

Christopher Paul Topping

Solicitor

139743

[Sanction Date: 5 September 2025](#)

Decision - Sanction

Outcome: Rebuke

Outcome date: 5 September 2025

Published date: 10 October 2025

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Jackson Lees Group Ltd

Address(es): 3rd Floor Walker House Exchange Flags Liverpool L2 3YL
England

Firm ID: 567726

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

We have issued Mr Topping with a rebuke for causing or allowing the firm's client account to be used as a banking facility on a client matter between 25 January 2023 and 22 March 2023.

Reasons/basis

Facts of the misconduct

Mr Topping acted for a client in a case against the Home Office for unlawful detention. The claim was successful and the client was awarded damages in January 2023.

The client was an asylum seeker with no leave to remain in the UK, and was serving a lengthy prison sentence. He also had a long history of mental health difficulties, including a diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder and multiple detentions under the Mental Health Act, and Mr Topping was aware of this.



The client did not have a UK bank account and the firm was unable to open a personal injury trust account on his behalf on account of his immigration and prisoner status.

The client's damages therefore remained on the firm's client bank account. Between 25 January 2023 and 22 March 2023, the client gave instructions via telephone to both Mr Topping and other members of staff at the firm, to make 21 separate payments out of his damages to six individuals, all, excluding his mother, serving prisoners or persons connected with serving prisoners.

Mr Topping authorised the firm's finance team to make these payments, totalling £37,640, out of the client account.

The client later reported to the police that he had been coerced into making the payments to other prisoners.

It was found that Mr Topping caused or allowed the firm's client account to be used as a banking facility, and in doing so, he breached Rule 3.3 of the SRA Accounts Rules 2019 and Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019.

Other information

Decision on sanction

It was decided that a rebuke was an appropriate and proportionate sanction. Mr Topping was issued with a written rebuke and ordered to pay costs of £600. This was because Mr Topping's conduct was serious by reference to the following factors in the SRA Enforcement Strategy:

- Mr Topping is an experienced solicitor and had direct responsibility for his conduct. He allowed the firm's client account to be used for transactions with no proper connection to the legal services provided to the client in breach of Rule 3.3.
- Mr Topping's conduct was serious. In allowing the client account to be improperly used as a banking facility Mr Topping ignored or failed to heed the repeated warnings by the SRA and the decisions made by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal about the issues raised, and how doing so was a breach of the SRA Accounts Rules and his individual regulatory obligations to comply with those rules.
- Some public sanction is required to maintain standards and to acknowledge there has been a breach of regulatory requirements. A more serious sanction was not considered to be proportionate on the basis that it appears to have been an isolated case. The specific circumstances were unusual and the risk of repetition is low.

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