

John McNamara

YEAR OF CALL: 2014



"He is very down to earth: clients like him and repeatedly request for him to be instructed."

THE LEGAL 500, 2025 | PROCEEDS OF CRIME (POCA) AND ASSET
FORFEITURE

"John combines hard work and strong personal skills to prosecute complex cases effectively."

The Legal 500, 2023

"John is highly intelligent, and his attention to detail is bettered only by his bedside manner with clients, who appreciate his calm and succinct style."

The Legal 500, 2022

"John is particularly good on his feet. He is a confident and persuasive advocate, provides clear advice in writing and in conference and he quickly captures the confidence of the client. John has particular expertise in dealing with complex road traffic matters"

Legal 500 - Crime 2024

"John is committed to excellence. He is a real star."

The Legal 500, 2025

"An up-and-coming fraud junior. He is a lovely and fair prosecutor who will go far."

The Legal 500, 2025 | Fraud: Crime

Overview

John specialises in all aspects of financial crime, proceeds of crime and related areas.

POCA and Asset Forfeiture

John is an experienced proceeds of crime practitioner. He is sought out by defence solicitors and law enforcement agencies for complex and high value POCA cases and is often specifically instructed for the POCA aspects of a broader criminal case. He has dealt with cases concerning international and mutual recognition issues, and has a growing practice in civil recovery encompassing all chapters of Part 5 of POCA.

"John understands and grasps the POCA regime in a way that very few do."

The Legal 500 2022 - POCA

"He has an in-depth knowledge of the statutory provisions and the relevant case law, and is able to apply to that to the factual circumstances of his own cases. He is calm under pressure and extremely good with both clients and judges alike."

The Legal 500, 2023

"His advocacy style is succinct and direct, but courteous at all times. He won't take bad points and always advances his case robustly and comprehensively."

Legal 500 - POCA 2024

'His advocacy style is succinct and direct, but courteous at all times. He won't take bad points and always advances his case robustly and comprehensively.'

The Legal 500 2024 | POCA

"John McNamara is relatively junior, but his ability and practice far exceeds his years of call."

Chambers & Partners, 2025 - POCA Work & Asset Forfeiture

Business and Financial Crime

John defends and prosecutes serious criminal cases. He is experienced in managing and absorbing large numbers of documents and boiling down complex factual issues to jury friendly points. John places client care at the heart of his practice.

Cryptocurrency

In his recent secondment to the Financial Conduct Authority in the Enforcement and Market

Oversight Division, John advised on applications for registration of cryptoasset firms. John is developing an expertise in UK regulation of cryptocurrency and this compliments his work in POCA and Financial Crime.

John holds Developed Vetting ("DV") Security Clearance.

Direct Public Access

John accepts instructions under the direct access scheme. This allows members of the public to instruct John directly to advise them on or represent them in suitable cases

"He knows his stuff, is very immersed in this area and is not someone you want to be against."

Chambers & Partners, 2025 - POCA Work & Asset Forfeiture

"He has a wealth of experience with different criminal investigation agencies."

Chambers & Partners, 2025 - POCA Work & Asset Forfeiture

Professional panel appointments

SFO Proceeds of Crime and International Assistance - C Panel (2020 - 2024)

CPS Specialist Proceeds of Crime Panel - Level 3 (2021).

CPS General Crime Panel - Level 3 (2021).

CPS Specialist Fraud Panel - Level 3 (2022).

Additional information

Prior to joining chambers, John worked as a paralegal for two years at Hickman & Rose Solicitors. During that time John assisted Jenny Wiltshire in various cases concerning manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter and historical sexual allegations.

Education

BPP Law School, BPTC; Very Competent.

BPP Law School, GDL; Commendation.

University of Warwick, BA (Hons.) History; 2.1.

Awards

The SEC, Tim Dutton CBE KC, Advanced International Advocacy Course Scholarship, Gray's Inn (2023).

Ann Felicity Goddard Scholarship, Gray's Inn (2017).

Professional Memberships

Secretary of the Criminal Bar Association (2020-22).

Criminal Bar Association (Exec Committee 2018-20).

Financial Services Lawyers Association (FSLA).

Young Fraud Lawyers Association.

London Irish Lawyers Association.

Asset Forfeiture, Confiscation & Civil Fraud

John is experienced in a range of asset recovery and confiscation proceedings. He has acted for law enforcement, individuals or companies in cases concerning:

High Court restraint order and receiver proceedings;

Account freezing and forfeiture proceedings with accounts valued in excess of a million pounds;

Complex and linked cash detention and forfeitures, often being sought out by multiple law enforcement agencies to work across various cases;

Listed asset forfeiture proceedings relating to artwork and luxury watches;

Confiscation proceedings including s10A and s22 applications; and

POCA disclosure orders.

Business Crime & Financial Regulation

John is experienced in advising on business crime, white collar crime and fraud. This includes at the early stages of an investigation where John has acted in contested and *ex parte* applications for production orders, POCA disclosure orders and search warrants.

John has prosecuted and defended in large and complex fraud cases, as junior alone and led junior. He has been instructed by defence solicitors to review and analyse documents in cases concerning:

A FCA and DOJ investigation into a banker accused of circumventing internal controls and fraudulently allowing sovereign-backed loans (valued at \$2 billion USD) to be taken out and sold to investors;

A detailed LPP review for a corporate client responding to a production order in a case connected to an alleged fraud against a sovereign wealth fund;

An executive officer of a FTSE 100 company accused of being involved in accountancy fraud.

As a paralegal, John was part of the team who represented the first LIBOR trader to be exonerated by the FCA's RDC. John also spent time as part of the team who defended a Barclays' derivatives trader charged with conspiracy to manipulate LIBOR.

Criminal Defence

John defends in the most serious cases including cases of:

Allegations of violence including s18 GBH and violent disorder;

Firearms, drugs and charges connected to alleged organised crime; and

Money laundering, complex fraud and acquisitive crime. John has worked on cases with clients ranging from high-net-worth individuals to vulnerable young people. He provides concise and understandable advice at every step of the case. John undertakes serious cases in the youth court, and has completed the vulnerable witness training course.

John is instructed in the magistrates' court to defend criminal matters on a privately funded basis. In conference his down to earth and methodical style has been said to bring peace of mind to lay clients.

Criminal Prosecutions - Private & Public

John is regularly instructed by the Serious Economic, Organised Crime and International Directorate (SEOCID) both as junior alone and led junior in multi-handed complex fraud cases.

He is experienced in bringing private prosecutions. On behalf of the Criminal Bar Association John drafted a response to the consultation on the Code for Private Prosecutors and written evidence on private prosecutions to the Justice Select Committee.

Inquests & Inquiries

John accepts instructions in relation to Public Inquiries and Inquests.

John is currently instructed by the Department of Health and Social Care on the COVID-19 Inquiry.

He was instructed as disclosure counsel to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry for 8 months, and was also instructed as disclosure counsel to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

Cases of Note

POCA

Op Boo [2023]

Led by Andrew Bird KC and James Fletcher instructed by HMRC. An account forfeiture case worth in excess of £6 million involving allegations of fraud in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and tax evasion over an extended period of time.

Op Cayman [2023]

Junior alone. Instructed for HMRC in account forfeiture order in excess of £250,000 in a case alleging a Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) VAT and tax fraud.

Met Police v B [2021]

Junior alone. Advised and represented a former European politician under investigation for bribery in relation to a freezing order in excess of €1.5 million.

Financial Crime

Op Adonis [2022]

Led junior, led by Dominic Connolly in a 2 handed £2.7 million investment fraud involving the selling of binary options. The trial lasted for 4 weeks. Convictions secured against both defendants.

Op Cornflour [2021]

Led junior, led by Dominic Connolly in a 4 handed diamond boiler room fraud. The case concerned fraudulent selling of fancy coloured diamonds to members of the public. The diamonds were worth hundreds of pounds but were sold at huge mark ups, of up to £90,000. The trial lasted for 10 weeks. Convictions secured against 3 of the 4 defendants.

Op Cornflour [2020]

Led junior, led by Dominic Connolly. Successfully prosecuted a £1.6 million Boiler Room Fraud at Southwark Crown Court. The trial concerned allegations of conspiracy to defraud and launder the proceeds of the fraud. The fraudsters sold non-existent investments in payday loan companies, cryptocurrency and pharmaceutical companies to vulnerable victims. The trial lasted for over 3 months. Convictions secured for all 3 defendants on all counts.

Serious Youth Crime

R v T [2021]

Junior alone. Youth court case with certificate. 4 handed gang rape of a 13 year old. All defendants aged between 12 and 13. Prosecuted by counsel +20 years call. Co-defence counsel for D2 and D3 +20 years call. Prosecution forced to offer no evidence on day 5 of trial. Application for non-conviction restraining order successfully resisted.

R v LM [2020]

Junior alone. John successfully defended an 18 year old of good character where CCTV showed the defendant slashing at an undercover police officer with a zombie knife over a foot in length. John recognised the symptoms of PTSD in the defendant and obtained an expert report. Defendant acquitted of attempted s18 GBH, attempted wounding and being in possession of an offensive weapon.

R v B [2019]

Junior alone. Youth court case with a certificate. A spate of robberies on taxi drivers and school children. Vulnerable witnesses gave evidence at court. 11 offences charged. John successfully had 4 dismissed at half time. The defendant was convicted of 1 offence after trial. YRO with ISS imposed. CBO application withdrawn by CPS after John made submissions that it was unlawful.

R v X [2018]

Junior alone (certificate for counsel). John represented an 18 year old of good character in the youth court. X was accused of attempted s18 GBH and s20 GBH. The trial lasted for 4 days. Following John's written and oral submissions of no case to answer the attempted s18 GBH was dismissed at the close of the prosecution case. John's client was acquitted of s20 GBH.

General Crime

R v ZY [2021]

Junior alone. Section 18 GBH. Z who was just 18 years old at the time of a stabbing. The prosecution asserted that Z had attended the property of a drug dealer and stabbed him in the back after he made threats to a 14-year-old co-defendant over a drug debt. A 3 handed trial, and the first and second defendants ran a cutthroat defence, blaming Z for the stabbing. Z gave evidence stating he could not recall having a knife with him and was unable to explain how the complainant suffered his injuries, including a "defensive" wound to the hand and a stab wound to the back. John's client was found not guilty.

R v AX [2018]

Junior alone. John secured an acquittal for his client charged with sexual assault. AX was of good character. The trial lasted 3 days and the jury acquitted John's client after 45 minutes. Defence costs order granted.

R v AA [2018]

Junior alone. AA was first on the indictment charged with s18 GBH in a two handed cut throat. The second defendant blamed AA entirely. Prosecution witnesses recalled AA delivering numerous kicks and punches to the complaint. AA was also alleged to have held a weapon to the complainant's face. The complainant suffered a brain haemorrhage, a skull fracture

necessitating the removal of part of the skull and ongoing memory issues. Following careful cross-examination and jury speech AA was acquitted of s18 GBH with intent. Convicted of s20 GBH, as was the co-Defendant. Sentenced to 33 months, which is below the guideline starting point.

R v DF [2017]

Junior alone. DF was arrested on the street with a taser which was allegedly disguised as a torch, a machete and a stab proof vest. DF was charged with s5(1A) Firearms Act offence subject to the statutory minimum 5 year sentence. Following representations drafted by John the CPS amended the indictment, charging a s5(1)(b) Firearms Act offence instead. DF was also charged with possession of an offensive weapon. Following extensive mitigation DF received a suspended sentence.

R v GP [2017]

Led junior (led by Queen's Counsel) in case concerning allegations of sexual assault and false imprisonment before the case was discontinued by the prosecution. Defence costs order granted. Continued to be instructed in claim for wasted costs against the CPS.

Driving Offences

R v M [2020]

Instructed direct access for a defendant charged with being drunk in charge of a motor vehicle. Following a letter of representations and an argument regarding disclosure failings the CPS offered no evidence. Defence costs order granted.

R v F [2018]

John's client entered a guilty plea to being drunk while in charge of a motor vehicle. John persuaded the court not to impose penalty points; the lay client was concerned on the effect of penalty points on his work and work insurance. The court imposed a short disqualification and a small fine.

R v TL [2017]

John successfully defended a former soldier accused of failing to provide a specimen of breath

when required to do so. TL suffered from PTSD as a result of his tour of Afghanistan. The prosecution disputed the defence medical evidence. Defence costs order granted.

R v N [2017]

John's client was acquitted of failing to provide a specimen of breath when required to do so. John cross-examined police officers at length and adduced expert evidence to show that N suffered with anxiety. Defence costs order granted.

Accreditation

