




David Birrell


Call 2006





Clerks

 Kate Masher
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 Suzanne Dutch
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 Denise Sheen
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Appointments

- Deputy District Judge (Civil)
- Legally Qualified Chair of Disciplinary Tribunals, England Boxing

Education

- Saint Edward's College, Liverpool
- University of Liverpool
- L'Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne
- Nottingham Law School

Criminal

“David’s attention to detail is extraordinary.” (Legal 500, 2023)

“His patience and understanding make him stand out from others.” (Legal 500, 2023)

“Nothing is ever too much trouble” (Legal 500, 2023)

Consistently ranked as a Leading Junior in the Legal 500, David specialises in serious crime. He handles cases in all areas of the criminal law including homicide, drug trafficking, terrorism, high value fraud and money laundering, and rape and sexual abuse. He has experience of leading teams in complex and sensitive cases.

He is regularly instructed in long running and high-profile cases which attract widespread media coverage. He defended as leading junior in R v Green and others, described by the BBC as ‘the UK’s biggest drugs conspiracy’. He also defended in R v Barton and others, a year-long fraud trial in which his client was the only defendant to be acquitted.

Hardworking and dedicated, David goes the extra mile for his solicitors. His lay clients appreciate his calm, patient and sympathetic manner. His advocacy, particularly his cross examination of witnesses, is economical and extremely effective.

Cases

R v TC (2023). Rape in which D advanced ‘sexsomnia’ defence. David skilfully cross examined an expert witness. David has conducted numerous ‘sexsomnia’ cases over 5 years such that solicitors now consider him an expert in this ever-developing field.

R v Green and others (2022-2023). Conspiracy to import vast quantities of Class A drugs. Defending, as leading junior. Trial lasted over a year. Case described by the BBC as 'the UK's biggest drugs conspiracy'.

R v AH (2022). Terrorism. Defending. D, who was serving a sentence for terrorism offences, was alleged to have disseminated terrorist materials from prison.

R v IG (2022). Death by dangerous driving. Defending. Acquitted.

R v PT (2021). Conspiracy to supply controlled drugs. OCG alleged to have supplied hundreds of kilograms of class A drugs. D, who had been extradited from Spain, was acquitted after David exposed gaps in the surveillance and telephone evidence.

Operation Clump (2019). VAT fraud. Defending. DJ and music producer charged with defrauding HMRC over 7 years. Acquitted.

Operation Ischia (2019). Large scale violent disorder trial involving German football hooligans. David's client, a Liverpool doorman said to be a principal offender, was acquitted following a 4-week trial in which David closely exposed flaws in the CCTV evidence and doggedly uncovered vital unused material.

R v DK (2019). Conspiracy to transfer firearm. Defending. D's dogged pursuit of unused material exposed a serious irregularity which caused the Prosecution to offer no evidence on the morning of trial.

R v Barton and others (2017-2018). Conspiracy to defraud. Defending. Over 100,000 pages of evidence. Trial lasted over 12 months. D acquitted. Case reported in national press.

R v Nam Pham and others (2016). Conspiracy to supply controlled drugs. Defending. 8-week trial. D successfully advanced a defence of 'modern slavery' on behalf of Vietnamese client.

R v Z and others (2013). Conspiracy to murder. D represented the first named defendant in 7-week trial. Complex issues of causation and toxicology. Case reported in national press.

Recommendations

“David can master a case immediately upon instruction and is always fully prepared in advance of conference, having digested all evidence in the case and having identified the issues immediately. He is always available to deal with issues on a case or to provide advice, his preparation of his cases lead to successful legal argument, and his advocacy is incredible.”

The Legal 500 2024

Beyond the Bar

- David runs marathons and ultramarathons
- He enjoys cooking and dining out.
- Having lived, studied and worked in Paris, David speaks French fluently.