

Gareth Rees KC (Associate)



Call: 1981

Silk: 2003

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Profile

Gareth was a practising member of the Bar for 31 years, taking silk in 2003, before being appointed Director of Enforcement at the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) in 2012. From 2017 to 2023 he was a partner in two global US Law Firms.

At the Bar he was recognised as a junior and leading counsel in Crime and Fraud for over 20 years in the professional directories. Some of the comments made by clients included:

- “a truly gifted defence silk, who understands the interplay between the technical and the tactical and always takes the optimal point for the client.”
- “he identifies key areas in an unfussy and unpompous way”
- “Dynamic and very astute”

He was involved in some of the most high-profile cases and was often instructed in regulatory matters leading to his appointment by the FRC.

At the Bar some of the notable cases in which Gareth acted as defence counsel were:

- Jubilee Line extension Fraud;

- Mars UK Bribery;
- Millennium Dome Bribery;
- Independent Insurance Fraud;
- Versailles PLC Fraud;
- Balfron Trustees Fraud;
- Oil-for-Food Iraq Sanctions criminal prosecutions;
- R-v- Rollins Insider Dealing criminal trial;
- R-v- Scheffer UN Corruption;
- R-v-Reichwald, Sackavicas and others, Money Laundering.

He also acted for the defence as leading counsel in a number of high-profile homicide cases including the re-trial of the 'Clydach murders' defendant in South Wales.

His wider practice involved providing advice to corporate clients and individuals on issues involving criminal and regulatory risk and he was frequently asked to speak at seminars and conferences on a range of issues. He continues to receive invitations to speak and has also published many legal articles and client guidance.

As Director of Enforcement at the FRC he built a team of lawyers and accountants who investigated and prosecuted misconduct by company directors and auditors in their duties in preparing and approving financial statements which affected the UK public interest.

This involved undertaking major investigations in high profile cases involving the leading accountancy firms who undertook the audit of large UK public interest corporate entities including HBOS, Tesco, Rolls Royce, Cooperative Bank, Serco, BHS, Sports Direct and Autonomy. Many of the investigations were done in parallel with other UK regulators including the SFO, FCA, Pensions Regulator and the Insolvency Service. A number had an international element and involved working closely with regulators in other jurisdictions.

As a partner in two large US law firms Gareth used his expertise and experience from the Bar and the FRC to advise global corporate clients and senior individuals on UK criminal and regulatory law. This involved travel to various jurisdictions and included investigations in Japan, India, Ukraine, Netherlands and UAE as well as numerous trips to the US to meet clients.

As a partner at King & Spalding LLP Gareth acted for a senior executive in the SFO Petrofac bribery investigation and a major Middle East corporate client in a Health and Safety prosecution following an explosion at a large London hotel. At Morrison & Foerster LLP he provided criminal client advice in the Horizon Post Office Public Inquiry and the CPS criminal investigations of individuals. He also provided UK sanctions advice to large global financial institutions following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and was a member of the firm's global

steering group on Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) issues advising on Modern Slavery Act issues, UK regulatory requirements on sustainability disclosures, and on Human Rights and other issues in the supply chain.

Gareth has been a member of the RFU Disciplinary Panel for 15 years and has chaired many high-profile appeal panels.

Related practice areas

Criminal Law

Business Crime & Investigations

Professional Discipline and Regulation