

Holly Nelson

Call to Bar: 2017



"Holly delivers controlled, persuasive, focused advocacy. She can delve into the heart of the key issues in the case and draw the jury with her. She masters tricky points of law with ease and confidence." - Legal 500, 2026 - Crime (General & Fraud)

Holly Nelson has built a strong reputation as an effective and persuasive advocate on the Northern Circuit. With a particularly affable nature she is able to relate to lay-clients and professional clients in a genuine and meaningful way, especially in cases of particular sensitivity.

Holly's main priority remains robustly representing each of her clients' interests in court in a productive manner. Holly has developed a very busy criminal practice both defending and prosecuting in a variety of matters that are often undertaken by significantly more senior barristers. Her regular instructions in the Crown Court include Class A drug conspiracies, serious violence and sexual offences.

Holly has also obtained a numerous very impressive results when she has been retained privately for criminal defence work in the Magistrates Court where she is sought after by private clients for the full spectrum of criminal offences.

In addition to general crime, Holly also has significant experience in regulatory fields having represented Trading Standards and Local Authorities in regulatory matters in the Magistrates and Crown Court. She regularly and reliably turns her mind to complex legal argument and is able to conduct significant legal research in novel areas of law

NOTABLE CASES

Firearms

Operation Absolute - Manchester Crown Square – Led Junior for the Crown in the prosecution of three defendants charged with conspiracy to possess firearms with intent to endanger life following firearms discharges in Eccles and Whitefield.

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Practice areas:

Criminal Law

Regulatory Law

Professional appointments:

CPS Grade 3– Serious Crime, Specialist Advocate Panel

CPS Grade 3 – General Crime Advocate Panel

CPS Grade 3 – Counter Fraud

CPS Grade 3 Counter Terrorism

Northern Circuit (Former Junior of the Circuit – January 2022 – July 2022)

Criminal Bar Association Gray's Inn

SCHOLARSHIPS

Gray's inn:

Prince of Wales major

BPTC scholarship

Hebe Plunkett BPTC scholarship

Ann Felicity Goddard pupillage scholarship

Operation Drever - Manchester Crown Square – Led Junior for the Crown in a prosecution of 4 defendants for conspiracy to possess firearms with intent to endanger life.

Drugs Operation Alberta - Preston/Burnley Crown Court – Led Junior for the Crown in a 33+ defendant conspiracy to produce, supply and burgle cannabis farms in East Lancashire.

Operation Drever (drugs) - Manchester Crown Square – Junior alone in the supply of Class A and B drugs in North Manchester.

Operation Simplon - Preston Crown Court – Junior alone prosecuting the supply of 30kg+ cocaine and heroin where the defendant was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment.

Operation Feast - Preston Crown Court – represented defendant in a Class A drug conspiracy whose sentence resulted in a 'walk out' following negotiation with the Crown as to acceptable alternative offences.

Operation Zodiac - Preston Crown Court - represented a defendant with an accepted starting point at sentence of 7 years' imprisonment. Defendant received a suspended period of imprisonment.

Operation Horizon - Preston Crown Court – Led Junior for the Crown in a retrial relating to a seventeen-defendant operation arising from county lines drug supply to Barrow-in-Furness.

(CCU) R v O – Preston Crown Court - successfully defended a man charged with PWITS Class A and B who was found with 1kg of cocaine in his trousers. Cut-throat defence. Overnight return in second-six of pupillage.

R v P – Carlisle Crown Court – Junior alone prosecuted a trial of issue relating to PWITS 100kg cannabis.

Violence

R v M - (CACD) – Successfully appealed a sentence imposed overturning dangerousness finding and reducing sentence by eight months.

R v V - Manchester Crown Court - Led Junior for the prosecution in trial of defendant charged with attempted murder, conspiracy to cause GBH, and possession of firearm with intent to endanger life.

Operation Drever (B & H) - Manchester Crown Court - conspiracy to cause GBH with intent sentenced to 7.5 years' and 4.5years' imprisonment respectively.

R v D – Preston Crown Court – successfully defended one of two women charged with a joint enterprise s47 assault in Barrow-in-Furness.

Other

Operation Sprite – Led Junior for the Crown in a conspiracy to burgle/steal high-value vehicles in East Lancashire with an estimated value of over £1m.

R v R – Court of Appeal – appeal against sentence for the Defence. Submissions described as ‘very attractive’ and ‘succinct’. Dingemans LJ referring to the ‘excellence’ of her submissions. Client subsequently acquitted after 16 months’ imprisonment, and the quashing of a 54 months’ sentence at Carlisle Crown Court

R v G – Carlisle Crown Court – successfully made a submission for the jury to be discharged following a jury irregularity which came to light after the Defendant had given evidence.

Interests Outside Chambers

Holly is usually found on a Lake District fell with her Golden Retriever.

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