

Alisdair Williamson KC

Call: 1994 / Silk: 2017



Alisdair Williamson KC practises in serious crime and professional discipline. He has been recognised for many years as one of the foremost barristers in his practice areas.

He is well-known as specialist defence counsel in homicide, fraud, and difficult, complex sexual offences. He has acted in many very high-profile cases, including the successful defence of Coronation Street actor Michael Le Vell, and – in professional discipline – the successful appeal in the leading case of **SRA v Beckwith**.

He has been The Times Lawyer of the Week, The Lawyer's Barrister of the Week and is consistently ranked across several practice areas in both Chambers UK and Legal 500.

Recent cases include the successful defence of Ringo Starr's grandson (Sonny Starkey); and of a police officer accused of causing the death of Lewis Johnson by dangerous driving; the obtaining of the rare and difficult Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity verdict in allegations of murder and attempted murder. He advised a well-known England footballer on assault and driving charges resulting in no further action being taken. He also represented one of the lorry drivers in the manslaughter trial arising from the deaths of 39 Vietnamese nationals concealed in a lorry container. He acted in the Daniel Morgan enquiry. He successfully represented one of the lead officers in the police discipline case arising from the death of Sean Rigg. He was recently instructed to defend in a claim of professional negligence against solicitors in the high profile case of footballer Ched Evans following his acquittal of rape charges. He has considerable expertise in cases of alleged baby-shaking. He is currently instructed in several complex murders around the country as well as very high-profile sexual allegations and one of the country's largest fraud allegations.

He has a successful appellate practice in both the Court of Appeal, where he is asked to take over cases in which he was not previously instructed, and in the form of judicial review.

Crime

Alisdair is one of the leading barristers in criminal law. He has defended in the gravest and most serious cases around the country. His experience of complex and sensitive allegations is of the highest order, whether murder or sexual offences. He has a truly impressive record in defending the most difficult and emotionally charged cases where a range of advocacy skills and styles are required. He has particular expertise in cross-examining vulnerable witnesses in the most demanding of circumstances.

Notable Crime cases

- **R v Talware and others (2023)**

Alisdair secured an acquittal of murder for his then 15-year old client in an allegation of execution killing.

- **R v David Carrick (2023)**

Alisdair (leading Patrick Hill) represented former PC Mr Carrick in one of the most serious sexual cases to have come before the Courts of England and Wales.

- **R v Gallagher, Starkey, and Ors (2022)**

Alisdair acted for Sonny Starkey, grandson of Ringo Starr, in this very high-profile prosecution in which he persuaded the CPS to offer no evidence and for his client to be bound-over in respect of allegations of affray and assault.

- **R v S (2021)**

Alisdair (leading Edmund Gritt) secured complete acquittals for a police driver accused of causing death by dangerous driving arising out of the pursuit of a moped which had been engaged in crime.

- **R v D (2021)**

Alisdair secured the acquittal of a student accused of the rape of another student during Fresher's Week.

- **R v Walker (2021)**

Alisdair represented Sarah Walker in the missing body murder trial arising from the disappearance of Sarah's 17 year old daughter, Bernadette.

- **R v Wells (2021)**

Alisdair represented Mr Wells, the former doctor, in his trial for the drugging and raping of children.

- **R v Z (2021)**

Alisdair secured Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity verdicts in this difficult, complex, and highly emotive murder trial. Z killed his brother-in-law and tried to kill his sister and nephew. The trial centred on the disputed psychiatric evidence and Alisdair's cross-examination of the Crown's expert.

- **R v Hughes, Harrison and others (2020)**

Alisdair acted for one of the drivers in the very high-profile manslaughter trial arising from the deaths of 39 migrants in a lorry container being imported to the UK.

- **R v AD (2020)**

Alisdair secured the acquittal of a member of staff accused of sexual assaults on a vulnerable patient in a psychiatric unit

- **R v W (2019)**

Alisdair secured the acquittal of a man found with £500,000 hidden in his flat. Charged with money-laundering, he explained that he was a semi-professional gambler and the money represented his winnings.

- **R v WM (2019)**

Alisdair's client was acquitted of murdering his mother in a case of complicated psychiatric, evidential, and forensic issues.

- **R v P (2018)**

After successfully appealing the defendant's conviction arising from the judge's wrongful refusal to allow time for an expert to complete their report, Alisdair secured complete acquittals for a police officer accused of historical sexual abuse of his partner's daughter. The case involved complicated forensic issues arising from the effect of therapy and EMDR on the complainant's memory.

- **R v H (2018)**

Successful defence of a woman accused of serious, historical sexual assaults on her son. A highly unusual, difficult and emotionally charged case in which Alisdair secured his client's acquittal.

Fraud & Corruption

Alisdair has been at the forefront of fraud work throughout his practice. Whether it has been advising in high-profile cases, strategic management of crises to prevent litigation, or representing high net worth individuals at every stage of the criminal process, Alisdair's experience and expertise is in constant demand. He has defended in a variety of VAT, missing trader, income tax and regulatory frauds. His background degree in economics enables him to master the financial details and nuances. Solicitors and lay clients value his approachable style and analytic ability.

Alisdair has extensive defence experience of tax evasion, missing trader and other VAT frauds, frauds on public bodies such as the NHS, and frauds in the obtaining of contracts from government departments.

Notable Fraud & Corruption cases

- **R v H (Southwark Crown Court)**

Leading counsel international conspiracy to defraud and money-laundering.

- **Re W-C (Chancery Division)**
Proceedings in respect of an accountancy services firm.
- **R v S (Ipswich Crown Court)**
Leading counsel multi-million pound international conspiracy to defraud.
- **R v B (Leeds Crown Court)**
Leading counsel multi-million pound international VAT missing trader fraud.
- **R v C (Chichester Crown Court)**
Regional Development Office fraud.

Inquests & Inquiries

Alisdair has extensive experience acting in Inquests and Inquiries around the country. He has acted for doctors, families, and police officers at Inquests and is highly valued for his ability to deal with complex, sensitive and large-scale cases in a way that never loses sight of the sensitivity of the issues for the individuals concerned.

Notable Inquests & Inquiries cases

- **The Daniel Morgan Inquiry (2021)**
Alisdair acted for three officers named in the report in this very high-profile Inquiry.
- **Inquest into the Death of AG (2022)**
Alisdair acted for two police officers central to the investigation of the murder of AG.
- **Inquest into the death of RC (2021)**
Mr C had armed himself with a lethal air weapon that had the appearance of a sawn-off shotgun and walked to a local petrol station where he acted aggressively. On being challenged by armed police, he levelled the weapon at them, tragically giving the officers no option in the circumstances but to discharge their weapons. The jury found that he had been lawfully killed, Alisdair acted for the officers concerned.
- **Inquest into death of ST (2016)**
Represented three Custody Sergeants in a widely reported death in custody.
- **Inquest into death of DB (2015)**
Represented a police officer whose vehicle crushed a member of the public after being left unattended. Complex issues of latent defect in the braking system, an unlawful killing conclusion was avoided following representations on behalf of the officer.

Professional Discipline

Alisdair acts for solicitors before the SDT, the High Court, and on criminal allegations before the Crown Court. He has acted successfully for Magic Circle partners accused of sexual impropriety and has expertise in pre-action advice to avoid litigation. He has represented firms and individuals on a range of disciplinary allegations.

Alisdair also acts for doctors and dentists before their professional disciplinary bodies. He has particular expertise in allegations of sexual misconduct.

Alisdair has an enviable record in defending police officers in disciplinary proceedings and the criminal courts; he well understands the unique pressures that face police officers accused of wrong-doing. He has widespread experience representing senior officers accused of corruption and has successfully represented officers accused of the most serious offences.

Notable Professional Discipline cases

- **SRA v Beckwith (2020)**

Alisdair acted for the successful appellant in the leading case on the meaning of 'integrity' in professional discipline. A case which is widely seen as a rebuke of the SRA by the High Court both in respect of the nature of the allegations brought and the costs accrued.

- **SRA v Y (2022)**

Alisdair made successful representations against referral to the SDT for a solicitor who faced allegations of breaches of the Principles in respect of management and oversight, client matters, and breaches of the Accounts Rules.

- **SRA v X (2021)**

Alisdair acted for a high-profile solicitor who faced allegations of sexual impropriety. Alisdair made successful representations against referral to the SDT and the matter was resolved without reference to any sexual misconduct.

- **SRA v Z (2021)**

On appeal to the SDT from an order by the Adjudicator, Alisdair was successful in overturning findings of breaches of Principle 6 (undermining public trust)

- **In the matter of Sean Rigg (2019)**

Successful representation of officer cleared of any wrong doing arising from the death of Sean Rigg in 2008. Police discipline hearing held 10.5 years after the tragic events.

- **R v P (2018)**

After successfully appealing the defendant's conviction arising from the judge's wrongful refusal to allow time for an expert to complete their report, Alisdair secured complete acquittals for a police officer accused of historical sexual

abuse of his partner's daughter. Complicated issues of memory contamination from Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR).

- **R v T (2018)**

Successful defence of police officer accused of historical serious sexual offences against step-daughter.

- **R (Chief Constable of the Derbyshire Constabulary) v The Police Appeals Tribunal (Green and Stewart –Interested Parties)[2012]**

EWHC 2280.

- **Re H (2016)**

Successful representation of Police Custody Sergeant at discipline proceedings for failure to secure medical attention for a detainee with two broken legs.

- **Re R (2014)**

Successful defence of a dentist accused before the GDC of sexual assaults on two members of staff. The case was dismissed.

Notable Cases

Crime

R v Talware and others

(2023)

Alisdair secured an acquittal of murder for his then 15-year old client in an allegation of execution killing.

R v David Carrick

(2023)

Alisdair (leading Patrick Hill) represented former PC David Carrick in one of the most serious sexual cases to have come before the Courts of England and Wales.

R v Gallagher, Starkey, and Ors

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Alisdair acted for Sonny Starkey, grandson of Ringo Starr, in this very high-profile prosecution in which he persuaded the CPS to offer no evidence and for his client to be bound-over in respect of allegations of affray and assault.

R v S

(2021)

Alisdair (leading Edmund Gritt) secured complete acquittals for a police driver accused of causing death by dangerous driving arising out of the pursuit of a moped which had been engaged in crime.

R v D

(2021)

Alisdair secured the acquittal of a student accused of the rape of another student during Fresher's Week.

R v Walker

(2021)

Alisdair represented [Sarah Walker](#) in the missing body murder trial arising from the disappearance of Sarah's 17 year old daughter, Bernadette.

R v Wells

(2021)

Alisdair represented [Mr Wells](#), the former doctor, in his trial for the drugging and raping of children.

R v Chilman

(2021)

Alisdair represented [Mr Chilman](#) in the murder trial arising from the discovery of the burned body of his former partner's new lover.

R v Z

(2021)

Alisdair secured Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity verdicts in this difficult, complex, and highly emotive murder trial. Z killed his brother-in-law and tried to kill his sister and nephew. The trial centred on the disputed psychiatric evidence and Alisdair's cross-examination of the Crown's expert.

R v Hughes, Harrison and others

(2020)

Alisdair acted for one of the drivers in the very high-profile manslaughter trial arising from the deaths of 39 migrants in a lorry container being imported to the UK.

R v AD

2020

Alisdair's client, a teacher in a secure psychiatric unit, was acquitted of all counts of sexually abusing a child patient.

R v W

2019

Successful defence of man found with £500,000 in cash hidden in his flat. Charged with money-laundering, he explained that he was a semi-professional gambler and the money was his winnings from poker and horse racing.

R v P

2018

After successfully appealing the defendant's conviction arising from the judge's wrongful refusal to allow time for an expert to complete their report, Alisdair secured complete acquittals for a police officer accused of historical sexual abuse of his partner's daughter. Complicated issues of memory contamination from Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR).

R v T

2018

Successful defence of police officer accused of historical serious sexual offences against step-daughter.

R v F

2018

Successful defence of man accused of historical sexual offences against his partner's three children.

R v C

2018

Legally and factually complex defence of loss of control for man accused of murdering his wife over her sexual humiliation of him.

R v H

2018

Successful defence of a woman accused of serious, historical sexual assaults on her son. A highly unusual, difficult and emotionally charged case in which Alisdair secured his client's acquittal.

R v W-C

2018

Successful defence of businessman accused of buggery and other serious historical sexual offences against his cousin during the late 80s.

R v B

2018

Successful defence of headmaster and former scout master accused of a series of historical, serious sexual offences.

R v U

2017

Successful defence of young defendant accused of a leading role in fatal stabbing. Found not guilty of murder, manslaughter and conspiracy to commit GBH.

R v M

2017

Successful defence of man accused of raping his sister 35 years ago. The case raised complicated issues of doli incapax and also the presumption of incapacity of rape by reason of age. He was acquitted of rape and of ABH but convicted of an indecent assault for which he was fined.

R v L

2017

L was acquitted of attempted murder. He had stabbed through the heart the leader of a gang who had harassed L and damaged his property. Convicted of GBH.

R v L, V & S

2016

Successful defence of man accused of double gang-rape in the mid-eighties

R v O

2016

Secured the acquittal of a man accused of raping his brother's wife over an extended period, and historical sexual assault of his niece

R v C

2016

Successful defence of a man accused of raping an unconscious woman. Complex pharmacological and mental health issues

R v A

2015

Successful defence of a man accused of historical childhood incestuous sex offences by his sister. (Direct Access)

R v J

2015

Man accused of historical sexual assaults by a male friend of the family. Acquitted.

R v J

2015

Successful defence of man accused by former wife of a historical campaign of rape and assault.

R v E

2015

Secured the acquittal of a police officer accused of serious abusive behaviour, sexual and physical, on previous partners

R v M

2015

Secured the acquittal of a PC who had previously served with distinction as a Firefighter and who had been accused of the physical and indecent assault of recruits to the Fire Service.

R v C

2015

Police Officer accused by colleague of serious sexual assaults. Acquitted.

R v GC

2014

Successful defence of serving DS against allegations of child rape going back to the 1970s.

R v WH

2014

Secured acquittal of man accused of gang rape during the 1970s.

R v GJ

2014

Defended an allegation of child sex abuse dating back 30 years. The defendant was acquitted.

R v C

2013

Secured the acquittal of a police firearms officer accused of attempting to anally rape and digitally penetrating, his partner.

R v Michael Turner (Michael Le Vell)

2013

The successful defence of actor Michael Le Vell in his prosecution for child rape and other serious sexual offences.

R v D & Y

2013

Successful defence of a 14 year old boy accused of, when 13, raping his co-defendant's 15 year old girlfriend.

R v Ezekiel & Another

2013

Counsel for the Crown in the successful prosecution of the former leader of Thanet Council for Misconduct in Public Office.

R v G

2012

Secured the acquittal of defendant accused by well-known author of rape and GBH during their marriage

R v Studholme

2012

Leading junior counsel for the only defendant acquitted of conspiracy to supply London's largest ever seizure of cocaine.

Fraud

R v H (Southwark Crown Court)

Leading counsel international conspiracy to defraud and money-laundering.

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R v C (Chichester Crown Court)

Regional Development Office fraud.

R v W (Isleworth Crown Court)

Money laundering web.

R v JF (Croydon Crown Court)

Leading counsel million pound fraud on the Home Office.

R v A (Southwark Crown Court)

Large scale bribery for the award of local government contracts.

R v H (Lewes Crown Court)

Million pound income tax fraud and ancillary JR proceedings.

R v B (Southwark Crown Court)

A complex and large-scale multi-million fraud on the mobile phone networks.

R v W (Inner London Crown Court)

Industrial scale money-laundering through domestic casino networks, and property transactions in Spain.

R v S (Kingston Crown Court)

Leading counsel multi-handed money laundering.

R v AJ (Croydon Crown Court)

Leading counsel multi-million pound fraud against DEFRA.

R v E (Maidstone Crown Court)

Prosecution of the former Mayor of Thanet for corruption and Misconduct in Public Office.

R v Hamper

2012

Leading junior counsel in the successful defence of a woman accused of conspiracy to defraud and conspiracy to launder the proceeds of cocaine supply.

R v John & Others

2012

Leading junior for 3rd defendant in largest DEFRA prosecution for fraud relating to animal medicines.

Inquests

The Daniel Morgan Inquiry

(2021)

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R v C

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Directory Recommendations

“He is excellent, both in terms of his level of detail and his client interactions.” **Chambers UK 2024: Crime**

“Alisdair is a team player and has the gravitas to persuade the tribunal with his superb advocacy skills.” **Chambers UK 2024: Professional Discipline**

“Alisdair is a brilliant tactician. He is both dominating and highly persuasive as an advocate and there is real depth to the way he addresses juries and handles even the most difficult of witnesses. He is also a joy to work with.” **Legal 500 2024: Crime**

His advocacy skills, preparation, written submissions and tactical acumen mean he is at the very upper echelons of the Bar, possibly second to none. A first choice as an advocate for any case of complexity and seriousness.’ **Legal 500 2024: Police Law**

“He is conscientious and takes good care of clients. He is outstandingly good in court.” **Chambers UK 2023: Professional Discipline**

“He is a calm and measured barrister putting lay clients at ease. He works well within a team. He is a persuasive advocate selecting well the points to make and those not to make.” **Legal 500 2023: Police Law**

“Methodical, calm and outstandingly good in court.” **Chambers UK 2023: Crime**

“Alisdair is a powerful advocate: trusted by juries, respected by judges, and feared by opponents. Clients are immediately reassured by his calm and confident approach.” **Chambers UK 2023: Crime**

“The most delightful person to work with and someone who knows everything inside out.” **Chambers UK 2022: Crime**

“Brilliant, calm and always at pains to provide the best possible service.” **Chambers UK 2022: Professional Discipline**

“He’s instructed in the biggest cases and gets fantastic results for his clients.” **Chambers UK 2022: Professional Discipline**

“He is simply impressive.” **Legal 500 2022: Crime**

“His written work, his ability to deal with tribunals and to cross-examine over difficult and sensitive subjects are outstanding. He is an absolutely first-class advocate.” **Legal 500 2022: Police Law**

“An impeccable performer who is strong at cross-examination and a good choice for the most difficult cases.” **Chambers UK 2021: Crime**

“He has a majestic advocacy style and is technically brilliant.” **Chambers UK 2021: Crime**

“A charming advocate who is eloquent and able to present things effectively.” **Chambers UK 2021: Crime**

“He is efficient, thorough and very approachable with good judgement and easy-going with clients.” **Legal 500 2021: Crime**

“A tactically brilliant silk.” **Legal 500 2021: Police Law**

“Technically brilliant – one of the very best.” **Legal 500 2019: Police Law**

“He has a great strategic mind.” **Chambers UK 2020: Crime**

“So personable, with a sharp legal mind and a great manner with instructing solicitors and clients.” **Chambers UK 2018: Crime**

“He has a fantastic manner. His witness handling is outstanding.” **Chambers UK 2018: Professional Discipline**

“A majestic practitioner.” **Chambers UK 2017: Crime**

“Always the first choice for defendants facing allegations of rape or sexual assault”. **Chambers UK 2017: Crime**

“A leading barrister in defending rape cases – calm, measured and a brilliant cross-examiner.” **Legal 500 2017: Crime**

“His quality of advocacy in cross-examination is of the first order.” “Always the first choice for defendants facing allegations of rape or sexual assault.” “He’s got a very reassuring manner with clients and an excellent jury manner.” **Chambers UK 2017: Crime**

“He’s very good at getting his head around a case quickly, and from there he makes the right strategic calls.” “A highly experienced, unflappable advocate, he’s always calm and able to think on his feet.” **Chambers UK 2017: Professional Discipline**

“Unflappable and good at dealing with challenging clients.” **Legal 500 2016: Crime**

“He receives attention for the quality of his client care and for his abilities in cross-examination. “He is very thorough in his preparation of cases and is very good with clients, including potentially difficult ones.” “He is an absolute master of the art of cross-examination. He has an ability to deal with everyone, from clients to solicitors and judges.” **Chambers UK 2016: Crime**

“He is a brilliant cross-examiner and an excellent jury advocate.” “He’s very understated, but he’s an experienced tactician and very good at making clients feel comfortable.” “He is very good with all aspects of the process. He grasps what the client needs and what the strong points of the defence are, and liaises with the police well.” **Chambers UK 2015: Crime**

“He is a brilliant cross-examiner and a compelling advocate.” “He is energetic, highly effective and a pleasure to deal with.” **Chambers UK 2014: Crime**

“Very tough and knows what he is talking about” ... “plays well to the jury and has that bearing that juries expect of a senior advocate”. **Chambers UK 2013: Crime**

“A great presence at the Criminal Bar, with a strong reputation for handling murders and sexual offences.” **Chambers UK 2012: Crime**

“A highly expert cross-examiner who has dealt with a number of cases of great seriousness.” **Chambers UK 2011: Crime**

Memberships

- The Criminal Bar Association
- The Association of Regulatory & Disciplinary Lawyers
- Fraud Lawyers Association South Eastern Circuit
- Criminal Bar Association Working Party on section 41 Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act
- Undertakes work for the Bar Council Pro Bono Unit
- Pro Bono Privy Council work

Education

- MA (Oxon) -Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Open Exhibitioner)
- Dip Law (City) with Commendation
- Called to the Bar 1994 (Astbury Scholar)

Accreditations



Privacy Statement

I, Alisdair Williamson KC, am a data controller and can be contacted at 3 Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5BH or by telephone on 020 7400 6400 or by email at alisdair.williamson@3rblaw.com. My Data Protection Policy can be found below.

All personal data that I process is for the purposes of providing legal services, conducting conflict-checks, marketing, defending potential complaints, legal proceedings or fee disputes, keeping anti-money laundering records, training other barristers and pupils and when providing work-shadowing opportunities, and/or exercising a right to a lien. The types of data I process vary upon the nature of the legal matter in relation to which I am engaged to advise, but can include names, contact details, biographic details and 'special category personal data' (such as details of racial or ethnic origin, political

opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health, sex life and criminal convictions and proceedings).

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the legal bases upon which I process personal data are (i) the performance of a contract to which the data subject is a party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract, (ii) the processing is necessary to comply with legal obligations to which I am subject, or (iii) the processing is necessary for the legitimate interests set out above, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child. When I rely on (iii) legitimate interests, my 'Legitimate Interests Assessment' can be found [here](#). When I process data which has not been obtained directly from the data subject (e.g. personal data contained in evidential materials), it will have been supplied to me as part of my instructions in circumstances covered by legal professional privilege.

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, I may share the personal data with:

1. my Chambers, which supplies professional and administrative support to my practice;
2. Courts and other tribunals to whom documents are presented;
3. my lay and professional clients;
4. potential witnesses, in particular experts, and friends or family of the data subject;
5. solicitors, barristers, pupils, mini pupils and other legal representatives;
6. ombudsmen and regulatory authorities;
7. current, past or prospective employers;
8. education and examining bodies;
9. business associates, professional advisers and trade bodies.

I retain personal data for no longer than 7 years after the case has come to an end or as otherwise required by law.

I do not intend to transfer data to any country which is not either within the European Union, 'white listed' by the EU or otherwise permitted by EU law (e.g. to the USA under the provisions of the 'Privacy Shield').

Under the GDPR, data subjects whose personal data I process have the right to request from me access to, and rectification or erasure of, their personal data, the right to the restriction of processing concerning them, the right to object to processing as well as the right to data portability. Data subjects also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ico.org.uk).

In cases where there is a contract between me and the data subject, the provision of personal data is a contractual requirement and the data subject is obliged to provide the personal data in order that I can supply legal services. A failure to provide such data may mean that I will not be able to provide the legal services.

Rev 1.1 – 24.05.2018

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Legitimate Interests Assessment](#)

Direct Access

Alisdair Williamson KC is qualified to accept instructions direct from clients under the Bar Council's [Public Access](#) Scheme. This means that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to him. In addition, he welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's [Licensed Access](#) Scheme.

For further information please contact our [Clerks](#).