



Stephanie Jones

Employee

669536

Agreement Date: 26 October 2020

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 26 October 2020

Published date: 30 November 2020

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Harrison Clark Rickerbys Limited

Address(es): 5 Deansway, Worcester, WR1 2JG

Firm ID:

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Reasons/basis

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Ms Stephanie Jones, a former employee of Harrison Clark Rickerbys Limited (the Firm), agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of her 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 her that, from the date of this agreement:
 - i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with his practice as a solicitor
 - ii. no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with the solicitor's practice
 - iii. no recognised body shall employ or remunerate her
 - iv. no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate her in connection with the business of that body



v. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit her to be a manager of the body

vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such body shall permit her to have an interest in the body

except in accordance with the SRA's prior permission.

b. to the publication of this agreement

c. she will pay the costs of the investigation of £300.

2. Summary of facts

2.1 Ms Jones worked at the Firm in its credit control department from 3 April 2018. When she joined the Firm, she had been in receipt of housing benefit since 2015.

2.2 In July 2019, the Department for Work and Pensions (the DWP) notified Ms Jones that she had received £6,665 in housing benefit that she was not entitled to.

2.3 The DWP interviewed Ms Jones and subsequently charged her with failing to notify her local Council of an increase in her income.

2.4 On 2 December 2019, Ms Jones pleaded guilty to failing to declare a change of circumstances to the DWP contrary to section 112(1A) and (2) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992.

2.5 Ms Jones was sentenced to a 12-month Community Order with 100 hours of unpaid work. She was also ordered to pay costs of £85 and a victim surcharge of £85.

2.6 The Firm reported the conviction to the SRA on 19 December 2019.

3. Admissions

3.1 Ms Jones admits, and the SRA accepts, that her conviction for failing to declare a change in financial circumstances means that it is undesirable for her to be involved in legal practice.

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 Jones and the following mitigation which she has put forward:

- a. she expressed remorse and insight for her actions
- b. she has completed the 12-month community order of 100 hours of unpaid work
- c. she has co-operated with the SRA investigation.

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

- a. Ms Jones is not a solicitor
- b. her employment or remuneration at the Firm means that she was involved in a legal practice
- c. she has been convicted of an offence which makes it undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice.

4.4 Ms Jones's conduct makes it undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice because she failed to report a change in her financial circumstances. This led to her being convicted of a criminal offence. It demonstrates that, were Ms Jones to be involved in a legal practice again, she could not be trusted to act with integrity.

5. *Publication*

5.1 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory process. Ms Jones agrees to the publication of this agreement.

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

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

7. *Costs*

7.1 Ms Jones 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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