

Patrick Harrington QC

Call 1973 | Silk 1993



Clerks' Details

 Nick Buckley
 0161 817 2757

Appointments

- Recorder of the Crown Court
- Bencher of Gray's Inn
- Former Leader of the Wales & Chester Circuit
- Former Vice President of the National Anti-Doping Panel
- Protector of the Millennium Awards Trust
- Protector of the Legacy Trust

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association
- Sports Law Association
- London Commercial & Common Law Bar Association
- Wales & Chester Circuit Criminal Law Association
- Ebbw Vale Rugby Football Club
- Glamorgan County Cricket

Education

- MA, in English Literature, University of Wales
- LLB (Hons), Birmingham College of Commerce
- Ebbw Vale Grammar School

Health and Safety CV

Overview

Patrick has been in silk for over 26 years, during which time he has acted for the defence in a number of fatal and non-fatal health and safety prosecutions.

He travels extensively in this work having done trials in Cardiff, Swansea, Caernarfon and Exeter.

Recommendations

Patrick Harrington QC is listed as a leading silk for crime in both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500.

A hugely experienced barrister on the Wales and Chester Circuit with significant experience in fraud and murder cases and who is highly praised by his peers.

“It is difficult to find a silk with more class or better forensic judgement.”

Recent work: Prosecuted a paranoid schizophrenic for the attempted murder of his partner’s son.

Chambers UK 2019, Crime

“He is very experienced and gets good results.” “He is diligent and well organised.”

Recent work: Acted for the first defendant in Operation Lunar, a £100 million-plus alleged tax fraud.

Chambers UK 2019, Financial Crime

Renowned for his skill in handling the prosecution and defence of high-value financial crime, including alleged tax frauds related to film finance, mortgages and carbon credits.

Strengths: “One of the best jury advocates in the UK in my opinion. Juries just love him. He plays the jury like a really good musician; he knows exactly what’s right for the jury, strips the case down to bare essentials whether prosecuting or defending a serious crime, and is very good at pretending to the jury that he’s just coming to terms with the facts of the case as the case is developing, even though you know he’s got an encyclopaedic knowledge of the case.”

Recent work: Acted for the prosecution arising from the Operation Bulkhead investigation, involving a suspected £275 million film finance tax fraud.

Chambers UK 2017

Hugely experienced barrister on the Wales Circuit with significant experience in fraud and murder cases and who is highly praised by his peers.

Strengths: “He’s the top man. No one would say otherwise. He’s very good.”

Recent work: Defended one of nine defendants charged with dealing in criminal property. The case involved the theft and sale from storage sites of BT equipment worth £1 million.

Chambers UK 2017

A vastly experienced advocate who has defended and prosecuted over 200 cases of homicide and fraud in his career. He receives high praise from peers for his expert knowledge in high-profile murder cases.

Strengths: “He is a robust cross-examiner.”

Recent work: Prosecuted a case involving a contract killing, successfully securing the conviction of the two defendants.

Chambers UK 2016

A formidable financial crime silk with significant defence and prosecution experience. He handles high-value criminal fraud matters including major commercial fraud, investment fraud and money laundering matters.

Recent work: Acted in Johnson & Johnson, a multimillion pound fraud involving the concealment of illegally obtained money.

Chambers UK 2016

‘A formidable advocate with a wealth of experience in the criminal courts.’

Legal 500

‘A particularly strong track record in high-profile homicide and fraud cases.’

Legal 500

‘Sought after for his experience on the defence side of multiple death cases.’

Legal 500

‘He combines excellent advocacy skills with iron determination.’

Legal 500 2018

Publications

- “A Nutshell on Evidence” (1974)
- “The Session Man” (with Bobby Graham)(2004)

Beyond the Bar

Patrick’s principal interests are sport and music. He plays tennis regularly, skis every season and is an avid supporter of Welsh Rugby – supporting not just the national team but also his home town team Ebbw Vale.

He is a regular concert goer -mostly rock and country music.

Cases

R v TJ Smith Contracting Limited (Exeter Crown Court) - TJ Smith Contracting Limited was charged with offences under sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety Act 1974. The company operated Mobile Elevated Working Platforms (commonly known as “cherry pickers”) as part of its decorating business. In December 2014 one platform toppled over, throwing clear one worker who was not harnessed but causing a crash injury to a worker who was wearing an appropriate harness. Although he did not suffer serious injuries he subsequently died of an embolism. At trial the defence successfully argued that as there was no causation between any fault of the defendant company and the death evidence of the fatality should be excluded. Although the company was convicted of both counts the modest fine imposed reflected the lack of culpability for the death.

R v DL [Cardiff Crown Court] (2010) - Represented, with Carwyn Cox, a Company charged with Health and Safety offences arising from a fatal accident at a water pumping station. The case was stayed as an abuse of process after lengthy arguments.

R v Fryer [Sheffield Crown Court] (2009) - Donald Fryer was the captain of a North Sea rig support vessel. When leaving port the anchor was hauled in and the anchor chain held within a chain locker. If unrestrained the chain rattled and disturbed crewmembers especially when they were trying to sleep. One crewmember opened the chain locker hatch intending to tie the chain down: he did not realise the toxic air within the chamber and within seconds of entering collapsed dead. A colleague entered the locker intent on rescue: he too collapsed dead within seconds. A third colleague suffered precisely the same fate. Donald Fryer was charged with the marine equivalent of manslaughter. After a three-week trial at Sheffield Crown Court he was acquitted of all three counts.

R v Reed [Cardiff Crown Court, Pitchford J] (2009) - With Carwyn Cox, successful defence of a company employee charged with manslaughter following a fatal accident at a water pumping station.

R v Porter (2008) - Philip Porter was the proprietor of a private school in Bangor, North Wales catering for children aged three upwards. The school building was not purpose built. A four-year-old child jumped down the last few stone steps of a perfectly safe set of steps in the school playground. He fell, banged his head and tragically died of his injuries. Mr Porter was prosecuted, personally, for alleged breaches of the Health and Safety Act 1974. At the conclusion of his trial at Mold Crown Court, to the surprise of many, he was convicted. On appeal to the Court of Appeal (Moses LJ) his appeal against conviction was allowed. The case is extensively quoted in academic and other learned articles as authority for the proposition that it is unreasonable to expect all risk to be avoided. Please read the article on this case in the New Law Journal.

R v Barton - The defendant was a CORGI registered gas fitter. He carried out a service on a gas boiler in a house in Derbyshire. A week later a 15-year-old girl whose school had closed for the day because of a heavy snowfall met up with her older boyfriend at the

house. Whilst occupied upstairs they each died of carbon monoxide poisoning. The defendant was prosecuted for alleged offences under the Health and Safety Act. At his trial at Nottingham Crown Court a jury failed to agree. The retrial took place and again the jury failed to agree. The prosecution then offered no further evidence and not guilty verdicts were entered.