



CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE – SPECIALIST ADVOCATE PANEL SCHEME

SPECIALIST PANEL – SERIOUS CRIME GROUP

SELECTION CRITERIA LEVELS 2, 3 and 4

Introduction

1. Entry to the CPS Serious Crime Group Advocate Panel at Level 2, 3 and 4 is through this application process and is open to appropriately qualified barristers and solicitors who have a Higher Courts Advocacy qualification.
2. Advocates on the Serious Crime Group Panel advise on and prosecute cases on behalf of the Central Casework Divisions relating to:
 - a. [Special Crime](#) – serious and sensitive casework as set out in the [referral criteria](#), including deaths in custody, assisted suicides, serious criminal allegations against police officers, gross negligence manslaughter and election offences.
 - b. [Organised Crime](#) – members of the most serious organised crime groups and cases typically investigated by the National Crime Agency, as well as other law enforcement bodies such as Home Office Immigration Enforcement and specialist Police units, and often involving organised drugs, international firearms conspiracies, immigration, modern slavery, sexual exploitation and cyber-crime

Level 2 Panel Requirements

3. Level 2 advocates will be required to perform any of the work of a Level 1 advocate on the General Crime panel and, in addition, Youth Court cases, straightforward non-jury work in the Crown Court and jury trials including theft, deception, assault (ABH and Section 20 GBH), burglary (not in aggravated form), possession of drugs and non-fatal road traffic offences. Applicants must be able to demonstrate expert up to date legal knowledge relevant to such prosecutions and demonstrate appropriate standards of oral and written advocacy (including ability to deal with complicating factors such as special measures, expert evidence, significant disclosure/PII issues, and complex points of evidence or law) and should have demonstrated potential to appear as a junior in appropriate cases. They should be able to demonstrate that they are able to work well with others in this range of prosecutions. Applicants should also have sufficient knowledge of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to be able to deal with any confiscation issues raised in Level 2 prosecutions.



4. Generally, applicants will have in the region of 12 months trial advocacy experience, but please note this is a guide, not a criterion. While experience in specialisms is referred to in the form, allowance is made for the fact that it will be more difficult for level 2 applicants to show experience in a particular specialism. Applicants, are however, welcome to refer to specialisms in which they have an interest in gaining experience. Applicants at level 2 should be aware that due to the nature of its work, the Organised Crime Division is unlikely to instruct advocates at this level.
5. The criteria headings for assessment will be:
 - Advocacy
 - Advisory Work
 - PII and disclosure
 - Other relevant knowledge, skills and experience
 - Appreciation of the role of a CPS Special Crime Division Panel Advocate
6. In order to score very highly applicants will be expected to demonstrate excellent standards against a range of competencies in respect of the type of casework listed in paragraph 3, above, including:

Advocacy

- The ability to conduct trial advocacy efficiently and effectively in the range of cases identified in paragraph 3 above
- Trial advocacy skills for jury trials in the Crown Court including opening, closing, witness handling and legal argument
- Sound understanding of evidential and criminal procedure rules, hearsay, bad character etc
- Appropriate use of language and questioning
- Ability to deal effectively with complicating factors such as special measures, expert evidence and complex points of evidence or law
- Acts appropriately to assist the court in the proper administration of justice, as required

Advisory Work

- Routinely exercises sound judgement
- Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of law and practice and up-to-date knowledge of law relevant to prosecutions at this level



- Presents clear and succinct written arguments citing relevant authorities
- Able to develop a clear case strategy

PII and disclosure

- An understanding of the principles of PII and CPIA and ability to put those principles in practice in cases relevant to Level 2
- Accurately identifies evidence that should be disclosed
- Able to deal with sensitive PII issues.

Other Relevant Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- IT skills – including the presentation of electronic evidence, word processing, use of e-mail and / or secure email
- The ability to conduct confiscation hearings in any of the proceedings in which the applicant may be instructed at Level 2.
- Obtaining and using evidence from abroad, jurisdictional issues, human rights, restraint and confiscation.
- Relevant defence or regulatory work of an equivalent level, if any

Appreciation of the Role of a CPS Serious Crime Group Panel Advocate

- A knowledge of ethical standards e.g. completion of the Advocacy & Ethics element of the New Practitioners Programme.
- Acts appropriately when handling issue of diversity or difference
- A willingness to work as part of a prosecution team undertaking the type of work listed at paragraph 3 without compromising professional independence
- Familiarity with, and understanding of, CPS policy guidance including the Code, the Farquharson guidelines and policies in respect of victims and witnesses, hate crime and violence against women and girls

An appropriate understanding of the professional relationship between the CPS, the advocate and the police, National Crime Agency, the IPCC, HSE and other law enforcement agencies



Level 3 Panel Requirements

7. Level 3 advocates will be required to demonstrate that they are able to competently undertake any of the work of a Level 2 advocate and jury trials in more serious and onerous prosecutions including fraud (non-SFD cases), serious assaults (Section 18), complex robberies, immigration crime, modern slavery offences, child sexual exploitation, money laundering, international firearms and drugs conspiracies, driving offences involving death, child abuse and trials involving child victims and witnesses, rape and indecency cases, video link cases and multi-handed prosecutions of up to four defendants. Level 3 advocates will also be expected to conduct straightforward appeals in the Divisional Court and Court of Appeal. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate expert up to date legal knowledge relevant to such prosecutions and appropriate standards of oral and written advocacy. They should be able to demonstrate that they are able to work well with others in this range of prosecutions. Applicants should also have sufficient knowledge of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to be able to deal with the confiscation issues raised in Level 3 prosecutions.
8. Generally, applicants to this panel have at least five years advocacy experience (this is a guide, not a criterion).
9. In order to score very highly applicants will be expected to demonstrate a range of competencies to excellent standards in respect of the breadth of casework expected to be undertaken at level 3, including:

Advocacy

- The ability to conduct advocacy in the range of cases identified in paragraph 7 above, often attracting local media attention
- Highly developed trial advocacy skills for jury trials in the Crown Court including opening, closing, sensitive witness handling and legal argument, quoting relevant key authorities
- Ability to deal with complicating factors such as special measures, presenting or challenging complex expert evidence and difficult or sensitive issues of law and/ or fact
- Ability to undertake advocacy in complex and voluminous multi-handed cases, and is able to effectively direct and manage a number of participants in the courtroom
- Able to manage extremely sensitive cases reliably, including cases with child or vulnerable witnesses



- Ability to be an effective led junior

Advisory Work

- The exercise of consistently sound judgement and case management strategies
- Demonstrates a strong knowledge of law and practice and up-to-date knowledge of law relevant to prosecutions at this level;
- Up to date knowledge of the law relevant to prosecutions at this level, including criminal procedural rules and evidential rules.
- Presents coherent skeleton arguments even in complex cases or addressing complex law, evidence or procedure
- Presents clear and succinct relevant written submissions demonstrating expertise

PII and disclosure

- In depth understanding of the disclosure regime and principles of CPIA, Public Interest Immunity RIPA and Legal Professional Privilege.
- Ability to handle sensitive matters in relation to investigation techniques
- Understands disclosure requirements even in the context of complex investigations and evidential situations

Other Relevant Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- IT skills – including the electronic presentation of evidence, word processing, use of e-mail and / or secure email
- The ability to conduct confiscation hearings in any of the proceedings in which the applicant may be instructed at Level 3.
- Obtaining and using evidence from abroad, jurisdictional issues, human rights, restraint and confiscation.
- Sufficient knowledge of confiscation and POCA 2002 to be able to handle confiscation as it may arise in any of the cases which fall within their competency.
- Relevant defence or regulatory work of an equivalent level, if any



Appreciation of the Role of a CPS Serious Crime Group Panel Advocate

- A knowledge of ethical standards e.g. completion of the Advocacy & Ethics element of the New Practitioners Programme.
- Understanding of diversity and cultural issues and proactive in addressing the needs of people from all backgrounds
- A willingness to work as part of a prosecution team undertaking the type of work listed at paragraph 6 without compromising professional independence
- Familiarity with, and understanding of, CPS policy guidance including the Code, the Farquharson guidelines and policies in respect of victims and witnesses, hate crime and VAW
- An appropriate understanding of the professional relationship between the CPS, advocate and the police, National Crime Agency, the IPCC, HSE and other law enforcement agencies.
- Able to lead a prosecution team and manage the strategic direction of the case.

Level 4 Panel Requirements

10. Level 4 advocates will be required to demonstrate that they can competently advise on and prosecute all Special Crime and Organised Crime cases where a junior advocate alone is instructed in the Crown Court and beyond, whatever the issues and whatever the number of defendants. They will be expected to handle serious, novel and difficult points of law and fact, sometimes in opposition to leading counsel for the defence. They will be expected to demonstrate a consistently high quality of work whether working alone, with a second junior, or when led. In addition, they will have shown their ability in relation to sensitive witnesses (e.g. where special measures employed) and in handling complex witness issues. They must demonstrate expert up to date legal knowledge relevant to such prosecutions and appropriate standards of oral and written advocacy. They will be expected to handle a wide range of Appellate and Administrative Court work. They should be able to demonstrate that they are able to work well with others in this range of prosecutions. Applicants should also be able to deal with the most complex issues including those involving gross negligence manslaughter, corporate manslaughter, RIPA and confiscation orders under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
11. Applicants to this level will generally have in the region of ten years advocacy experience (this is a guide, not a criterion).



12. In order to score very highly applicants will be expected to demonstrate a range of competencies to an excellent standard in respect of the breadth of casework expected to be undertaken at level 4, including:

Advocacy

- The ability to conduct highest quality advocacy in the range of cases identified above, often of the utmost gravity
- A superior grasp of trial advocacy skills for sensitive, high profile jury trials in the Crown Court including opening, closing, witness handling and legal argument often in complex multi-handed cases
- Ability to deal with highly complicating factors such as presenting or challenging complex expert evidence and difficult or sensitive issues of law and/ or fact
- Presents highly proficient submissions to a standard of excellence before any tribunal including the Crown Court and Higher Courts.
- Ability to deal with complicating factors such as special measures, presenting or challenging complex and/or voluminous expert evidence and difficult or sensitive issues of law and/ or fact
- Able to lead a prosecution case with skill and diplomacy in the face of hostile opponents
- A fluid articulate and intuitive advocate

Advisory Work

- Able to present highly proficient written submissions to a standard of excellence
- The exercise of consistently sound judgement
- Demonstrates expertise in law and practice and up-to-date knowledge of law relevant to prosecutions at this level;
- Assimilates the relevance of evidence quickly, even when working with voluminous or complex evidence.

PII and disclosure

- In depth understanding of the disclosure regime and principles of CPIA, Public Interest Immunity, RIPA and Legal Professional Privilege.



- Ability to handle complex and sensitive PII issues
- Able to lead disclosure lawyers / officers and to plan and implement an effective disclosure strategy

Other Relevant Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- IT skills – including the electronic presentation of evidence, word processing, use of e-mail and / or secure email
- The ability to conduct confiscation hearings in any of the proceedings in which the applicant may be instructed at Level 4.
- Obtaining and using evidence from abroad, jurisdictional issues, human rights, restraint and confiscation.
- Sufficient knowledge of confiscation and POCA 2002 to be able to handle confiscation as it may arise in any of the cases which fall within their competency.
- Relevant defence or regulatory work of an equivalent level, if any

Appreciation of the Role of a CPS Serious Crime Group Panel Advocate

- Acts as a role model for others.
- Knowledge of ethical standards and a leader on issues of diversity and difference.
- Comprehends and successfully leads cases of the utmost gravity, complexity and sensitivity.
- Familiarity with, and understanding of, CPS policy guidance including the Code, the Farquharson guidelines and policies in respect of victims and witnesses, hate crime and VAW
- An appropriate understanding of the professional relationship between the CPS, the advocate and the police, National Crime Agency, the IPCC, HSE and other law enforcement agencies and, particularly in cases where there has been lengthy and complex investigations

Evidence of competency

13. Applicants should provide details of their knowledge, skills and experience on the application form under each heading. They should provide relevant



examples based on criminal casework with specific reference to cases advised on and prosecuted by the Special Crime Division or Organised Crime Division.

14. When providing evidence to support their application, applicants should clearly state what role they played. For example, if they were led, what was their contribution to the case? In PII applications, what was the point they had to argue? Examples can be given of difficulties faced and how they were overcome.

References

15. Reliance will be placed on the references and referees should be chosen with care.
16. Those applying to join the Panel at Level 4 should provide three references. At least one reference, but no more than two, should be from members of the full-time judiciary. Level 3 applicants provide two references with at least one from the full-time judiciary; Level 2 applicants should provide two references with no more than one from the full-time judiciary.
17. Applicants with significant prosecuting experience should provide at least one reference from an instructing lawyer. However, if applicants have not undertaken a significant amount of prosecuting work and are unable to supply such a reference, this will not prevent them from applying.
18. Referees should be in a position to speak with authority about the skills specified in the selection criteria. The assessment boards are aware it is generally more difficult for applicants to level 2 to find referees who can speak with authority on all of the required skills and allowances are made for this.
19. Referees will be asked to consider the competencies of the applicant against the broad selection criteria in respect of the level applied for under the following headings:
 - a. What is the extent of your knowledge of the applicant's work?
 - b. Analytical ability
 - c. Judgment
 - d. Written expression
 - e. Advocacy
 - f. Interpersonal skills



- g. Legal knowledge
- h. Additional information which would assist.