

# Leon Kazakos KC

Call: 1999 | Silk: 2020

"He is the top person on my list because he's dedicated, prepared and a smooth advocate."

Chambers UK 2025 (Crime)



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Leon Kazakos KC's practice divides into business crime, general crime, regulatory proceedings, tax appeals, and police disciplinary work.

Now in his fifth year in silk, he is ranked Band 2 for both General and Financial Crime by Chambers and Partners and ranked by the Legal 500 in three categories – crime, business & regulatory crime (including global investigations) and fraud. Prior to taking silk, Leon was shortlisted for Crime Junior of the Year 2019 and ranked Band 1 for Crime by Chambers and Partners.

In business crime he is instructed to defend across the spectrum of misconduct; from allegations of high value fraud, corruption, and misconduct in public office to cheating the public revenue, money laundering, insolvency offences, breaches of FSMA, and other related misconduct.

His general criminal practice encompasses homicide (murder and manslaughter), human trafficking and slavery, serious drugs and firearms offences, and serious sexual offending.

His regulatory work spans firearms licensing, breaches of planning notices, wildlife offences (CITES regulations) and some health and safety work.

His tax work focuses on bringing appeals to the First and Upper Tier Tribunals in a variety of direct and indirect taxation cases, often where evasion or dishonesty is alleged by HMRC.

He provides advice and advocacy in substantial, sensitive and complex cases, usually from a pre-charge stage; representing individuals and companies who are under investigation or being prosecuted for serious wrongdoing. He is an accredited advocacy trainer (Lincoln's Inn), a pupil supervisor, and a trained facilitator for advocacy and the vulnerable. Leon lectures and delivers training to solicitors' and accountancy firms in relation to criminal and regulatory matters, with a particular focus on financial misconduct and money laundering.

Leon was elected to Lead the South Eastern Circuit in 2023 and 2024. He is proud to be a Vice Chair of the Kalisher Trust. He is a contributing editor to Butterworths "*Fraud Law, Practice and Procedure*.", a contributing author on corporate crime to LexisNexis and a contributor to Banks on Sentence.

# Expertise

## Business Crime & Financial Services

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Ranked as a leader in financial crime in Chambers and Partners and Legal 500, complex financial cases are a very substantial part of Leon's practice. He has extensive experience of defending in all forms of business crime and is instructed to defend in cases brought by the Financial Conduct Authority, the Serious Fraud Office, CPS, BEIS, HMRC as well as against cases brought by private prosecutors where a robust approach is often called for.

Leon's caseload spans the full spectrum, from allegations of misconduct in insolvency proceedings to the operation of unauthorised collective investment schemes to bribery, political corruption and wide-ranging conspiracies to defraud. His proceeds of crime practice sees him advise and represent individuals in civil recovery disputes with the National Crime Agency.

## Recent Instructions:

### **R v X (2022 – 2026)**

Misconduct in public office

### **R v C (2022 – 2024)**

Instructed for corporate defendant in bribery prosecution

### **R v C (2022)**

Argument concerning the extra-territorial reach of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

### **Operation Barbados (2022 – 2025)**

Cheating the Public Revenue – Missing Trader Fraud

### **R v X (2022 – 2024)**

Misconduct in public office

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### **Operation Barbados (2022 – 2023)**

Cheating the Public Revenue – Missing Trader Fraud

### **R v M**

Prosecution for insolvency offences

**SFO v G (2021)**

Investment scheme investigation

**BEIS v G (2021 – 2022)**

Director's Disqualification Proceedings

**R v B (2021)**

Corruption and fraud prosecution.

**R v C (2021)**

Prosecution for misconduct in public office

**Re: X (2020-2021)**

Advising company directors in a bribery and corruption investigation

**Operation Obi-Wan (2020-2021)**

Hidden income and Value Added Tax fraud

**Operation Tennessine (2019-2020)**

Allegations of International £ multi-million banking fraud and money laundering. Leading counsel for the first defendant.

**HMRC v CL (2019)**

The defence of a company director and restaurateur against allegations of Value Added Tax and Corporation Tax evasion.

**North Wales Police v D (2019)**

Post acquittal representation of defendant against an application by police for account freezing and forfeiture orders.

**BEIS v K (2018)**

Defence counsel for the leading defendant in a prosecution brought on behalf of the Insolvency Service. The case concerned the alleged abuse of a series of limited and the creditors voluntary liquidation scheme in order to evade debts to creditors and to pursue property investment transactions. Large scale confiscation proceedings that followed were defeated entirely.

**Operation Observe (2018)**

The successful defence of a businessman accused of fraud and money laundering. The prosecution alleged his involvement in an high value conspiracy to defraud members of the public through the offering for sale of tickets to sporting events. The case received widespread publicity both before and during trial (see [here](#)).

**R v J (2018)**

Mis-selling of investment products.

### **T v T (2018)**

The successful defence of a businessman against a private prosecution brought by an ex-business partner accusing him of fraud and misuse of the letter of credit scheme.

The proceedings arose out of an international action brought in the High Court by a contractual counterparty.

### **NCA v E (2018)**

Instructed for the respondent in Part V (High Court) Civil Recovery Proceedings.

### **Operation Dogstar (2018)**

The successful defence of a City worker accused of participation in fraudulent equity release loan applications and mortgage fraud.

### **NCA v D (2017)**

Instructed for the respondent in Part V (High Court) and Part VI (Tax Tribunal) Civil Recovery Proceedings.

## **Consumer & Trading Standards**

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Leon Kazakos KC has long experience defending in prosecutions brought by Trading Standards, with a particular emphasis on the construction sector.

Recent instructions include cases involving allegations of fraudulent mis-selling, fraudulent trading in the construction and repair of residential properties, breaches of Medical Device Regulations, abuse of the UKAS and DHSC regimes and a variety of planning prosecutions.

## **Criminal Defence**

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Ranked as a leader in Crime by both the Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners for a number of years Leon is a highly experienced and committed defence advocate. He has a wide ranging and diverse defence practice with its roots in defending in cases involving serious and organised crime. His current practice has a heavy bias on defending those accused of serious financial misconduct. He is however regularly instructed to appear in cases of homicide and serious violence, rape and other serious sexual offending where specialist witness handling of vulnerable complainants is called for, drug and human trafficking, computer hacking and cases brought under the Modern Slavery Act.

In addition Leon continues to represent police officers accused of a variety of criminal offences, from perverting the course of justice to driving offences to violent crime to attempted poisoning. These are invariably cases where the allegations – regardless of gravity – have very serious consequences for the reputation and careers of those on trial. Leon's cross-discipline experience in both criminal and regulatory fields allows him to provide specialist advice to police officers under investigation.

## **Recent Instructions:**

### **R v M (2024-2025)**

Public Nuisance and Fraudulent Trading

**R v W (2024)**

Drug Trafficking

**R v T (2024)**

Murder

**R v B (2023)**

Coercive & Controlling behaviour

**R v UC (2023)**

Forensic scientist accused of misconduct in public office. Press coverage: [BBC](#) | [The Times](#)

**R v H (2023)**

Murder – Shooting.

**R v J (2022)**

Appeal to High Court in Kenya to overturn conviction for human trafficking.

**R v B (2022)**

£12m sterling counterfeiting conspiracy.

**R v A (2022)**

Murder ‘Joint enterprise’ stabbing.

**R v F (2022)**

Prosecution following a fatal accident involving death of off duty police officer.

**R v B (2022)**

Stalking, revenge pornography and voyeurism prosecution.

**R v C (2022)**

Child cruelty.

**R v R (2021)**

Murder.

**R v M (2021)**

Prosecution of bank worker for alleged sexual offences following a vigilante group ‘sting’ operation.

**R v S (2021)**

Child cruelty.

**R v H (2020)**

Murder – stabbing.

**R v U (2020)**

Murder ‘Joint enterprise’ stabbing.

**R v X (2020)**

Police officers accused of perverting the course of justice.

**R v D (2019)**

The successful defence of an individual accused of modern slavery offences.

**NCA v S (2019)**

Leading junior for the defence in the largest prosecution brought for importation and production of anabolic steroids (BBC report [here](#)).

**R v K (2019)**

Representing a man accused of being a ‘high society drug dealer’. The case received widespread publicity following conviction (The Times report [here](#)).

## Environmental

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Leon Kazakos’s broad defence practice regularly encompasses advice and representation for individuals and companies who face investigation or prosecution by the Environment Agency and other enforcement authorities for environmental and related offences.

## Recent Instructions:

**R v E Ltd**

Defence of a waste management company for serial breaches of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 and for misconduct in insolvency proceedings.

**R v X Ltd**

Defence of company and its director for breaches of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 involving the unsafe disposal of asbestos.

**R v N (2018), R v S (2019), R v S (2022)**

Instructed for the defence in three separate cases where private individuals were charged with breaches of the Control of Trade in Endangered Species Regulations 1997. The defendants had, either using various internet forums (Ebay and Instagram) or in retail trade purchased and then sold or offered for sale clothing made from pelts and skins and hair of endangered species. Those species were listed in the annexes to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In two cases the defendants faced further charges brought under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 for the fraudulent evasion of the

regulation of the trade, and the fraudulent evasion of import and export duty. Non-custodial sentences were achieved in all three cases.

**R v X Ltd**

Defending the Company and its directors in proceedings brought by the local authority for breaches of Town and Country Planning Act 1990, through the operation of a Shisha café

**R v C & P Ltd**

Defending both the company and its director in protracted confiscation proceedings arising out of historic breaches of planning notices.

**R v P**

A prosecution brought by the Environment Agency and the local authority for long term abuse of the regulations and serial breaches of enforcement notices over the operation of an unlicensed waste disposal system on green belt land. The case involved protracted legal argument and confiscation proceedings thereafter.

**R v S**

Defending a company director against allegations brought by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.”

## Health & Safety

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Leon provides advice to and represents corporate and professional/director clients in all types of Health and Safety at Work Act, Planning and Environmental Act cases and has a broad experience of defending in a wide range of regulatory prosecutions. He also represents corporate and private firearm and shotgun licence holders in appeals.

## Recent Instructions:

**R v D**

This criminal prosecution arose from the very serious injury to and blinding of a man employed by the defendant company to service and repair motor vehicles.

**R v B**

Defence of company director accused a series of offences contrary to the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

**R v C**

Defending a private individual in a prosecution brought against a caravan site for breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act arising out of the unsafe storage and maintenance of gas cylinders and appliances.

**R v X Ltd**

Defence of a company accused of breaches of the Work at Height Regulations.

## Private Prosecution

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Graded at Grade 3 by the Crown Prosecution Service and with experience of prosecuting a wide variety of cases Leon Kazakos also advises on the bringing of private prosecutions in cases where the CPS have declined to prosecute.

### Recent Instructions:

**Re: J**

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution of a then serving cabinet minister for expenses fraud.

**Re: G**

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution for a suspected fraud perpetrated by an insurance company against a contracting supplier.

**Re: C**

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution of an insolvency practitioner (Administrator) for fraud in the conduct of a company's affairs.

**Re: M**

Advice to the defendant in civil proceedings about the bringing of a private prosecution for perjury.

**Re: D**

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution for assault in the context of a divorce.

## Professional Discipline

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Leon provides advice to and represents police officers and HMRC officers in professional disciplinary matters.

### Recent Instructions:

**AA v PC K**

The officer was accused of discreditable conduct, of a breach of the Data Protection Act and of acting in breach of the standards of confidentiality after sharing information about an arrest with a colleague, information that then reached the victim of the incident.

The Appropriate Authority had argued that dismissal was the only suitable outcome after a contested hearing. Having heard argument the Panel were persuaded – despite characterising the behaviour as gross misconduct- that the officer should receive a final written warning, thus remaining in employment.

**MP v Q**

The successful defence of a police detective accused of a series of allegations of gross misconduct: including allegations of dishonesty.



All allegations of dishonesty were found to be groundless with a large proportion of the case against the accused officer being stayed for abuse of process.

**Re: B**

Advising an accountant [whose clients include household name celebrities] facing an investigation in respect of both tax advice given and the operation of a tax avoidance scheme.

**Re: JS**

Advising an officer of HMRC facing disciplinary proceedings brought for suspected evasion/non declaration of Stamp Duty Land Tax arising out of his operation of a business undeclared to his employer.

## Tax

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An indirect tax evasion specialist Leon advises and represents individuals and companies who wish to appeal the decisions of HMRC to withhold input tax or to assess duty claims. He is also increasingly instructed at an early stage by companies who have become – or are concerned they may become – the subject of HMRC investigations. He appears before the First and Upper Tier Tax Tribunals, usually but not exclusively where dishonesty is alleged by HMRC.

He brings his significant experience in defending in the criminal courts in tax and duty fraud to these cases along with a full understanding of the significant body of case law that has developed in the area of Missing Trader Fraud, and the developing position in the DOTAS regime.

## Recent Instructions:

Leon is instructed to advise and represent corporates and individuals in a series of appeals to the First and Upper Tier Tribunals concerning:

- VAT Margin Scheme Abuse
- Construction Industry Scheme abuse
- The Alcohol Wholesalers Registration Scheme
- The Disclosure of Tax Avoidance Scheme (DOTAS) Regime
- The Promotion of Tax Avoidance Scheme (POTAS) Regime
- ‘Missing Trader’ Value Added Tax disputes