Alex Matthews



Junior Counsel - Under 15 Years

CALLED 2012

"Alex is a rising star of the Criminal Bar, increasingly prosecuting serious and complex crime without..."

CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2027

Alex is a tenacious criminal law specialist. She appears in the Crown Court and Court of Appeal in serious and complex crime matters with a focus on firearms, terrorism offences, attempted murder, high value frauds, serious violence and drugs conspiracies.

She is regularly instructed to defend in cases involving alleged gang violence and associated offences involving modern slavery. She is adept when it comes to helping vulnerable and young defendants, setting them at their ease and ensuring no stone is left unturned in their defence.

Having authored a book on mental health provision within the criminal justice system Alex is particularly knowledgeable when it comes to cases in which mental health issues are central. Her book can found here: A Practical Guide to Fitness to Plead.

Alex is also rape and serious sexual offences practitioner defending and prosecuting the most serious of allegations. Her forensic approach to preparation and incisive advocacy are factors which have led to success across her instructions.

Instructed for the Counter Terror unit to prosecute as well as working with Serious Crime CPS teams she is regularly briefed on delicate matters. Her tact and discretion make her the ideal candidate for cases which involve a nuanced approach and empathetic witness handling.

Having worked as a paralegal at a high-street legal aid firm and within the criminal department at Kingsley Napley LLP before coming to the bar Alex is intimately familiar with the work those instructing her are undertaking, and the ways she can best assist.

Alex is an advocacy trainer at Middle Temple, Recorder of the South Eastern Circuit, a member of the SEC Executive Committee and the Criminal Bar Association Executive Committee, and a pupil supervisor.

Alex is on CPS panel 4 for general crime. She is also a RASSO prosecutor and is on the Serious Crime, Fraud and Counter Terror Panels at grade 3.

Ranked in Legal 500 for Crime - Tier 4

Notable Cases

Drugs

R v D and others, 2024

Prosecution junior on multi-handed drugs indictment (initially 12 defendants).

R v W, D and 10 other defendants, 2024

Alex acts as led prosecution junior in a 12 handed drugs conspiracy case.

Alex has prepared the case summary, prepared jury exhibits, given direction and advice on trial preparation and assisted with advice on acceptability of plea. The case centres around phone evidence and has involved a lot of direction of officers to ensure the case is compiled in a “jury friendly” format. Alex has advised extensively on the creation of an event schedule to allow for the effective presentation of the case.

Wood Green Crown court

R v DT and others, 2022

Junior alone in a 10 handed class A drugs conspiracy concerning 19kg cocaine. Alex advised extensively on plea, basis and categorisation having numerous conferences with the client in HMP

and producing a number of submissions notes in the 9 months between plea and sentence in this complex multi- handed Newton. Ultimately Alex was able to persuade the Crown to drop the defendant's role from leading, category 1, to significant category 2 with a very limited period of offending within the wider conspiracy.

R v H, 2019

Drugs conspiracy. Obtained an acquittal on a false imprisonment charge in the face of phone evidence, cell site, and the evidence of an informant.

Drugs

Financial Crime

R v R, L, A and S, 2017

Prosecution junior on 4 handed fraud lasting 6 weeks. Summer 2017.

Financial Crime

Firearms

R v FB, 2024

Defending in 5 handed 8 week firearms and drugs trial. Defendant the girl who 'held the gun'. Acquitted of all charges having run a case of modern slavery and duress.

R v M and others, 2022

Alex acted as prosecution junior to Jessica Clarke on an 8 handed firearms indictment involving a serious GBH using a metal weapon, handguns and a shotgun. In preparation for trial Alex drafted extensive gangs bad character applications, compiling addendums as further character material came to light. Following a number of guilty pleas, and then guilty pleas on day 1 of trial by two defendants, two further defendants were convicted after trial of s.18 wounding and possession of an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence. One youth is to be re-tried on a like firearms charge.

Firearms

General Crime

R v C, 2023

Alex defended in this explosive act charge case in which the defendant required ongoing and detailed psychiatric assessment. He had created a bomb in his bedroom. Alex advised on the evidence, ensured psychiatric reports were immediately obtained, ensured the case was joined to his robbery matter awaiting sentence and dealt with live evidence concerning the making of a hospital order with restriction (a s.37/41 order).

Aylesbury Crown Court

Read more:

- BBC News
- Thames Valley
- Bucks Free Press

Crime

Murder and Manslaughter

R v G and Others, 2023

Alex acted as defence junior for the second defendant on a four handed "county lines" linked murder.

Led by Justin Rouse KC she assisted with preparation for re-trial, reviewing newly served evidence and unused material. Throughout trial she worked closely with instructing solicitors with regards pastoral care of the teenage defendant.

Alex assisted with the drafting of a new defence statement immediately prior to trial, taking detailed instructions in conference with the client resulting in a "sea change" in the way his case was run. Alex also conducted a full day conference with the defendant mid trial to confirm the position with regards to whether the defendant sought to give evidence.

Upon conviction Alex produced an initial draft of a defence sentencing note focusing on the defendant's transition into adulthood and the impact on tariff sentencing.

Norwich Crown Court

Read more:

- BBC News

- Daily Mail
- ITV News
- Eastern Daily Press

R v C, 2023

Explosives act case. Mentally vulnerable defendant accused of making a bomb in his bedroom. Extensive psychiatric evidence and consideration of fitness to plead, insanity and appropriate disposal.

Murder and Manslaughter

Rape and Sexual Offences

R v AA , 2023

Junior alone in serious RASSO prosecution. A teen defendant who exploited, manipulated and then sexually assaulted a series of teen girls. Seven complainant case. Extensive phone evidence and 'tracing' exercise as well as delicate witness handling (there being no ABE interviews conducted by police). Defendant convicted on all but one count.

R v JW, 2024

Serious RASSO prosecution involving multiple rapes of defendant's elder daughter, and various sexual assault charges against his younger daughter. Extensive messaging. Alex caused, upon receipt of the case close to the trial date, full and effective jury exhibits to be exhibited. Cross examination spanned 2 days. The defendant was convicted of all 16 counts indicted and received an 18 year sentence extended by a further 4 years.

R v A, 2024

Alex prosecuted a 10-day, 5 complainant RASSO case concerning the sexual exploitation of children and meeting those children after grooming.

Alex dealt with numerous legal applications through the course of the trial including a s.41 application, and two hotly contested bad character applications.

The complainants were all children at the time of the offending and none of their evidence had been video recorded, contrary to best practice. Evidence in chief of all 5 complainants plus 2 other youth witnesses had to be delicately and empathetically conducted. Alex has prepared a detailed sentencing note dealing with complex issues within sentencing guidelines.

Reading Crown Court

Read more:

- The Reading Chronicle
- Yahoo News

R v SS, 2021

Court Martial at Bulford – defendant acquitted of sexual assault charge.

R v JB, 2021

Historic sex case. Prosecution forced to offer no evidence after Alex's cross examination of the complainant.

Rape and Sexual Offences

Youths

R v SA, 2024

Defending a youth accused of serious violence; robbery and GBH conspiracy charges. Extensive sentencing note, psychiatric evidence and lengthy mitigation resulted in a sentence of time served given extensive time on tagged curfew.

R v W (a youth), 2023

Junior alone, Alex advised extensively on this drawn out case in which a 15 year old committed a second serious wounding while on a Youth Rehabilitation Order for a prior serious GBH. Youth provisions, dangerousness, delay and psychiatric evidence played into this complex sentencing exercise. Ultimately Alex was able to secure the defendant a non-custodial sentence following extensive oral and written submissions on sentence.

Snaresbrook Crown Court

Youths

Achievements

Memberships

- Middle Temple
- Criminal Bar Association Executive Committee
- South Eastern Circuit Executive - Recorder of the Circuit 2022 to 2024
- Jules Thorne Scholar 2012

Appointments

- CPS General Crime Panel (Grade 4)
- Counter Terror Panel (Grade 3)
- Serious Crime Panel (Grade 3)
- Fraud Panel (Grade 3)
- RASSO panel

Publications

- ‘A Practical Guide to Fitness to Plead and Insanity in the Crown Court and Magistrates Court’, November 2023 - Available here
- Protest and proportionality: Where next?.Archbold Review, January 2023

Education

- Exeter University BA (2.1)
- Kings College/RADA MA (Distinction)
- GDL (Distinction)
- BPTC (VC)

Recognition

"Alex is a rising star of the Criminal Bar, increasingly prosecuting serious and complex crime without a leader." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Alex is an excellent advocate with great client care skills." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Alex is increasingly instructed in complex, sensitive prosecutions. She is hardworking and able to master complex matters of law and fact with ease. She is very pleasant to work with - fair, engaged, and enthusiastic." **Legal 500, 2027**

"Alex is an exceptional counsel who offers great customer service to the client." **Chambers and**

Partners, 2027

"Alex's advice and tactical ability are always top-notch." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Alex's rapport with clients is excellent; her clients warm to her." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Alex is an excellent lawyer who exercises good tactical judgement in cases." **Legal 500, 2026**

"Alex Matthews is excellent. A well-organised and accomplished barrister." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**

"She is a very good jury advocate, whose manner is confident but not arrogant." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**

"A very accomplished barrister, who combines great expertise with superior advocacy skills and excellent client care." **Chambers and Partners, 2026**