



Christine Agnew KC

Call 1992

Silk 2015

Christine Agnew KC is ranked in the Legal Directories as a leader in Health and Safety and General Crime. She was nominated as "Crime Silk of the Year 2019", "Health and Safety Silk of the year 2020" and "Crime Silk of the Year 2023", in the words of Chambers and Partners -"She really is first class."

Described in the most recent Chambers and Partners as an "exceptional advocate" her complete commitment to her client's cause is summed up by the Legal 500 2019 which says of her that "she never shies away from a fight" but at the same time she is described as "tactically astute." The Legal 500 2023 says '*Christine is highly respected by all. She is diligent and empathetic in her approach and is an exceptional advocate.*' She is described by the Legal 500 as "an excellent trial advocate."

She was described by Hadley Freeman, when writing about the Kevin Spacey trial in The Times as being 'as quick as a cobra' and it was suggested that the Writers Guild of America should hire Christine to 'punch up scripts'. Chambers 2023 described her as being 'tenacious in court, and particularly skilled in cross-examination'

She conducts the most serious and complex criminal cases as leading counsel for both the defence and the prosecution. Her practice covers the full range of criminal work and she has very considerable experience in relation to allegations involving murder, manslaughter, serious sexual offences and other serious criminal offences.

Christine has wide experience of dealing with complex and expert evidence from involved Health and Safety allegations to "baby-shaking" and infant non-accidental injury cases. The Directories have described her as a "highly regarded silk with a vast criminal practice prosecuting and defending the most serious heavyweight criminal matters including murder...."

She is used to conducting extensive cross-examination of medical professionals, technical expert witnesses and other scientific evidence making it accessible for juries: this is summed up by the Directory description of her as someone "who is trusted by judges and juries alike."

Christine regularly appears in all types of heavy-weight fraud cases. She specialises in cases of corruption, money laundering and other serious financial crime. She represented the only defendant to be acquitted in the first prosecution by the Serious Fraud Office under the Bribery Act.

She has a reputation as being an extremely hard working and able defence advocate who is exceptionally good with clients with the Directories having described her as "...great with clients", "she is very gentle and considerate with clients" and "clients love her." The Directories also note however, that "...she's not a soft touch" and that "her effortless manner belies her steely determination".

Whether as a prosecutor or when instructed for the defence she is frequently instructed in a case from the earliest possible stage assisting in making important tactical decisions. She is consultative, proactive and accessible to all in the team. As the Directories note she is both “tactically astute and level-headed.”

Christine has an extensive health and safety law practice prosecuting and defending in the most high profile of cases. She has prosecuted several cases involving fatalities that have required detailed specialist knowledge in the fields of construction, dangerous liquids, highways and crowd control.

She has considerable experience of coroners’ inquests.

She appears before Police Disciplinary and Appeal Tribunals.

Christine is authorised to accept instructions from members of the public in certain circumstances.

Practice Areas

Advisory

Christine is often instructed to advise individuals before charge in relation to serious sexual offences. This can include the position to be adopted in a police interview or drafting letters of representation as to why an individual should not be charged. This can often have a huge impact on whether a client will even be charged with a criminal offence.

She also advises the Crown Prosecution Service and other prosecution bodies at the pre charge stage in relation to serious and complex crimes. This involves evidence gathering and advice in relation to arrest.

Appeals

Christine is also regularly instructed to give a second opinion both upon requests from solicitors and after referral from The Criminal Cases Review Commission in cases where she did not act in the court below.

She has also advised ‘pro bono’ in cases from Commonwealth jurisdictions and appeared in the Privy Council in relation to an appeal against a murder conviction from Jamaica.

Crime

Christine has specialised for 30 years in prosecuting and defending serious and complex crime. As a KC this continues and she specialises in the most serious criminal offences.

She regularly represents high profile clients and those who attract media attention. Christine understands the particular pressure that brings to a case and is able to help deal with it.

Christine has significant experience in dealing with the press and applying for or opposing reporting

restrictions.

Notable crime cases

R v KS

Prosecuting Kevin Spacey who was charged with historical sexual allegations.

R v B

Representing man charged with death of his partner. Evidence included cell site, DNA evidence and extensive scientific evidence.

R v W

Representing man charged with the Murder of his mother by arson.

R v S

Representing a 16 year old boy charged with the murder of a 'helpful neighbour'. Defendant was of good character.

R v C

Representing an 18 year old charged with Murder. The only defendant of 3 to be acquitted.

R v C

Representing 17 year old charged with the manslaughter of an elderly neighbour by encouraging another to put a lit firework through her letter box.

R v K

Representing a man who had been communicating with an undercover police officer, believing her to be a 13 year old girl. Charged with offences under the Sexual Offences Act.

R v B

Representing a mother charged with the murder of her 3-month old Daughter. Following commissioning of an expert psychiatric report and negotiation the prosecution accepted a plea to Infanticide. The defendant was sentenced to a hospital order without a restriction order.

R v C

Representing the ex-managing partner of a magic circle firm charged with assault and making threats to kill against his ex-wife.

R v O

Representing a sitting MP charged with perverting the course of justice.

R v V

Prosecuting a two handed murder / manslaughter in which the killing was as a result of a single blow.

R v T

Representing a man with significant mental health problems who had set fire to a block of flats and had caused the death of a heavily pregnant woman. The case was ultimately disposed of by way of a hospital order.

Fraud

Christine has extensive experience in all types of fraud cases. She has recently been instructed in mortgage frauds, VAT frauds, fraudulent trading cases and a trial involving allegations of bribery.

She regularly acts for professionals, whether company accountants or directors.

Christine also has considerable experience in relation to money laundering allegations. She has acted for individuals and advised companies.

Notable fraud cases

R v E

Currently instructed in high value money laundering case.

R v A

Representing defendant who was privately prosecuted charged with an insurance fraud.

R v G

Representing agent who had received allegedly corrupt payments for contracts in Saudi Arabia.

R v D

Representing deaf defendant charged with 2 complex Access to Work frauds.

R v L

Representing an employee of the NHS charged with corruption in relation to the receipt of payments in relation to the awarding of contracts.

R v W

Representing a qualified accountant charged with conspiracy to furnish false information and bribery. This was the first bribery prosecution by the SFO under the new Bribery Act. Mr W, a qualified accountant, was the only defendant to be cleared. His co-accused, who were convicted, received between 6 and 13 years' imprisonment.

Health & Safety

Christine has appeared in a number of Gross Negligence Manslaughter and Corporate Manslaughter trials. She has often been instructed to advise at an early stage when prosecuting in relation to charge and evidence gathering. Christine has prosecuted several fatality cases requiring detailed and specialist knowledge. She has represented local authorities, companies and directors.

Notable health & safety cases

R v A Ltd

Prosecuting a company and directors for Corporate Manslaughter and GNM arising out of an incident at a waste disposal year which resulted in the decapitation of a worker by an industrial conveyor belt.

R v L & H

Prosecuting 2 individuals for GNM arising out of a RIB colliding with a buoy in Southampton Water. There were also a number of maritime regulatory offences on the indictment.

R v H Ltd

Representing a company and director charged with offences arising out of a man being crushed to death by a number of panes of glass.

R v D

Prosecuting the Match Commander on duty at the Hillsborough Stadium and the Club's safety officer on 15th April 1996 when 96 Liverpool football fans died as a result of crushing.

R v H

Representing Local Authority Highways Department in relation to a serious accident causing grave injuries to a child involving street furniture. Involved advising the CEO and CFO of the Council.

R v A

Prosecuting a company and director for Corporate Manslaughter and health and safety offences arising out of an accident at a waste site resulting in the death of an employee by crushing.

R v O

Prosecuting a company charged with corporate manslaughter and individual directors charged with health and safety offences. Fragile roof case resulting in death of employee.

R v V

Prosecuted a large waste company in relation to the death of an employee who had been crushed by a vehicle at a waste disposal site.

R v T

Advised in relation to the prosecution of two defendants for Gross Negligence Manslaughter in relation to the death of a child on a bouncy castle.

R v L

Prosecuting a company charged with health and safety offences surrounding the crushing to death of an employee during the installation of a staircase.

Serious Sexual Offences

As a junior barrister Christine spent many years prosecuting and defending the most serious type of sexual offences.

As a KC this continues; she is widely considered to be a sensitive and client friendly leader of the team.

She has particular expertise in historical cases but is also enormously experienced in cross examining young witnesses.

Christine has successfully argued that a prosecution for historical sexual offences is unfair due to delay in bringing the charges.

Notable serious sexual offences cases

LC

Advising a man of good character pre charge. Drafting letter of representations for submission to police and CPS. Liaising with a solicitors' firm dealing with the internal investigation of the company.

D

Advising a man of good character post interview and pre charge. Drafted a letter of representations on charge for submission to the investigating officer and the CPS.

R v S

Representing a man of good character charged with sexual offences dating back to the 1970's.

R v H

Indecent images case in which defendant was made the subject of a suspended sentence despite the fact he had a huge number of images. Christine was involved early and advised as to plea from the outset. He was an orthodontist and Christine also represented him in front of the GDC thereby ensuring continuity of representation.

R v FD

Representing a Premiership football player charged with gang rape.

R v X

Letter of representation for young man accused of sexual offences leading to a decision not to charge.

Memberships

- Association of Regulatory & Disciplinary Lawyers
- Criminal Bar Association
- Essex Bar Mess
- Health & Safety Lawyers Association
- South Eastern Circuit

Qualifications

- Grade 4 Prosecution Advocate

Directory Quotes

- Christine is highly respected by all. She is diligent and empathetic in her approach and is an exceptional advocate." **Legal 500 2024**
- "As quick as a cobra" **Hadley Freeman (The Times)**
- "Christine has a lovely manner in court. She's very approachable for the jury but at the same time quite firm." **Chambers & Partners 2024**
- "She really is an exceptional advocate" **Chambers & Partners 2024**
- She is tenacious in court and particularly skilled in cross-examination." **Chambers & Partners 2020**
- "She is a very strong advocate. She is able to explain complex matter to a jury with ease." **Legal 500 2021**
- "She never shies away from a fight." **Legal 500 2021**
- "Christine is extremely knowledgeable and a real team player, who rolls up her sleeves and gets stuck in. Christine deals skillfully with intricate legal problems, difficult witnesses and tactical issues. She is robust but calm when dealing with tricky judges and opponents. A pleasure to work with and particularly responsive." **Legal 500 2021**
- "Christine is already excellent and will only grow towards the very highest level of performance. She dealt singlehandedly with intricate legal problems, difficult witnesses and tactical issues. She is robust but calm when dealing with tricky judges and opponents. A pleasure to work with and is particularly responsive." **Chambers & Partners 2020**
- "Amazing for high-profile cases. Christine is so approachable and personable, and she always delivers. I love the way she really breaks the trial right down. She deals with each step and each process so thoroughly." **Chambers & Partners 2020**
- "A tactically astute and level-headed silk." **Legal 500 2020**
- "An outstanding advocate." **Legal 500 2020**
- "She never shies away from a fight." **Legal 500 2020**
- "A highly regarded silk with a vast criminal practice prosecuting and defending the most serious heavyweight criminal matters such as murder...She is well regarded by market sources for being "down-to-earth and approachable." **Chambers 2019**
- "Really personable, really effective and someone who is trusted by judges and juries alike." **Chambers 2019**
- "Her effortless manner belies her steely determination." **Legal 500**
- "She really is first class. She's sympathetic and hard working, and clients love her, but she's not a soft touch." **Chambers & Partners**
- "An excellent trial advocate who is great with clients." **Legal 500**
- "She really is first class. She's sympathetic and hard-working, and clients love her, but she's not a soft touch." **Chambers & Partners**