Stephanie Thompson

Call: 2017

Stephanie Thompson has deep reserves and a sharp mind.

CHAMBERS HIGH NET WORTH 2026

sthompson@serlecourt.co.uk +44 (0)20 7242 6105

Stephanie Thompson has a broad commercial chancery practice, with a focus on civil fraud, offshore and domestic trusts and probate litigation. She has a particular interest in cases with foreign law elements and has experience in overseas jurisdictions including Bermuda, The Bahamas, the BVI, Jersey, Guernsey and New Zealand.

Stephanie is regularly instructed as sole counsel in the English High Court, most recently appearing unled for the Claimants in a four-week fraud trial, and is equally comfortable working as part of a larger team. She also advises and appears as specialist Chancery counsel in financial remedy proceedings. She has a developing arbitration practice, particularly in the field of trust arbitration, and has appeared in or advised on proceedings under the UNCITRAL, ICSID, ICC and LCIA Rules.

Stephanie was admitted to the British Virgin Islands bar in 2022.

Prior to joining Serle Court, Stephanie was a barrister in New Zealand for three years. She also completed an LLM at the University of Cambridge, where she received the BRD Clarke Prize for coming first in her year and prizes for coming first in each of her four subjects.

Expertise

Civil Fraud

Recent Cases

- *Equity Real Estate (Bracknell) Ltd & Ors v Capstan Capital Partners LLP & Ors* (ongoing) – Acting (with Justin Higgo KC) for five SPVs who are the victims of a complex property fraud. Stephanie obtained extensive disclosure from third parties under the Bankers Trust, Norwich Pharmacal and pre-action disclosure jurisdictions (BL-2020-001104, 17 November 2020).

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- *SMPI Bordeaux SPV 3 Ltd & Ors v Burton & Ors* (ongoing) – Acting (led out of chambers) for 136 claimant victims of a fraudulent wine-lending scheme. The claimants recently obtained judgment without trial following strike-out and default judgment in the sum of over £52 million (including declaratory relief as to their beneficial interest in monies paid to the defendants), avoiding the need for a lengthy and expensive trial.
- *Russell v Cartwright & Ors* [2020] EWHC 41 (Ch) – Acted (with Dan McCourt Fritz KC) for three defendants in the trial of a claim for fraudulent non-disclosure and unlawful means conspiracy brought by their former business partner. The defendants were wholly successful at trial and entitled to their costs on the indemnity basis, with the Court finding that they did not owe fiduciary duties or duties of disclosure and that they had been honest in their dealings with the claimant.
- *Instant Access Properties Ltd v Rosser* [2018] EWHC 756 (Ch) – Assisted Lance Ashworth KC and Matthew Morrison KC in acting for one of the defendants in the trial of claims alleging fraudulent breach of fiduciary duties, shadow directorship, tax evasion and fraudulent trading.
- *Barley v Muir* [2018] EWHC 619 (QB) – Assisted Ruth den Besten in a claim for fraudulent misrepresentation arising out of an investment in a pharmaceutical company. Assisted in a separate application for disclosure by the police of documents acquired during their parallel criminal investigation for use in the civil trial.
- *Willmont v Elm International Ltd* – Assisted Justin Higgo KC acting for respondents to a worldwide freezing order and ancillary disclosure order.

Commercial Litigation

Recent Cases

- *Deripaska v Chernukhin* [2019] EWHC 173 (Comm) – Acted (with John Machell KC and James Weale KC) in a substantial commercial court action involving a property development in central Moscow (instructed by Clifford Chance). Stephanie was instructed to deal with a number of urgent and difficult privilege and disclosure issues immediately prior to the five-week trial.
- *Christoforou v Christoforou* – Acted (with Daniel Lightman KC) for the claimant in proceedings concerning a valuable London property held pursuant to a common intention constructive trust. Brought a successful application to strike out allegations of dishonesty, fraud and illegality from the defendants' Amended Defence and to exclude those allegations from consideration and cross-examination at trial, on the grounds that they amounted to similar fact evidence which was of peripheral value to determining the claim and would have increased the cost (and risked adjournment) of the trial.
- *Freshasia Foods Ltd v Lu* (unled) – Successfully defended Mr Lu both at the interim injunction stage ([2018] EWHC 3644 (Ch)) and at trial ([2019] EWHC 638 (Ch)) from claims (i) that he had breached restrictive covenants and should be injuncted from working for his new employer, (ii) in copyright infringement and (ii) in breach of confidence. Arnold J found that the restrictive covenants were both void for uncertainty and unenforceable for being in breach of public policy and awarded indemnity costs to Mr Lu. The case also raised important questions of severance and the interim injunction judgment was discussed in the recent Supreme Court decision Egon Zehnder v Tillman.
- *Spokane v CMS* – Acted (with Justin Higgo KC) for a private equity fund in proceedings for breach of fiduciary duty against its former solicitor. The Lawyer listed it as one of the Top 20 Cases of 2019.
- *Rapid Home Warranties Ltd v Farooq (unled)* – Represented the respondent in a High Court claim concerning ownership of a website, including on an interim injunction application.
- *Russell v Cartwright & Ors* [2020] EWHC 41 (Ch) – Acted (with Dan McCourt Fritz) for three defendants in the trial of a claim for fraudulent non-disclosure and unlawful means conspiracy brought by their former business partner. The defendants were wholly successful at trial and entitled to their costs on the indemnity basis, with the Court finding that they did not owe

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fiduciary duties or duties of disclosure and that they had been honest in their dealings with the claimant.

- *Equity Real Estate (Bracknell) Ltd & Ors v Capstan Capital Partners LLP & Ors (ongoing)* – Acting (with Justin Higgo KC) for five SPVs who are the victims of a substantial property fraud. Stephanie obtained extensive disclosure from third parties under the Bankers Trust, Norwich Pharmacal and pre-action disclosure jurisdictions (BL-2020-001104, 17 November 2020).
- *SMPI Bordeaux SPV 3 Ltd & Ors v Burton & Ors* (ongoing) – Acting (led out of chambers) for 136 claimant victims of a fraudulent scheme in which substantial loans were made against the purported security of valuable wine collections. The claimants recently obtained judgment without trial following strike-out pursuant to CPR r 3.5(5) and default judgment in the sum of over £52 million (including declaratory relief as to their beneficial interest in monies paid to the defendants), avoiding the need for a lengthy and expensive trial.

International

Recent Cases

- *Wong v Grand View Private Trust Co & Ors* (ongoing) – Acting (with Dakis Hagen KC and Emma Hargreaves) for the Plaintiff in Bermudian proceedings concerning very substantial purpose trusts. The six-month trial has just concluded and judgment is awaited. In 2020 and 2021, the Bermuda Supreme Court handed down decisions on issues including the iniquity exception to legal professional privilege ([2020] SC (Bda) 33 Com, 5 August 2020), purging contempt for breach of the implied undertaking ([2020] SC (Bda) 52 Civ, 10 December 2020), specific discovery based on "practical control" and joint interest privilege ([2020] SC (Bda) 57 Com, 30 December 2020), pleading amendments ([2021] SC (Bda) 21 Com (11 March 2021) and the admission of statements of important witnesses without cross-examination ([2021] SC (Bda) 46 Com (9 June 2021)).
- *Wong v & Anor v Grand View Private Trust Co* (ongoing) – Acting (with Dakis Hagen KC and Emma Hargreaves) for the Plaintiffs in Bermudian proceedings in which the Plaintiffs obtained summary judgment on the grounds that powers of addition and exclusion in a trust deed cannot be exercised in a manner which changes the substratum of the trust ([2019] SC (Bda) 37 Com). The Defendant was successful on appeal (Civil Appeal No. 5A of 2019, 20 April 2020) and the case is due to be heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in early 2022.
- UNCITRAL arbitration (ongoing) and related subsequent Bahamian litigation – Acting (with Dakis Hagen KC) for the trustee of a suite of Bahamian trusts in proceedings concerning the trustee's decision to distribute the trusts' assets to the settlor and primary beneficiary of those trusts.
- *Crociani* (appeals) – Acted (with Dakis Hagen KC) for one of the appellants following breach of trust litigation in Jersey.
- *Re X & Y Trusts* (2018-2021) – Acted (with Paul Adams) for the trustee of two trusts. Successful in obtaining a variety of directions, declarations and Benjamin orders.
- Stephanie is also acting for the trustees of several substantial New Zealand trusts and is well placed to do so given she is also qualified in New Zealand.

Trusts & Probate

Recent Cases

- *Wong v Grand View Private Trust Co & Ors* (ongoing) – Acting (with Dakis Hagen KC and Emma Hargreaves) for the Plaintiff in Bermudian proceedings concerning very substantial purpose trusts. The six-month trial has just concluded and judgment

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- *Wong v & Anor v Grand View Private Trust Co* (ongoing) – Acting (with Dakis Hagen KC and Emma Hargreaves) for the Plaintiffs in Bermudian proceedings in which the Plaintiffs obtained summary judgment on the grounds that powers of addition and exclusion in a trust deed cannot be exercised in a manner which changes the substratum of the trust ([2019] SC (Bda) 37 Com). The Defendant was successful on appeal (Civil Appeal No. 5A of 2019, 20 April 2020) and the case is due to be heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in early 2022.
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- *Re X & Y Trusts* (2018-2021) – Acted (with Paul Adams) for the trustee of two trusts. Successful in obtaining a variety of directions, declarations and Benjamin orders.
- *Gupta v Gupta* [2018] EWHC 135 (Ch) – Assisted Constance McDonnell KC in successfully defending claims to pronounce against the deceased's will for want of knowledge and approval.
- Stephanie regularly advises and acts as sole counsel in private client disputes. Recent cases have included a Strong v Bird claim concerning the alleged gift of a substantial property, a claim for delivery up of confidential information by former trustees, claims for removal of executors, Beddoe applications, claims for breach of duty by trustees and claims under the 1975 Act.
- Stephanie is also acting for the trustees of several substantial New Zealand trusts and is well placed to do so given she is also qualified in New Zealand.

Company

Recent Cases

- *s 994 petitions* – Stephanie is presently acting on two unfair prejudice petitions and related claims for breach of fiduciary duties and for an account.
- *Instant Access Properties Ltd v Rosser* [2018] EWHC 756 (Ch) – Assisted Lance Ashworth KC and Matthew Morrison KC in defending allegations that one of the parties was a shadow director and had acted in breach of fiduciary duties.
- *First Subsea Ltd v Balltec Ltd* – Assisted Andrew Moran KC in an appeal to the Supreme Court concerning the application of s 21 of the Limitation Act 1980 to breaches of fiduciary duty by company directors.

Partnership

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Recent Cases

- *In re Infund LLP* [2018] EWHC 1306 (Ch) – Assisted John Machell KC and Dan McCourt Fritz KC in representing the defendants to a claim brought by Grupo Mexico seeking to avoid the restoration of an LLP to the Register of Companies.

Intellectual Property

Recent Cases

- *Freshasia Foods Ltd v Lu* (unled) – Successfully defended Mr Lu both at the interim injunction stage ([2018] EWHC 3644 (Ch)) and at trial ([2019] EWHC 638 (Ch)) from claims (i) that he had breached restrictive covenants and should be injuncted from working for his new employer, (ii) in copyright infringement and (ii) in breach of confidence. Arnold J found that the restrictive covenants were both void for uncertainty and unenforceable for being in breach of public policy and awarded indemnity costs to Mr Lu. The case also raised important questions of severance and the interim injunction judgment was discussed in the recent Supreme Court decision Egon Zehnder v Tillman.
- *Rapid Home Warranties Ltd v Farooq* (unled) – Represented the respondent on an interim injunction application in the High Court concerning ownership of a website.

Matrimonial Finance: Trusts & Company Law

Stephanie acts as specialist chancery counsel in matrimonial proceedings in the Family Division.

Testimonials

"Stephanie Thompson has deep reserves and a sharp mind."

Chambers High Net Worth 2026

"Stephanie is a superbly good junior who is destined for great things. She is very responsive and she produces very good written work."

Chambers High Net Worth 2026

"She is one of the most impressive and pleasant barristers that I have ever worked with. Her commitment and dedication is of the highest degree and her intellect is unparalleled."

Chambers & Partners

"Stephanie is super bright and has a really clear drafting style. She is a responsive and really smart barrister."

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Chambers & Partner 2026

"Stephanie is unbelievably good. She's a massive workhorse who produces highly complex opinions to tight deadlines and knows how to pitch to clients at the right level."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"Stephanie Thompson at Serle Court is brilliant. She performs so far above her call."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"I definitely would instruct her again. She is really everything you need in a barrister - a star of the future."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"Stephanie Thompson is very skilful, diplomatic and utterly reliable. If you have a really difficult judgement call to make, she will be the right person to go to."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"Her written advice and submissions are the most clear and approachable. She is highly commercial and sophisticated."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"She is super bright and has a real clear drafting style."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"She is technically excellent, good with clients and responsive."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"Stephanie Thompson is incredibly bright and hardworking. You can give her a huge amount of material, and she will come up with solutions straight away."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"Stephanie's abilities are far beyond her year of call. She is brilliant and a pleasure to work with."

Chambers & Partner 2026

"Stephanie Thompson is brilliant. She performs so far above her year of call."

Chambers & Partner 2026

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"Stephanie Thompson is very skilful, diplomatic and utterly reliable. If you have got really difficult judgement call to make, she will be the right person to go to."

Chambers & Partners High Net Worth 2025

"Her written advice and submissions are the most clear and approachable. She is highly commercial and sophisticated."

Chambers & Partners High Net Worth 2025

"Stephanie is a very smart barrister who handled all questions well and was good on the strategy."

Chambers & Partners 2025

"I think she might be one of the brightest people I've ever met. She has an extraordinary ability to take on masses of information, and has a very understated manner that belies her fierce intellect."

Chambers & Partners 2025

"Stephanie is personable, always on hand and someone who provides extremely clear advice."

Chambers & Partners 2025

"Stephanie is organised and practical. She adapts well and knows when to push back against judges."

Chambers & Partners 2025

"Stephanie is fantastic and is super bright. She is absolutely lovely to work with and really impressive."

Chambers & Partners 2025

"Stephanie is operating at a high level and will be a star of the future."

Chambers & Partner 2025

"An absolutely fantastic practitioner with immense intellectual fire power, who is hard working and a nice character. She is a very able speaker, who is all about precision and being waffle free."

Chambers & Partner 2025

"Stephanie presents complicated problems straightforwardly in pleadings and submissions."

Legal 500 2025

"An incredibly thoughtful and analytical barrister."

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Legal 500 2025

“Stephanie is a very smart barrister who handled all questions with good strategy.”

Chambers & Partners High Net Worth 2024

“I think she might be one of the brightest people I've ever met. She has an extraordinary ability to take on masses of information. She has a very understated manner that belies a fierce intellect.”

Chambers & Partners High Net Worth 2024

“Stephanie is personable, always on hand and provides extremely clear advice.”

Chambers & Partners High Net Worth 2024

“Stephanie is amazing. She is hugely hard-working and someone who turns over all the stones to make sure everything gets covered. She's a delight to work with, and has a very bright future ahead of her.”

Chambers & Partners 2024

“Stephanie is extremely responsive and works tirelessly to help the team reach its shared goals. She displays astonishing resilience under pressure and has a great ability to cooperate on both a personal and professional level, making her admired by both clients and professionals alike.”

Chambers & Partners 2024

“She is very diligent and completely on top of the law and the detail in a case. Her offshore knowledge is vast and impressive.”

Chambers & Partners 2024

Appointments

- Called to the British Virgin Islands Bar (2022)
- Called to the New Zealand Bar (2013)

Recommendations

- Rising Leader, Private Client (Global Elite 2022 & 2023)

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- Chancery: Traditional (Up & Coming) (Chambers High Net Worth 2023)
- Chancery: Traditional (Up & Coming) (Chambers UK Bar 2023)
- Private Client: Trusts & Probate (Band 4) (Legal 500)

Publications

- S Thompson “When is it appropriate to withhold a trust deed from a beneficiary? Disclosure of trust documents in the New Zealand Supreme Court” (Trusts & Trustees, OUP 2019)
- K Davenport QC and S Thompson “Piercing the Trust Structure at a Relationship’s End: Interesting Developments from the New Zealand Supreme Court” (Trusts & Trustees, OUP 2016)
- DAR Williams QC and Stephanie Thompson “Interim Measures in New Zealand”, a chapter in Interim Measures in International Arbitration (Juris Publishing, 2014)

Education, Qualifications and Awards

- BRD Clarke Prize for Best Overall Performance in the LLM, Cambridge
- Goff & Jones Prize for the Law of Restitution, Cambridge
- 3 Verulam Buildings Prize for International Commercial Litigation, Cambridge
- Travers Smith Prize for International Commercial Tax, Cambridge
- Volterra Fietta Prize for International Investment Law, Cambridge
- Glanville Williams Prize for the LLM, Jesus College, Cambridge
- Russell Vick Prize for Law, Jesus College, Cambridge
- New Zealand Law Foundation Ethel Benjamin Scholarship, Gordon Watson Scholarship, Spencer Mason Scholarship and LB Wood Scholarship (2016)
- Prizes for Company Law & Agency Law, University of Auckland
- LLM (Distinction), University of Cambridge
- BA, University of Auckland
- LLB (Hons), University of Auckland

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BSB Registration

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