5. Character evidence

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This chapter, which focuses on the admissibility and evidential worth of character evidence, explains the definition of bad character under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. It examines how bad character evidence of the defendant may be admitted through one of the ‘gateways’ under the Act. It reviews the evidential worth of the character evidence if admitted and explains the difference between propensity and credibility. The law on the admissibility of the bad character of non-defendant witnesses is explained. The chapter concludes with the admissibility of good character evidence, governed by the common law.

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