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Claire Pickthall

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Practice Overview

Claire is a member of both the Criminal Team and Immigration team, having initially specialised in Criminal law following completion of her pupillage in 2000.

Crime

She is instructed by both the Prosecution and the Defence in a wide range of cases dealing with serious violent offences, complex dishonesty offences, serious and historic sexual offences and drug conspiracy offences. She has significant experience of high value Proceeds of Crime cases and is often instructed in cases that attract significant media attention.

Immigration

Claire regularly appears in the Immigration & Asylum Chamber, including the Upper Tribunal on cases involving asylum, family and private life claims, EEA regulations and deportation.

Recognised for her thorough preparation and clear, concise and persuasive advocacy within the Court room, she is well known for being approachable both to her professional and lay clients.

She takes her responsibility as an Advocate very seriously, understanding that it can be a difficult journey for all of those involved, striving to make it as smooth a journey as possible both for her professional client and her lay client.

Claire is a Grade 4 Prosecutor and member of the Rape and serious sexual offences panel.

Notable and Reported cases

- R v PG & AG (2018)
Junior counsel for 1st defendant in historic sex case dubbed the "Fred and Rose West of Barry"
- Operation Hallett
 - **R v Corry (2015 – ongoing)**. Defence counsel for Corry charged with conspiracy to supply cannabis (186kgs located, 16 defendants).
- Operation Mint



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- **R v Martin (2015 – ongoing)**. Defence Counsel in large scale drugs conspiracy involving cocaine and mephedrone. Complicated Proceeds of Crime Application due to property recovered from the defendant and evidencing legitimate income.

 - Operation Kinsfolk
 - **R v Quick et al (2010-2015)**
Junior Counsel prosecuting on behalf of the Organised Crime Division of the CPS. Multi million pound drugs conspiracy, 11 defendants faced trial, the indictment contained both drugs and money laundering offences. The case also involved allegations of conspiracy to supply Class A drugs to Australia. Sole conduct of the Proceeds of Crime Applications, the value of drugs involved exceeded £10m.

 - Operation Denver
 - **R v Pryzborowski (2011)**
Defence Counsel in drugs conspiracy involving a kilo of heroin being seized from a vehicle in which the defendant was travelling.

 - Operation Rebus
 - **R v Cureton (2010)** Defence Counsel in drugs conspiracy.

 - Operation Balneation
 - **R v McNess et al (2008 – 2011)** - Junior Counsel prosecuting on behalf of the Organised Crime Division of the CPS. Drugs conspiracy involving Class A and Class B drugs. The Proceeds of Crime applications involved multi million pounds worth of realisable assets.

 - R v Hamza 2016

'Fresher's Week Rape' – prosecuting

 - R v Harrhy 2015

Defence Counsel in allegations of rape made by former partner, multiple allegations of violence admitted as 'background evidence'.

 - R v Cox 2015

Defence Counsel for defendant who pleaded guilty to 2 counts of robbery of high street banks at knife point

 - R v Coslett 2014

Defence counsel for first named defendant on the indictment in an allegation of manslaughter, the case attracted significant press interest.



- R v Owen 2014

Prosecution Counsel in case alleging multiple rapes of children by a convicted rapist

- R v Batten 2013

Prosecution Counsel in case involving allegations of historical sexual abuse. Leave to appeal against conviction granted, conviction upheld by the Court of Appeal.

- R v Donovan and Gibbons 2013

Defence counsel, case involved allegations of robbery in the victims home, one victim left with permanent brain injury, unable to continue work as a General Practitioner

Appointments

Accredited Pupil Supervisor

Education & Qualification

- Caerleon Comprehensive School
- 1994 – 1997: University of Wales, College Cardiff - LLB Hons. 2:1
- 1998- 1999: Inns of Court School of Law - Bar Vocational Course: 'Very Competent'
- 1999 – 2000: Pupil, Temple Chambers, Cardiff
- 2000 – 2012: Tenant, Temple Chambers, Cardiff
- 2012 – Present: Tenant 30 Park Place, Cardiff

Recommendations

- 'Excellent with clients and a great advocate.' (Legal 500, 2020)
- 'She has a meticulous eye for detail.' (Legal 500, 2018)
- 'An excellent advocate with a systematic approach'. (Legal 500, 2017)
- 'She has recent experience in historical sexual abuse trials'. (Legal 500, 2016)
- 'She is approachable, and has an excellent rapport with clients and instructing solicitors'. (Legal 500, 2015)