



## PAUL SCHOFIELD

### CRIMINAL DEFENCE SOLICITOR

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 [Paul Schofield, UK | Chambers Profiles](#)

### WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT PAUL

*"Five star operator Paul Schofield is accessible, has the human touch and is one of the best solicitors I have ever dealt with."*

**Chambers & Partners 2022**

*"Thank you and all of the amazing team at Farleys for all that you have done for me and my family. From the first meeting I was reassured by your experience and professionalism. Your calm assured approach gave great confidence and I felt looked after throughout. What an amazingly professional and friendly team!"*

**Richard Emmett**

*"Paul Schofield is exceptional. He has a huge amount of experience and is incredibly easy to work with."*

*"Paul Schofield is outstanding. He is meticulous in his preparation and has an excellent support team."*

*"They are a fantastic team, always willing to go the extra mile for the client."*

**Legal 500 2023**



### ABOUT PAUL

Paul is a vastly experienced solicitor specialising in the defence of Serious Fraud, Business Crime, and Serious Crime cases. For over 40 years he has enjoyed a reputation for the vigorous defence of his clients from arrest/investigation right through to trial and, on occasions, appeal. He has been Head of the Criminal Law Department at Farleys throughout. His practice has always been based upon "standing shoulder to shoulder" with his clients and robustly advancing their cases.

He has developed and maintains a strong position in the legal market having become a "go-to choice" for professional clients, in particular other solicitors, and is privileged to receive referrals and recommendations from his peers. Paul has been completely trusted by very many other solicitors and clients to defend their cases in an astute and energetic manner.

He routinely deals with serious fraud investigations and prosecutions brought by Government agencies including the Serious Fraud Office, CPS Serious Economic Organised Crime and International Directorate (SEOCID), HMRC, National Trading Standards, The Environment Agency, and others including the Department for Transport. He is well known for his expertise in stopping cases at the investigation stage, or failing that, in the meticulous preparation of proactive defence cases to give his clients the best chance of winning a trial. His success rate is amongst the best in the country. His practice has been a national one for very many years, with cases across the length and breadth of the jurisdiction and trials in all the major cities, particularly in London at Southwark Crown Court.

Paul deals with privately funded cases, often insurance backed, and also legally aided cases, with equal gusto.

### CAREER OVERVIEW

Qualifying in 1980, Paul spent the first decade of his career setting up and running the Criminal Law Department at Farleys, soon becoming a Partner in the firm. In the 1990s he developed a real appetite for Serious Fraud and Serious Crime cases, which paved the way for two distinct areas within the team. One side deals with 'mainstream' crime cases with a high-quality Legal Aid Agency (LAA) approved service; and the second leading on Serious Fraud, Business Crime and Serious Crime cases. This is simply because Paul realised from a very early stage that the demands, skill sets and expertise in both areas of criminal defence work are very different. Serious Fraud cases typically last several years whereas mainstream cases have a shelf life of only weeks or months.



## SOME CAREER HIGHLIGHTS...

**2001** – Paul was one of the first members of the Serious Fraud Panel set up by the LAA, his application was supported by a Queen’s Counsel who later became the most senior criminal law Judge in the country.

**2002** – The LAA set up the VHCC Scheme in order to manage very high-cost criminal cases. Paul received instructions in several “carousel frauds” which were typically dealt with in London at Southwark Crown Court, with huge levels of paperwork and long trials. The VHCC Scheme included an Appeals Panel system and Paul became a member of that relatively small group of lawyers hearing appeals, and he continues to deal with these. He has been a Grade A VHCC Supervisor from the inception of the Scheme.

**2003** – Paul’s work was recognised in the Chambers UK Guide to the Legal Profession and his department soon achieved Category 1 status with Paul being recognised as a “leading individual”. This level has been maintained annually since then, please see the link above for the 2022 edition.

**2004** – Several criminal defence solicitors instructed Paul in separate high profile cases alleging money laundering linked to the activities of their clients in the wholesale importation/supply of drugs. All were acquitted.

**2006** – Paul was appointed to the Law Society’s Panel as an expert in money laundering to advise other solicitors who encountered money laundering issues.

**2007** – Paul’s work was recognised in ‘Debretts: People of Today’ for his “services to the legal profession” and this has been the case annually since then.

**2011** – Paul’s work was also recognised in The Legal 500 with Farleys rated as a “Tier 1 Firm” and Paul as a “Leading Lawyer”. This again has been maintained annually.

**2012** – Paul achieved the status of Higher Courts Advocate enabling him to appear in the Crown Court and Court of Appeal should he so wish.

Over the last year ten years Paul has also played an active part in strategic decisions with Farleys’ expansion into offices in the cities of Manchester and Preston, both of which have been a resounding success. He has continued to attract the highest quality of work across the whole country, particularly in serious fraud.



## CURRENT SERIOUS FRAUD CASES



**2R -v- RE & 2 others** – this was a prosecution at Southwark Crown Court brought by the SFO after a lengthy investigation into the activities of solicitors dealing with The Axiom Legal Fund. The value of the fraud was over £100m and the trial took place between April and July 2022 when our client was the only one of three defendants to be found “not guilty”. The case is still current because we are pursuing a substantial claim on behalf of our client for his expenses having successfully applied for a Defendant’s Costs Order in his favour. ([Law Society Gazette](#))



**R -v- LS & 17 others – Operation Destin** – trial listed for May 2023 at Southwark Crown Court, this is a VHCC prosecution alleging thousands of timeshare resales which were fraudulent over a 5 year period, the total value around £45M.



**R -v- LQ & 3 others – Operation Best** – this is a Trading Standards prosecution following a 6 year investigation into the alleged fraudulent mis-selling of energy contracts, trial due to start at Preston Crown Court in October 2022. Value around £45m.



**R -v- CX & 3 others – Operation Manningtree** – this is a highly complex and international fraud involving the alleged evasion of various duties by the importation of solar panels from China over a long period of time. The trial is listed at Leeds Crown Court in May 2023 and is expected to last up to 6 months. Value over £40m.



**R -v- EP & 7 others -- Operation Druid** – case to be tried at Leicester Crown Court in January 2023, involving fraudulent evasion of VAT and money laundering arising from the practices in the clothing industry in the Leicester area, an investigation which lead to the issue surrounding Boohoo.



**R -v- HAM & 3 others – Operation Sanicle** – a conspiracy to defraud involving employees at a bank and the withdrawal of funds from customers’ accounts involving £2m-£3m. Trial listed at the Inner London Crown Court in January 2023.

Below is a selection of cases concluded in recent years.



**R -v- TW & 4 Others – Operation Fox** – a long investigation and then prosecution by the Department for Transport against 5 Directors/Managers at an engineering company producing exhaust systems. This was a shocking case involving a wholly biased investigation starting in 2015 and then prosecution in 2019 which, due to aggressive pre-trial applications, we were able to stop and have thrown out before the trial began. This resulted in us recovering over £2m in defence costs. This case is now the subject of a substantial commercial claim in the High Court on behalf of all 5 defendants and the company for damages caused by malicious prosecution and misfeasance in public office, being dealt with by Farleys' Commercial Litigation Department.



**R -v- PL & 7 others** – SFO Investigation into Tata Steels. This long running investigation ultimately ended with no prosecution, due to a proactive approach to the investigation by the defence.



**R -v- LS & 8 others** – Another SFO investigation this time into what was said to be over £200m worth of fraud to do with re-development schemes in Liverpool and Manchester and the receipt of foreign investments particularly from Hong Kong. After a lengthy investigation and again due to proactive defence work, there was no prosecution at all.



**R -v- CH & 8 others** – An HMRC prosecution at Birmingham Crown Court in relation to alleged fraudulent pension schemes, our client was an IFA and the lead defendant. He was acquitted after a trial.



**R -v- KF & 1 other – Operation Backbar** – a conspiracy to defraud involving VAT and money laundering and the wholesale transfer of personal data via platforms, based upon false invoicing. Our client was tried at Leeds Crown Court in 2018 and was acquitted, the other defendant was convicted and sentenced to 9 years in prison. The value of the fraud was said to be over £40m.



**R -v- JG & 10 others – Operation Fig** – a large case involving alleged immigration fraud, forgery, bribery of public officials, mortgage fraud and money laundering concerning very many applications to enter the UK over a 7 year period made by Chinese Nationals. Our client was an accountant and she was acquitted after trial at Leeds Crown Court. The value was said to be £1.5m.



**R -v- NC & 4 others – Operation Remzacco** – a very long investigation by the Specialist Organised & Economic Crime Command of New Scotland Yard into systematic offences of bribery and corruption, fraud and money laundering involving Coca Cola Enterprises. Our client alone was alleged to have received over £4m, we negotiated an extremely favourable compromise with the ultimate outcome in 2021 that our client received a suspended prison sentence at Southwark Crown Court.



**R -v- IM – Operation Façade** – our client was 1 of 7 suspects in an investigation involving widespread unlawful immigration and malpractice in connection with bogus colleges. There were numerous interviews under caution for our client but ultimately no further action was taken against him, another example of proactive pre-charge defence work.