



Sahara Fergus-Simms

Year of Call: 2015



A meticulous advocate who is experienced in representing vulnerable clients and those with complex needs across a range of practice areas.

Sahara acts as led junior and junior alone accepting instructions on a publicly funded or private basis. She covers a range of criminal defence work encompassing: drug offences, organised crime, violent offences and financial crime.

Sahara's measured but robust approach means that she is trusted by both clients and solicitors when faced with challenging cases.

Sahara has significant experience assisting vulnerable individuals. Prior to joining Chambers, Sahara facilitated police station interviews with vulnerable adults and young people in her capacity as an Appropriate Adult for Southwark Social Services. She also delivered training on behalf of the Borough to other Appropriate Adults on the topic of police bail and after qualifying as a restorative justice conference facilitator with the Restorative Justice Council, sat on the Youth Referral Order Panel. Sahara has also volunteered as a case worker for Bail for Immigration Detainees in Oxford and worked as a criminal defence paralegal where she prepared cases for a range of offences including firearms, blackmail and kidnapping.

Sahara is involved in Chambers' work with the BPP Streetlaw programme. The programme provides training to law students who then deliver presentations to schools and young offender institutions on topics such as knife crime and joint enterprise.

Harmsworth Scholarship - Middle Temple

4 x 4 Advocacy Scholarship - BPP Holborn

Fraud and Financial Crime

R v C and others (2018) (Southwark CC) Operation Trooper - Led by Queen's Counsel at trial in this 5-week multi-handed conspiracy to cheat the public revenue. The client was an accountant accused of assisting a number of companies with the evasion of their VAT.

R v Y and another (2017) (Basildon CC) Currently representing a client charged with fraud having obtained in excess of £500,000 from his employers over a two-year period.

R v H (2017) (Isleworth CC) Secured a 10-month suspended sentence for a client who pleaded guilty to theft of a high value motor vehicle from a HP company, with the contract worth in excess of £40,000.

R v P & E (2017) (Lincoln CC) Operation Solitude - Instructed to represent one of two defendants accused of acquiring criminal property, namely receiving a portion of a substantial sum of money stolen from a 72-year-old.

R v B (2017) (Portsmouth CC) Secured a 2-year suspended sentence for a client charged with stealing £12,400 from his elderly neighbour over a 5-month period and where there was a significant breach of trust.

Organised Crime

R v P & K (2017) (Croydon CC) Secured an 18-month prison sentence after persuading the judge to take an exceptional course and apply a 3-year starting point in a Class A- cocaine, street dealing case where the starting point is 4 ½ years.

General Crime

R v O & M (2018) (Snaresbrook CC) The client was the first defendant in a joint enterprise, false imprisonment and robbery trial. The client was acquitted of all counts despite pleading guilty to ABH against the same complainant earlier that day and with the entire incident having been audio recorded.

R v B (2018) (Kingston CC) Client was acquitted after trial of possession of an offensive weapon. The defence case was that the item was carried with the intention to frighten a potential attacker but not to cause injury.

R v B-W (2018) (Chelmsford CC) Client acquitted of ABH (wound to the leg using a shard of glass) and criminal damage whilst being restrained by security guards. He was acquitted despite the admission of bad character evidence, which included a GBH conviction and with the incident also caught on CCTV.

R v P (2018) (Isleworth CC) Client accused of theft from a church. He was acquitted against overwhelming evidence to the contrary including from the church warden and youth worker who were both eyewitnesses to the event.

R v T (2018) (Blackfriars CC) Crown persuaded to discontinue a charge of possession of a bladed article after the defence skeleton argument was served for an application to dismiss. The argument put forward was that the communal hallway in the apartment block was not a public place.

R v E and others (2017) (Inner London CC- 5 days) Instructed for trial in a four-handed ABH where the client was suffering from PTSD. The defence involved the occurrence of dissociative fugue and issues of fitness to stand trial were raised. Successful negotiations with the Crown on the day of trial resulted in the case being discontinued.

R v M (2017) (Harrow CC) Client acquitted after trial of a racially aggravated public order offence against a bus driver where the conduct was captured on CCTV.

R v S (2017) (Southwark CC) Client received a prison sentence reduced to 30 months after the court was persuaded to place him into a 'lesser role' in a PWITS Class A, street dealing case, despite evidence to the contrary and with the client in breach of a previous PWITS conviction.

R v W (2016) (Isleworth CC) Defended a client charged with two racially aggravated public order offences.

R v L (2017) (Southwark CC) Persuaded the court to depart from the mandatory minimum 6-month prison sentence for a subsequent bladed article offence.

R v M (2017) (St. Albans CC) Successful appeal against sentence in a careless driving case, where the

disqualification was substituted for 6 penalty points.

R v H (2017) (Hammersmith MC) Defendant acquitted in a voyeurism trial where the defence was that he was using the torch on his iPhone to search the changing room floor for his lost drugs.

R v M (2017) (Camberwell Green MC) Defendant acquitted of possession of an offensive weapon after legal argument on whether a baton/torch was offensive per se.

R v F (2016) (Willesden MC) Defendant acquitted of theft after the cross-examination of the police officer who identified the defendant and a successful half time submission on breaches of PACE Code D.

R v T (2016) (Ealing MC) Successful exceptional hardship argument avoiding a totting up ban.

R v B (2017) (Wimbledon MC) Cross-examination of a 10-year- old child complainant in a domestic assault case.

R v J (2017) (Camberwell YC) Persuaded the judge to impose a non-custodial sentence for violent disorder when the YOT had recommended a DTO due to the seriousness of the offence, the client's antecedents and his unwillingness to comply with his current order or any proposed non-custodial order.

R v S (2017) (Wimbledon YC) Defendant acquitted of theft on a joint enterprise basis.

Regulatory and Disciplinary Proceedings:

R v N and another (2017) (Thames MC) Currently representing a landlord charged with a number of HMO regulation breaches.

Appeals and CCRC

R v K (2018) (Croydon CC) Successful appeal against conviction for a client charged with assaulting a police officer and obstructing an enforcement agent. The legal argument put forward was that the bailiff was not acting lawfully and therefore the police were acting outside the execution of their duties.

R v J (2018) (Reading CC) Successful appeal against sentence for a client charged with breaching his Criminal Behaviour Order, which in turn activated his suspended sentence. The new sentence secured his immediate release from prison.

R v L (2017) (Woolwich CC) Successful appeal against conviction in a sexual assault case where the client was suffering from schizophrenia.