

Gavin Irwin

Call: 1996

"Gavin is very detailed and forensic. He has a calm, assured manner with clients which is both empathetic and reassuring."

Chambers UK 2025 (Financial Crime)



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Gavin Irwin is widely recognised as a leading junior in financial and other serious crime, and in professional conduct and coronial proceedings. His advice and representation is sought in the most complex cases by individuals, businesses and governments.

Having been ranked in Band 1 for Financial Crime for many years, Gavin is one of the few UK barristers with a proven track record in financial and trade sanctions, export controls and national security and investment.

Gavin has worked with the United Nations in Africa and is actively involved in the Western Balkans Rule of Law Initiative. Known for his team leadership, tactical acumen and commercial approach, Gavin has a wealth of experience across complementary disciplines.

Gavin accepts [direct access](#) instructions.

Expertise

Business Crime & Financial Services

Financial Crime

Gavin is currently leading the team in the defence of:

- The principal defendant in a case concerning allegations of bribery in the construction industry
- A financial services professional charged with laundering the proceeds of cross-border frauds

In the recent past, Gavin has:

- Advised in relation to the SFO investigation into Quindell PLC, described by the Law Society Gazette as one of the most "*contentious acquisition deals in legal history*"
- Represented the finance director of a high-profile property development company charged with evading £5M of VAT

- Represented the principal defendant in confiscation proceedings for what the SFO dubbed “*the largest boiler room fraud ever pursued by a UK authority*” – valued at £70M

National Security & Investment

Gavin regularly:

- Advises businesses operating within the 17 sensitive sectors of the UK economy on issues relating to the National Security and Investment Act 2021
- Assists businesses with notifiable acquisition submissions to the Cabinet Office, Investment Security Unit

Criminal Defence

Serious & Organised Crime

Gavin has appeared for the defence in numerous homicide cases before the Central Criminal Court. In recent years he has represented individuals charged with rape (disclosure of multi-agency records and the statistical analysis of DNA), causing non-accidental harm to children (paediatric medical experts), arson and firearms offences (secondary transfer of DNA and cell-site evidence) and significant drug trafficking (covert probe, encrypted communications and evidence obtained under letters of request).

Recent instructions include:

- The Nigerian Senator charged with modern slavery – facilitating travel for the purpose of human tissue harvesting
- Conspiracy to counterfeit currency – the most significant case of its kind for more than a decade, involving £5M of £20 notes

Proceeds of Crime

Gavin undertakes restraint and asset freezing work. He acted for Raymond May in the seminal House of Lords case on the definition of “obtaining” benefit. He has a wealth of experience in applying for injunctions on behalf of prosecuting authorities and in resisting them on behalf of individuals and other legal entities. Gavin advises and represents individuals in enforcement proceedings.

International, Sanctions & Extradition

Financial & Trade Sanctions

Gavin regularly advises businesses and individuals on the impact of financial and trade sanctions and is currently acting for:

- A UK company for possible breaches of trade sanctions in relation to Iran
- A number of public figures currently under investigation: in relation to the art-market and terrorism financing; and, for public pronouncements said to support Russian state interests
- A number of UK companies whose interests and operations have been affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022

Gavin has been instructed in three ‘firsts’:

- The first criminal case alleging breaches of the financial sanctions applied against Russia – (Southwark Crown Court, 2025)
- The first criminal case alleging breaches of disclosure within the regulated sector linked to counter terrorism financing sanctions (Central Criminal Court, 2025)
- The first attempted extradition to the United States of a UK national for alleged facilitation of breaches of U.S. financial

sanctions imposed against Oleg Deripaska (Westminster Magistrates Court, 2023)

Export Controls

Gavin has an established track-record in navigating export control challenges and in leading corporate investigations where end-user concerns and WMD proliferation risks have been identified. He has considerable experience in the overlap between export controls and trade sanctions, shaping self-disclosures, averting criminal proceedings and negotiating compound and monetary penalties.

Gavin has acted, in criminal proceedings, for:

- A UK company for exports involving breaches of the UN Chemical Weapons Convention
- An individual for exporting chemicals feared to be pre-cursors for a 'suitcase dirty-bomb' to Iran

Advisory work includes:

- Corporate investigations into the export by UK companies of: software for use in semi-conductor manufacturing (global); cryptographic software (Russia); and, high-performance machine parts (Iran)
- Law enforcement investigations into the export by UK companies of: submarine technology (China); and, advanced vehicle components (Russia and the United States).

Extradition

Having acted for various requesting states, including the United States, the Russian Federation and many European judicial authorities, Gavin's extradition practice is now focused on defending individuals charged with, or convicted of, serious offences including murder, terrorism and fraud.

Gavin has prevented the extradition to:

- Germany of a UK national for tax evasion
- UAE of the UK director of an aviation business for dishonoured cheques
- The Czech Republic of a UK businessman charged with offences arising from a 'lost weekend' in Prague

In addition, Gavin acted in the first ever extraditions to Peru (a series of accusation cases involving significant drug trafficking) and in extradition proceedings brought by Spain for the largest shipment of cocaine ever to be intercepted in European waters.

Inquests

Gavin's advice and advocacy is regularly sought in relation to Coroner's Inquests. He has represented doctors and healthcare organisations in sensitive Inquests where juries are sworn and where individuals are at risk of findings of neglect or being required to 'self-report' to the GMC and NHS.

Gavin has represented General Practitioners, Emergency Medicine doctors and Consultants in relation to the deaths of:

- A young man whose death in custody was contributed to by "excessive restraint" applied by police officers
- A number of young persons and adults with gender identity challenges
- A young woman after a long battle with anorexia nervosa

Professional Discipline

Gavin has represented individuals in conduct proceedings brought by the General Medical, Dental, Optical and Pharmaceutical Councils, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the Council of the Inns of Court and the Council for Licensed Conveyancers. He has particular experience where jurisdictions overlap and where the prospect of criminal proceedings is an important factor in tactical decision-making.

Recent cases include representing:

- Numerous doctors and dentists in conduct proceedings relating to: dishonesty; serious sexual offences; and, personal issues (substance misuse and developing dementia without ‘insight’)
- The National Health Service in the First-Tier and Upper Tribunals, in an appeal against a finding of ‘inefficiency’ and removal from the Performers List
- Students brought before university conduct committees in relation to allegations of serious sexual misconduct

In 2012, Gavin spent two months working for the United Nations in Kenya and regularly appeared before the UN Dispute and Appeals Tribunals.

Private Prosecution

Gavin regularly advises and represents individuals and entities in private prosecutions arising from commercial disputes with parallel civil and/or regulatory proceedings.

Much of Gavin’s work involves protecting professionals including:

- A partner in a national law firm alleged to have hacked the computer of an opponent in contested bankruptcy proceedings
- A firm of accountants alleged to have failed to comply with the notice and information provisions of the Companies Act 2006