

Sarah Magill

Call to Bar: 2016



"Sarah is a joy to instruct as she is great with clients, fastidious in her preparation of all matters, and responsive. She is authoritative without a hint of arrogance, extremely well-prepared for any eventuality, and clearly enjoys advocacy" - Legal 500, 2025

"An excellent barrister who is both passionate and realistic, Sarah has a fantastic rapport with the clients and always goes the extra mile." - Chambers & Partners, 2025 (Crime)

"Her advocacy skills are exceptional and she can connect with the jury, presenting compelling and intuitive arguments." - Chambers & Partners, 2025 (Crime)

"Clients appreciate Sarah for her fierce nature and her communication." - Chambers & Partners, 2025 (Crime)

Sarah Magill specialises in serious organised crime, military law, business crime, professional discipline, regulatory matters and inquests. She defends and prosecutes complicated, technical matters. She is regularly instructed in evidentially dense, multiple defendant cases involving fatalities and has extensive experience in the presentation and cross-examination of specialist professional witnesses and vulnerable witnesses.

An experienced and sought-after Courts Martial advocate, Sarah accepts instructions from service personnel subject to service discipline. She is regularly called upon to defend members of the armed forces and veterans facing criminal proceedings. She is the co-author of Forces Legal Resources, a body of articles kept online to assist members of HM Forces navigating the Service Justice System.

Sarah is described as "knowledgeable, warm but assertive when needed" with clients and "articulate and fearless" in court. She impresses "with her command of detail and with her obviously high level of skill at deciding the really important points to go at. She is also clearly someone who knows what is right and is prepared to stand her ground."

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Practice areas:

Inquiries & Inquests

Criminal Law

Business Crime & Financial Regulation

Regulatory

Professional Discipline

Licensing

Sarah is on the specialist regulatory panel which enables her to prosecute on behalf of regulators including the Health and Safety Executive, the Coal Board and the Environment Agency. She is on the serious organised crime and fraud panels and was appointed to the level 3 Crown Prosecution Service panel in 2018. Sarah accepts public access instructions in respect of: AGAI, RAF and Royal Navy service justice . Firearms licensing.

Cases of Interest

Sarah is presently instructed in various large policing operations and murder cases. She is entrusted to both prosecute and defend alone or with a leader.

Operation Advance [2025] - Preston Crown Court; Conspiracy to Supply Cocaine and Heroin. Prosecuting, Sarah led Holly Nelson in the prosecution of fifteen defendants for drugs offences following an investigation by Lancashire CID into a lengthy drug enterprise run from inside HMP Manchester. The case was [widely publicised](#) with the antics of a parrot reading out drug prices featured in a video found on a defendant's phone going viral. The case involved sensitive elements including the use of children as drug runners, one of whom was filmed being stabbed. All defendants were convicted.

R v JB and MT [2025] - Manchester Crown Court; Gross Negligence Manslaughter and 'being the person in charge of a dog dangerously out of control where death is caused'. Defending, Sarah was led by Andrew Thomas KC, case was widely reported and involved the prosecution of parents over the death of their infant. Acquitted of gross negligence manslaughter.

Operation Firestorm – Preston Crown Court; assisting an offender [murder]. Defendant was prosecuted for assisting two defendants charged with murder. Convicted on basis of manslaughter rather than murder.

Operation Adelite – Manchester Crown Court; Defence junior led by Tim Storrie KC in ten-handed conspiracy to murder trial involving drill lyrics. Adduced voluminous defence evidence including music. Relied upon expert in drill. Client acquitted of murder.

Operation Marley – Preston Crown Court; defendant prosecuted for possession of multiple firearms and relevant ammunition with intent to endanger life. Not guilty verdicts recorded and defendant convicted of lesser offence whereby liberty was retained.

R v A, P and B – Manchester Crown Court; represented defendant accused of firearms possession; question of antiquity. Advanced two limbs of legal argument denying possession and raising antiquity; crown offered no evidence. Operations

Quebec and Quebec 2 – Preston Crown Court; junior alone in the prosecution of multi-handed Operation Quebec and then led junior in the larger more expansive. Operation Quebec 2. The prosecutions involved conspiracy to supply class A from Liverpool to Blackpool and elsewhere. All defendants in Operation Quebec were convicted and out of 28 defendants in Operation Quebec 2, 25 were convicted.

Operation Valetta – Burnley Crown Court; prosecuted series of exposure attacks involving a predatory male targeting female care home staff at night over nine months. Convicted on all counts.

R v D – Preston Crown Court; defended medical professional accused of rape and violent attacks against three separate female complainants. After advancing legal argument the Crown abandoned one complainant and continued to trial in respect of the remaining two. Acquitted of every allegation made by the three women. Manchester Arena bombing;

Operation Mantaline – Manchester Crown Court, led junior, prosecuted five terror suspects including one in absence for conspiracy to supply class A, offences discovered during the investigation of the arena bombing during the Ariana Grande concert. Later reported within the Inquiry proceedings.

R v J – Manchester Crown Court at Minshull Street – rape, controlling and coercive behaviour and ABH. Marital allegations against spouse. Acquitted of rape and s.47 ABH, hung jury on coercive and controlling behaviour; no retrial.

R v Hamilton [2016] --EWCA Crim 78; Conveying articles into prison (cocaine) – this case is the authority for how to sentence conveyance of drugs into prison. Successfully reduced Ms Hamilton's sentence by half.

Courts Martial and Military

R v Capt X [2025] - Catterick Military Court Centre; Sexual Assault - defending, Sarah led Kimberly Obrusik in the retrial of a British Army officer prosecuted for sexually assaulting a fellow officer during the pandemic. The case involved the introduction of defence jury bundle evidence and the calling of defence witnesses, following which the defendant was acquitted.

R v Major A [2024] – Catterick; multi-count indictment including assault. Adduced sensitive evidence from very senior military officers to achieve satisfactory outcome for officer (loss of seniority).

R v WO1 [2023] B – Catterick; multi-count indictment including assaults and public order act offences. Client received extremely favourable outcome with plea accepted to lesser alternative offence. Reduced by one rank.

Sarah accepts instructions in respect of Service Complaints, AGAI 67 proceedings, inquests and inquiries, including sensitive matters.

Co-author of Forces Legal Resources, Sarah has written a body of articles kept online to assist members of HM Forces navigating the Service Justice System with colleague Matthew Bolt. Forces Legal Resources can be found at www.boltandmagill.com

Regulatory, Inquests, Inquiries and Licensing

Part of the junior team instructed on the **Covid Inquiry** for the Health and Safety Executive.

Instructed off-panel by HMG in a particularly sensitive inquiry involving **international reciprocal agreements**.

Inquest touching on the death of a prisoner; Stafford, represented the family in a death in custody case where the cause of death was the consumption of novel psychoactive substances ('spice').

Animal Protection Society v M. et al [2022] – Preston Crown Court; Advanced detailed legal argument that had the effect of terminating the prosecution. The case was the beginning of the demise of both the charity and the solicitors' firm, the prosecution were robustly criticised and the case received widespread media attention together with the cases that followed it.

Cumberland County Council v BN [2024] – Carlisle Crown Court – represented director prosecuted for offences parasitic to an insolvent company. Put forward legal argument. Dishonesty offences withdrawn, director pleaded guilty to remainder, received a fine.

Sarah is selected to act in cases involving commercial animal breeders challenging local authority decisions in respect of licensing.

Firearms Licensing; Sarah appears both for police forces and private clients in licensing appeals.