

JAMES MACDOUGALD

"James is first class. He is unflappable, incredibly user-friendly and someone who deals with matters in a very timely fashion."
(Chambers UK 2025)



Call 2011

James is a Chancery barrister specialising in trusts and estates, inheritance disputes and private client taxation. His broader practice encompasses charities, Court of Protection work, property rights and professional negligence claims. He enjoys a mixture of litigation and non-contentious advisory work. He appears frequently in the High Court, has appeared as junior counsel in the Court of Appeal and has been instructed in a range of offshore cases in Jersey, Guernsey, Bermuda and the Bahamas.

In the legal directories he is variously described as “super bright”, “conscientious”, “approachable” with “excellent technical skills” and as “a junior with an impressive mind, whose knowledge base in trusts is superb for one of his call.”

Before coming to the Bar, James worked as an assistant editor at the Daily Telegraph.

Ranked in Band 1 for Trusts and Band 4 in Chancery: Traditional in Chambers UK 2022.

Trusts & Estates

James has a busy contentious practice in trust and estate litigation.

Reported Cases:

- **Dawson-Damer v Taylor Wessing** [2019] EWCA Civ 352 (data protection, trusts and legal professional privilege)
- **Barker v Confiance Ltd** [2019] EWHC 1401 (Ch): non-party costs order
- **Twin Benefits v Barker** [2017] EWHC 1882 (Ch): variation of costs order
- **Twin Benefits v Barker** [2017] EWHC 538 (Ch): non-party disclosure
- **Dawson-Damer v Taylor Wessing** [2017] EWCA Civ 74: Data Protection Act and trusts.
- **Shergill & Ors v Khaira & Ors** [2017] EWHC 769 (Ch): Dispute over trusteeship of Sikh temple
- **The Longleat litigation** [2016]: Junior counsel for the continuing trustees in a contested application to

Location

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remove trustees.

- **Davidson v Seelig** [2016] EWHC 549 (Ch): Junior counsel for the trustees in a late application to amend concerning the locus standi of trust protectors.
- **Gayle v Gayle** [2016] EWHC 2587 (Ch)

Private Client

James frequently advises on the administration of trusts and estates. He enjoys solving problems and has particular expertise in

- Construction and rectification of wills and trust documents
- Setting aside transactions involving mistakes
- Variation of trusts and trustees' administrative powers

Reported Cases

- **Bathurst & Anor v Bathurst & Ors (Rev 1)** [2016] EWHC 3033 (Ch): Variation of trusts application
- **South Downs Trustees Ltd v GH** [2018] EWHC 1064 (Ch): section 57, Trustee Act 1925

Taxation

James specialises in private client taxation, with a particular focus on inheritance tax and capital gains tax. He regularly advises on the tax treatment of trusts, estates and individuals.

Court of Protection

James advises on the law of mental capacity as it relates to property and affairs. As an advocate he has appeared in the Court of Protection and in Chancery litigation involving issues about mental capacity.

Recommendations

“Quick to respond and unfailingly helpful, he has in-depth knowledge of private client work and is a pleasure to work with. He impresses clients with his manner and knowledge.”

“James is technically excellent and his advocacy is very good.”

“A delightful barrister, who is wise beyond his year and always quick to assist.”

“He is highly practical, extremely nice to deal with and brilliant with the client.”

“James is a considered, measured and very bright barrister with a brilliant memory, who has a great sense of strategy. He never lets you down and possesses great drafting skills.”

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“James is first class. He is unflappable, incredibly user-friendly and someone who deals with matters in a very timely fashion.”

“James is very thoughtful and erudite, with a careful and reasonable demeanour which reassures clients and those instructing him.”

Legal 500 2025

“An excellent junior, who is responsive, very bright and totally dependable. He can turn his hand to anything and is always willing to roll up his sleeves. James also has a very good understanding of the solicitor position with regard to clients.”

“James has an incisive mind and provides practical advice.”

“James is fantastically smart and a pleasure to work with.”

“James is very responsive and patient, and provides advice on pretty knotty stuff . He is technically really good.”

Chambers UK 2024

‘James can provide thorough and considered advice. His written advice is detailed but still clear and client-friendly. He is extremely knowledgeable and an absolute pleasure to work with.’

Legal 500 2024

“Fantastically clever, highly efficient and always willing to lend a hand and chat through any issues.”

“An absolute star across the board, from international trusts to Court of Protection work.”

Chambers UK 2023

“He is highly bright.”

“James provides clear, practical advice within the timeframe estimated He is always willing to talk through matters.”

“Approachable and perceptive, he provides timely and sensible input whether drafting documents or advising by telephone or in writing.”

Chambers UK 2022

“Very personable and thoughtful, he looks around the issues and provides comprehensive and practical advice in a straightforward manner. He has a real desire to be helpful.”

“A star for the future who works well with the much more senior members of offshore litigation teams.”

Legal 500 2022

“He’s one of the most efficient and enthusiastic juniors.”

“He’s very helpful, conscientious, straightforward and easy to deal with.”

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“A junior with an impressive mind, whose knowledge base in trusts is superb for one of his call.”

Chambers UK 2021

‘Very bright, excellent drafting and advocacy. Sound advice. Very good on less common procedural issues.’

Legal 500 2020

“He’s one of the most efficient and enthusiastic juniors I have come across“

“He’s very helpful, conscientious, straightforward and easy to deal with.”

Chambers HNW 2020

“He is super bright, willing and never lets me down. He is quite thoughtful in nature and very willing to talk things through. He’s very approachable and clients have a lot of confidence in him.”

Chambers UK 2020

“Has a keen eye for detail and knows trusts inside out.”

Legal 500 2020

“James MacDougald is very impressive. His cross-examination of witnesses and thoroughness is admired. He quickly gets to grips with the key issues and advises pragmatically and strategically. He has a very personable touch with clients who are just as impressed with his advocacy.”

HNW Guide 2019

“Very young but already very accomplished in his field, he has excellent technical skills and is always strong and forthright in his opinions.”

“He gets very involved in cases and fights tenaciously for the client.”

Chambers UK 2019

“His technical knowledge is very good and he gets to grips with things very quickly. Even though he is a young junior, he really inspires confidence in solicitors and clients. He is very thoughtful in his approach and never shy to give his opinion on matters.”

HNW 2018 Guide

“A highly rated junior”

“Already very accomplished in this field.”

“He is very cerebral and he is shaping up to a really excellent technical lawyer”

“He thinks through things deeply and always comes back up with very practical advice.”

“He is brilliant at dealing with counsel on the other side. He gets very involved in cases and fights tenaciously for

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Chambers UK 2018

“Even though he is a young junior, he really inspires confidence in solicitors and clients. He is very thoughtful in his approach and never shy to give his opinion on matters.”

“He is wonderful and really knows his stuff.”

Chambers HNW 2017

Qualifications

- Bar Professional Training Course (Outstanding), College of Law (2011)
- Graduate Diploma in Law (Commendation), College of Law (2010)
- BA (First Class), University of York (2009)

Associations & Memberships

- Chancery Bar Association
- Court of Protection Bar Association

Publications

James is an author of [Williams on Wills \(10th ed.\)](#)

Published articles:

- [Dawson-Damer v Taylor Wessing: The practical implications](#), March 2017
- [“Changes to the UK taxation of non-doms”](#), Lawskills, December 2016
- [“Long arm of the law: the English court’s power to vary foreign trusts”](#), Trusts and Trustees
- [“Standing on thin ice: court applications by trust protectors”](#), Lawskills, April 2016
- [“Crociani: the proper forum for trust disputes”](#), Journal of International Tax, Trust and Corporate Planning, 2015, Vol 22, Issue 2
- [“Have you made a serious mistake”](#), Lawskills, August 2015
- [“The bell is tolling for pilot trusts”](#), Lawskills, March 2015
- [“Can the proceeds of a life insurance policy be clawed back in 1975 Act Claims?”](#), Lawskills, October 2014

Speaking Engagements

James regularly delivers talks (in seminars and webinars) on a wide range of topics relating to his core practice areas.

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