

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

CASE NO. 12792-2025

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY

-and-

STEVEN SIMPKINS

Answer to the Applicant's Rule 12 Statement

The Allegation

(using the numbering for the four substantive allegations made by the Applicant)

The respondents basic responses with mitigation issues to be expanded in witness evidence if necessary:

- 1. Accepted**
- 2. Accepted**
- 3. Accepted**
- 4. Accepted that in normal circumstances I ought to have known but not that I did "know" the information was inaccurate or misleading.**

The Respondent denies any or all allegations of or impugning dishonesty.

Mitigation

The Respondents central mitigation is that during the period of time that the events occurred that have led to these proceedings [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The Respondent was not aware at the time of the transfers being made that are the subject of the proceedings. The Respondent was only first made aware of these transfers when informed by the SRA once they had been reported by [REDACTED] to them after it was clear her position at the firm was no longer tenable due to her previous conduct. There is no evidence apart from the lay witness evidence of [REDACTED] that the Respondent had any knowledge of the transfers prior to SRA revealing them to him. Due to her conduct [REDACTED] is no longer able to work for a Solicitors Practice the Respondent understands.

Once the Respondent was made aware of the payments that are the subject of these proceedings occurring he admitted they were wrong, apologised and made sure the intention to repay the clients/ client account. Once know, the Respondent has never denied or not been in full recognition of the seriousness of the actions and remains professionally embarrassed that such a situation arose, albeit in the circumstances faced. The Respondent accepts that his basic conduct in these circumstances (without intention or negligence) did not adhere to the higher standards expected of a solicitor and was not appropriate in particular relating to the care and responsibility to his Clients.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

All client balances/funds have been correctly paid to clients and as such no financial loss has been incurred by any of them. The Professional Indemnity Insurers for Simpkins and Co investigated the circumstances and found no evidence of dishonesty by their policy holder the Respondent and has indemnified the firm for the majority of these losses.

The Respondent is a qualified solicitor of 24 years and ostensibly ran his own firm Simpkins and Co for approximately 19 years. There have been no serious disciplinary issues previously referred to the SRA or the Solicitors Tribunal prior to the subject of the current proceedings.

The Respondent notwithstanding these proceedings has been allowed to continue with a Practising Certificate after consideration by the SRA albeit with conditions that were fully agreed.