

Gareth Booth

Employee

7019639

[Employee-related decision Date: 4 December 2023](#)

Decision - Employee-related decision

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

Outcome date: 4 December 2023

Published date: 14 December 2023

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Stephenson Law Ltd

Address(es): 7 Bell Yard, London, WC2A 2JR

Firm ID: q638752

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Summary of decision

The SRA has disqualified Mr Booth 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.

The facts of the case

Mr Booth, who is not a solicitor, was employed by Stephenson Law Limited (the firm) as head of finance between 6 June 2022 and 16 August 2022. Mr Booth was dismissed from the firm for gross misconduct on 16 August 2022.



On 22 September 2020, Mr Booth was convicted of defrauding his previous employer of £586,694.35 on various dates between January 2017 and December 2018 when he was employed as group operations director. He was sentenced to three years and three months in custody. He was ordered to spend 1 year and seven months in prison and 1 year and eight months on licence.

On 9 November 2021, Chartered Accountants Ireland, the professional body for chartered accountants in Ireland, excluded Mr Booth from its membership. This was because it found that by virtue of his conviction Mr Booth acted in breach of fundamental principles of its code of ethics for members.

It was found that:

- i. On 21 April 2022, Mr Booth completed an application form with a recruitment agency, to seek employment. This application was used to apply for the head of finance role at the firm. In the application form, Mr Booth responded 'no' to the following questions:
- ii. Do you have any unspent criminal convictions?
- iii. Have you ever been disqualified by a professional body?

In doing so, Mr Booth misled both the recruitment agency and the firm and breached Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles.

Mr Booth's conduct was serious by reference to the following factors in the SRA Enforcement Strategy: it was deliberate, it was dishonest, and it posed a risk to the reputation of the firm and the wider profession.

Our decision on sanction Mr Booth's conduct breached relevant duties that applied to him as an employee of the firm, namely SRA Principles 2, 4 and 5 (2019).

It was found that it would be undesirable for Mr Booth 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.

Mr Booth was disqualified from holding any of these roles.

Mr Booth was also ordered to pay the SRA's costs of £1,350.

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

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