

Matthew Hudson

Solicitor

393005

Agreement Date: 8 August 2023

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 8 August 2023

Published date: 15 August 2023

Firm details

Firm or organisation at date of publication and at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Ancora Law LTD

Address(es): C4DI@thedock, 31-38 Queen Street, Hull HU1 1UU, England.

Firm ID: 665318

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Mr Matthew Charles Hudson (Mr Hudson), an owner and director of Ancora Law Limited (the firm), agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of his conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA):

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

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 On 21 December 2022 the firms reporting accountants submitted a qualified accountant's report (QAR) to the SRA. The report covered the years ending 31 December 2020 and 31 December 2021. The 2020 report was late by eighteen Months, the 2021 report was late by six Months. The QAR identified breaches of the SRA Accounts Rules 2019 (the rules)

2.2 The SRA investigated the reported breaches and identified the following issues:

- a. Mr Hudson did not carry out reconciliations when due in accordance with rule 8.3 of the rules. During the investigation it was established that no client account reconciliations had been produced between July 2020 and January 2023.
- b. Mr Hudson failed to deliver an accountant's report for 2020 and 2021 in accordance with rule 12.1 of the rules.

2.3 Since March 2023 Mr Hudson has demonstrated that he has taken steps to ensure he properly maintains accurate accounting records and carries out proper client account reconciliations.

3. *Admissions*

3.1 Mr Hudson makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts:

- a. He did not carry out reconciliations when due in accordance with rule 8.3 of the rules.
- b. He did not submit accounts reports when required to do so in accordance with rule 12.1 of the rules.

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 appropriate sanctions and controls in this matter, the SRA has taken into account the admissions made by Mr Hudson and the following mitigation he has put forward:

- a. The firm commenced trading in December 2019 shortly before the Covid- 19 pandemic. It was the first occasion Mr Hudson had held the position of director within a law firm and he found this extremely challenging.
- b. there was no monetary loss or harm to client funds. The cash shortage on client account was £1,186.30 and Mr Hudson rectified the client account shortage during the course of the SRA inspection at the Firm.
- c. Mr Hudson has taken remedial action to resolve all the breaches and made improvements to his accounting processes. During the investigation all his client account reconciliations were brought up to date.



- d. Mr Hudson has cooperated fully and promptly with the SRA investigation.

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

- a. Mr Hudson had direct control and responsibility for the circumstances giving rise to the breaches.
- b. the breaches continued for a period of time without Mr Hudson addressing them.
- c. proper record keeping for the holding of client's money goes to the core of the SRA's regulatory role and public interest purpose.
- d. the SRA enforcement strategy states that we take account of the circumstances and a rebuke is appropriate when:
 - a. The conduct or behaviour is reckless as to the risk of harm/regulatory obligations.
 - b. There is low risk of repetition.
 - c. 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. Mr Hudson agrees to the publication of this agreement.

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

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

6.2 If Mr Hudson 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 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 Principles and paragraph 7.3 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

7. Costs

7.1 Mr Hudson 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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