

# Amina Begum

## Employee

### 575443

*Employee-related decision Date: 4 May 2023*

#### *Decision - Employee-related decision*

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

Outcome date: 4 May 2023

Published date: 17 May 2023

#### *Firm details*

##### **Firm or organisation at date of publication**

Name: Bourne Harris LLP (closed)

Address(es): 1 Redditch Road, Kings Norton, B38 8RN

Firm ID: 638872

#### *Outcome details*

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

#### *Decision details*

Ms Amina Begum (also known as Amina Miah)

#### *Who does this decision relate to?*

Ms Amina Begum whose last known address was in Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

A person who is or was involved in a legal practice but is not a solicitor.

#### *Summary of decision*

The SRA has put restrictions on where and how Ms Begum can work in an SRA regulated firm. It was found that Ms Begum:

- on 16 January 2020, created a letter which she dishonestly backdated to 23 December 2019 which falsely suggested her sister was owed £12,945.50 for services rendered.
- on 17 January 2020, dishonestly arranged for payment of £12,945.50 into her sister's bank account from client money held by the firm, creating a shortfall in the client account.

- dishonestly included her personal bank details on payment instructions for Clerical Medical for payment of £19,812.21 that was due to beneficiaries to obtain the money for herself.
- fabricated the signatures of the executors of the estate on correspondence with Clerical Medical to give the appearance that the payment instructions were authorised by them when in fact it was not.

By virtue of the above, it is undesirable for Ms Begum to be involved in a legal practice without the SRA's prior written consent.

#### *The facts*

Ms Begum worked as a paralegal in the private client department of Bourne Harris LLP (now closed).

She worked on a particular probate file until her employment was terminated on 28 January 2020.

While she worked on that file, she arranged for £12,945.50 to be paid to her sister when she knew she was not entitled to the money. To do that, she created a backdated letter, amended completed estate accounts to include the payment, and authorised the payment without possession of a legitimate invoice.

On the same file, Ms Begum wrote to Clerical Medical with a payment instruction that instructed Clerical Medical to pay £19,812.21 due to the estate into her bank account and not the account of Bourne Harris. She did this by giving the impression her bank account belonged to Bourne Harris and she fabricated the signatures of the two executors of the estate.

#### *Our decision on outcome*

An order pursuant to section 43(2) of the Solicitors Act 1974 was imposed as Ms Begum's conduct meant that it was undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice without the SRA's prior approval.

This was because Ms Begum's conduct was serious. She has been found to have been dishonest on several occasions to obtain, by deception, substantial sums of money either for her sister or herself that belonged to the estate of a client of Bourne Harris.

Ms Begum was also ordered to pay a proportion of the SRA's costs of £200.

#### *What our section 43 order means*

To make an order pursuant to section 43 that with effect from the date of the letter or email notifying Ms Begum of this decision:

- i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with his/her 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; and
- vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit her to have an interest in the body

except in accordance with the SRA's prior written permission.

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