

Craig Hassall KC

Call to Bar: 1999

Silk Year: 2021



Ranked in The Legal 500 (2021) for Crime.

“The consummate professional – calm under pressure with the ability to think quickly on his feet.” – The Legal 500 (2021)

“Specialises in serious fraud cases.” – The Legal 500 (2020) “Noted for his expertise in fraud cases.” – The Legal 500 (2019)

“A strong advocate, who acts with intelligence and calm authority.” The Legal 500, 2017

“Conscientious and good with clients.” – The Legal 500, 2017

During his 22 years as junior counsel, Craig’s criminal practice covered a vast range of work: from road traffic offending through sexual offences, serious and organised crime, violence including homicide, fraud and complex regulatory offences.

In recent years, his practice has included murder, manslaughter, rape and serious sexual assaults, people trafficking and large-scale smuggling of drugs and dutiable goods. He sits as a fee-paid judge in the Mental Health Tribunal and has significant experience of dealing with cases involving mental disorder, experienced by defendants or witnesses.

He has become well-known for his ability to prosecute and defence in highly complex cases. His depth and breadth of experience of cases involving a wide range of prosecuting authorities enables him to bring a unique perspective to cases that transcend more than one area. He has been involved in many large cases with multiple defendants.

He has often dealt with sensitive issues of disclosure and public-interest immunity, including covert human intelligence sources, intercept material and offenders with links to terrorism. He has extensive experience in all areas of financial offending, including applications for restraint, confiscation, compensation, appointment of receivers and disqualification of directors

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Practice areas:

Regulatory & Public

Health & Safety

Criminal Law

Professional appointments:

2019 - Judicial appointment to the First-Tier Tribunal Criminal Recorder appointment

2021 Queen’s Counsel

Many of his cases have involved corporate defendants and the interpretation of corporate accounts.

Craig's sympathetic approach towards clients has repeatedly been identified by legal directories. He can be relied upon to deal sensitively with clients accused of the most serious offences.

Alongside his advocacy and advisory work, Craig is the North Eastern Circuit's Advocacy Training Officer. He is an accredited advocacy trainer and a facilitator of vulnerable witness advocacy training.

NOTABLE CASES

Homicide & Serious Violence

R v Dearlove – Junior counsel to Richard Wright QC in a prosecution for murder 49 years after the death of the victim. The defendant was convicted of murder in relation to the death of his baby stepson on Teesside in 1968. He had evaded prosecution in the 1960s by suggesting that the child had sustained the fatal head injury by falling out of bed. The trial involved calling contested expert evidence in the fields of paediatrics, paediatric neurosurgery and paediatric neuropathology.

R v Zaman (Operation Hoe) – prosecution junior counsel in the first successful prosecution for gross negligence manslaughter arising from a food allergy, and its subsequent successful defence in the Court of Appeal [2018] 1 Cr. App. R. (S.) 26.

R v Azad, Thapar & Hussain – prosecution junior counsel in an attempted murder by arson. The principal defendant was sentenced to 32 years imprisonment.

R v F – junior counsel in a murder prosecution, following the stabbing of the victim by his partner's sister. Craig successfully defended (alone) an appeal against conviction based on fresh evidence.

R v D & S – junior counsel in a Boxing Day murder by stabbing.

R v M – “baby shaking” case with numerous expert medical witnesses.

R v H – defence of a father accused of failing to protect his child, contrary to section 5(1)(a) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. Significant factual findings had been made against the client in family proceedings and the child had been removed from his care. After Craig's consideration of the expert paediatric neurology evidence and negotiation with the Crown, no evidence was offered against Craig's client.

Fraud

R v D (Operation Dulcie) – Ongoing fraud prosecution following concurrent investigations by Greater Manchester Police and NHS Protect. The Defendant accountant and finance director defrauded three NHS trusts and several private companies. Complex accounting evidence and issues surrounding calculation of losses.

R v Goulbourne & Others (Operation Accordion) – Junior counsel to Guy Gozem QC in a six- defendant mortgage fraud case. The case involved expert conveyancing evidence, extradition and complex issues in relation to calculation of loss. Craig conducted part of the trial alone (including cross examination of the principal defendant and the prosecution closing speech) against three Queens Counsel, Treasury Counsel and six juniors.

R v SN (Operation Lollipop) – defence counsel for the second of fifteen defendants in a “cash-for-crash” conspiracy to defraud motor insurance companies, through the staging of multiple fake accidents, one involving a bus, the driver of which was complicit in the fraud

Operation Wizardry – Leading junior counsel for the prosecution in a five-defendant (including two former police officers), £11million tobacco-smuggling conspiracy, which the Court of Appeal described as “one of the most serious examples of its type”

R v Rathod & Others (Operation Apple) – Leading junior counsel for the prosecution in a four- defendant immigration fraud operated through two fake Sikh Gurdwara. The defendants had facilitated the entry into the country of hundreds of immigrants by falsely claiming they were religious workers in the temples.

R v Ishaq (Operation Earthworm) – Prosecution of a former mayor of Scunthorpe for fraud and perverting the course of justice. Confiscation proceedings are ongoing.

R v Moon & Others (Operation Landlord) – Leading junior counsel in a ten-defendant tobacco duty fraud. The trial involved contested fingerprint, DNA and cellsite evidence.

R v W – defence counsel for client accused of stealing almost £1 million from Asda. The case involved complex issues in relation to the proof of Asda’s losses, the legality of the prosecution’s calculation of alleged losses and protracted confiscation proceedings.

R v Wood & Others (Operation Paste) – Leading junior counsel in a nine-defendant prosecution of fraud against the NHS. The defendants, including a senior NHS manager had defrauded the NHS of £3.5 million through the awarding of overpriced contracts for management training in contravention of NHS procurement rules.

R v D (Operation Filtermill) – Prosecution of an independent financial advisor who claimed inflated commission by “churning” his clients pension investments from fund to fund. Confiscation proceedings continue.

Proceeds of Crime (in addition to the above)

Operation Y – advising the prosecuting authorities in relation to pre-charge restraint in a multi- million-pound pensions fraud investigation.

Re a firm – advising an LLP in relation to confiscation proceedings following the conviction of a former partner of the firm for fraud and money laundering. The prosecution and Court threatened contempt proceedings in relation to disputed funds in the possession of the firm. Craig provided advice and drafted a skeleton argument, upon which the prosecution discontinued all action against the client.

Sexual Offences

R v M – successful defence of a gay man charged with the sexual assault of a man who was alleged to have been asleep. The defendant had a previous conviction for a similar assault against another unconscious male. Acquitted at trial.

R v JH – successful defence of a stepfather charged with the attempted rape of his seven- year-old stepdaughter. Craig challenged the disclosure process and identified items that could be shown to be in the possession of the police, the existence of which had not been disclosed. Following legal argument, no evidence was offered.

R v BR – successful defence of a former police officer with previous convictions for indecent assault. The client was charged with sexual offences against two young female family members. Charges relating to one complainant were stayed as an abuse of the process of the Court following Craig’s application based on disclosure failures. The client was acquitted of all other charges at trial.

R v MP – successful defence of a man charged with non-recent rape and serious sexual assaults against two sisters who were the daughters of a former girlfriend. The case involved complex issues of law including jurisdiction, hearsay and character. The complainants’ mother, against whom they also made allegations, was interviewed when suffering from advanced motor-neurone disease and had subsequently died and the evidence was unclear as to whether some of the alleged offences had been committed in Scotland. The client was acquitted of all charges.

Miscellaneous

R v AN – defence counsel in a five-defendant people trafficking case. Craig made numerous applications for disclosure and ultimately for a stay based on the prosecution’s chaotic approach to disclosure. The trial judge rejected the applications but after seven weeks of trial the prosecution itself applied to discharge the jury on the basis of the disclosure failings.

R v DD – defence of a juror, prosecuted for contempt of Court who contacted a convicted defendant and disclosed the content of jury deliberations. Craig appeared before the Lord Chief Justice, prosecuted by the Solicitor General. His client received a suspended sentence and on the basis of his submissions the LCJ directed a national review by HM Courts Service into the information routinely provided to jurors.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Craig Hassall KC is qualified to accept Public Access work.

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