

Sophia Dower



Year of Call: 2013

020 7353 5324

Sophia enjoys a diverse practice which encompasses many areas of 2 Hare Court's specialisms, including general crime, professional discipline, regulatory and licensing. Sophia is instructed both as an advocate and in an advisory capacity.

She has a strong criminal practice, both prosecuting and defending cases in the Youth Court, Magistrates' Court and predominantly the Crown Court. Her experience covers a wide range of offences, including allegations of violence, firearms, supply of drugs, sexual offences, public disorder and serious fraud.

Sophia also undertakes private prosecution work.

In addition, she has a growing licensing practice and is regularly instructed in proceedings before City of London Magistrates Court in respect of appeals against adverse decisions taken by Transport for London.

She also accepts instructions in regulatory and professional discipline matters.

Sophia has contributed to a number of complex and large scale disclosure reviews, including a Premier League football club facing a FIFA investigation, a multi-million pound private prosecution and the inquest into the Manchester Arena terrorist attack. Sophia is currently instructed in the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry.

Outside of chambers, Sophia is a committed anti-death penalty advocate having spent several months working at the Office of Capital Defence Counsel in Jackson, Mississippi. She worked with clients currently on death row who were in the process of appealing their convictions, as well as assisting clients who were due to face trial for capital murder.

Location

2 Hare Court
Temple
London
EC4Y 7BH

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Criminal Defence

Sophia has a strong criminal defence practice, defending cases in both the Magistrates and Crown Court. She has experience representing clients at all stages of the criminal justice process.

She has developed a wealth of experience covering a broad spectrum of offences, including supply of Class A drugs, serious violence, sexual offences, financial crime, public disorder and weapons offences.

Sophia is recognised for her thorough preparation and for providing tactical, clear advice to both professional and lay clients. She is a robust and tenacious advocate who is committed to achieving the best results for her clients.

Notable Cases:

R v VF (2021)

Represented client charged with murder, led by Zubair Ahmad QC. As result of a carefully drafted basis of plea to manslaughter (loss of control) which was accepted by the Crown shortly before trial, the client received a sentence of 10 years imprisonment.

R v B Peterborough Crown Court (2020)

Acting as junior alone in this exceptionally tragic case Sophia represented Mr B, an 83 year old man of previous good character who was charged with causing the death of 99 year old Mrs C by dangerous driving. Resulted in suspended sentence.

R v D Chelmsford Crown Court (2020)

Instructed as junior counsel to Mark Graffius QC in the successful defence of Mr D in a historic murder trial. Mr D was alleged to have fatally stabbed Mr B in a revenge attack outside a Boxing Day party in 1998. Mr D fled the country for almost 20 years until he returned to the UK to hand himself in to police. Mr D's case was that he had been knocked unconscious by Mr B and his associates, and that those who came to his aid were responsible for the murder. However, Mr D refused to name them. During the trial, the Crown sought to adduce four previous instances of alleged bad character involving violence and/or possession of knives in respect of Mr D, but abandoned their application altogether upon receipt of Sophia's written response. Mr Donnelly was acquitted after trial.

R v L Peterborough Crown Court (2019)

L was accused of assaulting a heavily pregnant woman on her doorstep. L argued it was a case of mistaken identity, despite both the Complainant and her boyfriend recognising L, having known her since childhood. Sophia's client was unanimously acquitted by the jury in less than two hours.

R v A Bristol Crown Court (2019)

Instructed as junior counsel to Gudrun Young, also of 2 Hare Court, to defend in a "romance fraud" which attracted significant media attention. The case involved complex analysis of issues relating to extradition, foreign convictions and bad character provisions.

R v L Blackfriars Crown Court (2019)

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Defended in a multi-handed section 18 and affray trial where the first defendant pleaded guilty on the day of trial. Sophia made extensive representations made to the Crown, which resulted in the decision being taken to discontinue proceedings against L.

R v R Oxford Crown Court (2019)

R was charged with possession of a disguised firearm, namely a taser disguised as a torch, where he was at risk of the mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years being imposed upon conviction.

R v W Wimbledon Magistrates Court (2019)

W, a teacher who was of previous good character, was alleged to have assaulted a child in the context of a road-rage incident. Both the child, her mother and an independent eye-witness gave evidence for the Crown at trial. Sophia successfully applied to exclude a significant aspect of the Crown's case relating to an earlier allegation of assault against the mother and secured the acquittal of W.

R v MH Westminster Magistrates Court (2018)

Sophia's client was the first to be sentenced in a string of bladed article offences arising out of Notting Hill Carnival. The Crown submitted the case should be committed to the Crown Court for sentence as the starting point was 18 months. However, Sophia not only persuaded the Magistrates to retain jurisdiction of the case but to also exercise their discretion and impose a sentence outside of the Guidelines, resulting in her client receiving a 12 month Community Order.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Sophia accepts instructions on behalf of Properly Interested Persons at Coroner's Inquests.

She also has experience in assisting in complex investigations and public inquiries. Recent examples include:

- assisting in a sensitive, multifaceted disclosure exercise on behalf of a Premier League football club in relation to a FIFA investigation;
- participating in the disclosure review process in relation to the Inquiry into the Manchester Arena terror attack;
- being seconded to assist in the extensive review of material within the Football Association's archives in relation to The Sheldon Review concerning allegations of sexual abuse by individuals in football

Sophia is currently instructed as junior counsel on behalf of one of the Core Participants of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Licensing

Sophia has a growing licensing practice and is regularly instructed in proceedings before City of London Magistrates Court in respect of appeals against adverse decisions taken by Transport for London.

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Notable Cases:

A v TFL

Successfully appealed against TFL's decision to revoke an Uber driver's Private Hire Licence on safety grounds as a result of a complaint by a passenger that A sexually touched her. TFL also relied on 16 other complaints of dishonesty, poor driving and inappropriate behaviour against A. Sophia persuaded the Court that the complaints were evidentially weak and unreliable which resulted in a successful appeal.

AA v TFL

Appeared on behalf of a private hire driver who had his licence revoked on medical grounds.

Private Prosecution

Sophia has a growing private prosecution practice. She has successfully prosecuted a number of cases concerning the widespread sale of counterfeit luxury goods and secured both prosecution and investigation costs in favour of her clients.

Sophia has also assisted as disclosure counsel in a complex, high value private prosecution relating to an alleged contrived receivership of a casino.

Professional Discipline

Sophia is instructed on behalf of the Nursing and Midwifery Council in all manner of hearings, including interim order applications, contested fitness to practise hearings, and substantive order reviews. Her previous cases have included allegations of force-feeding patients and dishonesty.

Sophia also accepts instructions to appear on behalf of nurses and midwives at such hearings before the NMC.

Public Prosecution

Sophia has been instructed by the CPS to prosecute both in the Magistrates and Crown Court. Her prosecution practice covers a wide range of offences. In addition, she accepts instructions on behalf of the Local Authority and also HMRC in civil cash forfeiture hearings before the Magistrates Court.

Appointments & Memberships

- CPS Level 2 Panel Advocate

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- Criminal Bar Association
- South Eastern Circuit
- Female Fraud Forum
- Young Fraud Lawyers Association
- Women in Criminal Law

Education & Qualifications

- Bar Professional Training Course, BPP London
- The Connor Scholarship, Middle Temple
- LLB Law with Hispanic Law, University College London
- Old Square Chambers Prize, University College London

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