

## Curriculum Vitae

### Charlotte Lucinda Surley

Called 2000 Middle Temple

Admitted as Solicitor 2005

Higher Rights of Audience 2008

Appointed to sit as Specialist Member in the First Tier Tribunal Health and Social Care (Mental Health) 2021

### Expertise

I specialise in representing defendants who have, or may be suspected of having, a mental illness, learning disability and/or are neurodivergent. I have undertaken the Advocacy and the Vulnerable training, and I have considerable experience of defending cases involving vulnerable witnesses.

I have attended and delivered training, as well as writing articles on the topics of autism, mental health and the criminal justice system. I have also undertaken the additional training necessary to enable me to sit on mental health tribunals.

My communication style is flexible to meet the needs of the individual client. I firmly believe in enabling the fullest possible participation in the case for all my clients. I therefore place great emphasis on communicating clear and comprehensive advice, both orally and in writing.

In 2019 I won both the Ministry of Justice and Legal Aid Agency 'Diversity and Inclusion' awards for my work improving awareness of autism in the criminal justice system and the workplace.

### Notable Cases

Set out below is a selection of the most recent cases Charlotte Surley has conducted as junior alone. It should not be regarded as exhaustive.

#### Mental Illness

##### **R v M 2025**

s4A appointment in respect of a defendant experiencing features of mania and psychosis. He was communicative but his instructions were entirely based upon delusions. Care was necessary to represent his interests whilst ensuring that only proper matters were put to the witnesses.

##### **R v K 2025**

This was a complex sentencing exercise for a very vulnerable defendant. Focussed yet detailed mitigation enabled the judge to take the exceptional course of imposing a Community Order. The judge also provided written commendation of my advocacy in this case.

##### **R v X 2024**

s38 appointment in respect of a very challenging defendant made it possible for a two-week trial to run smoothly. Prior to my appointment there had been a series of unproductive listings spanning 18 months. I have since represented this client fully in multiple other matters as we have formed a good working relationship.

**R v F 2021**

s4A appointment to represent a defendant who denied allegations of outraging public decency. The defendant was effectively non-verbal. All conferences were conducted virtually to a secure psychiatric ward. Significant care was necessary to ensure he understood the trial process.

**Autism, Learning Disabilities and Related Conditions****R v A 2024**

The defendant was of retirement age when charged with multiple malicious communications offences and allegations of assault across multiple cases. She was unrepresented and disruptive in court. I forged a trusting working relationship with her, such that a s38 appointment led to full representation, and she was ultimately diagnosed as autistic. Her offending was a response to unmet social care needs. The prosecution therefore offered no evidence on a significant number of counts. A care home placement was made available to her so that, immediately after sentencing, she could be released into a suitable and safe environment.

**R v N 2022**

An autistic young adult was charged with two counts of assaulting an emergency worker as a consequence of his reaction to being touched on the arm by a police officer. The entire incident was recorded on body worn video. I dovetailed my detailed understanding of autism with the College of Policing guidance in presenting the defence case. The defendant was acquitted of both counts.

**R v Z 2022**

The defendant was of retirement age and had been of good character until 2020. She quickly accrued 10 convictions for assaulting emergency workers and public order offences. There were also multiple admissions to a psychiatric ward. I believed Z was autistic. This was confirmed and she was also diagnosed with ADHD, PTSD and schizoaffective disorder. On the first day of trial the prosecution reviewed the case in light of these diagnoses and offered no evidence on all counts.

**R v B 2021**

The defendant was accused of child neglect and had a lengthy history of mental health diagnoses. I suspected that she was, in fact, autistic. This was confirmed following an expert assessment. The defendant was acquitted on all counts. She stated afterwards that her diagnosis was an important outcome of the case which would allow her to move on from past trauma and improve her quality of life.

**Contact Details**

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