

Stephen Cooke

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Stephen Cooke has built a busy, predominantly defence, practice over a number of years, especially focused on serious and organised crime.

He has worked on a number of large and complex cases, including trials that have received national attention.

Stephen has defended alone in: complex drug conspiracies (including those with EncroChat evidence), firearms offences, frauds, kidnaps, cases of arson endangering life, serious violence, sexual offences including rape, and many other offences.

He has been led in cases (working as part of a defence team) which have included two murders and a £17m fraud.

Stephen believes that thorough preparation, hard work, integrity, sound judgement and good communication are the keys to success. That means listening to lay clients properly, working well alongside instructing solicitors, giving clear advice to lay clients, and fighting determinedly for all of his clients' interests.

He especially enjoys cases that involve greater factual or legal complexity and has appeared on multiple occasions in the Court of Appeal.

Although he predominantly defends, Stephen also appears as a prosecution advocate.

Expertise

Organised Crime

Stephen has defended in many serious and organised crime cases. He has particular expertise in complex drugs trials requiring close analysis of telephone evidence.

Recently he has been involved in successfully defending a large EncroChat class A conspiracy case. He remains involved in defending several other ongoing EncroChat conspiracy cases.

As well as large scale drug trafficking and importation, the organised crime cases Stephen has been involved in include firearms, kidnaps and serious allegations of violence.

Notable Organised Crime cases

R v B; EncroChat Class A conspiracy

Defendant faced two counts of conspiracy to supply class A, in a total amount of over 50kg of cocaine. The case relied heavily on EncroChat evidence, as well as a previous conviction for class A supply. Stephen represented the defendant throughout, until his eventual acquittal on all counts.

R v C & amp; others

He was led on a multi-handed kidnap, false imprisonment and blackmail case involving Lithuanian criminal gangs. This trial received national press attention.

R v S

He is defending in an ongoing matter regarding an alleged national class A drug trafficking ring. This is said to span many different cities and the allegations heavily feature EncroChat evidence. The scale of drug supply is said to run into the millions of pounds.

R v S

The client had pleaded guilty to involvement in an organised conspiracy to supply cannabis from two specially equipped cannabis shops in the East End. Stephen was responsible for the successful appeal against sentence for the client, which meant that the client was released within a week of the sentence appeal.

R v M

A case involving allegations of kidnap and torture in the context of two competing drug gangs. It was a trial that required extensive analysis of telephone and cell site evidence. Mixed verdicts were returned, but a close analysis of the telephone evidence highlighted a flaw in the Crown's case leading to an acquittal on the kidnap count.

R v P

He was led on this trial involving allegations of a conspiracy to commit a series of bank and post office robberies, some with a firearm. The trial lasted for two months at the Central Criminal Court and involved competing experts dealing with a complex web of cell site, CCTV and communication data. Mixed verdicts were returned but the defendant was acquitted of all the more serious counts which involved firearms.

Murder and Manslaughter

Stephen has been led on murder trials and was a hardworking and effective junior on two successful defence teams.

Notable Murder and Manslaughter cases

R v L

A murder trial involving an alleged drug-related murder and subsequent cover up by a group of vulnerable young people. The client accepted stabbing the deceased with a kitchen knife in the chest but denied murder. The client was found not guilty of murder but convicted of manslaughter and perverting the course of justice. The case received national press attention and a television documentary was later made about it.

R v K

A murder trial involving the accidental shooting of an innocent young woman by two masked men. It was alleged to be a drug gang war that had gone awry. The trial was reported in the national press. The case against the defendant was a complicated one built from multiple different sources. The Prosecution sought to piece these together, in a certain way, to show the client's involvement. The defendant was found not guilty after a five-week trial at the Central Criminal Court.

Fraud

Stephen enjoys the greater factual complexity and opportunity for analysis that can arise in fraud trials and has been involved in several such cases.

Notable Fraud cases

R v G

He was led on this complex fraud trial that lasted for five months at Southwark Crown Court. The case involved competing experts, legal argument over police covert recording and great factual complexity. The scale was large, with more than £17m allegedly defrauded in a VAT fraud spanning a large web of companies.

R v S

He was instructed for a client who accepted their guilt in a long-running fraud on their employer (including feigning cancer). This had created losses allegedly running into six figures, supposedly created through a complicated juggling of money between accounts. After extensive analysis of the figures, Stephen was able to show the real losses were far lower and the client received a suspended sentence.

Violence

Stephen has years of experience with allegations of all kinds of violence in a wide range of contexts. In particular, he has dealt with a number of s.18 offences (causing grievously bodily harm with intent to do so).

Notable Violence cases

R v C

A case that received national press attention and featured on the front page of the Times. The client was accused of a s.18 offence, by violently amputating another man's hand with a machete-like weapon.

R v A

A homeless man was accused of a s.18 offence against another homeless man. The client said he had been defending himself throughout, and he was found not guilty after being represented by Stephen at trial.

Sexual Offences

Stephen has been instructed to defend across the full range of sexual offences, including allegations of rape. He is able to adapt his style of cross-examination appropriately for different ages of witness, or for vulnerable witnesses, and yet still find a way to vigorously contest the client's case. He is aware and sensitive to how devastating such allegations can be to a client, who may themselves sometimes be vulnerable and require extra help and support.

Notable Sexual Offences cases

R v F

He successfully defended an allegation of rape that required sensitive cross-examination of a vulnerable witness, as well as supporting a particularly vulnerable client through to acquittal.

R v N

He was instructed to defend a young man on the autistic spectrum who faced trial for sexual assault by penetration offences. The evidence initially appeared strong, as there was an apparent written confession. Psychiatric evidence was obtained about the nature of the client's difficulties with depression and autism spectrum disorder, and how these might have led to him agreeing to things he had not done. He was found not guilty on all counts.

R v M

The client was accused of stalking several women. The client had a medical condition which meant he was unable to speak and could only write with difficulty. With the aid of an intermediary, and a good deal of time and care attending to his needs, he had a fair trial and was able to give evidence. He was found not guilty on the more serious of the charges he faced. Stephen was praised by the judge for the conduct of the trial.

Confiscation & Asset Recovery

Stephen has represented many clients in confiscation proceedings. It is an area of law he is experienced in and enjoys. He appreciates how such hearings are not an ancillary small matter to clients but can be of enormous importance to those who may risk unfairly losing homes, cars or pensions legitimately earned over many years.

Notable Confiscation & Asset Recovery cases

R v G

He is dealing with the confiscation proceedings arising from a complicated £17m fraud case.

Memberships

- Gray's Inn
- Criminal Bar Association