EXCHANGE CHAMBERS

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Hal Watson

Call 2003

Clerks

Ian Spencer
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Kate Heald
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Sara Baxter
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Appointments

- Grade 4 Fraud Panel Specialist
- Grade 4 POCA Panel
- Grade 3 General Crime Prosecutor

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association
- North Eastern Circuit
- Fraud Lawyers Association

Asset Forfeiture

Hal has very significant experience in cases relating to the recovery of criminal proceeds under both pre, and post Proceeds of Crime Act legislation, including the POCA freezing and forfeiture provisions and the Unexplained Wealth Order regime.

Hal is a grade 4 prosecutor on the CPS Proceeds of Crime Panel and acts for the defence in non-CPS matters, therefore in respect of proceedings brought by the Serious Fraud Office, Insolvency Service and in like civil proceedings.

He is regularly instructed in confiscation hearings where benefit figures are in excess of £10m, allied enforcement proceedings, and on applications pursuant to section 22 and 23 POCA 2002. Hal has relevant experience at first instance and in the appellate courts in relation to asset freezing and forfeiture including in the High Court with reference to enforcement and receivership processes.

Hal has direct experience of AF powers arising from the Criminal Finances Act 2017 including where criminal proceedings were either not pursued or were inappropriate, and has advised on the interplay between and decisions to pursue civil as against criminal forfeiture processes (including with reference to relevant standard and burdens and the unavailability of criminal disposal).

He routinely works in conjunction with (internal and external) forensic accountants and financial investigators both pre and post charge in respect of restraint and the recovery/confiscation of assets in the context of police and HMRC investigations relating to asset tracing, tax misconduct and restraint.

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Recommendations

Consistently listed by Chambers UK as Tier 1 counsel.

See also historically from Chambers and Partners:

"A junior recognised for his experience in financial crime. He has a particular focus on the prosecution of large-scale fraud and money laundering cases."

"He is incredibly thorough and very hard-working ... a very good operator; he deals in large-scale, paper-heavy cases and is meticulous ... the go-to financial crime junior."