



James Coutts

Areas of Specialism

Crime

In his criminal practice James appears in the Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court, instructed by both the Crown Prosecution Service and Defence Solicitors. He is a Category 3 prosecutor on the Crown Prosecution Service's Advocate Panel. His work covers the broad spectrum of criminal offences and at all levels.

James also has experience of other proceedings within the criminal courts, ranging from breach proceedings, confiscation hearings in the Crown and Magistrates Court, Football Banning Orders, applications for Domestic Violence Protection Orders and to amend or discharge Sexual Harm Prevention Orders.

Regulatory

James undertakes all forms of regulatory work, having been involved in taxi licensing appeals at Court and before the Tribunals and environmental prosecutions; as well as advocacy James will advise in conference or writing as to the prospects of success.

Civil

James' civil practice encompasses a broad range, with a particular focus on personal injury, credit hire and housing on both sides and at all levels of the County Court. He has appeared in what was formerly the Leasehold Valuations Tribunal and has developed experience in acting for Certificated Enforcement Agents in complaints against bailiffs.

He is willing to act on a CFA basis in appropriate cases.

Recent cases, both reported and of interest:

R v H – Caernarfon Youth Court – James successfully defended a fourteen-year-old accused of rape and other sexual offences against a six year old. The Defendant was acquitted on all four charges. The case involved pre-prepared written cross-examination of young witnesses and issues relating to bad character and previous sexual knowledge of young and vulnerable witnesses.

R v Caley and others – Court of Appeal – James successfully appeared as part of a multi-defendant conjoined appeal dealing with issues surrounding credit for a guilty plea. His client's appeal against sentence was successful in reducing the custodial sentence in respect of the amount of credit to be afforded after a Newton Hearing.

R v N and R v C – Chester Youth Court and Chester Crown Court – James represented the Crown at appearances before the Youth Court and the Crown Court where the committal was alleged to have been unlawful. Skeleton Arguments were provided dealing with the issue and as yet, the matter is still unresolved, but will be progressing towards the Administrative Court for Judicial Review proceedings.

Year of Call
2007

Telephone
+44 (0)1244 348282

Email
James.coutts@lhchambers.co.uk

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MMHA v M and E – James represented tenants facing possession proceedings brought by the Housing Association against them based on anti-social behaviour alleged to have been committed four and a half miles away from their home address. The case rested entirely on the interpretation of the meaning of ‘within their locality’ pursuant to s.7A Housing Act 1988 as amended.

Education

Law LLB Leeds University
BVC – BPP Law School, Leeds