

Richard is a skilful and persuasive advocate who prides himself on providing the best advice, and the most effective representation.

Richard is a native of Dublin and studied History at Trinity College, Dublin University. He qualified as a solicitor in England in 1996, and in Ireland in 1997 where he practiced for two years. As a solicitor he was involved in a number of high-profile and complex cases, amongst them the London City Bond fraud and the Sally Clark appeal. He became a partner with Burton Copeland Solicitors in 2000.

He was called to the Bar in 2003 and practices at the Criminal Bar, appearing in courts in the North West and throughout the country. He has a predominately defence practice, but does prosecute in complex, document-heavy, multi-handed cases.

He was a Law Society trainer on the Human Rights Acts and has been trained by Amicus in death row cases. He has advised the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas and has written for their journal on mental health issues.

“With Richard controlling my case I felt reassured that everything will be dealt with professionally and without any drama” – Client testimonial

Specialisms

Mental Health – Richard has a particular interest and expertise in offences involving mentally disordered defendants. He is instructed because of his skill, patience and understanding of those who are particularly vulnerable when faced with the ordeal of appearing in court.

He also appears in Mental Health Review Tribunals. He is a member of the Mental Health Lawyers Association, and in 2017 he was awarded a Post-Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Law from the University of Northumbria.

Sexual Offences – Richard is regularly instructed to represent those alleged to have committed the most serious sexual offences, which very often, are said to have happened many years before. Allegations of this type are invariably devastating to all involved; they require detailed preparation, patient, and when necessary robust advice, as well as thoughtful and sensitive consideration both in and out of court.

Offences Involving Children – Over the years Richard has been involved in many cases where the Police believe a child has been the victim of serious, often fatal violence. In the process he has developed an understanding of the complex medical and other evidential issues involved.

In addition to the above, the summary of cases below illustrates the broad range of serious, complex and sensitive cases Richard has been involved in. To ensure confidentiality, many case names have been anonymised.

Offences Involving Defendants with Mental Health Problems

R v B – Defending. Rape. 16-year old defendant unfit to stand trial. Jury not sure in relation to one allegation. Hospital order with restrictions made.

R v J – Defending. Rape. 11-year old defendant unfit to stand trial. Jury not sure in relation to one allegation. Supervision order made.

R v G – Defending. Rape. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia, accused of a campaign of rape.

R v A – Defending. Arson. Defendant, while trying to take her own life, set fire to herself and in the process a block of flats causing extensive damage to the flats and serious injury to herself. Hospital order with restrictions.

R v P – Defending. Death by Dangerous Driving. Defendant found not guilty by reason of insanity. Absolute Discharge.

R v D – Defending. Attempted Murder. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and Autism Spectrum Disorder, alleged to have tried to kill a former partner. Plea to a lesser offence accepted. Hospital Order without restrictions made.

R v E – Defending. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Accused of perverting the course of justice by making a false allegation of rape.

R v J – Defending. Defendant diagnosed with persistent delusional disorder. Accused of arson and possession of weapons. Hospital order with restrictions.



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PRACTICE AREAS

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MEMBERSHIPS

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Haldane Society

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL

2017 - Northumbria University
PgDip Mental Health Law
2003 - High Court Advocate, Crime
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1996 - Solicitor, England & Wales

PUBLICATIONS

Mental Health and Criminal Proceedings, Law and Practice, 2020
Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas, Autumn 2014 'Mental Health in UK Prisons'
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R v P – Defending. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia was accused of attempting to murder a neighbour.

R v B – Defending. Murder. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, charged with murder, he admitted manslaughter and received a hospital order with restriction. Junior alone.

Sexual Offences

R v D – Defending a man accused of raping five women over a ten-month period. Leading junior.

R v H – Defending one of a number accused of a campaign of rape and abuse against young women.

R v S – Defending. Historic allegations of serious sexual abuse.

R v I – Defending. Adult Defendant accused of befriending online and then having a sexual relationship with a 14 year old.

R v M – Defending. Defendant acquitted following trial upon an allegation he had abused his step-daughter over two years.

R v R – Defending. Youth court matter. Defendant accused of rape, pleaded guilty to a lesser offence and received a referral order.

R v H – Defending. Defendant acquitted of rape following trial.

R v G – Defending G, accused of a campaign of rape and sexual abuse against a number of victims over thirty years.

R v D – Defending D. Charged with rape. Part way through the trial the Crown amended the indictment following the complainants evidence. He was not guilty of rape but was, as he had accepted, guilty of sexual activity with a child, he received a non custodial sentence.

R v X – Defending a student charged with attempting rape a fellow student.

R v X – Defending a man alleged to have sexually assaulted his step-daughter, acquitted following trial.

R v X – Defending a man alleged to have raped his daughter in the 1970s, acquitted of rape, convicted of indecent assault.

R v X – Defending a man charged with a series of historic offences against his siblings which lasted ten years.

Other Serious Crime

Murder and Manslaughter

R v S – Defending. Murder. Convicted of robbery.

R v A – Defending. Murder. Guilty plea. Junior alone.

R v S – Defending. Murder. Guilty plea. Led by Mukthar Hussain QC.

R v B – Defending. Murder. Defendant diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, charged with murder, he admitted manslaughter and received a hospital order with restrictions. Junior alone.

R v T – Defending. Murder. Led by Paul Reid QC

R v L – Defending. Manslaughter. While in drink, the Defendant pushed his best friend who struck his head and died.

R v H – Defending, Manslaughter, led by James Pickup QC, D charged with others with causing the death of an 18-month old child.



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Robbery, drugs, firearms and assault

R v S – Defending. Bournemouth Crown Court. Conspiracy to commit armed robbery.

R v E – Defending. Death by dangerous driving. Guilty plea. Community order imposed.

R v M – Defending. Farmer acquitted following trial of causing unnecessary suffering to a dog which he had shot while it was worrying sheep.

R v S – Defending. S was charged with the assault of a transgender woman, a difficult and sensitive case, the Defendant admitted the offence and received a non-custodial sentence.

R v M – Defending. M accused of being in possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply, she received a non-custodial sentence, much to the annoyance of the Daily Mail.

R v M – Defending. M admitted shooting at the home of the father of a rival gang member.

R v F – Defending. Defendant charged with very serious s18, after negotiations the prosecution accept a plea to s20, suspended sentence imposed

Offences involving children

R v M – Defending. Defendant charged with cruelty of his two children by wilful neglect.

R v X – Defending. Defendant charged with assaulting four-week old daughters (s.18); acquitted of one, convicted of the other, sentence was appealed by the Attorney General as unduly lenient.

R v I – Defending. Defendant charged with manslaughter of son, plea to cruelty accepted, suspended sentence imposed.

R v H – Defending. Manslaughter, led by James Pickup QC, D charged with others with causing the death of an 18-month-old child.

Financial Crime/Fraud

R v B – Defending. Defendant was acquitted after a nine month trial brought by the SFO following the collapse of the Defendant's investment business and a loss of £170m to investors. Led by Stephen Solley QC.

R v S – Defending. Defendant acquitted following trial in relation to his alleged involvement in a Construction Industry Fraud Scheme. Led by Nick Johnson QC

FSA v D – Defending. Advised the Defendant in relation to proceedings taken under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

R v P – Defending. Defendant pleaded guilty to fraud, having taken in the region of £100,000 from his Mother's estate over which he had power of attorney.

R v Q – Defending. Conspiracy to defraud Nat West Bank of £20m. Led by Paul Reid QC.

R v A – Defending. Defendant was an accountant accused of making over £1m worth of false claims to HMRC for the repayment of tax.

R v H – Defending. Defendant acquitted following a trial alleging she was in possession of over £100,000 said to be the proceeds of crime and that over a significant period of time she laundered the proceeds of crime.

Prosecutions

R v Fowler and others – Prosecuting five men involved in the kidnap of a Preston business man. A ransom of £100,000 was demanded, the victim was held for 18 hours.

R v Watkins and 14 others – Prosecuting. Defendants were part of a gang who sold £1.5m worth of class A drugs in Preston.

R v Viggars and ten others – Prosecuting drug dealing gang in Skelmersdale. Leading junior.

R v Pennington and others – Prosecuting. Conspiracy to commit robbery.

R v Seddon and others – Prosecuting. Series of cash in transit robberies.



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Appeals

- R v Alkazraji* – [2004] 2 Cr App R (S) 55; sentencing pregnant Defendants.
- AG Ref 94 of 2006* – [2006] EWCA Crim 3028. Arson.
- R v Almond* – [2007] EWCA Crim 486. Confiscation, calculation of the available amount and period in default.
- R v Boswell* – [2007] EWCA Crim 1587, appeal against imposition of indeterminate sentence.
- R v James Kelly* [2007] EWCA Crim 3160, despite “forceful and attractive submissions” the appeal was unsuccessful.
- R v Craven and Beswick* – [2012] 1 WLR 1126. Successful appeals against sentences imposed following the Manchester riots.
- R v Brennan* – [2012] EWCA Crim 2000. Successful appeal against sentence in relation to the supply of drugs.
- R v McNamee* – [2016] EWCA Crim 2158. Successful appeal against sentence imposed for assault.
- R v Lynch* [2015] 2 Cr App R (S) 73, appeal against sentence imposed following plea to manslaughter.
- R v Cassidy* – [2016] EWCA Crim 1142 Attorney General’s reference.
- R v S.S.* – [2018] Sentence imposed for, amongst other things, coercive behaviour, reduced.
- R v W* – [2018] Attorney General’s reference, s18 assault.
- R v M* [2018] EWCA Crim 2040, appeal against sentence in historic sexual offence.
- R v G* [2018] EWCA Crim 2682, appeal against sentence in harassment case.



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