

Lauren Gibb
Employee
822232

Employee-related decision Date: 24 September 2021

Decision - Employee-related decision

Outcome: Control of non-qualified staff (Section 43 / Section 99 order)

Outcome date: 24 September 2021

Published date: 5 October 2021

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: National Accident Law Limited

Address(es): Bevan House, Kettering Parkway, Kettering Venture Park,
Kettering, NN15 6XR

Firm ID: 655606

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Other information

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Lauren Gibb (Ms Gibb), a former employee of National Accident Law 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 Ms Gibb that, from the date of this agreement:
 - i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with their 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 Gibb was a paralegal in the firm's Claims Preparation Team.

2.2 The firm regularly review reporting data which shows the volume of calls received and made by each fee earner. All inbound/outbound calls made or received by fee earners are logged by the telephony system even if the outcome is no answer or engaged.

2.3 The firm became aware that the number of units claimed on the Case Management System by another paralegal within their Claims Preparation Team were high compared to the actual telephone calls made. This prompted the firm to review the time recording of all fee earners against the telephone calls made.

2.4 The firm collated Ms Gibb's time recording data from three randomly selected weeks. It was found that there was no corresponding phone call on 43 out of 281 time entries logged in that period. Ms Gibb had logged these calls on the Case Management System as part of the firm's automated billing process.

2.5 When asked to explain her actions at a disciplinary meeting on 15 February 2021, Ms Gibb admitted that she had knowingly added time units where no phone call had been made in order to increase her daily units and meet targets.

2.6 Following an internal investigation conducted by the firm, Ms Gibb was dismissed on 5 March 2021.

2.7 The firm reported their concerns to the SRA on 11 March 2021.

3. Admissions

3.1 Ms Gibb makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts:

a. she logged calls on the firm's case management system that had not been made



- b. the conduct was repeated over a protracted period
- c. her conduct set out above was dishonest
- d. as a result of her actions in relation to legal practice, she has been involved in conduct which is of such a nature that it is undesirable for her to be involved in legal practice.

4. Why the agreed outcome is appropriate

Section 43 Order

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 Gibb and the following mitigation:

- a. Ms Gibb has fully admitted the misconduct to the SRA and co-operated with its investigation
- b. Ms Gibb received no financial benefit from her conduct
- c. Ms Gibb provided full admissions to the firm when asked to explain the discrepancies between the phone calls logged and made
- d. Ms Gibb was experiencing difficulties with her mental health at the relevant time.

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

- a. Ms Gibb is not a solicitor
- b. her employment or remuneration at the firm means that she was involved in a legal practice
- c. Ms Gibb has occasioned or been party to an act or default in relation to a legal practice because she falsified her claimed outgoing calls and therefore misled the firm. This would have resulted in inflated invoices being raised if not for the review of the firm.
- d. Ms Gibb's conduct in relation to that act or default makes it undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice because it demonstrates she has behaved dishonestly and has a propensity to mislead others. If such conduct were to be repeated in future, it would pose a risk to clients and public trust.

4.5 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 Ms Gibb agrees that she 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 Ms Gibb 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.

Search again [<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/solicitor-check/>]