



Claire Howell

Call 2003

✉ Claire.Howell@drystone.com

☎ 020 7404 1881

Claire Howell specialises in the most serious complex criminal cases and regulatory law with a particular emphasis on murder, fraud and regulatory offences.

Claire is often instructed by solicitors in cases involving high profile or professional clients.

Her practice mainly focuses on defence work, but she has been a Grade 4 panel advocate for over a decade and is on both the CPS Specialist Fraud Panel and Serious Crime Panel. Claire is also appointed to the list of specialist advocates in Health and Safety, and acts in cases prosecuted by Local Authorities and Trading Standards.

She also has a particular interest in mental health in the context of criminal cases and was asked to contribute to the review undertaken by 'Justice'.

Chambers and Partners describes her as 'highly sought after'.

Expertise

Murder & Manslaughter

Claire Howell has been instructed as junior counsel in many murder cases, and has been instructed alone in attempted murder trials, appeals against conviction/sentence in murder cases, manslaughter cases and cases involving deaths in the work place.

She has a particular interest in scientific, scenes of crime, and medical evidence as well as expertise in dealing with vulnerable defendants or witnesses.

Notable Murder & Manslaughter cases

R v S

(Led junior). Murder against a background of organised crime. The case hinged on circumstantial and cell site evidence.

R v A

(Led Junior). Murder in a domestic context involving psychiatric evidence.

R v W&H

(Led junior). Murder of a vulnerable man; case involved forensic entomology evidence re: time of death.

R v JC & Others

Instructed alone and later led by a QC. Murder of a vulnerable man; case involved a significant amount of forensic evidence and a client with a brain injury and significant mental health problems.

R v ML

Initially instructed alone, later led by QC, to represent a young client accused of a stranger murder. The case involved psychiatric evidence.

R v G & L

(Led junior). Case of murder by pushing down stairs; presentation to the jury of large amounts of digital evidence and a "3D" presentation.

R v S

(Led junior). 'Staged suicide' murder involving a large amount of scenes of crime and forensic evidence.

R v W & Others

Initially instructed alone, later led by QC to represent a young client of good character accused of a 'revenge' gang murder.

R v L

(Led junior although leader unavailable for part of the trial). Murder case involving expert evidence about dementia and a fitness argument.

R v N & Others

(Led junior although undertook significant portions of the case as leader unavailable). Circumstantial gang murder case focusing on presentation of multiple sources of evidence.

R v DR

(Acting alone). Representing a client with autism on appeal against his murder conviction.

R v S

(Acting alone). Representing a defendant on appeal against a murder conviction; case involved psychiatric evidence in the context of PTSD following military service.

Modern Slavery

Claire Howell was instructed as Junior Counsel in one of the first Prosecutions of Modern Slavery and has dealt with a number of cases. As such she is familiar with the particular issues that can arise in such cases and is adept at anticipating and advising in respect of them.

Notable Modern Slavery cases

R v C & Others, Luton Crown Court

Instructed as junior counsel in the second ever prosecution under the Modern Slavery Legislation.

Operation "E"

Large investigation into organised criminal networks committing immigration offences

R v V & Others

Large police operation focusing on forced prostitution rings.

Sexual Offences

Sexual offences are a uniquely difficult area for a number of reasons. Claire Howell has considerable experience in dealing with these cases and in representing professionals, as well as particularly vulnerable young people, accused of rape and other types of sexual offences.

Notable Sexual Offences cases

Operation C

A large police investigation into abuse at multiple children's homes. Case involved dealing with vast amount of material as the case spanned multiple decades, as well as dealing sensitively with very vulnerable people involved in the case.

R v A

Allegations of 'Stranger rape'. Alleged anal rape by a taxi driver. Case involved expert medical evidence in respect of injury and digital forensic evidence in respect of evidence produced from mobile telephones seized during the investigation.

Multiple cases involving section 28 procedure for e.g.

R v M. "Section 28 case" involving cross examination of a young complainant, a client with mental health issues and multiple applications for disclosure of information crucial to the defence case.

Multiple cases involving very young or vulnerable clients or complainants for e.g.

R v C. Represented a 14 year old accused of sexual offences against a 6 year old. Advised in respect of a judicial review of the decision to prosecute.

R v B. Representing a 16 year old accused of raping a 4 year old. Case involved expert medical evidence, close analysis of social services material and a detailed sentencing note resulting in a non custodial sentence.

R v C. Representing a client with a learning disability accused of sexually abusing her daughter. The importance of expert evidence and its relevance to culpability were key in this case.

Historic Sexual Offences

Having undertaken a great many cases involving allegations of sexual abuse, some dating back five decades, Claire Howell has expertise in particular issues that arise in these cases. Including dealing with difficult trials involving lost documents and clients who are often physically infirm.

Notable Historic Sexual Offences cases

Operation V

Defending in large multi complainant case where historic allegations made of sexual abuse and child cruelty.

Operation L

A large police investigation into historic abuse at a boarding school for vulnerable children.

R v MB

Case involving historic sexual allegations made against a former Irish Presidential Candidate's brother.

Numerous cases representing those of good character accused of historic sexual offences e.g.

R v G. Representing step father accused of sexual offences against his step daughter 40 years earlier. Meticulous review of disclosure and the timeline of various events was key in this case.

R v T. Representing father accused of historic sexual offences against his daughters.

Gangs & Organised Crime Groups

Claire Howell has appeared in many cases involving organised crime groups and drugs. She has also appeared in cases involving arguments in respect of 'drill' music and has a particular interest in this area.

Notable Gangs & Organised Crime Groups cases

Operation V

(Led junior). A very large police operation into county lines drugs operation across four counties involving 27 defendants who were charged. Case involved presentation of large amounts of telephone evidence.

Operation E

Representing the main defendant in a large police operation focusing on alleged Class A drugs supply. The case involved the use of expert evidence in respect of the effect of serious domestic violence 'battered women syndrome'.

R v LS

Representing the main defendant in a large police operation focusing on commercial Class A drug supply across county lines.

Operation S

Representing a client accused of being involved in industrial scale importation of cutting agents for Class A drugs via a sham company. Case involved legal arguments in respect of definition of formerly so called 'legal highs'.

Operation M

representing a client accused of being the 'money man' for a large organised crime group. Case centred on legal arguments in respect of the admissibility of 'acts in furtherance of a common design' resulting in case being stopped at half time.

Firearms

Claire Howell has been instructed in many firearms cases, particularly those involving young people and alleged gang activities. She is adroit at understanding the potential issues in the case, and how they should be best presented to a jury.

Notable Firearms cases

R v A

R v W

Defence of a client alleged to be in possession of a firearm and to be in a 'gang'. The case involved arguments as to the admissibility of 'drill evidence and a successful half time submission in respect of the elements required to prove 'intention to endanger life' in respect of firearms offences.

R v E

Representing a young client who was accused of firearms offences. A key issue in the case was duress and the importance of focused disclosure requests.

Sexual Harm Prevention Orders

Claire Howell has been instructed in hundreds of applications for hundreds of sexual harm prevention orders and has considerable expertise in this area; where the importance of drafting and awareness of caselaw cannot be over emphasised.

Driving fatalities/causing serious injury

Claire Howell has represented many professionals who have been accused of serious criminal offences arising out of incidents on the roads, where people have died or been seriously injured.

She has considerable experience in dealing with the specific types of evidence (toxicology, collision investigation experts) that arise in such cases. The importance of scrutinising such evidence very carefully has been demonstrated in a number of cases where the Prosecution's initial evidence has been shown to be incorrect.

Notable Driving fatalities/causing serious injury cases

R v K

Representing a young client of good character who was accused of causing death by dangerous driving.

R v A

Representing an elderly client of good character who was accused of causing death by dangerous driving whilst working as a taxi driver. The expert evidence obtained by the defence in this case later resulted in errors being identified in the Prosecution's report and the case being dropped.

Proceeds of Crime: confiscation

Claire Howell has significant experience in confiscation proceedings and has been involved in cases where orders have been sought totalling millions of pounds.

She is experienced in mounting arguments in respect of value and apportionment and well versed in the relevant caselaw.

Money Laundering

Claire Howell has experience in representing those accused of money laundering. Recent cases having involved legal arguments in respect of 'acts in furtherance of a common design' and the ambit of the mental element of the offence.

Notable Money Laundering cases

Operation M

Representing a client accused of being the 'money man' for a large organised crime group. Case centred on legal arguments in respect of the admissibility of 'acts in furtherance of a common design' resulting in case being stopped at half time.

R v B

Representing a defendant in a large multi handed money laundering case involving millions of pounds. The case involved legal arguments in respect of the elements that the Prosecution were required to prove in respect of the offences on the facts of the case.

Fraud

Claire Howell has particular expertise in dealing with fraud and financial crime. She has advised in cases involving international jurisdiction issues, as well as advising financial institutions in respect of compliance with court orders.

Notable Fraud cases

R v D & D

Allegations of fraud against an elderly vulnerable complainant. The case involved issues in respect of acts undertaken in different jurisdictions.

R v C

Representing a man of good character accused of the commission of a multi million pound fraud against vulnerable victims. The case involved significant disclosure challenges and arguments in respect of abuse of process due to disclosure failures.

Health & Safety (Consumer & Regulatory offences)

Claire Howell's expertise in the field of Health and Safety work lies in criminal prosecutions arising out of investigations by the Health and Safety Executive.

Notable Health & Safety (Consumer & Regulatory offences) cases

R v M

Representing a man of good character prosecuted in respect of alleged violations of health and safety and trading regulations. The case involved a major national retailer.

R v W

Representing a man of good character accused of perverting the course of justice in respect of the falsification of health and safety forms on a building site where a man died.

Planning enforcement (Consumer & Regulatory offences)

Claire Howell undertakes cases involving planning enforcement, chiefly prosecutions by the Local Authority and also undertakes advisory work in this area.

Housing (Consumer & Regulatory offences)

Licensing (Consumer & Regulatory offences)

Claire Howell is experienced in dealing with and advising upon Licensing applications.

Positions Held

- CPS Grade 4 Panel Advocate
- CPS Level 4 Specialist Fraud Panel & Serious Crime Panel

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association
- Inner Temple
- Midland Circuit
- South Eastern Circuit

Awards



Chambers
RANKED IN
UK
Bar
2024

Claire Howell



Claire Howell