



NICHOLA HIGGINS

MAIN AREAS OF PRACTICE:

Fraud, Financial and Business
Crime
Crime and Regulatory Law
Extradition and Mutual
Assistance

Called to the Bar 2005

CONTACT:

nicholahiggins@matrixlaw.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7404 3447
Paul Venables, Senior Practice
Manager
paulvenables@matrixlaw.co.uk

A leading practitioner in the field of financial and corporate crime, Nichola has defended, investigated and prosecuted some of the most complex and challenging allegations of corruption and fraud, both domestic and overseas, in recent years.

FINANCIAL CRIME

Nichola's experience of complex and multi-jurisdictional matters of corruption and fraud includes:

- First junior, since 2015, for a global engineering company, in a multi-phase SFO prosecution for international corruption. This seminal case was one of the SFO's largest and longest running corporate prosecutions for corruption. It raised issues of corporate liability, jurisdiction, prosecution appeals, good/bad character of corporate entities, and, most notably, it was the first prosecution of a corporate in the absence of its directing mind. These issues have been reported separately at R. v. Alstom Network UK Ltd [2019] EWCA Crim 1318; R. v. A Ltd, [2016] 4 W.L.R. 176; and R. v. AIL [2016] Q.B. 763;
- Acting for the Serious Fraud Office, since 2015, in a £30 million multi-jurisdictional and multi-handed "sustainable" investment fraud;
- Junior advocate in a multi-handed, boiler-room fraud;
- Instructed as sole junior for the Financial Conduct Authority in a prosecution relating to a deposit taking scheme;
- An application to set aside fourteen account freezing orders, combined value of £12 million, on behalf of a director/beneficial owner of a network of international companies;
- Second junior for the SFO for both the investigation and trial of an international conspiracy to corrupt spanning a decade and involving the payment of \$30 million of alleged bribes;
- Junior counsel for the SFO in a fraud to cheat a private Swiss bank of €22 million perpetrated by a City equity partner and his client;
- Junior counsel for the SFO in the investigation and prosecution of a CEO of a London reinsurance company for a conspiracy to make corrupt payments to high ranking officials in Latin America.

Nichola Higgins:
nicholahiggins@matrixlaw.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7404 3447
Paul Venables, Senior Practice Manager
paulvenables@matrixlaw.co.uk

DIRECTORIES' RECOMMENDATIONS

HERE'S WHAT THEY SAY:

'Extremely thorough, hard-working and diligent'

'She has an unparalleled work ethic and displays real energy both when preparing for a trial and during the course of it. She leaves no stone unturned in terms of reviewing material and considering things from every angle'

'A thorough and incisive junior barrister'

'A first-class advocate with an enormous capacity for huge cases.'

"An excellent, very hard-working junior who assimilates volumes of material quickly and is good at identifying tricky issues in an enormous case."

"A junior with a strong record of acting in high-stakes corruption matters, who has an impressive corporate client base. She is capable of handling both government and internal investigations, including those with a multi-jurisdictional reach".

"Able to distil complex legal issues down to the salient points very quickly"

"She is bright, extremely hard-working and someone who has a real focus on the job in hand. Her attention to detail is second to none and her judgment is spot on".

"Aside from her obvious intelligence and remarkable memory, she is down-to-earth, pragmatic and very accessible".

**Ranked junior, Chambers UK:
Financial Crime: Corporates (2019
and 2020)**

**Ranked junior, Chambers UK:
Financial Crime (2018, 2019, 2020)**

**Leading junior Business and
Regulatory Crime (including global
investigations) - Legal 500 (2018,
2019 and 2020)**

CORPORATE ADVICE

Nichola advises companies on their compliance procedures and has unique experience of advising an international corporation engaged in global projects on the practical features of the 'adequate procedures' defence under the Bribery Act 2010.

She has conducted and advised upon internal investigations, both national and cross-border, drawing upon her experience of multi-jurisdictional SFO investigations. Her experience includes:

- Advising a sovereign wealth fund on the merits of a private prosecution;
- Instructed alone on behalf of nine senior directors of a global parent company threatened with prosecution by Companies House;
- An internal investigation on behalf of a billion pound hospitality company;
- Advising a multi-national on various matters of criminal and international law arising from the salvage of a celebrated wreck;
- Advising a UK board regarding concurrent civil and criminal proceedings in Spain and linked MLA requests in the UK;
- Instructed to advise a FTSE 100 extractive company in relation to its investigation by the Serious Fraud Office for suspected corruption offences;
- Instructed alone to review an internal investigation for a large multi-national concerning the diversion of some €30 million from an engineering project;
- Advised a French blue-chip (CAC40) multi-national with complex global operations on its Bribery Act obligations for six months in 2014. While based in Paris, Nichola led a team advising on adequate procedures and related issues.

Nichola is an approved advocate for the Serious Fraud Office (A Panel) and a fluent Spanish speaker.

OTHER NOTABLE CRIMINAL WORK

Nichola has wide experience of appellate cases, judicial review and organised crime. She is regularly instructed, both alone and as a led junior, where novel or complex issues of law arise.

Recent instructions include:

- A multi-handed, six year conspiracy to pervert the course of justice;
- A conspiracy to import/ supply class A, challenging targeted equipment interference under the Investigatory Powers Act (an "EncroChat" case);
- Securing the release of a vulnerable group of Jersey national forcibly quarantined in a hotel in Tenerife following an outbreak of COVID-19;

Nichola Higgins:
nicholahiggins@matrixlaw.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7404 3447
Paul Venables, Senior Practice Manager
paulvenables@matrixlaw.co.uk

- Instructed to defend allegations of dissemination of terrorist publications.

EXTRADITION

Nichola advises and appears for requested persons facing extradition at both first instance and on appeal to the High Court. Significant cases include:

- *Islam v. Cyprus* Represented a person wanted for extradition by Cyprus. The case required legal argument on the construction and specificity of the European Arrest Warrant.

ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

Nichola is a member of the editorial board of Lloyds Law Reports: Financial Crime and contributes regularly to that publication.

In addition, she both lectures and writes on Financial Crime.

Publications include:

- Taylor on Criminal Appeals, Ch.4, *Judicial Review of Decisions of Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court* (2021).
- Bribery: a compliance handbook, Bloomsbury Professional 2014 (contributing author). Second edition commissioned for 2021.
- Account freezing orders: at what cost? Co-authored with Richard Fisher Q.C. December 2019
- Time to negotiate? An analysis of deferred prosecution agreements, Counsel Magazine, September 2014
- Principal's Consent: has the mist finally cleared? March 2014
- Deferred Prosecution Agreements at what price? Published in The Lawyer June 2013
- The Bribery Act 2010, Westlaw UK Insight, 2012
- Corruption and Misconduct in a Public Office, Westlaw UK Insight, 2012
- "All hail the Bribery Act: the toothless wonder" (Archbold News, July 2011)
- "The Bribery Act 2010: all bark and no bite?" (Archbold News, June 2010)
- "Something in Common: A report on the 17th Commonwealth Lawyers' Association Conference" (Counsel, June 2011)
- "Positive Transformation", an article on the future of the Young Bar (Counsel, June 2011)
- "The Advocates Panel Scheme and the Bar", an article written with Max Hill Q.C. on the CPS Advocates Panels (Counsel, May 2011)
- "Taking a case to the Court of Human Rights: An overview"

Nichola Higgins:
nicholahiggins@matrixlaw.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7404 3447
Paul Venables, Senior Practice Manager
paulvenables@matrixlaw.co.uk

Representation of the Profession

Nichola was Chairman of the Young Barristers' Committee of the Bar Council of England and Wales in 2011 and a member of Bar Council for three years. She was a member of the Board of Editors of Counsel Magazine (2012-2015) and has represented the Bar at the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association annual conference (2011) and at the American Bar Association Young Lawyers' Division annual conference (2011).

Nichola is regulated by the Bar Standards Board and accepts instructions under Standard Contractual Terms. To find out more information on this and the way we work at Matrix, including our fee transparency statement, please see our [service standards](#).