

John Harrison KC

Call to Bar: 1994

Silk Year: 2016



"John's key strengths lie in his exceptional technical knowledge and ability to develop innovative legal strategies. His advocacy is calm, precise, and devastatingly effective." - Legal 500, 2026 (Crime - General & Fraud)

Ranked as Leading Silk – Legal 500, 2026

"John Harrison KC is a well-respected silk who is recognised for his strong criminal defence practice. He acts in a wide range of cases including those involving investment schemes, money laundering and tax fraud." Financial Crime – Chambers and Partners 2024

"He is a well-rounded financial crime silk – approachable, technical and consistent." Financial Crime – Chambers and Partners 2024

'A highly accomplished silk in the field of financial services. John is a first-class advocate and has a clarity of thought and expression that cuts through a lot of irrelevant material' – Legal 500 2023 (Business & Regulatory Crime)

'John is a silk who commands respect. It is extremely easy for lay clients to like him' Legal 500 2023 (Crime General & Fraud)

'John is excellent at processing large amounts of complex evidence and is diligent in his case preparation. His advocacy is persuasive and juries love him' Legal 500 2022 (Crime General & Fraud)

'John has an incredible ability to cut through regulations and legislation to succinctly identify the key points. He is an effortless advocate. When he speaks, the court listens' Legal 500 2022 (Business & Regulatory Crime)

'Very well known for his expertise in health and safety matters' Legal 500 2021

'Bribery and corruptions cases are a particular speciality', Legal 500 2020

'Recommended for prosecution and defending serious criminal matters' Legal 500 2019

'Very well known for his expertise in health and safety matters', Legal 500 2018

Ranked as a Leading Silk – Legal 500 2024

Contact details:

John.harrison@lincolnhousechambers.com

Contact details:

Dwright@lincolnhousechambers.com

David Wright – 0161 832 5701

Practice areas:

Business Crime & Financial Regulation

Criminal Law

Health & Safety

Inquest & Inquiry

Regulatory

John Harrison KC

John Harrison was called to the bar in 1994 and took Silk in 2016.

John is a criminal law and regulatory specialist and has a specific expertise in regulatory areas including Financial Regulation, including both unregulated and Financial Conduct Authority regulated matters. He also has a particular interest in tax tribunal work.

John undertakes advisory and litigation work for both prosecution and defence in respect of Serious Crime, Corporate Manslaughter, Gross Negligence Manslaughter, Environmental Law and Health and Safety Offences.

John is an extremely popular barrister who has earned a reputation of being both a master tactician and an outstanding trial advocate. He is well known for his capability to handle the most complex of cases with a clear, pragmatic approach.

John's background in civil litigation and commercial law makes him particularly well placed to assist clients across a range of litigation areas.

Although based on the Northern Circuit he has a national practice. For further information or to instruct John Harrison KC please contact the Director of Clerking, David Wright.

Fraud:

R v. Arnold – Defence – Parliamentary and police investigation into fraudulent expenses claimed by Jared O'Mara MP for whom Mr. Arnold was Chief of Staff.

R v. Sorby – Defence – SFO prosecution. Sorby was the retired managing director of Sarclad Ltd who traded internationally in steel manufacturing equipment. The company had entered into a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA) with the SFO, after undertaking an internal investigation. The DPA was anonymised to XYZ. Sorby was prosecuted by the SFO following the outcome of their investigation, which was in reality, an adoption of the investigation carried out by Sarclad's solicitors. After a lengthy trial Sorby was acquitted by the jury casting doubt over the DPA process itself. Satellite litigation included SFO v. XYZ.

R v. Wharton – Defence – Operation Circus, the lead defendant in both international property investment and ponzi investment frauds.

R v. Patterson – Defence – Operation Bamburgh 1, North East Property Buyers fraud involving mortgage, re-sale/re-mortgage and property investment scheme frauds.

R v. Marr – Defence – Operation Bamburgh 2, conspiracy to defraud, property development and mortgage fraud, electronic presentation

R v. Akegware – CPS – Conspiracy to defraud, identity and credit fraud, company identities stolen and used to purchase or lease computer equipment

R v. Roberts – Defence – Fraudulent trading and money laundering in relation to the selling of utility company contracts and the failure of the company involved.

R v. Sargent & Brownhill – CPS – NHS fraud and false accounting, diversion of funds from service users of care homes by managers of those care homes.

R v. Kiani – Defence – Conspiracy to defraud and fraudulent trading offences prosecuted by the SFO. Defending a complex asset stripping fraud involving 'white wash' company purchases, inter-company loans, and the use of factoring agents.

Civil Recovery & Restraint

Chief Constable of Cheshire Police v ACC & MCAP – Interested Party in Forfeiture Order Application -

Instructed to advise and represent commercial clients in regard to several hundred thousand pounds subject to an account freezing order. When the Chief Constable of Cheshire Police applied for a forfeiture order, John Harrison KC was successful in his application to have his client joined to the proceedings as an Interested Party.

At the Forfeiture Order Application the proceedings were concluded in the favour of the Interested Party with recovery of previously frozen assets.

Chief Constable of Lancashire Constabulary v S - The police applied for forfeiture pursuant to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 after police officers stopped a car on the M6 in Lancashire and found silver and gold coins, and cash, to a value of nearly £480k in the car. They alleged the coins and cash represented money laundering the proceeds of criminal activity. The police application was contested and a strategy to present evidence to support the argument that the coins and cash represented the client's income and life savings over several decades was pursued. John Harrison KC was successful in settling the case on a favourable basis for the Respondent without the need to participate in a full court hearing.

Corporate & Gross Negligence Manslaughter

R v. Michael Holgate – Defence – Gross negligence manslaughter. The defendant was the operator of a haulage company whose HGV was involved in a collision causing a double fatality on the M62.

R v. Greenfeeds Ltd – CPS – Corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, health and safety offences. Two workers drowned at a business manufacturing liquid animal feed.

R v. Roofing Consultants Limited – CPS – Fatality following fall from height, health and safety offences.

R v. Al Amin Warehouse – CPS – Corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, health and safety offences. Fatality following fall from height, health and safety offences.

R v. Huntley Mount Engineering – CPS – Corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, health and safety offences. Fatality involving a young apprentice at an engineering company, health and safety offences.

R v. Pyranha Mouldings – CPS – Corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, health and safety offences. Fatality at a canoe factory, health and safety offences.

R v. Sherwood Rise Ltd – CPS – Corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, health and safety offences. Fatality at a care home, elderly resident neglected, health and safety offences.

Serious Crime

R v. Donaldson, Sladek & Hargreaves – CPS – Murderous group revenge attack after tit for tat escalating violence.

R v. McGowan – Defence – Alleged murder of the defendant's father. Acquitted after trial.

R v. Rutowicz – Defence – Alleged joint murder of the defendant's friend. Acquitted of murder after trial

R v. Musgrave – Defence – Alleged group attack by way of summary justice in Hartlepool, acquitted after trial.

R v. O'Donnell – Defence – Conspiracy to murder in Bolton, acquitted of conspiracy to murder after trial having admitted conspiracy to commit robbery.

R v. Ghazanfar – Defence – Group revenge attack on several other young men, one of whom was killed.

R v. Goodall – Defence – Gang related murder involving numerous defendants. Joint enterprise and bad character both major factors in the case.

R v. Liam Johnson – Defence – Conspiracy to murder, two brothers paid to kill complainant, attacked with axe and knife, complex issues witness intimidation & cut throat defences.

R v. Callaghan, Ojengbede & Others – Defence – Attempted murder, shotgun used, drug turf war, complex factual case with extensive bad character issues.

R v. Barker-Jones & Others – Defence – Aggravated burglary and double attempted murder, revenge attack on father and son, complex issues as to defendants mental state.

R v. Onfroy & Hollis – CPS – Murder to steal drugs and money, convicted after trial.

Crime – Terrorism:

R v. Wright – Defence – Offences of disseminating terrorist publications, manufacturing a firearm, possession of a prohibited firearm, possession of components of a 3D printed firearm for terrorist purposes and collecting information likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism. Extreme right wing ideology terrorism offences by Telegram Chat, Telegram Channels and the manufacture of a 3D printed firearm.

R v. Hussini – Defence – Offences of disseminating terrorist publications. Distribution of Islamic state terrorism videos capable of encouraging terrorism.

Environmental:

EA v. Fenny – Defence – Unauthorised waste operation offences at various sites in Middlesbrough area.

EA v. Smith – Defence – Waste management offences described as the worst ever seen in South Yorkshire

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