

Tania Griffiths QC

Call 1982 | Silk 2006



Clerks' Details

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Appointments

- Recorder (2000)

Education

- Liverpool Polytechnic BA (Hons)
- Law Bar Vocational Course

Criminal Overview

Since taking Silk, Tania has specialised in defending allegations of serious sexual assault, in particular, cases of an historic nature, but she also deals with the full range of sexual allegations including the more contemporaneous, and cases of murder, manslaughter and child cruelty.

She frequently represents professionals involved, or formerly involved, in caring for or working with children as well as sexual allegations arising within the family, frequently in the context of divorce and custody/contact disputes. She never forgets that the client is a person, not a case, and embraces the team approach, putting the client at the heart of the case, ensuring they are fully involved in discussions and strategies whilst assisted by sensible and sound legal advice from the legal team.

Highly skilled, sensitive, supportive and approachable, she has excellent client care skills, works tirelessly for the client and always gives of her best. She understands very well the impact - both now and in the future - that such allegations can have on the client and their whole family.

She is well versed on the impact that mental health issues, communication disorders and learning disabilities suffered by complainants can have on the trial process and the effect of contamination (accidental or otherwise) on the reliability of evidence.

She also has a good understanding of the additional needs of clients who themselves suffer from learning disabilities to one degree or another and of specific considerations relating to these issues and how they can best be managed within the court process so that the defendant is not disadvantaged by them.

She firmly believes that enthusiasm, hard work and preparation is the

only way to ensure success and that justice cannot be achieved without proper and timely disclosure of information by the prosecution.

Tania has also been instructed in cases of murder and manslaughter for both the prosecution and defence. Her personal injury practice as a junior stands her in good stead in dealing with complex medical issues that can arise in these types of case.

Tania is consistently ranked as a leading individual in The Legal 500 UK Bar Guide.

Recommendations

“Tania Griffiths is not your average Barrister, flitting in and out to download advice; she spent so much time with us, talking things through, listening to our endless worries and ... afforded [us] the same compassion and time; everyone admired her.”

Client testimonial 2019

“Tania is of superb intellect with an exceptional level of legal knowledge and experience within criminal practice. She has the ability and passion to quickly assimilate a complicated Murder Prosecution and identify key issues/best strategies with razor like precision. Tania’s advocacy is exceptional, as is her ability to carry the confidence of, not only the Prosecution Lawyer, but the Senior Police Officers forming the major investigative team.”

The Legal 500 2022

“Once she has identified a weakness in the testimony of a witness she will seek to exploit to the full.”

The Legal 500 2021

“An excellent advocate with a tremendous will to win.”

The Legal 500 2020

“Passionate, valiant and level headed.”

The Legal 500 2018/19

“A straight-shooter with acute tactical nous.”

The Legal 500 2017

“Recommended for defending serious sexual offence cases.”

The Legal 500 2016

“Known for dealing with cases involving malicious and false allegations of sexual abuse.”

The Legal 500 2015

“Serious crime silks of choice.”

The Legal 500 2014

“Famed for trial skills and for her expertise across a broad range of issues.” – Chambers and Partners Barrister of the Year

Liverpool Law Society

Cases

R v S (2020) - Successful defence of contemporaneous allegations of rape between professional colleagues in different stages of their careers. Complainant alleged that the defendant, against her express wishes, had failed to wear a condom during intercourse. She also alleged that the defendant had admitted rape in text messages sent. Detailed expert analysis of the phone records was necessary to show that this was not the case. Technical evidence as to the order in which messages are sent, received and “stacked” was very important in proving that there was no admission. A successful application to adduce previous sexual history proved to be important in showing that the complainant was not telling the truth about injuries allegedly sustained. In cross examination, the complainant admitted having lied about aspects of the alleged rape. The judge withdrew the case from the jury on a half time submission of “no case”. A private prosecution is being pursued against the complainant.

R v M (2019) - Successful defence of historic abuse allegations made against the defendant by three related complainants. Defence case was that all three complainants had conspired to blackmail the defendant when he became the sole beneficiary of a family inheritance. Allegations unravelled following a lengthy trial process when painstaking reconstruction of events thirty years earlier showed that the allegations were not reliable and some evidence tied one or more complainants to the blackmail attempt. Image counts also featured in the case, the defence being that these were not the responsibility of the defendant and could have been due to accidental contamination from legitimate sites or due to malicious activity by one or more of the complainants. After a retrial the prosecution offered no evidence on the sexual allegations and the court ordered the image counts to lie on the file, never to be proceeded with.

IICSA 2017 -19 - Representing several Core Participants in the long running national Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse with particular reference to sexual abuse within The Roman Catholic Church. The case involved several detailed case studies into the prevalence of child sexual abuse at various Catholic Institutions and, in particular, the Church’s approach to safeguarding matters. Submissions had to be drafted, disclosure issues pursued, witness statements approved and questions prepared for consideration by the Chair and Counsel to the Inquiry in order to ensure that the issues that related to our clients were raised and dealt with appropriately. The Inquiry have published several interim reports and hope, in the fullness of time, to use the findings made in these case studies to assist in the production of national Child Protection Guidelines.

R v PB 2018 - Successful defence of the one defendant I represented in a multi-handed prosecution relating to allegations of child cruelty at a care home. Successful submission made to sever from the indictment sexual allegations made against other defendants on the basis that their presence was prejudicial to the defence case. Disclosure issues continued before and during the trial despite continued requests by the defence. Jury acquitted of one allegation and failed to agree on another whereupon the prosecution did not seek a retrial and offered no further evidence.

R v BD (2018) - Partially successful defence of historic sexual abuse allegations. This was a long and complicated trial and the prosecution case was a formidable one involving allegations of sexual impropriety by multiple complainants who were former residents of a care home. Other charges related to image counts and contemporaneous “grooming” offences using social media, all of which were complicated by previous pleas of guilty many years before to sexual abuse of residents of the same care home. The jury acquitted the defendant of approximately one third of the sexual offences, in some cases returning Not Guilty verdicts entirely for several complainants and returning mixed verdicts on others.

R v O (2018) - Successful defence of a contemporaneous rape allegation after the prosecution offered no evidence after social media messages came to light which cast doubt on the reliability of the complainant’s account.

R v S (2018) - Pre charge advice given to a male who had been arrested but not charged in relation to sexual allegations in a case involving family members who were locked in a bitter financial dispute.

R v L (2018) - Prosecuting allegation of manslaughter in the context of domestic violence. Defendant pleaded guilty after case had been opened and expert evidence called. Injury may not have been fatal had deceased promptly sought medical assistance .

R v L (2017) - Defendant convicted of historic sexual offences on a sole complainant who was related to him. Social media evidence featured in the case but not all was permitted by the court to be used for the purposes of cross examination. First attempt at appeal was unsuccessful but second appeal imminent in the light of new evidence.

R v C (2017) - Successful defence of a single allegation of historic child cruelty made by the now adult complainant against an elderly and wealthy female relative. The defence case was that the allegation resulted from a grievance over the defendant’s Will. Various members of the family and extended family were involved in the trial on either side. Some of the jury were in tears listening to the very compelling account given by the defendant in evidence. The jury acquitted in minutes.

R v K (2017) - Successful defence of contemporaneous allegations of sexual assault made by two elderly female complainants against a male unknown to them, save that he was a much younger member of the same health club. Allegations of “groping” were made by the two females who were known to each other whilst they were using the facilities at the health club. The jury acquitted the defendant of an allegation made by one complainant and failed to agree on the other , following which the prosecution did not seek a retrial but offered no evidence.

R v AS (2016) - Successful defence of multiple allegations of rape. Allegations by two ex-partners against professional man. The defence case was that one set of allegations arose after the partner had been hypnotised, the other through malice. Allegations arose in the context of contested contact proceedings following divorce. Detailed consideration of documents in the divorce was required, together with analysis of text and social media

messages.

R v A (2016) - A was a lead “target” for the national Operation Pallial enquiry. Serious allegations of multiple offending were made with the defendant being charged in respect of four complainants. Following disclosure of documents persistently sought by the defence, charges against two complainants was discontinued. The case eventually concerned allegations of sexual abuse by two complainants supported by a number of “bad character” witnesses. Contested bad character issues and arguments as to disclosure / abuse of process arose. The defendant was convicted notwithstanding defence criticisms as to the trial process and the reliability of the evidence and an appeal is ongoing.

R v LD (2016) - Successful defence of allegations of historic indecent assault on a young child by a (then) teenage babysitter. Evidence which proved beyond doubt that the accounts of the complainant, mother and other witnesses could not be relied upon showed the extent to which the evidence had been contaminated by gossip and innuendo.

R v TK (2016) - Successful defence of a young health care professional who was charged with digital penetration of a friend’s girlfriend. Case discontinued by the prosecution when it became apparent that the complainant was not going to attend the trial and the judge refused an adjournment after the defence produced compelling evidence of her unwillingness to engage with the trial process.

R v NG (2016) - Successful defence of allegations against a teenager with autism who was accused of racist violence on his first solo outing without his parents/ carers in a place other than his home town. Disability issues arose and expert evidence as to understanding autism was critical in ensuring that the Crown were fully apprised of all the issues , which led to the charges being discontinued.

R v DJ (2016) - Successful defence of another national Operation Pallial case concerned allegations of physical abuse against a husband (whom I represented) and wife who were former care home workers. Again disclosure proved to be the key in proving that allegations made by former residents were false.

R v S (2015) - Successful defence of another lead “target” in the national Operation Pallial enquiry. The case concerned allegations of physical abuse and was effectively 16 trials in one : with eight individual complainants and about eight “bad character” witnesses. The case involved expert medical evidence, contested bad character issues and arguments as to abuse of process. Disclosure proved to be the key to unlocking the prosecution case by proving in some cases that the allegations were false and others , unreliable. Thorough preparation and a determination for proper disclosure proved to be the key to securing acquittals on all counts.

R v T (2015) - Successful defence of former senior police officer who became head of security at a nightclub. Charged with rape of nightclub goer included allegations that he abused his position to target his victim. Again, defence evidence as to contemporary events was critical in discrediting the complainant’s allegations and proving their unreliability.

R v G T (2015) - Successful defence of historic allegation of rape on a step daughter. The chronological significance of events had been missed and/or misunderstood by the complainant so that the defence could easily prove the many fallacies in her account as to what had been the correct factual matrix at the time of the allegations. Evidence marshalled by the defence proved so compelling and in contradiction of the family's account that the judge directed the jury that unless they accepted the family's account, their credibility was so undermined that Not Guilty verdicts were inevitable.

R v SF (2015) - Successful defence of allegations of historic sexual abuse of one brother on another. The defence claimed collusion and abuse of process alleging that the allegations had been timed to await the death of their mother so that she could not give evidence. Allegations failed when a sister called to support the complainant let slip that she was awaiting the death of the father before similarly making an allegation that she too had been abused by another brother.

R v M (2014) - Successful defence of historic allegations of serious sexual assault against a youth worker where the recent allegations had been prompted by a chance meeting between the two many years later. The defendant had, in his capacity as youth worker, taken the complainant "under his wing" and given her lifts and taken her to places both alone and with other members of the church youth club unaware of the fact that she had developed a "crush" on him. The degree of unaccompanied contact (not unusual at the time) with a young female left the defendant "wide open" to allegations of the sort now being made. Fortunately, the defence were able to show the jury that the allegations were unreliable and that the complainant lacked credibility.

R v C A (2014) - Successful defence of historic allegations of serious sexual assault made by three ex partners against a former high ranking police officer. He was convicted of contemporary harassment charges. Issues arose as to the poor quality of the police investigation and the involvement of therapists in producing the complaint.

R v BW (2014) - Successful defence of historic allegations of sexual abuse of two boys by the defendant, then a boy slightly older than the complainants but now a successful local businessman. The defence case was that the allegations arose as part of a protection racket. There were serious failings in the police investigation and a refusal to mount any proper investigation into the defendant's allegations that this was a scam.

R v PH (2014) - Allegations of abuse by stepfather on stepdaughter and her friend. Usual issues relating to inconsistency and contamination of accounts.

R v Ah (2014) - Successful defence of allegations of sexual abuse in family setting (brother on younger brother). Detailed research was necessary of the family make up, background and recent history (especially ill feeling over a recent marriage) in order to demonstrate lack of credibility in account.

R v N H (2014) - Successful defence of very complex case in which it became apparent that the mother had "put up" the young step son (aged 11) to make allegations against

the defendant after the defendant commenced proceedings for contact to their daughter during the divorce. There was tape recorded evidence obtained by the defendant which showed conclusively that the mother was indeed coaching the son in the evidence that he should give and disclosure of that evidence led to difficult but important issues relating to admissibility. The mother was interviewed by the police in relation to this evidence but they declined to charge her in the midst of these proceedings. Also, very difficult tactical issues arose in relation to an admittedly false allegation of rape made by a former girlfriend, evidence of an alleged conspiracy between that former girlfriend and the complainant's mother and abduction of the defendant's other son by the child's mother (the defendant's first wife).

R v A (2014) - Successful defence of a very difficult and worrying case in which two apparently respectable professional women (one a member of the clergy and one a former paediatric nurse) were alleging serious historic sexual abuse by the defendant brother who could offer little reason why these allegations should suddenly be made but was adamant they were untrue. One of the complainants had psychological problems and both had undergone counselling and dubious therapy in which the defence case was that their memories had been tainted by inappropriate suggestion. Legal arguments as to contamination accepted by court and case dismissed.

R v G (2014) - Successful defence of allegations of historic sexual abuse by young brother on step sister. Prosecution offered no evidence on day of trial when messages on social media revealed that this was a false allegation. Allegations had caused significant disruption and upset as the teenage defendant was required to leave home which was occupied by parents and younger sister pending outcome of proceedings. Excellent detective work by mother and supporter unearthed the all-important social media messages.

R v M H (2014) - Successful defence of allegations of inciting a child to engage in sexual activity. Case involved numerous issues including vulnerable defendant (autism) and management of active suicide risk, intermediary, computer forensic expert, fake emails, authenticity and admissibility of Skype logs/electronic evidence and a suicide note relied on as bad character evidence in which threats of a terrorist nature were made.

R v K (2014) - Successful defence of allegations of sexual abuse allegedly against a shopkeeper on the young daughter of an employee. The defence case had been that the child had made the allegations because she feared that the shopkeeper would tell her mother that she had been sneaking a look at the "adult" magazines on display.

R v AM (2013) - Successful defence of allegations of historic sexual abuse by separate (but linked) complaints by two young girls. The first allegation, by his 13 year old stepdaughter arose in the context of relationship breakdown. The evidence revealed that the mother appeared to have been pressurising the child to make complaints and telling her what to say. In the second interview, the child was heard to complain that her "mum will go mad now" after she failed to make any substantive complaint. Social workers reported that when the child came out of that interview, the mother did indeed "go mad" and said to the child that she had "f***ed up everything" by failing to make an allegation. The second

child made complaints many years later, four days after the defendant had confided in her mother the fact of the previous allegation. That child had significant psychiatric issues and was also known to have made a false allegation of rape and to have accused her mother's cousin of having touched her. At the start of the case the prosecution accepted defence submissions that allegations against the defendant of conducting internet searches for child pornography were misconceived and indeed, the prosecution abandoned this aspect of the case.

R v H (2014) - Case involved allegations of sexual abuse against two young granddaughters.

R v C (2013) - Successful defence of allegations of historic sex abuse against defendant when he was a teenager. Allegations that he had abused his friend's sister were undermined by contemporary evidence, The influence of therapy on the making of the allegations was also a relevant feature.

R v LC (2013) - Successful defence of allegations of historic sex abuse against defendant made by partner's teenage daughter who disliked defendant and could be shown to have lied.

R v P (2013) - Successful defence of contemporary allegation of rape: issues involving consent/relevance of distress.