



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

# Acland Bryant

YEAR OF CALL: 2019, 2024 (NORTHERN IRELAND)



Acland is developing a broad administrative and public law practice, specialising in cases that involve issues of environmental and climate justice.

Acland has experience in representing a broad range of professional and lay clients and is known for his thorough preparation, strategic thinking, client care and articulacy.

Alongside his practice at Garden Court, Acland is doctoral candidate, undertaking research in climate litigation, and is an Associate Tutor at the University of East Anglia.

Prior to joining Garden Court, he was a lawyer at Friends of the Earth and worked on several high-profile judicial reviews.

"Acland is the consummate legal professional. His work ethic is exceptional."

PROFESSIONAL CLIENT

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"Acland came across as far more experienced than his call would suggest. His submissions were intelligent, articulate and persuasive...He is definitely one to watch."

"He understood my concerns and projected them effectively which I'm grateful for. He did a brilliant job and I would highly recommend him."

LAY CLIENT

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"Acland kept a strong dignified approach with my son at the heart of everything he put forward. His attendance notes afterwards were extremely clear and helpful - I was understood completely."

LAY CLIENT

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I was given a clear understanding of the reasons for the advice given and they were invaluable... I am so grateful for Acland's involvement in the case and would absolutely recommend him to others."

LAY CLIENT

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"Acland has shown himself to be a skilled strategic thinker and a legal strategist."

PROFESSIONAL CLIENT

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If you would like to get in touch with Acland please contact the clerking team:

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## ADMINISTRATIVE AND PUBLIC LAW

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Acland has experience and expertise in administrative & public law and accepts instructions in all aspects of this area. Acland's public law practice is at the heart of his multi-disciplinary work. His time as an in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth provided him with a strong grounding in judicial reviews that raise issues of planning law, environmental law & climate justice, and human rights.

Acland is happy to be engaged at an early stage in the process and provide advice assistance on scoping, framing, and pre-action correspondence to help shape any potential challenge.

## NOTABLE CASES

***Wolverhampton City Council and others (Respondents) v London Gypsies and Travellers and others (Appellants)*** – Acland, acting as an in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth, was involved in Friends of the Earth's preparation for the Supreme Court hearing in these proceedings. This case concerns the courts power to grant "newcomer injunctions". Friends of the Earth's intervention focussed on the impacts to protest (particularly environmental protest). Friends of the Earth were represented at the hearing before the Supreme Court by Stephanie Harrison KC, Stephen Clark and Fatima Jichi of Garden Court Chambers.

***Finch v Surrey County Council and Horse Hill Developments Ltd (with Friends of the Earth Ltd intervening) (2022) EWCA Civ 187*** – Acland, acting as an in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth, was involved in preparing Friends of the Earth's submissions for the Supreme Court. The main issue in the appeal concerned the adequacy of the environmental impact assessment ("EIA") and focused on the requirement to include, within the EIA, an assessment of the significant indirect effects of the development on the climate. Since the development's very purpose is the extraction of oil; and following refinement, distribution and sale, it will in future, be used in a way that will generate GHG emissions, the claimant argued that the EIA had to include an assessment of those GHG emissions (known as "scope 3 emissions").

***In the Matter of an Application by No Gas Caverns Limited and Friends of the Earth Limited for Judicial Review*** – Acland was the lead in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth for the Court of Appeal stage of proceedings in this case, where Friends of the Earth acted as co-claimants with the local action group No Gas Caverns. This case concerned a public law challenge to the ministerial approval of a major energy infrastructure development in Northern Ireland, and raised significant constitutional issues regarding when matters should be referred to the Northern Ireland Executive Committee. It also raised whether the Minister for DAERA, when taking the decision to approve the project, took into account an irrelevant consideration, namely the provision of a 'community fund'.

***R (Friends of the Earth Ltd) v Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero; ClientEarth v SSES NZ; Good Law Project v Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (challenges to the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan)*** - Acland, acting as an in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth, was involved in preparing Friends of the Earth's application for judicial review. This judicial review sought to challenge to the legality of the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (CBDP)) under the Climate Change Act 2008.

***In the Matter of an Application by Derry City and Stabane District Council for Judicial Review*** - Acland, acting as an in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth, assisted in preparing Friends of the

Earth's submissions in support of their legal intervention. This case is a public law challenge to the Department for Economy's grant of mineral prospecting licences. Friends of the Earth's intervention focuses on the precautionary principle and cumulative impacts. This case is listed for a substantive hearing in April 2024.

***In the Matter of an Application by Friends of the Earth for Judicial Review*** – Acland acted as the lead in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth. This case concerned a public law challenge to the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure's failure to comply with its statutory duty to conduct a smoke test during a state-run MOT testing of diesel vehicles. In this case, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People is an intervener to make submissions on how the failure to conduct a smoke test impacts children and young people.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

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Acland has experience and expertise in all aspects of domestic and international environmental law & climate justice. His environmental practice is broad and includes cases which raise issues pertaining to animals and animal welfare. Acland has worked with and/or for international environmental NGOs, charities, activists, campaigners, political figures, protestors, and individuals (including children) who have been or are at risk of being impacted by environmental degradation and climate change.

Acland is a doctoral candidate at the University of East Anglia ("UEA") and a member of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. Acland's thesis looks at climate change litigation in common-law jurisdictions and has assisted his development of a deep knowledgebase of litigation in this practice area.

Acland regularly publishes, presents at workshops, events and conferences on an array of topics in this practice area. For event speaking enquiries, please contact [Acland's clerks](#).

## NOTABLE CASES

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distribution and sale, it will in future, be used in a way that will generate GHG emissions, the claimant argued that the EIA had to include an assessment of those GHG emissions (known as “scope 3 emissions”).

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Acland's international practice focuses on public international law and international environmental law. He is interested complex public international law issues, such as the law of state responsibility, extra-territorial jurisdiction, and all areas of international environment and climate change law.

Acland is also interested in how other areas of international law may be used to promote environmental protection. For example, the extent to which the Rome Statute currently protects the environment and whether the Statute should be amended to include a new fifth crime against peace – “ecocide”.

## NOTABLE CASES

***R (on the application of Friends of the Earth Ltd) (Appellant) v Secretary of State for International Trade/UK Export Finance (UKEF) and another (Respondents)*** – Acland, acting as an in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth, was involved in preparing and reviewing submissions in support of Friends of the Earth's application for permission to appeal from the Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court case. This case concerned the legality of the decision to approve funding for the LNG project in Mozambique and its purported compliance with the Paris Agreement.

## CIVIL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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Acland has experience and expertise in respect of representing individuals in human rights cases, with a particular interest in how climate change and climate security can impact human rights.

## PLANNING LAW

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Acland has experience and expertise in planning law matters and has particular expertise in considering environmental and climate impacts of planning applications.

In his previous local government capacity as a Parish Councillor, Acland gained experience in considering and responding to planning applications impacting the Parish and its residents, neighbourhood development plans, enforcement applications and appeals. Acland has since gained experience of planning inquiries held in respect of major infrastructure and energy projects, and public law challenges to planning decisions.

## NOTABLE CASES

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## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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Acland has experience and expertise in respect of representing children in family court proceedings, but also has an interest in children’s rights in the context of climate change and climate security.

Acland has authored an article published in Family Law Week, titled: [\*'Is the Environment a Relevant Consideration under the Children Act 1989?'\*](#) In this article, Acland explored the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 in the context of climate change.

## NOTABLE CASES

***In the Matter of an Application by Friends of the Earth for Judicial Review*** – Acland acted as the lead in-house lawyer at Friends of the Earth. This case concerned a public law challenge to the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure's failure to comply with its statutory duty to conduct a smoke test during a state-run MOT testing of diesel vehicles. In this case, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People is an intervener to make submissions on how the failure to conduct a smoke test

impacts children and young people.

## FAMILY LAW

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### Children

Acland frequently receives instructions in public law and private law children matters, and has gained experience in representing local authorities, parents, guardians and interveners. He has experience of assisting clients with a history of mental health issues and/or substance abuse and has acted for parents, grandparents and children. Acland has worked on cases involving allegations of parental alienation, domestic abuse, rape, controlling and coercive behaviour, emotional abuse and physical abuse and cases involving serious non-accidental injuries.

### Family Law Act

Acland has successfully represented applicants and respondents at all stages of Family Law Act proceedings, including Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders. Acland has represented clients in cases involving complicated medical evidence, trusts, rape, mental health issues, physical and emotional abuse against partners, children and extended family members. He also has experience in cases involving issues of service and locating individuals.

## NOTABLE CASES

***A Local Authority v M, P and W (unreported)*** – Acland acted as junior counsel for an infant child, through their Children’s Guardian, in a 3.5-week fact-finding hearing where serious allegations of child abuse and non-accidental injury were raised. The infant child had suffered fifteen separate fractures and other non-accidental injuries. Findings of non-accidental injury were made against the father in this case.

***F v F (unreported)*** - Acted as sole counsel for the respondent mother in a case concerning serious allegations child sexual abuse against a non-subject child, physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, financial abuse, and other domestic abuse. The court made findings on all allegations but one at the fact-finding stage, and subsequently made a “no contact order” and a S.91(14) order at the welfare stage.

## EDUCATION LAW

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Acland acts for children, young people and families in all forums where education law issues arise, including the First-tier Tribunal, the Upper Tribunal, the Administrative Court, university panels, governing body disciplinary committees, and independent review panels.

Acland also represents children, young people, and families in civil proceedings that allege breach of contract and/or negligence.

Acland has significant insight and experience of education law and related issues from personal experience, having lectured and tutored at University level.

## **NOTABLE CASES**

***DA v A Primary School*** – Acland acted pro bono on behalf of the family of a four-year old child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities under the Equality Act, who had been permanently excluded from his primary school. Acland was successful before the Independent Review Panel, who ordered that the permanent exclusion be quashed, and directed that the school governing board consider re-instatement.

***A Local Authority v Mr and Mrs L*** – Acland successfully resisted an appeal by the local authority against the First-tier Tribunal's decision, raising five grounds of appeal. The appeal was dismissed on the basis of the written representations, made on behalf of the parents in the skeleton argument.

***FB v A University*** – Acland acted on behalf of a PhD student accused of plagiarism and falsification within their thesis.

***NS v A University*** – Acland acted on behalf of a PhD student regarding a complaint which raised issues of breach of contract, discrimination, and negligence.

## **COURT OF PROTECTION**

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Acland regularly appears in the Court of Protection accepting instructions from families, local authorities, accredited legal representatives (ALRs), integrated care boards (ICBs) and the Official Solicitor. Acland acts in a full range of the Court of Protection's jurisdiction, including;

**Contested appointments of deputies**

**Personal Welfare Disputes**

**Best interest decisions**

**Challenges to Deprivations of Liberty**

**Lasting Powers of Attorney Disputes**

## **Capacity disputes**

### **Disputes involving property and affairs**

Due to Acland's background as an experienced family practitioner, specialising in cases of serious abuse, whether it be physical, verbal, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial, he is regularly instructed in cases with serious allegations of abuse and complex medical evidence.

## **WHAT CLIENTS SAY**

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"We had a meeting with Acland where he took the time to help us understand every aspect of the process. His professionalism and compassion made a significant difference, and we cannot thank him enough for this." - Public Access Client

"We left the meeting with a far clearer understanding and months down the line, the divorce is nearing conclusion. I do not believe this would've been possible without Acland's help from the meeting." - Public Access Client

"I would highly recommend Acland to anyone in need of legal support." - Public Access Client

"I wanted to take a moment to thank Acland for covering and handling the client's case with such care and expertise during our recent meeting. I was particularly impressed with how well he grasped the key issues and guided the discussion." - Professional Client

## **BACKGROUND**

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Alongside his practise and doctoral studies, Acland teaches law to undergraduate students at the University of East Anglia.

Since beginning his legal studies, Acland has assisted clients through several pro bono initiatives and continues to represent clients on a pro bono basis. Acland worked as a paralegal in the General Counsel & Risk department at Addleshaw Goddard LLP in their London office, where he gained experience in all practice areas. Additionally, Acland worked in-house as a lawyer at Environmental NGO Friends of the Earth.

Before studying law, Acland was a member of the Great Britain Fencing Team and World Class Performance Program funded by UK Sport. He has competed at World Cups, Commonwealth Games, European Championships and other international competitions.

## PUBLICATIONS

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The Mozambique Export Finance Case Part (1) – Paris (Dis)agreement in the Divisional Court

The Mozambique Export Finance Case Part (2) – The Court of Appeal and the “Tenable” Approach to (Non-)interpretation

Family Law Week: Is the Environment a Relevant Consideration under the Children Act 1989?

The First Global Stocktake, An Environmental Mirage

## TRAINING AND SEMINARS

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UEA School of Law Podcast: Opportunities and limitations in UK climate change litigation: The Boswell case

## EDUCATION

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University of East Anglia (UEA) – PhD Candidate (2022 – present)

University College London (UCL) – Master of Laws in Environmental Law and Policy (2020 – 2022)

City Law School - Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) (2018 -2019)

University of Surrey – Bachelor of Laws (2015 – 2018)

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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Advocate

A-Law

The Constitutional and Administrative Bar Association (ALBA)

The Family Law Bar Association (FLBA)

Planning and Environmental Bar Association (PEBA)

Public Interest Litigation Support Northern Ireland (The PILS Project NI)

The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research

UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA)

If you would like to get in touch with Acland please contact the clerking team:

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