



Tracy Ayling KC

Call 1983

Silk 2006

Tracy is one of the foremost silks at the criminal bar. She both prosecutes and defends in multi-handed murder, terrorism cases and serious sex cases. She has acted in some of the highest profile murder cases of recent years in the UK, including acting for the defence in the case concerning the 2021 murder of Sir David Amess, the sitting MP for Southend West. Tracy is also one of the few silks to successfully secure a Gross Negligence Manslaughter conviction.

Tracy is a leading specialist in matters of public-interest immunity (PII) and disclosure, and she has extensive experience of dealing with cases involving terrorism and national security. She regularly acts in cases involving Government agencies and has served as a Special Advocate for the Attorney General since 2010, appearing in the Special Immigration Appeals Commission. From 1998 to 2005 Tracy served as Standing Counsel to HMRC.

Tracy is highly experienced in cases concerning human trafficking and child sex offending, and has acted in a number of the most high profile cases concerning grooming gangs.

Tracy is regularly identified by the directories as a leader in her field. Legal 500 has described her as *"a pre-eminent silk"* and *"a master tactician"* and has noted that *"no matter how difficult the tribunal or formidable the opposition, she remains undaunted and always fights her corner."* Chambers and Partners has identified her as *"a charming and deadly opponent"* and *"someone who you would want on your side rather than against you."* It has also noted: *"Her strengths are her ability to focus on key issues, her organisation, her passion and the authority she brings to her appearances."*

Tracy teaches advocacy for the Inner Temple and has taught in foreign jurisdictions including the USA, Romania and Sierra Leone.

Tracy is a frequent writer and speaker on criminal law. In February 2020 she took part in a panel discussion with Baroness Hallett entitled *"Is the Presumption of Innocence Alive and Well?"* as part of the prestigious Social Context of the Law series at Inner Temple. She is also the author of the chapter on disclosure in *Vulnerable People and the Criminal Justice System* (Cooper and Norton, ed., OUP), the leading book on the participation of vulnerable witnesses and defendants in the criminal justice system.

Practice Areas

Appeals

Tracy is an experienced appellate advocate and has successfully handled a number of appeals.

Notable appeals cases

R v G & R

A case concerning a defendant who sent salt through the post in imitation of anthrax.

R v D-J

Concerning a solicitor's murder of his wife.

R v A

Multi-handed Enchrochat case concerning a conspiracy to supply millions of pounds worth of class A drugs.

R v F

A harrowing child abuse case

Confiscation

Notable confiscation cases

R v Jarvis

Largest confiscation on paper.

Murder & Manslaughter

Tracy has handled some of the highest profile murder cases of recent years and has considerable skill in prosecuting and defending multi-handed cases.

Notable murder & manslaughter cases

R v Ali Harbi Ali

Acting for the defence in the case concerning the 2021 murder of Sir David Amess, the sitting MP for Southend West.

R v D, W, M and H

Acting for the prosecution in a case before Chelmsford Crown Court involving a 4 handed drug related murder by stabbing and conspiracy to pervert the course of Justice.

R v S

Acting for the defence in the case of a paranoid schizophrenic who stabbed to death two of his nephews and a third man in Colchester in 2019.

R v T and T

Acting for the prosecution in the high publicised case of two fairground workers in a rare conviction for gross negligence manslaughter.

R v P

Acting for the prosecution in a baby murder case in which catastrophic skull fractures and other bodily injuries were inflicted by the defendant mother.

Operation Director

A multi-handed conspiracy to murder

Serious Sexual Offences

Tracy is highly experienced in cases concerning human trafficking and child sex offending, and has acted in a number of the most high profile cases concerning grooming gangs.

Notable serious sexual offences cases

Operation Bullfinch

Tracy appeared as Leading Defence Counsel in a very high profile, widely reported case concerning a gang of Asian men grooming and abusing very young girls over a period of many years in Oxford – being only the second case of its type.

Operation Sabaton

Acting for the defence in a case related to Operation Bullfinch and Operation Silk.

Operation Silk

Acting for the defence in a case related to Operation Bullfinch and Operation Sabaton.

R v M & Others

Concerning human trafficking and controlling prostitution.

R v M

Concerning historic sexual abuse 38 years previously.

Prosecution

Notable prosecution cases

R v Padmanabha

Mother convicted of Manslaughter and cruelty of her seven month old baby girl.

R v Blundell

Shooting of John Pordage in Chelmsford.

R v B

Allegation that Headmaster of approved school caned boys in 19 complainant case.

R v Thurston & Thurston

Two defendants who operated a bouncy castle which blew away, were convicted of Gross Negligence Manslaughter of a 7 year old girl.

Operation Director

Conspiracy to Murder.

Operation Manila

Aggravated Burglary where the victims had boiling water poured on them.

Criminal Defence

Notable criminal defence cases

R v M

Double murder. Defendant accused of stabbing two men in a flat. Acquitted in relation to one deceased.

Operation Bullfinch

One of the first cases concerning a gang of Asian men committing child sex offences by grooming and abusing very young girls over a period of many years in Oxford. Also appeared in more recently linked cases of Operations Sabaton 2016 and Operation Silk 2018. Child sex offending, grooming, and human trafficking.

R v Maule

Human trafficking case at Wood Green.

Memberships

- Special Advocate for the Attorney General
- Standing Counsel to HMRC (1998 – 2005)

Qualifications

- Advocacy Trainer, Inner Temple

Directory Quotes

- “Tracy has a quick legal mind and deals with some of the most high profile and complex cases.” **Chambers and Partners 2025**
- “She’s got a lovely manner in court. Very good with both judges and juries, she has that confident, easy style.” **Chambers and Partners 2024**
- “Tracy is always very well prepared and grasps points very quickly. Her advocacy is clearly structured and she is engaging with juries and persuasive with judges.” **Legal 500 2024**
- “Tracy remains absolutely at the top of her game and is both a charming and deadly opponent. She is certainly someone you would want on your side rather than against you.” **Chambers and Partners 2023**

- “Tracy has the ability to bring calm to chaos and to navigate through difficult trials.” **Legal 500 2023**
- “Tracy is tenacious and has excellent judgement. She is well prepared, thoughtful and measured. Moreover, she is a master tactician and is always evaluating and anticipating the tactics of the opposition. Moreover, no matter how difficult the tribunal or formidable the opposition, she remains undaunted and always fights her corner.” **Legal 500 2022**
- “Her strengths are her ability to focus on key issues, her organisation, her passion and the authority she brings to her appearances.” **Chambers & Partners 2022**
- “She has extensive knowledge in her subject areas and is widely recognised as an expert in sex and sexual grooming cases.” **Legal 500 2020**
- “Excellent with defendants and takes time to explain all matters clearly – thus gaining their confidence. Her legal knowledge is right up to date and she makes cogent, persuasive, succinct, focused submissions at all times.” **Legal 500 2020**
- “She has a tactical brain that not only considers her own case but the other cases around her. She is an all round top performer.” **Legal 500 2020**
- “Unflappable under pressure, her judgement is always spot-on.” **Legal 500 2018**
- “A pre-eminent silk, who undertakes the most serious criminal work.” **Legal 500 2017**
- “Her advocacy is punchy, focused and succinct.” **Legal 500 2016**
- “An amazing advocate in court.” **Legal 500 2015**