



Sarah Read

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Expertise

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Sarah has expertise in public inquiries. She was appointed Junior Counsel to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in February 2020.

Sarah is also instructed in cases that involve the full range of criminal conduct including murder, sexual offences, drugs offences, serious violent crime and public disorder, matters of dishonesty and fraud. Sarah is instructed as leading junior, led junior and alone.

As a result of her experience as a legal adviser in the magistrates' court, Sarah also has particular expertise in matters involving road traffic law offences. She has been instructed privately to represent clients (including high-profile individuals) at risk of disqualification.

Sarah is a pupil-supervisor.

Notable Cases

Public Inquiries

Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Sarah was appointed Junior Counsel in February 2020 and has been instructed to work on Modules 4 (examining the response of central government in the immediate aftermath of the fire), 5 (firefighting), 6 (Government) and 8 (evidence relating to the deceased).

Drugs offences

R v S (2021) – Sarah represented a vulnerable defendant charged in a large-scale conspiracy to supply drugs.

R v H (2020) – Operation Serpent. Leading Junior instructed to represent H who was one of the main organisers in a conspiracy to supply drugs and commit child exploitation offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

R v K (2011) – Successful defence of K, after trial, who was charged with allegations of possession of class A drugs with intent to supply in prison. K's defence was duress.

Sexual offences

R v C (2021) – Led Junior. C was charged with multiple sexual offences against young girls, including rape.

R v H (2018) – Instructed to represent H who was charged with historic sexual abuse offences against his daughter, her friend and his niece. The Judge said that Sarah had conducted the case with 'impeccable professionalism'.

R v M (2017) – Led by King’s Counsel – successful defence of what was believed to be one of the oldest prosecutions of a historic sex case. The defendant was 88-years-old and the earliest allegation dated back to 1947.

R v M (2017) – M was of good character and charged with sexual assault of a work colleague at a party. M was acquitted after trial in the Crown Court. M commented regularly that he was reassured by Sarah’s approach to the case.

R v G (2016) – G was acquitted of assault by penetration and sexual assault allegations. G had a long-standing diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. Sarah’s excellent communication skills and client care ensured that G fully participated in the trial process. The case was particularly sensitive as the allegations were said to have occurred when both G and the complainant were under eighteen.

R v S (2016) – Led by King’s Counsel. S was acquitted of multiple counts of rape and sexual allegations. This case involved complex legal argument which Sarah drafted the skeleton arguments for. Sarah was publicly praised for the clarity of her written submissions by the trial judge.

R v B (2016) – Sarah was instructed to represent B who was charged with sexual assault of a young child and making indecent images of children. The case involved complex cross-examination of the Crown’s forensic computer expert which Sarah conducted with skill.

R v P (2016) – P was investigated by the National Crime Agency in relation to multiple sexual offences including downloading more than 300,000 indecent images of children, distribution of indecent images of children, voyeurism and indecent assault of a child.

R v M (2015) – Successful defence of M who was charged with rape. Sarah was able to prove that the complainant was lying about an important feature of the Crown’s evidence.

R v G (2013) – G was acquitted of indecent images allegations. Case involved issues surrounding technical examination of computers.

R v M (2012) – Client charged with offences relating to nearly 100,000 indecent images of children.

R v B (2012) – Sarah represented a former teacher who admitted historic allegations of sexual abuse of his pupils.

Violent crime

R v T (2020) – Successful defence of youth charged with GBH with intent (stabbing).

R v S (2018) – Instructed to represent S who was charged with murder. Led by Martin Rutherford KC.

R v L (2017) – Represented L who was charged with firearms offences. The evidence was strong against L and the case resulted in a hung jury.

R v C (2014) – Sarah represented one of eleven defendants charged with prison mutiny and criminal damage as Junior alone. C was acquitted after a six-week trial.

R v A (2012) – A was charged with aggravated burglary. Sarah requested an application to dismiss and served the Crown with a skeleton argument in advance. The Crown then decided to offer no evidence.

Fraud and money laundering

R v W (2019) – Operation Major. Sarah was instructed to represent W, one of seven defendants, charged with conspiracy to launder the proceeds of a two-million-pound fraud.

R v R (2016) – Sarah was instructed to represent R who was charged with conspiracy to commit a sophisticated fraud involving theft of identities and fraudulent use of bank details.

R v S (2016) – Sarah was instructed to represent S who was charged in relation to a £2.3million conspiracy to steal and money laundering.

R v A (2015) – Led Junior. A was charged with multiple counts of fraud.

R v U (2011) – Led Junior representing a defendant in a multi-million-pound conspiracy to cheat the public revenue.

Court of Appeal

R v H (2015) – H pleaded guilty to inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, making and distribution of indecent images of children. H's sentence was reduced by the Court of Appeal.

R v Spence (Rafael) [2012] EWCA Crim 3194. Successful appeal against sentence in Court of Appeal for RS who pleaded guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent. S was originally charged with attempted murder.

“Sarah is a natural advocate. Her calm and disarming delivery makes her a favourite with judges and juries alike. When she speaks, everyone in the court room listens.” (Legal 500, 2023)

“Sarah has a wonderful stillness to her advocacy. She emits an aura of calm and reassurance which is reflected in her measured responses to judicial intervention. She remains unflustered under fire. Her preparation and grasp of the detail of a case are first class and her client care second to none. The defendant she represented received a five star service in terms of client care.” (Legal 500, 2021)

“An excellent advocate, good at detail and tactics.” (Legal 500, 2020)

Qualifications

University College London – LLB (Hons)

University College London – LLM (Merit)

BPP Law School – Bar Vocational Course (Very Competent)

Professional Associations

Criminal Bar Association

South Eastern Circuit

Lincoln's Inn