

'Barrister of the Year' – Manchester Legal Awards, 2019

"At the top of her game. One of the best cross-examiners on the circuit. Her trial strategy is second to none." – Chambers & Partners, 2019

"Her speeches are pure genius." – Legal 500, 2018

"She is a joy to instruct and is the silk you want in your corner when things get tough. One of the best cross-examiners on circuit and pure class all round." "She is magnificent in court from start to finish; it is a pleasure to watch such skilled advocacy." – Chambers & Partners, 2018

"A Master Tactician." – Legal 500, 2017

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"Regularly appears in complex white-collar and serious fraud cases, with noted experience in corruption and money laundering. She is also well known for her work on high-profile sexual offences, acting for both the prosecution and defence... She does high-profile work. She's very hard-working and committed to her clients." – Chambers & Partners, 2017

"Possibly the best crime silk on circuit; she has exceptional judgement and is an outstanding trial advocate" – Legal 500, 2016

"This criminal law specialist receives high praise from solicitors for her strong practice and advocacy skills. She is instructed by firms in cases of corruption, money laundering and fraud and also handles cases for private clients." – Chambers & Partners, 2016

"An excellent barrister." – Chambers & Partners, 2016

"She is an absolutely fantastic advocate." – Chambers & Partners, 2015

"A robust advocate who has a strong track record in serious crime cases" – Legal 500, 2015

"An excellent serious and business crime specialist" – Legal 500, 2014

"Has a specialism in serious and white-collar crime. She regularly appears for both the prosecution and defence in high-profile cases. She is extraordinarily good with her preparation and advocacy" – Chambers & Partners, 2014

"An excellent performer" – Chambers & Partners, 2013

"Kate Blackwell handles the most serious criminal offences and impresses observers with her very hand on approach. She is hugely responsive and I can call her any time of the day" – Chambers & Partners, 2011

Kate Blackwell QC is a criminal law and regulatory specialist who has appeared in some of the most high profile cases on circuit and is also involved in inquiries with national public interest.

Kate is instructed by leading specialist firms of solicitors nationwide in the full range of criminal offences but is particularly well known for her expertise in sexual offences and her representation of high net individuals charged with cases of dishonesty, commercial fraud, corruption, violence and drugs offences.

Kate is recommended by the leading legal publications year after year, she is considered one of the best QC's for crime and regulatory defence on circuit. She has been awarded the coveted Manchester Legal Awards Barrister of the Year Award twice.

Kate regularly presents lectures and seminars on all aspects of serious crime, fraud, regulatory crime and health and safety law (including corporate manslaughter). She has advised a number of prosecution agencies (Police, HSE, CPS) on evidence gathering and case preparation.



CONTACT DETAILS

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PRACTICE AREAS

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Business Crime & Financial Regulation
Regulatory
Professional Discipline
Licensing

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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Appointed as Queens Counsel in 2012
Deputy Head of Lincoln House Chambers 2016
Lincolns Inn Master of the Bench 2017
Member of the Criminal Bar Association

Kate handles a high proportion of private client work. Following success in a recent case the client said “Kate was absolutely fantastic. I was extremely impressed by how quickly she grasped the case and focused on the most relevant points to have the case dismissed before trial. I would have no hesitation in recommending her to anyone that required the very best legal advice.”

Other feedback includes:

“We can honestly say that throughout the whole process matters were dealt with professionally and efficiently at all times. From the very first introduction meeting to this conclusion we believe that we were given excellent and clear advice and thorough, professional case management. We also felt supported and that we had someone on our side throughout the difficult time.”

“We thank you for bringing our family back together. For our little girl to have her daddy home is something that is so precious to us and her. You’re our very own super hero, it’s been an absolute pleasure working with you.”

Following release from lengthy period in custody pending trial:

“Words cannot express the amount of happiness I can see in my parents eyes after such a long time and I cannot thank you enough and would like to give you the whole credit for this part of my life”.

Inquiries

Gosport Independent Panel

Kate was appointed by the Secretary of State for Health, as Lead Counsel and Panel Member to the Gosport Independent Panel in 2015. This Panel was constituted by the Minister to examine and report on historical events which relate to the care, treatment and deaths of the patients of the Gosport War Memorial Hospital (GWMH) in Portsmouth. The Panel’s work was ongoing for four years and the Panel’s report was published in June 2018. It received wide media national and international coverage.

<https://www.gosportpanel.independent.gov.uk/panel-report/>

Daniel Morgan Independent Panel

On 10 May 2013, in a written statement to Parliament, the then Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP, announced that the Government was setting up the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel (DMIP) to review police handling of the murder investigation. Kate was appointed as Counsel to the Panel in September 2013.

The remit of the Panel is to shine a light on the circumstances of Daniel Morgan’s murder, its background and the handling of the case over the period since 1987. In so doing the Panel is seeking to address questions arising, in particular those relating to police involvement in Daniel Morgan’s murder; the role played by police corruption in protecting those responsible for the murder from being brought to justice and the failure to confront that corruption; and the incidence of connections between private investigators, police officers and journalists at the News of the World and other parts of the media, and alleged corruption involved in the linkages between them.

Kate has negotiated with numerous organisations, including the Metropolitan Police Service, in ensuring maximum possible disclosure of material to the Panel, in accordance with the Terms of Reference. She has met with senior officers of the MPS and the NCA in order to consider confidential an secret information and drafted agreements to ensure the protection of documentation and other information. The final report is in the process of being drafted.

The Shipman Inquiry – Represented the Greater Manchester Police as Junior Counsel during this protracted public inquiry.



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Inquests & Regulatory

Kate has prosecuted many cases for the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency and the Office of Rail Regulation. In addition, she has been briefed to defend individuals and companies charged with breaching regulations and legislation.

Kate has been instructed in several substantial inquests. She is instructed in a number of roles by both professional bodies, individuals and government departments.

Cases of interest and notoriety include the following:

8-week inquest touching the death of Paul McGuigan – Representing the National Offender Management Service in a case where a security operative employed by G4S in Iraq shot dead 2 colleagues.

Office of Rail Regulation – Prosecuting railway company convicted of breaching Health and Safety Offences where a disused depot had been left with live overhead cables causing the electrocution of a group of 13 year old boys, one of whom died.

EA v Bloom Plant – Defending company manager charged with breaching environmental regulations in his waste management company.

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

R v T – Prosecution of a 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 a 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.

R v Windmill & others – Fatal accident on demolition site.

Crime

Kate is regularly briefed in all categories of crime ranging from serious sexual offences to murder and both white-collar and gang-related crime.

Sexual Offences

R v H – Defending a man charged with running a paedophile ring including the abduction and abuse of a 14-year old boy.

R v J – Defending a psychiatric patient charged with sexual assault upon 2 nurses.

R v J – Prosecuted Premier League and England International footballer for child sex offences. Advised from the point of charge and presented the case through to trial, sentence and Court of Appeal. Convicted and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. Successfully defended conviction and sentence appeals. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/adam-johnson-to-be-sentenced-for-sexual-activity-with-15-year-old-fan-a6949481.html>

R v B – Case involving taking and producing thousands of images of young female and serious sexual assault. Legal applications included the anomaly produced by the age differential in the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

R v P – 22 year sentence handed down to defendant who had waged an 8 year campaign of grooming, rape, sexual assault, trafficking and assaulting a series of young females.

R v T – School teacher convicted of grooming a rape of an 11 year old pupil over a 5 year period.

R v M – Grooming and rape of vulnerable child with severe learning difficulties.

R v G – Kidnap, rape and assault of several sex workers, one of whom had been trafficked.

R v B and others – Rape of a 4 year old family victim discovered when she was diagnosed with gonorrhoea.

R v B – Multiple historical abuse by music teacher at Cheethams Music School.

R v S – Indian national charged with rape - consent defence.

R v D – Indecent images charges against former police officer in position of trust



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Call to the Bar: 1992

R v G - Allegations of historic sexual abuse of extended family members

R v D - Allegations of historic abuse of sister

R v C - Sexual touching of 13 year of boy

R v L - Private tutor charged with sexual offences against students

Business Crime

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 Aslam – Defending a business man charged with conspiring with others to launder money. HMRC offered no evidence after extensive written argument, all restraints lifted.

R v Linda Simm & others – Defending a woman in a multi-million pound fraud and money laundering operation. Following lengthy disclosure arguments the case collapsed leading to not guilty verdicts for all the defendants.

R v Webster & others – Defending a man in a substantial waste disposal/weightbridge fraud. Not guilty verdict entered against him in circumstances where the majority of other defendants were convicted.

R v Cox & others – Defending a woman in an 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 – Defending a Maltese national in a £13 million diversion fraud involving a strong international element and a culture of non-disclosure and misinformation. Successful defence in circumstances where client had developed severe mental health difficulties during course of the trial.

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

R v Billingham & others – The provision of advice given to a company director during the currency of an investigation into a £ multimillion MTIC fraud.

R v O'Carroll & others – Prosecution of 3 defendants charged with fraud on a substantial scale involving the commission of "disqualified director" offences.

Oldham Trading Standards v Vance Miller & others – Defending a woman in a conspiracy alleging the fraudulent running of a kitchen business. Case stopped as an abuse of process after a 4 month trial.

R v Ravjani & others – Representing the main defendant in an alleged MTIC carousel fraud depriving HMRC of over £100million.

Operation Oceanus – The successful prosecution of three defendants charged with fraudulent trading and "disqualified director" offences.



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Homicide & 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* – Part of the prosecution team in a trial involving allegations of multiple murder.
- R v Holland* – Defending man charged with the manslaughter of a police officer.
- R v Collier* – Defending man charged with murder of man whose body was found to have suffered 97 separate injuries.
- R v Atherton & Turnbull* – Prosecuting mother and father whose neglect led to the death of their premature baby.
- R v Kindzierski* – Prosecuting man convicted of murdering his partner in the presence of their 3 children.
- R v Coghlan & others* – Prosecuting a 7-handed murder and drugs conspiracy.
- R v Gordon Park* – The "Lady in the Lake" murder case. Prosecuting a defendant charged with murdering his wife and hiding her body at the bottom of Coniston Lake, Cumbria.
- R v Aslam & others* – Prosecuting part of the "Oldham Riots" cases.
- R v Shergold & others* – Prosecuting the 6-handed murder of an Ormskirk businessman.
- R v Anderson & others* – Prosecuting an extensive people trafficking and false documents case.
- R v Francis & Francis* – Prosecuting identical twins for gangland shooting. One of first Anonymous witness applications to be made.
- R v Mohammed Nasir Khan & others* – Prosecution of armed robbery based upon DNA evidence.
- R v Mustaf Jama* – Defending in retrial of defendant for murder of PC Sharon Beshenevsky.
- R v Chapman* – Defending schizophrenic man charged with attempted murder by multiple stabbing.

Drugs

Kate is regularly instructed in major national cases involving drugs-related crime.

- R v Kenny & others* – Prosecution of a major drugs conspiracy extending from the North West to Wales and Scotland.
- R v Fahim Mohammed* – Defending a man charged with conspiracy to supply large quantities of heroin involving the use of entrapment. Preliminary legal argument lasted 5 weeks. Successfully reduced case against defendant by half.
- R v Javed Iqbal* – Defending the main defendant in a multi-handed case involving a major Rochdale drugs gang; issues of autrefois acquit and bad character based upon previous acquittals.
- R v Harrison & others* – Defending in an extensive drug ring supplying serving prisoners and involving prison officers.

Professional Discipline & Misconduct in a Public Office

Kate accepts instructions to represent professionals facing professional disciplinary proceedings. She has experience of a number of professional regulators including the SRA, GMC & Police.

- R v Percy and Percy* – Prosecuting husband and wife prison officers convicted of perverting the course of justice and misconduct in a public office.
- R v Livesey* – Prosecution of a police officer charged with perjury and perverting the course of justice both a trial and re-trial.



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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.

Private Client

Kate is the counsel of choice for many solicitors who want to offer a bespoke and exceptional service to their private clients. She has successfully represented professionals including sports personalities, solicitors, accountants, bankers, insurance executives and medical professionals charged with business crime and all manner of sexual offences. Please contact Director of Clerking, David Wright, to discuss your requirement.



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