



About

Year called: 1987
Silk: 2016

Professional Memberships

- Commercial Bar Association
Commercial Fraud Lawyers Association
- Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers
- Chancery Bar Association

Appointments

- Panel Counsel for Law Society, Solicitors Regulatory Authority.
- ICAEW and IPReg
- Arbitrator and Mediator

Education

LLB (Hons) 1983 - 1986

James Ramsden KC

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OVERVIEW

James Ramsden KC is a distinguished Silk with an expansive international practice spanning commercial dispute resolution, civil fraud, regulatory enforcement, and public law. Serving a diverse clientele of City institutions, multinational corporations, governmental bodies, and regulatory agencies, he is consistently recognized by Chambers & Partners and The Legal 500 as a leading King's Counsel. Directory commentators describe him as "*an absolute star*," "*ferociously clever*," and "*the gold standard for complex high value international litigation*".

Universally regarded as the pre-eminent London Silk in cryptocurrency and digital asset litigation, James pioneers precedent-setting freezing orders across multiple jurisdictions. He continues to lead the market in this field, most recently securing a major victory in the Supreme Court of Gibraltar involving the discharge of a worldwide freezing order and the strike-out of substantial fraud claims in a high-value utility token dispute.

A highly versatile tactician, James is known for commanding cohesive, multi-disciplinary teams in complex, time-critical, and cross-border assignments. James has appeared as lead advocate in several of the notable Commercial Court and commercial chancery cases of recent years including *BTA v Ablayazov & others*, *TNK-BP v Lazurenko*, *Wilcox LLC v Balmore Invest*, *Kolyada v Yurov*, *Green v Vossen Capital Partners LLP*, *Ojsc Tnk-BP Holding & Anor v Lazurenko & BNP Paribas S.A. v OJSC Russian Machines & JSAMC Ingosstrakh-Investments & Tulip Trading v Bitcoin Association*.

James has been admitted to or advised in a multitude of international jurisdictions, including Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the US, Russia, Ukraine, Iceland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Uruguay, Australia, Jersey, and the Isle of Man. He is admitted full-time to the BVI Bar and ad hoc to the Gibraltar Bar.

Beyond his core practice, James has a longstanding commitment to Advocate (the Bar Pro Bono charity) and was nominated as Pro Bono Silk of the Year in 2021. He lectures extensively on Anti-Money Laundering (AML), Counter-Terrorist Financing (CTF), fraud, and asset recovery, and serves as an author and contributing editor for Butterworths' Financial Regulation Service.

“An absolute star”
Chambers & Partners

Noteable Cases

Tulip Trading v Bitcoin Association & Others:

Acted for the defendant developers of the Bitcoin network in the most important digital asset case to come before the UK courts.

Ready Maker Inc v Macedo [2025]:

Successfully led the defence in a major utility token dispute before the Supreme Court of Gibraltar, securing the discharge of a worldwide freezing order (WFO) and the strike-out of substantial claims, including all allegations of fraud and dishonesty, alongside an award for indemnity costs

Wen v Exmoor Partners [2018]:

Secured the first known UK freezing and disclosure orders over Cryptocurrency.

Moldovan Bank Fraud Investigation [2017]:

James was appointed to lead the investigation into one of the world's biggest frauds in which up to half a billion pounds was laundered through the UK.

Stati & Others v The Republic of Kazakhstan:

Acted for the Claimants in a \$500m cross border BIT arbitral enforcement claim.

Komaksavia Airport Invest Ltd v Republic

of Moldova [2020]: Successfully represented Komaksavia in obtaining an award for interim emergency measures in a complex investor-state arbitration dispute.

1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) [2017]:

Part of the investigation team tracing the sovereign wealth fund fraud and represented an individual in response to allegations of participation in the fraudulent scheme.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland v Dillon &

Others UKSC/2025/0013: Acting pro bono in the Supreme Court on behalf of military veterans of the Northern Ireland Troubles in a legal challenge to the NI Legacy Act 2023.

Wilcox LLC v Balmore Invest [2013]: Appeared for the Claimant in a successful application for committal for contempt in relation to Orders made under S.25 CJA in aid of proceedings before the Commercial Court in Kiev.

BNP Paribas S.A. v OJSC Russian Machines &

JSAMC Ingosstrakh-Investments [2012]: Acted for the first Defendant in a landmark service and jurisdictional battle concerning the enforcement of an arbitration award.

Vorotyntseva v Money-4 Limited t/a Nebeus.Com

[2018]: Acted for Vorotyntseva in the High Court successfully securing a freezing order over a substantial amount of Cryptocurrency.

Dynasty Company Ltd v The Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq and Dr Hawrami [2020]:

Lead counsel for the Claimants in an ongoing multi-billion-pound economic torts claim in the commercial court.

GFH Capital Limited v David Lawrence Haigh

and Others [2020]: Successfully represented GFH Capital, a Dubai based investment fund in its claim against David Haigh, the former Leeds United managing director and obtained the first English decision in enforcement of a DIFC judgement.

TNK-BP v Lazurenko [2012]:

Represented the Applicant in a significant dispute concerning the disclosure of confidential information regarding an employment contract. The case raised key issues regarding service and jurisdiction.

Practice Areas

- Commercial Litigation
- Regulatory & Disciplinary
- Civil Fraud and Asset Recovery
- Administrative & Public
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

Commercial Litigation

“James Ramsden is ferociously clever and an excellent tactician. He’s the person you want in your corner.”

Chambers UK, 2026

James commands a formidable commercial litigation practice, distinguished by his profound expertise in complex multi-jurisdictional claims, conflicts of law, and jurisdictional disputes. James has consistently risen through the rankings *“following appearances in high-value disputes and the receipt of praise from solicitors and peers at the Bar.”* (Chambers UK 2016).

James is recognised as a leading authority on pre-emptive remedies. He routinely secures and defends against pre-action disclosure, evidence preservation, and worldwide asset freezing orders. This technical knowledge underpins his civil fraud practice, where he is regularly retained by sovereign governments and public bodies to trace and recover assets in large-scale, global fraud investigations.

In tandem with his injunction work, James has specific expertise in contempt of court proceedings arising from the breach of pre-emptive orders. Since 2015, he has successfully secured committal to prison for breaches of disclosure and freezing orders on four occasions, with terms ranging from 6 to 18 months.

As a subset of his commercial practice, James maintains a significant tax litigation profile. He regularly appears before the First-tier Tribunal (FTT), Upper Tribunal (UT), and Administrative Court in a variety of challenges to HMRC.

Case Examples

- Acting on behalf of a family of UHNW individuals, following the death of the head of the family, in a multi-billion dollar dispute concerning issues of trust law, company law, offshore structures in the context of multi-jurisdictional commercial and matrimonial litigation proceedings.
- Acting for Lord Jeffrey Archer, the international renowned British novelist, in a seven figure claim in the Chancery Division against his former literary agent regarding royalty payments and rights of termination, as well as seeking relief by way of an account and inquiry.
- *Dynasty Company Ltd v The Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq and Dr Hawrami* [2020]: Lead counsel for the Claimants in an ongoing multi-billion pound economic torts claim in the commercial court.
- James appeared before the Court of Appeal of Grand Cayman in 2018 on behalf of The International Banking Corporation in multi-jurisdictional enforcement proceedings against Algosabi Corporation.
- In March 2017 led a claim against HMRC by 700 UK taxpayers challenging the vires of advance payment notices.
- In April 2018 he secured a landmark decision in the FTT in *Patel v HMRC* establishing that HMRC had no statutory power to open enquiries into tax returns voluntarily submitted by taxpayers.
- *Komaksavia Airport Invest Ltd v Republic of Moldova* [2020]: Successfully represented Komaksavia in obtaining an award for interim emergency measures in a complex investor-state arbitration dispute.
- *Oysterware Ltd v Intentor Ltd* [2020]: successfully defended a computer software copyright claim at an application for summary judgement in the Chancery Division.

Regulatory, Disciplinary, Fintech and Digital Currency

James is consistently ranked as a leader at the London Bar for regulatory and disciplinary work. He serves as Panel Counsel for the Law Society, SRA, ICAEW, and IPReg, and acts as standing Counsel on AML/CTF compliance for several City law firms. Commended in legal directories for his "personable and persuasive" style that "readily gets judges on side," (Legal 500) he is at the forefront of complex sanctions cases. He routinely advises major corporate clients in SE Asia, India, and Russia on US secondary sanctions and the JCPOA, utilizing established Washington contacts to liaise with OFAC on licensing matters.

In digital assets, James possesses exceptional, pioneering expertise in cryptocurrency regulation, fraud, and asset tracing. He continues to lead market-defining litigation, recently securing the discharge of a worldwide freezing order and full strike-out of fraud claims before the Supreme Court of Gibraltar in *Ready Maker Inc v Macedo* [2025]. This builds on his precedent-setting track record obtaining the first UK crypto freezing orders in *Wen v Exmoor Partners* (2018) and the first Cayman Islands crypto disclosure orders (2020). He also collaborates with leading forensic firms, including CoinFirm and Duff & Phelps, on crypto tracing software.

Recommended by the Legal 500 as a leading sports lawyer, James handles high-profile sports disputes and regulatory matters, with particular expertise in equestrian law. He has represented Olympic show jumpers Michael Whittaker and Robert Smith, as well as former football manager Gus Poyet. He currently acts for 15 active Premiership players and managers in high-value claims against IFAs, banks, and accountants arising from mis-sold tax management schemes.

"James Ramsden is the gold standard for complex high value international litigation.

The best of the best."

Legal 500, 2026

Case Examples

- Successfully led the defence in *Ready Maker Inc v Macedo* [2025] before the Supreme Court of Gibraltar. Secured the discharge of a worldwide freezing order (WFO) and a trust preservation order, followed by the successful strike-out of substantial claims, including all allegations of fraud and dishonesty, and subsequently obtained an award for indemnity costs.
- As a leading expert in AML and CTF work, James is retained by a number of City legal and financial institutions to advise on AML and CTF regulatory issues. This work extends to FCA compliance and disciplinary proceedings and advice on EU, UN and US sanctions.
- James has advised and acted in disciplinary proceedings for the MCC and before the RFU and advised Team GB at the London Olympics.
- James has considerable expertise in the policing and removal of offensive and defamatory material on web publications, Twitter & Facebook and has pioneered use of the Defamation (Operators of Websites) Regulations 2013 for that purpose.
- Acted for Vorotyntseva in *Vorotyntseva v Money-4 Limited t/a Nebeus.Com* [2018] in a successful High Court application to secure a freezing order over a substantial amount of Cryptocurrency.
- Acting for the Liquidators of Cryptopia in New Zealand working on settling a number of issues, most prominently cross border enforcement in matters concerning cryptocurrency.
- Acted for the claimants in an application under section 303N Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 for the recovery of detained property comprising a significant value of precious metals.
- James is also currently retained to advise several individual, corporate and trust clients on the developing jurisdiction of Unexplained Wealth Orders.
- Lead counsel in *B v Persons Unknown*, securing the first freezing, disclosure and search orders over cryptocurrency in the Financial Services Division of the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands.

Civil Fraud and Asset Recovery

James has particular expertise in the tracing and recovery of assets in complex civil fraud cases. He is regularly instructed by government and public bodies to act in large-scale fraud investigations, often with a global reach. Given the time-sensitive nature of this work, James is highly experienced in acting rapidly to mobilise extensive networks of experts and third-party professionals to assist with the tracing, freezing, and recovery of misappropriated assets.

Case Examples

- James was instructed in Singapore in the largest ever civil fraud, concerning the alleged US\$5.6bn diversion of funds from the Malaysian Sovereign Wealth Fund, the Malaysian Development Berhad, “1MDB”.
- *Grosvenor Property Development Ltd v Varma & Others* where James successfully achieved dismissal of all claims arising out of the alleged fraudulent collapse of a property development company.
- James was instructed in Moldova to identify and trace the proceeds of that country’s \$1bn banking fraud. On 2nd August 2018 James jointly presented with Quintel Intelligence a report on the fraud at the Sputnik Centre in Chisinau.

“James Ramsden – a very experienced and clever lawyer. He knows what clients need and has an in depth understanding of what is required in any dispute”

Legal 500, 2026

Administrative & Public

Consistently recognized as a leading public law practitioner, James is frequently instructed in complex disputes at the interface of commercial, regulatory, and public law. He is a highly experienced appellate advocate in high-value cases and is recommended in the Legal 500 for providing “*pragmatic and solution-orientated advice*” and making “*sound and independent judgments*”.

James is committed to pro bono work and a significant part of his time is allocated to work for those who could not otherwise afford to pay for legal advice and representation. He has a particular interest in and commitment to injunctive and anti-harassment applications in cases of forced marriage. He also regularly acts pro bono for other lawyers, most recently in a complex and sensitive judicial review.

Case Examples

- James has appeared for the claimant in *R (Huitson) v HMRC* [2011] EWCA 893 the leading authority on the application of retrospective legislation on A1P1 rights. The case is now pending before the European Court of Justice.
- In March 2017 James was lead advocate in the test case of *Dickinson & Others v HMRC* before Mr Justice Charles in the Administrative Court, challenging the vires of advance payment notices on abuse of power grounds.
- James appeared before the Privy Council in January 2009 on an appeal from the High Court in St Lucia and in December 2010 he returned to the Supreme Court in a complex cross-border dispute concerning the rights to telecom franchises in Kyrgyzstan. This was the first “paperless” appeal heard in the Supreme Court using exclusively electronic document management and presentation.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

James maintains a highly active Alternative Dispute Resolution practice, acting extensively as both an arbitrator and a mediator in complex disputes. He brings profound commercial insight to his arbitral appointments, having arbitrated a diverse array of claims encompassing high-value commercial contracts, copyright infringement, and professional negligence. Additionally, his deep regulatory expertise has led to increasing appointments as an arbitrator in sensitive professional disciplinary proceedings.

Complementing his work as an arbitrator, James commands a expanding mediation practice. He leverages his extensive background in high-stakes litigation and tactical negotiation to help parties navigate entrenched conflicts, facilitating effective commercial settlements outside of formal court proceedings.

Case Examples

- Successfully represented an investor in obtaining an award for interim emergency measures in a complex investor-state arbitration under ICSID. The dispute concerned the ownership of strategically significant national infrastructure and involved substantial political and commercial sensitivities.
- Acted for an international manufacturer in an LCIA arbitration concerning the installation and operation of a large-scale automated processing and packing system. Successfully defended the proceedings.

“James Ramsden – a very experienced and clever lawyer. He knows what clients need and has an in depth understanding of what is required in any dispute”

Legal 500, 2026

- Acted for an international financial institution in a successful arbitration for the recovery of cash and securities that had been fraudulently removed. The proceedings followed a successful application for disclosure in an offshore jurisdiction.
- Acted for a purchaser in an LCIA arbitration arising from the sale of a high-value artwork through a leading international auction house. Successfully obtained rescission of the sale after establishing that the artefact was not authentic.
- Acted in an arbitration concerning rights to operate a commercial concession at a major UK sporting venue. The claim settled on terms granting the parties long-term mutual rights in respect of the concession.
- Acted for an international-level equestrian athlete in a dispute arising from the sale of a competition horse to an overseas purchaser. The claim settled before an award was issued.

“James Ramsden KC – 1st class advocate”

Legal 500, 2026

Recommendations

James has been consistently recognised for Professional Discipline and Commercial Disputes by both Chambers and Legal 500. He was ranked as “Leading Partner” for both Professional Discipline and Commercial Litigation in Legal500’s 2026 rankings, and has been ranked individually by Chambers for Professional Discipline.

- **“James Ramsden KC of Astraea Group is adept at handling an array of professional discipline cases. He has notable experience advising the SRA on complex and high-profile matters, as well as other regulators including the FCA and the ICAEW.”** Band 4 for Professional Discipline, Chambers and Partners (2024)
- **“James Ramsden is a fantastic advocate.”** Professional Discipline Respondent UK, Chambers and Partners (2024)
- **“James Ramsden KC is a star individual. He has longstanding experience as a barrister and is an adept strategist and advocate.”** Legal 500, 2024
- **“James Ramsden KC is comfortable as leading counsel on the most complex disputes.”** Legal 500, 2024
- **“James has an incredible eye for detail, is smooth in court and oozes authority.”** Chambers UK (2020)
- **“An impressive advocate at trial. He provides sound, honest advice.”** Chambers UK (2019)
- **“Always impresses with his knowledge and his calm approach to any matter. He’s really confident on his feet and not thrown by anything when he’s under pressure.”** Chambers UK (2019)
- **“Charming, impressive on his feet and a pleasure to work with.”** Legal 500 (2018)
- **“He is businesslike, commercial, and clear and direct with clients. He’s a very confident orator, and someone who can provide unequivocal and detailed advice on the merits of the case.”** Chambers UK (2017)
- **“Highly persuasive and hard-working advocate who puts clients at ease... he is extremely impressive with clients and on his feet in court.”** Chambers UK (2016)
- **“He is willing to argue difficult cases to the fullest extent.”** Legal 500, Commercial Litigation (2016)
- **“He shows brilliant advocacy and client-handling skills and is quick to spot the winning argument.”** Legal 500 (2015)
- **“James provides clear, commercially astute advice and clients appreciate his supportive and straightforward approach.”** Chambers UK (2014)
- **“An absolute star... with a smooth and confident approach... and commercially focused advice.”** Chambers UK (2013)
- **“Sound and independent judgments.”** Legal 500, Administrative and Public Law (2013)
- **“He provides advice that is not just legally sound but also commercially sensitive, which is what you need as a client.”** Chambers UK (2012)
- **“A highly regarded advocate whose smooth style masks a steely determination to win.”** Chambers UK (2011)
- **“Pragmatic and solution-orientated advice.”** Legal 500 (2011)
- **“Handles various sports cases and has particular expertise in show jumping.”** Legal 500, Entertainment and Sport Law (2011)
- **“A superb tactician.”** Chambers UK (2010)
- **“Personable and persuasive” and “readily gets judges on side.”** Legal 500, Entertainment and Sport Law (2010)
- **“Clever and tactical approach to litigation.”** Chambers UK (2009)
- **“(He) dazzles in trial. From day one he focuses on how to sell the case to the judge. His penetrating performance in cross examination is matched by an extremely good bedside manner with clients.”** Chambers UK (2008)