



Practice Profile

Sarah Forshaw QC was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2008 and quickly established a formidable practice in Silk. She was appointed co-Head of Chambers in 2009 and from 2012-2014 was Leader of the South Eastern Circuit (the largest of the six geographical Circuits of the Bar of England and Wales). She was nominated for Crime silk of the Year 2014 by Chambers & Partners.

Sarah Forshaw QC, described by an independent FT journalist as the 'criminal barrister of choice if you can get her', has maintained an impressive and diverse practice since taking Silk. She is frequently instructed to represent high profile individuals charged under the Sexual Offences Act and her track record marks her out as a leader in this field. Her skill and experience in cases involving historic sexual allegations are legendary including recently successfully defending publicist Max Clifford against a second round of allegations from the 1970's. Other recent trials have included the successful defence of a doctor accused of sexual assault on patients and of a high-profile businessman alleged to have engaged in sex with a minor.

She has built a formidable reputation at the Central Criminal Court, having defended in over 40 Old Bailey murder trials. Notable successes include the defence of one of 19 boys on trial at the Old Bailey for the murder of a 15 year old schoolboy at Victoria station and of a 17 year old boy charged with a double murder in Leytonstone in a drug related gang attack. She is often sought out for young defendants in joint enterprise killings, and was involved in the recent post "Jogee" appeals of Johnson and others.

In cases of Fraud and Financial crime, she is frequently instructed to defend professional clients in the most complex and demanding cases. A firm believer that the best advocates undertake both prosecution and defence work, Sarah most recently secured convictions for the Serious Fraud Office against all defendants in a long-running £80 million PONZI fraud. Current instructions include Operation Lunar, a multi-million Tax fraud using capital loss relief, listed for several months in 2018.

Recent General Crime experience has included the successful prosecution of the "Fake Sheikh", Mazher Mahmood, for conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, and successfully defending the only individual acquitted in a multi-handed international conspiracy to import £5m of cocaine from South America. She has been described as 'silky smooth' in court and 'a class advocate...brief, eloquent, with a dash of theatre'.

Alongside her criminal practice, Sarah is often instructed to appear before regulatory bodies, primarily for members of the medical profession. Recent cases before the General Medical Council include the successful reinstatement of a doctor accused, and subsequently cleared, of raping a nurse.

Fees for regulatory and all private criminal work are agreed by the **Senior Clerk**.

Areas of Practice

- General Crime
- Sexual Offences
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Homicide & Corporate Manslaughter
- Fraud & Financial Crime
- Appellate
- Confiscation, Civil Recovery & Asset Forfeiture
- Inquests
- Prosecution
- Regulatory & Professional Discipline
- Cyber Crime
- Military Law
- Terrorism

What The Directories Say

'She is robust in defending with a velvet-clad iron fist.' *Legal 500 2017*

"She's a silk who reads every piece of paper. She's demanding on those she works with and she's got great client rapport. Juries love her." *Chambers UK 2017*

"Silky smooth." *Legal 500 2016*

"Brilliant. An amazing advocate who's comfortable with the clients, takes an uncompromising approach to case presentation and develops a very good rapport with the jury." *Chambers UK 2017*

News

Jury acquit father of sexually assaulting 5 year old son in ten minutes

19 April 2018

A jury today returned Not Guilty verdicts against P in a case that alleged sexual assaults upon his 5 year old son. The jury took just ten minutes to return their verdicts. Sarah Forshaw QC and Paul Jackson were instructed by Rob Borwick and Claire Hewitt of ABV Solicitors.

Recent Cases

R v. X [Teesside] 2018

Alleged historic sexual offending in prestigious boarding school

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for the defence in this case of alleged historic sexual offending committed whilst our client was a Gap Year Student in 2002 at a prestigious all boys boarding school in the North of England. The defendant was acquitted of all charges by a jury in 14 minutes. Instructed by Ellen Peart of BCL LLP.

Operation Lunar [Birmingham] 2017

£Multi-Million HMRC Tax Avoidance Prosecution

Sarah Forshaw QC and Robert Ellison acted in the defence of this defendant charged with 10 others of a multi-million pound conspiracy to cheat HMRC. The fraud centred around multiple tax avoidance schemes. The charges were dismissed against our client following legal argument. The trial on the remaining defendants is listed for 6 months in 2019. Instructed by King and Spalding LLP.

R v. M & anr [CCC] 2017

Fatal Stabbing of Teenager in Northolt

Sarah Forshaw QC represented this 17 year old man who was cleared of the murder and manslaughter of an 18 year old man in Northolt. The jury returned a unanimous verdict after a 3 week trial at the Old Bailey. Instructed by McCormacks Solicitors.

News report here.

R v. NC [Aylesbury] 2017

Ex Teacher accused of Historic Sexual Assaults

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for this retired ex-teacher who was charged with a series of historic sexual assaults in the 1980's. NC had been extradited from Spain to stand trial but was cleared of all charges. Instructed by Sonn McMillan Walker.

R v. GS [C.C.C.] 2017

Sexual Assault upon 5 year old niece

Sarah Forshaw QC defended this Merrill Lynch banker whom was charged and cleared following an 8 day Old Bailey trial of Sexually Assaulting his 5 year old niece during a bout of "Parasomnia". Instructed by BCL Solicitors LLP.

R v. Te [C.C.C.] 2017

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for the defence in this Old Bailey trial concerning the fatal stabbing in the neck and chest of a 20 year old man during a brawl in an East London park in front of picnicking families. The defendant was acquitted of murder, convicted of manslaughter. Instructed by McCormacks.

R v. R [Croydon] 2017

Alleged Rape of married woman

Sarah Forshaw QC, successfully represented a 39 year old father of two whom was cleared of raping a married woman after walking her home. A jury acquitted the defendant of four counts – sexual assault, rape and two counts of attempted rape. Instructed by ABV Solicitors.

News Report here.

R v. Newman [C.C.C.] 2016

Fatal Stabbing

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully defended an 18 year old man who was cleared of murder and manslaughter following the fatal stabbing of a 20 year old man in Thornton Heath, the jury accepting he acted in self-defence. Instructed by MK Law.

News report here.

R v. Mahmood & Smith - "The Fake Sheikh Trial" [C.C.C] 2016

Trial of the "Fake Sheikh"

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Danny Robinson were instructed by the CPS in the successful prosecution of the 'Fake Sheikh' and his driver for perverting the course of justice surrounding the 2013 failed prosecution of popstar Tulisa Contostavlos.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3819690/Fake-Sheikh-Mazher-Mahmood-guilty-Tulisa-cocaine-sting-trial.html>

R v. Dr V [Wood Green] 2016

Doctor accused of Sexually Assaulting young patient

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully represented this Doctor whom was cleared of an allegation of sexually assaulting a young female patient. Instructed by EBR Attridge. Now instructed by BCL Solicitors LLP in regulatory proceedings before the GMC and NHS Trust.

R v. Sykes [C.C.C.] 2016

Murder of a pensioner

Sarah Forshaw QC led Orla Daly for the defence in a case prosecuted by Queen's Counsel and Treasury Counsel. The case related to the death of a pensioner bludgeoned to death by a defendant with learning difficulties. Issues of diminished responsibility and assisted suicide. Instructed by Thomas Boyd Whyte Solicitors.

Operation Canon [Southwark] 2016

£80m Ponzi Scheme

Sarah Forshaw QC, instructed by the SFO, successfully prosecuted this £80m "Ponzi" scheme. The defendants purported to be a successful supplier of electrical goods such as light bulbs, air conditioning units, trouser presses and televisions to major hotel chains such as the Marriott and Hilton. They also falsely claimed to be the preferred supplier of the Olympic village, ahead of the 2012 Games.

<https://www.sfo.gov.uk/2016/05/24/ponzi-fraudsters-sentenced-total-21-years/>

R v. A [Aylesbury] 2015

Allegation of Rape against a professional footballer

Sarah Forshaw QC was successful in the defence of a professional footballer charged with rape and sexual assault upon teenage victim. Instructed by BCL Solicitors LLP.

R v. D & ors [C.C.C.] 2015

Drug related double murder

Sarah Forshaw QC appeared for a 17 year old man who was cleared of involvement in the double murder of two men in Leytonstone, East London. Instructed by McCormacks.

BBC news report here.

R v. Riaz & anr [C.C.C.] 2015

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully represented a law student who was cleared of arranging the murder of her boyfriend but a former boyfriend. Instructed by Imran Khan & Partners.

Daily Mail report here.

R v. Kharrahassan & ors [C.C.C.] 2014

Importation of £5m of Cocaine

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Charlotte Newell represented a greengrocer who was charged and cleared of smuggling £5m of cocaine in fruit and vegetables. Co-defendants sentenced to 17 years. instructed by Bark & Co.

Daily Mail report here.

Coats, R. v [2013] EWCA Crim 1472 (24 July 2013) 2013

"Battered Woman Syndrome"

Sarah Forshaw QC acted on behalf of this appellant on a case referred to the COA by the Criminal Cases Review Commission. The appeal centred around "Battered Women Syndrome" after the appellant was convicted of cocaine smuggling. Instructed by Blackfords LLP.

Reported Judgment can be read here.

Guardian report can be read here.

Notable Cases

R v. Armstrong [Southwark] 2017

Alleged Rape in the Palace of Westminster

Sarah Forshaw QC represented Samuel Armstrong, Chief of Staff to conservative MP Craig Mackinley, whom was accused of raping and sexually assaulting a young woman following a drinking session after work in the bar at the Houses of Parliament. The case attracted considerable media attention. Mr Armstrong was cleared by a jury after an 9 day trial. Instructed by Taylor Haldane Barlex.

BBC report here.

R v. Max Clifford [Southwark] 2016

Defence of celebrity publicist for historic sexual assault

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Orla Daly were successful in their defence of the renowned celebrity publicist who was cleared of a further charge of historic sexual assault.

BBC news report here.

Appeal of Johnson & ors 2016

Post "Jogee" Joint Enterprise Appeal

Sarah Forshaw QC was involved in the post "Jogee" conviction appeals. A matter that is to be considered by the Supreme Court.

Judgment can be found here.

R v. Brennan [2015] 1 WLR 2060 2015

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC was instructed in the defence of a gay escort accused of killing 53 year old antiques dealer in a ritualistic satanic attack. The murder conviction was overturned on appeal in 2015 and the sentence reduced. It has become an important decision in cases of diminished responsibility and expert psychiatric evidence. Instructed by Bailey Nicholson Grayson.

The judgment of the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, is now reported <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2014/2387.html>.

BBC news report here.

R v. Thompson [Aylesbury] 2013

Historic Sex Abuse

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Dickon Reid successfully represented this defendant who had Aspergers and was charged and cleared of 42 counts of historic sexual assaults. The defendant had similar fact previous convictions which were renewed to the Court of Appeal and subsequently overturned. Instructed by Edward Hayes LLP. Internet report here.

Operation Farnhams [C.C.C.] 2012

Murder of schoolboy at Victoria Station

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Sue Rodham, successfully represented their defendant in the trial in respect of the brutal killing of the schoolboy Sofyen Belamouadden at Victoria Railway station by a gang of 19 youths in March 2010. The horrific nature of this killing led to widespread publicity of joint enterprise, knife related gang crime. Instructed by Whitelock and Storr.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15310015>