

Morr & Co LLP
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Recognised body
440504

[Sanction Date: 18 October 2024](#)

Decision - Sanction

Outcome: Rebuke

Outcome date: 18 October 2024

Published date: 22 October 2024

Firm details

No detail provided:

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Morr & Co LLP (the Firm), a recognised body agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of its conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA):

- a. it is rebuked.
- b. to the publication of this agreement.
- c. it will pay the costs of the investigation of £300.

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 On 27 May 2013 the firm became responsible for administering the estate of Mr Leonard Lawrence, following the firm's amalgamation with the firm Cozens Moxon & Harts, which had previously had conduct of this client matter. At the time of the firm's amalgamation, the firm held approximately £50,000 in client funds that were owed to the beneficiaries of Mr Lawrence's estate.

2.2 Between 27 May 2013 and 22 November 2018, the responsible staff at Morr & Co LLP failed to finalise the estate of Mr Lawrence in a timely



manner, resulting in a delay in £50,000 being paid to the beneficiaries during that period.

2.3 In addition, between 27 May 2013 and 23 July 2017 inclusive, the responsible staff at Morr & Co LLP failed to properly notify the executor of Mr Lawrence's estate of the funds being retained, and the reason for that retention.

2.4 Furthermore, between 27 May 2013 and 17 October 2018 inclusive, the responsible staff at Morr & Co LLP failed to keep the executor of Mr Lawrence's estate informed of updated costs incurred during that period.

3. Admissions

3.1 The relevant SRA Standards and Regulations in force at the time the conduct occurred are those presented in the SRA Handbook 2011. The Standards and Regulations relevant to the conduct described above would thus be the SRA Principles 2011, the SRA Codes of Conduct 2011 and the SRA Accounts Rules 2011.

3.2 The firm makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts:

- a. That between 27 May 2013 and 22 November 2018 the firm failed to finalise the estate of Mr Leonard Lawrence and distribute funds to the beneficiaries in a timely manner, and thus breached Outcome 1.5 of the SRA Codes of Conduct 2011.
- b. That between 27 May 2013 and 23 July 2017 the firm failed to properly notify the executor of Mr Lawrence's estate of the funds being retained, and the reason for that retention, thus breaching Rule 14.4 of the SRA Accounts Rules 2011.
- c. That between 27 May 2013 and 17 October 2018 inclusive, the firm failed to keep the executor of Mr Lawrence's estate informed of updated costs incurred during that period, thus breaching Outcome 1.13 of the SRA Codes of Conduct 2011.
- d. That the above conduct also represents a failure by the firm to provide a proper standard of service to clients, thus breaching Principle 4 of SRA Principles 2011.
- e. That the above conduct also represents a failure by the firm to act in the best interests of each client, thus breaching Principle 5 of SRA Principles 2011.

4. Why a written rebuke 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 the firm



and the following mitigation which it has put forward:

- a. The firm has no regulatory history of similar breaches.
- b. The firm has taken remedial action to ensure that the relevant funds have been properly distributed to relevant beneficiaries and has put improved processes and controls in place to reduce the likelihood of similar breaches arising in future.

4.3 The SRA considers that a written rebuke is the appropriate outcome because:

- a. The firm has no prior regulatory history of similar breaches and has implemented improved processes and controls to prevent similar issues reoccurring, so there is a low risk of repetition.
- b. The beneficiaries of the Lawrence estate have now received all the funds owed to them, as well as appropriate interest in accordance with each firm's policies, so the clients have not suffered significant or lasting harm.
- c. While the firm has taken appropriate remedial action, the relevant issue was allowed to persist longer than can be considered reasonable, and as a result the delay experienced by the beneficiaries was far longer than can be considered acceptable. Accordingly, some public sanction is required to uphold public confidence in the delivery of legal services.

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. The firm agrees to the publication of this agreement.

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

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

6.2 If the firm denies the admissions 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 Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement may also constitute a separate breach of principles 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles and paragraph 3.2 of the Code of Conduct for Firms.

7. Costs

7.1 The firm agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £300. Such costs are due within 28 days of a statement of costs due being issued by the SRA.

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