Martin McCarthy KC



YEAR OF CALL 1994

He is a specialist defence barrister in Homicide, organised and financial crime and Human Trafficking. He is recognised by both of the principal bar directories as being a leader in his field.

Martin is ranked in the legal directories in Crime and Financial Crime.

Martin was appointed a Gray's Inn Bencher (2025).

Image type unknown /var/www/vhosts/farringdon-law.co.uk/httpdocs/uploads/barrister-images/chambers-logo-2027.webp

Image type unknown /var/www/vhosts/farr tpdocs/uploads/barrister-images/l500-leading-silk-2027.webp

Email clerks@farringdon-law.co.uk

Career Overview

Martin is ranked as a leading silk in both leading directories. For many years he was ranked as a Band 1 Leading Junior in the Crime and Financial Crime sections of the Legal 500.

PRACTICE

Martin is instructed in the most substantial and complex cases of murder, fraud, drugs, corruption, money laundering, people trafficking and all aspects of organised crime. He has extensive experience of serious fraud and related confiscation proceedings, and has advised and appeared in complex contested cases in the Crown Court, the High Court and the Court of Appeal. He is used to working with substantial amounts of paperwork and is highly computer literate.

He is particularly experienced in cases involving expert evidence such as cell-site, computer, telephone and accountancy evidence.

In recent years Martin has developed a niche practice in appeals against costs decisions. He has been reported in

decisions of Costs Judges, the High Court and the Very High Cost Case (VHCC) appeals committee, where he has been unusually successful in taking points of principle. These cases include R v Mooney, R v Mehmetaj, R v Zigaras, R v Sereika, R v Francis and R v Carter, all of which successfully challenged decisions of the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) before the Costs Judge on behalf of litigators and/or counsel.

Martin has substantial experience of VHCC cases. He was formerly an Independent Costs Adjudicator (previously known as a member of the LSC VHCC appeals committee), was a former elected member of the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) executive, and was co-opted to the CBA Remuneration Committee. He is available to lecture to solicitors and the Bar on costs and costs appeals.

In relation to cybercrime, Martin's experience focuses on various types of cyber fraud, as well as matters involving malware, ransomware and phishing offences.

He also has many years' experience of the full range of sexual offences, including indecent images.

WHAT THE DIRECTORIES SAY

Legal 500 2027

Martin is ranked as a leading Silk in both the Crime and the Fraud and White-Collar Crime sections. He is described as:

Crime: “Martin is an extremely effective advocate who does not waste his words. In cross-examination, he deploys his questions with targeted efficiency to devastating effect.”

Fraud and white-collar crime: “Martin is extremely knowledgeable, astute, and practical.”

Crime: “A skilful and charismatic jury advocate with a brilliant forensic mind. Martin cuts to the chase in his cases, identifies the key issues and puts his clients first and foremost. He is a very good strategist and particularly adept at choosing his legal arguments.”

Fraud and White-Collar Crime: “Martin is extremely knowledgeable, astute and practical.”

Chambers 2027

Financial Crime: “Martin McCarthy KC has a strong track record of defending in financial crime cases. He is esteemed for his ability in cases of fraud, money laundering and serious organised crime. He has particular expertise in modern slavery cases. “Martin is a leading fraud practitioner. You know you’re in safe hands and he really knows his stuff.”

“He is an outstanding advocate who can distil complex concepts into digestible soundbites for juries to understand - a

very hard worker whose diligence and understanding of the law make a challenging opponent."

Crime: "Martin is a great advocate who exhibits absolute command in the courtroom and is really on top of his game." "Martin is very measured and knows all the details." "You know you're in safe hands with Martin - he really knows his stuff."

"Martin is a brilliant silk. He is constantly in demand because of his excellent work ethic, client care and ability to distil complex concepts so well." "Martin is hugely respected by the Bar and Bench alike. He is an astute tactician with the most charming court manner that belies a spine of steel."

Legal 500 New Silks

In its New Silks section, the Legal 500 describes Martin as follows:

"Martin is a superb barrister. He is a wise and considered practitioner who shows great judgment in which battles to pick. He has a delightful court manner which charms judges and juries alike, as well as a steely resolve. Martin is a stellar performer who was made for silk robes."

He is also described as "a forceful, formidable advocate who is adept in heavyweight crime and financial crime cases" and as "known for his well-prepared, meticulous and devastating cross-examination."

Legal 500 2022

Martin was ranked in Band 1 in the Crime section, where he was described as "in command of his papers" and someone who "robustly cross examines witnesses". In the Financial Crime section he was described as "a junior who possesses expert tactical acumen, both in his submissions and his dealings with witnesses and juries".

Chambers & Partners 2022

Chambers & Partners described Martin as "a strong and insidious barrister with excellent judgment and who knows how to handle the opposition and get what he wants". In its Financial Crime section he was rated as "an accomplished junior … very experienced and great to deal with. A very good jury advocate who is excellent at witness handling."

Legal 500 2021

The Legal 500 ranked Martin as a Leading Junior in both general crime and fraud crime. He is described as "charismatic" and as someone who "fights tirelessly… one of the most talented fraud and business crime juniors at the bar…". He is the "go to counsel in heavyweight crime, particularly drugs, people trafficking and serious organised

crime". He is a rare breed of leading junior advocate, with a firm, tenacious manner in court mixed with charm and charisma.

Chambers & Partners 2021

Chambers & Partners ranked Martin as a Leading Junior in fraud and general crime, describing him as "well thought of and a real fighter" and "a very, very good jury advocate".

2020

In the general crime section, he was described as "a walking disclosure manual whose cross examinations are effective". In the fraud crime section the same directory said: "a thorough practitioner who will fiercely fight his client's corner".

2019

The Legal 500 2019 said of Martin: "He can absorb and understand vast amounts of complex material and explain it to a jury."

He was also recognised in the 2019 edition of Chambers & Partners in the area of Financial Crime, and was the only member of Farringdon Chambers to be included. He was described as an "accomplished junior with a strong track record of defending in financial crime cases. He is esteemed for his ability in cases of fraud, money laundering and serious organised crime", and as "brilliant on the law" with "a superb cross examination technique".

Area of Practice

Homicide

Fraud including Business Crime.

General Crime, especially Drugs & People Trafficking.

Cyber Crime / Cyber Fraud

Serious Sex Offences

Notable Cases

Martin has been instructed in a number of serious cases in recent years but as a guide, the following cases reflect the type of work Martin undertakes:

Fraud/money laundering

Martin is currently instructed in 2 vast fraud cases at Southwark and Northampton in 2026 in which he acts for principal defendants charged with £multi millions.

R v RG - £1m plus money laudering

Leading Junior

R v S - £10m car ringing conspiracy

Leading junior

R v S - multi-million pound international fraud

Prosecuted by QC and junior. 15 defendants. 3 months at Southwark CC

R v S - multi-defendant parcel fraud

4 weeks Blackfriars

R v M - Fraud

Leading junior must-defendant mortgage fraud/money laundering

R v M - Multi-defendant money laundering

3 weeks Canterbury

R v M - Multi-defendant fraud and money laundering

Leading Junior - 2.5 months Southwark

R v S- Fraud

Currently retained to advise in a multi jurisdiction computer phishing fraud

R v M - Fraud

10 week money laundering/fraud

R v W - Money Laundering

Retained to advise at pre charge restraint stage in International fraud and money laundering

R v G - Money Laundering

Currently acting as sole junior in fraud/money laundering likely to last 2 months Kingston CC

R v C - Fraud

Leading junior in a diamond boiler room fraud Southwark CC

R v D - Blackmail

major money lending and blackmail case at Wood Green CC

R v H - Huge courier fraud

Leeds CC

R v H - substantial courier fraud

Worcester CC

Drugs

Martin has extensive experience of Encrochat cases and has appeared in some of the largest cases in the Country. He has recently led in a long case at the Old bailey in which his client, who denied the offending, was the only defendant against whom the Crown decided not to proceed.

R v D - sole junior organised crime group importing and onward selling Class B

Lincoln CC

R v P - Leading junior Stafford CC - Organised Crime group

Acted for lead defendant

R v M - Sole junior Birmingham CC

Acted for lead defendant in substantial multi defendant Class A organised crime group

R v X - Two drugs conspiracies involving in excess of 20 defendants in all

Split trials in Nottingham and Bristol

R v K - Drugs

Currently retained to advise on restraint and act for lead defendant in substantial telephone based drugs investigation involving multiple defendants - Peterborough CC

R v B - Drugs

Currently acting for one of the main defendants in a multi defendant organised crime drugs cas

People trafficking/Modern Slavery

R v D – vast sexual trafficking case in which Martin led for a principal defendant.

Martin is currently instructed in other such cases and has a particular interest in s.45 MSA defences.

R v M - People trafficking/Modern Slavery

Leading junior 10 weeks slavery Newcastle CC

R v C - leading junior - People trafficking/Modern Slavery

Case lasted over 4 months Prosecuted by QC and two juniors. Birmingham CC

R v H - People trafficking/Modern Slavery

Leading junior people trafficking.

R v D -People Trafficking/Modern Slavery

6 week case leading junior

R v G - Modern Slavery/Sexual Trafficking

6 week case - leading junior

Homicide

R v N - Murder - Wolverhampton CC. Only defendant acquitted of Murder in a multi-handed cut throat case.

R v KF – 3 Handed cut throat Murder with a firearm. Martin's client was the only one acquitted of all charges after a lengthy trial

R v Y - Murder. One of 6 defendants said to have taken part in an attack over drugs. Y was one of only 2 defendant acquitted of all offences in cut throat case.

R v F - Multi-defendant shotgun Murder and Firearms case. Revenge shooting as a result of alleged earlier gang related activities.

Reported cases

Lord Chancellor v McCarthy

High Court "friendly appeal" against the costs Judge's decision to categorise a case from an A to a B in graduated fee case resulting in decision being overturned in our favour...

R v Smith (Henry Lee) [2007] Crim.L.R 325

(Archbold 2011 Para 4-40 & 13-29)

Lord Chancellor v Purnell QC & McCarthy [2010]

Costs L.R. 81, QBD

Lord Chancellor v AJ Solicitors & McCarthy [2011]

EWHC 2113 (QB)

Smith v CPS [2005]

EWHC 3506 (Admin)

MO, & Others, R [2011]

EWCA Crim 2854 (8 Dec 2011)

Lord Chancellor v McCarthy [2012]

EWHC 2325 (QB).

Firearms

Martin has extensive experience in Firearms cases and has recently led in a vast case at the Old Bailey involving the possession of guns and ammunition. He is also currently instructed in a vast case in Sheffield.

Serious Organised Crime

Martin has experience of acting in such cases and is currently instructed in R v C, a multi defendant drugs case involving importations of vast quantities of drugs. The defendant was said to be involved in setting up Companies as fronts for the importations.

Martin is also reported in a vast array of costs decisions acting for Litigators and Counsel, where he has taken a significant number of points before the Costs Judge on issues such as PPE, stayed indictments, start of trial, category and Newtons. Many of his cases have found their way into the LAA manual of Guidance for Criminal Costs. He is sought out for his uptodate knowledge and analytical approach to costs appeals.

Memberships

Professional Memberships

- Former Member of the Executive committee of the Criminal Bar association.
- Criminal Bar Association
- South Eastern Circuit
- Proceeds of Crime Lawyers Association
- Former Independent Costs Adjudicator for the Legal Aid Agency
- Association of Fraud Lawyers
- Former member of CBA Remuneration Committee

Education

LL.B (Hons)

Other Information

- Gray's Inn Bencher
- Chambers Director
- Chambers Criminal Bar Association representative
- Member of Fraud Lawyers Association
- Advocacy teacher Grays Inn

Link to cost appeals bundle