Sarah Magill

Call to Bar: 2016



"Sarah is a tenacious barrister; she leaves no stone unturned and her client-facing manner is impeccable." - Chambers & Partners, 2026 (Crime)

"Sarah Magill is an excellent barrister."- Chambers & Partners, 2026 (Crime)

"Sarah is a formidable advocate. She is a real fighter who gives it her all for her clients. She has a remarkable ability to establish trust, offering them the confidence that their case is in the hands of an advocate who will fight relentlessly on their behalf."- Legal 500, 2026

"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 specialises in the most serious cases including terrorism, murder, complex fatalities and organised crime. She is instructed by large international firms and regulators in multi-defendant cases in the criminal courts and at inquests and inquiries.

Sarah prosecutes and defends technical cases involving large-scale organised crime, corruption, human trafficking, weapons and drug importation and excise evasion, fraud and cases involving delicate issues of capacity, abuses of trust, Wills and property

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Practice areas:

- Inquiries & Inquests
- Criminal Law
- Business Crime & Financial Regulation
- Regulatory
- Professional Discipline
- Licensing

She is frequently instructed pre-charge, guiding cases from inception to conclusion. Sarah is frequently instructed in inquests on behalf of Interested Parties, whether they be organisations or bereaved families.

Sarah is a highly sought after and busy military specialist and is regularly found at Courts Martial and in the civilian courts representing service personnel in the most sensitive of cases. She advises in respect of major administrative action on a direct-access basis. Sarah sits part-time as a Military Judge having been appointed to the role of Deputy Assistant Judge Advocate General in 2025.

She also runs a hostile region evacuation and resettlement charity that she started in 2021 and is the Northern Circuit's Treasurer.

Panels and Memberships

Serious Crime – level 4

General Crime – level 4

Counter Terror – level 3

Regulatory Board (The Health and Safety Executive, Coal Board, Environment Agency, Office of Rail and Road, National Resources Wales, Care Quality Commission and the Office for Product Safety and Standards).

Association of Military Court Advocates

Criminal Bar Association

Health and Safety Lawyers' Association

Northern Circuit

Middle Temple

Cases of Note – Crime

R v Easom [2026] – Preston Crown Court; nationally reported case of serious domestic violence. Prosecuted defendant who had abused his partner over several years, then when she ended the relationship, broke her neck, rendering her tetraplegic. Sarah was instructed immediately at charge as Miss Burgess was in hospital ventilated in ICU and guided the investigation. D was jailed for 16 years after losing a trial. National media coverage ensued. Trudi Burgess, the subject of the attacks, now speaks out about domestic violence and coercive control 'Violent bully' who broke partner's neck and left her paralysed jailed for 16 years | Domestic violence | The Guardian

R v Operation Madford and Madford 1 [2026] – Manchester Minshull Street, Armed Robbery conspiracy. Sarah led Lewis Bocking in the prosecution of three men who organised and took part in targeted attacks of wealthy lone women and businesses. All defendants convicted, two pleaded mid-trial and one lost a Newton. Three jailed over violent robbery spree worth £1m across Manchester | Messenger Newspapers

R v LC [2026]– Preston Crown Court, Death by dangerous driving. Prosecuting, Sarah prosecuted a teenage defendant who caused the death of his 17-year-old passenger. https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/demi-davies-car-crash-burnley-37359881

R v DG [2025] – Liverpool Crown Court, drugs importation. Defended Chinese defendant prosecuted for importing £mm cannabis into the United Kingdom.

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.

R v AM [2024] – Preston Crown Court; s.3 Explosive Substances Act 1883. Prosecution junior. Defendant had viable improvised explosive device (nail bomb) improvised explosive device disguised as a firearm (pipe-type bomb), imitation firearm and knife.

R v Wilkinson [2024] – Preston Crown Court; Murder. Led by Tim Storrie KC; defendant murdered, disembowelled and decapitated his neighbour and then distributed his remains throughout a large geographical area.

Operation Brick [2024] – Burnley Crown Court; conspiracy to supply cocaine. Prosecuted alone; six defendants had engaged in a professional 'Deliveroo' type cocaine dealing throughout Lancashire for just under one year. All convicted.

R v A [2024] – Preston Crown Court; arson with intent to endanger life. Defended lay-client alleged to have been involved in a fire attack on a terraced domestic premises while a person was inside the house. The crown offered no evidence following cross-examination of the complainant on identification. Defendant acquitted before half-time and released from custody immediately.

R v A, P and B [2024] – 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.

R v HR [2023] – Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court; trial for death by dangerous driving. Defended alone one of two defendants prosecuted for causing the death of a 16 year old pedestrian, a school girl walking to college. The case post-dated the amendment to the maximum sentence for this offence to life.

Operations Quebec and Quebec 2 [2023] – 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 [2023] – 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 BX [2023] – Preston Crown Court; defendant prosecuted for possession of imitation firearm used to threaten; guilty plea entered on a basis that enabled him to avoid an immediate prison sentence and keep his business.

Operation Marley [2023] – 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 D [2023] – 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.

R v J [2023] – 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.

Operation Adelite [2021] – Manchester Crown Court; Defence junior in ten-handed conspiracy to murder trial involving drill lyrics. Adduced voluminous defence evidence including music. Relied upon expert in drill. Jury acquitted client of conspiracy to murder, convicted instead of conspiracy to cause GBH.

Manchester Arena bombing; Operation Mantaline [2019] – Manchester Crown Court – 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 GH [2017] – Carlisle Crown Court; causing serious injury by dangerous driving. Prosecuted HGV driver who did not pay attention to any overhead warning signs and drove into queue of stationary traffic, causing lifelong disabilities and life-limiting injures to several people.

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 Defendant A [2026] – Hull Crown Court; service person prosecuted in the Crown Court for an offence linked to service. Reporting restrictions and handling of delicate material, D was fully unanimously acquitted of the indictment charge and its statutory alternative.

R v Soldier R [2026] – Court Martial; Recordable Criminal Offence. Defending, Sarah secured the acquittal of a senior soldier from a sensitive military unit following a two-day Court Martial involving special measures and evidence heard both in public and in private. The defendant was acquitted after just 27 minutes of deliberation.

R v Soldiers X and Y [2025] – Westminster Magistrates' Court; defended one of two soldiers prosecuted for serious offences, led successful anonymity argument securing orders where partial reporting had been leaked, secured favourable outcome for a very relieved client who had dedicated the majority of his life to exceptional service to the country.

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 Magill

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

Inquests of Note

Inquest touching upon the death of Mr B; acted for the family in Article 2 Inquest when a relatively high profile prisoner died after ingesting novel psychoactive substances and was undetected by prison officers for some time, Stafford. Complex review of prison and healthcare records to rule out intentional death. Accidental death recorded.

Inquest touching upon the death of Mr P; acted for Rochdale Borough Council in a case involving a vulnerable adult with issues of cuckooing who posed a safeguarding concern. Narrative conclusion recorded, no PfDs.

Inquest touching upon the death of Mr F; acted for the family in a death subsequent to a road traffic collision where the circumstances were initially unclear. Narrative conclusion recorded.

Inquest touching upon the death of Ms H; acted for a care home following death after a fall. Assured the care home experiencing their first inquest. Comprehensive review. No evidence of any shortcomings in care were detected, conclusion recorded as accident, no PfDs.

Inquest touching upon the death of Mr K; acted for a local authority following a death that had lain undiscovered for years wherein the deceased had contact with the police and local authority prior to death. Submissions drafted subsequent to which the client was discharged as an IP.

Inquest touching upon the death of Mr H; acted for care home following a death subsequent to short stay in care home after discharge from hospital. Family raised significant criticisms, which the care home disputed. Conclusion; natural causes contributed to by accidental trauma, no PfD.

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').

Inquest; Rochdale, represented the local authority in respect of a case where a body had lain undiscovered for years.

Inquest touching on the death of a care home resident; represented a private care home experiencing their first inquest following a death that occurred after a fall.

Sarah is currently instructed in complex high profile and sensitive cases.

Regulatory, Inquiries and Licensing

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.

R (HSE) v Three Defendants [Skip Hire/Waste Management] [2025] – Sheffield Magistrates' Court – prosecuted for the HSE in respect of waste management health and safety breaches whereafter company and director both convicted. Case materialised after a joint EA/HSE investigation and separately prosecuted.

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R (Natural Resources Wales) v Company [2025] [Waste Management] – North Wales – defended waste management company who entered agreeable pleas to waste offences in North Wales.

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 currently instructed in ongoing complex waste management cases.

Firearms Licensing; Sarah regularly appears both for police forces and private clients in licensing appeals and is presently instructed in several firearms licensing appeals. Sarah is selected to act in cases involving commercial animal breeders challenging local authority decisions in respect of 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**.

LINCOLN HOUSE CHAMBERS