Zahler Bryan

Call: 2012

Zahler is excellent. Her written work is excellent and she is great with clients.

CHAMBERS HIGH NET WORTH 2026

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

Zahler Bryan has a broad commercial chancery practice, with a particular emphasis on contentious trusts, civil fraud and financial disputes.

She regularly advises on a wide range of matters, with considerable experience in large-scale commercial and trust disputes spanning an extensive range of jurisdictions.

Zahler also has a particular interest in appellate work and has appeared in the Supreme Court and the Privy Council.

Described as "*razor smart and a great asset to any team*", Zahler was awarded 'Chancery Junior of the Year' at the Legal 500 UK Bar Awards 2023.

Expertise

Trusts

Zahler is regularly instructed across a wide range of traditional and commercial chancery matters. She has particular expertise in complex multi- jurisdictional trusts, with a particular emphasis on corporate governance within high value trusts. She is also regularly instructed in contentious domestic trust cases and has experience of advising and acting in claims brought under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975.

She has worked on a broad variety of offshore matters including judicial review proceedings concerning the pollution of the marine and terrestrial environment in The Bahamas and potential jurisdictional challenges to a winding up petition issued by the English High Court.

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General enquiries

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Recent Cases

- *Hamersmith-Stewart v Cromwell Trust Company Ltd and Ors:* acts with James Weale KC and Richard Wilson KC for defendant beneficiaries in significant trust litigation in multiple jurisdictions including The Bahamas.
- *PTNZ V AS* PT-2019-000273 – Acted for the trustee in a momentous decision blessing application relating to the restructuring of a substantial group of trusts, led by Richard Wilson KC and instructed by Burges Salmon LLP. This case involved proceedings in multiple jurisdictions.
- *Crociani v Crociani*: acted for the minor beneficiaries in the Privy Council appeal from the Jersey Court of Appeal decision, led by Frank Hinks KC and instructed by Locke Lord LLP. The Jersey Court of Appeal had held that the remedy by which a defaulting trustee is liable to reconstitute the trust fund is entirely discretionary and the Privy Council appeal raised questions about the approach traditionally adopted in trusts law to protect the interests of minor beneficiaries.
- *Gany Holdings v Khan and others* [2018] UKPC 21: acted with Stephenson Harwood LLP, led by Alan Boyle QC and Richard Wilson KC, for the successful respondents in a Privy Council appeal from the BVI concerning the vesting of trust assets and challenges to the exercise of trustees' discretion under the rule in Re Hastings-Bass. The Privy Council clarified the correct approach to identifying beneficial interests arising from a gratuitous transfer of property as well as to challenges to the exercise of trustees' discretion under the rule in *Re Hastings-Bass*.
- *Re A Trust* [2018] SC (Bda) 42 Civ: acted for McDermott Will and Emery, led by Frank Hinks KC, in a very high value momentous blessing application. Zahler acted for the settlor and principal beneficiary of a multi-billion dollar group of Bermudian family trusts in this case, in which the trustees sought approval of a substantial investment which was opposed by a number of the beneficiaries.
- *Davidson v Seelig* [2016] EWHC 549*:* acted with Clifford Chance LLP in a high profile family trust dispute over the ownership of more than £17m of jewellery, paintings and objets d'art. Led by Stephen Rubin KC and Justin Higgo KC, Zahler acted for the parents claiming in conversion and trespass for the return of chattels from their children, who claimed the chattels had been purchased with trust monies.
- *Paratian v Sotiri* – Acted with Kingsley Napley LLP for the defendants to a domestic common intention constructive trust claim involving several London properties.
- *Loose v Lynn Shellfish* [2016] UKSC 14: led by Thomas Braithwaite, Zahler acted with Bond Dickinson LLP for the Crown Estate as intervenors before the Supreme Court, persuading the court to overturn the judgments below with respect to the operation of the doctrine of accretion in tidal waters, the construction of ancient grants and the nature of prescriptive rights.
- Instructed in highly contentious, confidential proceedings concerning a family trust for one of the world's wealthiest families.
- Acting for a principal beneficiary of a Jersey discretionary trust in proceedings brought seeking declarations as to the validity and effect of the purported removal of the beneficiary.
- Instructed by the principal beneficiary of a Guernsey trust bringing a claim for fraudulent breach of trust, dishonest assistance and knowing receipt.
- Instructed in proceedings relating to the restructuring of substantial Jersey trusts, in circumstances where the Protector refused consent to the Trustee's proposed exercise of its powers.

Civil Fraud

Zahler has significant experience in high value international and domestic civil fraud matters and regularly acts both led and unled in cases involving the misappropriation of funds.

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Recent Cases

- *İşbilen v Hanson Asset Management Ltd* [2023-ongoing]: acts with Matthew Morrison KC for a financial services provider in relation to an alleged fraud arising from the removal of assets from Turkey. Related high profile proceedings are also brought against Mr Turk in relation to the same alleged fraud, with the proceedings set for a conjoined trial towards the end of 2026.
- *Mozambique v Credit Suisse & Ors; VTBC & Ors v Mozambique* [2024] EWHC 1957; [2024] EWHC 3188: acted with Jonathan Adkin KC for the Republic of Mozambique in its successful multi-billion dollar claim against a number of financial institutions and the Privinvest group, arising from an international fraud relating to the obtaining of sovereign guarantees for a series of loans in what became known as the 'tuna bonds scandal'. This case was one of *The Lawyer's Top 20 Cases of 2023*.
- Acted for the principal beneficiary of a trust bringing a claim for fraudulent breach of trust and dishonest assistance in relation to the misappropriation of property held by the trust.
- Instructed by a high net worth individual to seek specific performance of an agreement concerning the ownership of very valuable shareholdings.
- *Glenn v Watson; Novatrust Limited v Kea Investments Ltd*: acted for the successful claimants in long-running proceedings brought by New Zealand businessman Sir Owen Glenn against Eric Watson for deceit, bribery and breach of fiduciary duty, led by Elizabeth Jones KC and instructed by Farrer & Co LLP. Following the multi-million damages award achieved by the claimants at trial, the subsequent enforcement action involved multiple dimensions including a 4 week committal application.
- *Khalifeh v Blom Bank* [2021] EWHC 3399 (QB): acted for the claimant who sought the return of monies held in a Lebanese bank account at trial, following successfully defeating the Lebanese bank's jurisdiction challenge by establishing that the claimant was a consumer for the purposes of the European rules of jurisdiction ([2020] EWHC 2427 (QB)).
- *Satfinance Investment Ltd v Athena Art Finance Corp* [2019-2020]: acted with Philip Shepherd KC for the defendant speciality lender resisting a claim brought by Satfinance Investment asserting ownership of a Jean-Michel Basquiat painting, arising from agreements made with Inigo Philbrick. Athena Art Finance successfully set aside the permission granted to Satfinance to serve proceedings out of the jurisdiction, a decision upheld on appeal ([2020] EWHC 3527 (Ch)).
- *Ang v Reliantco Investments Ltd* [2019] 3 WLR 161: acted for the claimant, who had invested in Bitcoin futures through a cryptocurrency trading platform provided by a Cypriot company, led by Jonathan Harris KC (Hon.) and instructed by SCA ONTIER LLP. The claimant issued proceedings in England after her account was terminated and no monies returned. The claimant defeated the defendant's jurisdiction challenge by successfully arguing that an investor in Bitcoin futures was a consumer for the purposes of the European rules of jurisdiction.
- *Mahdavi v Sterling Avram*: acted for the successful claimants in this dispute arising from a multi-million pound property fraud carried out by a consultant engaged by a solicitors' firm, led by Daniel Lightman KC and instructed by Shakespeare Martineau LLP. The proceedings raised novel questions about (i) the legal protection available against property fraud where the fraudster operates within a solicitors' firm and (ii) the availability of relief under section 61 of the Trustee Act 1925 to solicitors who have paid away client monies in breach of trust.
- *Akhmedova v Akhmedov*: assisted Dakis Hagen KC, instructed by Payne Hicks Beach, in relation to a substantial asset tracing exercise following one of the highest divorce awards ever made in the English courts.
- *Business Energy Solutions v Scrivener & Ors*: acted for the claimant company, led by Philip Marshall KC, in an unlawful means conspiracy claim against defendants who are alleged to have induced the company's customers to breach their contractual obligations. Zahler also acted in a related breach of confidence claim against one of the company's former employees.

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Company

Zahler is a contributing author to *Minority Shareholders: Law, Practice & Procedure* (7th ed, 2024) and is regularly instructed on cases involving alleged breaches of directors' duties, minority shareholder remedies and issues of corporate governance.

Recent Cases

- Acts with Daniel Lightman KC for the petitioners in unfair prejudice proceedings brought in relation to a very valuable cryptocurrency business.
- Acting for a parent company in the context of a proposed multiple derivative claim.
- Acting for a shareholder and director in unfair prejudice proceedings in relation to a very valuable group of companies in the context of the administration of an estate.
- Advised on a multi-jurisdictional unfair prejudice petition relating to an industry-leading underlying trading company.
- Instructed to advise on the valuation exercise undertaken by the Court when contemplating a sale purchase order in the context of an unfair prejudice petition.
- Advised a number of companies in the context of urgent interim relief sought in unfair prejudice proceedings.
- *Glenn v Watson*; *Novatrust Limited v Kea Investments Ltd:* acted for the successful claimants in long-running proceedings brought by New Zealand businessman Sir Owen Glenn against Eric Watson for deceit, bribery and breach of fiduciary duty, led by Elizabeth Jones KC and instructed by Farrer & Co LLP. Following the multi-million damages award achieved by the claimants at trial, the subsequent enforcement action involved multiple dimensions including a 4 week committal application.
- *Med Mining and Minerals Limited v Nusantara*: acted with Cheyney Goulding LLP, Geraldine Clark and Michael Todd QC for an Indonesian mining company bringing a multi-million claim against former directors for breach of duty in relation to $7.5m loan made to acquire mining concessions, in a case which settled at trial.
- *Petrodel Resources Ltd v Prest* [2013] 3 WLR1: assisted Daniel Lightman acting with Farrer & Co LLP in this landmark company law case in which the Supreme Court redefined the circumstances in which the court can pierce the corporate veil.

Commercial Litigation

Zahler has experience in an extensive range of commercial disputes, from claims against company directors for breaches of duty and contractual disputes to proceedings under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. She also advises on jurisdictional challenges in international commercial disputes.

Recent Cases

- *İşbilen v Hanson Asset Management Ltd* [2023-ongoing]: acts with Matthew Morrison KC for a financial services provider in relation to an alleged fraud arising from the removal of assets from Turkey. Related high profile proceedings are also brought against Mr Turk in relation to the same alleged fraud, with the proceedings set for a conjoined trial towards the end of 2026.
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- *RBS litigation*: acted with Herbert Smith Freehills for the RBS Group defending actions brought by shareholder and investor groups regarding RBS's £12bn rights issue in 2008. These actions, brought under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, challenged the information provided in relation to the RBS rights issue. This high profile case was believed to be the largest claim when it went through the English courts before reaching settlement shortly ahead of trial.

Matrimonial Finance: Trusts & Company Law

Zahler has experience in high value matrimonial proceedings, particularly where there are complex issues of company and/or trusts law. She has:

- Advised on the beneficial ownership of shares for the purpose of ancillary relief proceedings
- Acted for the trustees of offshore trusts with substantial assets in the context of English divorce proceedings
- Instructed to advise on the value of shareholdings in ancillary relief proceedings
- Assisted in a substantial asset tracing exercise following one of the highest divorce awards ever made in the English courts

Probate

Zahler acts in a range of contentious probate matters, including 1975 Act claims and proceedings challenging the validity of wills

Banking & Financial Services

Zahler has in-depth experience of banking litigation, having acted with Herbert Smith Freehills for the RBS Group defending actions brought by shareholder and investor groups regarding RBS's £12bn rights issue in 2008. These actions, brought under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, challenged the information provided in relation to the RBS rights issue. This high profile case was

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International

Zahler has extensive experience across a range of offshore jurisdictions and regularly works in the Channel Islands.

Recent Cases

- *Hamersmith-Stewart v Cromwell Trust Company Ltd and Ors*: acts with James Weale KC and Richard Wilson KC for defendant beneficiaries in significant trust litigation in multiple jurisdictions including The Bahamas.
- Acting for the claimant in proceedings arising from the transfer of substantial investments from a BVI company and between offshore trust structures.
- Instructed in highly contentious, confidential proceedings concerning a family trust for one of the world's wealthiest families.
- Acting for a principal beneficiary of a Jersey discretionary trust in proceedings brought seeking declarations as to the validity and effect of the purported removal of the beneficiary.
- Instructed in proceedings relating to the restructuring of substantial Jersey trusts, in circumstances where the Protector refused consent to the Trustee's proposed exercise of its powers.
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Testimonials

"Zahler is excellent. Her written work is excellent and she is great with clients."

Chambers High Net Worth 2026

"Zahler Bryan is highly skilled and can get instructing solicitors out of sticky situations with excellent advice and assistance delivered with poise."

Chambers High Net Worth 2026

"Zahler has admirable forensic and advocacy skills. She is a formidable leader."

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Chambers High Net Worth

"'An absolute quality junior', and she is 'always completely on top of every detail, and a technically brilliant and detailed lawyer'."

Chambers & Partners

"Zahler Bryan is a real rising star of the future."

Chambers UK 2026

"Zahler Bryan excels in the most complex of disputes, providing succinct advice. She is extremely approachable and her advice is always geared to the nub of the issue."

Chambers High Net Worth 2025

"Zahler Bryan is a real rising star of the future."

Chambers High Net Worth 2025

"Razor-smart - a great asset to a team, her input is always well thought-out and useful."

Legal 500 2021

"Zahler is an extremely capable junior whose written product is excellent."

Chambers UK 2025

"Zahler is very helpful and considered, and a pleasure to work with."

Chambers UK 2025

"Zahler is very responsive, keeps the instructing solicitor informed, and her advice is thorough, of the highest quality, and user-friendly. She is very approachable and helpful."

Legal 500 2025

"Zahler is highly personable and responsive. Her legal analysis is always excellent and thorough, and her advice is practical and timely. She has an excellent and quick grasp of the details."

Legal 500 2025

"Zahler is an extremely capable junior with an excellent written product."

Chambers HNW 2024

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"Zahler is very helpful and considered and a pleasure to work with."

Chambers HNW 2024

"Zahler has a first-class intellect. She is sharp-witted, incisive and someone with superb analytical and writing skills."

Chambers UK 2024

"Zahler is thorough and a joy to work with."

Chambers UK 2024

"Extremely astute with an ability to identify and advise clearly on key points and tactics early. She is very hard-working, having delivered some complicated drafting in a very tight time frame."

Chambers UK 2023

"Zahler is sharp, thorough and a joy to work with."

Chambers High Net Worth 2023

"Extremely astute with an ability to identify and advise clearly on key points and tactics early."

Chambers High Net Worth 2022

"She is very hard-working, having delivered some complicated drafting in a very tight timeframe."

Chambers High Net Worth 2022

"She is going to be a superstar."

Chambers High Net Worth 2022

"Zahler is unfailingly hard working, reliable and pragmatic - an excellent junior and real team player."

Legal 500 2022

Recommendations

- Chancery: Traditional (Chambers UK Bar & Chambers HNW)
- Offshore (Legal 500)

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- Chancery (Best Lawyers, 2024)
- English Bar Offshore: Private Wealth & Trusts (Legal 500)
- Commercial Litigation (Legal 500)
- Civil Fraud (Legal 500)
- Private Wealth & Probate (Legal 500)

Memberships

- Chancery Bar Association
- Commercial Bar Association

Education, Qualifications and Awards

- Legal 500's 'Chancery Junior of the Year' 2023.
- Eastham, Lord Mansfield, Lord Bowen and Hardwicke Scholarships, Lincoln's Inn
- Buchanan Prize, Lincoln's Inn
- Sweet & Maxwell Company Law Prize, City University
- AHRC masters and doctoral research awards
- BPTC (Outstanding)
- GDL (Distinction), City University
- MPhil; DPhil in political philosophy, Magdalen College, Oxford
- BA PPE (First), Magdalen College, Oxford

In the Press

The Lawyer's Top 20 cases for 2023: '*The Republic of Mozambique v Credit Suisse International et al*' (available to subscribers) here.

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BSB Registration

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