



Stephen Donnelly

Call 2001

✉ Stephen.Donnelly@drystone.com

☎ 020 7404 1881

Stephen Donnelly is an experienced Grade 3 CPS Prosecutor, who has developed a substantial practice in criminal law, dealing with cases in the Court of Appeal, the Crown Court and the Youth and Magistrates' Courts.

In recent years Stephen's practice has focused particularly on the areas of serious organised crime, serious violence and high-value drugs conspiracies. He is especially accustomed to sensitively dealing with young and vulnerable clients and witnesses.

He has significant experience of dealing with cases involving sensitive disclosure issues and 'intrusive' policing methods and has delivered lectures specifically dealing with disclosure and evidential presentation.

He has represented nurses, teachers and care workers charged with criminal offences arising in the course of their work. Stephen's attention to details and empathy is given the utmost consideration when dealing with these highly sensitive cases.

Stephen has a particular interest in acting and advising in disciplinary proceedings relating to sports law. Over several years he represented both trainers and jockeys appearing before disciplinary panels, and formerly acted as a steward with the British Horseracing Authority.

Expertise

Murder & Manslaughter

Stephen's considerable expertise in criminal law has seen him acting on behalf of clients facing trial on charges of murder, manslaughter and attempted murder.

Instructing solicitors recognise the benefits to be gained from his wealth of knowledge and early instruction, and the consequent advice received. This often shapes the approach taken during the course of interviews with police. His approach helps formulate a strong case analysis and tactical considerations early on, to expedite criminal law cases.

The key to Stephen's effective case preparation is teamwork and close coordination with his instructing solicitor. Always client-focussed and attentive, he ensures that a rapport is developed with clients and their family members.

Notable Murder & Manslaughter cases

R v M (2021) – Bristol CC

Multi-defendant case in which Stephen acted as sole counsel for the first defendant indicted on attempted murder (and weapons) charge. Case involved gang-related issues, the victim having been attacked by men with machetes, and required close scrutiny of cell-site evidence and CCTV footage.

R v C (2021) – Swansea CC

Led by Allison Summers QC – defence in murder case – domestic. Victim suffered multiple external and internal injuries (resulting in her death) as a consequence of admitted assault by the defendant whilst intoxicated.

R v J (2020) – Swansea CC

led by Karim Khalil QC – Defence in Murder Case

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2021-07-29/the-painstaking-investigation-of-catching-a-welsh-killer-without-a-body>.

Victim's body has never been found, but his blood was found on a forklift truck at the scene. DNA analysis had shown that a small piece of intestine found at a yard close to the defendant's home came from the victim.

R v G - Swansea CC

led junior in defence of 'mercy killing' allegation.

Modern Slavery

For over 10 years, Stephen has established a reputation as a 'go to' member of the Bar for the travelling community and has represented them in trials involving modern slavery issues, as well as a broad range of other allegations.

Notable Modern Slavery cases

Stephen is currently acting as Leading Counsel in the trial at Stafford CC of five members of the travelling community charged with offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

This is the second re-trial, previous juries having been discharged at late stages in previous trials. To date, juries have been

engaged in over 100 days of court sittings.

Terrorism

Stephen is one of only a few members of Chambers with in-depth knowledge and experience in the specialist area of Terrorism. He has received repeat instructions from firms of solicitors in relation to representation of their clients in both Crown and Youth Courts.

The legislation in this area of law has developed rapidly in recent years, and it is essential that solicitors and clients should have confidence that counsel instructed in terrorism-related matters are knowledgeable, with up to date knowledge.

Stephen will always endeavour to meet with an investigation team, or with a lay client at an early stage in proceedings to formulate a sound case preparation model.

Notable Terrorism cases

R v A (2021) – Bristol Youth Court

Heard before the Chief Magistrate, representing 16-year old defendant charged with multiple offences under the Terrorism Act 2000. Following guilty pleas, secured non-custodial sentence.

R v H (2020) – Central Criminal Court

Defendant acquitted on all charges. Indicted on possession of terrorism-related materials.

Sexual Offences

Notable Sexual Offences cases

R v M, Nottingham CC

Junior alone defending in North Staffordshire 'grooming' trial. Multiple allegations of rape. Defendant acquitted

R v K and Others, Central Criminal Court

Led junior defending (with Narita Bahra QC) in Operation Articulate; the Aylesbury 'grooming' trial.

R v D, Swansea CC

Successful defence of manager/owner of children's nursery accused of force-feeding and other child cruelty allegations

Gangs & Organised Crime Groups

Stephen is frequently instructed in cases focussed on large-scale conspiracies to supply controlled drugs. He has also received instructions over many years in relation to prosecution and defence in cases involving gang-related and 'OCG' matters.

Commonly involving allegations of conspiracy, early case preparation is essential, and Stephen is adept at identifying the core issues at an early stage in order that advice be given as to how best a case should be progressed.

Notable Gangs & Organised Crime Groups cases

2021 and 2022

Stephen has been instructed in a number of trials and cases involving technical 'Encrochat' evidence. Typically, these matters involve analysis of voluminous quantities of evidence and unused material.

R v M (2021) – Bristol CC

Multi-defendant case in which Stephen acted as sole counsel for the first defendant indicted on attempted murder (and weapons) charge. Case involved gang-related issues, the victim having been attacked by men with machetes, and required close scrutiny of cell-site evidence and CCTV footage.

R v X (2019) – Northampton CC

Prosecution of multi-defendant gang case – evidence utilised in relation to cell-site, drill rap music, and firearms.

R v A, Snaresbrook CC

Prosecution in case of possession of firearm and ammunition with intent to endanger life. Gang member involved in inter-gang 'shoot out'; complex sentencing issues, firearm used in five previous incidents.

R v K and Others, Cardiff CC

Leading counsel securing acquittal of client in multi-handed conspiracy to cultivate cannabis in properties throughout South Wales and SW England

Firearms

Stephen has unparalleled expertise in the Firearms Practice area, and has previously held both shotgun and firearms certificates. He has extensive experience in the use, and ownership, of firearms to which the Firearms Act 1968 applies.

He has experience in both the prosecution and defence of offences under this legislation and will advise, if necessary, at the earliest stage of a case as to the appropriate expert witness to be instructed.

Notable Firearms cases

R v J

Following trial, successful appeal against sentence resulting in a 5 years imprisonment reduced to 6 month [2011] EWCA Crim 1448

R v A, Snaresbrook CC

Prosecuting in case of possession of firearm and ammunition with intent to endanger life. Gang member involved in inter-gang 'shoot out'; complex sentencing issues, firearm used in five previous incidents.

Driving fatalities / causing serious injury

Stephen has extensive experience in both the prosecution and defence of cases involving death or serious injury by dangerous driving incidents.

As is often the case with allegations of this type, instruction of an appropriately qualified expert witness is essential. It is Stephen's practice to identify and arrange for instruction of suitable experts at the earliest stage in proceedings.

Criminal Fraud

Stephen has frequently been instructed in both the prosecution and defence of cases involving allegations of fraud. Such cases commonly involve scrutiny of voluminous amounts of evidence and unused material. Stephen will provide instructing solicitors with detailed advice at the outset of a case, in order to ensure that a methodical and effective process of case management is adopted.

Notable Criminal Fraud cases

R v C, Cardiff CC

Successful defence of an aide to the Shadow Minister for Equalities, and Deputy Leader of the Welsh Labour Party, on charges of fraud and forgery – acquittal on all counts. (
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/24/labour-mp-carolyn-harris-denies-pulling-aides-hair-outing-gay>)

R v R, Warwick CC

Junior defending alone in multiple defendant conspiracy to defraud, insurance/warranty sales via 'cold calls'.

R v H, Leicester CC

Counsel for dentist charged with Ponzi-type fraud intended to fund property investments.

Professional Discipline

Stephen has experience in the representation of solicitors before the SRA.

Notable Professional Discipline cases

In one case, following a formal complaint raised by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, mitigation advanced successfully in order to prevent a likely suspension from practice and to limit financial penalty.

Memberships

- Inner Temple
- Criminal Bar Association