

Rachel Hedworth

Call 1999

EXPERTISE

Crime

Rachel is a criminal law specialist. She has established a very busy and varied Crown Court practice through her reputation for 'going the extra mile' in both her preparation and presentation of cases. Solicitors remark at her ability to empathise with clients and maintain a firm focus on seeking to achieve best outcomes. On a daily basis she deals with challenging, difficult and heavyweight cases. Areas of expertise include:

- Fraud
- Sexual Offences
- Conspiracies
- Violence
- Arson
- Proceeds of Crime (POCA)

Road Traffic Offences

Rachel has enjoyed considerable success across the full spectrum of Road Traffic cases from death by dangerous driving to speeding. She has developed a particular expertise in challenging Section 172 Notices, together with the loss of driving and taxi licences.

Regulatory

Rachel has experience of prosecuting and defending in relation to trading standards matters and benefit fraud prosecutions. She is also interested in agricultural related regulatory matters. Rachel has provided training lectures to Local Authority Regulatory Departments. In regulatory prosecutions, she is briefed by Defendants, Local Authorities and the Royal Mail.

Private Law Children

Rachel is instructed in private law children cases. Deploying her extensive Crown Court advocacy and in particular cross-examination skills and experience, Rachel deals with children contact and residence disputes, as well as contested injunctions and issues involving domestic abuse.

She deals with Fact Finding Hearings and is experienced in working with complex witness evidence including evidence from psychologists and psychiatrists. She has an excellent "bedside manner" and is experienced in dealing with vulnerable witnesses and clients.

Public Law Children

Rachel accepts instructions in child care proceedings, again calling on her extensive Crown Court advocacy experience and from dealing with experts, vulnerable witnesses and clients.



Expertise

Criminal

Regulatory

Family - Finance & Property

Family - Public Law & Children

Matrimonial Finance & Divorce

Rachel is experienced in dealing with matrimonial finance/ancillary relief disputes including applications relating to maintenance, child support and property. Rachel has dealt with cases involving business valuations and pension arrangements.

APPOINTMENTS

- Grade 3 Prosecutor CPS
- Pupil Supervisor
- Associate Lecturer at Northumbria University

MEMBERSHIPS

- North Eastern Circuit
- Criminal Bar Association

LECTURES & SEMINARS

Rachel has delivered seminars to clients including Local Authorities on benefits prosecutions, hearsay, bad character and proceeds of crime.

EDUCATION

LLB (Hons) Northumbria University

PUBLIC ACCESS

Rachel is qualified to receive instructions direct from businesses, professionals and members of the public. Any such requests should be directed to her clerks in the first instance.

Clerking team



Liam Gorman
Lead Criminal &
Regulatory Clerk
0191 245 9521



Chloe Lau
Criminal & Regulatory
Clerk
0191 245 9550



Edward Shepherd
Criminal & Regulatory
Clerk
0191 245 9542



Chris Gibbin
Criminal & Family Clerk
01642 247 569



Fiona Bullock
Direct Access Clerk
01642 247 569



Steven Preen
Lead Family Clerk
0191 232 1927



Ken McLafferty
Family & Immigration
Clerk
0191 245 9531



Paula McLure
Family Clerk
0191 245 9530

Notable Cases

Fraud

RvM – Multi handed conspiracy to commit large firm fraud – 10 year evasion of VAT amounting to in excess of £210,000.

RvM – Large scale cigarette smuggling operation involving duty evaded of £1.8m.

RvN – Dishonest sickness benefit claim exceeding £60,000 by football referee who was shown on national television news sprinting up and down the pitch.

RvA – Local businessman and property owner charged with fraud offences arising out of false declarations made to the Local Council.

RvB – Successfully defended “Cash for Crash” wide-scale insurance fraud involving fake accident claims to insurers in respect of financial loss and personal injury.

RvB – Successfully represented Defendant jointly charged with former partner and others in respect of mortgage fraud linked to “the North East Property Buyers” conspiracy which involved more than 20000 mortgage advances between 2004 and 2008. Indictment stayed following legal argument.

RvG – Conspiracy involving dishonest representations to members of the public that those involved were collecting money on behalf of “Help for Heroes”.

RvG – Successfully represented Defendant, a serving soldier, in respect of alleged involvement in sales of military property on E-bay. The

case attracted intense local media attention. Trial involved presentation and challenge of complex expert evidence. Defendant, who had been suspended, was acquitted and, immediately thereafter, promoted.

R v E – Successfully defending a case involving extensive allegations of fraud against a vulnerable person.

R v P – Successfully defended a wide-scale high value auto-parts fraud involving detailed analysis of reams of accountancy data and expert evidence, resulting in acquittal following abuse of process argument.

Sexual Offences

Operation Sanctuary/Shelter – Defended in a complex series of lengthy trials. Attracted significant media attention. Concerned the sexual exploitation of young, vulnerable women by an organised crime group. Complex legal arguments regarding disclosure and a voir dire in respect of the notorious “XY” police informant.

R v O – Successfully defended juvenile facing multi handed rape allegation. Lengthy disclosure hearings led to Crown offering no evidence.

R v G – Represented Defendant charged with sexually assaulting elderly occupants during the course of dwelling house burglaries.

R v H – Knife point sexual assault on a juvenile by a female juvenile Defendant.

Conspiracies

R v O – Wide ranging conspiracy to commit armed robberies of commercial premises during the course of which off duty police officers’ car hijacked and driven off with baby present.

R v G – Conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Defendant assisted in the conveyance of a murder victim after attack and before death.

R v C – Conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Defendant assisted in conveyance from home to Nature Reserve of person who had fatally overdosed on illegal drugs.

R v M – Represented female Defendant in a multi handed conspiracy to supply Class A drugs with a value of 100’s of thousands of pounds. Crown represented by Leading and Junior Counsel.

R v C – Successfully defended in a multi handed drugs conspiracy involving multiple kilos of Class A drugs. The case demanded detailed analysis and cross-referencing of ANPR data and telecoms evidence. Secured the only acquittal.

R v K – Successfully defended in a conspiracy to commit tie-up robberies and burgle. Case involving supergrasses. Not guilty verdicts following legal argument.

R v R – Led in a conspiracy involving allegations of the setting up and running of large brothels generating a substantial income in a well organised and determined manner. A plethora of legal arguments were made, resulting ultimately in not guilty verdicts.

R v M – Successfully defended a female in a multi handed drugs conspiracy concerning vast quantities of Class A drugs. Acquittal secured following legal argument in respect of medical evidence.

R v Stefan Rafael – Leading the successful defence of one of the first multi handed trials alleging modern day slavery lasting 3 months. The Defendants and principle witnesses were Slovakian nationals. Argument was raised regarding the accuracy of translation resulting in close scrutiny of the importance of translation in criminal cases leading to a national inquiry. Required sensitive, careful handling of vulnerable witnesses during cross-examination. Resulted in the only acquittal.

R v R – Originally charged with conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. Resolved by way of pleas to 18 substantive offences. Secured a suspended term of imprisonment.

R v F – Involved supply of Class A drugs with an estimated value of £8m. Lengthy Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) proceedings. The Crown sought to recover £750,000, a forensic accountant was instructed.

Violence

R v H – A Section 18 machete attack leading to severe disfigurement. Not guilty verdict.

R v L – Section 18 Assault resulting in a long period of hospitalisation. Causation was in issue. Expert pathological evidence was challenged. Acquittal secured.

R v Morrison – Led in murder. Not guilty verdict.

R v Knox – Led in murder involving death of a local drug dealer. Case resolved by way of plea to manslaughter.

R v D – Attempted Murder. This was a case concerning extreme domestic violence. The Complainant was left facially disfigured following a frenzied knife attack in the presence of a very young child. Case resolved by way of a plea to an offence contrary to Section 18 OAPA 1861. Legal argument and challenge to psychiatric evidence in relation to the issue of ‘dangerousness’.

Arson

R v F – Represented Defendant responsible with others for firebombing the home of a victim who she believed had sexually assaulted her child.

Proceeds of Crime (POCA)

R v R – Represented property developer/cannabis farmer. In excess of £1m following instruction of forensic accountant realisable asset figure limited to £1,300.

R v F – Represented Defendant convicted in respect of serious drug offences. Crown sought to recover £750,000, forensic accountant instructed, after lengthy debate Crown abandoned its claim.

