

Jonas Hankin KC

Call: 1994 | Silk: 2013

"Ranked as Leading Silk in Crime (General and Fraud)"

Legal 500 2026



Jonas is a homicide specialist, renowned for his ability to master complex medical evidence and examine expert witnesses with precision and skill.

He is an excellent lawyer, an intelligent strategist, and a persuasive trial advocate. These qualities are reflected in his track record of success, which is second to none.

Expertise

Crime

Jonas offers expert advice and advocacy in homicide cases, from the very earliest stages of an investigation (pre-charge), through to the conclusion of proceedings.

He is best known for his work in cases concerning child homicide, in which field his knowledge and experience is unrivalled.

Notable Cases

R v Kirsty Carless [2025] (Choudhury J)

Jonas Hankin KC was instructed by West Midlands CPS Complex Casework Unit to prosecute a case concerning the murder of a 31-year-old man by his former partner on Christmas Day 2024. The defendant admitted unlawfully killing her former partner by stabbing him with a carving knife but denied that she intended to kill him. Alternatively, the defendant sought to establish the partial defence of diminished responsibility, placing reliance upon expert forensic psychiatric opinion that, if the jury were to accept that she was a victim of chronic domestic abuse, there was evidence that she was probably suffering from PTSD, which substantially impaired her ability to exercise self-control and was a significant contributory factor in causing her to kill her former partner. The prosecution argued that the killing was premeditated: before travelling to her former partner's home address, where the offence was committed, the defendant had acquired a

Birmingham

103 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AG

DX: 16075 Fountain Court Birmingham
Telephone: +44 (0) 121 606 0500

London

Fifth Floor
7 Savoy Court
London WC2R 0EX

DX: 449 London Chancery Lane
Telephone: +44 (0) 207 420 7500

Bristol

30 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4ND

DX: 7838 Bristol
Tel: +44 (0) 117 917 8501

weapon and a spare key, so that she could gain entry and kill him. The defendant gave evidence, as did a consultant forensic psychiatrist called on her behalf. No psychiatric evidence was called by the Crown. The defendant was found guilty of murder and was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment.

R v Joanne Sharkey [2025] (Eady J)

Instructed by CPS Mersey-Cheshire Complex Casework Unit to advise on charge in a case of immense complexity dating back to the 1990s. In March 1998, the body of a full term, newborn male infant was discovered next to a path in a wooded area near Warrington. An autopsy suggested that the baby had been born alive and had died an unnatural death. Despite police efforts at that time, the mother of the baby could not be found. A periodic review of the DNA National Database in 2022 finally identified a close male relative of the baby, and thereafter the biological parents. The case raised complex questions relating to causation and the fundamental question of whether the deceased had ever legally been a person "in being". Experts in forensic and paediatric pathology were instructed to review the original autopsy. There were limitations to the extent of the post mortem examination conducted in 1998 compared with what would be expected in a similar case in the present day. The macroscopic and microscopic appearances of the lungs were most consistent with, but not diagnostic of, live birth. From a purely pathological perspective, injuries to the baby's head might reasonably have been explained by birth trauma, especially in the context of an unassisted, precipitous delivery. It was not possible to be certain of the baby's condition at birth. The medical cause of death was "unascertained". The baby's mother was arrested and interviewed. She was unable to recall clearly most of the details of the birth process; however, she admitted that efforts had been made to keep the baby quiet. Considering the evidence in totality, the baby's mother was charged with murder; however, subsequent written psychiatric opinion established a consensus view that at the time of the killing the defendant had been suffering from moderately severe to severe depression and that all the elements of the partial defence of diminished responsibility were established. The defendant pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility. In assessing whether it was in the public interest to accept the plea, the prosecution was entitled to, and did, weigh in the balance the evidential difficulties in respect of proof of live birth, unlawful killing and intent.

R v Joseph Davidson [2024] (Choudhury J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning the death of a disabled child, aged 6 years, who drowned in a bath while unsupervised by an adult. Experts in paediatric neurology and paediatrics were instructed to assess the level of the child's disability and to comment upon the nature and severity of the risk posed to him if he was left unattended in a bath. The child's father, who was responsible for the child's care when the drowning occurred, was charged with gross negligence manslaughter. The defendant subsequently pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 32 months imprisonment.

R v Yasharahyalah and Yasharahyalah [2024] (Wall J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning the neglect of two young children, Abiyah (aged 3 years 9 months) and Child B (aged 5 months), whom the suspects had failed to provide with adequate amounts of properly nutritious food and necessary medical attention. Abiyah died as a result and his body was secretly buried. His skeletonised remains were discovered two years later. Child B was left with very significant health difficulties. The suspects' motivation for acting as they did was their prioritisation of a distorted system of beliefs over the children's welfare. They were prepared to live with any consequences which flowed from their adherence to these beliefs, including the disability or death of the children. The suspects were charged with, and subsequently convicted of, causing or allowing the death of Abiyah, wilfully neglecting both children and doing an act tending and intended to pervert the course of public justice. Experts in forensic anthropology, bone pathology and odontology were called to prove that Abiyah had died in a state of severe malnutrition. Although the medical cause of Abiyah's death was "Unascertained", the prosecution was able to prove that, on the facts, severe malnutrition (for which the defendants were criminally responsible) was a more than minimal cause of his death. Experts in endocrinology, gastroenterology, radiology, neuroradiology and paediatric medicine were called to prove that Child B had been denied an adequate supply of adequately nutritious food and necessary medical attention. The defendants were sentenced to terms of 24 years and 6 months and 19 years and 6 months imprisonment, respectively.

R v Michael Davis and Kayleigh Driver [2024] (Cotter J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning a baby who, by the time of his death, had sustained 40 fractures. The fatal injury was a broken neck that was sustained between 4 and 8 days prior to death. Experts in 10 areas of clinical medicine and pathology were instructed and advice given that the suspects should be charged with murder and other associated offences. The baby's father was convicted of murder and two counts of causing grievous bodily harm with intent, and sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 22 years. The baby's mother was convicted of causing or allowing a child to die and causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child, and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment.

Birmingham

103 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AG

DX: 16075 Fountain Court Birmingham
Telephone: +44 (0) 121 606 0500

London

Fifth Floor
7 Savoy Court
London WC2R 0EX

DX: 449 London Chancery Lane
Telephone: +44 (0) 207 420 7500

Bristol

30 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4ND

DX: 7838 Bristol
Tel: +44 (0) 117 917 8501

R v COR and BC [2024] (Choudhury J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a harrowing case concerning life-changing and life-limiting head injuries to a baby, who also displayed signs of sexual violence upon examination. Experts in 6 areas of clinical medicine were instructed and called to give evidence at trial. The baby's father was convicted of three counts of causing grievous bodily harm with intent, two counts of child cruelty, one count of causing a child under the age of 13 to engage in sexual activity, two counts of sexual assault of a child under 13 and two counts of taking an indecent photograph of a child, and sentenced to an extended sentence of 25 years imprisonment. The baby's mother was convicted of two counts of causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child, one count of inflicting grievous bodily harm, two counts of child cruelty, one count of causing a child under the age of 13 to engage in sexual activity and two counts of sexual assault of a child under 13, and sentenced to an extended sentence of 10 years imprisonment.

R v Katie Tidmarsh [2023] (Wall J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on reinstatement of proceedings after a decision made by CPS in 2013 not to prosecute a woman for the alleged killing of her adoptive baby in 2012. Experts in 12 areas of clinical medicine and pathology were instructed and advice given that the suspect should be charged with murder and associated sub-lethal violence. Wall J refused an application to stay the trial as being an abuse of process. The defendant was successfully prosecuted for murder and inflicting grievous bodily harm.

R v Leila Borrington [2023] (Nicklin J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning the death from closed head injury of a 3-year-old boy with autism, one feature of which was self-injurious behaviour including head-banging. Experts in 9 areas of clinical medicine and pathology were instructed. The defendant was successfully prosecuted for manslaughter and inflicting grievous bodily harm on the same child on two previous occasions.

R v Paris Mayo [2023] (Garnham J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning the death of a newborn baby born to a 15-year-old girl in secret following a concealed pregnancy. Experts in 10 areas of clinical medicine and pathology were instructed, along with two experts in forensic and adolescent psychiatry. The defendant was successfully prosecuted for murder, the jury rejecting the partial defence of infanticide.

R v Laura Heath [2022] (Dove J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning the death of a 7-year-old from uncontrolled asthma. Experts in respiratory medicine and pathology were instructed. The child's mother was charged and convicted of gross negligence manslaughter and child cruelty.

R v Emma Tustin & Thomas Hughes [2021] (Wall J)

Successful prosecution of two defendants for the shocking abuse and killing of 6-year-old Arthur Labinjo- Hughes during lockdown. Emma Tustin was convicted of murder and child cruelty. Thomas Hughes was convicted of manslaughter and child cruelty. The Judge described the evidence as "distressing and disturbing" with the protracted cruelty amounting to "unimaginable suffering". In an unprecedented gesture, the Secretary of State for Education publicly acknowledged Jonas' outstanding work in this troubling case in a formal statement to the House of Commons.

R v Haroldas Bugaila [2021] (Baker J)

Instructed by CPS to advise on charge in a case concerning the death of a 2-month-old baby and life-changing brain damage sustained by his surviving twin.

Birmingham

103 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AG

DX: 16075 Fountain Court Birmingham
Telephone: +44 (0) 121 606 0500

London

Fifth Floor
7 Savoy Court
London WC2R 0EX

DX: 449 London Chancery Lane
Telephone: +44 (0) 207 420 7500

Bristol

30 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4ND

DX: 7838 Bristol
Tel: +44 (0) 117 917 8501

Experts in 12 areas of clinical medicine and pathology were instructed. The children's father was charged and convicted of murder and inflicting grievous bodily harm with intent.

Awards



Qualifications

- Educated at King's College London, Birmingham University and the Inns of Court School of Law.

Birmingham

103 Colmore Row
Birmingham
B3 3AG

DX: 16075 Fountain Court Birmingham
Telephone: +44 (0) 121 606 0500

London

Fifth Floor
7 Savoy Court
London WC2R 0EX

DX: 449 London Chancery Lane
Telephone: +44 (0) 207 420 7500

Bristol

30 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4ND

DX: 7838 Bristol
Tel: +44 (0) 117 917 8501