

Homicide appeals in Scotland: 2010-2019

Introduction

This paper accompanies our Discussion Paper on the Mental Element in Homicide (Discussion Paper No 172, 2021). The paper is referred to at paragraphs 1.15 to 1.18 of that Discussion Paper.

The purpose of this research was to ascertain whether there are any visible patterns in the legal issues raised and types of grounds of appeal and also the numbers of homicide appeals which have arisen in the last decade.

The research focused solely on High Court of Justiciary appeals concerning cases of murder and culpable homicide which had been reported and were publicly accessible. The period researched ran from 1 January 2010 until 31 December 2019, with each statistical year running from 1 January to 31 December. Each case was categorised according to the date of its appeal judgment.

In the ten years we examined, there were a total of 111 homicide appeals, 70 of which were appeals against conviction and were the focus of the research (see **Table 1** and **Table 2**). The remaining 41 were appeals against sentence (see **Table 3**).

As with the homicide rate, the rate of reported appeals against conviction and appeals against sentence have been in gradual decline over this period (see **Table 1**).

The broad conclusion we have reached (particularly from the information contained in **Table 2**) is that the grounds of appeal which have arisen in case law over the past ten years do not display any significant trend in criminal appeals focusing upon the mental element in murder.¹

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¹ See para 1.18 of the Discussion Paper.

Table 1: Appeals against convictions in homicide cases (2010 – 2019)

The cases in this table are arranged by year (the total number of cases in each year shown in brackets after the year) and show the case name, citation, judgement date, ground(s) of appeal and outcome of the appeal (ie either refused or allowed)

The total number of appeals against conviction between 1st January 2010 and 31st December 2019 was 70 (from a total of 111, the remaining 41 being appeals against sentence – see **Table 3** for a summary of those remaining 41).

Case	Neutral Citation; Reported Case Citation; Judgement Date	Grounds of Appeal
2019 (2)		
Rodgers v HMA	[2019] HCJAC 27; 2019 SCCR 230, 10 May 2019	 (1) Misdirection regarding diminished responsibility (2) misdirection on balance of probabilities. Appeal refused.
Cook v HMA	[2019] HCJAC 24, 3 May 2019	 (1) Erred in refusing to admit evidence – admissibility of (hearsay) evidence. Appeal refused.
2018 (1)		
Graham v HMA	[2018] HCJAC 60; 2018 SCCR 347, 2 Oct 2018	(1) Existence of significant new evidence.Appeal dismissed.
2017 (1)		
Fee v HMA	[2017] HCJAC 13; 2017 SLT 469, 9 March 2017	 (1) Misdirection regarding concert (2) misdirection regarding concert – availability of verdict of culpable homicide. Appeal refused.
2016 (5)		
Abboud v HMA	[2016] HCJAC 124; 2017 SCCR 93, 20 Sept 2016	 (1) Unfair trial – lack of impartiality of judge. Appeal refused.
Smith v HMA	[2016] HCJAC 67; 2017 JC 54, 19 Aug 2016	 (1) Insufficient evidence (2) Inadequate direction – evidence (3) Unreasonable jury verdict. Appeal refused.
Docherty v HMA	[2016] HCJAC 49; 2016 SCL 627, 20 May 2016	(1) Unreasonable jury verdict.Appeal refused.

Sim v HMA Carey v HMA	[2016] HCJAC 48; 2016 SCCR 303, 19 May 2016 [2016] HCJAC 10; 2016 SLT 377, 2 Feb 2016	 (1) Misdirection regarding concert (2) Misdirection regarding self-defence (3) Inadequate direction regarding mixed statements (4) Misdirection – unbalanced charge (5) Misdirection regarding sufficiency of evidence. Appeal refused. (1) Insufficiency of evidence (2) Unreasonable jury verdict (3) Misdirection of jury – corroboration. Appeal refused.
2015 (4)		
Humphrey v HMA	[2016] HCJAC 5; 2016 SCL 275, 16 Dec 2015	 (1) Misdirection – charge not balanced. Appeal refused.
Yazdanparast v HMA	[2015] HCJAC 82; 2015 SLT 626, 8 Sept 2015	 (1) Defective representation – preparation for trial (2) Defective representation – conduct of the trial (3) Defective representation – restriction to choose appropriate representation. Appeal refused.
Lilburn v HMA	[2015] HCJAC 50; 2015 SCCR 320, 17 June 2015	 (1) Existence of significant new evidence. Appeal refused.
Geddes v HMA	[2015] HCJAC 10; 2015 SCCR 139, 13 Feb 2015	(1) Unreasonable jury verdict.Appeal refused.
2014 (10)		
MacKinnon v HMA	[2015] HCJAC 6; 2015 SCL 272, 29 Oct 2014	 (1) Unreasonable jury verdict – evidential issues, DNA, contamination etc. (2) Unreasonable jury verdict – unreliability of witnesses. Appeal refused.
Meikle v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 116; 2014 SLT 54, 28 Oct 2014	 (1) Misdirection regarding provocation. Appeal refused.
Telford v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 128; 2015 SCL 136, 23 Oct 2014	 (1) Misdirection regarding incriminating statements. Appeal refused.
Young v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 113; 2014 SLT 1037, 10 Oct 2014	(1) Significant new evidence.Appeal refused.
Deeny v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 104; 2014 SCCR 672, 3 Oct 2014	 (1) Misdirection regarding prior statements (2) Misdirection regarding self-defence (3) Misdirection regarding expert evidence. Appeal refused.
Younas v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 114; 2014 SLT	 (1) Misdirection – charge not balanced (2) Misdirection – child witness evidence. Appeal refused.

	1043, 23 Sept 2014	
Docherty v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 94; 2014 SCL 758, 24 Aug 2014	 (1) Non-disclosure of evidence by Crown (2) Police interviews without access to solicitor (3) Misdirection regarding dock identification. Appeal refused.
Gordon v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 92; 2014 SCL 725, 31 July 2014	(1) Misdirection regarding concert.Appeal refused.
Wade v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 88; 2014 SCL 680, 29 July 2014	 (1) Admissibility of evidence – judge erred in reusing objection to evidence (2) Crown failed to fully disclose evidence in time. Appeal refused.
Lauchlan v HMA	[2014] HCJAC 22; 2015 JC 11, 27 March 2014	 (1) Inadmissible evidence – judge erred in eliciting prejudicial material from witness (2) Misdirection regarding concert. Appeal refused.
2013 (11)		
Rehman v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 172; 2014 SCCR 166, 20 Dec 2013	 (1) Inadequate/insufficient directions regarding adoption of prior statements (2) Inadequate/insufficient directions regarding wicked recklessness (3) Failure to direct regarding standard of proof (4) Failure to direct regarding concert (5) Misdirection regarding witness evidence. Appeal refused.
Webster v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 161; 2014 SCL 256, 13 Dec 2013	 (1) Admissibility of additional Crown evidence – added late witness (2) Insufficient evidence. Appeal refused.
Paterson v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 156; 2014 SCCR 217, 29 Nov 2013	 (1) Failure to direct regarding concert (2) Misdirection regarding concert (3) Unclear direction regarding concert. Appeal refused.
McGrory v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 165; 2014 SCL 178, 26 Nov 2013	 (1) Erred in failing to adjourn trial diet - to remove prejudicial material from internet about previous trials (2) judge erred warning against self-incrimination to witness. Appeal refused.
Parfinowski v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 123; 2014 SCL 29, 17 Oct 2013	(1) Misdirection regarding concert.Appeal allowed.
Fraser v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 117; 2014 JC 115, 4 Oct 2013	(1) Prejudicial evidence by witness.Appeal refused.
Grenfell v HMA	[2013] HCJAC 125, 24 Sept 2013	 (1) Misdirection regarding recklessness – involuntary culpable homicide v wicked recklessness. Appeal refused.

	[2013] HCJAC 93, 2 Aug 2013	 (1) Insufficient evidence (2) Unreasonable jury verdict Appeal refused.
	[2013] HCJAC 89; 2014 JC 137, 15 July 2013	(1) Insufficient of evidence.Appeal allowed.
	[2013] HCJAC 47; 2013 SLT 525, 18 April 2013	(1) Misdirection regarding expert evidence.Appeal allowed.
	[2013] HCJAC 16, 6 Feb 2013	 (1) Erred in repelling no case to answer (2) Insufficiency of evidence Appeal refused.
2012 (12)		
	[2013] HCJAC 18; 2013 JC 163, 20 Dec 2012	 (1) Admissibility of statements made to police without caution. Appeal refused.
_	[2012] HCJAC 138, 26 Oct 2012	 (1) Insufficiency of evidence (2) Unreasonable jury verdict (3) Misdirection regarding adoption of prior statements. Appeal refused.
	[2012] HCJAC 123; 2012 S.CC.R 735, 20 Sept 2012	 (1) Prejudicial statements made by Advocate Depute (2) Failure to direct on prejudicial statements (3) Dock identification (4) Failure to direct – dock identification (5) Failure by Crown to disclose evidence (6) Inadequate directions regarding eye-witness evidence (7) Unreasonable jury verdict (8) Admissibility of evidence – statements made to police with no solicitor. Appeal refused.
	[2012] HCJAC 126; 2012 SCCR 728, 19 Sept 2012	 (1) Misdirection regarding concert. Appeal refused.
	[2012] HCJAC 89, 22 May 2012	 (1) Failure to direct – Article 8 ECHR/trespasser in the home. Leave to appeal to Supreme Court refused.
	[2012] HCJAC 51, 19 April 2012	 (1) Undue delay (2) Admissibility of evidence – unauthorised surveillance (3) Apparent bias – court lacked appearance of independence/impartiality (4) Apparent bias - prejudicial remarks by judge (5) Erred in failing to desert trial (6) Misdirection regarding identification evidence Leave to appeal allowed on certain specified grounds.
	[2012] HCJAC 50, 18 April 2012	 (1) Real possibility of different jury verdict (2) Insufficiency of evidence (3) Misdirection regarding evidence of police interview (4) Inadmissible evidence – police interview with no solicitor. Appeal refused.
	[2012] HCJAC 48, 13 March 2012	 (1) Misdirection regarding accident (2) Misdirection regarding witness' evidence. Appeal refused.

Crawford v HMA	[2012] HCJAC 40; 2012 JC 360, 6 March 2012	 (1) Erred in repelling no case to answer submission – insufficient evidence (2) Misdirection regarding concert. Appeal refused.
McDade v HMA	[2012] HCJAC 38, 2 March 2012	 (1) Insufficient evidence/repelled submission of no case to answer (2) Unreasonable jury verdict. Appeal refused.
Lauchlan v HMA	[2012] HCJAC 20; 2012 WLUK 253, 8 Feb 2012	 (1) Erred in rejecting no case to answer – insufficiency of evidence (2) Erred in allowing prejudicial evidence (3) Undue delay (4) Failure to direct – prejudiced caused by delay (5) Unauthorised surveillance (6) Apparent bias – court lacked appearance of independence and impartiality (7) Judge erred in refusing to desert trial (8) Misdirection regarding alibi (9) Unreasonable jury verdict (10) Misdirection regarding eye witness identification (11) Evidence – police interview with no solicitor (12) Misdirection regarding opinion evidence (13) Judge lacked appearance of impartiality and independence. Leave to appeal refused in respect of on co-accused and allowed in respect of other on two grounds and sentence only.
Gage v HMA	[2012] HCJAC 14; 2012 SCCR 254, 27 Jan 2012	 (1) Unreasonable jury verdict (2) Admissibility of evidence – resemblance identification. Appeal refused.
2011 (16)		
Dearie v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 102; 2011 SCCR 727, 18 Oct 2011	 (1) Insufficient direction – culpable homicide (2) Misdirection regarding provocation. Appeal refused.
Elsherkisi v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 100; 2011 SCCR	• (1) Misdirection regarding definition of murder (2) Misdirection regarding culpable homicide.
	735, 18 Oct 2011	Appeal refused.
Jenkins v HMA	735, 18 Oct 2011 [2011] HCJAC 86; 2011 SCCR 575, 31 Aug 2011	
Jenkins v HMA O'Donnell v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 86; 2011 SCCR 575, 31 Aug 2011	Appeal refused.(1) Unreasonable jury verdict
O'Donnell v	[2011] HCJAC 86; 2011 SCCR 575, 31 Aug 2011 [2011] HCJAC 84; 2011 SCCR 536,	 Appeal refused. (1) Unreasonable jury verdict Appeal allowed and conviction quashed. (1) Misdirection regarding confession evidence (2) Misdirection regarding witness evidence (3) Non-disclosure of evidence by crown (4) Late disclosure of evidence by Crown (5) Defective representation

Mitchell v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 60; 2011 SCL 792, 7 June 2011	(1) Identification evidenceAppeal refused.
Walker v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 51; 2011 SLT 1114, 26 May 2011	 (1) Misdirection regarding expert medical evidence (2) Failure of jury to provide reasons for decision. Appeal allowed and verdict quashed.
Lilburn v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 41; 2011 SLT 861, 26 April 2011	 (1) Misdirection regarding diminished responsibility. Appeal refused.
Shahid v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 37; 2012 SCL 5, 19 April 2011	(1) Significant new evidence.Appeal refused.
Johnston v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 32; 2011 SCCR 369, 7 April 2011	 (1) Misdirection regarding standard of proof/ reasonable doubt (2) Failure to direct –mixed statements (3) Misdirection – prejudicial witness evidence (4) Misdirection – witness evidence. Appeal refused.
Cameron v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 29; 2011 SCL 633, 29 March 2011	 (1) Erred in repelling no case to answer submission – insufficiency of evidence. Appeal refused.
Scott v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 27, 15 March 2011	 (1) Insufficient evidence (2) Failure to direct – inconstancy in evidence (3) Eyewitness evidence (4) Failure to direct – concert (5) Failure to direct – position of Crown. Appeal refused.
Docherty v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 24 9 March 2011	 (1) Apparent judge bias – directions liable to rouse sympathy for deceased (2) Misdirection – not balanced charge (3) Misdirection – witness evidence. Appeal refused.
Casey v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 19; 2011 SCL 494, 25 Feb 2011	(1) Significant new evidence.Appeal refused.
Jamieson v HMA	[2011] HCJAC 58; 2011 SCL 703, 16 February 2011	 (1) Misdirection regarding mixed statements (2) Admissibility of evidence – police interview with no solicitor. Appeal allowed and conviction quashed.
2010 (8)		
McDonald v HMA	[2010] HCJAC 95; [2010] 10 WLUK 8 1 Oct 2010	 (1) Misdirection – sufficiency of evidence Appeals refused.
Woodside v HMA	[2010] JCJAC 94; 2011 SCCR 12, 29 Sept 2010	 (1) Non-disclosure of Crown evidence Appeal refused.

Ferrie v HMA Parracho v	[2010] HCJAC 62; 2011 SCL 8, 15 June 2010 [2010] HCJAC 59,	 (1) Insufficiency of evidence (2) Failure to direct – evidence (3) Misdirection – evidence (4) Misdirection – concert (5) Misdirection – concert (6) Unreasonable jury verdict. Appeal refused. (1) Insufficiency of evidence.
НМА	11 June 2010	Appeal refused.
Beggs v HMA	[2010] HCJAC 48, 27 May 2010	 (1) Prejudicial trial publicity influencing jury (2) Non-disclosure of Crown evidence Leave to appeal refused.
McDonald v HMA	[2010] HCJAC 45; SCCR 619, 7 May 2010	 (1) Unreasonable jury verdict (2) Failure to direct – corroboration (3) Inadequate directions – prior inconsistent statements. Appeal refused.
Docherty v HMA	[2010] HCJAC 31; 2010 SCL 874, 26 March 2010	 (1) Insufficiency of evidence (2) Non-disclosure by Crown of evidence (3) erred in repelling no case to answer submission/insufficiency of evidence (4) Non-disclosure by Crown of evidence (5) Misdirection – corroboration (6) Apparent bias – trial judge lacked appearance of impartiality and independence (7) Inadmissibility of evidence – police interview with no solicitor. Appeal refused.
Beggs v HMA	[2010] HCJAC 27; 2010 SCCR 681, 9 March 2010	 Prejudicial trial publicity – influencing jury (2) Inadmissibility of hearsay evidence (3) Advocate Depute's conduct – inappropriate and prejudicial comments (4) Inadmissibility of evidence – search warrant (5) Insufficiency of evidence (6) Inadmissibility of irrelevant evidence (7) late disclosure of evidence by Crown (8) Failure of jury to provide reasons for decision. Appeal refused.

Table 2: Categorisation of grounds of appeal against convictions in homicide cases (2010 – 2019)

Over the 10 year period between 1st January 2010 and 31st December 2019 there were a total of 170 separate grounds of appeal noted in appeals against convictions in homicide cases. These were spread over a total of 70 cases which were appeals against convictions, with some appeals having multiple grounds of appeal (see **Table 1** for a list of those appeals against conviction).

The table below categorises those 170 grounds of appeal under a number of broad categories (with the total number of grounds of appeal under that broad category heading shown in brackets):

Those broad ground of appeal categories are (1) Misdirection, (2) Evidence, (3) Conduct of trial and (4) Jury verdict.

Within each broad category we have listed a number of subcategories and, within those, a further breakdown of types of ground of appeal within each subcategory (with totals shown in brackets).

Grounds of Appeal on Misdirection (Total: 72)

Subcategory	Grounds of appeal within subcategory
	Witness evidence (8)
	Prior statements (4)
	Mixed statements (3)
	Expert evidence (3)
	Eye witness identification (3)
	Evidence (2)
Evidence (38)	Corroboration (2)
	Witness dock identification (2)
	Standard of proof (2)
	Sufficiency of evidence (1)
	Incriminating statements (1)
	Child witness evidence (1)
	Identification evidence (1)
	Police interview evidence (1)
	Folice litterview evidence (1)

	Opinion evidence (1)
	Confession evidence (1)
	Inconsistent evidence (1)
	Cause of death (1)
	Concert (15)
	Wicked recklessness (2)
Offences (20)	Culpable homicide (2)
	Murder (1)
	Self-defence (2)
	Provocation (2)
	Trespasser in home (1)
Defences (8)	Accident (1)
	Alibi (1)
	Diminished responsibility (1)
	Unbalanced charge (4)
Other (6)	Prejudice caused by delay of trial (1)
	Crown case (1)

Grounds of Appeal on Evidence (Total: 58)

Subcategory	Grounds of appeal within subcategory
Insufficient evidence/no case to answer (21)	
	Police interview with no solicitor (7)
	Unauthorised surveillance (2)
Inadmissibility of evidence (12)	Hearsay evidence (1)
	Defective search warrant (1)
	Inadmissible evidence (1)

Late/non-disclosure of Crown evidence (11)	
Prejudicial evidence (5)	
New evidence (5)	
	Identification evidence (2)
Identification evidence (4)	Dock identification (1)
	Resemblance identification (1)

Grounds of Appeal on Conduct of Trial (Total: 24)

Subcategory	Grounds of appeal within subcategory
Trial judge/court lacking appearance of	Trial judge lacking appearance of impartiality and independence (5)
impartiality and independence (8)	Court lacking appearance of impartiality and independence (2)
	Conduct of trial judge (1)
Conduct of defence and Crown agents (6)	Defective representation (4)
	Advocate Deputes conduct inappropriate and prejudicial (2)
Prejudicial publicity (3)	Prejudicial publicity influencing jury (2)
	Failure to adjourn trial due to prejudicial publicity (1)
Other (3)	Absence of reasons provided by jury for their decision (2)
	Libel not instructing relevant charge (1)
Undue delay (2)	
Failure to desert trial (2)	

Grounds of Appeal on Jury Verdict (Total: 16)

Subcategory	Grounds of appeal within subcategory
Unreasonable jury verdict (15)	
Possibility of different jury verdict (1)	

Table 3: Appeals against sentence in homicide cases (2010 – 2019)

Arranged by year (total number of cases in each year shown in brackets) and noting the case name, citation and judgement date.

The total number of appeals against sentence between 1st January 2010 and 31st December 2019 was 41 (out of 111 appeals in total, the other 70 being appeals against conviction – see **Table 1** for a summary of those).

2019 (2)	
(1)	Kinlan v HMA [2019] HCJAC 47 – 11 July 2019
(2)	Laurie v HMA [2019] HCJAC 3 – 24 Jan 2019
2018 (1)	
(3)	Gordon v HMA [2018] HCJAC 21 – 25 Jan 2018
2017 (1)	
(4)	Leathem v HMA [2017] HCJAC 10 – 17 Feb 2017
2016 (4)	
(5)	Ahmed v HMA [2016] HCJAC 125 – 29 Nov 2016
(6)	Sinclair v HMA [2016] HCJAC 24 – 24 March 2016
(7)	Brown v HMA [2016] HCJAC 31 – 18 March 2016
(8)	Bruce v HMA [2016] HCJAC 25 – 4 March 2016
2015 (3)	
(9)	Haugen v HMA [2015] HCJAC 121 – 4 Dec 2015
(10)	McManus v HMA [2015] HCJAC 46 – 19 May 2015
(11)	Young v HMA [2015] HCJAC 16 – 21 Jan 2015
2014 (5)	
(12)	Deeny v HMA [2015] HCJAC 5 – 20 Nov 2014
(13)	HMA v V [2014] HCJAC 126 – 18 Nov 2014
(14)	Chalmers v HMA [2014] HCJAC 59 – 9 May 2014
(15)	Chalmers v HMA [2014] HCJAC 24 – 28 March 2014
(16)	Gul v HMA [2013] HCJAC 177 – 7 Jan 2014
2013 (4)	
(17)	HMA v Callander [2013] HCJAC 159 – 26 Nov 2013

(18)	Johnstone v HMA [2013] HCJAC 92 – 1 Aug 2013
(19)	Hadden v HMA [2013] HCJAC 61 – 18 April 2013
(20)	Andonov v HMA [2013] HCJAC 27 – 5 March 2013
2012 (8)	
(21)	HMA v Esquierdo [2012] WLUK 161 – 6 Dec 2012
(22)	Reid v HMA [2012] HCJAC 150 – 27 Nov 2012
(23)	R v HMA [2012] HCJAC 134 – 29 Aug 2012
(24)	Rippon v HMA 2012 SCCR 699 – 29 Aug 2012
(25)	HMA v X [2012] 8 WLUK 139 – 11 Aug 2012
(26)	Stewart v HMA [2012] HCJAC 103 – 1 Aug 2012
(27)	HMA v McNamara [2012] HCJAC 54 – 4 May 2012
(28)	Reid v HMA [2012] HCJAC 18 – 3 Feb 2012
2011 (7)	
(29)	Jakovlev v HMA [2011] HCJAC 90 – 16 Sept 2011
(30)	HMA v Williamson [2011] HCJAC 87 – 23 Aug 2011
(31)	McDonald v HMA [2011] HCJAC 71 – 15 July 2011
(32)	Beggs v HMA [2011] HCJAC 49 – 12 May 2011
(33)	HMA v Riggi (No 2) [2011] WLUK 647 – 27 April 2011
(34)	Mitchell v HMA [2011] HCJAC 10 – 2 Feb 2011
(35)	Balgowan v HMA [2011] HCJAC 2 – 12 Jan 2011
2010 (6)	
(36)	Smith v HMA [2010] HCJAC 118 – 19 Oct 2010
(37)	H v HMA [2010] HCJAC 111 – 14 Oct 2010
(38)	HMA v Reid [2010] 10 WLUK 268 – 13 Oct 2010
(39)	HMA v Thomson [2010] HCJAC 56 – 13 May 2010
(40)	Ferguson v HMA 2010 SCCR 399
(41)	HMA v Clark [2010] HCJAC 4