



Practice Profile

Ben Holt is a specialist criminal barrister. He has been instructed as leading and led junior for the prosecution and defence in the full range of criminal cases; from homicide to fraud and money laundering. Ben was appointed Junior Treasury Counsel, based at the Central Criminal Court, in April 2024 by the Attorney General.

Ben regularly receives instructions from the full range of Specialist Units within the CPS; both as led and leading junior. He is frequently instructed by the Homicide Unit, Special Casework Units [London and the South-East], Specialist Fraud Division, International Justice and Organised Crime Unit [now SEOCID] and the Counter Terrorism Division.

He has been instructed in a number of murder, attempted murder and road fatality cases. In addition, Ben is instructed in substantial cases involving fraud and international money laundering; both for the prosecution and defence. He has undertaken a significant number of cases as part of Op Northleigh; the investigation into the Grenfell Tower disaster. He has prosecuted (alone and as a leading junior) numerous class A drug conspiracies where the evidence comes from data obtained from Operation Venetic.

Ben has specific experience in dealing with complicated disclosure issues; these have included the handling of particularly sensitive material and reviewing cases which have involved evidence from Covert Human Intelligence Sources and RIPA warrants. He has been instructed by the CPS to review disclosure on various matters and has worked together with the NCA and specialist units of the Metropolitan Police in this regard. For example, he was instructed to review the sensitive disclosure as part of Op Melrose (the investigation into the 39 Vietnamese migrants who died).

Ben has also advised on a wide range of cases pre-charge; including homicide, road fatalities and large-scale fraud investigations. Advice has included matters relating to LPP material.

As Treasury Counsel, Ben regularly advises the Attorney General's Office in relation to Unduly Lenient Sentences. He frequently appears in the Court of Appeal; instructed by the AGO to argue the Reference.

Ben has spent a 9-month period of secondment with HSBC conducting a past-business review into mis-sold interest rate hedging products.

Ben's Privacy Policy can be downloaded [here](#).

Areas of Practice

- General Crime
- Prosecution
- Confiscation, Civil Recovery & Asset Forfeiture
- Public Access

- Financial & Corporate Crime
- Military Law
- Road Traffic
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Sexual Offences
- Cyber Crime
- Homicide
- Terrorism
- 5KBW Criminal Appeals
- 5KBW Criminal Appeals Resources

What The Directories Say

"He is an effective and organised prosecutor." *Chambers UK 2025*

"If you want a tactical barrister, then he is your man. He is very good at reading the room and working out what counsel and judges are thinking." *Chambers UK 2025*

"Tactically astute and hyper-aware of what's going on in a case." *Chambers UK 2024*

'Ben is an excellent advocate and all round lawyer. His preparation shines through in his advocacy. He is admired by many and will go far.' *Legal 500 2024*

"Ben is superb and displays great attention to detail." *Chambers UK 2023*

'A consummate professional and a ferocious cross-examiner when necessary. He has a great eye for detail – nothing gets past him'. *Legal 500 - 2023 [Financial Crime]*

'A hard working junior with an unflappable and laid back style. Fierce in cross-examination when required'. *Legal 500 2021*

Appointments

- Junior Treasury Counsel

Panel Appointments:

- SFO – Panel B
- CPS General Crime – Level 4
- CPS Special Crime – Level 4
- CPS Fraud – Level 4
- CPS Counter Terrorism – Level 3

News

Attempted Murder Conviction

10 April 2024

Ben Holt prosecuted a defendant charged with attempted murder. The defendant visited the home address of the victim in the early hours of the morning and attacked her with a knife, slashing her throat. Following a trial at Inner London Crown Court, the defendant was convicted. Sentencing will take place on the 31st May.

Ben Holt to be appointed Junior Treasury Counsel

15 February 2024

Chambers are delighted to announce that the Attorney General has appointed Ben Holt as Junior Treasury Counsel as of 1 April 2024.

Torture Murder of Mother of Two

14 December 2023

Ben Holt, led by Allison Hunter KC [now HHJ Hunter KC], prosecuted three individuals charged with torturing and beating to death, a woman from West London.

After a 14-week trial at the Central Criminal Court, all three were found guilty of murder and prevention of a lawful burial and will be sentenced on the 8th February.

Instructed by Devi Kharran of the CPS Homicide Unit.

Read more here:

Shakira Spencer: Three convicted of torture murder of mother of two - BBC News

Conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration

27 November 2023

Ben Holt led Sam Willis in the prosecution of Caolan Gormley who was charged with a conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration into the UK. Gormley was the last defendant to come before the Courts charged with offending linked to the thirty-nine Vietnamese migrants who were found deceased in a trailer in Purfleet, Essex. Two further defendants pleaded guilty prior to trial; one to thirty-nine counts of manslaughter. Mr Gormley was convicted after a trial at the Central Criminal Court. He is due to be sentenced on the 30th November.

Instructed by Russell Tyner and Miguel Grana of the CPS SEOCID.

Final member of people-smuggling gang linked to 39 migrant deaths convicted | The Independent

People Smuggler Jailed

12 July 2023

Ben Holt, led by Bill Emlyn Jones KC of 3 Raymond Buildings, prosecuted this defendant for his part in the manslaughter of 39 Vietnamese migrants. This follows the successful prosecution of nine other men for their roles in the same offending.

Read more

Recent Cases

R v SP [Inner London CC] 2024

Attempted Murder

Prosecution counsel in an attempted murder trial. The defendant went to the home address of the victim in the early hours of the morning and slashed her throat. Instructed by CPS, London.

Operation Northleigh [Isleworth Crown Court] 2024

Family Fraud following Grenfell Disaster

Leading prosecution counsel in an eight-week trial. All defendants were members of the same family. They were charged with various allegations of fraud that arose from representations made in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Instructed by CPS, SCU.

R v BE [Wood Green CC] 2023

Murder

Prosecution of a man charged with murder. Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

Led by Bill Boyce KC.

Op Melrose [CCC] 2023

People-smuggling gang linked to 39 migrant deaths in Essex

Ben Holt was instructed as lead prosecution counsel in this trial that arose from the investigation into the thirty-nine Vietnamese nationals who died in the rear of a lorry. Ben was previously instructed as led junior [led by Bill Emlyn-Jones KC] in the prosecution of a man for thirty-nine counts of manslaughter. Instructed by CPS, SEOCID.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-67580615>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-52206257>

Operation Westable [CCC] 2023

Murder & Prevention of Lawful Burial

Successful prosecution of three defendants charged with murder and prevention of a lawful burial. The trial took three months. The prosecution called family members of the defendants in order to prove the case. Defendants jailed for life, minimum term thirty-four years. The Judge concluded that it was a sadistic murder. Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

Led by Allison Hunter KC [now HHJ Hunter KC].

R v G [Croydon CC] 2023

Attempted Murder of Mother

Sole prosecution counsel in this trial. The defendant was alleged to have attempted to murder his mother. Defence was insanity. Expert evidence called by both prosecution and defence. Hung jury. Instructed by CPS London.

R v S [Harrow CC] 2023

Death by Careless Driving

The defendant had run over a man who was lying down in the middle of the road. The trial involved analysis of mobile phone usage. Defendant pleaded guilty to causing death by careless driving. Hung jury in respect of death by dangerous driving.

[Instructed by CPS, Homicide].

Operation Elite [Kingston CC] 2023

Importation of Class A Drugs

Defendants alleged to have imported approximately 100kgs of cocaine using a network of lorry drivers. Evidence comes from Operation Venetic.

Leading.

Operation Ananke [Southwark CC] 2023

Twenty One Hander Loan Fraud

Leading Junior for the Crown. Twenty-one handed indictment alleging a loan fraud carried out against NatWest Bank. This trial dealt with the first seven-defendants. The fraud was operated by defendants who ran a finance company in Wood Green. Two defendants were 'inside men' and worked within the bank. The value of the fraud was in excess of £1m.

[Instructed by CPS, SFD].

R v S [Isleworth Crown Court] 2023 2023

Stabbing by 15 year old bo

Lead prosecution counsel. The defendant, a 15 year-old boy, accused of attempted murder having stabbed an acquaintance, who was 14 years of age, a total of seventeen times.

[Instructed by CPS, London]

R v E [Wood Green CC] 2023

Homicide Allegation

Homicide allegation – stabbing in Tottenham. ?Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

Led by Bill Boyce KC.

R v S-P & T [Southwark] 2023

Investment Fraud

Ben Holt led for the prosecution in this trial of two defendants alleged convicted of committing fraud by abuse of position in relation to investments made on behalf of clients. Both were directors of an advisory business. They fraudulently advised their clients to invest in an investment scheme that they had set up. Both businesses failed; leaving their clients at a financial loss. [Instructed by CPS, SFD Manchester].

R v K [Kingston CC] 2023

One Punch Manslaughter

Sole prosecution counsel in a 'one-punch manslaughter' trial. The defendant and deceased were arguing. The defendant stood up and punch the deceased once in the head. It caused him to fall back and hit his head; resulting in catastrophic brain injuries and death. Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

R v Kersys [Kingston] 2022

One Punch Manslaughter

Ben Holt was sole prosecution counsel in a 'one-punch manslaughter' trial.

Operation Locomotion [Southwark] 2022

VAT evasion

Lead prosecutor in a six-handed VAT evasion trial. The defendants were convicted of setting up a warehouse in Essex that was used to divert alcohol that should have been travelling under bond. The scheme was running for almost a year; the total loss to the Revenue was over £2m. Instructed by CPS, SFD Liverpool.

R v O [Wood Green] 2022

Attempted Murder of mothers partner

Prosecution of a man for attempted murder. He attacked his mother's partner with a baseball bat. Instructed by CPS, London.

Operation Tambo [Central Criminal Court] 2022

Three Handed Murder

Three-handed murder trial at the Central Criminal Court. First defendant charged with murdering a fellow resident at the YMCA hostel in Wimbledon. Two further defendants alleged to have helped him conceal the murder weapon in a vent. Case involved detailed analysis of hours of CCTV footage. Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

Led by Anthony Orchard KC

R v B [Central Criminal Court] 2022

Death by Dangerous Driving

Prosecution of young defendant for causing death by dangerous driving. The deceased was fifteen years of age and riding an e-scooter at the time of the collision. Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/man-james-biscoe-killed-teenager-junior-alexander-driving-drunk-bromley-london-crime-b1004381.html>

R v Charkaoui & Ors [Southwark] 2022

Conspiracy to supply 250kgs of Cocaine

Lead prosecution counsel in a five-handed large-scale drug supply conspiracy. The main two-defendants were alleged to have been involved in the supply of 250kgs of cocaine over a two-year period. Instructed by CPS, SCU.

R v S [Isleworth CC] 2022

Attempted Murder

15 year-old defendant charged with attempted murder. Stabbed the victim on fifteen occasions in a street in East London.

Jury discharged; re-trial in 2023.

Operation Venetic [Southwark Crown Court] 2022

Conspiracy to Supply Cocaine

Leading junior. Five-handed conspiracy to supply cocaine trial. Evidence obtained as part of Operation Venetic. Defendants alleged to be involved in conspiracy to supply £10m of cocaine. [Instructed by CPS, SCU]

Operation Tembe [Wood Green Crown Court] 2022

Two-handed Murder

Two-handed murder trial. First defendant stabbed the deceased in clear view of CCTV cameras. Second-defendant was in the vicinity at the time that the fatal wound was concerned. Case required detailed submissions in relation to joint enterprise. Instructed by CPS, Homicide.

Led by Bill Boyce KC

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2022-02-27/london-teenager-brutally-murdered-while-acting-as-peacemaker>

Operation Tambov [Iselworth CC] 2022

Murder

Led junior for the prosecution in a three-handed murder [Instructed by CPS, Homicide Unit].

Deceased stabbed to death in Parsons Green.

Operation Localizer [Kingston Crown Court] 2022

Conspiracy to Supply Class A

Leading Junior. Seven-handed conspiracy to supply cocaine allegation. Evidence comes from Operation Venetic material and surveillance operation [Instructed by CPS, London].

Six defendants convicted; no evidence offered against the seventh.

Sentence awaited.

Operation Scouttish [Kingston Crown Court] 2021

Money Laundering

Ten-handed money laundering conspiracy. [Instructed by CPS, IJOC].

The two main defendants were tried in September/October 2021.

As well as laundering significant cash sums they are also said to have been involved in laundering the proceeds of frauds carried out on the Bounce Back Loan scheme.

Both defendants convicted and sentenced to 17 and 16 years' imprisonment.

National Crime Agency Report

Operation Docwu [Isleworth CC] 2021

Attempted Murder

Ben Holt was Leading junior for the Crown in four-handed prosecution for attempted murder. The victim was shot at point-blank range by an individual with a sawn-off shotgun.

R v L [Snaresbrook] 2021

Manslaughter

Prosecution of a cyclist for manslaughter. Defendant had cycled through a red light which caused a collision with a pedestrian who died. Defendant convicted of a s35 OAPA offence and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Instructed by CPS Homicide.

Commendation received from the Police Team.

Sky News Report

Operation Antelope [Maidstone] 2021

Aggravated Burglary

Three-handed aggravated burglary [Instructed by CPS, Kent]. Defendants sentenced to over thirty years' imprisonment.

Operation Melrose [CCC] 2020

People Smuggling

Disclosure junior. Investigation into the 39 Vietnamese nationals who died in a lorry in Essex.

BBC News report.

Operation Photal [CCC] 2020

Attempted arson with intent to endanger life

Ben Holt acted for the Crown in this case where the Defendant was convicted of attempted arson with intent to endanger life after placing an incendiary device in the exhaust pipe of a diplomatic car parked outside the Iranian Embassy [Instructed by CPS, CTD].

BBC News report

Operation Footprint [CCC] 2020

Buying a grenade over the 'dark web'

Ben Holt acted for the Crown in this case where the Defendant was convicted of buying a grenade over the 'dark web' [Instructed by CPS, Thames & Chiltern CCU].

ITV News report

Operation Northleigh [Isleworth CC] 2020

Grenfell Tower Fraud

Ben Holt prosecuted this two-handed trial. Both defendants were convicted by a jury of having committed fraud by lying that they were living in Grenfell Tower at the time of the disaster [Instructed by CPS, SCU].

News report

Met Police report here.

Operation Hillside [CCC] 2020

Attempted Murder of Police Officers

James Brown led Ben Holt for the Crown in this high profile trial involving the attempted murder of Police Officers during a gun fight following an armed 'car jacking'. The defendant was convicted by a jury and received a life sentence.

News report here.

Link to Met Police report.

Operation Baghrash [Bristol] 2019

Conspiracy to defraud the N.H.S and D.o.H

Ben Holt appeared in this 8-week, seven-handed, prosecution trial acting as led junior. Allegations related to the application to the Department of Health for grants in order to improve care homes by a Hospice in Somerset. Seven-handed conspiracy to defraud the NHS and DoH in relation to tenders made for building projects. Instructed by CPS SFD Manchester.

Operation Banjax [Southwark] 2019

£Multi-Million MTIC Fraud

James Martin, leading Ben Holt, were instructed on behalf of Mr Aslam by Bark & Co Solicitors.

The case was an MTIC Fraud which was part and parcel of Import Duty Diversion on Beers, Wines and Spirits. According to HMRC the OCG were accountable for significant losses to the UK Exchequer through associated large scale VAT and Excise duty frauds. The group also conducted a substantial money laundering operation in relation to the proceeds of these crimes which was believed to be in excess of £86 million.

13 different individuals were said to be involved along with a whole host of MTIC and Buffer companies some of which sold on the BWS to end user Cash & Carriers who were never investigated.

The case was split into two trials with Mr Aslam D1 in Trial 2. As the case developed there were significant issues with the evidence and associated disclosure problems which related to material that had been withheld by HMRC and should have been disclosed far in advance of the trial itself. After considerable legal argument in Mr Aslam's case we were able to restrict the alleged loss to HMRC to less than £7k.

Ultimately Mr Aslam was convicted but only received a Suspended Sentence Order. ?

Operation Italici [C.C.C] 2019

Importation of Anabolic Steroids from India & Singapore

Ben Holt has successfully prosecuted a case involving the importation of unlicensed anabolic steroids (AAS) from India and Singapore. The gang imported more than 40 tonnes of illicit anabolic steroids and is said to be 'the most prolific of its kind ever uncovered'. One member of that gang was also linked to another gang involved in the production and distribution of steroids from an underground AAS factory in the United Kingdom. Five Defendants were convicted following two six week trials.

Instructed by the CPS Organised Crime Division; investigated by the NCA in Belfast.

[News Report Here](#)

[News Report Here](#)

Operation Major [Guildford] 2019

Multi handed conspiracy to money launder and commit fraud

Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt for the Crown in this seven-handed conspiracy to launder the proceeds of a two-million-pound fraud. Instructed by CPS Specialist Fraud Division.

Operation Pearland [Isleworth] 2018

£7 million Ponzi Fraud Scheme

Ben Holt led Junior counsel in Prosecution of two defendants accused of a 'Ponzi' fraud. Losses amongst the defendants exceeded £7m. Both defendants convicted after trial. Both received the maximum sentence available – 10 years' imprisonment.

R v JN [Isleworth] 2018

Rape of ex-wife and two daughters

Ben Holt, instructed by the RASSO Unit at the CPS and led by Catherine Pattison. Trial of defendant who was

accused of raping his ex-wife and two daughters. Convicted and sentenced to a custodial sentence of 27 years with an extension period of 8 years.

Operation Tandil [Croydon] 2018

Violent disorder arising out of an attack on an asylum seeker in Croydon

Two linked trials. Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt in the first and Ben Holt led Dickon Reid in the second. A total of 14 defendants were charged with violent disorder arising out of an attack on an asylum seeker in Croydon. The case attracted international media attention. Instructed to SCU at CPS London.

[Daily Mirror report here](#)

[Daily Mail report here](#)

Operation Northleigh [Isleworth] 2018

Fraud of the Grenfell Tower victim fund

Ben Holt prosecuted the Finance Manager of the Grenfell Finance Team. She was employed by the RBK&C to assist in providing financial assistance to victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster. However, she stole £62,062 from prepaid credit cards that were allocated to survivors of the fire. During the course of the investigation into that allegation, it transpired that the defendant had defrauded her previous employer, the NHS. Defendant received a custodial sentence of 5-and-a-half years. Instructed by SCU, London.

[BBC News Report here](#)

[The Guardian News Report here](#)

R v. Abdikarim [Isleworth] 2017

Acid Attack

Ben Holt was instructed by the Prosecution for the trial of an 'acid attack' case. The victim was lured to a park in Isleworth by the defendant. A substance was thrown at him by another, unidentified, male. Victim lost his eye as a result of the attack. He gave evidence with the assistance of an intermediary. Defendant was convicted and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment.

[News report here](#)

R v. S [St Albans] 2017

Blackmail and misconduct in a public office

Ben Holt was instructed to defend a Detective Constable charged with blackmail and misconduct in a public office. S had used the PNC to find out personal details of an individual who was using the services of a prostitute. He then blackmailed him. Pleaded guilty. Sentence referred to the CoA by the A-G as being unduly lenient. Instructed by Slater & Gordon.

[News reports:](#)

BBC report here

Daily Telegraph report here

R v. Ahmed [Snaresbrook] 2017

Attempted Murder

Ben Holt was Prosecution counsel at this trial of attempted murder. The defendant had run over an acquaintance with whom he was having a disagreement. Convicted of section 18 and sentenced to nine years' imprisonment.

R v. Daniels & ors [Isleworth] 2017

Conspiracy to steal motor vehicles

Ben Holt acted for the Crown, Daniels was charged with two others with conspiracy to steal motor vehicles. He worked for a BMW dealership and was convicted of stealing car keys and customer's personal details before passing them on to other conspirators who would steal the cars that had been sold from his place of work. His co-defendants pleaded Guilty at PTPH; with one of them giving evidence for the Crown against Daniels. On conviction, Daniels was sentenced to 63 months' imprisonment.

News reports:

Evening Standard

Daily Mail

Operation Manningtree [Inner London] 2017 2017

13 handed Violent Disorder following illegal 'rave'

Catherine Pattison led Ben Holt in the Prosecution of 13 defendants for violent disorder that arose out of an illegal rave organised to take place on the night of Hallowe'en 2015 by a group called 'Scumtek'. The violence was described as the worst in London since the riots of 2011 and resulted in the largest deployment of Police Officers since that time.

News reports here:

Evening Standard

The Guardian

R v. Oorloff & Dickinson [Guildford] 2016

£2m 'Rare Earth Metal' Fraud

Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt in this "boiler room" rare earth metals fraud. Both Defendants were convicted after trial of selling worthless Rare Earth Metals as part of an investment. The total value of the scam was £1.9m. Both

defendants were convicted and sentenced to a total of 11 years' imprisonment. Instructed by CPS Headquarters Central Fraud Group.

News report here.

Operation Tineid [Blackfriars] 2015

Fraud

Catherine Farrelly led Ben Holt for the Crown. Defendants were charged with arranging co-defendants to take driving test on behalf of other people. NCA investigation, instructed by the Organised Crime Group at the CPS.

News report here.

R v. A & ors [C.C.C] 2015

Standing Order Fraud

Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt for the Crown in a nine-handed standing order fraud that was set up and orchestrated by an inside man working with Nationwide bank. Case involved a considerable amount of forensic and banking evidence. (Investigated by DCPCU, instructed by CPS SCU). Jury were unable to reach a verdict on defendant said to be "inside man". Prosecuted re-trial alone and the defendant was convicted. Mail Online news report.

R v. M & M [Woolwich] 2015

NHS fraud

Ben Holt represented the husband of an NHS employee, in a prosecution brought by NHS Protect. The wife was alleged to have stolen £300,000 from her employer whilst working for the NHS. The husband was said to have acquired the criminal property. Significant quantity of evidence served (over 10,000 pages). Ben acted alone; other parties in the trial had two counsel. Hung jury. Evening Standard news report.

R v. S 2015

Armed Robbery

Ben Holt prosecution counsel in an armed robbery trial. Crown's case relied solely on ANPR, cell site and other circumstantial evidence. Defendant convicted and imprisoned for life.

R v. S & ors [C.C.C] 2014

Card fraud by ATM skimming

Catherine Pattison led Ben Holt for the prosecution in two separate sets of proceedings relating to Romanian nationals who were charged with card fraud by ATM "skimming". This was sophisticated organised crime group who were making equipment to capture individuals' bank account details when they inserted their cards into an ATM. A total of 13 defendants were charged with offences ranging from conspiracy to defraud, possessing articles for use in fraud and transferring criminal property. (Investigated by DCPCU, instructed by CPS SCU). Mirror Online news report.

Operation Kennedy [Portsmouth] 2014

Conspiracy to supply class A drugs

Gordon Carse led Ben Holt for the defence in this multi-handed Class A conspiracy trial. The defendant was alleged to have been part of a conspiracy to supply over £600,000 of cocaine in and around the Portsmouth area. The defendant's involvement and role were underpinned by cocaine found in his possession, call data and text messages. The defendant was acquitted. Sentences totalling 54 years imprisonment were handed down.

R v. T [Chelmsford] 2014

Firearms and drugs

Ben Holt represented a defendant charged with possession of firearm with intent to endanger life and drug supply offences. Convicted of the drug matters and simple possession of the gun. Sentenced to an eight-year term of imprisonment.

R v. R & ors [Croydon] 2013

Kidnap trial

Catherine Pattison led Ben Holt for the prosecution in this 5-handed kidnap trial. This case involved counsel reviewing a considerable amount of unused material. This included downloads from over 40 mobile telephones. There were numerous issues relating to sensitive disclosure. The case against the defendants was solely reliant on cell-site and tracker evidence. One defendant was convicted and received a prison sentence of 12 years. Instructed to draft respondent's notice to appeal. Leave refused; renewed in front of the full Court and refused. (Investigated by Kidnap & Special Investigation Unit of the Met, instructed by CPS SCU).