

Georgia Burns

Employee

7159582

Agreement Date: 21 February 2024

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 21 February 2024

Published date: 1 March 2024

Firm details

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

Name: Harvey Roberts Solicitors

Address(es): 92-94 Gorton Road, Reddish, Stockport, SK5 6AV

Firm ID: 811591

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Ms Georgia Burns, a former employee of Harvey Roberts Solicitors (the Firm), a recognised body, agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of their conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA):

- a. to the SRA making an order under section 43 of the Solicitors Act 1974 (a section 43 order) in relation to Ms Burns that, from the date of this agreement:
 - i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate them in connection with their practice as a solicitor
 - ii. no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate them in connection with the solicitor's practice
 - iii. no recognised body shall employ or remunerate them
 - iv. no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate them in connection with the business of that body



- v. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit them to be a manager of the body
- vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such body shall permit them to have an interest in the body except in accordance with the SRA's prior permission
- b. to the publication of this agreement
- c. to pay the costs of the investigation of £300.

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 Ms Burns was employed by the Firm as a legal secretary in its personal injury department. Their responsibilities included preparing files of confidential and sensitive client information for court hearings and replying to client contacts and correspondence. Prior to being employed by the Firm, Ms Burns worked in other roles supporting the delivery of legal services.

2.2 A police investigation established that between March 2020 and March 2021, a county lines drugs supply operation took place.

2.3 On 26 August 2022 at Bolton Crown Court, Ms Burns was convicted for offences of the supply of class A drugs.

2.4 On 18 May 2023, Ms Burns was sentenced to:

- a. 24 months imprisonment suspended for 24 months
- b. 20 days rehabilitation activity requirement
- c. 200 hours of unpaid work, and
- d. pay a victim surcharge of £156.

2.5 In their sentencing remarks, the judge commented upon the impact that these offences had caused including that Ms Burns:

- a. was fully aware of the involvement of the co-accused in a county lines drugs supply operation
- b. drove the co-accused to facilitate his drug dealing on at least four occasions and
- c. on at least two occasions transported a minor for the purpose of dealing drugs. And that as a consequence, they narrowly avoided a custodial sentence.

3. Admissions

3.1 Ms Burns agrees, and the SRA accepts, that their conviction for being concerned in the supply of class A drugs, is of such a nature which means

it is undesirable for them to be involved in legal practice without the SRA's prior permission.

4. Why a section 43 order is appropriate

4.1 The SRA's Enforcement Strategy and its guidance on how it regulates non-authorised persons, sets out its approach to using section 43 orders to control where a non-authorised person can work.

4.2 When considering whether a section 43 order is appropriate in this matter, the SRA has taken into account the admissions made by Ms Burns.

4.3 The SRA and Ms Burns agree that a section 43 order is appropriate because:

- a. Ms Burns is not a solicitor
- b. their employment at the Firm as a legal secretary means that they were involved in a legal practice
- c. they have been convicted of a criminal offence of such a nature which makes it undesirable for them to be involved in a legal practice without the SRA's prior permission.

4.4 Ms Burns knowingly committed criminal offences.

4.5 Ms Burns was a legal secretary handling sensitive and confidential case information, preparing files of documents for court and corresponding with clients. She would be expected to do so with integrity and in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the safe delivery of those legal services.

4.6 The public's trust and confidence in legal services is diminished if Ms Burns, who has been convicted of offences as described, can work in such a role without the SRA's prior permission.

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.

5.2 Ms Burns agrees to the publication of this agreement.

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

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

7. Costs

7.1 Ms Burns agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £300 inclusive of VAT and disbursements. Such costs are due within 28 days of a statement of costs due being issued by the SRA.

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