DERE STREET BARRISTERS

Michael Forrest

Michael has acted in ever increasing serious criminal cases, including homicide, complex drug conspiracies, kidnapping and blackmail, serious violence, money laundering, fraud, and sexual offences.

Michael is highly committed to the defence of those he represents, combining an approachable, thorough and dependable style, which has resulted in a number of successful appearances at all levels including in the Criminal Court of Appeal.



Michael is experienced in a range of regulatory work, including countless cases associated with Proceeds of Crime Proceedings. Michael is well versed in conducting prosecutions under the Unfair Consumer Trading Regulations and breaches of Trading Standards' regulations.

Michael is a Grade 3 prosecutor.

YEAR OF CALL

2018

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Crime

Legal500 LEADING JUNIOR UNITED KINGDOM 2027

NOTABLE CASES

Sexual Offences

R v CL [2025]

Indecency with a child. Client, former babysitter, faced a historic by two brothers. Michael credited for his meticulous cross-examination. Client unanimously acquitted within 1 hour.

R v MD [2024]

Indecent assault on male. Historic allegation of adult employer grooming two underage males, allegations were said to have occurred decades apart and no link between complaints. Jury unable to reach verdicts.

R v JC [2024]

Attempted rape. Witness has reported the defendant attacking a female. Police attend both defendant and female are undressed, police describe the female as being pinned down and in a state of disadvantage. Female described as heavily intoxicated. Following three-day trial, client was unanimously acquitted.

R v NC [2023]

Rape of child under 13, historic familiar allegation against a step-father. Client was unanimously acquitted.

R v TJ [2023]

Rape. Client, aged 21, charged with rape of 15-year-old female. Successfully defeated the accusations of force / coercion. Client was acquitted of rape.

R v JC [2023]

Rape of child under 13. Client, aged 14, accused of raping his 8-year-old niece. Youth Court trial, cross-examination of a child witness and family members. Trial Judge described the case as 'The most difficult of his Judicial career' Client was acquitted of all counts.

R v CL [2022]

Led by Dale Brook in a 7-week trial. Client aged 18, was accused by 7 complaints all under 16 of offences of rape, sexual assault and inciting a child to engage in sexual activity. Defence successfully argued that the police had over-zealously pushed the complainants into increasing the severity of the situation. Client was acquitted of all charges relating to rape and sexual assault.

R v NC [2021]

Successful prosecution of an inmate who has sexually assaulted a female prison officer.

Homicide

R v M [2023]

Led Junior by David Lamb KC in a 9-week murder trial, client unfit. Complex issues of joint enterprise. Michael received his red bag for his assistance in the trial.

R v CF [2024]

Led Junior by John Elvidge KC, five defendant murder trial, Crown could not identify killer, sought all on joint enterprise murder. Client acquitted of murder, convicted of manslaughter.

Drug-Trafficking

R v CM [2024]

Multiple count conspiracy to supply Class A drugs. Client found in known drug house on multiple occasions. Through cross-examination of the Officer in the case. It became clear that during the time Michael's client had been in custody, the drugs, and vehicle the drugs were store, had been moved and taken by persons unknown. Client unanimously acquitted.

R v LA [2023]

Possession with Intent to supply Class A drugs. Client found with 24 packets of crack cocaine within her possession. 5-day trial, cross-admissibility application permitted Michael to argue the drugs belonged to another. Client acquitted. Michael received praise for his closing speech.

R v TC [2022]

Defended client charged with importing 16kg of Cocaine into UK, with a street value of £1.6 million.

R v JS [2022]

Defended in a multi-handed drug conspiracy to supply contraband and Class B drugs into HMP Hull.

Domestic Violence

R v OD [2023]

Client charged with a 17-count indictment of child cruelty and coercive and controlling behaviour. In the first trial, the client was acquitted of the only count against his former partner, and 6 counts of the child cruelty. The Crown sought a re-trial, Michael successfully argued the children had been coached by their mother against the father. Client was acquitted.

R v DH [2023]

7-day trial of coercive and controlling behaviour, client acquitted.

R v LA [2023

Multiple counts of Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily harm, strangulation including an assault in a public house where the bartender gave evidence that he witnessed the defendant throw a bottle and hit the complainant, following cross-examination. Client was unanimously acquitted of all counts.

Public Order

R v ZE [2025]

A group of men attacked a public house armed with knives; client remained inside the property but wielded a table leg to fend off attacks. 9-day jury trial; client acquitted within 20 minutes.

R v MT [2024]

Instructed to defend youth client charged with violent disorder, jointly charged with 12 others, 6 defendants face manslaughter and one faces murder. Following a 6-week trial, following 7 closing speeches from senior King's Counsel, Michael was the only Junior to address the jury in closing. Michael received praise for his submissions from the bar and the trial Judge. Michael was retained in the re-trial at the insistence of his lay client. Client was unanimously acquitted of all charges.

R v GM [2023]

Defended a chemical engineer who conducted chemical experiments in his home following a 2016 Criminal Behaviour Order prohibiting him from doing so. The police raided the home, and due to materials stored, 100 homes were evacuated whilst the chemicals were disposed of. Michael put forward a basis of plea, and successfully conducted the Newton Hearing. Client received a suspended sentence. Media coverage can be found here

Court of Appeal

R v LA [2020]

Following compelling written grounds, leave was granted to appeal sentence of 18 months for dangerous driving.

R v CW [2022]

Appeared in the Court of Appeal following leave, appealing the trial Judges decision to impose a 2-year sentence for affray to a man of Good Character without a pre-sentence report.

R v AF [2023]

Sentence of 81 months imposed for dwelling burglary. Leave was refused by Single Judge. Michael appeared without leave, and argued the sentence was manifestly excessive. Two of the three grounds put forward were upheld. A sentence of 65 months was imposed. Media coverage can be found here

R V BN [2025]

Three separate assaults against emergency worker charges was manifestly excessive. Reduced to 12 months, which resulted in client's automatic release from custody.

Regulatory

R v A, M [2023]

Represented North-East Lincolnshire Council in the largest seizure and prosecution of illegal cigarettes and tobacco. Michael was involved in the pre-charge stage and then taking the case to trial. Media coverage can be found here

Recommendations and client feedback

The Legal 500 2027

'Excellent subject knowledge, superb client care, and excellent communication with those who instruct him.'

The Legal 500 2026 – Rising Star

'Michael is a great advocate. He is good with clients, taking the time to explain matters to them. He will ensure that he puts across all points in mitigation on behalf of his client.'

Qualifications

Durham University, University College,

2:1 LLB Law (with Honours): 2014 –2017

BBP, Leeds, 2017-2018

BPTC, Very Competent

Membership

Gray's Inn

North Eastern Circuit Criminal Bar Association