

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12800-2025

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

JAMES MARTIN TAYLOR

Respondent

Before:

Mrs F Kyriacou (in the chair)

Mrs C Evans

Ms E Keen

Date of Hearing: 09 October 2025

Appearances

There were no appearances as the matter was dealt with on the papers.

JUDGMENT ON AN AGREED OUTCOME

Allegations

1. The allegations against the Respondent made by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“SRA”) were that while in practice as a Solicitor at Collingwood Immigration Services LLP (“the Firm”):

1.1 Between November 2021 and May 2022, the Respondent sent emails to Client A and Person B which he knew or ought to have known were misleading in that he omitted to tell them that the Further Submissions were first sent by email to the Home Office on 21 December 2021 and not on 21 July 2020.

In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 (the Principles), and Paragraphs 1.4 and 7.11 of the SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs (the Code for Solicitors).

In addition, as an alternative to the allegation at 1.1 that the Respondent breached Principle 4 of the Principles, the allegation is advanced on the basis that the Respondent’s conduct was reckless. Recklessness is alleged as an aggravating feature of the Respondent’s misconduct but is not an essential ingredient in proving the allegations.

1.2 Between 3 December 2021 and 30 November 2022, the Respondent told the Firm’s COLP and the Home Office that Client A’s Further Submissions were submitted in July 2020 when he knew or ought to have known that this was misleading because the Further Submissions were first sent by email to the Home Office on 21 December 2021 and not in July 2020.

In doing so he breached any or all of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the Principles and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code for Solicitors.

Documents

2. The Tribunal had before it the following documents:-

- The form of application dated 30 June 2025
- Rule 12 Statement and Exhibit bundle of documents NG1 dated 30 June 2025
- Statement of Agreed Facts and Proposed Outcome signed by the Respondent and the Applicant on 6 October 2025

Factual Background

3. The Respondent was born in July 1982 and is a non-practising solicitor who was admitted to the Roll on 16 March 2009. The last practising certificate the Respondent held was for the 2022/2023 practice year and this was free from conditions.

4. At the time of the misconduct, the Respondent was one of two partners in the Firm which specialised in the area of immigration and asylum law and the Respondent was based in its Gateshead office.

5. The misconduct came to the attention of the SRA on 2 December 2022 when Ms Liew, the Firm's Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (COLP), informed the SRA of a complaint she had received from Client A in relation to his claim for asylum with which the Respondent had been dealing. Ms Liew said that she was reporting what she believed to be a serious breach of the SRA's standards and principles by the Respondent.
6. On 5 December 2022, the SRA received a 'self-report' from the Respondent in which he explained that he had initially believed that he had lodged the Further Submissions to the Home Office and informed the client of this. However, in 2021 the Home Office confirmed that they had not received them, and, as the matter progressed, it became apparent that the Respondent had not actually lodged them. Rather than admit this to the client, the Respondent continued to maintain that they had been properly lodged.
7. The Respondent admitted all the allegations including that his conduct had been dishonest.

Application for the matter to be resolved by way of Agreed Outcome

8. The parties invited the Tribunal to deal with the Allegations against the Respondent in accordance with the Statement of Agreed Facts and Outcome annexed to this Judgment. The parties submitted that the outcome proposed was consistent with the Tribunal's Guidance Note on Sanctions.

Findings of Fact and Law

9. The Applicant was required to prove the allegations on the balance of probabilities. The Tribunal had due regard to its statutory duty, under section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998, to act in a manner which was compatible with the Respondent's rights to a fair trial and to respect for their private and family life under Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
10. The Tribunal reviewed all the material before it and was satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the Respondent's admissions were properly made.

Sanction

11. The Tribunal considered the Guidance Note on Sanction (11th Edition). The Tribunal's principal objective when considering sanction was the need to maintain public confidence in the profession.
12. The Respondent failed in his duty to inform his client about his failure to make Further Submissions to the Home Office and maintained this deceit for over a year. He also made untrue representations to his client's MP, to the Home Office and to the COLP of the Firm. He continued to deny the truth when under investigation.
13. The Respondent was an experienced solicitor who accepted that he had failed to act with integrity and had acted dishonestly by deliberately misleading his client, other members of the profession, the Home Office and a Member of Parliament, and thereby causing harm. The Tribunal found that the Respondent's actions constituted serious

misconduct which was aggravated by being sustained over a period of time. It concluded that striking him off the Roll was the only appropriate and proportionate sanction to maintain the reputation of the profession and protect the public.

Costs

14. The parties agreed that the Respondent should pay costs in the sum of £6,000.00. The Tribunal determined that the agreed amount was reasonable and proportionate/appropriate. Accordingly, the Tribunal ordered that the Respondent pay costs in the agreed sum.

Statement of Full Order

15. The Tribunal ordered that the Respondent, JAMES MARTIN TAYLOR, solicitor, be STRUCK OFF the Roll of Solicitors and it further ordered that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry in the fixed sum of £6,000.00.

Dated this 22nd day of October 2025
On behalf of the Tribunal

F. Kyriacou

F. Kyriacou
Chair

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

Case No: 12800-2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974 (as amended)

AND IN THE MATTER OF:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LIMITED

Applicant

and

JAMES MARTIN TAYLOR

Respondent

STATEMENT OF AGREED FACTS AND PROPOSED OUTCOME

1. By its application dated 30 June 2025, and the statement made pursuant to Rule 12 (2) of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 which accompanied that application, the Solicitors Regulation Authority Limited ("the SRA") brought proceedings before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal ("the Tribunal") making two allegations of misconduct against James Martin Taylor ("the Respondent").

The allegations

2. The allegations against the Respondent made by the SRA within that statement were that while in practice as a Solicitor at Collingwood Immigration Services LLP ("the Firm"):

Allegation 1.1

Between November 2021 and May 2022, he sent emails to Client A and Person B which he knew or ought to have known were misleading in that he omitted to tell them that the Further Submissions were first sent by email to the Home Office on 21 December 2021 and not on 21 July 2020. And in doing so, he breached any or all of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 ("the Principles"), and Paragraphs

1.4 and 7.11 of the SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs¹ (“the Code for Solicitors”).

In addition, as an alternative to the allegation at 1.1 that the Respondent breached Principle 4 of the Principles, the allegation is advanced on the basis that the Respondent’s conduct was reckless. Recklessness is alleged as an aggravating feature of the Respondent’s misconduct but is not an essential ingredient in proving the allegations.

Allegation 1.2

Between 3 December 2021 and 30 November 2022, he told the Firm’s COLP and the Home Office that Client A’s Further Submissions were submitted in July 2020 when he knew or ought to have known that this was misleading because the Further Submissions were first sent by email to the Home Office on 21 December 2021 and not in July 2020. And in doing so he breached any or all of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the Principles and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code for Solicitors.

Admissions

3. The Respondent admits the allegations and breaches set out within paragraph 2 above. The Respondent also accepts the factual basis of the admitted allegations set out within this document.

Agreed Facts

- 4 The following facts and matters, which are relied upon by the SRA in support of the allegations set out within paragraph 2 of this statement, are agreed between the SRA and the Respondent.
- 5 The Respondent, who was born on _____, is a solicitor having been admitted to the Roll on 16 March 2009.
- 6 At the time of the matter giving rise to the allegations, he was one of two partners in the Firm. The Firm specialises in the area of immigration and asylum law and has offices in

¹ Now the SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs and RSLs

Gateshead, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Hull, and Lancaster. At the time of the alleged conduct, the Respondent was based in the Firm's Gateshead office.

- 7 The Respondent does not have a current practising certificate. The last practising certificate the Respondent held was for the 2022/2023 practice year and this was free from conditions.
- 8 The conduct came to the attention of the SRA on 2 December 2022 when Ms Susan Margeret Liew, the Firm's Compliance Officer for Legal Practice ("COLP"), informed the SRA of a complaint she had received from Client A in relation to his claim for asylum which the Respondent had been dealing with. Ms Liew said that the complaint was in the process of being investigated by the Firm but that she was reporting what she believed to be a serious breach of the SRA's standards and principles by the Respondent.
- 9 On 5 December 2022, the SRA received a 'self-report' from the Respondent. In his report, the Respondent explained that he had initially believed that he had lodged the Further Submissions to the Home Office and informed the client of this. However, in 2021 in response to a chasing request, the Home Office confirmed that they had not received the Further Submissions and as the matter progressed, it became apparent that he had not actually lodged them. Rather than admit this to the client, he continued to maintain that they had been lodged.

Allegation 1.1

Client A's fresh claim for asylum

- 10 Client A is a foreign national who came to the United Kingdom with their family to seek asylum. Client A and their family submitted a claim for asylum to the Home Office in 2019, but this was refused. The family approached the Firm and obtained advice as to submitting a fresh claim for asylum on the grounds of religious conversion. In January 2020, the Firm was instructed to act for the family in respect of their fresh claim for asylum.
- 11 On 4 May 2020, the Respondent reviewed the file to establish the next steps. In his attendance note prepared at 13:54, he wrote, '*We need to do the following, new client form, client care letter, go on record with the Home Office, clarify proof of means*

situation, draft and lodge further submissions.' The same day, the Respondent prepared a client care letter addressed to Client A. The letter confirmed that the next steps would be to prepare and lodge further submissions.

- 12 On the same day, the Respondent prepared a letter addressed to the Home Office Further Submissions Unit ("HOFSU"). The letter confirmed that the Firm had been instructed by Client A and enclosed a signed form of authority document. The letter and the form of authority were sent by email as an attachment on 4 May 2020 at 13:50 to CSUEC@homeoffice.gov.uk. The Respondent received an email acknowledgement from the Home Office at around 17:13 on 4 May 2020 which said, '*Thank you. We have updated our records to show that you are now the acting legal representative for your client, [Client A].*'
- 13 The Respondent prepared a further letter, this time addressed to the '*LSE Team*' in which he requested confirmation of Client A's receipt of financial support. The client file shows that this letter was sent by email on 4 May 2020 at 13:53 as an attachment. The email states, '*Please find attached a request for proof of means and a signed form of authority*'.
- 14 The Home Office responded to this by way of a letter dated 6 May 2020, stamped as being received by the Firm on 14 May 2020. An attendance note dated 19 May 2020 displaying the username, 'User: JMT James Taylor', records that the Respondent noted receipt and reviewed the letter from the Home Office on this date.
- 15 The following documents appear on the client file:
 - 15.1 a letter dated 21 July 2020 addressed to the HOFSU raising Further Submissions prepared in support of Client A's fresh claim for asylum.
 - 15.2 An email purportedly sent from the Respondent's Outlook account to the Home Office CSUEC@homeoffice.gov.uk on 21 July 2020 ("the July Email"). The July Email was purportedly sent at 17:50. The body of the email says, '*Please find attached further submissions,*' and purports to attach two pdf documents labelled as 'Further Submissions.pdf' and 'Form of Authority-JMT2020250414490373.pdf.'

- 16 The Home Office did not acknowledge receipt of the July Email. The Respondent admits that he did not lodge these Further Submissions with the Home Office by email on 21 July 2020.
- 17 Between 7 October 2020 and 6 November 2020, the Respondent and Client A exchanged emails, however, none of the emails provided an update on the progress of the fresh claim which Client A had requested.
- 18 Nothing further happened until 9 March 2021 when Client A emailed the Respondent stating: *'I'm writing to you to ask for a followup [sic] on my case with the Home Office as it has been a year since the entry of my fresh claim to the Home Office. I would appreciate if you could have a look and give me an update.'* The Respondent replied to this email the same day saying, *'I will contact the Home Office and ask for an update.'* There is no evidence that the Respondent contacted the Home Office following this email.
- 19 By 10 August 2021, Client A had contacted his local MP's office for assistance and was in contact with Person B².
- 20 On 4 November 2021 at 09.35, the Respondent sent an email to Person B, copying in Client A, stating: *'I understand you are meeting with our client this morning. Please find attached a copy of his further submissions. We have spoken to our client today and we have agreed that he is to attend the Home Office in Liverpool to hand in these further submissions and updated correspondence. We will be writing a letter asking that this matter be expedited and providing a detailed breakdown of the correspondence on this file'* . Attached to this email was a document labelled 'Further Submissions-JMT20211104093333002.doc.'
- 21 Shortly after at approximately 10:10 on 4 November 2021, the Respondent sent a further email to Client A and Person B, saying, *'Apologies, I sent the wrong attachment on my previous email please disregard. The correct version is attached now.'* Attached to this email was a document labelled 'Further Submissions-JMT20211104100858917.pdf.'

² Person B is a Case Worker for the Member of Parliament for Client A's constituency.

- 22 On 22 November 2021, the Respondent and Client A had a telephone conversation where they discussed that the Home Office had not received the Further Submissions and that Client A had indicated that he did not now want to go to the Home Office in Liverpool. The Respondent did not inform Client A that the Further Submissions had not been sent to the Home Office by email in July 2020.
- 23 On 3 December 2021, the Respondent prepared a letter addressed to HOFSSU to accompany the bundle of documents in support of the fresh claim, which Client A would take with him to an appointment with the Home Office. These documents included the July Email and the Further Submissions bearing the date of 21 July 2020. In this letter the Respondent stated, '*We prepared further submissions for Client A in July 2020. These were submitted by email on 21 July 2020 along with a copy of his Form of Authority.*'
- 24 Client A provided the Respondent with a copy of a letter dated 6 December 2021 from his MP addressed to the Home Office. In this letter the MP referred to Further Submissions being made to the Home Office in July 2020. The letter also indicated that Client A had been informed by the Home Office that his fresh claim had not been registered.
- 25 On 14 December 2021, Client A sent an email to the Respondent copying in Person B. Client A's email requested the following, '*Could I please have the date of when the letters were sent to the Home Office as well as the confirmation you have received from them*'. There is no evidence that the Respondent replied to Client A.
- 26 On 21 December 2021, the Respondent sent an email to the Home Office to lodge the fresh claim. His email states, '*We have attached the following: 1) Further Submissions bundle our client was to take to Liverpool, 2) Further Supporting Documents he has now been able to provide evidencing further his case (including a letter from his MP), 3) the email regarding the previously booked appointment. We would ask you to pay particular attention to our letter of the 3rd of December 2021 (page 17 of the bundle). This sets out the case history and we would ask that you provide a prompt response to this request.*'
- 27 On 21 and 23 December 2021 the Respondent received two automated acknowledgement emails from the Home Office. One of these emails acknowledged receipt of the Further Submissions.

- 28 On 23 December 2021, the Respondent sent an email to Client A stating, '*The Home Office have this morning responded to my last email to confirm receipt*'. The Respondent did not disclose to Client A that the Further Submissions had not been lodged in July 2020.
- 29 On 20 January 2022 in response to a request for an update from Client A, the Respondent sent an email to the Home Office chasing an update on the status of Client A's claim. A copy of this email was forwarded to Client A. The file also records an attendance with Client A on this date and there is no evidence that the Respondent revealed that the Further Submissions had not been lodged in July 2020.
- 30 On 9 February 2022, the Home Office wrote to Client A regarding a further request for permission to work dated 13 December 2021. In its response, the Home Office refused the permission on the basis that Client A's asylum submissions had not been outstanding for more than 12 months and that he could apply again after 21 December 2022.
- 31 On 22 February 2022, the Respondent met with Client A to discuss issuing a 'Letter before Action'³. The purpose of this was to require the Home Office to make an urgent decision on the fresh claim, to grant permission to work in the interim, grant ARC cards for Client A's family, and provide a letter for the purposes of Client A's child's education. The Respondent went through the Letter Before Claim with Client A, who approved the contents, prior to it being emailed to the Home Office.
- 32 The Letter Before Claim dated 22 February 2022 prepared by the Respondent and approved by Client A, set out the 'details of the matter being challenged' and 'the issue' as follows:
- 32.1 '*We prepared further submissions for Client A in July 2020. These were submitted by email on 21st July 2020 along with a copy of his Form of Authority*'.
- 32.2 '*We understand that the Home Office position is that these further submissions are not recorded on the system.*'
- 32.3 '*...In the meantime, we have been in touch and requested permission to work but it is now being stated that he has not been waiting for 12 months (the letter*

³ The Letter Before Claim (recorded by the Respondent as a Letter before Action) is to commence a claim in accordance with the Pre-Action Protocol for Judicial Review.

appears to be a copied version of previous correspondence). Given that the original submissions were made on the 21 July 2020 this seems unreasonable'.

32.4 *'The applicant requires urgent consideration of his case and a decision on his further submissions. He has been waiting for over 17 months for a decision on this matter'*

32.5 *'... there has been a significant delay (compounded by confusion over whether or not the further submissions were actually received)'.*

33 The Respondent provided Client A and Person B with a copy of the Letter Before Claim that had been filed.

34 The Respondent received the Home Office's response to the Letter Before Claim on 15 March 2022. The Home Office's formal response included the following:

34.1 *'...The team did not locate the further submissions submitted on 21 July however, the further submissions have been accepted on 21 December 2021'.*

35 The formal response from the Home Office stated that it had only received the Further Submissions on 21 December 2021 and not on 21 July.

36 On 1 April 2022, the Respondent sent an email to the Home Office copying in Client A and Person B. The Respondent asked the Home Office to provide a decision urgently and he referred to his previous correspondence highlighting that the matter had been ongoing for a very significant period of time.

37 On 26 May 2022, the Home Office granted Client A and his family asylum.

38 An attendance note shows that the Respondent spoke with Client A on 31 May 2022 when he explained the Home Office's decision to grant the family asylum. The same day he sent an email to Client A enclosing a copy of the Home Office's decision.

39 An email to Person B dated 31 May 2022 shows that the Respondent also notified them of the Home Office's decision to grant the family asylum. The Respondent did not inform Client A or Person B that the Further Submissions had not been lodged in July 2020.

Allegation 1.2

Client A's complaint and the Firm's investigation

40 On or around 28 October 2022, Ms Liew, the Firm's COLP became aware of the complaint made by Client A dated 25 October 2022.

41 On 31 October 2022, Ms Liew conducted a review of Client A's file.

42 On 3 November 2022, Ms Liew and the Respondent had a telephone conversation in which they discussed Client A's complaint. During that conversation, the Respondent told Ms Liew that:

42.1 There was proof that the fresh claim was submitted via email on 21 July 2020 at 17h50.

42.2 That the fresh claim was lodged in July 2020 by email as that was the process at the time.

42.3 When asked by Ms Liew where the confirmation email from the Home Office Further Submissions Unit was, the Respondent said he could not find confirmation to show successful submission of the fresh claim and that it was so long ago he doubted it would still be there.

42.4 The Respondent admitted fault in terms of attaching the wrong document to an email sent to the Client's MP but there was no GDPR breach. He said that in error he sent a template fresh claim and then sent the correct version straight away on 4 November 2021.

43 Ms Liew was given the impression by the Respondent that there was no merit in the complaint. On 10 November 2022, at Ms Liew's request, the Respondent provided a written response to the complaint stating:

43.1 *'We went on record and further submissions were made in July 2020 to the email address on the link above.'*

43.2 *'When the client asked for copies of the emails he was provided with these and we did not therefore attempt to suggest to him that this had been done in March and the documents sent to him showed our correspondence.'*

- 44 Ms Liew reviewed the Respondent's written response and discussed this with him by telephone 10 November 2022, where he confirmed that his response remained the same, and that there was no merit in the complaint.
- 45 On 28 November 2022, Ms Liew sought assistance from a company called The Access Group. The Access Group is an IT company which provides the Firm's case management system and hosts its remote desktop. The case management system software is called Legal Fusion and the Firm logs onto the remote desktop to access this. Ms Liew requested The Access Group to check the Respondent's Outlook folders to determine whether the July Email had in fact been sent to the Home Office on that date.
- 46 On 30 November 2022, The Access Group informed Ms Liew that the July Email purportedly sent by the Respondent to the Home Office, had not been sent.
- 47 During her investigation Ms Liew also made enquiries to determine when the Further Submissions document had been created. According to the metadata, the document identified as the Further Submissions dated 21 July 2020, had been created on that date at 16:56 but the revision history showed that it had been revised by the Respondent on three subsequent occasions, at 10:08 on 4 November 2021 and twice at 10:24 and 10:28 on 3 December 2021.
- 48 On 30 November 2022, Ms Liew met with the Respondent in person to discuss her findings. At this meeting, the Respondent admitted that he had not been honest with Client A, the MP or her in his initial response to the complaint.
- 49 Ms Liew made further enquiries with The Access Group between 31 July 2023 and 18 August 2023. A technical support officer at The Access Group conducted a new search of the Respondent's Outlook mailboxes on 18 August 2023 and he was unable to find the July Email in any of the folders within the Respondent's Outlook between the dates 17 July 2020 and 24 July 2020.
- 50 The July Email was therefore not sent to the Home Office from the Respondent's Outlook account on 21 July 2020.

The Respondent's self-report and admissions

51 The SRA received a 'self-report' from the Respondent dated 5 December 2022. In that report the Respondent set out the following matters, including admissions:

51.1 *'I Initially believed that I had made the submissions. The client was advised of this.'*

51.2 *In 2021, in response to a chasing request, the Home Office confirmed that they had not received the further submissions.'*

51.3 *'As the matter progressed, it became apparent that whilst I had contacted the Home Office, and gone on record, I had not actually lodged the further submissions.'*

51.4 *'Rather than admit this to the client and explain the situation, as I should have done, I continue [sic] to maintain that the application was submitted.'*

51.5 *'The further submissions were correctly lodged in December 2021.'*

51.6 *'The client has issued a formal complaint. The client is seeking compensation on the basis that had I dealt with his case differently, then he would have been granted earlier. He has asked me to accept that I misled him in allowing to continue to believe that his further submissions had been lodged, by me, even after I realised that this was not the case. I intend to do this immediately.'*

51.7 *'I realise that if I had simply accepted that it had not been submitted, at the time, my honest mistake would not have deteriorated into dishonesty.'*

51.8 *'I appreciate that when I became aware there was a problem, I should have informed the client, but I initially thought that by lodging further submissions that the issue would resolve itself.'*

51.9 *'I realised after doing this that this was not the correct one, but once I had confirmed the lie, I couldn't see a way back and so maintained the dishonesty position.'*

52 The SRA investigated the matter and on 19 March 2025, an Authorised Decision Maker at the SRA decided to refer the conduct of the Respondent to the Tribunal.

Penalty proposed and costs

53 The admitted misconduct is serious and of the highest level. The SRA therefore contends, and the Respondent accepts, that the proper penalty in this case is that the Respondent should be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.

- 54 With respect to costs, it is further agreed that the Respondent should pay the SRA's costs of this matter agreed in the sum of £6,000.00.

Explanation as to why such an order would be in accordance with the Tribunal's sanctions guidance

- 55 The Respondent has admitted dishonesty. The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal's "Guidance Note on Sanction" (11th edition), at paragraph 28, states that: "*The most serious misconduct involves dishonesty, whether or not leading to criminal proceedings and criminal penalties. A finding that an allegation of dishonesty has been proved will almost invariably lead to striking off, save in exceptional circumstances (see Solicitors Regulation Authority v Sharma [2010] EWHC 2022 (Admin)).*"

- 56 In Sharma [2010] EWHC 2022 (Admin) at [13] Coulson J summarised the consequences of a finding of dishonesty by the Tribunal against a solicitor as follows:

"(a) Save in exceptional circumstances, a finding of dishonesty will lead to the solicitor being struck off the Roll ... That is the normal and necessary penalty in cases of dishonesty...

(b) There will be a small residual category where striking off will be a disproportionate sentence in all the circumstances ...

(c) In deciding whether or not a particular case falls into that category, relevant factors will include the nature, scope and extent of the dishonesty itself, whether it was momentary ... or over a lengthy period of time ... whether it was a benefit to the solicitor ... and whether it had an adverse effect on others..."

- 57 For the reasons described below, there are no exceptional circumstances here.

- 58 The Respondent is an experienced solicitor having been admitted to the Roll in 2009. He was also a partner at the Firm and would have been aware of his regulatory obligations and the Standards and Regulations governing the conduct of the profession. The Respondent had direct control and responsibility for conducting the case on behalf of his client. He was in a position of trust, which he breached when he failed to inform

his client, his COLP and others of the true position of the asylum claim. His motivation in misleading them was to conceal his own mistakes.

- 59 In terms of the harm caused, the Respondent's conduct adversely impacted his client, his colleagues, and others. The Respondent failed to inform his client of the true position of his asylum claim, preventing him from taking action to rectify it. The consequences for the client were serious and he could have faced removal from the UK because his asylum claim had been refused, and he had no claim pending before the Home Office until it received the Further Submissions. The impact upon the Firm was that it was required to financially compensate the client in relation to the complaint. The Home Office was also impacted in that it was required to expend resources to respond to the Letter Before Claim which the Respondent advised his client to make, despite that potential claim being based on a material untrue statement. The extent of the harm caused by the Respondent's conduct could reasonably have been foreseen.
- 60 The factors that aggravate the seriousness of the misconduct include that the Respondent's conduct was repeated, on numerous occasions over a period of around twelve months. The conduct is likely to have continued were it not for the complaint made by the client, resulting in the Firm investigating.
- 61 The conduct was not impulsive but was a planned course of action in that the Respondent was aware that he had not lodged the Further Submissions by email in July 2020, yet he allowed others to believe that he had and did not correct their belief as to the true position, despite having opportunity to do so. Further, he did not tell the truth to the COLP when she was investigating the complaint against the Firm until he was faced with IT evidence contradicting his account. Concealment of wrongdoing is an aggravating factor.
- 62 These were serious acts of dishonesty committed over an extended period and the case plainly does not fall within the small residual category where striking off would be a disproportionate sentence. Having considered the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal's Guidance Note on Sanction (11th edition), the seriousness of the Respondent's conduct is at the highest level such that a lesser sanction would be inappropriate and strike off is required for the protection of the public and the reputation of the legal profession.

63 Accordingly, the proportionate penalty in this case is for the Respondent to be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.

Dated this 6 day of October 2025

Head of Legal and Enforcement on behalf of the SRA

.....
James Martin Taylor, Respondent