

Richard Cartwright

Solicitor

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[Agreement Date: 5 December 2023](#)

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 5 December 2023

Published date: 19 December 2023

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Thompsons Solicitors LLP

Address(es): Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LW

Firm ID: 556695

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome and undertakings

1.1 Mr Richard John Cartwright (Mr Cartwright), a solicitor formerly of Thompsons Solicitors LLP, agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of his conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA):

- a. he undertakes to remove himself from the Roll of Solicitors (the Roll) within 14 days of the date of this Agreement.
- b. he undertakes not to apply for restoration to the Roll without the prior agreement of the SRA.
- c. to the publication of this agreement.
- d. he will pay the costs of the investigation of £600.

1.2 Mr Cartwright provides the following undertakings to the SRA:

- a. He undertakes to apply to remove his name from the Roll within 14 days of the date of this Agreement.



- b. He undertakes not to apply for restoration to the Roll without the prior agreement of the SRA.
- c. He will not:
 - i. be employed or remunerated by a solicitor in connection with a solicitor's practice;
 - ii. undertake work in the name of, or under the direction or supervision of a Solicitor;
 - iii. be employed or remunerated by an authorised body;
 - iv. be employed or remunerated by a manager or employee of a recognised body in connection with that body's business;
 - v. be a manager of a recognised body; and
 - vi. have or intend to acquire an interest in such a body without such solicitor or authorised body seeking prior approval from the SRA.

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 Mr Cartwright was a salaried partner in Thompsons Solicitors LLP (the firm) between 1 May 2012 and 30 April 2017 and an equity partner between 1 May 2017 and 2 March 2020.

2.2 On 15 December 2019, various concerns about Mr Cartwright's conduct were raised with the firm. These concerns included the nature of his relationship with a colleague, Person A.

2.3 On 17 December 2019, Mr Cartwright was informed by the firm in writing that he had been suspended to allow the firm to investigate the concerns. Mr Cartwright agreed with the firm not to contact or have any communication with any employees of the firm until the investigation had concluded.

2.4 The firm held a meeting with Mr Cartwright about these concerns on 23 January 2020. During this meeting, Mr Cartwright denied the allegations put to him by the firm about his conduct and that he had been in an intimate relationship with Person A.

2.5 Mr Cartwright contacted Person A numerous times on 24 January 2020. In one call, lasting approximately 17 minutes, Mr Cartwright discussed the investigation with Person A.

2.6 Mr Cartwright resigned from the firm on 2 March 2020.

2.7 A further meeting between the firm and Mr Cartwright was held on 9 March 2020. In this meeting Mr Cartwright denied attempting to contact Person A.

2.8 On 11 March 2020, Mr Cartwright admitted to the firm that he had previously had an intimate relationship with Person A and that he had contacted Person A on 24 January 2020 to discuss the firm's investigation.



3. Admissions

3.1 Mr Cartwright makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts:

a. On 23 January and 9 March 2020, Mr Cartwright gave recklessly misleading information to the firm about the nature and extent of his relationship with Person A and his contact with Person A on 24 January 2020.

In doing so, Mr Cartwright has breached or failed to achieve:

- i. Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019 (the Principles)
- ii. Principle 5 of the Principles
- iii. Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs

4. Why the above outcome is an appropriate outcome

4.1 The SRA's Enforcement Strategy sets out its approach to the use of its enforcement powers where there has been a failure to meet its standards or requirements.

4.2 When considering the appropriate sanctions and controls in this matter, the SRA has taken into account the admissions made by Mr Cartwright and the following mitigation which he has put forward:

- a. Mr Cartwright admitted his recklessly misleading statements to the firm and has fully co-operated with the SRA investigation.
- b. Mr Cartwright has explained that he initially denied the nature of his relationship with Person A because of the personal nature of the matter and potential embarrassment it could cause him and Person A. This is also why he attempted to contact Person A after the meeting and continued to give recklessly misleading information to the firm until he was sure there would be no adverse impact for Person A.
- c. At the time of the conduct Mr Cartwright was not working due to ill health. Mr Cartwright's state of ill health is continuing.
- d. Mr Cartwright has not practised since March 2020 and has no present intention of returning to employment within the legal profession.

4.3 The SRA considers that removal from the Roll is the appropriate outcome because:

- a. Mr Cartwright's conduct was serious. In making recklessly misleading statements to his firm, he fell short of the ethical standards expected of solicitors and so lacks integrity.
- b. However, we have also taken into account:
 - i. Mr Cartwright's state of health at the time contributed to a serious error of judgement on Mr Cartwright's part.



- ii. Mr Cartwright's ongoing ill health.
- iii. Mr Cartwright's recklessly misleading statements concerned his private life, were made only to the firm and in relation to his terms of employment. There was no harm caused to any parties.
- iv. Mr Cartwright made no financial or other gain from his conduct.
- v. Mr Cartwright has no other regulatory history, and this is an isolated incident.

5. Publication

5.1 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory and disciplinary process. Mr Cartwright agrees to the publication of this agreement.

6. Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement

6.1 Mr Cartwright agrees that he will not deny the admissions made in this agreement or act in any way which is inconsistent with it.

6.2 If Mr Cartwright denies the admissions and/or breaches the undertakings referred to in paragraph 1.2 above or acts in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement, the conduct which is subject to this agreement may be considered further by the SRA. That may result in a disciplinary outcome or a referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal on the original facts and allegations.

6.3 Denying the admissions made or acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement may also constitute a separate breach of Principles 2 and 5 of the Principles and paragraph 7.3 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

7. Costs

7.1 Mr Cartwright agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £600. Such costs are due within 28 days of a statement of costs due being issued by the SRA.

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