

## Gavin Irwin

"He is eloquent on his feet and his drafting and preparation is impeccable....He is personable and clever and very good at what he does."

Chambers UK 2024



Year of Call: 1996

020 7353 5324

Widely recognised as a leading junior in financial and other serious crime, and in professional conduct and coronial proceedings, Gavin's 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.

- Financial and Trade Sanctions
- Export Controls
- National Security and Investment
- Financial Crime
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Proceeds of Crime
- Private Prosecutions
- Extradition
- Professional Conduct
- Inquests

Gavin accepts **direct access** instructions.

## What others say:

*"He is personable and is very clever and very good at what he does." "He has a great eye for digesting a lot of information and a knack for pinpointing the main issues." "Gavin is personable and*

### Location

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*quick to establish good rapport with both instructing solicitors and client.” and “He is eloquent on his feet, he is received well by the jury and by the judge, and his drafting and preparation is impeccable.” (Chambers UK 2024) – Financial Crime*

*“Gavin is very clear and detailed in his advice and is impeccable in handling challenging clients.” “A very calming manner with clients. He considers cases in light of the overall picture and commercial reality and advises clients accordingly. A great advocate to have on your side.” and “Gavin inspires full confidence in a client. He absorbs large volumes of information, and distils this down to the pertinent issues and facts at speed.” (Chambers UK 2024) – Professional Discipline*

*“Gavin is a very skilful barrister who is great at his job.” and “He has fantastic attention to detail.” (Chambers UK 2023)*

*“He has a lovely jury manner.” “He is refreshingly approachable and understands the need to be pragmatic. He appreciates the commercial reality of cases and is very responsive and flexible.” and “He is very organised and someone you definitely want on your side.” (Chambers UK 2022)*

*“Gavin is very thorough and well prepared, remains calm in any situation, and demonstrates a strong team work ethic.” (Legal 500, 2022)*

*“He’s very cerebral and intelligent, fantastically good on detail, and he gets his head around voluminous amounts of material. He’s also a very good advocate.” “He is always well prepared, has a lot of experience, and his presentation of cases is excellent.” (Chambers UK, 2021)*

*“A very effective and charming advocate, whom juries find very engaging: if, like him, you cross-examine with a smile on your face, you get a lot more information and the jury will listen.” “He’s very dignified and intelligent.” (Chambers UK, 2020)*

*“He prepares well and knows his topic.” (Legal 500, 2020)*

*“Incredibly good tactical barrister, particularly in fraud cases ... extremely knowledgeable both on financial crime and regulatory crime” (Chambers UK, 2019)*

*“A criminal barrister with the finesse and smoothness to switch very easily to the corporate or commercial context...a skilled negotiator...he understands a case from the technical, commercial and human angles” (Chambers UK 2018)*

*“An advocate who is clear and polite in court, and a skilled manager of challenging personalities ... an intelligent, sensible advocate who is direct with the judge ... his tactical awareness is very good, and he has excellent knowledge of the law.” (Chambers UK, 2017)*

*“... has a tremendously good manner with prosecutors, judges and clients.” (Chambers UK, 2016)*

*“Very good indeed, he gets stuck in and does the work ... very clued-up and switched on.” (Chambers UK, 2015)*

*“knows the law, and is very user friendly ... obvious commitment to clients ... very responsive” (Chambers UK, 2014)*

*“an expert on corporate investigations” (Chambers UK, 2013)*

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# Business Crime & Financial Services

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## 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

## Financial and Trade Sanctions

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

- A number of public figures currently under investigation in relation to: the art-market (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 two ‘firsts’:

- The criminal case alleging breaches of the financial sanctions applied against Russia – to be tried at Southwark Crown Court in 2025
- The attempted extradition to the United States of a UK national for alleged facilitation of breaches of U.S. financial sanctions against Oleg Deripaska

## 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 shaping self-disclosures, averting criminal proceedings and negotiating compound 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)

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- Law enforcement investigations into the export by UK companies of: submarine technology (China); and, advanced vehicle components (Russia and the United States).

## National Security and 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

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### Serious and 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.

## Extradition

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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

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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 & Public Inquiries

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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

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### Professional Conduct

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

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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

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bankruptcy proceedings

- A firm of accountants alleged to have failed to comply with the notice and information provisions of the Companies Act 2006

## Accreditations

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Gavin Irwin  
Crime Junior of the Year



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## Appointments & Memberships

- Private Prosecutors' Association
- Bar of England and Wales
- Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers
- Health and Safety Lawyers' Association
- Defence Extradition Lawyers' Forum
- European Criminal Bar Association
- European Fraud and Compliance Lawyers
- South Eastern Circuit

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