

Sophia Dower

Call: 2013



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Sophia Dower is a highly sought after junior, specialising primarily in criminal defence, as both sole counsel in serious and substantial cases and as a led junior.

She advises and acts for clients from pre-charge through to trial across the full spectrum of criminal offences, including murder, serious sexual offences and violence, kidnap, large-scale drug conspiracies, fatal road traffic offences and complex money-laundering and fraud.

Her ability to digest voluminous and technical evidence, her meticulous preparation, tactical skill, and ease in working with clients of all ages and backgrounds is widely recognised. She is repeatedly commended by judges and solicitors for the quality of her written and oral advocacy.

Her most recent instructions include, defending a motorist accused of causing the death of a cyclist through dangerous driving, representing a client accused of involvement in a highly organised multi-million-pound cocaine conspiracy, and acting for a businesswoman alleged to be part of a serious and complex international investment fraud.

In addition to criminal defence, Sophia is regularly instructed on public inquiries and is currently instructed as junior counsel on behalf of a Core Participant in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. She has contributed to a number of complex and large-scale disclosure reviews, including the inquiry into the Manchester Arena terrorist attack, assisting in a sensitive and multi-faceted disclosure exercise on behalf of a Premier League football club in relation to a FIFA investigation and assisting in the extensive review of material for The Sheldon Review concerning allegations of sexual abuse by individuals in football.

Sophia also enjoys a successful licensing practice. She has extensive experience in representing clients in their appeal against adverse licensing decisions taken by Transport for London before City of London Magistrates and the Central Criminal Court.

Outside of chambers, Sophia is a committed anti-death penalty advocate. She previously worked at the Office of Capital Defence Counsel in Mississippi for clients standing trial for capital murder charges where they were at risk of the death penalty if convicted.

Sophia accepts [Direct Access](#) instructions.

Expertise

Criminal Defence

Sophia Dower specialises in criminal defence and is a coveted junior. Her criminal practice encompasses the full spectrum of criminal offending, including murder, sexual offences, organised crime, serious violence, large scale drug conspiracies, money laundering and fatal road traffic cases.

She is a highly skilled, tactical, and robust advocate who is committed to achieving the best possible outcome for her clients. She has a reputation for thorough case preparation, meticulous written argument, and tactical insight beyond her call. On numerous occasions, Crown Court judges have commended her for the quality of both her written and oral advocacy.

As a led junior, she is frequently instructed in complex and high-profile criminal cases, often the subject of media interest.

Notable cases [led junior]:

R v MA (Bristol Crown Court) – instructed as junior counsel to Gudrun Young KC on behalf of a “career conman” accused of exacting a sophisticated romance fraud where he defrauded a woman out of her life savings. Having fled the country, he was placed on the National Crime Agency’s “Top 10 Most Wanted List”. He was extradited from Switzerland to the UK in 2019 to face trial. The case attracted widespread media attention and the defendant is the subject of an in-depth Sky documentary.

R v MD (Chelmsford Crown Court) – instructed as junior counsel to Mark Graffius KC in a cold-case murder. During trial, Sophia’s robust written response to the Prosecution’s bad character application resulted in them abandoning it altogether without the need for any legal argument, and her meticulous review of disclosure unearthed highly valuable material which formed a substantial part of the defence case, ultimately leading her client’s acquittal.

R v CF (Southwark Crown Court) – instructed as junior counsel to Peter Lownds to represent a defendant who, alongside 17 co-defendants, faces a 79-count indictment alleging a long-running holiday investment fraud which resulted in the loss of almost £40million and targeted nearly 5000 victims, the majority of whom were elderly.

R v VF (Woolwich Crown Court) – instructed as junior counsel to Zubair Ahmad KC to represent a client charged with murder after he repeatedly stabbed a family member in the back following a domestic argument. The Prosecution ultimately accepted a carefully drafted basis of plea to manslaughter (loss of control) shortly before trial.

As sole counsel, she continues to defend cases of the utmost gravity, including kidnap, child-sex offences, serious violence, and complex fraud. In particular, Sophia has developed a formidable reputation for the quality of her representation in fatal road-traffic cases and is repeatedly counsel of choice to private clients facing such allegations. She has also had repeated success before the Court of Appeal Criminal Division having brought multiple successful appeals against sentence.

Notable cases [sole counsel]:

R v AM (Exeter Crown Court) – instructed to defend the high-profile fugitive AM named on the National Crime Agency’s ‘Top 10 Most Wanted List’ for offences of Conspiracy to Supply Class A and Class B, Money Laundering and Firearms offences. Sentencing involved complex but ultimately successful submissions on parity of sentence with co-defendants and preservation of credit in circumstances

when a Defendant had absconded.

R v CS (Court of Appeal, Criminal Division) – successful appeal against sentence on behalf of CS who had pleaded guilty to offences of wounding with intent, violent disorder, possession of a bladed article and burglary. CS was a Hell’s Angel who played a leading role in a vicious, pre-planned, revenge attack on a rival motorcycle club. The Court of Appeal were persuaded that the sentencing judge had wrongly categorised the Victim’s injuries as “life-threatening” and agreed the correct categorisation of Harm was Category 2 as opposed to Category 1. This resulted in CS’s sentence being reduced by 3 years.

R v JB (York Crown Court) – privately instructed to defend JB who stood trial for causing death by dangerous driving after his Porsche collided with a cyclist in circumstances where the road was completely clear of all other road-users and visibility was unhindered. The trial focused on complex forensic collision and reconstruction evidence, together with electronic (phone and Garmin data) and toxicology expert evidence. JB was allegedly distracted by his phone and impaired by earlier cocaine and alcohol consumption. However, Sophia’s careful and targeted cross-examination established a narrow but critical window of no phone activity immediately prior to impact and the possibility that the cyclist swerved into JB’s path. The Jury unanimously acquitted Sophia’s client in less than 2 hours.

R v MM (Cardiff Crown Court) – MM was accused of being part of a serious organised crime group involved in the industrial supply of cocaine worth over £4million and the subsequent laundering of the proceeds through a complex cryptocurrency network. The case involved substantial disclosure and expert evidence. Sophia engaged in delicate negotiations with the prosecution during which she impressed upon them the weaknesses of their case against MM. This resulted in Sophia’s client being the only defendant, out of 12 co-defendants, to have a not guilty verdict recorded after the prosecution were driven to offer no evidence on the fifth day of a 10-week trial.

R v AD (Reading Crown Court) – instructed to defend in an eight-handed conspiracy to kidnap trial involving an extremely vulnerable child who was physically and sexually abused by her parents causing her to run away to “safety” when in fact, she was being kidnapped for return to her abusers. This extremely rare case of kidnap by fraud involved complex legal argument, tactical advice, and forensic examination of phone records, ultimately leading to the acquittal of Sophia’s client.

R v AR (Westminster Magistrates) – successful defence of climate activist AR for wilful obstruction of a highway during Just Stop Oil’s controversial campaign of “Occupy Westminster.” She stood trial alongside three other protestors who were all without representation therefore, Sophia led the defence on behalf of all defendants. After extensive cross-examination of multiple police officers and complex written and oral submissions on the proper application of articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights and the relevant Supreme Court decisions, AR, and all co-defendants were acquitted.

R v JF (Preston Crown Court) – Sophia achieved an exceptionally lenient sentence for the ringleader of an organised crime group who targeted luxury homes, stealing high-value vehicles and jewellery worth over £800,000. Despite JF’s extensive criminal record, and the Prosecution’s invitation to the Judge to consider a sentence in double figures, her client was sentenced to a term of just 5 years and 3 months.

R v JB (Peterborough Crown Court) – Sophia appeared in this tragic case where she acted for an 83-year-old man of previous good character charged with causing the death of a 99-year-old pedestrian by dangerous driving. This resulted in a suspended sentence with no requirements and no order of costs.

Gaming & 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.

Notable Cases:

H v TFL

Successful appeal before the Central Criminal Court against TFL's refusal to renew H's Private Hire Licence. H was subject to a police complaint alleging sexual misconduct against a female passenger, together with other conduct related complaints made to his operator Uber. After a full hearing, the Court was satisfied that TFL's decision was wrong and in addition, handed down a written judgement with comprehensive recommendations to TFL.

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.