

Katy Thorne KC



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Profile

She is ranked in both Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners and has recently been appointed as an Assistant Coroner.

'Katy is outstanding in every way. She is an impressive and effective advocate.' - Legal 500 2024

Her specialisms include the most serious violence, including murder and manslaughter, sexual allegations and abuse, child abuse and financial crime. She is frequently instructed in multi handed murders and is ***"always thorough and well-prepared"*** (Legal 500) and, with long experience of representing vulnerable or professional defendants, her client care is second to none.

She is regularly instructed in heavy fraud and money laundering cases. Her training and experience of working in banking and insurance early in her career provides her with particular insight into real business life. She has a flair for getting the best out of anxious clients, and in court knows when to ruffle feathers and when to charm. Her recent caseload includes an international conspiracy to defraud which was privately prosecuted by the

Premier League, high value bank fraud/money laundering, conspiracy to defraud by false representation and multi-million boiler room fraud. She is always available for pre-charge advice and will actively pursue all available routes to prevent prosecution.

Her clients, whether professionals accused of fraud or sexual offending, parents accused of baby abuse, teenagers accused of gang killings, or Interested Persons in inquests, receive a combination of tactical nous, clever legal arguments, robust advocacy and jury craft to obtain the best possible outcome.

Katy has particular expertise in challenging experts from medical to cell site **“Excellent on forensic issues, especially baby-shaking cases and appeal work.”** (Legal 500) **“She has an exceptional ability to unravel complex medical evidence and deal with expert witnesses”** (Chambers & Partners). She is often sought by professionals who may also face proceedings brought by their regulatory body, particularly where those arise as a result of criminal allegations. In 2015, she published Mason’s Forensic Medicine for Lawyers with Professor Helen Whitwell and others.

Katy’s inquest work has become a larger part of her practice, with experience of representing families in deaths involving suspected suicide, alleged lack of care in hospitals and prisons, and violent deaths.

Katy has a long and established record in second opinion appellate work, including CCRC and ECtHR. Her clients praise her brilliant judgment, her robust court presence, and creative intelligence and being easy to work with.

Languages

French

Related practice areas

Criminal Law

Inquests and Public Inquiries

Business Crime

Criminal Appeals

Sexual Crime and Offences Against Children

Katy is extremely experienced in sexual crime (historic, inter-family, gang-related, cold-case, male on male, transsexual; sex rings; relationship); and has a national reputation for cases

involving violence against young children and babies.

Her cross-examination skills are so well honed, she is adept at challenging witnesses from medical experts to young witnesses (including those with learning disabilities and with intermediaries).

Notable cases include **R v B**, a shaken baby allegation. The case became a leading authority on dealing with experts and led Katy to become one of the most sought-after advocates in this field.

Past successes include cases thrown out due to arguments of abuse of process and/or doli incapax in historic cases. More than one such argument has resulted in the Prosecution choosing not to prosecute, even where clients had relevant previous convictions. Recent cases include **R v D & D** (the child crushed to death in the footwell of a car) **R v K & N** (sexual abuse in context of faith healing).

Serious Violence

Katy has a high level of expertise in cases involving medical, DNA and toxicological evidence and her breadth of cases ranges from gang related murders to attempted mercy killings, deaths in custody and fatal arson attacks.

Katy has been instructed in many cases involving clients with challenging presentations where her exceptional client care skills and talent for expert-handling are a prerequisite to success. In particular, she succeeded in securing an acquittal for a man accused of his third murder - committed in prison of a fellow lifer for cannibalistic motives (**R v M**); for a mentally ill woman accused of attempting to murder her terminally ill mother for altruistic reasons (**R v T**); for a lifer accused of raping another male prisoner (**R v R**); and for a damaged 16 year old who stabbed his 17 year old friend in the back (**R v K**).

Katy is frequently instructed in cases involving those who are accused of homicide in the course of their work, from prison officers (**R v S and others**) and (**R v H and others**) to nurses (**R v M and others**). These cases in particular benefit from Katy's high degree of skill in challenging complex expert evidence.

She has a very strong reputation, and a high acquittal rate, in serious organised crime related violence (e.g. **R v E** drug trafficking related murder; and **R v G** armed robbery murder).

Financial Crime and Drugs

Katy's early training in business, insurance and banking gives her a particular affinity and understanding of both the business world and the criminal courts. Her ability to assimilate large amounts of technical information and challenge expert reports in fields as diverse as cell site to forensic accounting mean that she is an excellent choice in money laundering and fraud as well as large scale drugs conspiracies. Recent financial cases have included Premier League private prosecution of multinational football streaming conspiracy, Trading Standards prosecution, large scale VAT fraud and Hawala banking money laundering.

Criminal Appeals

Katy's extensive experience in the Court of Appeal and with the Criminal Cases Review Commission for conviction and sentence appeals with an enviable success rate, means that she is frequently instructed by the most respected appeal firms in a range of cases: murder and rape convictions to dangerousness sentences (in which she is a recognised expert and wrote the Insight pages on Westlaw) and is also frequently instructed to look again at baby abuse murder convictions and historic sex allegations.

She represented Hutchinson (2015) in the European Court of Human Rights in relation to Whole Life Terms and Article 3.

Katy has been involved in a number of guideline cases (e.g., **R v Henderson and others** [2010] 2 Cr.App.R. 24, CA, (expert evidence and shaken baby); **R v Brustenga-Vilaseca** [2011] EWCA Crim 1099, [2012] 1 Cr App R (S) 3; and **R v Beeton** [2008] EWCA Crim 1421 [2009] 1 Cr. App. R. (S.) 46 (false allegations of rape).

Inquests

Katy's inquest work has become a larger part of her practice, where she combines her vast experience of cross examination and of investigations into deaths in custody and in hospital settings with fabulous advocacy and great judgment to superb effect.

Recent instructions have included deaths in psychiatric hospitals, prisons, road traffic accidents including those involving police pursuit and suspected suicides questioned by the family as possible homicide.

She is an Assistant Coroner.