



Practice Profile

Catherine Farrelly KC is a sought after and highly regarded criminal advocate with extensive expertise in leading serious and complex litigation. Catherine's practice encompasses all forms of homicide and serious and organised criminal offending. Catherine is frequently instructed in the most complex and sensitive cases of sexual offending, having over recent years been instructed in cases involving some of the UK's most prolific offenders

Catherine is an accredited advocacy facilitator (trainer) of other advocates in relation to young and vulnerable witnesses and has received a commendation from the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in recognition of the way in which she dealt with a very young complainant in a case involving very serious sexual allegations.

Catherine is also a first choice for cases with a true international dimension. She has a wide experience of assisting in drafting ILORs; arguing the admissibility of foreign evidence and mutual legal assistance more generally. She is to receive a commendation from the Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and Europol in recognition of her role as leading counsel in the prosecution of 14 defendants in the "Feltham Book Heist" case.

Catherine is praised for her tenacious commitment to her cases and her meticulous attention to detail. Her sensitivity and emotional intelligence make her ideal for cases involving vulnerable witnesses and defendants, earning their confidence in the criminal process and maximising the quality of their evidence.

Catherine is always willing to discuss a case before instructions are sent. To do this, please contact the clerks room.

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

Areas of Practice

- General Crime
- Homicide
- Prosecution
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Sexual Offences
- Regulatory & Professional Discipline
- Terrorism
- 5KBW Criminal Appeals
- 5KBW Criminal Appeals Resources

What The Directories Say

"Catherine is very calm, collected and proactive. She is everything you would want in a barrister." *Chambers UK 2025*

"Catherine is excellent in every respect. She is very hard-working and puts a lot of time and effort into preparing her cases thoroughly and making sure, as far as is possible, that any gaps in the evidence are closed off. She is very good at putting witnesses at ease before they give their evidence. Her closing speeches are some of the best to be seen. She is very persuasive both when addressing juries and during legal argument." *Legal 500 2025*

Other Languages:

Italian

News

Student Rapist Jailed for 24 Years

19 June 2025

A Chinese PhD student named by police as "one of the most prolific predators" in the UK has been sentenced today to life with a minimum term of 24 years.

Sentencing followed a 6-week trial at Inner London Crown Court in March where Catherine Farrelly KC led Corinne Bramwell of 9BR Chambers on behalf of the Crown.

News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4g8dy38qxjo>

Drug-Rape Student Convicted

6 March 2025

After a 6-week trial at Inner London Crown Court, and what has been described as possibly the biggest rape investigation in Britain, an individual said to be one of the most prolific sex offenders in British history was convicted of drugging and raping 10 women in both London and China.

Sentence will take place in June.

Catherine Farrelly KC led Corinne Bramwell of 9 Bedford Row on behalf of the Crown.

Read more here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/mar/05/london-phd-student-zhenhao-zou-convicted-rapes>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwyjxv1j9g8o>

Teenager Jailed for Attacking Trans Woman

20 September 2024

A 19 year old man was sentenced to an extended sentence of 10 years, 4 months in relation for disseminating terrorist material online and for his attack on a transgender woman.

Catherine Farrelly KC was instructed by Lee Ingram of the CPS Counter-Terrorism Unit.

News Article

Convictions for Killing of 18 Year Old Who Was Shot & Stabbed

19 June 2024

Following a 10-week trial at the Central Criminal Court which concluded in May, two individuals were convicted of the murder of an eighteen-year-old, who was shot and stabbed outside his home in East London. The attack is believed to have been motivated by feuds between rival gangs.

The defendants were sentenced on the 12th June to life imprisonment, minimum terms of 36 ad 31 years.

Anthony Orchard KC leading Catherine Farrelly, appeared on behalf of the Crown. Instructed by Catherine Gould of CPS Homicide.

Read more here:

<https://news.met.police.uk/news/two-convicted-after-extensive-cctv-and-forensic-evidence-presented-to-the-jury-in-the-newham-murder-of-junior-jah-483650>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3gg3r568lwo>

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-crime-stabbing-shooting-old-bailey-junior-jah-police-guilty-b1156853.html>

Former Met Police Officer Convicted of Multiple Rapes

3 May 2024

Following a three-week trial at Croydon Crown Court in February, a former Met Police Officer was convicted of multiple counts of rape, including six against a child, and kidnap. The defendant was sentenced on the 1st May, to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 14 years.

Catherine Farrelly KC led Rebecca Foulkes of Foundry Chambers. Instructed by Barbara Down of CPS Rape & Serious Sexual Offences Unit.

Cliff Mitchell: Ex-Met PC jailed for 13 years for multiple counts of rape - BBC News

Former Met Officer Guilty of Rape & Kidnap

19 February 2024

Catherine Farrelly led Rebecca Foulkes of Foundry Chambers, in the prosecution of a former Met Police Officer charged with multiple counts of rape, including six against a child, and kidnap.

After a three-week trial at Croydon Crown Court, the jury convicted the defendant, and sentence will take place on the 1st May 2024.

Read more here:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/youve-met-the-devil-met-officer-told-woman-he-raped-and-kidnapped-5ql2pqbxr?ts=1708613672461>

Cliff Mitchell: Ex-Met PC found guilty of multiple counts of rape - BBC News

Former Metropolitan Police officer found guilty of multiple rapes, including three against a child, and kidnap | UK News | Sky News

King's Counsel Appointments

15 February 2024

We are delighted to announce that Catherine Farrelly and Jonathan Polnay are to be appointed as King's Counsel (KC). The 2024 Silk appointment ceremony will take place at Westminster Hall in March.

King Charles III has approved the appointment of 95 barristers and solicitors as King's Counsel in England and Wales. A ceremony at Westminster Hall on 18th March will take place where the Lord Chancellor will formally swear in the new silks. The title of KC is awarded to those who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy.

Joint Head of Chambers, Sarah Forshaw KC said:

"The award of King's Counsel is for 'excellence in advocacy'. That is the standard we seek to achieve at 5 King's Bench Walk. We could not be more proud and delighted that two of our home-grown advocates, Jonathan Polnay and Catherine Farrelly, are to be appointed King's Counsel in 2024. Firm friends, they started out as pupils together at 5 King's Bench Walk in 2000/2001. Both are true stars; hugely impressive advocates with unrivalled judgment. That they are, each of them, also thoroughly likeable and fiercely popular is the icing on the cake."

Congratulations from everyone at 5KBW

Anaesthetist facing jail for drug theft

27 November 2023

Catherine Farrelly prosecuted a trainee anaesthetist, who admitted stealing drugs from a hospital where he was working, with the intention of using them for sexual activity with a girlfriend.

He will be sentenced on the 16th February. Instructed by Sarah Walker of CPS Complex Casework Unit.

Read more here:

Anaesthetist facing jail for stealing drugs from hospital 'for sexual activity' | The Independent

Lawyer of the week

5 October 2023

5KBW's Catherine Farrelly is The Times, Lawyer of the Week, rightly commended for prosecuting "the most hard-fought case" of her career.

The Times Article

Businessman Convicted of Plot to Plant Hoax Bombs at Barristers' Chambers

18 August 2023

Catherine Farrelly, leading Lucy Organ of 6KBW, prosecuted this four-month trial at the Central Criminal Court. Instructed by Patricia Strobino of CPS Complex Casework Unit.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-66544098>

Young Man Convicted of 22 Counts of Rape

18 August 2023

Catherine Farrelly, leading Fiona Ryan and Anna Dutka, prosecuted this young defendant who was convicted of 22 counts of rape in relation to 6 separate young girls, following a 5 week trial at Inner London Crown Court. Instructed by Laura Devitt of CPS RASSO.

Recent Cases

Six-handed murder 2023

Six-handed murder

Catherine Farrelly, led by John Price KC, prosecuted this six-handed murder trial which concluded with all six defendants being convicted of murder.

News

Daily Mail Article

R v DO & Ors [Central Criminal Court] 2022

Murder

Catherine Farrelly, led by John Price QC, prosecutes two males convicted of murder.

Press Report

R v MK [Bristol Crown Court] 2022

Large Scale Frauds

Catherine Farrelly prosecuted male convicted of large-scale frauds.

Press Report

R v TK [Kingston Crown Court] 2022

Rape

Catherine Farrelly prosecutes male convicted of rape.

Press report

R v B & M [Snaresbrook Crown Court] 2021

Rape and sexual abuse by male in his 60s offering "sugar daddy" arrangements with teenage girls

Charlotte Newell QC and Catherine Farrelly successfully prosecuted professional male in his 60s who groomed and abused a series of young girls offering "sugar daddy" arrangements, deploying BDSM abuse and introducing his brother into "threesome" sexual activity.

John Bancroft: Essex man sentenced to 25 years for using dating apps to sexually exploit seven teenage girls | UK News | Sky News

R v PK [Isleworth Crown Court] 2021

Double Rapist

The prosecution of a male for two separate rapes involving significant violence. It involved contested, and successful, application for joinder and complex issues in relation to character evidence.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/ivy-league-raped-women-london-convicted-b908342.html>

R v DW [Ipswich Court Court] 2021

Sexual Abuse of Children

The prosecution of one of the most prolific offenders investigated by the NCA who was responsible for the on-line sexual abuse of 52 children. The case concerned complex issues in relation to the indictment, given the significant number of complainants involved.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/11/23/paedophile-would-not-have-caught-facebooks-encryption-plans/>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8978441/One-Britains-worst-paedophiles-admits-96-sex-offences-against-51-boys.html>

R v CU & others [Kingston] 2020

Commercial Burglary

Prosecution of twelve defendants in relation to a string of high value commercial burglaries involving the theft of rare and precious books. Led by Catherine Farrelly.

News reports:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/sep/18/rare-books-stolen-london-heist-found-floor-romania>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/09/18/rare-books-stolen-romanian-gang-recovered-joint-uk-eu-police/>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8747023/2-5million-trove-books-stolen-London-warehouse-Romania.html>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54209366>

R v CU & Ors [Kingston] 2020

The Feltham Book Heist

Leading Charlotte Hole. The prosecution of 12 defendants for a number of high-value commercial burglaries, including the theft of rare books by Isaac Newton & Francisco Goya. The prosecution arose out of a JIT (Joint Investigation Team) with Romanian and Italian law enforcement and concerned legal issues in relation to the admissibility of extraterritorial evidence and the presentation of a significant amount of telephone and cell-site evidence. The case attracted considerable interest in the national and international press.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/dec/13/tome-raiders-solving-the-great-book-heist>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/heist-isaac-newton-galileo-romania-clamparu-b748240.html>

R v SF & Ors [CCC] 2020

Homicide

Led by John Price QC. The prosecution of four men for murder. The case involved a significant amount of telephone and cell-site evidence.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-54986153>

R v FP [CCC] 2020

Homicide

Led by Crispin Aylett QC. The prosecution of three men for murder.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-51010380>

R v BH & 3 others [Blackfriars] 2018

Internet Banking Fraud

£500k internet banking fraud against elderly victims by bank employees. Catherine Farrelly led Charlotte Hole, instructed by the CPS International Justice and Organised Crime unit, prosecuting 4 defendants following an investigation by the National Crime Agency Cyber Crime Unit. The case centred around the activities of two men who worked at high street banks who assisted another in creating a significant number of sham bank accounts for the use in a transfer fraud, raising legal issues about the definition of 'criminal property' under s.340 POCA 2002.

R v. Rekaya [Isleworth] 2018

Prosecution of £90,000 Grenfell fraudster

Catherine Farrelly successfully prosecuted a man who ran up nearly £90,000 in accommodation and travel costs, after pretending to be a victim of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

He was sentenced to four years and six months imprisonment.

The news report may be found [here](#).

R v. Glenn [ILCC] 2018

Rape of 13 year old school girl

Catherine Farrelly prosecuted this matter in which the defendant grabbed a 13-year-old schoolgirl off the street and filmed himself raping her. He was jailed for 11 years.

News report [here](#).

R v. Hussain [Snaresbrook] 2017

Series of Sex Attacks by Uber Driver

Catherine Farrelly prosecuted this Uber driver whom was sentenced to 12 years for rapes and sexual assaults. Hussain lay in wait outside popular London bars looking for drunken women to rape, preying on women leaving pubs in Shoreditch, in the east of the capital before attacking them as they slept.

Daily Mail report [here](#).

R v. Defontaine [Croydon] 2017

Sexual Assaults on own family members

Catherine Farrelly prosecuted this "persistent and manipulative" paedophile who carried out a series of sexual assaults on 6 of his own family members. He was sentenced to 18 years.

Evening Standard report [here](#).

R v. Khan & Barclay [C.C.C.] 2017

Revenge Stabbing

Catherine Farrelly was prosecution Counsel in this trial of two defendants for the pre-meditated revenge stabbing of another in connection with a drug-deal gone awry. The case involved the analysis of a significant amount of telephone evidence in addition to expert cell site and voice recognition evidence.

Guardian News report [here](#).

R v. Rehman [Snaresbrook] 2017

Rape & False imprisonment of 16 year old girl

Catherine Farrelly was instructed for the Prosecution of this defendant for false imprisonment and three counts of rape involving a daytime attack on a 16 year old girl.

Evening Standard Report [here](#).

R v. Leppard [Maidstone] 2016

Rape

Catherine Farrelly was instructed in the defence a young man charged with two counts of rape.

News Report [here](#).

R v. Beveridge [I.L.C.C.] 2016

Historic Sexual Assaults

Catherine Farrelly led Paul Jackson in the prosecution of a defendant who, over the course of a number of years, had sexually abused five very young children who suffered from various learning disabilities. The case involved the review of a significant amount of social services and educational material and close liaison with the appointed intermediary. The defendant was sentenced to 22 years' imprisonment with an extended licence of 6 years.

R v. N.A. [Snaresbrook] 2016

Rape of daughter

Catherine Farrelly was instructed for the Prosecution of a defendant who had raped his daughter from the ages of 13 to 15 years, using sex toys and other implements during the course of the abuse. The case involved very sensitive handling of the complainant. The defendant was subsequently sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

R v. Rahman [Snaresbrook] 2016

Rape & Kidnap of 15 year old girl

Catherine Farrelly was instructed for the Prosecution of a defendant who kidnapped a 15 year old girl off the street and then repeatedly raped her.

R v. Anwar & ors [C.C.C.] 2016

Attempted Murder

Catherine Farrelly leading Senghin Kong in this prosecution of 6 defendants on charges including attempted murder, possession of a firearm with intent to commit robbery and conspiracy to rob. At the close of the prosecution case the learned Judge upheld submissions of no case to answer on the charges of attempted murder and possession of a firearm with intent to commit robbery. As a result the prosecution appealed this at an expedited hearing. The Court of Appeal allowed the prosecution appeal and the trial continued on all charges. Leveson LJ gave the judgment of the court reported here. The 6 defendants were eventually convicted of possession of a firearm with intent to commit robbery and conspiracy to rob. The case involved complex cell site evidence and legal argument. Guardian 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. Castano & ors [Snaresbrook] 2015

Supply of Cocaine

Catherine Farrelly was instructed for Prosecution in this cases involving four defendants in relation to the supply of 1 kilogram of cocaine with an estimated street value of £100,000.

R v. Alasow [Snaresbrook] 2015

Possession of loaded firearm with intent

Catherine Farrelly was instructed in this Prosecution of a defendant who was charged with possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life and possession of ammunition. He had been stopped by police shortly after climbing over garden fences in east London and then disposing of a loaded firearm, fitted with a "silencer". The case involved protracted legal argument over the admissibility of DNA and GSR expert evidence, all of which was ruled admissible.

News Report [here](#).

R v. MN & ors [Wood Green] 2015

Gangland stabbing

Catherine Farrelly led Valeria Swift instructed by the prosecution, in this 6 handed conspiracy to commit GBH, which included a premeditated attack on another youth, his stab wounds close to his heart which were very nearly life ending. This case required expert analysis of telephone evidence which equated to over 20,000 pages. Defendants convicted of conspiracy.

News report here.