

Anna Chestnutt

Call to Bar: 2016



“Anna has exceptional forensic analysis and she is a once-in-a-decade quality advocate on all levels. All judges trust her judgement and listen with an acceptance that her points have validity.”Tier 1 Crime (General and Fraud) - Legal 500, 2024

“Anna is a joy to instruct; her energy, sharp intellect, and industry know no bounds. She is a stand-out advocate who brings her authentic self into the courtroom where she is highly persuasive.”Tier 1 Professional and Disciplinary Law - Legal 500, 2024

“Anna has demonstrated a capacity to unflappably absorb and define voluminous and challenging instructions at short notice. She has demonstrated sound and proven abilities as a lawyer, advocate and communicator in all matters in which briefed or instructed” - Legal 500, 2023

Criminal & Regulatory (Criminal Courts)

Anna Chestnutt is a sought after crime and regulatory specialist who enjoys a significant following on the Northern Circuit. She has been described as a “Rising Star”, in several practice areas, by the leading legal directories.

Anna’s practice includes cases across the full spectrum of criminal and regulatory areas and frequently involves cases of significant weight that might usually be considered appropriate for barristers far beyond her call.

Anna is known for her calm and tactful manner with clients. She can develop a good rapport with clients from all walks of life to ensure the client has communicated their instructions and their wishes clearly. This has included clients with enduring mental health issues and drug misuse issues which requires a degree of sensitivity and adaptability.

Contact details:

anna.chestnutt@lincolnhousechambers.com

Clerk Contact details:

tprice@lincolnhousechambers.com
Ty Price – 0161 832 5701

Practice areas:

Criminal Law
Professional Disciplinary
Regulatory

Professional appointments:

Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn
Criminal Bar Association
APPOINTMENTS
CPS Level 3
Regulatory List C
AWARDS
Lord Denning Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn
Hardwicke Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn
Wolfson Scholarship, Lincoln's Inn

It is not uncommon for Anna to advise for the input of either a psychologist or a psychiatrist as the case requires. Anna has also dealt with clients with learning disabilities and acquired brain injuries. She will work to fully understand their communicative needs.

There are many relatively young defendants within Anna's caseload. Anna considers this an opportunity to engage in a meaningful way with her clients, so they do not re-offend. Anna has, for example, achieved suspended sentences for young clients who have been involved in the supply of Class A drugs as she is able to draw out the relevant detail of their youth, immaturity and vulnerabilities.

Anna's popularity with defence firms is shared by several prosecution authorities and regulatory bodies, and as a result, Anna is regularly instructed to prosecute serious offences in the Crown Court and before other tribunals. Anna is a CPS Category 3 Prosecutor and is also on the Attorney Generals Regulatory Panel (HSE, EA). Anna is also instructed to advise on data protection offences, having formerly undertaken a 3 month secondment with the Information Commissioner's Office.

In addition to her work as junior alone, Anna has also been instructed as a led junior in long-running, serious criminal cases. She is regularly specifically requested by leading counsel as a result of her outstanding work ethic, ability to manage document heavy cases, and meaningful input to the work of larger legal teams.

The overlap between criminal and regulatory law is of interest to Anna. Aside from her criminal practice, Anna has regular conduct of regulatory cases, often arising from criminal conduct, before a range of tribunals.

These include:

Healthcare and Professional Discipline

This area of law has been a prominent feature of Anna's practice throughout her career at the Bar. A highlight includes a 14-week case before the Nursing and Midwifery Council ('NMC') in which Anna successfully made a submission of no case to answer.

Anna had also worked for the NMC on a 3-month secondment (2023) advising on whether cases should proceed through the Fitness to Practice process or should be closed. This required careful consideration of not only the relevant law but the ever-important NMC Code and published guidance.

Additionally, Anna has a wealth of experience of Interim Order hearings, FTP and Substantive Order Review Hearings. Anna takes pride in guiding her lay clients through what can be an extremely challenging and stressful process.

Inquests

Anna accepts instructions in inquest hearings covering a very wide spectrum of causes of death.

Cases of note include:

Inquest into the death of Ben Leonard - In 2024, Anna was instructed as junior Counsel to the Inquest led by a silk. This very heavily reported inquest touched on virtually all potential issues of law and procedure so fastidious attention to detail was required. Anna mastered disclosure which amounted to tens of thousands of pages to ensure that a 'no stone unturned' approach was achieved. The evidence in the case before a jury lasted for 5 weeks.

Inquest into the death of RW - Anna was instructed on behalf of the Government to deal with issues arising from a death of an individual supervised by the Probation Service. This required a level of sensitivity as Anna had to challenge the evidence put forward by grieving family members.

Inquest into the death of JH – Anna was instructed to represent a local authority in an inquest arising from a death Stepping Hill Hospital. The inquest involves safeguarding considerations and early discharge from hospital.

Transport Law Regulation & Traffic Criminal Defence

Anna regularly appears Nationwide before the various Traffic Commissioners, on behalf of both Operators and Drivers for their conduct hearings. Anna has also advised drivers on obtaining licences when they have relevant criminal convictions.

Through years of experience, Anna has learned the importance of rectifying issues identified for the Public Inquiry through instructing relevant consultants. She also acknowledges that the effect of punchy and persuasive written submissions before the Public Inquiry cannot be overlooked.

Anna has represented Operators with Standard National Licences and Restricted Licences, understanding the nuanced but important differences from a legal perspective.

Anna has also defended in a significant number of driving offence matters and has an impressive track record for her work in this area. Her services are specifically sought by a number of specialist solicitors as a result of her experience of driving cases involving complex matters of law and procedure.

Memberships etc

Anna is a member of the Criminal Bar Association and the Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers.

Presently, Anna is the Manchester Junior on the Northern Circuit Executive Committee. She has an interest in outreach work so those from underrepresented backgrounds may flourish in their career at the Bar.

Anna is qualified to accept instructions on a Direct Access basis.

Notable cases include:

R v UH & Others - led junior prosecuting in a multi-handed conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. The evidence was the testimony of undercover police officers as well as telephony and ANPR. The defendants were universally convicted.

R v MS - had the prosecution dismissed as an abuse of the Court's process when the prosecution laid new charges arising from an incident where the defendant had already entered his guilty pleas and had participated in the preparation of a pre-sentence report.

R v EW - the prosecution had treated one individual as a witness and had another charged as a defendant even though their circumstances were identical. Successfully applied to have the case stayed against her defendant as an abuse of the Court's process.

R v PD - secured the acquittal of a defendant of previous good character charged with a series of historic rape Counts against two child complainants.

R v JF - secured the acquittal for rape of a vulnerable adult with apparent developmental issues, where the Court had refused multiple applications for an intermediary to assist the defendant.

Appeal against Conviction before Court of Appeal (ND) - led junior on behalf of the Respondent (CPS) for an appeal against ND's murder conviction. This transpired to be a landmark decision regarding when solicitors and barristers are professionally embarrassed and may withdraw. The appeal was unsuccessful.

R v AC - the complainant had been slashed 5 times to the face with a knife and sustained a wound which extended the edges of his mouth. The defendant was acquitted of a s.18 assault and convicted of a s.20 assault in the alternative.

R v AO - secured a suspended sentence for her client who was convicted of a s.18 assault having stabbed the victim in the head.

OTC v AEL - where a series of desk-based assessments had revealed a number of serious shortcomings with the running of the Operator's licence. Achieved the unusual result of a formal warning where she persuaded the Traffic Commissioner that sufficient remedial steps had been taken to ensure compliance.

OTC v MA - secured a verbal warning for a driver following a bridge strike before the Traffic Commissioner, where the guidelines had a starting point of a 6-month suspension.

NMC v VL - successfully persuaded a fitness to practise panel that whilst a nurse's actions amounted to misconduct, their fitness to practise was not impaired. Advised in respect of the nurse's written reflection which proved instrumental in achieving the outcome.

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