



Catherine Reynolds

Solicitor

444087

[Agreement Date: 17 April 2023](#)

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 17 April 2023

Published date: 18 April 2023

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: The Chief Constable of Gwent Police

Address(es): Headquarters Croesycelilog CWMBRAN NP44 2XJ

Firm ID: 65117

Firm or organisation at date of publication

Name: J A Hughes

Address(es): Centenary House, Kings Square, Barry, CF62 8HB

Firm ID: 290412

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Ms Catherine Reynolds (Ms Reynolds), a solicitor, agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of her conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority Limited (SRA):

- a. she is fined £2,000
- b. to the publication of this agreement
- c. she will pay the costs of the investigation of £300.
- d. Summary of Facts



2.1 On 1 December 2021, the police investigated a report that Ms Reynolds had driven her vehicle into her driveway wall on a number of occasions while attempting to park her car.

2.2 The police took breath specimens from Ms Reynolds which showed that she had driven her car after consuming a level of alcohol that exceeded the prescribed legal limit, namely 72 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath. Ms Reynolds was charged with that offence.

2.3 On 6 April 2022, at Cardiff Magistrates Court, Ms Reynolds pleaded guilty to that offence.

2.4 The sentence was:

- a. a 16-month driving ban to be reduced by 16 weeks on satisfactory completion of the 'Advanced Motorists' course, and
- b. a fine of £500

2.5 Ms Reynolds was also ordered to pay:

- a. a victim surcharge payment of £50, and
- b. costs of £85.

2.6 Ms Reynolds promptly notified the SRA about her arrest and continued to provide updates to the SRA about her conviction and sentence.

3. Admissions

3.1 Ms Reynolds makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts: that by virtue of her conduct and conviction, she failed to act in a way that upholds the public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons, in breach of Principle 2 of the SRA Principles.

4. Why a fine 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 considered its guidance on "Driving with excess alcohol convictions" and has taken into account the admissions made by Ms Reynolds and the following mitigation which she has put forward:

- a. this is an isolated incident
- b. Ms Reynolds has promptly reported her conviction to the SRA and cooperated fully with its investigation



- c. Ms Reynolds has apologised for her conduct and has expressed remorse.

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

- a. Ms Reynolds had direct responsibility for her conduct, which had the potential to cause serious harm
- b. When officers arrived at the scene, Ms Reynolds did not provide full and frank information to the police about who had been driving the vehicle
- c. a public sanction is required to uphold public confidence in the delivery of legal services.

4.4 A fine is appropriate to maintain professional standards and uphold public confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons because of the seriousness of her conduct. Any lesser sanction would not provide a credible deterrent to Ms Reynolds and others. A financial penalty therefore meets the requirements of rule 4.1 of the Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedure Rules.

5. Amount of the fine

5.1 The amount of the fine has been calculated in line with the SRA's published guidance on its approach to setting an appropriate financial penalty (the Guidance).

5.2 Having regard to the Guidance, the SRA and Ms Reynolds agree that the nature of the misconduct was low / medium because Ms Reynolds has cooperated with the SRA's investigation, and the behaviour does not appear to have formed part of a pattern of misconduct. The Guidance gives this type of misconduct a score of one.

5.3 The SRA considers that the impact of the misconduct was medium because it caused damage to a property wall and had the potential to cause loss to others. The Guidance gives this level of impact a score of four.

5.4 The nature and impact scores add up to five. The Guidance indicates a broad penalty bracket of £1,001 to £5,000 is appropriate.

5.5 In deciding the level of fine within this bracket, the SRA has considered the mitigation at paragraph 4.2 above. The SRA considers a basic penalty of £2,500 which is at the middle of the penalty bracket, to be appropriate.

5.6 The SRA considers that the basic penalty should be reduced to £2,000. This reduction reflects a 20 percent discount for Ms Reynold's self-report and admission.



6. Publication

6.1 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory and disciplinary process. Ms Reynolds agrees to the publication of this agreement.

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

7.1 Ms Reynolds agrees that she will not deny the admissions made in this agreement or act in any way which is inconsistent with it.

7.2 If Ms Reynolds 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.

7.3 Denying the admissions made or 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 7.3 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

8. Costs

8.1 Ms Reynolds 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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