Emma Heath



Junior Counsel - Under 15 Years

CALLED 2016

"Emma is a very hard working advocate who presents well."

CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2027

Called to the Bar in 2016, Emma has a proven track record in some of the most serious and complex criminal cases, including murder, sexual offences, firearms, and large-scale drug conspiracies. Emma has earned a reputation as a fearless jury advocate with exceptional attention to detail and a straightforward, practical style.

Emma is particularly known for her work with vulnerable witnesses and young defendants. As Head of the Youth Practitioners Association (2022–2024), she helped raise standards of advocacy for young people in the Criminal Justice System.

In 2024, Emma successfully opposed an application by HM-AG to refer a sentence as unduly lenient. That same year, she was appointed as a Grade 3 CPS General Crime and RASSO advocate, and she has successfully defended individuals and businesses in Trading Standards prosecutions involving allegations of fraud and deceptive practices. Emma has appeared against, and is regularly instructed as junior to, King's Counsel.

In 2025, Emma was appointed as embedded counsel to His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, advising and working alongside the Fraud Investigation Service (FIS) on some of the UK's most

significant cases of tax fraud and economic crime.

Notable Cases

Appellate

Alfie Baker, 2024

Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) [2024] EWCA Crim 413, the Solicitor General sought leave to appeal against a sentence deemed unduly lenient. The respondent, an 18-year-old with learning difficulties, was represented by Emma. Having heard submissions on the defendant's age and cognitive challenges. The Court of Appeal refused the Solicitor Gernal's application for leave.

Bribery and Corruption

R v N, 2023

Emma was led by Karl Volz and instructed by Richard Cronin of O'Keefe Solicitors. The case involved eight defendants facing allegations of conspiracy to defraud that spanned a two-and-a-half- year period. The prosecution's case (North Yorkshire Trading Standards) focused on various authorities, including Police Forces Local Authority Trading Standards Departments and financial institutions. The fraudulent activity targeted 28 members of the public who had allowed the defendant to carry out building work on their properties.

R v D and others

Emma, led by Ruth Becker of chambers, secured an acquittal for their client who was charged with a conspiracy to produce over 10 million pound of counterfeit currency. Emma represented the first of five defendants in an 8 week trial before the Woolwich Crown Court. Emma was instructed by Lisa French of Foxes solictors.

Bribery and Corruption

Driving

R v Ivan Zhyhan, 2023

Representing a defendant charged with causing serious injury by dangerous driving (HGV). The complainant suffered life changing injuries and was in a coma for 19 weeks post-accident. The case

involved cross examination of road traffic experts and HGV experts in relation to weight/distance/speed and tachographs measurements.

After a 7 day trial the jury convicted on causing serious injury by dangerous driving. At the sentencing hearing, mitigation was put forward on behalf of Mr Zhyhan which allowed the judge to pass a sentence of 2 years 4 months imprisonment.

Basildon Crown Court

Read more on Bishop's Stortford Independent

Driving

Drugs

R v F

Emma represented a 17 years old charged with possession with Intent to Supply Class A and GBH with intent before the Croydon Crown Court and successfully ran the s45 Modern Slavery defence. Emma's client had serious mental health conditions and

Emma was instructed by Mel Stooks of GT Stewart Solicitors.

R v M, 2021

Emma, who was lead, represented the first defendant on a multi-handed indictment alleging conspiracy to supply class A and B drugs and possession and transference of firearms in an 8-week trial before the Stafford Crown Court. Following a successful s8 application a severance argument was pursued in respect of the firearms counts which the court upheld. The Crown proceeded only on the drugs counts. Emma was instructed by Nadeem Majid of M&M Solicitors.

R v KM, 2019

Emma represented a 19 year old client who came before Kingston Crown Court for sentence of his third Possession with Intent to Supply (PWITS) Class A drugs offence, having pleaded guilty to two previous PWITS, Class A offences. The Crown initally argued that the defendant fell to be sentenced to a minimum mandatory sentence of 7 years imprisonment. At the sentencing hearing, Emma persuaded the CPS and the Court that the provisions of s.110 PCC(S)A 2000 did not apply and secured a sentence of 30 months imprisonment for the two drug charges. The court was " grateful to Ms Heath for her detailed sentencing note and her pragmatic and helpful oral submissions, both of which assisted the court in the sentencing exercise.

Kingston Crown Court.

Drugs

Financial Crime

R v MC, 2024

Emma prosecuted a con-woman who defrauded her 74-year-old neighbour of £118,000. The fraud took place over a 19 month period and involved the defendant convincing the victim that she was investing in lucrative property deals in Spain. The fraud occurred between January 2019 and October 2020 and the defendant spent the entirety of the money fraudulently obtained n designer goods, luxury cruises, and expensive holidays in the Caribbean.

Luton Crown Court

J v Department for Work & Pensions, 2019

Emma represented an Appellant who appealed against a decision of the DWP in relation to benefit overpayment that was alleged to have taken place over a period of 10 years. The overall benefit figure was reduced by 25% following successful representations that the Appellant had properly notified the relevant department of a change in circumstances and therefore the benefit figure was not recoverable.

Financial Crime

Firearms

R v RB

Emma represented a 15-year-old charged with possession of an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence. Emma's client was jointly charged with youths and adults but was arrested some months after the alleged offence date. Emma was successful in an application to dismiss before the Snaresbrook Crown Court.

Emma was instructed by Gerry McDonald of EBR Attridge.

R v A, 2021

Emma represented a 15-year-old charged with possession of an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence who was jointly charged with others but arrested some months after the alleged offence date. Emma was successful in an application to dismiss before the Snaresbrook

Crown Court.

Emma was instructed by Gerry McDonald of EBR Attridge.

Firearms

General Crime

R v S, 2026

Emma, leading Andrew Rose, was instructed to represent a client alleged to have been involved in a conspiracy to supply Class A drugs and money laundering, known as Operation CRINKS. The case concerned an organised group involved in a conspiracy to supply very large-scale commercial quantities of cocaine, operating in London and the East of England. The case involved surveillance evidence, covert audio recordings, EncroChat phone evidence, and the recovery of vast amounts of cash and cocaine. Emma was instructed by Katie Kipps of Murray Hughman Solicitors.

R v I, 2023

Emma, led by Simon Stirling, acted for a client charged with conspiracy to facilitate travel with a view to exploitation under s.2 of the Modern Slavery Act, 2015, known as Operation Supermarine. The prosecution case centred around prostitutes working in the Swindon area who had come from Romania. Following a submission of no case to answer by Simon and Emma. the jury was directed to return not guilty verdicts in respect of their client.

Emma was instructed by Raymond Shaw of SGK Solicitors.

R v KM, 2018

Following a committal to the Crown Court for breach of a Suspended Sentence Order (SSO), Emma successfully argued that activation of the 18-year-olds SSO was unjust in all of the circumstances, despite the breach matter being committed only a matter of weeks after the imposition of the original SSO.

Crime

Inquests, Inquires and Public Law

Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan

Emma is currently instructed as junior counsel to the Inquiry, contributing to the investigation of some of the most serious allegations concerning UK operations overseas.

Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

Emma was instructed by Peters & Peters Solicitors LLP in the statutory inquiry into the failings of the Horizon accounting system and the wrongful prosecution and conviction of sub-postmasters and postmistresses.

Public Law

Murder and Manslaughter

R v NQ and others, 2024

Emma, led by Ruth Jones, represented the second defendant, charged with the murder of a man in Old Kent Road in January 2024. The case was one of joint enterprise and involved the stabbing of a man following his spontaneous outburst of violence with the first defendant, who was the partner of the second defendant. The trial lasted 7 weeks.

Inner London Crown Court

Link to news article here

R v KS and Others, 2024

Emma, led by Jane Bickerstaff KC, represented the second defendant who was charged with murder. The case was one of joint enterprise and involved the stabbing of a man who was dealing drugs for a rival drugs line. The defendants all played different roles with Emma's client being directly involved in the stabbing.

Central Criminal Court

Murder and Manslaughter

Private Prosecutions

JUUL Labs UK Holdco Limited v VP and MK, 2020

Emma, along with Scott Smith of 9 Bedford Row and Ruta Mikailaite of McMillan Williams Solicitors successfully defended in a private prosecution brought by Edwards Marshall McMahon on behalf of JUUL Labs UK Holdco Limited for offences under the Trades Mark Act 1994 , Registered Designs Act 1949 and the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. The case concerned the prosecution of sales assistants who unknowingly sold counterfeit goods and their alleged breaches of regulations

in relation to electronic cigarettes. After a full days trial before Westminster Magistrates Court, both individuals were acquitted.

Private Prosecutions

Rape and Sexual Offences

R v LM, 2025

Emma represented a client facing multiple allegations of rape and sexual assault brought by two former partners. The allegations spanned a seven-year period, beginning when the defendant was 15 years old. The defence strategy focused on raising the issue of collusion between the two complainants, suggesting a coordinated effort to fabricate a false narrative. Following a two week trial, the defendant was acquitted of some of the charges. Emma was instructed by Mel Stooks of GT Stewart Solicitors.

Inner London Crown Court

R v MF, 2024

The complainant was an in-patient at a residential care home and the defendant was employed by the Local Authority as her carer. The case was not granted s28 special measures and cross-examination of the complainant took place before the jury with an intermediary present. The Crown's case involved an allegation that the defendant had groomed the complainant by showing her pornographic material on his mobile telephone in a bid to show her how to have sex (the Crown's case being that her learning difficulties made it difficult for her to know what sex was/involved). The defence therefore required analysis of phone material and CCTV from the residential unit to trace the defendant's steps before and after the allegations. The jury acquitted on count 1 and convicted on count 2.

Snaresbrook Crown Court

R v TC, 2024

Emma successfully defended a client who was acquitted of rape, intentional non-fatal strangulation, false imprisonment and sexual assault. The Crown, represented by King's Counsel, also alleged that the defendant had subjected the complainant to controlling and coercive behaviour and ABH. Emma was instructed by EBR Attridge.

Oxford Crown Court

Read more on Oxford Mail

R v DW 2024

Emma sucessfully represetend a defendant who was acquttued of sexual assualt of his step-daughter, alleged to have occurred in 2019. The trial lasted 9 days and the jury returned unamious not guilty verdicts Emma was instructed by Toni Hennessy-Ling Lawtons Solicitors.

Inner London Crown Court

R v JC, 2023

Client had a conviction for rape of his biological daughter 19 years prior which went before the jury

The case involved extensive cross examination of the complainant in relation to her phone records and a timeline of events that she provided to the police in interview.

Case also involved cross-examination on vaginal injuries noted at the time and drugs found in the complainant's system which the defence asserted was taken recreationally. This was material that came to light through the unused material and was able to be put before the jury by way of agreed facts as the Crown could not challenge it.

After a week-long trial the jury were unable to reach a verdict and the jury was discharged.

The Crown sought a retiral – the same s28 cross examination was put before the jury (conducted by Miss Heath) and the jury failed to reach a verdict a second time.

Wood Green Crown Court

R v JC, 2022

Emma was instructed to represent a defendant charged with the rape of his daughter who was an adult at the time of the alleged offence. The case involved sensitive cross examination of a witness who was vulnerable due to mental health issues. Emma was instructed by Gerry McDonald of EBR Attridge. The jury could not reach a verdict and were dismissed after a 7 day trial. Wood Green Crown Court.

R v MC, 2021

Emma, led by Anthony Berry KC, represented a 21-year-old charged with multiple counts of rape, violence and controlling and coercive behaviour against three ex-partners. Guildford Crown Court. Emma was instructed by Richard Cronin of O'Keefe Solicitors.

R v G, 2019

Instructed as junior counsel, defending a Lubavitch Rabbi on 14 counts of serious indecent assault against 4 boys in the 1990s. The prosecution was part of Greater Manchester Police's extensive investigation into allegations of sexual abuse within the Orthodox Jewish Community in Manchester.

The case took 3 years to come to court with three previous trial listings vacated, with both leading and junior counsel involved in all three trials and wasted costs order made against the CPS and GMP for disclosure failings.

Following a three week trial, the jury took a day and a half to acquit the defendant of all 14 counts alleged by the complaints. Emma was instructed by David Sonn of Sonn Macmillan Walker.

See the full article here

Rape and Sexual Offences

Violence

R v MM, 2024

Emma successfully defended a client who was acquitted of s.18 GBH with an alternative count of s.20 wounding. Emma's client was initially charged with the attempted murder of his father, who he accepted stabbing twice in the abdomen. The defence raised was self-defence. On the first day of trial, the Crown amended the indictment to the s.18 and s.20 offences. After a five-day trial, the jury unanimously acquitted Emma's client of both counts.

Woolwich Crown Court

R v K, 2019

After a three day trial before the Croydon Crown Court, Emma successfully secured the acquittal on two counts of Assault against an Emergency Worker, an offence which came into force in November 2018. The allegation concerned assault by beating on two police officers, which the Crown alleged was captured on body worn video footage. The jury unanimously acquitted the defendant after 50 minutes in retirement. Emma was instructed by Leah Connolly of Ewing's Solicitors

R v K, 2019

Emma successfully defended an individual who was accused of assaulting a police officer whilst being detained for the purposes of a strip search. The case was thrown out after successful legal argument that the grounds for the strip search were unlawful and the officers were not acting in the execution of their duty. The Crown continued to trial on the second charge of drunk and disorderly in a public place which, after a successful half time submission, was thrown out by the District Judge. The matter has since been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission. (IPCC)

R v S, 2018

Instructed as defence counsel in a matter involving alleged domestic violence. Following extensive arguments about disclosure, which involved two court hearings and a separate section 8 hearing before a District Judge, the Crown offered no evidence against the Defendant.

Violence

Youths

R v U, 2022

Emma represented a youth defendant charged with a multi-handed aggravated burglary before the Snaresbrook Crown Court. Emma's client was 17 at the time of the offence but 18 at the time of sentence. The judge took a starting point of 10.5 years for an adult which was successfully reduced to 8.5 years for the mitigation Emma put forward. Having successfully argued credit for plea and the appropriate reduction for age at the time of the offence, the judge was persuaded to pass a sentence of 38 months of detention under section 250 of the Sentencing Act 2020.

Emma was instructed by Naoimh Hughes of Macauley Smith Solicitors.

R v J, 2022

Emma secured an Intensive Referral Order for a youth defendant who was convicted of s.18 GBH and sending malicious communications, to the same complainant. The defendant was 15 years of age.

Following mitigation, the Judge was persuaded to take an exceptional course and passed a sentence of an Intensive Referral Order.

Emma was instructed by Leah Connolly of SMW Solicitors.

R v AK, 2021

Emma represented a 16-year- old before the Harrow Crown Court, involving five defendants, charged with attempted murder, s.18 GBH and violent disorder.

Emma was instructed by Leah Connolly of Sonn MacMillan Walker.

R v RB, 2021

Emma represented a 15-year old charged with possession of an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear or violence. Emma's client was jointly charged with youths and adults but was arrested some months after the alleged offence date. Emma was successful in an application to dismiss before the Snaresbrook Crown Court.

Emma was instructed by Gerry McDonald of EBR Attridge.

R v SA, 2020

Emma successfully defended a 16-year old client charged with possession with intent to supply and possession of a bladed article. The allegations dated back to September 2019 and were tried in October 2020 before the Highbury Youth Court. The defence advanced at trial was under s.45(4) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Emma was instructed by Richard Brown of Baxter Brown McArthur.

R v MK, 2020

Emma represented a 15-year-old charged alongside an adult and one other youth defendant charged with s18 GBH offence on a joint enterprise basis. Emma was successful in reducing the charge against her client to one of Affray and secured a sentence of a YRO with ISS before the Woolwich Crown Court.

Emma was instructed by McQueens Solicitors.

R v D, 2020

Emma represented a 17-year-old youth client charged with robbery on a joint enterprise basis. The issues for the court involved a positive identification of the youth defendant by the complainant and a PCSO. After trial, Emma secured his acquittal.

Emma was instructed by Elena Papamichael of Hodge Jones and Allen Solicitors.

R v F, 2019

Emma was instructed from the first appearance to represent a 16- year-old who was charged with possession with intent to supply class A and possession of a bladed article. The facts of the case and the circumstances in which her client was arrested and presented in court were such that Emma advised those instructing her than an NRM referral was made. The matter was committed to the Wood Green Crown Court, together with an adult co-defendant, who was believed to be his trafficker. Emma's client also suffered from learning difficulties. Following a conclusive grounds decision and legal argument before the Wood Green Crown Court, all the charges were withdrawn against her client.

Richard Cronin of O'Keefe Solicitors instructed Emma.

R v A, 2019

Emma represented a youth client, who, having been remanded to the Crown Court on unrelated matters faced a Detention and Training Order (DTO) being passed by way of a sentence in the Youth Court for lesser offences. The starting point for the court was that only a DTO would be available by way of sentence for the lesser offences given his circumstances of being remanded.

After several weeks of engagement between those instructing and the Southwark Youth Offending Service (YOS) and following detailed submissions in court, the District Judge was persuaded to allow a Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) to be undertaken within the custodial environment as it was conceded that were it not for the Defendant's circumstances, the lesser offences would not have attracted a DTO. The District Judge observed in her sentencing remarks that this was the first case of its kind where such a course had been taken and that it would be looked on with interest regarding its success

Emma was instructed by Leah Connolly of Sonn Macmillan Walker.

Youths

Achievements

Associated Work

In support of her dedication to youth work, Emma was elected as the Chair of the Youth Practitioners Association (YPA) in October 2022 for a three-year tenure.

Memberships

- Honourable Society of Middle Temple
- Middle Temple Young Barristers' Association
- Association of Women Barristers
- Criminal Bar Association
- Southeastern Circuit
- Young Legal Aid Lawyers Association

Appointments

- Current Chair of the Youth Practitioners Association (3-year tenure)
- CPS Panel (Grade 3)
- The Inns of Court, Advocacy and the Vulnerable Course
- The General Council of the Bar Council Representative

Education

- Bar Professional Training Course, University of Law – (2016) (Very Competent)
- Honourable Society of Middle Temple, Joseph Jackson Scholar (2016)
- Inns of Court Advocacy Training
- Middle Temple Inn (Very Competent) (2017)
- University of Kent. LLB (Hons) Law (2:1) (2015)

Recognition

"Emma is a really gifted advocate." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Emma is a very hard working advocate who presents well." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Emma is certainly one to watch; she has been fantastic when I've seen her." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Emma is certainly one to watch for the future. She is determined, intelligent and getting some great cases at the moment." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Emma was thoroughly professional and very easy to work with." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Emma is a formidable advocate and a favourite with juries." **Legal 500, 2022**

"Emma is an excellent advocate for young and vulnerable defendants. She is able to gain the trust of her lay clients through her empathetic approach and exceptional communication skills. She is also a very persuasive advocate." **Legal 500, 2016**