

Thomas Acworth

Year of Call: 2014

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Overview

Thomas Acworth is a criminal specialist. His practice encompasses general crime, regulatory crime and police law.

Regulatory crime

Thomas Acworth's public and regulatory practice focuses on regulatory crime and police law. With experience of prosecuting and defending 'traditional' criminal cases, an eye for detail and an aptitude for technical law, Thomas represents his clients with skill beyond his year of call.

Police Law

Thomas is regarded as a "go-to" barrister in the field of firearms licensing. He has acted for police forces across England as well as individuals seeking the restoration of their certificates. Thomas is highly regarded for his ability to deal with cases sensitively, pragmatically and robustly. He appears in the Crown Court, conducting licensing appeals at first instance and has conducted appeals by way of case stated in the Administrative Court.

Chief Constable of Surrey v Smith: Appeal by way of Case Stated. Whether Crown Court's decision at first instance rational. Arguments on extension of time.

Chief Constable v U: Firearms Licence Appeal: Appeared against a QC. City executive's shotgun certificate revoked on basis of post-acquittal restraining order and mental health concerns. Case required detailed analysis of psychiatric reports.

Chief Constable v F: Firearms Licence Appeal. Hundreds of guns found at residence of a registered firearms dealer together with prohibited weapons and prohibited ammunition. PII and evidential issues resultant from concurrent criminal proceedings.

Chief Constable v Q: Firearms Licence Appeal. Revocation of firearms certificate on basis of intelligence reports. Appeal concerned PII and public safety considerations.

Chief Constable v Z: Firearms Licence Appeal. Refusal to grant shotgun certificate on basis of minor, historic, offences of violence and ongoing tendency to obsessive and aggressive behaviour.

Chief Constable v H: Firearms Licence Appeal. Lengthy appeal brought by practising solicitor. Issues of mental health and domestic abuse, both historic and contemporary. Sensitive handling of vulnerable parties.

Chief Constable v Q: Firearms Licence Appeal. Revocation based on irresponsible behaviour (minor road traffic incidents) and insecure storage of weapons.

Regulatory Crime

Tom has a strong caseload in regulatory crime. Recent cases include:

R v H: Bankrupt acting as Company Director. Defendant set up two companies whilst bankrupt, one of which traded for an extensive period.

HMRC v X Ltd & Others: Trading in Breach of VAT and PAYE Security Notices. Notable regional company continually trading in breach of VAT and PAYE security notices. History of difficulties with HMRC.

Local Authority v X: Contempt of Court. Vulnerable, elderly client. Allegations of breach of ASBO.

X County Council v F: Failing to Produce Waste Transfer Notice. Prosecution of a business that was flouting the Waste Regulations and causing a neighbourhood nuisance.

X County Council v Y: Knowingly Failing to Secure Regular Attendance at School. Child in GCSE year. Non-compliance following previous conviction. Dispute over learning centre provision.

Police Force v S: Closure Order. Acting for applicant police force. Suspected crack house. Occupant threatening neighbours with violence.

Recommendations

Thomas Acworth is a sought-after junior with notable expertise in criminal defence work. His caseload includes murders, fraud and sexual abuse matters.

Strengths:

- "He approaches cases forensically and achieves very good results."
- "He is very diligent."

Chambers UK 2025/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths:

- "He possesses skills way beyond his call."
- "Thomas is very hard-working and always in command of his brief."
- "Thomas is a fearless and determined advocate."

Chambers UK 2024/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "Thomas is a fearless advocate."

Chambers UK 2023/Crime/Western Bar

'Thomas is driven, focused and talented. He has precise attention to detail and a robust approach to advocacy.'

Legal 500 2025/ Crime (General and Fraud)/Leading Juniors/ Western Circuit

'Thomas is an extremely diligent practitioner with an extraordinary eye for detail and his knowledge is genuinely astounding. No stone is left unturned in his preparation and his advocacy is equally impressive.'

Legal 500 2024/ Crime (General and Fraud)/Leading Juniors/ Western Circuit

'He has an excellent court manner, very calm and controlled and his witness handling is absolutely superb. He isn't fazed by judges.'

Legal 500 2023/Crime (General and Fraud)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'A barrister of great tenacity, very hard working and with an eye for detail. He shows a high level of dedication to his clients and is fearless and straight talking in his approach.'

Legal 500 2022/Crime (General and Fraud)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

"Words cannot explain how elated I am with the outcome today. I am ever so grateful. Wanted to express my deepest appreciation"

Client's email to instructing solicitor

"I am extremely grateful for the excellent work you have done on this case"

Email from instructing solicitor

"I've just had a chat with young Mr. F and he's asked me to pass on his sincere thanks for yesterday. In his words you were top dollar and really cool. Thank you for all your efforts in securing a great result for us"

Email from instructing solicitor

"I must say he is absolutely amazing at what he does, firm when he needs to be (and he needed to be with me) and so incredibly quick thinking when he is in court"

Client's email to instructing solicitor

Academic qualifications

- BPTC (Kaplan)
- LLB (Newcastle University)

Scholarships

- Academic Scholar (Canford School)
- The Luboshez Award (Middle Temple)
- Arnold and Porter Prize for Competition Law (N'cle)
- Pinsent Masons Prize for Public Law (N'cle)
- Cartmell Shepherd Mooting Prize

Professional bodies

- Criminal Bar Association

- Western Circuit