

## ANNA VIGARS QC

CALL: 1996

SILK: 2017

"She is absolutely brilliant, thorough and patient with the client."  
*Chambers UK 2022*

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Anna Vigars KC is a criminal practitioner with over twenty five years' experience. She also has extensive experience of health and safety cases.

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### PRACTICE AREAS

- Crime
  - Health & Safety
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### CRIME

Since taking Silk in 2017, Anna has prosecuted and defended cases involving allegations of murder, manslaughter, the multiple rape of children and vulnerable people, human trafficking, and planned mass shooting. She is very experienced in leading a team dealing with the prosecution of multiple defendants and enjoys the challenges of drawing together scattered or complex strands of evidence to build a compelling picture for the jury. Anna has worked extensively with witnesses who have faced multiple challenges to being able to give evidence and has worked with them so that they are able to repose trust in her and give powerful evidence despite the hurdles.

Anna has also worked with many defendants who have struggled with vulnerabilities and sometimes severe psychiatric problems. She's been able to inspire confidence in them, engage them in the process they are facing and give them the necessary agency. She has also worked with a number of companies, professional bodies, and other agencies facing or prosecuting regulatory offences and is skilled at complementing a team within those organisations, balancing the commercial realities of their world with the practical and legal issues in the case.

### Recent Cases

- **R -v- B** - prosecution of a teacher and choir master for the buggery and sexual assault of thirteen complainants over a forty year period. There were sensitive questions over the way in which the complainants had come forward and relating to various other boys in the schools and choirs who were contacted but said they remembered nothing of some very striking incidents. Many of the men involved were high profile and successful in their chosen careers and anxious about publicity. Anna was responsible for leading the team through difficult disclosure decisions and making complex decisions about the scope of the case so that it was manageable for the jury.
- **R -v- C** - defence of a 17 year old charged as one of eight with the gang murder of a 16 year old in Gloucester. The defendant was of previous good character. He had psychiatric difficulties and had been the victim of knife crime himself.
- **R -v H** -prosecution of a woman for the killing of her husband. She had a long history of violent abuse at the hands of previous partners, alcohol and drug problems, and said that she had no recollection of the killing. There was also evidence that her husband habitually strangled her to the point of loss of consciousness to stop her shouting at him. Anna had to navigate those sensitivities very carefully so that the case was presented in its proper light to the jury.
- **R -v- B and others** – the prosecution of 14 defendants for offences including rape and exploitation of a vulnerable young woman and for their roles in the control of drugs to a Devon seaside town. Members of the group had effectively controlled the town for many years by intimidation and violence and witnesses were frightened of them. Complex questions of consent engaged in the legal arguments around the trial.
- **R -v- B** – defence of a woman charged with the murder of her neighbour, an elderly man who had shown her kindness and supported her in practical terms. Her position was that she had been sexually assaulted by him.
- **R -v- G** – prosecution of a 17 year old for attempted murder and rape of a 10 year old snatched on her way home from school.
- **R -v- D** – prosecution of an 18 year old for obtaining a gun and ammunition over the dark web; he had intended to use them to stage a school shooting, as demonstrated by his internet activity. The jury needed to understand the quantity and nature of internet evidence that the police digital forensic team had uncovered but the volume of that made presentation of the trial very challenging. With her junior, Anna divided the material into chapters and chose representative samples of it to be shown to the jury while also ensuring that all the material was properly scheduled. It was presented to the jury using iPads and with the help of a specialist technical team so that by the time Anna cross-examined the defendant, the jury was familiar with the material, understood his fascination with school shooting, terror, and anarchic research, and were easily able to navigate their way through the different chapters.
- **R -v- C** – defence of an asylum seeker from North Africa accused of multiple rapes of both men and women. The defendant had complex language, cultural and intellectual difficulties. Severe mental health difficulties and other vulnerabilities on the part of the complainants. He was bitterly distrustful of the police because of previous contact with them. Anna and her junior had to work extremely hard to maintain trust levels in order to keep the trial on track.
- **R -v- S, B & B** – prosecution of a multi-handed murder and the sister of one defendant who had triggered the attack having been offended by the deceased and having called her brother and his friend to come to her aid.
- **R -v -L** – defence of a man accused of killing his partner and destroying her body.
- **R -v- R** – defence of a Brazilian man who chose to remain mute and keep his eyes closed throughout his trial, having given extensive instructions on earlier occasions.

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## HEALTH & SAFETY

Both as a junior and in silk, Anna has prosecuted and defended indictments arising out of health and safety incidents in a wide variety of different settings. She enjoys the combining her depth of criminal advocacy experience with the commercial realities facing defendant companies.

## RECENT CASES

- **HSE -v- S and S** – prosecution of a firm arising out of the death of a contractor using lifting equipment hired out.
- **HSE -v- T and another** – prosecution of two firms, one of them a well-known multi-national, for an incident arising out of a fall from height at a major industrial plant in South Wales.
- **CQC -v- AWP** – defence of an NHS mental health trust for the fall from a roof of an inpatient.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### CHAMBERS UK 2022

#### Crime

#### Band 1

"She is absolutely brilliant, thorough and patient with the client." "She is unflappable and often called upon to take on large cases. She can see the wood for the trees and is great with witnesses."

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## LEGAL 500 2022

### Crime

Ranked: Tier 1

'Anna is an extremely bright and hardworking silk; an inspiring leader.'

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## CHAMBERS UK 2021

### Crime

Often instructed in heavyweight criminal cases, including those of murder and manslaughter. She boasts particular expertise in cases involving serious sexual allegations and those with significant health and safety elements. She brings confidence to cases with multiple defendants and complainants. She has experience of sensitive cases involving offences such as female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.

Strengths: "Anna's grasp of statute, practice direction and procedure is extraordinarily good, and she can respond really quickly on her feet." "She has a very considered manner, which inspires confidence in clients and the court alike. She's also very easy to work with, is always well prepared, and is extremely skilled in the courtroom."

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## LEGAL 500 2021

### Crime (General and Fraud)

"When she speaks in the court room, she is authoritative, poignant and always on key."

Ranked: Tier 1

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## LEGAL 500 2020

### Crime

"Her performance in cases involving complex evidential challenges is truly impressive."

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## CHAMBERS UK 2019

### Crime

Often instructed in heavyweight criminal cases, including those of murder and manslaughter. She boasts particular expertise in cases involving serious sexual allegations and those with significant health and safety elements. She brings confidence to cases with multiple defendants and complainants. She has experience of sensitive cases involving offences such as female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.

"A phenomenal silk - one of the best."

Recent work: Prosecuted in Operation Blisland, a case involving the alleged rape and exploitation of a vulnerable young woman by six different men.

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## LEGAL 500 2019

## Crime

'An indefatigable advocate with an engaging personal style.'

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## CHAMBERS UK 2018

### Crime

New Silk

Often instructed in heavyweight criminal cases, including those of murder and manslaughter. She boasts particular expertise in cases involving serious sexual allegations and those with significant health and safety elements. She brings confidence to cases with multiple defendants and complainants.

Strengths: "Her attention to detail and her advocacy skills are outstanding."

Recent work: Prosecuted seven defendants for the rape and sexual abuse of young, vulnerable girls. The case involved complex issues over bad character material, vulnerabilities of complainants and evidential difficulties.

### Health & Safety

New Silk

Newly appointed silk who has considerable experience of regulatory law. She both prosecutes and defends large corporate clients and individuals in significant health and safety cases.

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## LEGAL 500 2017

### Crime

Silk

"Her practice includes homicide, violence and serious sexual offences cases."

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## CHAMBERS UK 2017

### Crime

Leading Junior - Band 3

Often instructed in heavyweight criminal cases, including those of murder and manslaughter. She boasts a particular expertise in cases involving serious sexual allegations and those with significant health and safety elements.

Recent work: Successfully prosecuted an individual accused of murdering his landlady by pushing her down the stairs.

### Health and Safety

Both prosecutes and defends large corporate clients and individuals in an array of significant health and safety cases.

She's extremely personable." "Sees the wood for the trees and presents cases in an attractive way to juries."

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## LEGAL 500 2016

### Crime

Leading juniors

'Her advocacy is clear, concise and targeted.'

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## CHAMBERS UK 2016

### Crime

Leading Junior - Band 3

Her practice covers the full range of criminal offences. She is best recognised for her work in serious sexual crimes.

Strengths: "She is a very skilled and thorough advocate with a real understanding of how to enable vulnerable victims to give evidence in difficult criminal trials."

Recent work: Acted in the trial of three Polish defendants who were charged with the murder of one defendant's girlfriend.

### Health & Safety

Leading Junior - Band 2

A regulatory specialist who prosecutes for public bodies and defends corporate and individual clients in a variety of health and safety cases.

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## LEGAL 500 2015

### Crime

Leading juniors

'Able to build trust with vulnerable victims'

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## CHAMBERS UK 2015

### Crime

Leading Junior - Band 3

Noted for her expertise in relation to serious sexual offences. She acts for both the prosecution and the defence, and is also frequently instructed on homicides and cases concerning serious violence.

Expertise: "She is down to earth and trusted by juries."

Recent work: Acted in cases involving child sexual exploitation by a group of men, familial child abuse and a multi-handed murder involving evidential complexities.

### Health & Safety

Leading Junior - Band 2

Has a mixed practice that, in addition to health and safety, includes criminal and environmental cases. She is particularly commended for her advocacy skills.

Expertise: "She's a sensible advocate and highly effective." "She is highly rated in terms of her advice, approach and strategy."

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## LEGAL 500 2014

### Crime

Leading juniors - 'A crime specialist with expertise in matters involving multiple complainants or defendants'.

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## CHAMBERS UK 2014

### Crime

Is identified as a very pleasant and sensitive practitioner who is as impressive in her client care skills as she is in the courtroom.

Expertise: "She is a strong leading junior with great people skills and an ability to manage vast amounts of material."

Recent work: She defended a vulnerable mother with alcohol problems accused of seriously injuring her twin babies.

#### **Health & Safety**

A criminal barrister who has a strong reputation for handling regulatory crime cases. She has experience of both prosecuting and defending health and safety cases, and has acted for both companies and individuals.

Expertise: "She is a very skilled leading junior with great people skills and a talent for handling cases of considerable complexity."

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## LEGAL 500 2013

Other recommended individuals include Anna Vigars, who is highly recommended for serious sexual offence cases.

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## CHAMBERS UK 2013

#### **Crime**

Anna Vigars is "regularly praised by judges for knowing her law inside out and being very solid and reliable," say sources. She is particularly noted for her work in cases involving serious sexual offences.

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## LEGAL 500 2011

Anna Vigars' 'legal knowledge and advocacy skills are excellent; but it is her caring attitude and ability to relate to clients from all walks of life that sets her apart'.

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## LEGAL 500 2010

Anna Vigars is 'extremely good with clients, particularly the vulnerable'.

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## APPOINTMENTS:

- Recorder
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## MEMBERSHIPS:

- Criminal Bar Association
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## EDUCATION:

- City University, London
  - St Edmund Hall, Oxford
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## RECENT NEWS

- Statement regarding 'no returns' from the Crime team
- Practical Advocacy in the Crown Court has been published today!
- We are very excited to announce publication of our book 'Practical Advocacy in the Crown Court' written by members of our Crime Team
- Coronavirus Regulations Update - 6 July 2020
- Guildhall Chambers is delighted to announce that Peter Binder will join our Crime Team on 1 September 2020
- We are pleased to announce our Crime Team will have their book published by Bloomsbury Legal
- Coronavirus Regulations - Update 23 June 2020
- Coronavirus Regulations - Update 1 June 2020
- Crime Team Newsletter - April 2020
- James Townsend has been appointed as a Circuit Judge

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