



Kate is a criminal law specialist who was called to the bar in 1992. Since then her practice has successfully developed into the areas of white collar and serious crime, both prosecuting and defending. She was one of the most junior members of the Northern Circuit to be awarded "Category 4 Prosecutor" status. She has appeared in some of the most high profile cases on circuit and has also gained large fraud case experience by being granted a highly desired place on the Attorney General's Advocate "A" list. She is instructed by leading Fraud Panel Solicitors nationwide in commercial fraud cases. As such she has acted at all levels as leading-junior, junior and led-junior.

Kate participates in the "Lincoln House lecture programme", that includes the delivery of a lecture with Peter Wright QC and Joe Boyd on recent developments in the criminal law. She is a member of the fraud and regulatory team and has been part of a team to address and advise the HSE on evidence gathering and case preparation.

As far back as 2003 the Chambers Legal Guide had identified Kate as a "leader in crime". The 2007 edition of the Legal 500 entry for the Lincoln House business crime group confirmed that "for heavy crime such as Crown Court work of a significant nature Katherine Blackwell is a very experienced and competent junior" and Chambers & Partners 2011 "Kate Blackwell handles the most serious criminal offences and impresses observers with her very hands-on approach. She is hugely responsive and I can call her at any time of the day".

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Kate was appointed as a Crown Court Recorder in 2009.

CRIMINAL LAW

FRAUD

Kate has been instructed in substantial cases of mortgage fraud, VAT fraud and corruption and MTIC fraud. Her keen knowledge and thorough preparation are key skills in this area. She has also advised professionals prior to and during the course of criminal proceedings.

Cases of interest include the following:

R v Webster & others – Substantial waste disposal/weightbridge fraud.

R v Cox & others – MTIC fraud of EU exporters. At the time this was the largest and most complex fraud of its type, involving at least £400 million worth of mobile telephones being traded and a loss to the Revenue of at least £85 million.

R v Falzon & others – £13 million diversion fraud involving a strong international element and a culture of non-disclosure and misinformation. Successfully defended Maltese national who developed mental health difficulties during course of the trial.

R v Watson & others – fraudulent trading and blackmail. Successfully defended woman who was only one of the 4 indicted defendants to be acquitted.

R v Billingham & others – provision of advice given to director during currency of the investigation into a £ multi-million MTIC fraud.

R v O'Carroll & others – fraud on a substantial scale involving the commission of "disqualified director" offences.

Oldham Trading Standards v Vance Miller and others - allegedly fraudulently run kitchen business. Case stopped as an abuse of process after a 4 month trial.

R v Ravjani & others - alleged MTIC carousel fraud depriving HMRC of over £100million.

Operation Oceanus - fraudulent trading and "disqualified director" offences.

HOMICIDE AND VIOLENCE

Kate has been involved in the prosecution of many such cases, often advising on disclosure, PII and conducting lengthy and complicated “ex-parte” hearings. For the defence she has made many successful disclosure and abuse of process applications.

Cases of interest include the following:

R v Harold Shipman - multiple murder.

The Shipman Inquiry - represented the Greater Manchester Police during this protracted public inquiry.

R v Coghlan & others - 7 handed murder and drugs conspiracy.

R v Gordon Park - the "Lady in the Lake" murder case. Defendant charged with murdering his wife and hiding her body at the bottom of Coniston Lake, Cumbria.

R v Aslam & others - the "Oldham Riots" cases. Successful abuse of process application on the basis of bad faith on behalf of the officers and unsafe identification.

R v Shergold & others - 6-handed murder of an Ormskirk businessman.

R v Anderson and others - People trafficking and false documents case.

R v Francis and Francis - identical twins successfully prosecuted for gangland shooting . Anonymous witness application successfully made.

R v Mohammed Nasir Khan & others - armed robbery based upon DNA evidence.

R v Mustaf Jama - retrial of defendant for murder of PC Sharon Beshenevsky.

R v Chapman - Attempted murder by multiple stabbing committed by schizophrenic.

REGULATORY WORK (H&S, ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, TRADING STANDARDS)

Kate has prosecuted cases for both the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency. In addition she has been briefed to defend individuals and companies charged with breaching regulations and falling foul of legislation.

Cases of interest and notoriety include the following:

R v Dargue & others – defending director of Railtrack charged with gross negligence manslaughter and significant breaches of health and safety regulations.

HSE v T – prosecution of company whose breaches of H&S led to the death of employee at place of employment. Cross-examined director of company over 4 days.

R v Inglenorth – prosecution of company charged with breaching “waste” regulations. European legislation considered.

R v Dickenson – defence of company director in prosecution brought by Trading Standards involving millions of pounds worth of goods and strong international element.

HSE v Windmill & others - fatal accident on demolition site.

HSE v Westco – dangerous working practices leading to permanent injury to employee.

HSE v Kepak – legionella outbreak in meat packing factory.

HSE v Millennium Rubber Limited & United Crane Services – fatal accident following highly dangerous working practices where deceased fell from height from metal stillage balanced on a forklift truck.

HSE v Arcelor Avis – fatal accident at a steel works where employee was crushed between moving vehicles.

HSE v Montracon Limited – fatal accident at trailer building factory when machinery fell onto employee who was crushed beneath it.

LICENSING

Kate is regularly instructed to represent and advise applicants, local authorities and interested parties in connection with matters for which a licence is required. This representation covers local authority licensing committees and all court levels. Often controversial or sensitive, these cases involve such things as proposed sex establishments in residential areas, noise nuisance caused by patrons of public houses, problems associated with nightclubs and allegations of under-age sales at off-licences. She is also regularly instructed to represent premises who are alleged to have contravened fire protection regulations.

OTHER CRIME

Kate is regularly briefed in other categories of crime that include serious sexual offences (particularly those involving children), gang-related crime and the prosecution of those in authority.

Cases of interest include the following:

R v Livesey – Police Officer charged with perjury and perverting the course of justice. Leading Junior Counsel against QC. Also acted at re-trial.

R v Kenny & others - major drugs conspiracy extending from the North West to Wales and Scotland.

R v Hawthorne & others - paedophile ring including the abduction and abuse of a 14-year old boy.

R v Fahim Mohammed – undercover conspiracy to supply large quantities of heroin involving the use of entrapment. Took case over just 2 weeks prior to start of trial due to sacking of previous Counsel. Drafted lengthy and detailed legal skeleton submissions. Preliminary legal argument lasted 5 weeks. Successfully reduced case against defendant by half.

R v Javed Iqbal - Rochdale drugs gang; issues of autrefois acquit and bad character.

R v Harrison & others - drug ring supplying serving prisoners and involving prison officers.

R v Andrew Jackson - sexual assault by psychiatric patient upon 2 nurses.

EDUCATION / PROFESSIONAL

Loreto Convent Grammar School, Altrincham
Birmingham University
Inns of Court School of Law
Attorney General's List of Advocates ("A" list)
Category 4 prosecutor
Member of the Criminal Bar Association
Appointed as Recorder 2009

PERSONAL

Married with four children