

## Neil Saunders



Call: 1983

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### Details of practice

"Neil Saunders is 'without doubt the leading junior' – 'absolutely incredible'" **(The Legal 500)**

Specialist criminal and serious fraud advocate in all criminal courts.

Represents professional individuals and companies being investigated or accused of crime.

Regularly instructed as leader or junior by large city and specialist white collar fraud firms providing strategic advice during all stages of investigation, including pre charge.

Previous Grade 4 prosecutor.

Inquests - advising individuals or institutions re potential verdicts and procedure.

He has advised and appeared in a number of very high profile cases that received considerable media and press attention including cases which involved highly reputable families where children or relations became involved in either violence in night clubs or allegations of rape at house parties.

Neil has defended in numerous police discipline cases including allegations of dishonesty, excessive force, matters of sexual impropriety by police officers whilst on duty; also in cases directed by IOPC. Police disciplinary proceedings both before Metropolitan and Provincial forces.

Appears on behalf of respondents to special procedure hearings and in sports disciplinary hearings.

Appeared in Divisional court cases involving drink driving legislation and custody time limits.

**Crime:**

- Serious crime including murder, human and drug trafficking and serious sexual allegations
- Money laundering/complex commercial fraud
- Mortgage fraud
- Banking/advance fee/derivative frauds
- Share dealing allegations
- Tax and VAT fraud
- Bribery/corruption
- Cartels and price fixing/computer misuse

**Professional Discipline:**

- Police misconduct in disciplinary hearings and PATs
- Misfeasance in a public office
- Regulatory crime/health and safety

**Asset Recovery:**

- Criminal confiscation ; search and seizure orders
- Restraint, third party rights and contempt; civil recovery under Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

### Directory recommendations

Regularly ranked as a Star individual in Crime and Fraud in the **Chambers UK Guide**

"A phenomenon. He's brilliant with the jury and incredibly smooth with the judge." "Juries are very receptive to him as he is down-to-earth and both a very good cross-examiner and a great speech maker." **Chambers UK 2019: Crime**

"Saunders is widely regarded as a go-to leader in high-profile cases and has been instructed by the FCA in a number of major criminal prosecutions. He is valued for his ability to advise at the pre-charge stage of investigations." "Outstanding and wonderful with clients." "He has a lot of experience to draw upon." **Chambers UK 2019: Financial Crime**

'Meticulous in his preparation, and with great fluidity and charm as an advocate.' **The Legal 500 2019: Crime**

"Highly experienced – anyone who instructs him is lucky to have him." **The Legal 500 Fraud 2019: Crime**

"Probably one of the best juniors practicing at present"" **The Legal 500 2019: Business and Regulatory Crime**

"praised for his extremely persuasive advocacy which is "plainly silk standard."" **Chambers UK 2018: Crime**

"Offers gravitas and efficacy in equal measure." "In terms of his client care and the way he prepares the case, you can't fault him." **Chambers UK 2018: Crime**

"He has an unequalled practice as a leading junior and his knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected by judges and fellow counsel alike. His breadth of practice attests to his versatility." **Chambers UK 2018: Financial Crime**

"Great with clients, he can see the shape of a defence case and knows how to present it to a jury." **Chambers UK 2018: Financial Crime**

'One of life's eternal geniuses' 'Masterful and very well respected by judges and prosecutors alike, as well as co-defending counsel'. 'Neil Saunders has an unequalled practice as a leading junior and his knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected. His breadth of practice attests to his versatility.' **Chambers UK 2017: Crime**

'He has tremendous client care skills and makes the client feel safe.' 'He's a very eloquent advocate and you know if you instruct him on a case he's as good as many silks.' 'He is incredibly client-friendly and good at conveying unwelcome advice when he has to.' **Chambers UK 2017: Financial Crime**

'Regarded as the leading junior of the Criminal Bar, he has "unequalled and highly versatile practice" "He is tremendous - he's very astute, very easy to get on with, very good with clients, and respected by judges. His strategic acumen is second to none among juniors." **Chambers UK 2016: Crime**

"A very powerful court presence - he really takes control of the court." "Very good on detail and has an excellent jury manner." **Chambers UK 2016: Financial Crime**

"He is a cheerful and personable man which is important in these difficult cases." "His advocacy is admirable, and judges and juries love him." **Chambers UK 2016: Inquests**

"A consummate professional and a highly able advocate." 'He is conscientious, hard-working and realistic in the way in which he approaches cases.'" "Extremely thorough in his preparation and a very good cross-examiner. He will always do the best for his clients in extremely difficult circumstances." "He has the ear of the court and is highly empathetic." **Chambers UK: Inquests**

## Education/professional qualifications

BA (Hons) Law  
Called 1983

## Appointments

Recorder South Eastern Circuit 2004 – to date – also hears serious sexual offences and appeals

## Other information

Appeal Steward British Boxing Board of Control  
2009-10 SEC/CBA Working Parties considering the fraud review on plea bargaining and extending the powers of the Crown Court and revision of Code for Prosecutors  
2006-2009 South Eastern Circuit Committee  
2008 and 2009 Circuit committee re Jesus College Cambridge, Bar Conference and Dame Ann Ebsworth lectures  
1996-1999 Bar Council and CBA member  
1998 to date - Advocacy trainer and sponsor - Middle Temple  
1999 - 2001 Governor ICSSL  
2016 – Bencher Middle Temple

### Memberships:

South Eastern Circuit  
Criminal Bar Association  
Fraud Lawyers' Association  
Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers

**Leisure Pursuits:**

Golf, 22 handicap; competent skier; and willing bridge partner  
2009 RFU Referee Levels 1 and 2, ex member of London Society of Referees  
2004 Qualified RFU mini/midi coach level 1 and 2, ex player at London Welsh RFC  
Previously licensed and qualified pyrotechnic and DCPS choral society

## Direct access

**Instructing Neil Saunders direct**

Neil is qualified to accept instructions direct from clients under the Bar Council's Public Access Scheme. This means that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to him.

In addition Neil welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's Licensed Access Scheme.

He may also accept instructions direct from clients who carry on business or usually reside outside England and Wales, provided that the work is advisory. In such matters, if representation is required, a registered European lawyer may instruct in the same way as a solicitor of England and Wales.

His Senior Clerk Eddie Holland will be pleased to assist with any enquiries.

Please call him on 020 7400 6400 to discuss.

## Notable cases

**Crime:****Paul Wakeford**

Represented ex Inspector who was alleged to have assaulted a Spurs fan whilst escorting Arsenal fans into White Hart Lane. Further alleged to have then perverted the course of justice in writing a false account of the events.

**Stephen Higgins**

This individual was alleged to have committed grievous bodily harm by using his car to inflict injury on a 70 year old protestor at the US Airbase outside Harrogate. The incident was filmed on CCTV and a number of significant eye witnesses were called in the case including significant character witnesses who testified to his good standing.

**Christophe Stankovic**

This defendant a French national was arrested 6 months after an audacious plan to steal £4.5m of diamonds from Boodles New Bond Street in a switch or confidence trick. He was the only member of the team to face charges and having pleaded guilty was sentenced to 42 months imprisonment.

**Ryan McGowan: Southwark Crown Court [2016]**

This officer pleaded guilty to misconduct in public office having accepted that he was not authorised to carry a firearm. It was clear that this officer suffered from PTSD and it manifestly affected his position for some period of time.

**A business man: Oxford Crown Court [2016]**

The defendant pleaded guilty to attempting to pervert the course of justice. He received a suspended sentence due to the effect imprisonment would have on a number of colleagues and employees.

**Neil Wallis: Central Criminal Court [2015]**

This case was the final "hacking" case to be tried. Neil Wallis was the deputy editor of the News of the World under Andy Coulson's reign. The co-accused had pleaded guilty. Mr Wallis' defence was that he had never been involved or party to any agreement to hack the telephones of any personality. The main witness was a fellow journalist Dan Evans who was cross-examined for several days as to the detailed and contradictory accounts he had previously given.

**Charlie Brooks: Central Criminal Court [2013-2014]**

Prepared, advised and represented Rebekah's husband for nearly two years in the "hacking case". The trial lasted over 8 months. Neil was sole counsel (every other team co-defending and prosecuting had at least one silk). The allegations he faced were for perverting the course of justice.

**Fraud****Case of DB**

Defendant was responsible for opening multiple bank accounts in names of a deceased individual over a sustained period of time. Charged with various offences including use of many credit cards and failing to repay sums outstanding. He received a suspended sentence having repaid the money.

**Walter Wagbatsoma [2013-2018]**

Mr Wagbatsoma is a Nigerian businessman accused of Money laundering. Many millions were defrauded from various NHS Trusts by a variety of fraudsters. The defence case was that he understood those he dealt with were foreign exchange currency dealers and that he paid the equivalent in Naira. Neil has advised this client for some time prior to trial

**R v Dodgson & Others: Southwark Crown Court [2016]**

Neil was part of the FSA/FCA prosecution team for 4 years as this investigation took some years before coming to trial. There were 5 defendants involved in a 5 month trial resulting in convictions of the

principle bankers Martyn Dodson and an accountant Andrew Hind. Both men were sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment. The value of this insider trading was several million pounds with a profit of some £2.6m.

**R v Baxendale Walker: Guildford Crown Court [2015]**

Instructed to defend in relation to allegations of fraud by false misrepresentation and forgery involving officials at HMRC and the SRA. Considerable number of legal argument as well as client's medical difficulties.

**R v Paul Milsom: Southwark CC (2013)**

Prosecuted for FSA (now FCA) a senior equities dealer from Legal and General Investment Management Holdings Ltd who obtained shares as part of the team on the firm's Equity Central Dealing Desk for Insider Trading. This defendant was in possession of information which was used by his accomplices to place significant spread bets. He had been an approved person and was FSA (now FCA) registered. On conviction sentenced to 2 years imprisonment and received significant confiscation order.

**R v Natarajan: Central Criminal Court (2012)**

Prepared in 2012 for a trial involving an alleged fraud involving imported garlic into the UK. Just before trial the defendant absconded and was tried in his absence with no representation. On conviction he was sentenced to a substantial term of imprisonment.

**R v Jan Whitehouse: Southwark CC (2012)**

Pleaded guilty to various offences of fraud from the Royal Academy of Music when she was the finance and administration director by means of a false invoicing system. Classic allegation of serious breach of trust that involved her repaying over £400,000 back to RAM at the outset of the investigation.

### Inquests

**Rashan Charles [2018]**

Neil represented two officers who gave evidence anonymously using cyphers. The principle officer was involved in a struggle with Mr Charles who swallowed a package which prevented him from breathing. The inquest was heard in June 2018 and lasted 3 weeks.

**Hicks Inquest [2016]**

Represented four officers in three week inquest who denied they were in pursuit of a young man Henry Hicks riding a stolen and upgraded motor cycle. Inquest heard evidence from the officers (who were all granted total anonymity and gave evidence using pseudonyms) as well as from collision investigators and leading experts on definition of pursuit. Judicial Review was inserted in relation to anonymity issue.

**Fraser MacLennan [2012]**

Neil advised the family of a man who died following a road traffic accident. The family wanted to ensure that all matters were fully investigated by the police and that any issues that needed to be addressed by the coroner would be properly taken into consideration.

**7/7 Inquest [2010-11]**

Represented 10 families at the hearings from Oct 2010 to April 2011 from the four bomb sites. The hearing lasted for over 5 months as well as months before preparing. Neil acted for more families than any other counsel and was present for all the evidence at each of the four bomb sites. There were a large number of joint and individual conferences with the families in advance. He also made submissions on many of the recommendations that were adopted by Lady Justice Halett.

Neil has also represented housing association clients in unfortunate deaths in accommodation.

Advises families in individual deaths and investigations.

### Regulatory

**SIA v Sabrewatch and Others [2009-10]**

Prosecuted as lead counsel this first major trial for the Security Industry Authority.

This case was brought against a well-known company and three of its principal directors for failing to adhere to the licensing policy and ensuring its guards were licensed under the Security Industry Act. Following a two month trial at Southwark convictions against all the defendants' significant costs, fines and confiscation orders were made. The case was defended by a variety of silks and leading juniors. The preparation for this trial took many months in advance of the jury being sworn in. The process of bringing the case to trial took a number of years due to issues raised by the defence teams.

### Police misconduct/discipline

Substantial experience representing police officers of all ranks in serious and high profile cases.

**Philip Dean [2018]**

Officer alleged to have used excessive force in restraining young person in possession of a 22 inch machete who had rendered a fellow officer unconscious. Officer used martial arts training in restraint.

**Buffy Pearce [2018]**

Allegations made concerning honesty and integrity by family who were known to the officer for some time.

**Mark Dawson [2018]**

Officer disciplined for excessive force when working on close protection detail. Panel found that force used was necessary but in the circumstances excessive. Officer retained his position in the service.

**[2017]**

Alleged Misconduct of anonymous Officers A, B, C and D following the death of Henry **Hicks**. MPS Gross Misconduct hearing centred on issue of whether or not officers were engaged in a pursuit. Due to threats officers remained anonymous throughout the proceedings even though they were held in public. All officers were cleared of all allegations brought in IPCC directed hearing.

**Joe Curley** [2016]

Main officer accused of sexual impropriety whilst driving his private vehicle in the vicinity of a bus stop where 2 young women were standing. He denied this and a subsequent allegation that he and his brother also a police officer attempted to pervert the course of justice in fabricating a false alibi. This case was more involved due to the use of cell site analysis.

**Calvin Lindsay** [2016]

This case alleged that officers during the student riots had perverted the course of justice in giving untruthful accounts of the events on the evening in question. Having been acquitted in the Crown Court the Gross Misconduct allegations were stayed as an abuse of the process due to the identical issues being alleged with no new material at all after 5 years. Also there was clear prejudice as a result of the failure to subsequently investigate legitimate lines of enquiry.