

CASE NO.

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

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

AND IN THE MATTER OF:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LIMITED

Applicant

- and –

CHINYERE INYAMA

Respondent

**STATEMENT PURSUANT TO RULE 12 (2) OF THE SOLICITORS (DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS) RULES 2019**

I, **Huw Roberts**, am a Solicitor and Legal Adviser at the Applicant, the Solicitors Regulation Authority Limited (“**the SRA**”).

I make this statement on behalf of the Applicant.

The Allegation

1. The allegation against the Respondent, Mr Chinyere Inyama, made by the SRA is that, whilst employed as a Senior Coroner for the West London coroner area:

1. On 9 November 2021, he provided inaccurate and/or misleading information to the Chief Coroner’s Office (“CCO”) about the seriousness of the allegations made against him by Nottinghamshire Police.

In doing so, he breached any or all of:

- 1.2.1 Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019 (“**the Principles**”),
- 1.2.2 Principle 4 of the Principles;
- 1.2.3 Principle 5 of the Principles; and

1.2.4 Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs ('the Code').

The facts and matters relied upon in support of this allegation are set out in paragraphs 5 to 28 below.

Appendices and Documents

2. The following appendix is attached to and relied upon in this Statement:

2.1. Appendix 1: Relevant rules and regulations.

3. I also attach to this statement a bundle of documents, marked **Exhibit HR1**, to which I refer in this statement. Unless otherwise stated, page references in this statement relate to that exhibit, using the format [**HR1, X**].

4. The bundle is divided into the following sections:

4.1. Section A: Witness statements and exhibits

4.2. Section B: Documentary evidence.

4.3. Section B: SRA documentation and associated correspondence.

Professional Details

5. The Respondent was born on [REDACTED] 1961 and was admitted as a solicitor on 1 November 1993.

6. Between 1993 to 2003, the Respondent worked in private practice as a mental health solicitor.

7. In 2004, the Respondent was employed as an Assistant Deputy Coroner until his appointment as a Senior Coroner in 2011. From 2013 onwards, he was a Senior Coroner for the West London coroner area until his dismissal in February 2023.

8. The Respondent is currently registered as a practising solicitor (SRA ID 161223) at Inyama & Co Limited, Jhumat House, 160 London Road, Barking, IG11 8BB.

Factual Background

9. On 28 October 2021, the Respondent was contacted by DC Robinson of Nottinghamshire Police (“**the Police**”) and advised that he was to be voluntarily interviewed under caution in relation to allegations of a historic sexual nature. The interview was scheduled to take place on 7 November 2021, and the Respondent was informed he would be given pre-interview disclosure [**HR1, 6, 8-9**].
10. On the same date i.e. 28 October 2021, DC Robinson contacted the Coroner’s Society of England and Wales (“**CSEW**”) to advise them that the Senior Coroner (i.e. the Respondent) was to be questioned under caution. The CSEW referred the matter to the **CCO** who took over communications with the Police [**HR1, 45-46**].
11. Also on 28 October 2021, after being contacted by the Police, the Respondent contacted Mr James Parker (“**Mr Parker**”), who was the head of the CCO and private secretary to the Chief Coroner. The Respondent notified Mr Parker that he was to be interviewed voluntarily by the police in relation to historic allegations of a sexual nature. The Respondent explained that it related to when he was a solicitor in private practice and he was expecting further disclosure at some point [**HR1, 46**].
12. On 29 October 2021, the Police responded to a request for further information from Mr Parker with a more detailed summary of the nature of the offences. In short they informed Mr Parker that the allegation was of rape of a female aged over 16 and sexual assault. Mr Parker considered it inappropriate to tell the Respondent what the police had disclosed as it was a live police investigation at that time [**HR1, 46**].
13. On 3 November 2021, the Police sent pre-interview disclosure to the Respondent’s solicitor, Mr Ahmad, which recorded that there were two allegations of penetrative sexual activity with a mentally disordered female [**HR1, 6**]. The disclosure document was a single page long and said:

“ALLEGATION 1 - Whilst your client Mental Health Solicitor for a female called [REDACTED] is alleged that he accompanied [REDACTED] to a gym/swimming pool in the Newark area of Nottinghamshire. Whilst they were both in the sauna INYAMA began

to massage [REDACTED] and touch her all over her body. He then touched her vagina area and inserted his fingers into her vagina.

ALLEGATION 2 - Whilst your client was the Mental Health Solicitor for a female called [REDACTED] it is alleged that he accompanied her to a hotel in the Newark area of Nottinghamshire. Whilst in a hotel room he penetrated [REDACTED]'s anus and vagina with his penis on a number of occasions during the same evening and morning.” [HR1, 4]

14. Both offences were alleged to have occurred between 2001 and 2008.
15. On 5 November 2021, the Respondent informed Mr Parker that he had been given limited disclosure and that he expected to know more at the interview [HR1, 46]. During subsequent disciplinary proceedings, by the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (“JCIO”) the Respondent said that he had not read this disclosure prior to the conversation with Mr Parker on 5 November 2021 [HR1, 95].
16. The voluntary interview with the Police took place on 7 November 2021. The interview lasted approximately 50 minutes. The Respondent provided a very short, prepared statement denying the allegations before responding ‘no comment’ to all substantive questions asked [HR1, 14-40].
17. The Respondent was asked in detail about the allegations which had been summarised in the pre-interview disclosure [HR1, 14-40]. In particular, the Respondent was given the following information about the allegations:

“that offence is a female who was unable to refuse because of or for a reason related to a mental disorder when you knew or could be reasonably be expected to have known that she had such a disorder. And that because of it, or for a reason related to it, she was likely to be unable to refuse and that touching was sexual involving the penetration of her vagina and anus with your penis.” [HR1, 16]

“And allegation 1 is whilst your client was the mental health solicitor for a female called it is alleged that he accompanied [NAME REDACTED] to a gym swimming pool in the Newark area of Nottinghamshire. Whilst they were both in the sauna, Inyama began to massage and touch her all over her body. He then touched her vagina area and inserted his fingers into her vagina. Allegation 2 is whilst [the Respondent] was the mental health solicitor for a female called [NAME REDACTED] it is alleged that he

accompanied her to a hotel in the Newark area of Nottinghamshire. Whilst in a hotel room, he penetrated [NAME REDACTED]'s anus and vagina with his penis on a number of occasions during the same evening and the- it should say the following morning." [HR1, 16-17]

"She says that you kept putting your fingers into her vagina." [HR1, 29]

"She says that she didn't m [sic], she didn't have her swimming costume removed she was still wearing it erm but the costume was moved to one side of her vagina while you touched her in that area and internally as well." [HR1, 29]

"She says that you inserted your penis into her anus and began to anally penetrate her. She said that you had to push really hard to get inside of her and she said she was in a lot of pain and it really hurt. I that what, do you have anal sex on a regular basis?" [HR1, 34]

"She says that you did a mixture of both anal and vaginal penetration but it was mostly anal." [HR1, 34]

"She says that erm whilst you were having anal sex with her, having sex with her really really hard it was extremely painful for her and that you took a long time to ejaculate. Erm she says it was not a loving act at all erm she says that she was, she felt like she was being used and she felt like a piece of meat. She says that's you were rough with her, not hitting or violent, but just rough with the sexual side, with the penetration erm and she says that you were obsessed with her bottom and was very interested in that part of her body." [HR1, 34]

"She said that you penetrated her vaginally er as well but she felt that you weren't all that interested in that part of the body. She said that you had made her bottom bleed and then after ejaculating you eventually fell asleep." [HR1, 35]

"She says that before you left the hotel you pulled down her trousers and had anal sex with her again by inserting your penis into her anus. She says that you pushed her over, so that she was bent over the bed erm she didn't, erm you didn't undress you only unfastened your trousers and pulled them down but you had removed her trousers erm and had anal sex with her again..." [HR1, 36]

“she felt as though she was forced to have sex with you...” [HR1, 38]

18. The police investigation was subsequently closed after a full investigation and ultimately no charges were brought against the Respondent [HR1, 239].

19. On 9 November 2021 at around 13:45, the Respondent spoke with Mr Parker on the phone to update him on the police investigation. Mr Parker took what he describes as a verbatim note of that conversation immediately afterwards [HR1, 46]. The note records that:

“Mr Inyama reports that there were two allegations of what he termed ‘touching up’ – one in hospital, one in a hostel where she lived. Mr Inyama reports that he has been told that the complainant says she thought they had been in a relationship at the time or that he had been grooming her for a relationship [exactly which of these was alleged was not clear in the telephone call – JP]

He stated that he certainly did not recall the offences taking place and the tone of the conversation (as with previous conversations with me) was that his position was that the allegations were false.

Mr Inyama reports that he gave a ‘no comment’ interview on the advice of his solicitor.” (emphasis added) [HR1, 46]

20. Mr Parker noted that the Respondent’s summary of the alleged offences differed from what the police had disclosed to the CCO, so he sought clarity from DC Robinson on 18 November 2021 that what had been disclosed to the Chief Coroner is exactly what had been disclosed to the Respondent. DC Robinson confirmed that this was the case [HR1, 46].

21. Mr Parker was concerned the Respondent had tried to mislead him and to minimise the seriousness of the allegations. He therefore reported matters to the JCIO on 18 November 2021 [HR1, 45].

22. After a process of evidence gathering by the JCIO, which included obtaining written representations from the Respondent, Mr Justice Cobb, a nominated judge, recommended the Respondent’s removal from office for what he regarded as *“the most serious form of judicial misconduct”* [HR1, 42, 109-115].

23. The Respondent was subsequently suspended from his judicial office pending the outcome of the police investigation, a disciplinary panel and the decision of the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice [HR1, 49].
24. The Respondent exercised his right under the 2014 Rules to have a disciplinary panel consider the case before the Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice made a final decision [HR1, 124-130].
25. In a decision dated 22 June 2022, the first Disciplinary Panel found that the Respondent's conduct amounted to "*serious judicial misconduct*" and recommended a reprimand [HR1, 130].
26. The Lord Chancellor and Lord Chief Justice however, agreed that removal from office would be the appropriate disciplinary action [HR1, 132-132]. As required by the Judicial Conduct (Prescribed Procedures) Regulations 2014, before making a final decision, they referred the case to a new disciplinary panel for investigation [HR1, 42].
27. On 19 January 2023, a Disciplinary Panel found that the Respondent was guilty of serious misconduct [HR1, 13]. The Panel found that "*he deliberately misled the Chief Coroner's Office both as to the extent and the nature of what were very serious allegations of sexual offending against him. He did so in order to minimise the gravity of those allegations. The contrast between the information that he provided to Mr Parker and the contents of his police interview is both stark and striking.*" The unanimous recommendation was that he be removed from office [HR1, 62].
28. The Respondent was dismissed as a coroner on 7 February 2023 [HR1, 106]. He self-reported these matters to the SRA on 8 February 2023 [HR1, 117].

Breaches of the Principles in relation to allegation 1

Principle 4 and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code

29. The Applicant relies upon the test for dishonesty stated by the Supreme Court in *Ivey v Genting Casinos* [2017] UKSC 67 which applies to all forms of legal proceedings, namely that the person has acted dishonestly by the ordinary standards of reasonable and honest people:

“When dishonesty is in question the fact-finding tribunal must first ascertain (subjectively) the actual state of the individual’s knowledge or belief as to the facts. The reasonableness or otherwise of his belief is a matter of evidence (often in practice determinative) going to whether he held the belief, but it is not an additional requirement that his belief must be reasonable; the question is whether it is genuinely held. When once his actual state of mind as to knowledge or belief as to facts is established, the question whether his conduct was honest or dishonest is to be determined by the fact-finder by applying the (objective) standards of ordinary decent people. There is no requirement that the defendant must appreciate that what he has done is, by those standards, dishonest.”

30. By the time of his conversation with Mr Parker on 9 November 2021, the Respondent knew the following:
- a. The Respondent had been provided with pre-interview disclosure on 3 November 2021 through his legal representative. This disclosure comprised a single page and clearly set out the two allegations, which included sexual assault by digital, vaginal and anal penetration.
 - b. The allegations had also been explained to the Respondent in interview and detailed questions were asked about the specific aspects of each allegation (see paragraph 17 above). The Respondent therefore clearly knew the nature of the two, very serious allegations.
 - c. The Respondent was an experienced solicitor. He would also have known that the term “touching up” is very different to, and although still very serious, is less serious than what had been alleged.
31. Given this state of knowledge and belief, the Respondent acted dishonestly by the standards of ordinary decent people. Ordinary decent people would consider it dishonest for a solicitor to knowingly mislead, or try to mislead, the CCO as to the seriousness of the allegations for which he was under an active police investigation, by describing allegations of digital, anal and vaginal penetration of a vulnerable individual as “touching up” of that individual.
32. The Respondent therefore failed to act with honesty and breached Principle 4 of the Principles and paragraph 1.4 of the Code.

Principle 5

33. The Respondent's actions amounted to a failure to act with integrity (i.e. with moral soundness, rectitude and steady adherence to an ethical code) in breach of Principle 5 of the SRA Principles. In Wingate v SRA [2018] EWCA Civ 366, the Court of Appeal held that integrity connotes adherence to the ethical standards of one's profession. Lord Justice Jackson held:

"Integrity is a broader concept than honesty. In professional codes of conduct the term "integrity" is a useful shorthand to express the higher standards which society expects from professional persons and which the professions expect from their own members".

34. Paragraphs 30 to 31 are repeated.

35. The Respondent was in a position of trust and responsibility as a solicitor. A solicitor acting with integrity would not have wilfully provided false and / or misleading information to the CCO or acted in a manner that could have misled the CCO as to the nature and seriousness of matters for which he was under police investigation.

36. By the conduct stated in the preceding paragraphs, the Respondent failed to act with integrity and therefore breached Principle 5 of the SRA Principles.

Principle 2

37. The Respondent was in a position of trust and responsibility as a senior coroner, and was also on the roll of solicitors.

38. The trust that the public places in solicitors, and in the provision of legal services, depends upon the reputation of the solicitors' profession as one in which every member, of whatever standing, may be trusted to the ends of the earth. Solicitors are required to discharge their professional duties with integrity, probity and trustworthiness.

39. Members of the public should also be able to place their trust in members of the profession, who are held in high regard. Any behaviour which undermines this trust damages not only the regulated person, but also the ability of the legal profession as a whole to serve society.

40. Members of the public would expect a solicitor to act in a straight-forward and transparent manner with colleagues, and other members of the profession. This clearly includes not providing information that they know to be inaccurate, and correcting any misleading impression that may have been caused by that information.
41. By his actions, the Respondent abused the trust placed in him by his colleagues and members of the public, and profession, and did not conduct himself in a manner that maintains public trust in him and the provision of legal services. The Respondent therefore breached Principle 2 of the SRA Principles.

The SRA's investigation

42. The Respondent self-reported to the SRA on 8 February 2023 [HR1, 117].
43. The SRA wrote to the Respondent on 12 April 2023 in relation to his self-report [HR1, 117]. On 24 April 2023, the Respondent replied by way of email to the SRA attaching a number of documents to assist with the investigation. He was cooperative with the SRA investigation [HR1, 116].
44. The SRA issued a Notice Recommending Referral of Conduct to the Tribunal [HR1, 211] dated 17 March 2025 (“the Notice”). The Notice was provided to the Respondent for comment.
45. In the Respondent’s representative’s written response to the Notice, sent on 1 April 2025 [HR1, 226-232], the allegation is denied.
46. The Respondent denies the allegations. In his representations filed in response to the Notice, dated 31 March 2025, he explains that the assertion that he downplayed the seriousness of the allegations is misplaced and fails to recognise that he acted with professional judgment based on his direct knowledge of the facts. He does not accept any intention to mislead, nor any attempt to conceal or misrepresent material information [HR1, 230].
47. The Respondent places particular reliance on the fact that he knew that the CCO was in communication with the investigating police force and would in due course be notified of the serious alleged offences for which he had been interviewed [HR1, 228].

48. In further representations made on 30 June 2025, in response to the addition of an alleged breach of Principle 4 of the Principles (honesty), the Respondent specifically denied dishonesty **[HR1, 242]**.
49. On 30 April 2025, an Authorised Decision Maker at the SRA decided to refer the Respondent to the Tribunal **[HR1, 235]**.
50. On 13 June 2025, the SRA wrote to the Respondent informing him that a decision had been taken to also refer a breach of Principle 4 in respect of the same factual allegation **[HR1, 239]**.
51. The Respondent replied by way of email on 30 June 2025, denying the alleged breach of principle 4 **[HR1, 242]**.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts and matters stated in this statement are true.

Signed: H. Roberts

Dated: 7 August 2025

CASE NO.

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL**IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974 (as amended)****AND IN THE MATTER OF:****SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LIMITED**Applicant

- and -

CHINYERE INYAMARespondent

APPENDIX 1 TO STATEMENT PURSUANT TO RULE 12 (2)**SOLICITORS (DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS) RULES 2019****Relevant Rules**

SRA Principles 2019

You act:

- Principle 2 in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in the legal services provided
- Principle 4 with honesty
- Principle 5 with integrity

SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs 2019

- 1.4 that solicitors must not mislead or attempt to mislead their clients, the court or others by their own acts or omissions or being complicit in the acts or omissions of others