



**Five Pump
Court Chambers**

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Lydia Stephens

Barrister

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Practice overview

Lydia is a criminal and family barrister. Lydia successfully completed pupillage at a pure crime set where she prosecuted and defended regularly in the Youth, Magistrates' and Crown Court. Lydia moved to 5 Pump Court to pursue a wider practice and accepts instructions in both criminal and family law.

Lydia is on the CPS General Crime Panel at Grade 2 and is working towards Grade 3. She has been instructed in Crown Court trials involving offences of serious violence, arson, and sexual assaults against complainants as young as 16 at the time of the offences. Lydia is calm under pressure, and fearless in her advocacy.

Having previously worked as a criminal defence paralegal at Freemans Solicitors for 9 months and as an Amicus volunteer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for 3 months Lydia is familiar with the challenges facing criminal solicitors. She is also at ease representing clients from a range of different backgrounds. (Amicus is a charity that advocates for fair legal representation for those facing the death penalty in the U.S.A).

These experiences assisted Lydia in her transition into family work. She accepts instructions in both private and public children cases and she has experience acting for applicants, respondents and Local Authorities.

Lydia can analyse cases and assimilate large volumes of information quickly. She is adept at delivering clear and pragmatic advice in a sensitive way. She can work with the most challenging clients and will always strive to be a strong and persuasive advocate on their behalf.

Criminal Prosecution

Lydia is a Grade 2 prosecutor. Recent feedback from the CPS following a particularly difficult prosecution case was:

"Your witness handling was excellent, given the extensive enquiry you initiated and marshalled to ensure all our key witnesses and victims eventually attended court in response to the witness summons you applied for. I also thank you for dealing so brilliantly with all the Judge's concerns and queries regarding the fact that all our witnesses were reluctant to give evidence."

Lydia regularly acts in a full range of hearings in the Crown Court including PTPHs, complex sentences, ground rules hearings and proceedings brought under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, as well as trials.

When covering PTPHs for particularly complex matters Lydia will often advise on preliminary applications such as severing indictments and acceptable pleas based on the strength and weakness of the Crown's evidence.

Lydia is also well versed in CPS policies and expectations in relation to sensitive cases and vulnerable witnesses.

R v AG: Prosecuted a complex series of committals for sentence involving a young defendant who crossed several relevant age thresholds and had committed a large and significant range of offences including violence, weapons and motoring. Lydia produced a 35-page sentencing document outlining the relevant law, guidance and ancillary matters to assist in the sentencing hearing.

R v KES: Prosecuted a defendant charged with a section 18 wounding against an individual who sustained life changing injuries. Lydia was able to question experts as to the complex effects that the defendant's mental health conditions may or may not have had on his ability to form the requisite intent.

R v SG: Successfully prosecuted a defendant charged with arson and criminal damage after attempts to start a fire in a hotel room.

Criminal Defence

Lydia has defended a wide range of offences in the Magistrates Court at first appearance, trial and sentence including drugs; weapons; violence and sexual offences. She has also appeared in the Youth Court representing youths at first appearance and other types of hearings.

Lydia has often been instructed in trials at short notice and is able to deal with the information quickly and effectively in order to provide a high level of advocacy. She is able to advise on applications which might be appropriate and to prepare those quickly.

In addition, Lydia appears regularly in the Crown Court on cases of a very sensitive nature including indecent images and voyeurism, delivering tailored advice to clients with little or no experience of the Criminal Justice System.

R v AK: Represented a defendant in the Crown Court for breach of a suspended sentence order. Notwithstanding the accepted breach, Lydia mitigated on the defendant's behalf and persuaded the Court not to activate the SSO. The breach was instead marked by way of a fine and the order allowed to continue with reduced conditions.

R v RD: Represented a defendant charged with obstructing a police officer at a first appearance. The defendant had provided a false alibi on behalf of another who was under police investigation. After the defendant pleaded guilty Lydia mitigated on the defendant's behalf and they received a conditional discharge.

R v AB: Defended a sentence in the Crown Court whereby the defendant faced a significant period in custody for strangulation. Lydia persuaded the Court to accept an adjournment for the preparation of an expert report to assess the defendant for any mental health issues and the impact they may have had on his culpability.

Family law

Lydia represents clients in applications for domestic violence injunctions such as non-molestation, occupation orders. She can form a rapport with her clients quickly and engage with litigants in person on their behalf in a calm manner despite the often emotionally charged nature of such cases.

Lydia has acted for parents in private children cases and for parents and Local Authorities in public children cases. Lydia is aware of the law and the importance of managing expectations at Court.

Prior to pupillage Lydia gained extensive pro bono experience as a volunteer at Support Through Court at the Birmingham Civil and Family Justice Centre. She also has a long-standing interest in family law and she actively welcomes instructions in this area.

Lydia's practice in criminal law where she deals with highly emotive issues, clients from a wide range of backgrounds who are in very stressful circumstances, and allegations of domestic abuse, has equipped her with the skills needed to undertake instructions in this area.

K v M: Represented a private law applicant seeking a NMO against her partner following various allegations of controlling and abusive behaviour. The bench found the majority of the allegations proven and ordered the NMO.

C v C: Represented an applicant seeking a child arrangement and prohibited steps order following concerns about drugs use. The Court granted the orders in the terms proposed and ordered the applicant's costs be paid by the respondent at Lydia's request.

Education

- BTC, BPP University – Merit
- GDL, BPP University – Commendation
- BA Hons English Language & Literature, University of Oxford – 2:1

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association
- Women in Criminal Law

Prizes

- Lady Margaret Hall, Thackeray Prize (2019)
- Lincoln's Inn Lord Denning Scholarship (2020)
- BPP Career Commitment Scholarship (2020)
- Lincoln's Inn Debating Shield Winner (2021)

Notable Cases

R v CA: Prosecuted an appeal against conviction in the Crown Court in which the defendant was charged with threatening another with an offensive weapon (under section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953). When the complainant did not attend Court for trial Lydia

advanced a hearsay application to adduce the complainant's 999 call under the res gestae exception which was accepted by the judge despite strong opposition.

R v AK: Represented a defendant in the Crown Court for breach of a suspended sentence order. Notwithstanding the accepted breach, Lydia mitigated on the defendant's behalf and persuaded the Court not to activate the SSO. The breach was instead marked by way of a fine and the order allowed to continue with reduced conditions.

R v CC: Represented a defendant at an exceptional hardship hearing. Following compelling arguments related to the defendant's work, health and responsibility for her mother the Court did not disqualify her.

R v AB: Represented a defendant at a committal for sentence. The defendant was charged with intentional strangulation, assault by beating (x2), harassment (putting in fear of violence) malicious communications and criminal damage under £5000 (against his mother and former partner). Notwithstanding the fact that the starting point for strangulation alone is 18 month custody, Lydia (with the assistance of an expert report) was able to secure a suspended sentence for the defendant.

R v VP: Represented a defendant charged with breach of a non-molestation order arguing lack of knowledge and therefore reasonable excuse. Notwithstanding the fact the Court found the NMO had been served they were persuaded by Lydia's examination in chief such that the defendant was acquitted.

R v VD: Represented a defendant at a special reasons hearing in the Magistrates' Court. The defendant had driven a significant distance whilst over the legal alcohol limit. Lydia presented the defendant's case as to how she drove whilst drunk to escape a domestic assault at her home. Special reasons were found and the defendant was not disqualified.