IPOS Mediation

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Stephen Ruttle KC

Stephen Ruttle KC is one of the UK's leading mediators.

Background

Stephen Ruttle KC is one of the UK's leading mediators. Having, by October 2018, mediated almost 1500 disputes of every type in both the private and public sector there are few disputes which Stephen has not dealt with. Although his practice began in the shipping, insurance and reinsurance markets (which were his areas of expertise as Counsel) he now views himself as a mediator of any dispute rather than of a particular sector. Most of the disputes that Stephen handles concern claim value of six or seven figures but many have been into the hundred of millions and, on occasion, billions. Stephen mediates mainly in London, but mediates regularly in other parts of the UK and Ireland and in many jurisdictions abroad. For the last four years he has been one of Who's Who Legal's Top 10 most respected Commercial Mediators in the world. In 2017 he featured in a new list, Who's Who Legal "Thought Leaders: Mediation" as one of only ten in the world and in 2018 Stephen was included in the Legal 500 Hall of Fame for excellence in mediation.

Stephen is increasingly active as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. He is currently involved in projects that aim to train a new generation of peacemakers and to use faith-group buildings as places from which community mediation services can operate as neighbourhood reconciliation centres.

Practice Areas

Stephen mediates every type of legal dispute save only for those involving children and divorce or separation. The bulk of his work involves shipping, oil and gas/energy, banking, insurance and reinsurance, professional negligence of all types, construction, employment, corporate (shareholdings, mergers and acquisitions and financing) and general commercial disputes. Most cases are from the private sector but he has mediated a series of significant public sector disputes of the highest political sensitivity and significance.

The sums of money in issue have ranged from a few thousand pounds to as much as £4 billion but are typically in the millions. A large proportion of the work he mediates is international in nature and many disputes involve parties who are not based in the UK. Most of his mediations take place in London, but he regularly mediates elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and has mediated in the United States, Greece, the Gulf, the Caribbean and Hong Kong and has been put forward as a mediator for disputes in many other world-wide jurisdictions. He has mediated a number of sensitive, high profile Governmental disputes. Along with many other Commercial mediators he has noticed a trend in the last few years for an increasing proportion of those disputes that do settle (about 80% in his experience) to settle after the mediation day. This frequently involves extensive on-going contact between himself, the parties and their legal advisers.

In all larger disputes that Stephen now mediates his strong preference is for an initial meeting between himself and the legal advisers at the very beginning of the mediation process in the course of which agreement can be reached about the "shape" of the mediation and the detailed process to be employed.

Legal Directories

Chambers and Partners:

Stephen Ruttle KC mediates disputes in both the public and private sectors, with experience in shipping, energy and commercial disputes. "The way he conducts himself is always of a meticulously high standard." "He's well liked by clients." (2025)

Stephen Ruttle KC mediates disputes in both the public and private sectors, with experience in shipping, commercial and family law disputes. He is also active as a mediator in community and faith-based disputes. "Stephen Ruttle is the UK's leading mediator. He's a very good mediator as he's clever but never gives up." "He's a very experienced and very popular mediator." (2024)

Stephen Ruttle KC mediates disputes in both the public and private sectors, with experience in shipping, commercial and family law disputes. He is also active as a mediator in community and faith-based disputes. (2023)

Stephen Ruttle QC mediates disputes in both the public and private sectors, with experience in shipping, commercial and family law disputes. He is also active as a mediator in community and faith-based disputes. (2022)

Stephen Ruttle QC mediates disputes in both the public and private sectors, with experience in shipping, commercial and family law disputes. He is also active as a mediator in community and faith-based disputes."He's a very helpful mediator - very good at getting people engaged, persistent in difficult situations, and able to use his personality to help cut through antagonism between the parties." (2021)

Stephen Ruttle QC is commended by clients for being a "fantastic mediator who doesn't leave his expertise at the door," and who "comes in with real energy and a determination to get to a deal." He mediates a broad range of high-value commercial cases both in the UK and internationally, and is a thought leader in community and faith-based disputes. (2020)

Stephen Ruttle QC is a standout mediator who "is really on the ball, and can get into a party's mind, find out what they care about then get them over the line and find a resolution." He is often appointed in commercial disputes in the banking, insurance and shipping sectors, and is developing a unique skill set as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. (2019)

Stephen Ruttle QC is a "hugely likeable and enthusiastic" mediator who attracts acclaim for his experience handling high-value commercial disputes, particularly those involving high net worth individuals. He is often appointed in banking, insurance, shipping and construction disputes. One commentator reports: "He not only understands the legal issues but also the underlying emotional issues. He can work with those to significantly move parties closer together in situations in which that had not been thought possible." (2018)

Stephen Ruttle QC is singled out by sources as being "in the top echelons of mediators in the country." Fellow legal professionals note his expertise in insurance and professional negligence disputes and he has additional experience in construction, banking and shipping matters. (2017)

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"Stephen Ruttle QC is singled out by sources as a 'first class mediator' who 'instils trust and confidence' in parties. He brings to bear substantial expertise in shipping and reinsurance, and has additional capabilities in construction, banking, and professional negligence disputes." (2016)

"An outstanding figure," observers note, Stephen Ruttle QC is praised for his strong track record for resolving marine, insurance and other commercial disputes. With great gravitas and the "weight of authority behind him," he authoritatively steers parties towards a settlement, say sources." (2013)

Stephen Ruttle QC of Brick Court Chambers has built upon his strong background as a commercial barrister to develop a significant shipping, insurance and reinsurance mediation practice. Sources say: He gets to the heart of a problem quickly" and "remains affable whilst also challenging the parties' positions and expectations." (2012)

"He is an outstandingly nice man who is also extremely commercial and able to drive parties towards successful resolutions," say market commentators. (2011)

"Stephen Ruttle QC has long been a senior figure in mediation, and one of the Brick Court triumvirate who dominate high-value and complex commercial mediation. Clients find him 'quick, bright and on top of all the issues'. He projects an 'air of authority' but does so 'without appearing aloof'. He has 'great people skills' and 'a sincere commitment to the process'." (2010)

"For big, important disputes I always go to Ruttle. He has wonderful presence and is brilliant at narrowing down the issues quickly and getting parties to focus on their specific problems". (2008)

"the person for shipping and insurance" "an absolute natural mediator, it is clear he really does know his stuff" "immediately impresses, makes any party feel comfortable" "he always does a good job" (2007)

Lexology Index (formerly Who's Who Legal) 2025, Commercial Mediation:

"Stephen is a longstanding figure in international commercial mediation" "He has earned himself a great name in the market" "I hold Stephen in high regard" – Thought Leaders – Global Elite

Who's Who Legal 2019: (UK Bar: Mediation)

Stephen Ruttle QC receives widespread plaudits from peers who "would highly recommend him as a truly first-class mediator". He is "a hugely well-known mediator who is brilliant at finding ways to unlock negotiations, and who has a high success rate", say peers. They note, "His particular strengths are his charm and intelligence which he uses to great effect."

Stephen Ruttle QC is "highly regarded" for his vast experience handling high-value mediation proceedings and continues to impress market sources who describe him as "absolutely outstanding" and "the best there is". In addition, Stephen was recognised as a Most Highly Regarded Silk. (2018)

The "extremely popular and successful" Stephen Ruttle QC is a leading mediator in the international commercial sphere praised as an "innovator" and "extraordinary performer". (2017)

Legal 500:

A full-time commercial mediator since 2002, Stephen Ruttle KC 'has the technical legal expertise to engage with even the most complex legal disputes, and is able to articulate clearly the options for the parties in a constructive way that makes it possible for them to compromise'. Handling approximately 2,000 cases to date (including over 100 virtual mediations), Ruttle's appointments derive from both the public and private sectors; while a great share of his mediation work involves substantial sums that are in dispute. Practising predominantly in London, Ruttle also mediates regularly in other parts of the UK, as well as Ireland and numerous overseas jurisdictions. The chair of Trustees of Wandsworth Mediation Service, Ruttle is additionally mandated regularly to mediate community and faith-based disputes. (2026)

Stephen Ruttle KC is 'one of the handful of absolutely pre-eminent mediators, about whose appointment parties can generally agree, suggesting his appointment is never contentious since he is such a hugely gifted mediator'. A full-time commercial mediator since 2002, Ruttle has mediated approximately 2000 cases to date, with most of his

matters involving sizeable sums in dispute. In addition to being a longstanding chair of Trustees of Wandsworth Mediation Service, a local community mediation charity, Ruttle is increasingly active as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. Recent mediations include a wrongful death claim in relation to the murder of a social worker by the inmate of a psychiatric rehabilitation accommodation unit. (2025)

Stephen Ruttle KC ceased practising as a barrister in 2002, since which time he has operated as a full-time commercial mediator. Ruttle mediates the gamut of legal work in both the public and private sectors. His mediations frequently involve significantly large sums, and although he practises predominantly in London, he also mediates regularly in other parts of the UK and Ireland, as well as in several overseas jurisdictions. A longstanding chair of Trustees of Wandsworth Mediation Service, Ruttle is also increasingly active as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. (2024)

Stephen Ruttle KC 'goes above and beyond in terms of making the clients comfortable, and inspiring confidence and trust. Stephen is fully prepared; invests considerable time and energy in understanding the issues and the case; and is not afraid to give an honest and frank opinion so that each party sees the other's point of view'. By January 2022, Ruttle had mediated approximately 1,800 cases, most of which have involved large values. He practises predominantly in London, but also mediates regularly in other parts of the UK and Ireland, as well as in several overseas jurisdictions. (2023)

'Easily the best mediator on the circuit', Stephen Ruttle QC 'brings to bear a unique combination of skills – formidable technical expertise, a deep understanding of people and business motivations, and a genuine passion for finding creative ways of resolving disputes'. He ceased practising as a barrister and silk in 2002, and has since worked full time as a commercial mediator. By January 2021, Ruttle had mediated approximately 1,700 cases of nearly every legal type, from both the public and private sectors; and even during the pandemic, he completed over 70 virtual mediations. (2022)

Stephen has also been recognised in The Legal 500 Hall of Fame for 2022.

Stephen Ruttle QC is 'an exceptional mediator, who is easily at the top of the list for any difficult dispute. This is because he is passionate about resolving disputes and creative in the way he does so, always tailoring his approach to the precise circumstances of the case'. He ceased practising as a barrister and silk in 2002 and has since worked full time as a commercial mediator. By early 2020, he had mediated over 1500 cases; he is increasingly active as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. He practises predominantly in London, but also mediates regularly in other parts of the UK and Ireland, and in several overseas jurisdictions. In late 2019, he successfully co-mediated the group litigation between over 550 sub-postmasters and the Post Office. (2021)

Stephen Ruttle QC regularly mediates large cases where high values are at stake, and he is increasingly active as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. Recent matters include a large construction dispute between high-profile entities, a dispute over the ownership of valuable personal assets and various shipping claims. (2020)

Stephen has also been recognised in The Legal 500 Hall of Fame for 2020.

Stephen Ruttle QC 'brings the experience that clients would expect from one of the top mediators in the business and clients are left impressed'. Ruttle practises predominantly in London, but also mediates regularly in other parts of the UK and Ireland and in several jurisdictions abroad; and he is increasingly active as a mediator of community and faith-based disputes. (2019)

Stephen has also been recognised in The Legal 500 Hall of Fame for 2018.

Stephen Ruttle is in 'the top rank of mediators'. Ruttle has mediated approximately 1,200 cases to date, and a large proportion of his work is international in nature. Ruttle is well known for mediating large shipping disputes; but his practice also covers oil and gas, banking, insurance and reinsurance, and professional negligence claims. Other areas of note are construction, employment, corporate matters, and general commercial disputes. (2017)

"Stephen Ruttle QC at Brick Court Chambers is 'hugely likeable and enthusiastic'. Ruttle has successfully mediated nearly 1000 high-value commercial disputes." (2016)

"The 'highly-accomplished and well-regarded' Stephen Ruttle QC at Brick Court Chambers is 'among the best in the country'. Ruttle is noted for his particular expertise in shipping-related mediations, which account for around 30% of

his workload, and is also recognised as an excellent choice for construction, banking, professional negligence, insurance, environmental and company disputes" (2015)

"Stephen Ruttle QC at Brick Court Chambers is 'superb at focusing minds away from emotions to practicalities, and stays the course with all parties, but doesn 't get tired or frustrated'. About a third of his workload covers shipping-related mediations, and he is considered to be 'an incredibly astute mediator who cuts to the chase', 'one of a select few who can be effective on complex international disputes '." (2014)

"Stephen Ruttle QC at Brick Court Chambers enjoys an excellent reputation. Clients commend him as being 'well prepared and able to draw on his considerable experience of complex litigation'. 'He lays out the ground very clearly at the start, and continues to help the parties after the mediation if it is not possible to reach a settlement on the day'. He is unrivalled for shipping-related mediations, which make up around 30% of his practice." (2013)

"Considered by clients to be 'very good indeed'. (2011)

"Stephen Ruttle QC is in great demand for complex, cross-border and multi-party cases. He has the clout and gravitas of a high-end commercial silk, combined with great courtesy, people and communication skills". (2010).

"Combines the kudos and acumen of a top commercial silk with strong people skills," "a good listener" with "great empathy" and "immense reserves of patience" (2008)

"His reputation for commercial mediation continues to rise. His "light touch", "robust charm" and sense of humour has found appeal outside his acknowledged specialist areas of insurance, reinsurance and marine work. Clients warm to his "facilitative negotiating style", "clear distillation of the issues" and ability to sustain dialogue against the odds. He "doesn't spend hours dancing around the daffodils" and instead "cuts to the chase", "baring his teeth where necessary". (2006)

Career History

Year of Call: 1971

Silk: 1997

Stephen has been in practice at Brick Court Chambers since 1978. He stopped practising as a barrister and QC in 2002 and since then has worked full time as a Commercial Mediator.

Professional Qualifications and Affiliations

Westminster School Queen's Scholar 1966-1971.

Queens' College Cambridge 1971- 1975. B.A.Honours Degree in English Literature/Law.

Bencher Gray's Inn 2004

Accredited and Registered by CEDR as a Mediator 1998

Member of the Civil Justice Council ADR Committee 2000-2006

Member of the Bar Council ADR Committee 2000 - 2007

Board Member of Mediation UK 2001- 2005 (Vice-Chair 2004 – 2005)

Founder Director and Chair of Trustees Wandsworth Mediation Service 2002-

Independent Mediator Board Member of the Civil Mediation Council 2003-2005

Member: Panel of Independent Mediators (PIM) 2005

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Accredited Mediator at Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre 2006-

Distinguished Fellow of the International Academy of Mediators 2007-

Lieutenant-Bailiff Guernsey 2008-

Speaking, training and community work

Stephen regularly speaks, presents and lectures on mediation both in the UK and worldwide. He has been involved as a trainer on mediation and mediation-awareness courses. Since about 2000 Stephen has been heavily involved with community mediation. He is Chair of Trustees of Wandsworth Mediation Service ("WMS") a registered charity that provides community mediation services in the London Borough of Wandsworth, training local people as mediators and developing initiatives to promote peace in the community. He is currently seeking to design a pilot project aimed at developing a national network of peace centres backed by panels of mediators competent to mediate different types of legal and non legal dispute. He delivered the 2013 Roebuck lecture for the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators in which he set out his ideas on the wider social impact (and opportunities) of mediation under the title "Mediation: A Social Antibody?".

In the last 5 years or so Stephen has mediated an increasing number of disputes within his faith group, the Church. He was on the planning committee for the 2013 Faith in Conflict conference at Coventry Cathedral and is an active member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's facilitation team. He is a member of a number of working parties and groups, including the recently established charity BIMA, the object of which is to promote mediation and peace-making initiatives more widely both within communities and within and between faith groups. He is a co-author, along with his wife Fiona and Bill Marsh, of the training programme "Waging Peace" which he is seeking to promote more widely as a means of training a new generation of peacemakers. He is heavily involved in a project that seeks to use local faith-group owned buildings as places from which community mediation services can operate at low cost as neighbourhood conflict transformation centres.

Publications

Lecturer at numerous Insurance, Reinsurance and Mediation Seminars.

Co-Author of "Insurance Brokers" section in Professional Negligence and Liability, LLP 2000.

Contributor to Butterworths, "Mediators on Mediation, Leading Mediator Perspectives on the Practice of Commercial Mediation" 2005.

"ADR in Business". ICC publication; Kluwer 2000. Co-Author of Chapter 9; "Better Dispute Resolution - The Development and Practice of

Mediation in the United Kingdom between 1995 and 2005".

Contributor to "Good Disagreement?". Lion Hudson 2015. Author of final chapter "Mediation and the Church's Mission"