

## Sarah Vine KC



Call: 1997

Silk: 2022

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### Profile

Sarah is ranked as a leading silk in both Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners. Recently, she has been instructed in a number of significant and high profile cases, including allegations of systemic corruption at Liverpool City Council, a challenge to the legality of the CPS charging guidance on consent and deception, and the defence of the comedy writer and journalist **Graham Linehan**.

Sarah's economic crime practice involves not only trial work but also pre-charge challenges to investigatory powers. An ability to be pro-active from the inception of an investigation is something she regards as essential in the context of any modern criminal defence practice, but particularly those involving professional and corporate suspects.

Sarah's exceptional skill with vulnerable witnesses and defendants was recognised by the fact that she was selected as a facilitator to train other advocates under the ICCA's Advocacy & the Vulnerable programme.

Her published work includes case updates for Taylor on Appeals, and consultation responses on behalf of the South Eastern Circuit and the multi-disciplinary organisation Legal Feminist.

She is currently writing a series of articles for publication by the Criminal Law Review. Sarah regularly advises Parliamentary parties on foreseeable legal and human rights risks arising from prospective legislation.

A focus on her clients' bespoke needs, often from the very early stages of a criminal investigation, means that Sarah is rarely now available to conduct publicly funded work save in exceptional cases. She believes that achieving the best outcome for a client involves her having the time available to give to their cause. As a consequence, those who instruct Sarah usually do so at an early stage.

## **What the directories say**

### **2025**

Legal 500: *'Sarah is extremely intelligent and prepares thoroughly. She is a first class advocate and her clients are fortunate to have her leading the team.'*

Chambers & Partners: *'Sarah is tenacious, full of enthusiasm for the cause and works really hard. She puts in the time, prepares cases well all the way through and offers constant attention.'*

*'She is quite simply a natural in silk. She has dealt with a sensitive case with the utmost skill and ease. She is easily the most competent person in the courtroom.'*

### **2024**

Legal 500: *'Sarah is a very serious player. She has a great courtroom presence, is a brilliant cross-examiner and a very humane and funny individual. She has served time defending in the most difficult and unpopular cases so she is as tough as they come and has seen it all.'*

Chambers & Partners: *"A truly wonderful advocate. Both her written and oral advocacy are unquestionably excellent."*

*"Her emotional intelligence with juries is there for all to see."*

### **2023**

Chambers & Partners: *"An outstanding and fierce advocate whom you want in your corner."*

Legal 500: *'It is difficult to express the relief one feels with Sarah by your side on a tricky case. She has the ability to really identify the key issues and plan to deal with them one by one.'*

*"Sarah is an incredibly hard worker, and diligent in her preparation. Her use of English in her written pleading phenomenal, which makes any written argument succinct and effective. Sarah also has an easy and affable charm which puts clients at their ease, which professional*

*clients love her for. "*

## Related practice areas

Criminal Law

### Economic and Business Crime

- **R v SH**; instructed to represent a Liverpool City Council employee alleged to have sourced and disclosed confidential information to an unauthorised property consultant, enabling him to 'game the system'.
- **R v V**; instructed to represent the man alleged to be the architect of the system used to launder the proceeds of the UK's largest importation of class A drugs.
- **R v C & others**; representing the first defendant in the lead Encrochat case. Contested hidden assets hearing in multi-million pound POCA proceedings.
- **R v SM**: Securing a wasted costs order of over £40,000 against the CPS in connection with disclosure failings.

Sarah is also instructed to resist applications for protective orders (account freezing, restraint, cash forfeiture)

### Homicide and Serious Organised Crime

- **R v CG**: instructed to represent the only child defendant in a 10 handed gangland murder, listed for trial in 2026.
- **R v KP**: Representing a father charged with murder of his 13 week old baby. Over the last 6 weeks of his life, the victim suffered 41 fractures and a catastrophic head injury.
- **R v SH**: Defendant acquitted of manslaughter of a class A drug dealer, having been accused of fatally choking the deceased during a robbery for his car and house keys.
- **R v EM**: Representing one of two defendants for attempted murder, involving a gangland shooting.
- **R v RS**: Representing a man charged with beating his partner to death while in alcoholic blackout.
- **R v AU & ors**: Representing the lead defendant in attempted revenge murder of two burglars;

- **R v MP & ors:** Instructed for the only acquitted defendant in the 8 handed 'Tik Tok' revenge murder case;
- **R v CS;** Defendant acquitted in an allegation of drugs-related murder;
- **R v CMD:** Vulnerable child defendant acquitted at half-time in conspiracy to murder for gain.
- **R v JD;** representing the lead defendant in offences involving organised trafficking of firearms and class A drugs by alleged members of the Salford-based 'Anti-A Team'.
- **R v CT:** Conspiracy to transfer prohibited weapons. Sarah's submissions on the evidence persuaded the Crown to drop the case against her client prior to trial.

## Sexual Offences

Sarah is recognised as an expert in the field of sexual offending, and her practice has encompassed allegations ranging from minor sexual assaults to serial rape (involving social situations, professional contexts and between strangers), sadistic abuse and familial sexual harm. She has extensive experience dealing with neurodivergent clients, and understands well how the stresses arising from sexual allegations can impact an accused's ability to participate in his or her own case.

Notable cases include the following:

- **R v YD:** First successful defence of an allegation of "stealthing" (deceptive removal of condom).
- **R v GP:** Man accused of long-term sexual and violent abuse of multiple family members.
- **R v NZ:** Successful defence of a GP previously convicted of sexually abusing patients, accused of further offences by multiple former patients.
- **R v DA:** First successful defence of an allegation of importation of a 'child sex doll'.
- **R v DC:** Acquittal at half time as a result of cross-examination of complainant in an allegation of gunpoint rape against a background of sexual exploitation and drugs supply.

Sarah is also instructed to resist applications for protective orders (Sexual Harm Prevention Orders, Sexual Risk Orders; Notification Orders/Requirements)

## Appellate Work

Sarah is currently instructed in a challenge to the CPS's charging guidance for rape and sexual offences where consent is alleged to be vitiated by deception.

- ***R (C) v DPP*** [2020] 4 W.L.R. 158; challenge to the legality of the European Investigation Order under which all EncroChat material was transmitted to the UK for the purposes of Operation Venetic.
- ***R (Vazeer) v Manchester Crown Court***; challenge to the decision to extend custody time limits by over 4 years.
- ***R v A & others*** [2021] 1 Cr. App. R. 22; leading case on admissibility of EncroChat material.
- ***R (Proimage) v Lancashire Magistrates' Court & ors*** [2021] EWHC 3244 (Admin); challenge to the legality of warrants issued under the Trade Marks Act 1994.
- ***R v Hajdarmataj*** [2019] EWCA Crim 303; Rape conviction overturned on the basis of disclosure failings in respect of non-conviction bad character evidence.

## Advisory Work

Sarah has advised both individual and corporate clients on pre-charge strategy, reputational threats, protecting privacy rights and police use of 'common law disclosure' against an accused. This early input frequently results in matters being resolved in the client's favour without any publicity.