



**Joseph Clifford**  
**Employee**  
**7250358**

[Employee-related decision Date: 7 January 2025](#)

**Decision - Employee-related decision**

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

Outcome date: 7 January 2025

Published date: 24 January 2025

**Firm details**

**Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome**

Name: Freshfields LLP

Address(es): 100 Bishopsgate, London, EC2P 2SR

Firm ID: 484861

**Outcome details**

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

**Decision details**

**Who does this decision relate to?**

Joseph Clifford whose last known address was in Merseyside.

A person who is or was involved in a legal practice but is not a solicitor.

**Summary of decision**

The SRA has put restrictions on where and how Mr Clifford can work in an SRA regulated firm. Mr Clifford was previously employed at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer (the firm) in its IT department and was therefore previously involved in a legal practice.

It was found that on or around 2 December 2023, Mr Clifford assaulted and sexually assaulted a child under 13, caused a child to engage in sexual activity, and took indecent photographs of a child; between 1 December and 14 December 2023, possessed indecent images of a



child; and between 11 September 2022 and 14 December 2023, made indecent photographs of a child.

As a result, it is undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice in any of the ways described in the order below.

### **The facts of the case**

On 15 December 2023, the firm was informed that Mr Clifford had been charged with a number of criminal offences. The firm dismissed Mr Clifford immediately.

On 20 March 2024, Mr Clifford was convicted of 13 offences against a child, including sexual assault.

Mr Clifford's criminal conduct occurred outside of his work and none of the firm's IT equipment was used in respect of the criminal activity.

Even though the convictions were unconnected to legal practice, it was found that Mr Clifford's serious misconduct meant it was undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice in future without the SRA's prior approval.

### **Decision on outcome**

An order pursuant to section 43(2) of the Solicitors Act 1974 was imposed with effect from the date of the letter or email notifying Mr Clifford of the decision. Mr Clifford was also ordered to pay a proportion of the SRA's costs of £600.

### **What our Section 43 order means**

- i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate him in connection with his/her practice as a solicitor;
- ii. no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate him in connection with the solicitor's practice;
- iii. no recognised body shall employ or remunerate him;
- iv. no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate him in connection with the business of that body;
- v. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit him to be a manager of the body; and
- vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit him to have an interest in the body

except in accordance with the SRA's prior written permission.

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