

Sarah Langford

Year of Call: 2005
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Overview

Sarah specialises in criminal and family law for nearly ten years with 3PB, and is now an associate member of chambers.

Sarah also has experience of courts martial, prison adjudication hearings, inquests, Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority cases and other specialist tribunals. She has appeared as a legal advisor for local authority educational appeals and has appeared on behalf of trading standards enforcement teams. Sarah undertook work for the Treasury Solicitors as part of their scheme for barristers under three years call, which required her to draft advices and statements of cases for the Prison Service. She has also undertaken pro bono work and was junior counsel in an appeal against a conviction for murder in Jamaica.

She lives between London and Suffolk.

Sarah went on parental leave to have her two children and whilst away, became the well-known and highly successful author of "*In Your Defence: Stories of Life and Law*" (2018) and "*Rooted: Stories of Life, Land and a Farming Revolution*" (2022), both published by Penguin Random House. Sarah has featured in the Sunday Times, Evening Standard, Guardian, Counsel magazine among many others. Sarah is happy to give lectures or talks on a variety of topics including farming and writing.

Academic qualifications

- English Literature BA (Hons) (2.1)
- Graduate Diploma in Law (Distinction)
- Bar Vocational Course (Very Competent)
- Wilfred Getz Award (Gray's Inn, 2004)

Professional bodies

- Criminal Bar Association
- Family Bar Association
- Member of the Western Circuit

Expertise

Crime and Regulatory Crime

Sarah has considerable trial experience as a defence advocate. She is also a Level 2 Prosecutor and is on the Crown Prosecution Service's Advocate Panel 2016-2020 for general crime for the South Eastern and Western Circuits. She has appeared in a number of reported cases.

Sarah's practise covers a wide range of serious offences including multiple handed cases, serious assaults, rape, indecent images, kidnapping, high value frauds and applications under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. She has been instructed as a disclosure junior and as trial junior in a multi-count drugs conspiracy, rape and kidnapping trial involving several defendants.

Sarah has appeared in the Court of Appeal on numerous occasions. This has included appearing on behalf of her leader and successfully reducing her client's three life sentences to a concurrent sentence of sixteen years. She is proficient at drafting Advices on Appeal, Skeleton Arguments and Grounds of Appeal.

Her areas of experience include the following:

Drug Offences

Sarah frequently appears in cases involving both the possession and supply of drugs. She is well used to assimilating the large amount of evidence that is typical of such cases.

Cases of note include:

- **R v W [2011]** - Further to the Defendant's guilty plea to possession with intent to supply class A on the basis of being a custodian, Sarah represented the Defendant in the Court of Appeal, when it was held that although a benefit figure could be valued at the amount of drugs he had consumed over the relevant period, it was legitimate to reduce the amount of the benefit if it could be established that the drugs had been purchased in part with legitimate income.
- **R v V and others [2010]** - Sarah was Junior Counsel in a long running trial in which she represented one of five men charged with conspiracy to supply class A drugs, kidnapping, false imprisonment and three counts of rape. When her leader became unavailable Sarah appealed to the Court of Appeal against the three life sentences imposed and represented the Appellant alone. The Court of Appeal held that a life sentence had to be reserved for cases where the culpability of the offender was particularly high or the offence itself particularly grave and that, although the offences were serious and disgusting, they did not fall within the category requiring life sentences.

Violence

Sarah has been involved in a large number of cases involving the use of weapons, guns and knives. She has considerable experience of the full gambit of allegations of violence including grievous bodily harm, gang violence, violent disorder, riot, and affray.

Sarah also has considerable experience of domestic and non-domestic Arson and Burglary offences.

Road Traffic Act Offences

Sarah has frequently dealt with cases involving allegations of dangerous driving, driving whilst disqualified, and driving whilst under the influence, as well as more minor road traffic offences. She is well versed in special reasons and exceptional hardship arguments for those who wish to avoid a driving ban and/or penalty points following a conviction.

Sexual offences

Sarah has represented both the Crown and the Defence in a number of cases involving sexual offences. She has particular experience of the following:

- Representation of Defendants charged with rape of a child under the age of 13.
- Representation of young Defendants charged with rape of a complainant under the age of 16.
- Representation of a number of Defendants accused of possession of a large quantity of indecent images and videos. This has involved analysing, interpreting and explaining complex expert evidence on the retrieval and storage of such images on various computer systems.
- Arguing against the making of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders, both in their application and in their content. Sarah is well acquainted with the wealth of guidelines case law in this area. She is also experienced in representing those charged with breach of a SOPO.
- Representation of one of a group of men accused of 'cottaging' in local public toilets.

Family

Sarah specialises in all areas of public and private children's law.

Sarah's private law practise includes the representation of both fathers and mothers in applications made under the Children Act 1989. She has dealt with a wide number of issues including abduction, high conflict intractable disputes and allegations of sexual assault and physical and mental harm, amongst others. She has dealt with a number of private law cases which have required the involvement of a Social Worker, separately represented Guardian, independently represented children, or social service intervention.

Sarah's public law practice primarily involves the representation of parents within care proceedings, but she also has experience of appearing for the Local Authority, Guardian, Grandparents and other interested parties. She has represented parties at every stage of care proceedings, and has considerable experience in contested adoptions. Sarah regularly represents vulnerable clients including parents with learning disabilities, parents with addictions, teenage parents and parents who have had more than one child removed by the Local Authority. Her cases have included allegations of severe neglect, domestic violence and non-accidental injury cases. She is well acquainted with the full range of injunctive relief available through the courts.

Sarah has experience of using interpreters. She also has considerable experience of appearing in cases involving litigants in person and McKenzie Friends.

Sarah's cases include:

- Contested Hearings involving the instruction and subsequent cross-examination of numerous experts including child and adult psychiatrists and psychologists
- Representation of parents in lengthy fact finding hearings involving allegations of non-accidental injuries to the children or of extensive domestic violence including allegations of rape and violence
- Applications for permission to discharge Care Orders
- Applications for contact with a child in care
- Cases involving disputed paternity
- Cases involving allegations and judicial findings of implacable hostility by one parent against the other which have either resulted in the removal of the child from that parent, or the threat of that removal.
- Applications for Specific Issue Orders including the change of a school, change of a child's surname and culturally

sensitive issues such as a child's circumcision.

- Applications for Prohibited Steps Orders preventing removal of the child from the jurisdiction where there is a real fear that one or other parent will abduct the child to a non-Hague Convention country.