

AYANNA NELSON

Year of call
2009



Ayanna Nelson specialises in Crime, Regulatory & Professional Discipline, Offshore and International law.

A compelling advocate, Ayanna is well-liked by clients, who often comment on her personable nature, which puts them at ease throughout the challenging court or tribunal process. The same quality has caused her to be well-respected by colleagues, who appreciate her direct and straightforward approach.

Ayanna came to the Bar after practising as an attorney-at-law in Grenada for five years, where she gained a reputation as a fearless and respected advocate, often instructed in cases involving novel areas of law. She twice served as Secretary of the Grenada Bar Association and was appointed to sit on the General Legal Council, the Bar regulatory body. In 2014, Ayanna was featured in "Grenada 40", a profile of 40 rising stars under the age of 40, and regularly featured on local television and radio programmes as a 'legal expert'.

Ayanna studied the Double Maîtrise programme at King's College London, graduating with an LLB in English and French Law and a maîtrise en droit from Université de Paris 1: Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is fluent in French.

Ayanna was appointed a Bencher of Gray's Inn in 2024 and regularly assists with advocacy training and judging moots. She is also a Lord Justice Holker scholar.

Ayanna is a Grade 4 CPS prosecutor and has been appointed to the SFO B Panel of Prosecution Counsel since 2020.

Ayanna is qualified to accept instructions directly from clients and is registered under the Bar Council's Public Access Scheme, meaning that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to her. In addition, she welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's Licensed Access Scheme. For more information please visit our Direct Access page [here](#).

LEGAL EXPERTISE

Crime & Regulatory

Ayanna has experience in a wide range of criminal matters, with a particular interest in serious and organised crime. She has developed a particular expertise in representing young and vulnerable defendants and is regularly instructed to represent clients suffering with serious mental illnesses, or those for whom the trial experience is particularly challenging.

Ayanna is a CPS Grade 4 Prosecutor.

Selected Cases

[R v HS \(2024-2025\)](#)

Ayanna was instructed as defence junior counsel in this trial of an 18-year-old with significant vulnerabilities. HS had stabbed and killed a 15-year-old girl in Croydon, when he was 17. All of the significant witnesses were under 18 at the time of trial. HS's defence was diminished responsibility, on the basis that his autism had diminished his ability to exercise self-control. After a four-week trial, HS was convicted by majority of 10-2. The case received significant press coverage, and was prosecuted by the former Lord Chancellor, and presided over by Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb.

[R v T \(2024\)](#)

Ayanna was instructed to defend T who was charged with two counts of child cruelty and two counts of assault against his own children. On the first day of trial, Ayanna made successful arguments concerning the admissibility of hearsay evidence, which was deemed inadmissible. In light of this, and despite the availability of further evidence in support of their case, the Crown offered no evidence on all charges.

[R v Tyrell James \(2024\)](#)

Ayanna was instructed as junior prosecution counsel in this murder trial, in which the defendant stabbed the deceased 56 times. There was no evidence to suggest a motive for the killing, or the nature of the relationship between Defendant and deceased, although they were known to each other. Following conviction, Ayanna conducted the sentencing hearing alone, which included the Defendant's sentence for an unrelated GBH with intent. The defendant was sentenced to life with minimum 31-year term.

[R v Conrad Iyayi \(2023\)](#)

Ayanna was instructed as junior prosecution counsel in the trial of CI for murder. The defendant had pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility. However, following the opening of the trial to the jury, the defendant changed his plea and pleaded guilty to murder.

R v Rajesh Patel [2023] EWCA Crim 911

Ayanna represented RP before the Court of Appeal, having obtained leave to appeal by the single judge. RP had pleaded guilty to one count of making a threat to kill and one count of ABH. Counts alleging strangulation and controlling or coercive behaviour were ordered to remain on file. He was sentenced to a total of 2 years imprisonment. Although the appeal was ultimately dismissed, the Court of Appeal noted that the appeal had been “advanced ably by Ms Nelson both in writing and orally today”.

R v Ikram, Khan, Tarakhail and Hussain (Op Atlantite) (2022-2024)

Over the course of three trials, Ayanna prosecuted this conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration investigated by the NCA. The evidence to support the conspiracy amounted to 46,000 lines of messages. Ayanna was instructed as led junior but took over the first trial after her leader was hospitalised and withdrew midway through the prosecution case. She prosecuted the remainder of the trial alone. After two further trials, Ayanna conducted the sentencing hearing of all three defendants alone. Two of the defendants received 9-year sentences, the third, 4 years. One was acquitted.

R v Jamie Dunn, Catalina Cojocaru & Ors (Op Eton) (2022)

Conspiracy to commit offences under the Modern Slavery Act and control prostitution for gain. These were the first defendants to be charged with MSA offences by Northamptonshire Police. Ayanna was initially instructed as junior counsel for the prosecution, however ultimately instructed as sole counsel after her leader withdrew. The case received significant media attention due to the extravagant lifestyles of the main defendants, who received sentences of 3 years and 9 months following guilty pleas on day 3 of the trial. Ayanna also prosecuted the confiscation proceedings, which identified benefit in excess of £200,000.

R v LR (2022)

Ayanna represented LR, a young woman with a traumatic past and history of mental illness, charged with robbery and s.18 assault after the person she had admitted to robbing was run over and seriously injured by the car in which she was a passenger as she fled from the scene. The CPS did not consider her plea to the robbery to be acceptable by way of resolution. Shortly before the trial, Ayanna drafted further, full written representations addressing the prospect of conviction as well as the public interest in pursuing the case, which resulted in no evidence being offered against her on the day of trial. LR was sentenced to time served in respect of the robbery.

R v Cassius Povey (2022)

Ayanna appeared as led junior to prosecute this complex case in which the defendant was charged with 9 counts of rape and 14 counts of sexual activity with a child. There were eight victims in total. The trial lasted four weeks and many of the witnesses had significant vulnerabilities. The trial resulted in convictions on all but 1 count, and the defendant received a 20-year extended sentence.

R v Page & Ors (Op Broadbill 2) (2022)

Second trial in a major conspiracy to supply Class A and B drugs, which resulted in convictions for all four defendants. The estimated total value of the drugs was £42 million. Having appeared at trial as a led junior, Ayanna was instructed as sole counsel to prosecute the confiscation proceedings against all defendants from Op Broadbill 1 and 2, in which hidden assets were asserted against some of the principal defendants. The successful proceedings resulted in confiscation orders of £22 million for a number of the defendants.

NCA v G (2020)

Instructed by the National Crime Agency to prosecute an application for a Sexual Risk Order with foreign travel prohibitions against an individual suspected of committing child abuse on a number of different continents. Successful in obtaining an order preventing the Respondent from travelling without the consent of UK authorities.

R v C & anr (2019)

Led defence junior in a two-handed murder trial at the Central Criminal Court. C accepted having stabbed the victim three times through a car window using a large knife. C relied on the defence of loss of control. The jury was ultimately discharged, being unable to arrive at a verdict after several days of deliberations.

R v Sulakhan Singh - 2019

Prosecution junior counsel, led by Pavlos Panayi QC, in the trial of SS for murder. After a three week trial, SS was convicted of murder by the jury after only 52 minutes of deliberation.

R v Fashakin & Another (2019)

Led defence junior in a two-handed murder trial at the Central Criminal Court. The victim was shot at point blank range in broad daylight on a busy residential street. Both defendants accepted presence and ran a 'cut-throat' defence.

R v Conway & Ors (Op Broadbill) (2019)

Led prosecution junior in a large-scale conspiracy to supply Class A and B drugs trial, with a total of 11 defendants charged. The case involved the consideration of in excess of ten thousand pages of evidence.

R v T (2019)

Defended at trial a client charged with rape. The client had already pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual activity with a child and sexual communications with a child. He received a 5 year total sentence after conviction.

R v Sotiropoulos (2019)

Achieved a sentence of 2 years and 9 months for a client who had pleaded guilty to maintaining a highly sophisticated fraud, valued at in excess of £1million, for a number of years.

R v G (2018)

Client was charged with a violent robbery and false imprisonment, as part of a joint enterprise. His co-defendant had already pleaded guilty. The client accepted he was present throughout the robbery and false imprisonment but denied taking part. The jury returned a unanimous not guilty verdict.

R v V (2018)

Secured a unanimous acquittal for a client charged with the rape of a 15-year old girl. The client accepted having met the girl on the day in question but denied raping her.

R v JW (2018)

JW was charged with s.18 GBH with intent and accepted having been involved in a fight with the complainant but stated that he had left the fight prior to the complainant being stabbed in the back. JW was identified as the stabber by a witness. The jury deliberated for three days before acquitting JW of the s.18 offence and finding him guilty of the lesser offence of s.20 wounding, by a majority verdict.

R v E (2018)

E was charged with s.18 GBH with intent and accused of having stabbed his adult daughter. E had a lengthy history of violent offending, all of which was put before the jury. E stated that the complainant's stab wounds were self-inflicted. E was unanimously acquitted in less than an hour.

Regulatory & Professional Discipline

Ayanna has considerable experience of professional discipline law, in particular with healthcare regulators. This experience was honed during a 12-month secondment to the Nursing and Midwifery Council where she gained experience in every type of substantive and non-substantive hearing, including applications for restoration to the Register and registration appeals.

She is now regularly instructed to appear before a number of professional regulators, including the NMC, General Medical Council, Health and Care Professions Council, General Optical Council and the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, both as a case presenter and defending registrants, and has developed expertise in cases alleging sexual misconduct.

Ayanna also accepts instructs in respect of regulatory compliance for businesses, including compliance with Coronavirus Regulations.

Selected Cases

GOC v T (2021)

Represented the General Optical Council in an eight day hearing concerning numerous allegations of misconduct, including dishonesty, against in excess of twenty patients.

NMC v C (2020)

Instructed to represent a hospital nurse alleged to have stolen controlled drugs on three occasions. All allegations concerning the theft of medication were found not proved, in large part due to a last-minute disclosure request for previously unseen CCTV footage. The footage contradicted the evidence of the NMC's main witness.

HCPC v EB (2019)

Represented EB, charged with misconduct relating to his performance as a social worker, including an allegation of dishonesty, in addition to further allegations of sexual misconduct relating to two female clients. As a result of successful legal arguments, the HCPC offered no evidence in relation to the sexual misconduct charges. Despite finding a number of the remaining allegations proved, including the allegation of dishonesty, the Panel exceptionally found that EB's fitness to practise was not impaired.

HCPC v B (2018)

Represented B, a newly qualified radiographer, charged with lack of competence by the Health and Care Professions Council. Five of B's colleagues, including managers, gave evidence as to his alleged lack of competence. Dismissing all charges at half-time, exceptionally the Panel commended B for his concern for patient safety and full compliance with practice regulations, and went further by encouraging B to allow the HCPC to publish their written determination as a mark of public vindication.

NMC v A, K & N (2018)

Represented the NMC in a three-handed case in which the Registrants were alleged to have contributed to the suicide of a 17 year old inpatient in a secure mental health unit.

GMC v Dr A (2018)

Successfully represented a doctor accused of conducting sexually inappropriate physical examinations on a patient. The case was dismissed after a successful half-time application.

NMC v Akano (2017)

Represented the NMC in a case where a nurse was found guilty of deliberately sending an indecent image of a child to her colleague and engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a patient. The nurse had claimed the image was sent accidentally. She was ultimately struck off.

NMC v Giddings (2017)

Represented the NMC against a mental health nurse accused of having a sexually inappropriate relationship with his patient. The allegation came to light after the patient attempted suicide when the nurse ended the relationship. The case involved proving the existence of the sexual relationship through careful consideration of more than 3,000 text messages sent between the nurse and patient as the patient was unable to participate in the proceedings. All charges were found proved and the nurse was struck off.

Offshore & International Disputes

Ayanna maintains a multi-jurisdictional practice and receives instructions from the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands and the Eastern Caribbean in areas ranging from regulatory compliance to commercial litigation.

Her experience before the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court encompasses criminal and civil litigation, and extends to defending in multi-handed murders, complex fraud and money laundering and sexual offences, as well as general commercial litigation, shareholder disputes, and asset recovery. Ayanna has frequently been instructed in cases involving novel areas of law and cases giving rise to constitutional law issues.

Ayanna has delivered lectures and seminars on anti-money laundering and economic sanctions post-Brexit, to audiences worldwide, including at the OECS Regional Law Conference in Antigua (2019) and Saint Lucia (2024).

Selected Cases

Ayanna has been instructed by the Law Officers' Department in Jersey to advise in respect of cases concerning potential money laundering.

Ayanna has been instructed by a leading law firm in Jersey to advise in respect of multibillion pound insolvency litigation.

Ayanna is presently instructed by a well-established institution on the Isle of Man in relation to money laundering and regulatory issues.

R v EM (2014)

Landmark action brought seeking declaratory relief on the basis that the law prohibiting 'unnatural connexion' (section 431 of the Grenadian Criminal Code) contravenes a number of fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The case was pursued with the support of the UK-based Human Dignity Trust and required evidence to be obtained from witnesses throughout the Caribbean, including a number of experts in the field.

Financial Crime

Ayanna is instructed to prosecute and defend in respect of cases involving fraud, money laundering and internal investigations. She is also frequently instructed to represent individuals and, increasingly, large corporations to advise pre-charge, in respect of potential prosecutions by the CPS and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Ayanna is also instructed in respect of asset recovery proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Selected Cases

Op Livermore (2024 - ongoing)

Ayanna is instructed by the Financial Conduct Authority and being led by Andrew Wheeler KC to prosecute this case alleging a ponzi scheme conducted over the course of a number of years through an online trading scheme. The trial has been listed in Summer 2026.

R v AA (2024)

Ayanna was instructed to prosecute this case, which concerned cyber fraud, specifically multiple NFT (non-fungible asset) frauds committed by the defendant in excess of US\$600,000. The allegation arose from a complaint by a US NFT platform host, who detected the Defendant's fraudulent "rug pull" NFT schemes, all committed by the 16-year-old defendant from his bedroom. The case gave rise to complex legal arguments on the jurisdiction of the English Courts to try the case. Ayanna was successful in persuading the Court that it had jurisdiction, and the defendant subsequently pleaded guilty.

HMRC (2022)

Ayanna spent three months seconded to the High Net Worth team within the criminal investigations unit of HMRC, where she advised on investigations into criminal tax evasion by HNW individuals and corporate entities.

FCA v National Westminster Bank Plc

Instructed as junior counsel to advise NatWest Bank in respect of the first criminal prosecution by the FCA under the Money Laundering Regulations 2007. NatWest pleaded guilty to three charges for offences which occurred between 2012-2016, and the case concluded with Mrs Justice Cockerill imposing a fine of £264.8m on NatWest.

R v Z

Instructed by the Metropolitan Police to defend an application to set aside an account freezing order.

R v A

Successfully prosecuted a bank employee accused of defrauding her employer of £100,000.

R v A, I & Z

Instructed to prosecute an application for confiscation under POCA, where the benefit figure was £1.1m, and the defendants' available assets exceeded £800,000.

Appointments

- CPS Prosecutor (Grade 4)
- SFO B Panel (Prosecution)
- Bencher at Gray's Inn

Memberships

- Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers
- Criminal Bar Association
- Fraud Lawyers Association
- Grenada Bar Association
- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Bar Association