

Vijay Parekh

Employee

437131

Agreement Date: 18 March 2020

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 18 March 2020

Published date: 19 March 2020

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Ward & Rider Ltd

Address(es): 2 Manor Yard, New Union Street, Coventry WEST MIDLANDS, CV1 2PF

Firm ID: 532992

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Mr Vijay Parekh, a former employee of Ward & Rider Ltd (the Firm), agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of his 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 Mr Parekh that, from the date of this agreement:
 - i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate him in connection with his practice as a solicitor
 - ii. no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate him in connection with the solicitor's practice
 - iii. no recognised body shall employ or remunerate him
 - iv. no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate him in connection with the business of that body



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

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 Mr Parekh was a paralegal in the Firm's personal injury department. Mr Parekh acted for Client A in relation to a claim for a personal injury.

2.2 On 9 January 2019 Mr Parekh made an offer to the defendant's solicitors to settle Client A's claim for £25,000 and the offer was accepted. Client A had not given Mr Parekh authority or instructions to make the offer and had no knowledge of it.

2.3 On 10 January 2019 Mr Parekh emailed his client to tell her that the defendant had made a final offer to settle her claim for £25,000 and he advised her to accept it. He explained that counsel had valued her claim in the region of £30,000 which the court, may reduce to between £24,000 to £26,000. Having received this advice, Client A agreed to settle her claim for £25,000.

2.4 Counsel had valued Client A's claim at £33,750 and advised that offers be made between £30,000 and £35,000.

2.5 The Firm identified concerns about Mr Parekh's conduct of Client A's claim following a review of the file. The Firm commenced a disciplinary investigation. Mr Parekh resigned with immediate effect.

2.6 The Firm contacted Client A and explained to her what had happened. The Firm compensated Client A for her potential loss.

3. Admissions

3.1 Mr Parekh admits that his conduct set out above was dishonest.

4. Why the agreed outcome is appropriate

4.1 The SRA and Mr Parekh agree that a Section 43 Order is appropriate because:

- a. Mr Parekh is not a solicitor
- b. By virtue of his employment and remuneration at the Firm he was involved in a legal practice



- c. By making an offer to settle a personal injury claim without his client's authority, by misleading his client about who made the offer, and about counsel's valuation of her claim, he has occasioned or been party to an act or default in relation to a legal practice. Mr Parekh's conduct in relation to those acts or defaults make it undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice.

4.2 Mr Parekh's conduct makes it undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice because it shows that he has been dishonest, may mislead his clients and act without their authority.

4.3 In deciding that the agreed outcome is proportionate, the SRA has taken into account the following mitigation which Mr Parekh has put forward:

- a. He worked as a paralegal for the Firm for 14 years with no other concerns about his professional conduct being identified. The Firm audited his files after this incident and found no issues on them.
- b. He has admitted his conduct and has expressed remorse for his actions.

4.4 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory and disciplinary process.

5. Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this Agreement

5.1 Mr Parekh agrees that he will not act in any way which is inconsistent with this agreement such as, for example, by denying responsibility for the conduct referred to above.

6. Costs

6.1 Mr Parekh 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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