

Ruth Ferreira

Employee

7170343

[Employee-related decision Date: 5 March 2024](#)

Decision - Employee-related decision

Outcome: Control of non-qualified staff (Section 43 / Section 99 order)

Outcome date: 5 March 2024

Published date: 12 March 2024

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Irwin Mitchell LLP

Address(es): Riverside East, 2 Millsands, Sheffield, S3 8DT

Firm ID: 570654

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Ruth Ferreira (formerly Wallis) of Hampshire.

Summary of decision

The SRA has disqualified Ms Ferreira from holding any of the following roles in law firms regulated by the SRA:

- Head of Legal Practice
- Head of Finance and Administration
- A manager
- An employee

Reasons/basis

The facts of the case Ms Ferreira who is not a solicitor, was a Chartered Legal Executive in the tax trust and estates team at Irwin Mitchell whose head office is at Irwin Mitchell LLP, The Colmore Building, 9th Floor, 20

Colmore Circus, Birmingham, B4 6AH between 1 August 2021 and 20 July 2022.

It was found that Ms Ferreria:

1. Between September 2021 and April 2022 misled the executors of an estate by advising them that she had made an application to Equiniti to transfer shares held in the deceased's name when she had not. In doing so, Ms Ferreria has breached Principles 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019. Her conduct was dishonest in breach of Principle 4. Ms Ferreira also breached paragraph 1.4 of the SRA Code of Conduct for Firms.
2. Between September 2021 and April 2022 fabricated and sent a letter purporting to be from Equiniti to Irwin Mitchell dated February 2022 stating that the shares had been transferred on 18 January 2023 to the executors of the estate. In doing so, Ms Ferreira breached Principles 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019. Her conduct was also dishonest in breach of Principle 4.
3. Between March 2021 and April 2022, Ms Ferreira misled the beneficiaries of an estate by advising them that she had completed the inheritance tax account and submitted it to HMRC in August 2021, when no application had been made. In doing so, Ms Ferreria has breached Principles 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019. Her conduct was dishonest in breach of Principle 4. Ms Ferreira also breached paragraph 1.4 of the SRA Code of Conduct for Firms.

Ms Ferreira's conduct was serious by reference to the following factors in the SRA Enforcement Strategy: it was deliberate, it was dishonest, and it formed a pattern of behaviour.

Our decision on sanction

Ms Ferreira's conduct breached relevant duties that applied to her as an employee of the firm, namely, SRA Principles 2, 4 and 5 (2019) and Paragraph 4.1 Code of Conduct for firms.

It was found that it would be undesirable for Ms Ferreira to act as a Head of Legal Practice, Head of Finance and Administration, a manager or an employee of a body licensed in accordance with section 99 of the Legal Services Act 2007.

Ms Ferreira was disqualified from holding any of these roles.

She was also directed to pay costs of £1350.

SRA Principles 2019

Principle 2 You act in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons.

Principle 4 You act with honesty

Principle 5 You act with integrity

SRA Code of Conduct for Firms Rule 1.4 You do not mislead or attempt to mislead your clients, the court or others, either by your own acts or omissions or allowing or being complicit in the acts or commissions of others (including your client).

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