

Batchelor Sharp (Batchelor Sharp)
377-381 Two Mile Hill Road, Kingswood, Bristol ,
BS15 1AD
Recognised body
046711

[Fined Date: 29 February 2024](#)

Decision - Fined

Outcome: Fine

Outcome date: 29 February 2024

Published date: 1 March 2024

Firm details

Firm or organisation at date of publication

Name: Batchelor Sharp

Address(es): 377-381 Two Mile Hill Road, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 1AD

Firm ID: 046711

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Who does this disciplinary decision relate to?

Batchelor Sharp (the firm) is a recognised body whose principal office is at 377-381 Two Mile Hill Road Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 1AD.

Facts of the misconduct

On 26 June 2017, the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (information on the Payer) Regulations 2017 (MLRs 2017) came into force. Law firms who carry out certain work must comply with the MLRs 2017. Those firms must carry out client/matter risk assessments to identify and assess risks of money laundering and terrorist financing.

In March 2023, the SRA's Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Proactive Team undertook a desk-based AML review at the firm to assess its compliance



against the MLRs 2017. It was found that five files assessed by the SRA had no client/matter risk assessments.

During the investigation that followed, the firm accepted that it had not completed any client/matter risk assessments on its files prior to March 2023.

It was found that the firm:

- Failed to conduct client/matter risk assessments as required by Regulations 28(12) and 28(13) of the MLRs 2017 prior to March 2023.
- In doing so, the firm breached Principles 6 and 8 of the SRA Principles 2011, Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019, paragraph 2.1(a) of the SRA Code of Conduct for Firms (2019) and failed to achieve outcome 7.5 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011.

Decision on sanction

Batchelor Sharp was directed to pay a penalty of £23,035.50 and ordered to pay costs of £1,350.

This was because the firm's conduct was serious by reference to the following factors in the SRA Enforcement Strategy:

1. Its conduct was a breach of its regulatory obligations which persisted for longer than was reasonable. It demonstrated a pattern of non-compliance.
2. The firm was responsible for its own conduct which was serious and had the potential to cause serious harm to the public interest and to public confidence in the legal profession.

In view of the above, the firm's conduct was placed in conduct band C which has a financial penalty of 1.6% to 3.2% of annual domestic turnover. However, as the firm had not acted dishonestly or lacked integrity, there was no material harm caused and it had taken proactive steps to come into compliance with its AML obligations prior to the AML desk-based review, the firm's conduct was placed at the bottom end of this bracket.

The following mitigating factors were considered resulting in a fine of £23,035.50:

1. There was no significant harm caused by the firm's failings,
2. The firm had made admissions,
3. The firm cooperated with the SRA,
4. The firm had remedied the breaches.

SRA Principles 2011

Principle 6

You must behave in a way that maintains the trust the public places in you and in the provision of legal services

Principle 8

You must run your business or carry out your role in the business effectively and in accordance with proper governance and sound financial and risk management principles

SRA Code of Conduct 2011**Outcome 7.5**

You comply with legislation applicable to your business, including anti-money laundering and data protection legislation

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.

Code of Conduct for Firms (2019)**Paragraph 2.1(a)**

You have effective governance structures, arrangements, systems, and controls in place that ensure you comply with all the SRA's regulatory arrangements, as well as with other regulatory and legislative requirements, which apply to you.

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