Sean Sullivan

Junior Counsel - Above 15 Years
CALLED 2004

"He is exceptionally bright, has a terrific grasp of detail and is the hardest-working barrister around."
LEGAL 500, 2026

Sean Sullivan is an experienced, calm and focused barrister who both prosecutes and defends allegations of serious crime.

He prepares his cases with great care, gives insightful advice and is a convincing jury advocate.

Background and Experience

Sean regularly handles allegations of murder, rape, serious organised crime (including drugs and firearms) and financial crime.

Notable Cases

Appeals

R v N, 2023

Sean was successful in having a conviction for grievous bodily harm with intent quashed by the Court of Appeal. Sean was not involved in the original trial, but was asked to appeal on the basis of disclosure failings by the police and prosecution counsel and errors made by the trial judge. The appellant was released from serving a custodial sentence.

Appeals

Financial Crime

Financial regulation project, 2020-2021

Assisting a financial organisation engaged in global trading with financial crime compliance.

R v K, 2020

Prosecuting a defendant convicted of illegally importing and exporting endangered European eels. The offending involved over 5 million elvers to a value of over £53 million. Led by Peter Glenser KC.

See report here

Financial Crime

General Crime

R v N, 2026

Prosecuting three defendants facing charges of possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life, possession of prohibited weapons and drug supply offences. The lead defendant used his work place - a fast-food restaurant - as a front for the storage and supply of firearms and ammunition whilst dealing wholesale quantities of class A drugs. All three defendants were convicted and the lead defendant received a sentence of 18 years. Leading Emma Heath.

R v K and others, 2021-2026

Prosecuting over twenty defendants alleged to be part of an organised crime group involved in the supply of drugs, possession of firearms and an attack on the police in an attempt to retrieve seized drugs and firearms. Led by Peter Glenser KC.

R v H, 2023

H was accused of being the equal partner of the ringleader in a conspiracy to import cocaine into the United Kingdom. The drugs weighed over 1.5 tonnes and had a street value of more than £100 million. The prosecution's case relied upon close personal and professional links to the ringleader, telephone communications and covert recordings. Sean attacked and undermined each aspect of the prosecution's case arguing that their interpretation of the evidence was simply incorrect. The defendant was found not guilty.

Press coverage can be found here

R v Z, 2019

Defending a businessman accused of tying up the complainant, holding him hostage, beating him and threatening to kill him. The complainant was found bound and bloodied by the police. The defence was that he had agreed to be tied up and had set up the defendant after perpetrating a serious fraud against the defendant. Advancing the defence involved a full attack on the complainant's character in cross-examination over three days. The defendant was acquitted on all counts.

Crime

Murder and Manslaughter

R v B, ongoing

Defending an allegation of manslaughter where the unlawful act is said to be controlling and coercive behaviour in an intimate relationship leading to the death by suicide.

R v B, ongoing

Defending an allegation of gross negligence manslaughter relating to a death by drowning during a baptism.

R v W, 2024

Prosecuting a man for attempted murder who stabbed his friend in the chest with a sword.

R v B, 2024

Defending a man accused of murder involving a firearm. Led by Nicholas Rhodes KC.

R v O, 2024

Defending a man accused of murder by stabbing. Led by Jason Bartfeld KC.

R v G, 2023

Defending a man with serious mental health issues accused of murder. Led by Justin Rouse KC.

R v R, 2021

Defending the alleged hitman in an 11 week, eight defendant murder trial involving the killing of an innocent passer-by after a drive-by shooting. Led by Peter Glenser KC.

R v E&S, 2021

Prosecution of two employees for causing death by dangerous driving having parked their vehicles on a dual carriageway to carry out work on the side of the road. Led by Peter Glenser KC.

See news article here

R v B, 2021

Defending, alone, an allegation of causing death by careless driving.

R v S, 2020

Defending in a five-handed murder trial. Led by Anthony Berry KC.

R v M, 2020

Prosecuting for murder after a stabbing at East Croydon Station with a zombie knife. Led by Peter Glenser KC.

News report here

R v P, 2019

Prosecuting a son for the attempted murder of his disabled mother by dousing her in white spirit and setting her alight.

News report here

R v J, 2018

Defending an allegation of attempted murder. The complainant was stabbed seven times to the

chest and identified his lodger, the defendant, as his attacker. Sean challenged the identification evidence and the defendant was found not guilty.

R v S, 2016

Charged with murder, S was the only one of five defendants aquitted after a five-week trial. Sean's cross-examination of the prosecution's cell site expert helped undermine the prosecution's case. Earlier, in the Divisional Court, Sean had successfully challenged a decision to refuse bail. Sean was led by Justin Rouse KC.

Murder and Manslaughter

Rape and Sexual Offences

R v L, 2026

Prosecuting a 28 count indictment alleging serious historic sexual offending by the defendant against six child victims. After a three week trial the defendant was convicted of all of the offences alleged against him. Leading Joey Kwong.

R v J, 2025

Successful defence of allegations of buggery made by a former student of the defendant when he was a school teacher in the 1970s.

R v M, 2024

Defending a youth accused of falsely imprisoning a woman at gun point and then gang raping her along with his two co-defendants. Based upon his cross-examination of the complainant Sean submitted that the complainant's credibility was such that the case should not be allowed to continue. After hearing legal argument the trial judge agreed with Sean that the defendants had no case to answer and not guilty verdicts were entered.

R v F, 2024

Prosecution of a man accused of multiple rapes against his half-brother more than twenty years ago. The defendant was convicted on all counts.

R v M, 2023

Prosecuting a double rapist. The defendant was convicted.

R v B, 2022

Defending a man accused of multiple rapes, people trafficking and conspiracy to cause prostitution. The defendant was acquitted.

R v J, 2020

Defending a man accused of rape and attempted rape of the same complainant after supplying her with drugs. The defendant was acquitted on both counts.

R v D, 2020

Defending a young man accused of rape where a co-defendant was running a cut-throat defence. Sean persuaded the prosecution that the evidence was such that they should offer no evidence against his client resulting in a not guilty verdict.

R v F, 2018

Sean defended a university student accused of rape whose DNA was found on a swab of the higher vagina. The defendant insisted he had never penetrated the complainant. Sean challenged the forensic evidence and suggested a risk of contamination due to not following the correct procedure. The defendant was acquitted.

Rape and Sexual Offences

Achievements

Memberships

- Inner Temple
- Criminal Bar Association

Appointments

- CPS Panel (level 4)
- CPS RASSO prosecutor
- Serious Fraud Office (panel A)
- Recorder

Education

- BA Jurisprudence, St. Edmund Hall, University of Oxford.

Recognition

"He works really hard, prepares meticulously and is a real tactician." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"He is a truly brilliant barrister." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"Sean produces extraordinarily precise and persuasive legal arguments to which opponents find it difficult to effectively respond." **Legal 500, 2025**

"Sean is a rare advocate who knows the case inside out." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"He remains a passionate advocate with a razor-sharp wit and intelligence." **Legal 500, 2024**

"Sean is a brilliant tactician and a skilful advocate." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"He's a fantastic barrister and a real fighter." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"Sean will turn his hand to any problem and find a solution. He remains a passionate advocate with a razor-sharp wit and intelligence that results in being highly persuasive in any legal setting." **Legal 500, 2024**

"Sean exhibits fantastic attention to detail when dealing with cases of great complexity. He is able to foster brilliant working relationships with the clients, obtaining their confidence at an early stage. He pro-actively defends cases in court, vigorously challenging disputed evidence." **Legal 500, 2023**

"Sean exhibits fantastic attention to detail when dealing with cases of great complexity." **Legal 500, 2023**

"An excellent advocate with a great approach to clients." **Chambers and Partners, 2023**

"He sees the wood from the trees." **Legal 500, 2020**