

# Gabriele Watts

Call: 2019



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Gabriele Watts accepts a broad range of instructions covering both defence and prosecution work.

She is regularly instructed in complex matters before the Crown Court and has a diverse practice which covers all areas of Chambers expertise, including serious criminal offences ranging from violence, firearms, human trafficking and drugs to business crime involving high value fraud, counterfeit trading, and money laundering. She is frequently instructed in document heavy cases raising complex issues of fact and law and advises on these matters.

She also engages in international developmental work and has advised internationally. For example, she has worked alongside prosecutors from The Hague and former British judges of the International Criminal Court to deliver assistance and training to state bodies in the West Balkans. She also speaks a number of languages.

Gabriele's practice also encompasses public inquiries and inquests. She is involved in the Post Office Inquiry, and she has acted for professionals, authorities, bodies and for families of the deceased. For example, Gabriele represented the family of a young girl who died following a severe asthma attack at school.

Before coming to the Bar, Gabriele worked at the Serious Fraud Office where she worked on a number of cases involving serious and complex fraud, as well as international bribery and corruption spanning multiple jurisdictions. She has engaged with regulatory bodies such as the FCA, and overseas enforcement agencies such as the US Department of Justice.

Outside her practice, she writes in the area of white-collar crime and has lectured at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences on the LLM financial crime course. She is also on the contributory panel of the Lloyds Law Reports.

## Expertise

### Business Crime & Financial Services

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## Notable cases:

### **R v AM**

David Whittaker KC and Gabriele Watts acted for daughter of the ENRC Founder, who had her SFO conviction overturned at Southwark Crown Court. Discussions were launched with the SFO and an appeal was lodged. Although arguments of improper motive and bias would have been advanced had the appeal been heard, the SFO offered no evidence after recognising the forceful grounds upon which the appeal was being pursued, and her conviction was quashed.

## Consumer & Trading Standards

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## Notable cases:

### **R v AH**

Defended in a large counterfeit trading case at Bolton Crown Court. The case concerned trading of counterfeit premier league and other sports branded goods, resulting in hundreds of thousands of pounds. Following a guilty plea, the defendant was handed a suspended sentence.

## Criminal Defence

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## Notable cases:

### **R v ME**

Jonathan Laidlaw KC and Gabriele Watts acted for the first defendant who was a high-net-worth businessman and son-in-law of the late Harrods owner. The complainant alleged that he had been robbed by his brother-in-law, sister and two security guards. The incident was alleged to have taken place at their family home and the allegation had already been the subject of high-profile civil litigation that settled before the criminal proceedings began. Following an application to stay the case as an abuse of process, the CPS offered no evidence, and not guilty verdicts were returned.

### **R v KD**

Represented a defendant charged with false imprisonment, non-fatal suffocation and assault at Isleworth Crown Court. He was charged on a joint-enterprise basis. The defendant was a man of good character, and the defence case throughout was that KD had been a witness to the incident and had consistently provided a full and detailed account at every opportunity, denying his involvement in any criminal offences. Following written and oral submissions at Court, the Judge directed the CPS to conduct a full review of the case. The CPS offered no evidence, and the defendant was acquitted.

### **R v AL**

Represented the first defendant in a joint enterprise at Isleworth Crown Court. The case concerned a nine-count indictment, which included multiple counts of armed robbery, section 18 (GBH), and firearms. Successful half time submissions were made in relation to the section 18 and firearms, and the defendant was acquitted of all remaining counts barring one robbery.

### **R v XX**

Represented a former senior civil servant charged with racially aggravated assault. The defendant pleaded guilty, but following submissions the court agreed to use their discretion to step outside the sentencing guidelines and issued a fine.

**R v SB**

Defended in a joint-enterprise robbery at Harrow Crown Court. Following cross examination of the complainant, a number of weaknesses in the case were exposed that had significantly undermined the prosecution's case. The trial was stopped, and the defendant was acquitted.

**R v MG**

Defended in a multi-handed conspiracy to supply Class A and Class B and possession of criminal property at Inner London Crown Court. The case was listed for a 2-day Newton hearing. A man collapsed and died, and the cause of death was believed to be consumption of drugs. An investigation was launched, and a large drugs line was discovered, including large quantities of cash. The defendant later abandoned the Newton hearing on the day but 20% credit was still secured. He was sentenced to 4 years 6 months in prison despite a finding of "significant role" (and category 2 harm).

**R v JM**

Defended in a section 18 (with section 20 as the alternative), which was alleged to have been committed in a domestic context. The case was transferred from the Central Criminal Court to Isleworth Crown Court, and later sat in the Nightingale Court at the Barbican. Following a week-long trial, the defendant was acquitted of all counts.

## Inquests

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### Notable cases:

**Inquest into the death of PUA**

Represented the family of a 12-year-old girl who collapsed following a severe asthma attack which led her to go into a cardiac arrest at school. She later died at hospital. The conduct of the school was investigated, and evidence was heard from school staff, the emergency services and other medical professionals.

**Inquest into the death of DS**

Represented the medical practice in circumstances where a man died suddenly. No adverse findings or comments were made against the medical practice, and he was found to have ultimately died of natural causes against the backdrop of a history of ill-health and efforts made by all medical professionals to treat him

## International, Sanctions & Extradition

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### Notable cases:

**Bosnia & Kosovo**

Worked with state prosecutors, and judges and provided advice and guidance on anti-corruption, bribery and anti-money laundering laws in England and Wales. This included travelling to the West Balkans, such as to Kosovo, to provide training, workshops and

mentoring to state prosecutors and judges, as well as leading discussions around business crime, war crimes, and trial processes and procedure.

## Public Prosecution

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### Notable cases:

#### **R v RM**

Prosecuted multiple counts of fraud by false representation, involving multiple victims at Isleworth Crown Court. The defendant approached the victims and secured investment into a scheme, which he purported to operate. This included the presentations of false contracts, investment statements, banking documentation, loans and later intimidating messages. Following discussions between the Crown and the defence, the defendant pleaded and was later sentenced.