

Vinay Amar Nath Veneik

Solicitor

139751

Fined Date: 12 September 2023

Decision - Fined

Outcome: Fine

Outcome date: 12 September 2023

Published date: 16 October 2023

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP

Address(es): 125 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7AW

Firm ID: 419867

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Who does this disciplinary decision relate to?

Vinay Amar Nath Veneik was a non-solicitor consultant, formerly employed at Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP, 125 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7AW, a regulated body (the firm).

Short summary of decision

We have fined Mr Veneik £6,750 and £1,350 costs for breaching the SRA Accounts Rules 2019 and failing to undertake proper client due diligence in respect of a client.

Facts of the misconduct

It was found that:

1. On or around 22 July 2020, Mr Veneik requested two payments from the firm's client bank account that were not related to an underlying



legal transaction provided by the firm. In doing so, Mr Veneik breached Rule 3.3 of the SRA Accounts Rules 2019 and Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019.

2. From May 2020 onwards, Mr Veneik failed to conduct adequate customer due diligence in respect of a client. In doing so, Mr Veneik breached Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019.
3. Mr Veneik failed to apply enhanced customer due diligence measures and enhanced ongoing monitoring, where there was a high risk of money laundering, as the transactions involved related to precious metals and originated from a country highlighted as high-risk in the firm's AML Policy. In doing so, Mr Veneik breached Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019.

Decision on sanction

Mr Veneik was directed to pay a financial penalty of £6,750 and ordered to pay costs of £1,350.

It was decided that a financial penalty was an appropriate and proportionate sanction.

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

- a. His conduct had the potential to cause significant harm. Although there was no evidence that money laundering occurred, Mr Veneik's conduct meant that the firm acted with insufficient customer due diligence, in a transaction involving the mining of precious metals in a high risk jurisdiction. Funds from that transaction were then paid out of the firm's client account, to a foreign jurisdiction, in circumstances that had no connection to the underlying legal transaction.
- b. Mr Veneik was an experienced member of the profession, who had direct control and responsibility for his conduct.
- c. Mr Veneik's misconduct diminished the trust the public placed in him and the provision of legal services.
- d. His conduct was serious and any lesser sanction, such as a rebuke, would not be appropriate to protect the public interest. Any lesser sanction would not provide a credible deterrent to him and others. A credible deterrent plays a key role in maintaining professional standards and upholding public confidence.

In view of the above, Mr Veneik's conduct was placed in conduct band C which has a financial penalty bracket of between £5,001 and £25,000. His conduct was placed at the lower end of this bracket given:

- a. Aggravating factors
 - There was a risk of significant harm, including an increased risk of money laundering as a result of Mr Veneik's conduct



b. Mitigating factors

- It did not form part of a pattern of misconduct.
- There was a limited risk of repetition.
- There was no evidence of actual loss sustained by clients or the firm.
- Mr Veneik had made some admissions in his response to the investigation.

SRA Principles 2019

Principle 2: You must act in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons.

SRA Accounts Rules 2019

Rule 3.3 You must not use a client account to provide banking facilities to clients or third parties. Payments into, and transfers or withdrawals from a client account must be in respect of the delivery by you of regulated services.

[Employee-related decision Date: 9 March 2017](#)

Decision - Employee-related decision

Outcome: Approval of employment (section 41)

Outcome date: 9 March 2017

Published date: 27 March 2017

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP

Address(es): Adelaide House, London Bridge, London, EC4R 9HA

Firm ID: 426866

Firm or organisation at date of publication

Name: Penningtons Manches LLP

Address(es): 125 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7AW

Firm ID: 419867

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Penningtons Manches LLP have been granted permission under Section 41 of the Solicitors Act 1974 to employ Mr Vinay Amar Nath Veneik as a Consultant subject to the condition:

- Any variation to the terms of the employment must be notified to the SRA in advance of the change taking place and that the variation must not take place until permission is granted by the SRA.

For definitions, please refer to the defined terms set out in the SRA Handbook Glossary 2012.

Reasons/basis

Mr Veneik was struck off the Roll of Solicitors by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal on 26 November 2009. In accordance with Section 41 of the Solicitors Act 1974, any solicitor wishing to employ or remunerate him in connection with their practise as a solicitor must obtain the SRA's approval. The SRA is satisfied that the above employment will not put public confidence in the administration of justice and the provision of legal services or the interests of clients at risk.

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