Isobel Thomas

Call to Bar: 2012

"Isobel is an impressively conscientious barrister with a superb eye for detail and excellent client care skills. Her advocacy is persuasive and forceful, whilst always remaining courteous and accessible in tone, and when cross-examining, taking witnesses in chief, and in addressing the jury and the judge, she demonstrates excellent judgement and skill."- **Legal 500, 2025**

'Isobel is incredibly sharp, tactically astute, and has a peerless work ethic. Her written and oral advocacy is outstanding.' Crime (General and Fraud) - **Legal 500, 2024**

Isobel Thomas prosecutes and defends in a wide range of criminal matters; including, but not limited to, murder and manslaughter, sexual offences, drug conspiracies, serious violence and fraud.

Isobel has developed a reputation as a forceful advocate who is able to deal with complex and unusual legal issues. Isobel is able to able to quickly build a very good rapport with clients and provides clear and is extremely proactive in her management of cases, providing practical advice at every stage in proceedings.

In addition to her serious crime practice, Isobel is also frequently instructed by private clients in both driving matters and also regulatory offences including licensing, food safety, trading standards and actions brought by local authorities.

Isobel is public access qualified.

Isobel is a level 3 prosecutor.

Murder, Manslaughter and Serious Violence

Notable cases

R v LH – Instructed alone to represent female defendant charged with Manslaughter. The co-defendant was charged and convicted of murder. LH was a vulnerable individual with long standing mental health difficulties. The deceased was her ex-partner and the co-defendant was her new partner. LH was sentenced to an extended sentence of 18 years.

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Practice areas:

Criminal Law

Judicial Review Law

Licensing

Professional Discipline

Regulatory

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R v SA - Led junior for the prosecution in murder trial. Defendant convicted of planning and attempting the murder of his estranged partner, and the murder of her son who intervened in the attack to save her. Following the stabbings the defendant fled to the south coast with the intention of escaping by crossing the English channel in an inflatable dinghy. Defendant sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum period of 30 years. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12374225/Cowardly-killer-tried-flee-Britain-dinghy-murdering-estranged-partners-son-teenager-stepped-stop-stabbing-mother-jailed-life.html

R v DW – Led junior for the defence in murder trial. This was a legally unusual and difficult case. Both defendants had already been tried and convicted for murder in 2018. The case involved a petrol bomb having been thrown through the window of a house in Salford, causing the death of four children in 2017. Their mother eventually died from the injuries she sustained in the fire in 2019.

R v AM – Operation Camel. Junior counsel for the prosecution. The defendant, aged 39, was unanimously convicted of murder following a 9-day trial at Preston Crown Court. The court heard how the defendant subjected a vulnerable man to long-term physical abuse, including crushing his toe and extracting five of his teeth whilst he was still alive, before brutally murdering him by perforating his bladder and bowel. It was the prosecution case that the defendant's treatment of the deceased was nothing short of torture. The Judge described the defendant's actions as "barbaric and evil". The defendant was sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 32 years.

R v BD – Operation Yale. 8 week trial before a High Court Judge at Manchester Crown Court. Instructed to defend client charged with assisting an offender. The defendant was originally one of nine charged with murder, which related to a shooting in Ashton Under Lyne. However, the murder charge for him was dismissed before trial. He was tried for assisting an offender, together with the alleged murderers.

R v DN – Junior counsel for the defence in murder trial. The defendant was charged with murdering her ex-partner in a brutal attack involving an axe and a hammer. The defendant admitted manslaughter but denied murder, relying on the partial defence of loss of control. Defendant acquitted of murder following a 10 day trial. She was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for manslaughter.

R v XXXX – Junior counsel for the defence in re-trial. The defendant had previously been convicted of 2 counts of conspiracy to murder. Those convictions had been overturned by the Court of Appeal. There were issues relating to abuse of process. Prior to the re-trial the Crown offered no evidence in relation to one of the conspiracies.

R v AH – Three-week trial defending one of three brothers charged with a variety of offences including drug dealing, blackmail and witness intimidation.

Drug Offences

Notable cases

R v CR & Others - Operation Rosslare. Junior counsel for the prosecution. Nine defendants, part of an Organised Crime Group, were sentenced to a total of 68 years and 4 months, having pleaded guilty to drug related offences. The operation involved large scale drug dealing of Class A drugs in the Stockport area. https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/well-oiled-gangwho-sold-14565800

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R v MN & Others - Instructed to defend one of 8 defendants charged with conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. This case involved Class A drugs being brought from Yorkshire into the Lancashire area.

R v PW & Others - Operation Trinket. Junior counsel for the prosecution in 7 week trial at Bolton Crown Court. 6 defendants were charged with Conspiracy to Supply Class A drugs. The defendants had been involved in producing 375kg of caffeine and paracetamol, which the prosecution contended was later to be mixed with heroin as part of a multi-million pound operation.

Sexual Offences

Isobel has completed the Vulnerable Witness Training Course.

Notable cases

R v WA - Defence counsel in rape trial at Preston Crown Court. The defendant was alleged to have raped the complainant at knife point. Defendant acquitted following a 5 day trial.

R v JE - Instructed to represent defendant charged with historic sexual allegations against his brother together with offences (rape and violence) against his ex-wife and violence towards his children. Isobel successfully argued that the allegations relating to his brother should be severed. No evidence was later offered in relation to the allegations on the defendant's brother as Isobel raised the issue of doli incapax.

R v DL - Defending allegations of assault by penetration of a child under 13. The complainant was the defendant's 5 year old step daughter. This case required an extremely sensitive approach. The complainant was assisted by an intermediary and cross examination questions had to be prepared prior to trial.

R v JM - Successful prosecution following trial of a male charged with exposing himself in front of a family, including a 3-year old child. The defendant was subsequently detained under s41 Mental Health Act 1988.

R v DL - Defended a client charged with Indecent Assault on two girls under the age of 13. The offences dated back to 2000. Defendant acquitted after a 5 day trial.

Fraud / Money Laundering / Confiscation

Notable cases

R v Campbell - Junior counsel for the prosecution in money laundering trial. The defendants spend over £100,000 of "dirty" money on lavish holidays, cars and house renovations. https://www.lincolnhousechambers.com/henry-blackshaw-isobel-thomas-prosecute-nationallyreported-money-laundering-case

R v SH - Instructed to prosecute in a complicated two-day contested POCA hearing in which the Crown alleged that the defendant had substantial "hidden assets".

R v RS - Instructed to prosecute in a POCA (order value: £285,000) in which there was legal argument involving time to pay under the old/new s.11 POCA. Isobel successfully argued that the new s.11 applies to confiscation orders made before its implementation date.

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Regulatory

Notable cases

Bury MBC v The DH Bury Ltd - Instructed to prosecute in complicated 2 day premises licence appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

Cheshire EC v TLC - Instructed to prosecute a trial in which the defendant was charged with being in breach of a Temporary Stop Notice, contrary to section 171G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The defendant was convicted and fined £7000.

Cheshire EC v AS - Instructed to prosecute an appeal brought by a taxi driver against the decision of the General Licensing Sub-Committee to revoke his Hackney Carriage Private Hire Drivers Licence. The decision of the Sub-Committee was upheld following the appeal.

Isobel has completed the Vulnerable Witness Training Course.

Oldham BC v RN - Instructed to represent shop owner in contested hearing in which he faced losing his licence.

Health and Safety Executive v XXX - Instructed to represent a company charged with Health and Safety offences. The company pleaded guilty to a number of offences. Written and oral submissions had to be made in relation to the sentencing guidelines. Isobel successfully argued that this case was not one of "very high" culpability.

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