

Hannah Thomas



Year of Call: 2016

020 7353 5324

Hannah joined Chambers in March 2019 following the successful completion of her pupillage.

During her time in Chambers Hannah has established a busy practice, predominantly in criminal law. She also has a growing practice in the fields of professional discipline, civil asset recovery, and inquiry work.

Hannah has particular expertise in crime, having worked in the criminal team at a City solicitors' firm prior to coming to the Bar. She now prosecutes and defends in the magistrates, Youth and Crown Courts. She is a Grade 1 prosecutor and also has extensive experience conducting private prosecutions, currently working with a team preparing a large-scale private prosecution for fraud. She also prosecutes on behalf of HMRC in contested cash forfeiture hearings.

In her defence practice, Hannah is regularly instructed in serious matters beyond her year of call. Most notably, she has appeared in the Divisional Court in an appeal by way of case stated. Owing to her excellent client care and communication skills, Hannah is often chosen to represent clients who have vulnerabilities.

In the professional discipline field Hannah is frequently instructed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council to present cases of all levels of seriousness and complexity before fitness to practice committees. She is often instructed in cases that are likely to raise complex issues or serious allegations such as sexual misconduct. She also accepts instructions defending in such cases.

Hannah is currently instructed as 'second junior' counsel to Ofsted in its capacity as a Core Participant in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Residential Schools Investigation. She also recently acted as disclosure junior to one of the Core Participants in the Inquiry into the Manchester Arena Bombing.

Location

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Criminal Defence

Hannah has developed a wealth of experience in criminal defence covering a broad spectrum of offences. Her recent instructions include Class A drug supply, attempted GBH, benefit fraud, weapons offences, breach proceedings and confiscation proceedings.

She has experience of assisting professional clients with tactical, clear advice early in the case to achieve successful outcomes whilst avoiding the need for a lengthy trial.

Hannah is increasingly instructed in appellate work. She has successfully defended appeals in the Crown Court on a number of occasions and has also appeared in the High Court, where she was commended for her advocacy skills.

Hannah has a keen interest in assisting vulnerable defendants. In addition to mandatory vulnerable witness training, Hannah has completed specialised youth justice training to enable her to more effectively represent children charged with serious offences.

Notable Cases:

R v SD

SD was charged with two counts of supplying Class A drugs. The case involved extensive legal argument and the Crown was held to account for its disclosure failings. This resulted in the Crown offering no evidence on both counts, on the day of trial. Instead, a count relating to the supply of Class B drugs (which SD had always admitted) was added to the Indictment. He was sentenced on that basis alone.

R v LO

LO pleaded guilty to benefit fraud. Following detailed analysis of the figures, representations were made to the Local Authority and the total 'loss' was reduced by £15,000. LO received a suspended sentence of imprisonment.

R v DS

DS was charged with the second breach of a non-molestation order taken out against her by her son. The defence of reasonable excuse was successfully run at trial and DS was acquitted.

R v OGV

OGV had pleaded guilty to possession of a knife, whilst in breach of a suspended sentence order for possession of two offensive weapons. This triggered a statutory minimum sentence of 6 months' imprisonment. The Judge was persuaded to not activate the suspended sentence and also to suspend the statutory sentence of imprisonment.

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Private Prosecution

Hannah has a keen interest in private prosecution work, having conducted over 10 successful private prosecutions.

Recent instructions include the successful prosecution of a market trader selling counterfeit goods, who asserted that his ignorance of the nature of the goods was a defence. The case was won following successful legal argument on that point. The private prosecutor was granted their prosecution costs from central funds, and a significant proportion of their investigation costs from the defendant.

In addition, Hannah is currently seconded to a leading law firm working as part of a team preparing the evidence in a private prosecution. The prosecution is for fraud and has a cross-jurisdictional element.

Advisory

Hannah undertakes advisory work and has most recently acted as independent counsel in Operations Conjure and Snip. In Operation Conjure Hannah's role was to be present on the ground to ensure that no items potentially subject to legal professional privilege ('LPP') were seized. In Operation Snip Hannah was asked to review items marked as LPP and provide a detailed advice on their status.

Professional Discipline

Hannah acts for the Nursing and Midwifery Council ('NMC') in all manner of hearings, including interim order panels, contested fitness to practise hearings, and substantive order reviews.

Hannah is often instructed in cases that involve serious or complex issues, such as allegations of sexual misconduct, force-feeding patients, and dishonesty. She has also acted in health cases.

Notable Cases:

NMC v SB

Nurse charged with sexual misconduct against female colleagues. The fitness to practice committee made the decision to strike him from the register.

NMC v SM

Sensitive case involving a midwife charged with misconduct relating to mandatory record-keeping where a baby had died.

NMC v BS

Nurse charged with allegations of incompetence, misconduct and lack of English language proficiency. Hannah

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successfully defended a submission that a lack of English language proficiency could not impair fitness to practice in relation to a nurse who did not have to meet the new statutory scheme at the time of her registration.

Hannah also accepts instructions to defend nurses and midwives in such hearings at the NMC.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Hannah is currently instructed as 'second junior' counsel to Ofsted in its capacity as a Core Participant in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Residential Schools Investigation. She also acts as disclosure junior to one of the Core Participants in the Inquiry into the Manchester Arena Bombing.

Public Prosecution

Hannah is a Grade 1 prosecutor. She has been instructed by the CPS to prosecute both in the magistrates and Crown Courts. Hannah has also represented the CPS in an appeal against conviction in the Crown Court, successfully defending the conviction.

Hannah frequently represents HMRC in civil cash forfeiture cases, providing advice and conducting contested hearings, both in initial applications and on appeal.

Accreditations

- Criminal Bar Association Bursary Award 2017 – Excellence in Advocacy
- Mona de Piro Prize, Middle Temple Major Scholarship (2015)
- Postgraduate Scholarship, City University London (2015)
- Future Lawyer Excellence Award, City University London (2014)

Appointments & Memberships

- Women in Criminal Law
- Government Legal Department Junior Junior Scheme
- CPS Advocate Panel: Level 1
- Young Legal Aid Lawyers (YLAL)
- Criminal Bar Association (CBA)

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- Young Fraud Lawyers Association (YFLA)
- Private Prosecutors Association

Education & Qualifications

- Bar Professional Training Course, City University London (2015-2016)
- Graduate Diploma in Law, City University London (2014-2015)
- BSc Psychology (First Class Hons), Warwick University

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