

If the SFO comes knocking, here's where to turn for help

Financial crime & fraud & regulatory

BCL Solicitors

Headquarters **London**

Equity partners **12**

Headcount **65**

Turnover **£12 million**

Fraud prosecutions have fallen to record lows, with only about one in 500 reported offences leading to a prosecution, despite rising levels of crimes.

Nonetheless, this specialist in financial crime, fraud and regulatory matters has been busy over the past year, acting for a wide range of clients who have found themselves in the cross-hairs of the authorities.

Its lawyers represent key individuals in several high-profile investigations by the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), including cases involving the government contractor Serco and the oil-field services group Petrofac.

The firm is advising a former senior executive of the aircraft manufacturer Airbus over a global corruption investigation by the SFO, the French National Financial Prosecutor's Office, the US

Department of Justice and the Enforcement Directorate in India. In January Airbus reached a deferred prosecution agreement with the SFO and agreed to pay €991 million in the UK as part of a record €3.6 billion global penalty.

The practice is representing a Premier League football club in an investigation by HM Revenue & Customs into alleged complicity by several clubs in tax fraud linked to player transfer deals.

The firm's criminal defence practice is representing Razi Shah, a solicitor and civil judge who is charged with eight other lawyers over alleged legal aid fraud. They are accused of falsely claiming £12.6 million in costs, which they have all denied. Their trial at Southwark crown court was halted because of Covid-19.

The firm is also acting for the multimillionaire hedge fund manager Crispin Odey, *left*, who denies groping a young female banker at his home in 1998.

The busy regulatory practice also advised the steel producer Celsa after an explosion at its Cardiff plant in 2015 that killed two employees. The firm avoided being charged with corporate manslaughter, but was fined £1.8 million after admitting safety failures.



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