

Richard English KC

Call to Bar: 2003

King's Counsel: 2025



"Richard English KC is a wonderful KC " - Crime - Chambers and Partners 2026

"Richard is a strong advocate who has a keen eye for detail and is meticulous in his preparation." - Legal 500, 2026 - Crime (General and Fraud)

"He provides full advice and has a wonderful courtroom manner." - Crime - Chambers and Partners 2025

"He is an excellent junior barrister, he is extremely knowledgeable and able to explain the most difficult points to clients." - Crime - Chambers and Partners 2025

"Richard English is a notable practitioner with a significant reputation for his work in cases involving mentally disordered defendants. He primarily practises on the defence side, but he is also called upon to prosecute in complex multi-handed cases." - Crime - Chambers and Partners 2024

"Richard is personable and his attention to detail is great." - Crime - Chambers and Partners 2024

"Richard prosecutes and defends in serious and often sensitive cases, and he is an intelligent and astute advocate who jurors like. His closing speeches are some of the finest on the circuit, and he has significant experience in cases with a mental health element and is frequently sought out for severely mentally disordered defendants, as well as cases involving very vulnerable witnesses and complainants." Crime(General and Fraud) - Legal 500, 2024

"Richard is very effective and empathetic." Chambers & Partners, 2023

"Richard is a brilliant advocate." Chambers & Partners, 2023

"He puts clients at ease and guides them through very complex areas of law." Chambers & Partners, 2023

"He is highly experienced, he inspires confidence in every client and he deals with difficult issues and decisions sensitively but firmly." Chambers & Partners, 2022

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Practice areas:

Criminal Law
Mental Health Law
Business Crime & Financial Regulation
Regulatory
Public Law
Human Rights

Professional appointments:

Solicitor, England and Wales 1996

Solicitor, Ireland 1997

Barrister, 2003

Kings Counsel, 2025

"He is brilliant with clients with mental health issues." "His legal knowledge is outstanding." Chambers & Partners, 2022

"He does not leave any stone unturned and is careful in his preparation." Chambers & Partners, 2021

"A notable practitioner with a significant reputation for his work in cases involving mentally disordered defendants. He primarily practices on the defence side, but he is also called upon to prosecute in complex multi-handed cases." Chambers & Partners 2020

"An intelligent and astute advocate." "He excels at representing clients with mental health concerns." Chambers & Partners 2020

"His preparation is first-class and his drafting of advice on complex issues is excellent." Legal 500 2019

Richard is a former solicitor who was called to the bar in 2003; he was appointed King's Counsel in 2025; the only silk from the Northwest that year and one of very few in the country whose practice is predominately publicly funded defence.

He is instructed to advise and represent in serious RASSO cases, homicide and violence against children. Recent instructions include the successful defence of a man charged with the double murder of the rider and passenger of an electric bike and, a 14-year-old boy tried, as a joint participant, in the fatal stabbing of another 14-year-old in Manchester.

Many of his cases involve a defendant or complainant who experiences mental ill-health or is neuro-diverse. He has studied at post graduate level, written about and lectured on this topic and is writing a book for practitioners aiming to demystify the intersection of mental health and crime so that whether in acute crisis or not, defendants who are mentally unwell are in a position to get the best possible outcome, whatever that may be.

He has appeared consistently in the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) since his first appearance, before the Lord Chief Justice in the successful appeal of Alkazraji [2004] 2 Cr App R (S) 55 after less than six months in practice. Since then, a number of cases have been reported: Blackshaw, the Manchester riots appeal [2012] 1 Cr App R (S) 114 Lynch (Manslaughter [2015] 2 Cr App R (S) 73) and Brennan [2024] 1 Cr App R 14. In JH [2024] 1 Cr App R 5 the Court noted his "precise, measured and well-directed submissions".

He is a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and an associate member of the American Bar Association.

"With Richard controlling my case I felt reassured that everything will be dealt with professionally and without any drama" – Client testimonial

SPECIALISMS

Mental Health – Richard has a particular interest and expertise in offences involving mentally disordered defendants. He is instructed because of his skill, patience and understanding of those who are particularly vulnerable when faced with the ordeal of appearing in court.

He also appears in Mental Health Review Tribunals. He is a member of the Mental Health Lawyers Association, and in 2017 he was awarded a Post-Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Law from the University of Northumbria.

Sexual Offences – Richard is regularly instructed to represent those alleged to have committed the most serious sexual offences, which very often, are said to have happened many years before. Allegations of this type are invariably devastating to all involved; they require detailed preparation, patient, and when necessary robust advice, as well as thoughtful and sensitive consideration both in and out of court.

Offences Involving Children – Over the years Richard has been involved in many cases where the Police believe a child has been the victim of serious, often fatal violence. In the process he has developed an understanding of the complex medical and other evidential issues involved.

In addition to the above, the summary of cases below illustrates the broad range of serious, complex and sensitive cases Richard has been involved in. To ensure confidentiality, many case names have been anonymised.

Offences Involving Defendants with Mental Health Problems

R v R - A very serious allegation with a life threatening injury caused by a knife. Complicated by the fact that the Defendant was the Father of the Victim. Psychiatric and Psychological reports obtained which allowed the court draw back from what otherwise would have been a substantial custodial sentence.

R v B – Defending. Rape. 16-year old defendant unfit to stand trial. Jury not sure in relation to one allegation. Hospital order with restrictions made.

R v J – Defending. Rape. 11-year old defendant unfit to stand trial. Jury not sure in relation to one allegation. Supervision order made.

R v G – Defending. Rape. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia, accused of a campaign of rape.

R v A – Defending. Arson. Defendant, while trying to take her own life, set fire to herself and in the process a block of flats causing extensive damage to the flats and serious injury to herself. Hospital order with restrictions.

R v P – Defending. Death by Dangerous Driving. Defendant found not guilty by reason of insanity. Absolute Discharge.

R v D – Defending. Attempted Murder. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and Autism Spectrum Disorder, alleged to have tried to kill a former partner. Plea to a lesser offence accepted. Hospital Order without restrictions made.

R v E – Defending. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Accused of perverting the course of justice by making a false allegation of rape.

R v J – Defending. Defendant diagnosed with persistent delusional disorder. Accused of arson and possession of weapons. Hospital order with restrictions.

R v P – Defending. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia was accused of attempting to murder a neighbour.

R v B – Defending. Murder. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, charged with murder, he admitted manslaughter and received a hospital order with restriction. Junior alone.

Sexual Offences

R v C – Defending. Client charged with multiple sexual offences following allegations by a family member involving grooming. No case to answer on two counts. Acquitted of the remaining five counts of sexual assault despite the Prosecution relying on alleged confessional messages.

R v B - Allegations made that in 2017 and 2018 D sexually abused girls aged 13 and 14; the allegations included a series of violent rapes. D had autism and great care was required in taking his instructions and keeping him informed of the trial's progress. Cross examination of the complainants was a difficult exercise requiring considerable skill and preparation. Not Guilty verdicts after 4 week+ trial.

R v D – Defending a man accused of raping five women over a ten-month period. Leading junior.

R v H – Defending one of a number accused of a campaign of rape and abuse against young women.

R v S – Defending. Historic allegations of serious sexual abuse.

R v I – Defending. Adult Defendant accused of befriending online and then having a sexual relationship with a 14 year old.

R v M – Defending. Defendant acquitted following trial upon an allegation he had abused his step-daughter over two years.

R v R – Defending. Youth court matter. Defendant accused of rape, pleaded guilty to a lesser offence and received a referral order.

R v H – Defending. Defendant acquitted of rape following trial. **R v G** – Defending G, accused of a campaign of rape and sexual abuse against a number of victims over thirty years.

R v D – Defending D. Charged with rape. Part way through the trial the Crown amended the indictment following the complainants evidence. He was not guilty of rape but was, as he had accepted, guilty of sexual activity with a child, he received a non custodial sentence.

R v X – Defending a student charged with attempting rape a fellow student.

R v X – Defending a man alleged to have sexually assaulted his step-daughter, acquitted following trial.

R v X – Defending a man alleged to have raped his daughter in the 1970s, acquitted of rape, convicted of indecent assault.

R v X – Defending a man charged with a series of historic offences against his siblings which lasted ten years.

OTHER SERIOUS CRIME

Murder and Manslaughter

R v WGU – 14 Year old boy charged as joint participant, acquitted of murder but convicted of manslaughter; AG's application for leave to refer sentence to the Court of Appeal refused.

R v A – Joint enterprise in relation to double murder – defendant was acquitted

R v C – Defendant found not guilty by reason of diminished responsibility

R v S – Defending. Murder. Convicted of robbery.

R v A – Defending. Murder. Guilty plea. Junior alone.

R v S – Defending. Murder. Guilty plea. Led by Mukthar Hussain QC.

R v B – Defending. Murder. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, charged with murder, he admitted manslaughter and received a hospital order with restrictions. Junior alone.

R v T – Defending. Murder. Led by Paul Reid Q

C R v L – Defending. Manslaughter. While in drink, the Defendant pushed his best friend who struck his head and died.

R v H – Defending, Manslaughter, led by James Pickup QC, D charged with others with causing the death of an 18-month old child. Robbery, drugs, firearms and assault

R v S – Defending. Bournemouth Crown Court. Conspiracy to commit armed robbery.

R v E – Defending. Death by dangerous driving. Guilty plea. Community order imposed.

R v M – Defending. Farmer acquitted following trial of causing unnecessary suffering to a dog which he had shot while it was worrying sheep.

R v S – Defending. S was charged with the assault of a transgender woman, a difficult and sensitive case, the Defendant admitted the offence and received a non-custodial sentence.

R v M – Defending. M accused of being in possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply, she received a non-custodial sentence, much to the annoyance of the Daily Mail.

R v M – Defending. M admitted shooting at the home of the father of a rival gang member.

R v F – Defending, Defendant charged with very serious s18, after negotiations the prosecution accept a plea to s20, suspended sentence imposed

Offences involving children

R v M – Defending. Defendant charged with cruelty of his two children by wilful neglect.

R v X – Defending. Defendant charged with assaulting four-week old daughters (s.18); acquitted of one, convicted of the other, sentence was appealed by the Attorney General as unduly lenient.

R v I – Defending. Defendant charged with manslaughter of son, plea to cruelty accepted, suspended sentence imposed.

R v H – Defending, Manslaughter, led by James Pickup QC, D charged with others with causing the death of an 18-month-old child.

Financial Crime/Fraud

R v B – Defending. Defendant was acquitted after a nine month trial brought by the SFO following the collapse of the Defendant's investment business and a loss of £170m to investors. Led by Stephen Solley QC.

R v S – Defending. Defendant acquitted following trial in relation to his alleged involvement in a Construction Industry Fraud Scheme. Led by Nick Johnson QC.

FSA v D – Defending. Advised the Defendant in relation to proceedings taken under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

R v P – Defending. Defendant pleaded guilty to fraud, having taken in the region of £100,000 from his Mother's estate over which he had power of attorney.

R v Q – Defending. Conspiracy to defraud Nat West Bank of £20m. Led by Paul Reid QC.

R v A – Defending. Defendant was an accountant accused of making over £1m worth of false claims to HMRC for the repayment of tax.

R v H – Defending. Defendant acquitted following a trial alleging she was in possession of over £100,000 said to be the proceeds of crime and that over a significant period of time she laundered the proceeds of crime.

Prosecutions

R v Fowler and others – Prosecuting five men involved in the kidnap of a Preston business man. A ransom of £100,000 was demanded, the victim was held for 18 hours.

R v Watkins and 14 others – Prosecuting. Defendants were part of a gang who sold £1.5m worth of class A drugs in Preston. **R v Viggars and ten others** – Prosecuting drug dealing gang in Skelmersdale. Leading junior.

R v Pennington and others – Prosecuting. Conspiracy to commit robbery.

R v Seddon and others – Prosecuting. Series of cash in transit robberies.

Appeals

R v WGU – [2026] unreported, AG reference, leave refused

R v Jones – [2026] EWCA Crim 421. Life sentence – minimum period reduced by five and a half years

R v Hope – [2025] EWCA Crim 855

R v Watson – [2025] EWCA Crim 563; AG's reference

R v Nelson – [2025] Unreported, successful appeal against sentence

R v Brennand – [2023] EWCA Crim 1384 [2024] 1 Cr App R 14

R v JH – [2023] EWCA Crim 795, [2024] 1 Cr App R 5

R v D – [2022] EWCA Crim 1206; Appeal against sentence – sentence was reduced

R v Robinson – [2022] EWCA Crim 735; Re-opening an appeal – sentence reduced

R v Gillis – [2022] EWCA Crim 77; AG's reference - refused

R v Alkazraji – [2004] 2 Cr App R (S) 55; sentencing pregnant Defendants.

AG Ref 94 of 2006 – [2006] EWCA Crim 3028. Arson.

R v Almond – [2007] EWCA Crim 486. Confiscation, calculation of the available amount and period in default.

R v Boswell – [2007] EWCA Crim 1587, appeal against imposition of indeterminate sentence.

R v James Kelly -[2007] EWCA Crim 3160, despite “forceful and attractive submissions” the appeal was unsuccessful.

R v Craven and Beswick – [2012] 1 WLR 1126. Successful appeals against sentences imposed following the Manchester riots.

R v Brennan – [2012] EWCA Crim 2000. Successful appeal against sentence in relation to the supply of drugs.

R v McNamee – [2016] EWCA Crim 2158. Successful appeal against sentence imposed for assault.

R v Lynch [2015] 2 Cr App R (S) 73, appeal against sentence imposed following plea to manslaughter.

R v Cassidy – [2016] EWCA Crim 1142 Attorney General’s reference.

R v S.S. – [2018] Sentence imposed for, amongst other things, coercive behaviour, reduced.

R v W – [2018] Attorney General’s reference, s18 assault.

R v M [2018] EWCA Crim 2040, appeal against sentence in historic sexual offence.

R v G [2018] EWCA Crim 2682, appeal against sentence in harassment case

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