

## Chloe Ashley

### Crime

Year of Call: 2016

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Chloe is highly regarded, specialist criminal advocate regularly instructed in serious and sensitive cases. Her work sees her act as both alone or as a led junior on behalf of both the defence and prosecution in a range of complex cases.

Chloe's work has a particular focus on allegations of non-accidental injuries in infants and cases of child homicide. Advocacy of both frequently involves co-ordination of specialist expert evidence.

Previous instructions include *Operation Kenita*, which concerned the death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes in which Chloe defended his father and *Operation Lanvigator* in which Chloe was instructed to prosecute a mother convicted of the historic murder of her new-born son, when she was aged 15.

Chloe's other homicide cases have encompassed a multitude of complex issues, including gang-related bad character, anonymous witnesses and child defendants. She is recognised for her ability to win the trust of even the most justifiably self-protective witnesses.

In addition, Chloe both prosecutes and defends in cases involving sophisticated organised crime groups and criminal conspiracies. Chloe's practice extends to cases involving alleged modern slavery and large-scale drug conspiracies.

In her capacity as a barrister Chloe maintains a focus on human rights which originated in her previous career, where she worked for specialist women's rights charities and international NGO's focused on human rights issues including counter-terrorism measures and assisting individuals facing the death penalty abroad. This experience has been highlighted by clients as informing a sophisticated and tailored approach to her advocacy.

Chloe retains a special interest in the representation of women, those with both mental health issues and

intellectual disabilities within the criminal justice system and is often counsel of choice for solicitors representing clients whose acute vulnerability, or utilisation of psychiatric evidence, may be integral to their case.

Equally committed to improving equality and diversity inside the Bar as outside, Chloe is passionate about issues concerning equality, diversity, and social mobility at the Bar. She contributes to events and networks encouraging aspiring lawyers from marginalised backgrounds to pursue a career at the Bar, while mentoring students members of the Inner Temple. She is presently undertaking assessments to become an advocacy trainer.

Chloe was ranked by The Legal 500 as a Tier 1 “rising star” in the 2024 listings.

## Recommendations

### Comments from instructing solicitors:

“A very intelligent advocate who can master complex expert evidence, distil it and present it effectively to both lay clients and a jury.”

“Her closing speeches are flawless and a joy to watch, jury’s absolutely love her.”

“She is always top of our list when it comes to instructing in complex, serious cases. Chloe is extremely hard working, diligent, and leaves no piece of plausible evidence unexplored. She has an unrivalled commitment to her clients. She genuinely cares for them and their welfare and to that end she will fight hard for the right result for them.”

“Her work is creditworthy of an advocate of 20 years’ call. She is very impressive on her feet.”

“Her cross-examination is extremely good; she gets under a witness’ skin and will persevere until she gets the answer she wants.”

“Chloe is a joy to instruct, she consistently shows our clients a level of care and commitment which surpasses any expectation.”

“Ms Ashley endears herself to clients almost immediately, she exudes warmth, even with the most challenging of clients she will win them over. Her presentation in court is faultless- she quickly masters the evidence in a way that lends itself well to a jury. Judges she appears before value her commitment to her cases and her opponents respect her for it.”

“She has a real command of the law and evidence in any case I instruct her in- which can only come from a brilliant mind. Judges commend her for her forensic attention to detail.”

“Her preparation is meticulous... I receive nothing but excellent feedback from clients, they all warm to her especially youths.”

“Her ability to meet and exceed our client’s expectations is second to none. Her relatively, junior status is ignored by clients who see her as personable, intelligent, and savvy...she is mature beyond her years.”

“Ms Ashley has always offered us an unparalleled level of service. She is totally devoted to her clients’ cases and achieving the best possible outcome. Her preparation is pain-staking and thorough. She is first class.”

## Notable Cases

### Ongoing Cases

#### **Operation Thunderegg**

Led by Jonas Hankin KC. Instructed to prosecute a father charged with the manslaughter of his six-year-old severely disabled son.

#### **R v NT (2024)**

Instructed to defend a young woman charged with the attempted murder of her mother-in-law. A "Hansel and Gretel" case where it is alleged that the defendant and her co-accused forced the complainant into an oven. The allegations followed years of the defendant (a former child bride) being controlled and humiliated by her in-laws.

#### **R v JC & OF (2024)**

Instructed alone to prosecute the carers of a two-year old child charged with serious sexual and physical abuse. The case involves complex disclosure issues stemming from linked Family Court proceedings.

#### **Operation Crosstree (2024)**

Led by Jonas Hankin KC. Instructed to prosecute the mother of a 2-month-old charged with the murder of her daughter.

#### **Operation Alert (2024)**

Led by David Mason KC. Instructed to prosecute the father of a 6-month-old charged with murder of his son. The defendant is alleged to have inflicted brain injuries upon his son consistent with having shaken him. See here:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/23202264/man-charged-murdering-baby/>

#### **Operation Navy (2024)**

Instructed alone to prosecute a complex child cruelty case where the defendants, the parents of two very young children who suffered life-threatening respiratory events, exposed their children to Class A prompting several severe medical episodes.

#### **R v GM (2024), Worcester Crown Court**

Instructed alone to defend the father of 3-month-old baby alleged to have caused serious non-accidental injuries to his son.

### Previous Cases

#### **Operation Branchbeen (2023), Coventry Crown Court**

Led by Martin Rutherford KC. A 4 handed killing. The defendants stood charged with murder and conspiracy to murder. The case involved a significant amount of evidence covering telematics, phone data, CCTV, forensic pathology and difficult witness management, along with voluminous disclosure.

#### **Operation Ringtail (2023), Sheffield Crown Court**

Instructed as a junior alone to represent the lead defendant alleged to be part of an organised crime group concerned in the supply of £1.5 billion pounds worth of cocaine over a six-month period.

#### **R v CM (2023), Birmingham Crown Court**

Instructed to defend, alone, in an attempted murder where at the time of the offence the defendant was in the grips of a psychotic episode.

#### **Operation Kipfler (2023), Warwick Crown Court**

Instructed to defend one of 29 defendants charged with violent disorder arising out of a large-scale public disorder in Coventry connected to a national amateur junior boxing championship.

#### **R v S (2023), Stoke Crown Court**

Instructed to defend, a 14-year-old originally charged with attempted murder. The defendant kidnapped a 13-year-old victim and forced him to commit sexual acts upon him before stabbing him multiple times to the neck.

#### **Operation Lanvigator (2023), Worcester Crown Court**

Led by Jonas Hankin KC. Successful prosecution of a mother found guilty of murdering her new-born son. The defendant claimed that she did not know she was pregnant before giving birth. However, expert evidence from both a midwife and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology demonstrated that this to be false. The defendant inflicted complex skull fractures upon her son and suffocated him. Medical experts were deployed in the fields of Perinatal Pathology, Radiology, Osteoarticular Pathology, Neuropathology and Neonatology. See more here:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/mother-worcester-crown-court-herefordshire-hereford-gloucestershire-b2341542.html>

#### **Operation Dynmaite (2023)**

Led by Siobhan Collins. Successfully prosecuted 11 Defendants, obtaining convictions against all of them for conspiracy to burgle and conspiracy to steal. The group concerned worked together to commit a series of residential burglaries and to steal car from outside of those homes over a six-week period. Over the period concerned, 47 homes were targeted, and 33 vehicles were stolen. The total value of those cars stolen, and those targeted was £888,020:

<https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/23498896.gang-eleven-men-sentenced-six-week-crime-spree/>

#### **R v. H & H (2023), Worcester Crown Court**

Led by Mark Heywood KC to prosecute a “baby shaking” in which the parents are accused of causing significant injuries to their young daughter.

### **Operation Orbiter (2022), Worcester Crown Court**

Instructed as a junior alone to prosecute a fatal RTC, a 'nearest and dearest case' in which the defendant and deceased had been lifelong friends.

### **Operation Abim (2022), Warwick Crown Court**

Led by Michelle Heeley KC to prosecute this case, which resolved with a plea to manslaughter (by reason of diminished responsibility), due to the defendant's psychotic breakdown caused by the digestion of prescribed medication:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-62305965>

### **Operation Tafias 2 (2022), Birmingham Crown Court**

Instructed as a junior alone to represent one of fourteen men alleged to have operated in a lengthy conspiracy as part of an organised crime group, distributing significant quantities of heroin. The prosecution ultimately offered no evidence against Chloe's client.

### **Operation Kenita (2021), Coventry Crown Court**

Instructed alongside Bernard Richmond KC to defend the father of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes in a very complex child homicide case. Their client was acquitted of murder. The case received both national and international press attention. The case is also now the subject of a single, national review:

<https://news.sky.com/story/arthur-labinjo-hughes-father-and-girlfriend-handed-life-sentences-for-killing-of-six-year-old-boy-12485090>

### **Operations Mopaine, Bionta and Dynamite (2020/2021/2022), Worcester Crown Court**

Led by Siobhan Collins, instructed to prosecute 3 interlinked multi-handed high value conspiracies to burgle 100s of vehicles in the Worcestershire area.

### **Operation Mercantile (2021), Birmingham Crown Court**

Instructed to defend one of two defendants charged with the fatal shooting of Murtaza Nazir in Stechford, Birmingham. Chloe was led by Jo Sidhu KC. This case involved one of the largest CCTV and imagery investigations in West Midlands Police history:

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/man-charged-murder-stechford-dad-18955469>

### **Operation Guy (2021), Warwick Crown Court**

Instructed to defend the lead defendant in what the Prosecution said was a Post Code disagreement between two rival groups. Chloe's client was one of five men who faced trial for murder and robbery. She was the junior in the original trial and led by Nigel Lambert KC in January 2021. Her client went on to be acquitted of all charges:

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/trial-over-death-teenager-stabbed-19560582>

### **Operation Monarda (2020), Warwick Crown Court**

Led by Caroline Carberry QC, Chloe was instructed to represent one of three teenage defendants charged with the murder of another fifteen-year-old boy in Coventry. The case formed the subject of a one-off documentary shown in February 2021, "Forensics: The Real CSI", which focused on the complex strands of

forensic investigation which was the subject of robust legal argument by the legal team Chloe was a part of and successfully excluded:

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/babacar-diagne-murder-court-17728495>

#### **Operation Robotic (2020), Birmingham Crown Court**

Instructed to represent a man of good character facing allegations concerning the alleged exploitation and recruitment of vulnerable individuals from Slovakia, alongside his family members, over a seven-year period.

#### **R v Ferchiu (2020), Warwick Crown Court**

Led junior, instructed to prosecute both the trial and re-trial in a very sensitive case of a senior nurse accused of wilful neglect arising from the death of an acutely vulnerable care home resident:

<https://www.rugbyadvertiser.co.uk/news/crime/rugby-care-home-nurse-first-person-warwickshire-be-convicted-wilful-neglect-following-death-87-year-old-resident-3002010>

#### **Operation Ambition (2019), Wolverhampton Crown Court**

Represented one of eight defendants accused of conspiracy to supply cannabis. Following a trial defendant was convicted in the alternative of cultivation of a cannabis plant. He received a conditional discharge.

#### **Operation Loft (2019), Sheffield Crown Court**

Represented one of seven defendants in complex, case relating to the falsification of earnings on behalf of visa sponsors to enable them to meet Home Office criteria in relation to marriage visas. Chloe's client was acquitted following a six-week trial in which his daughter turned 'Queens Evidence' against him:

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-woman-jailed-over-spouse-16954219>

#### **Operation Lock (2019), Worcester Crown Court**

Led by Phil Bradley KC. It was alleged that Chloe's client, the lead defendant 'Z' aged 40 had conspired to throw sulphuric acid on his three-year-old son. He was jointly charged alongside six others. The case involved the youngest victim of such an attack to be prosecuted and attracted significant media coverage:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hereford-worcester-47446674>

#### **Operation Wraithbane (2018), Birmingham Crown Court**

Represented one of thirty-six men (a lead defendant) charged with public nuisance. The defendants allegedly formed part of an organised crime ring who converged on Birmingham as an unauthorized gathering involving hundreds of motorcyclists. Following a 4-week trial Chloe's client was acquitted.

#### **R v G (2018), Stoke Crown Court**

Led by Earl Pinnock, represented a former England youth international footballer accused of stalking his ex-girlfriend. The defendant went on to be acquitted of all charges.

## Appointments

2022 to 2023	Executive Committee Criminal Bar Association
2021 to 2022	Executive Committee The Young CBA Committee
2020	Senior Crown Prosecutor West Midlands CPS Seconded Grade 3 Panel
2019 to 2022	Secretary Women in Criminal Law Midlands
2019 to 2023	Committee Member Midlands Circuit Women's Forum
2018 to 2019	Independent Legal Advisor CPS West Midlands Hate Crime Panel
2018 to 2022	Criminal Law Committee Birmingham Law Society

## Awards

2023	Inner Temple Scholarship to attend Keble College's Tim Dutton CBE KC International Advocacy Course
2023	The Inns of Court Pegasus Scholarship Trist, Pegasus Scholar (USA)
2022	Nominated for 'Barrister of the Year' Birmingham Law Society Awards
2019	Nominated for the Frist 100 Years, Inspirational Women in Law Awards (under 35 category)
2017	Inner Temple Rachel Lawrence Scholarship
2015	Inner Temple Sir Joseph Priestly Scholarship
2013	Inner Temple Major Exhibition Awards (BPTC Award) Inner Temple Duke Of Edinburgh Award
2011	University of Sheffield Graduate Award

## Memberships

Midlands Circuit  
Midlands Circuit Women's Forum  
Criminal Bar Association

## Qualifications

2015	University of West of England, BPTC
2015	Accredited Civil and Commercial Mediator Certified by ADR Group London
2013	College of Law, PGDL
2011	The University of Sheffield, Philosophy BA (Hons)