DEANS COURT CHAMBERS

Michael Hayton - Head of Chambers

1993 Lincoln's Inn, 2013 Kings Counsel, Hayton@deanscourt.co.uk



Education

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

St Anne's College, Oxford MA (Oxon)

Inns of Court School of Law

Professional Associations

Criminal Bar Association

Health and Safety Lawyers' Association

Northern Circuit

Appointments

Leader of the Northern Circuit

Head of the Criminal Team

Appointed to the Bar of Northern Ireland

Recorder 2012

CPS Advocates Panel - Silk

Approved Counsel for the Falkland Islands

Master of the Bench of the Honorable Society of Lincolns Inn

Areas of Specialism

- Health & Safety
- Inquests
- General Medical Council (Defence)
- Professional Regulation and Healthcare
- Professional Discipline
- Environmental
- General Crime
- Drug Importation and Supply

- Homicide
- Licensing
- Police Federation
- Firearms
- Fraud
- International Law
- Money Laundering, Confiscation and Asset Forfeiture
- Motoring Offences
- Trademark and Copyright
- Trading Standards
- Corporate Manslaughter
- Rail and Transportation
- Employment
- Contempt & Private Prosecutions
- Crime
- Fire Safety Law
- Sports Law
- Pollution, Waste & Water

Profile

Michael Hayton is recommended year on year by both Legal 500 and ranked as a Leading Individual by Chambers UK, in General Crime and Regulatory work.

In silk, his practice concentrates upon the most serious cases on the criminal calendar as well as regulatory and criminal cases of the utmost complexity. His clients have included professional people, including doctors

and police officers, charged with frauds and misconduct relating to their work.

Michael also appears in sports related litigation and tribunal work. He has advised and appeared in other jurisdictions including the Isle of Man and the Falkland Islands.

Regulatory Work

Michael's regulatory work covers all areas of health and safety prosecutions and professional conduct. He specialises particularly in medical clients, acting for Doctors in inquests, criminal proceedings and professional conduct hearings.

Has acted in numerous professional misconduct proceedings, representing individuals holding positions of public trust. Experienced in advising and advocating for clients across a range of public sector roles, including local government officers, emergency services personnel, and regulatory officials. Work in this area includes navigating complex disciplinary frameworks, preparing clients for investigatory interviews, and presenting cases before professional standards panels and tribunals. Recognised for a meticulous approach, clear strategic guidance, and sensitive handling of reputational and career impacting issues.

His coroners work regularly includes Article 2 death in custody inquests.

He has appeared in many Health and Safety prosecutions for both corporate and individual clients, normally in cases involving fatalities or multiple serious injuries and often within the construction and food industries. He was trial counsel in the leading case of HSE v Chargot and others and has conducted many Crown Court trials in HSE prosecutions.

Professional Discipline

Mr Hayton has conducted numerous IOT and FTP hearings on behalf of the GMC and defence.

With over 15 years experience of both defending and prosecuting cases before professional panels and tribunals. His principal specialisms relate to medical and healthcare practice and law, involving professional negligence and professional discipline. He has a wide experience in professional disciplinary cases (often linked to employment) and he has conducted cases before various tribunals, trusts and professional bodies, as well as during proceedings in the Employment Tribunal.

Michael is also experienced in the Coroner's Court and has acted in a number of cases and inquests. His broad medical knowledge and jury experience assists him to obtain good results for his client.

He is experienced in a full range of highly complex fitness to practice hearings which dealt with allegations of dishonesty, conviction and performance. These have included the 'Bloodgate' case which attracted

international media attention. As well as appearing before the GMC panel, he has also conducted hearings in the Administrative and High Courts.

Michael is regularly recommended by Chambers and Partners for Professional Discipline Work, and offers seminars and in house training to Professional Discipline solicitors as well as the MDU and other regulatory bodies.

Crime

His practice in crime covers all areas, including fraud and other dishonesty offences; computer crime including breaches of copyright legislation; drug offences including significant conspiracies involving large amounts of both money and drugs; money laundering; sexual offences; firearms offences including the running of firearms to sectarian groups in Ireland; and offences of violence up to and regularly including murder.

Michael's practice is predominantly defence work, although he prosecutes for the Crown Prosecution Service including murder and has acted for other prosecuting authorities in regulatory prosecutions.

Financial Crime

Michael Hayton KC has extensive experience in complex financial crime, money laundering and Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) matters, acting for individuals facing some of the most serious and high-value allegations investigated by national enforcement agencies.

He has represented professionals, including doctors, police officers and other individuals in positions of trust, in cases involving allegations of fraud, misconduct and financial wrongdoing. His experience frequently involves analysing complex evidential trails, financial transactions and the recovery of assets arising from alleged criminal conduct.

A notable example of his work in this field was a major money laundering prosecution investigated by the National Crime Agency, in which Michael Hayton KC, leading Virginia Hayton, secured an acquittal. The case concerned allegations that large sums of cash were being exported to the Middle East concealed within freight departing from Manchester Airport. The prosecution alleged that the operation potentially involved more than £20 million, with evidence gathered across three continents.

His experience in serious crime and fraud litigation means he is well placed to advise and represent clients at every stage of POCA proceedings, including restraint orders, confiscation proceedings, asset recovery issues and allegations that assets represent the proceeds of criminal conduct. He is frequently instructed in cases of exceptional complexity requiring strategic analysis of both the criminal allegations and the financial implications flowing from conviction or investigation.

Notable Cases

R v PG - Manchester Crown Court at Minshull Street.

Practice Area: Crime

Michael Hayton KC, leading Virginia Hayton, secured an acquittal in a money laundering case involving the exporting of cash to the Middle East by secreting currency in freight being flown out of Manchester Airport. The case, investigated by the National Crime Agency, allegedly involved potentially more than £20 million and the evidence spread across three continents.

R v BV Limited - Manchester Crown Court

Practice Area: Crime

Michael Hayton KC has been instructed to represent a firm of accountants charged under Section 45 of the Criminal Finances Act 2017. This is the first prosecution under this section of the legislation and alleges a failure to prevent the facilitation of UK tax evasion offences. The case, which will proceed to a contested trial, involves alleged fraudulent claims in excess of £16 million of Research and Development Tax Credits and Covid era Bounce Back loans.

Inquest into the death of Ben Loenard

Practice Area: Inquest

A 6 week inquest into the death of a young boy scout (Ben Loenard) on Great Orme in North Wales. Represented the County Commissioner, a senior volunteer in the area.

Case received widespread national media attention.

Re: Veolia Uk Ltd

Practice Area: Inquest

Represented a multi-billion pound company following fatalities during the demolition of a North Sea oil rig.

A 9 day inquest

GMC v Dr Bawa Garba

Practice Area: Professional Discipline

Represented the Doctor in her review hearing. Dr Bawa Garba had been convicted of gross negligence manslaughter of a 6 year old boy in her care at a Leicester hospital. Following her conviction a Fitness to Practice panel determined that she should be suspended from practice, but on appeal by the GMC this was replaced with erasure. The case was then further appealed to the Court of Appeal including the Lord Chief Justice and the Master of the Rolls and erasure was replaced with suspension.

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/ne...

GMC v Mr BQ

Practice Area: Professional Discipline

Defending prominent eye surgeon and developer of intra ocular lenses who is being investigated for allegedly dishonestly recommending and carrying out surgery on 24 patients in his care at the Harley Street London Eye Hospital. The case is listed for 10 weeks.

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/he...

R v AT

Practice Area: Crime

Defended the first defendant in back to back trials involving abuse of young children in a local care home in the 1970s onwards. The Defendant was a carer at the home and had been previously convicted of sexual and physical abuse at the home, which was adduced at these trials. The Defendant was acquitted of multiple rapes and out of more than twenty counts on the indictments was eventually convicted of two child cruelty charges against one complainant which amounted to two common assaults.

Wisteria Lodge: Seven men deny child cruelty

R v JSG

Practice Area: Crime

Defended a retired police officer for the murder of his elderly mother. The case involved uncontested pathology evidence as to the method of killing being asphyxiation by smothering.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-46521909

R v AT

Practice Area: Crime

Successfully defended care worker accused of rape and sexual assault upon children in the 1980s and 1990s at a care home in the Midlands. Three week trial concluded with acquittals on all counts.

R v Derrick Cooper and others

Practice Area: Crime

Part of Operation Hydrant, a nationwide investigation into abuse by persons of prominence or at institutions by teaching staff. Acting for the prosecution involving historic abuse by teachers at a school for boys with social and welfare issues in the 1970s and 1980s. The case involved a 2 month trial in Carlisle Crown Court after which the Principal and Owner of school was convicted of an offence of assault

and another of child cruelty. He awaits sentence.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-43431073

R v Vicnenzo Tavano

Practice Area: Crime - (Murder)

MH was instructed as leading counsel for the Crown in the prosecution of Vincenzo Tavano. Mr Tavano is charged with the murder of Giuseppi Roncari, a well known local Italian restauranteur and businessman. Mr Roncari was found dead in his Salford flat in April 2017. He had been strangled and had a plastic bag tied over his head. Mr Roncari's property had been searched and credit cards and his Jaguar car had been stolen.

uk-england-manchester-39709156

R v Mark Buckley

Practice Area: Crime - (Murder)

MH was instructed as leading counsel for the defence in the murder trial of Mark Buckley. Mr Buckley is alleged to have killed Ellen Higginbottom, an 18 year old A level student. The body of Ms Higginbottom was found in the Orrell Water Park, near Wigan.

Man-woman-arrested-killing-Ellen-Higginbottom.html

R v Hurst

Practice Area: Crime - (Murder)

Michael Hayton QC begins on 10 July 2017 a two week murder trial for the prosecution. The Defendant is charged with the Murder of Matthew McKenzie in Heywood in January 2017. Mr McKenzie's body was found in an alleyway close to midnight by a local man walking his dog. He was stabbed multiple times

including the fatal wound to the heart.

http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/man-charged-murder-after-matthew-12465005

R v Devonta Neish and others

Practice Area: Crime

Gangland murder in Moss Side Manchester. 8 week trial involving multiple defendants.

http://www.itv.com/news/granad...

HSE v Essar Oil Limited

Practice Area:

Represented Essar Oil Limited before Davis J in the Liverpool Crown Court when the company was fined £1,650,000 for an offence contrary to the COMAH Regulations 1999. The prosecution arose from an explosion that took place at the Stanlow Oil Refinery at Ellesmere Port in November 2013.No injuries were sustained by any person but it was accepted that the risk of harm was high, and that a fatality could have resulted.

The refinery is the second largest in the UK and provides one in every 6 litres of petrol purchased nationwide as well as being an amor manufacturer of diesel and aircraft fuels. The refinery is COMAH(Control of Major Accident Hazards) site and the company has a turnover for the site of approximately £5 billion.

Whilst Essar acknowledged their guilt at an early stage there were protracted negotiations over many months regarding disputes between experts as to the level of culpability to be ascribed to the company for its failings. Further, the prosecution sought to bring the company within the “Very Large Company” section of the Sentencing Council DefinitiveGuidelines, which would potentially have attracted a sentence outside the£10,000,000 maximum envisaged within the guideline table covering “Large”companies. Expert accountancy evidence was relied upon by the defence insupport of submissions as to

proportionality.

Ultimately, following written and oral submissions, the case was dealt with on the basis of Harm Category 1, which was always conceded, and medium culpability with some aggravating features and was sentenced well within the range set down for “Large” companies.

Inquest re Cristal Pigment UK Ltd

Practice Area: Inquest

Complex issues of scientific nature dealt with following a major explosion in a chemical plant on Humberside.

River Humber closed to shipping following a leak of a chemical cloud of titanium tetra chloride.

http://www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk/

Inquest touching upon the death of PC William Barker.

Practice Area: Inquest

Death of a police constable in the execution of his duties during the Cumbria floods in Cockermouth. National publicity and attention.

Inquest touching upon the death of David Donohoe

Practice Area: Inquest

Substantial inquest lasting several weeks into death of man who had been prescribed pain killing tablets from which he subsequently overdosed. Involved issues as to scope of inquest. Reported at R (on the application of Sreedharan) v HM Coroner for the County of Greater Manchester and others [2013] EWCA Civ 181

Inquest touching upon the death of Christopher Heaton

Practice Area: Inquest

Two week inquest involving complicated and convoluted expert evidence in construction industry context.

Inquest touching upon the death of David Astley

Practice Area: Inquest

Death in Custody case.

R -v- Chargot Limited

Practice Area: Health and Safety

UKHL 73 Defence trial counsel for Ruttle Contracting one of two companies prosecuted for fatality at work. Advised upon appeal. Now a leading case.

R -v- Frederick Jones

Practice Area: Health and Safety

Defence Junior. Double manslaughter case involving Legionnaires disease contracted from the Copthorne Hotel, Cardiff

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R -v- Swindell (David)

Practice Area: Health and Safety

[2008] EWCA Crim 3277 Defence counsel in 3 week fatality prosecution. Brown verdicts.

HSE -v- PC Richardson

Practice Area: Health and Safety

Defence counsel in fall from height at Sellafield whilst dismantling irradiated chimney stack from the 1957 “Windscale Fire”; Britain’s biggest nuclear disaster.

HSE -v- Unichem PLC (Boots Chemists)

Practice Area: Health and Safety

Defence counsel for company in prosecution relating to fall from height resulting in fatal accident at place of employment.

HSE -v- James Thompson

Practice Area: Health and Safety

Defence counsel for company in prosecution relating to a fatal accident at place of employment.

Oldham MBC -v- Travis Perkins

Practice Area: Health and Safety

Defence counsel in Crown Court prosecution for accident at work involving significant crushing injuries.

HSE -v- E W Cartons

Practice Area: Health and Safety

Defence counsel for company in prosecution relating to a fatal accident at place of employment.

R -v- Graham (George Robertson)

Practice Area: Health and Safety

[2009] EWCA Crime 2846 HSE prosecution; Howe examined regarding level of fine.

GMC vs Dr Wendy Chapman

Practice Area: Professional Discipline

Acted on behalf of the General Medical Council against the Harlequins RFC "Bloodgate Scandal" doctor.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london11055639

Re: Dr O

Practice Area: Professional Discipline

Instructed to represent the interests of medical professionals in the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths in Northern Ireland. (http://www.ihrdni.org). The Inquiry is examining the deaths of a number of children and the treatment that they received whilst in hospital.

R -v- Benjamin Wilson

Practice Area: Firearms

(Central Criminal Court) Defence Junior. Two month trial involving the running of machine guns and other firearms to sectarian groups in Ireland

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R -v- Mu Yong Lin

Practice Area: Crime

Defence Junior. Morecambe Bay cockle pickers. Seven month trial alleging manslaughter of 21 Chinese cockle pickers. This case led to the introduction of the Gangmaster (Licensing) Act 2004. Junior counsel for one of the Chinese gangmasters

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R - v - Jamie Watson

Practice Area: Manslaughter

Defence Junior. Secured acquittal for manslaughter. Mob attack home of paedophile in revenge attack and deceased died following fall from balcony as he attempted to escape.

R - v - Hugh McMahon

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. Defendant acquitted of murder following drug related knife attack.

R -v- Leanne Potter

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior for first defendant acquitted of murder. Victim died 4 months after alleged assault.

R -v- Raymond Hughes

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior for first defendant in revenge murder of alleged police informant.

R -v- Paul Culshaw

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. Full life sentence for murder of Lancaster prostitute.

R -v- David Burns

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. 16 year old defendant acquitted of murdering his brother-in-law on grounds of provocation.

R -v- Richard Johnstone

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. Joint street attack on victim who died some weeks later. Substantial medical causation issues of some complexity.

R -v- Brendan Woods

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. Defendant acquitted of murdering his brother in a knife attack on grounds of lack of intent.

R -v- William McInnes

Practice Area: Murder

Prosecution Junior. “Body in the boot murder”. Defendant convicted of murdering his partner and leaving her body in the boot of a rental car in Blackpool where it was discovered some weeks later.

R -v- Vladamir Brandejes

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. Czech national who with a co-worker robbed and killed their employer before fleeing the country. Extradited back to UK.

R -v- Ian Grant

Practice Area: Murder

Defendant strangled his wife in alleged steroid “rage” following argument.

R -v- Luke Harvey

Practice Area: Murder

Defendant charged with murder of young traveller in an alleged revenge attack following theft of a motor cycle. Convicted of manslaughter.

R -v- Shaun Jackson

Practice Area: Murder

Defence Junior. Defendant murdered his friend following drunken argument.

R -v- Stephen Brown

Practice Area: Murder

Defendant killed his mother's boyfriend who had made sexual advances to the Defendant's partner. Medical causation issues. Defendant pleaded to manslaughter.

R -v- Sajad Ali

Practice Area: Murder

Doorman killed drunken club goer.

R -v- Pamela Tickle

Practice Area: Fraud

Leading defence junior in large scale NHS fraud in chain of optician shops, involving sums in excess of £1 million

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R -v- A K and others.

Practice Area: Fraud

Prosecution counsel in Major Crime Unit prosecution. Property fraud.

R -v- Philip Johnson

Practice Area: Fraud

Junior counsel for leading defendant, a blind chartered accountant, in a large scale fraud and blackmail case.

R -v- Chris Sanders

Practice Area: Fraud

Operation Emersed multi million pound MTIC fraud.

R -v- Wallbank (Lindsay Sarah)

Practice Area: Drug Conspiracy

[2010] EWCA Crim 2172 Drug conspiracy involving undercover police officers.

R -v- Edward Izzet

Practice Area: Crime

[2004] EWCA 586

Chief Constable of Lancashire -v- Lisa Marie Potter

Practice Area: Crime

[2003] EWHC 2272 (Admin) One of the leading cases on Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

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R -v- John Dunlop

Practice Area: Crime

[2001] EWCA Crim 1808

Attorney General of the Falkland Islands -v- Shaun May (Stanley)

Practice Area: Death by Reckless Driving

Defence Junior. Secured acquittal in the first prosecution in over 60 years for causing death by reckless driving on the Falkland Islands.

Attorney General of the Falkland Islands -v- Colin MacDonald (Stanley)

Practice Area: Sexual Offences

Defence Junior in historic sex abuse.

R-v- Paul Edensor

Practice Area: Manslaughter

Defended tram driver who was three times the speed limit when he hit and killed a pensioner on Blackpool promenade

http://www.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/news/uk-england-lancashire-11949563

What the Directories say

"*Michael is a stellar performer.*"

Chambers & Partners, 2026

"A very thorough and experienced silk."

Chambers & Partners, 2026

"Michael Hayton is a formidable trial advocate."

Chambers and Partners, 2025

"He is a stellar performer and gets a grip on things early."

Chambers and Partners, 2025

‘In terms of advocacy, Michael is the number one criminal silk in the north. His closing speeches are breath taking, he has a wonderful manner with clients, and he is always a master of his brief.’

Legal 500 2025

'Michael is an exceptional courtroom advocate; the best in the business. He should be at the top of everyone's list.'

Legal 500 2025

“Michael Hayton is a formidable trial advocate.”

Chambers and Partners, 2024

“He is extremely well thought of in the space and a good advocate.”

Chambers and Partners, 2024

Michael is a leader in his field. Thorough in terms of preparation, he is an exceptional advocate and is excellent at building good client relationships.

Legal 500, 2024

He's brilliant technically and very good at strategy. He is a fabulous advocate - when you are in court with him you always feel you're in the presence of someone on the top of their game. A heavyweight silk who is technically outstanding and a formidable jury advocate.

Chambers and Partners, 2022

Concise and clear.

Legal 500, 2022

A supremely good advocate. He has a fantastic amount of court experience. He is exquisite in cross-examinations, and his overall thoughts on a case are always spot on. He's a good performer who is very knowledgeable in this field.

Chambers and Partners, 2021

A powerful advocate - most impressive before a jury - who gives outstanding performances, meaning he is considered the go-to silk for historical sexual offence trials.

Legal 500, 2021

Michael is first and foremost an outstanding trial advocate. He brings a wealth of experience and gravitas to a case which sets him apart from others. Aside from that he is a great criminal tactician with a superb legal mind.

Legal 500, 2021

He provides clear and down-to-earth advice. His knowledge and experience is clear to see, which has been incredibly reassuring for our client. He is absolutely superb in court: a dream to listen to and a fantastic advocate.

Chambers & Partners

Excels before a jury.

Legal 500

Specialises in criminal and regulatory work. He represents companies and their directors in health and safety prosecutions and also prosecutes on behalf of local authorities. He has considerable experience in cases involving workplace fatalities. He has an extremely attractive style of presenting a case. Recent work: Acted in HSE v Alan Munson, a case regarding a fatality at a waste management plant in Lincolnshire.

Chambers and Partners

A redoubtable advocate. He is a formidable advocate.

Legal 500

Specialises in criminal and regulatory work. He represents companies and their directors in health and safety prosecutions and also prosecutes on behalf of local authorities. He has considerable experience in cases involving workplace fatalities. Highly knowledgeable and professional. He has outstanding advocacy skills.

Chambers and Partners

Very experienced across a panoply of criminal matters.

Legal 500

He has the ear of the court.

Legal 500

He is an exceptional jury advocate, and judges warm to him.(Regulatory, health and safety, and licensing)

Legal 500

Always willing to go the extra mile. (Crime)

Legal 500

Specialises in health and safety investigations and professional discipline. (Regulatory, health and safety, and licensing)

Legal 500

He is very shrewd tactically. (Crime)

Legal 500

He regularly defends professionals in disciplinary cases.

Chambers UK

Very, very good advocate, who, because he comes from a cut and thrust criminal background, knows how to examine a witness and to impress a jury. He has a wealth of experience and is acknowledged to be a powerful performer.

Chambers UK

Attracts praise for his astute advocacy in court and user-friendly advice to clients.

Chambers UK

Predominately concentrates on defence briefs, particularly those involving complex issues and fatalities.

Chambers UK

Very effective advocate who makes the most of what he has to work with.

Legal 500

Clear-thinking and articulate advocate, and is acclaimed for his defence work.

Chambers UK

Very effective advocate who makes the most of what he has to work with.

Legal 500

Man for the big occasion.

Chambers UK

He gets results.

Legal 500

An excellent client manner...Hard working and efficient.

Chambers UK

A robust court performer

Legal 500

An impressive advocate. He fights till the fat lady sings

Legal 500

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