

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12731-2025

BETWEEN:

and

TIMOTHY EAGLE Respondent

Before:

Mr A Horrocks (in the chair)
Mr R Nicholas
Mr A Lyon

Date of Hearing: 20-21 January 2026

Appearances

Thomas Walker, employed by Blake Morgan LLP, 6 New Street Square, London EC4A 3DJ,
for the Applicant.

The Respondent appeared and represented himself.

JUDGMENT

Allegations

1. The allegations against the Respondent, Timothy Eagle, made by the SRA were that on 23 December 2022, while in practice as the Senior Partner at Hansells Solicitors (“the Firm”):

1.1 Person A

- 1.1.1 He said to Person A words to the effect of ‘[Person A] *you are just so sexy,*’ which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or
- 1.1.2 He placed his hand on Person A’s waist, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or
- 1.1.3 He said to Person A words to the effect of ‘*if I was 20 years younger, I would like to fuck you right now*’ which was inappropriate and/or unwanted.

He thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the SRA Principles 2019 (“the Principles”) and Rule 1.5 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors 2019 (“the Code”).

1.2 Person B

- 1.2.1 He said to Person B words to the effect of ‘*your shoulders look lovely, I’d love to kiss them,*’ which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or
- 1.2.2 He kissed Person B’s bare right shoulder despite being told by Person B not to do so, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or;
- 1.2.3 He said to Person B words to the effect of ‘*I don’t believe you every woman likes being kissed,*’ after Person B had told him to stop and that she did not like it, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted.

He thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code.

1.3 Person C

- 1.3.1 He said to Person C words to the effect of ‘*that dress is easy access,*’ which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or
- 1.3.2 He gestured with his index and middle finger towards the middle of Person C’s thighs where her dress met in the middle which was inappropriate and/or unwanted.

He thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code.

1.4 Person D

1.4.1 He said to Person D words to the effect of '*we've got a bunch of really lovely colleagues here and I'd really love to fuck* (Person E),' which was inappropriate and/or unwanted.

He thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code.

2. Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 were advanced on the basis that Mr Eagle's conduct was sexually motivated and/or sexual in nature. Sexual motivation and/or the conduct being sexual in nature was alleged as an aggravating feature of Mr Eagle's misconduct but was not an essential ingredient in proving the Allegations.

Executive Summary

3. Mr Eagle was admitted to the Roll in October 1983. At the time of the alleged misconduct, he was the Senior Partner at the Firm. He resigned from the Firm in 2023 and does not now hold a practising certificate.
4. The alleged misconduct took place on 23 December 2022 at the Firm following the Firm's Christmas lunch and when Christmas celebrations took place back at the office after the Christmas lunch.
5. Mr Eagle was unable to work at the Firm between September 2021 and August 2022 due to severe ill-health. At the time of the alleged misconduct Mr Eagle worked at the Firm four days a week.
6. The Rule 12 Statement was dated 24 January 2025. Part One Standard Directions were issued by the Tribunal dated 3 February 2025 and Part Two Standard Directions were issued by the Tribunal dated 6 May 2025. Mr Eagle filed and served the Respondent's Answer on 14 April 2025. In his Answer he made partial admissions but made arguments as to mitigation on account of ill-health. He accepted breaches of Principles 2 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code. He did not admit that he breached Principle 5 of the Principles and denied that he failed to act with integrity. In his Answer Mr Eagle did not admit that his conduct in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 was sexually motivated and/or sexual in nature.
7. By an application dated 26 August 2025, the SRA applied to the Tribunal for anonymisation orders for seven individuals, Persons A to G. The SRA also sought to prohibit disclosure of the name of the Firm. The Tribunal granted anonymity for Persons A to G, finding it necessary where sexual misconduct was alleged. The request to anonymise the Firm was refused.
8. During oral evidence Mr Eagle admitted that his conduct in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 was sexual in nature. He admitted that his conduct in Allegations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 was sexually motivated. He did not admit this in relation to Allegation 1.3.

9. The Tribunal found on the balance of probabilities that Mr Eagle's conduct breached Principle 5 and that he failed to act with integrity. The Tribunal applied the test for integrity set out in *Wingate v SRA* [2018] EWCA Civ 366.
10. Mr Eagle was suspended from the Roll of Solicitors for one year and ordered to pay costs in the sum of £30,000.00.

Sanction

11. The Respondent was suspended from practice for 1 year. The Tribunal's reasons can be found [[here](#)]

Documents

12. The Tribunal considered all of the documents in the case which included:

- Rule 12 Statement
- Respondent's Answer
- Respondent's Statement of Means dated 21 December 2025
- Applicant's Schedule of Costs for Substantive Hearing dated 12 January 2026
- Applicant's Opening Note dated 12 January 2026

Preliminary Matters

13. Application by the Applicant to make submissions on sanction

- 13.1 Mr Walker applied to address the Tribunal on sanction. He submitted that as the case involved serious allegations the Tribunal might be assisted by hearing from the Applicant on sanction.
- 13.2 Mr Eagle did not oppose the application.
- 13.3 The Tribunal invited Mr Walker to make submissions on the application and he did so. He said the impact on the reputation of the profession was in issue and it might assist the Tribunal to hear from the Applicant on that subject, in particular as to *Beckwith v SRA* [2020] EWHC 3231 (Admin).
- 13.4 The Tribunal refused the application. The Tribunal was an expert Tribunal and well versed in dealing with cases involving the reputation of the profession. Mr Walker had already cited *Beckwith* in his opening note and the Tribunal was in any event familiar with the case. However, the Tribunal decided that it would hear Mr Walker in reply on any points of law arising after Mr Eagle had presented his case on sanction and mitigation.

14. Anonymity Order

- 14.1 The Chair of the Tribunal reminded the parties that further to the CMH in this matter on 26 August 2025 the anonymity order remained in place for Persons A to G. He reminded the parties that it was incumbent on the parties not to refer to Persons A to G

by name. The decision of the Tribunal in the CMH should be respected. The anonymity order did not apply to the job descriptions of Persons A to G or to the name of the Firm.

- 14.2 Mr Walker brought to the attention of the Tribunal that the SRA had discussed with Mr Eagle whether parts of the hearing should be heard in private as the Tribunal might need to hear evidence concerning Mr Eagle's health concerns at the material time during the proceedings. Mr Eagle confirmed that it was unnecessary for any part of the hearing to be heard in private. The Tribunal informed Mr Eagle that he was at liberty to reflect on this matter and change his mind on the necessity for aspects of the hearing to be heard in private during the course of the proceedings if he wished to do so. In the event, he did not do so.
- 14.3 The Tribunal asked Mr Eagle to confirm that he admitted breaches of Principles 2, 6 and Rule 1.5 of the Code in relation to Allegations 1.1 to 1.4. Mr Eagle confirmed that he admitted these breaches but he did not admit that he breached Principle 5 in relation to Allegations 1.1 to 1.4.

Factual Background

- 15. Mr Eagle was the Senior Partner of the Firm. In December 2020 Mr Eagle was diagnosed with serious illnesses and in cancer. In September 2021 he underwent major surgery which involved the removal of part of his liver, which had been found to be diseased. He had further serious health complications in 2021 and 2022.
- 16. During August 2022 Mr Eagle began a phased return to work on a part time basis on account of his health conditions. He had returned to full time work at the Firm by November 2022 and then worked in the office four days a week.
- 17. The conduct in this matter came to the attention of the SRA on 13 January 2023 when it received a self-report from Mr Eagle in which he informed the SRA of his conduct. In January 2023 the Partners of the Firm commenced an internal investigation into Mr Eagle's conduct. On the basis of its initial findings Mr Eagle was suspended from work. The Partners commenced internal disciplinary proceedings against him. Mr Eagle retired before the Firm's disciplinary proceedings concluded. The Firm's Managing Partner reported the allegations to the SRA on 20 January 2023. Mr Eagle did not return to the Firm after negotiating retirement terms which took effect from April 2023.
- 18. On 23 December 2022, the Firm closed around lunchtime in order for the staff to attend a Christmas lunch at a venue in Norwich. The lunch finished at approximately 5.00pm. Mr Eagle and Persons A to G returned to the Firm to continue the celebrations with colleagues. Mr Eagle appeared to be intoxicated and had interactions with several colleagues. Persons A to G all worked at the Firm. Persons A to D were women. Persons G and F spoke to Mr Eagle about his state of intoxication and suggested that he go home. His partner was called by a colleague to collect him from the Firm due to his state of intoxication.
- 19. Person A was young. She attended the Christmas lunch and then returned to the Firm's premises with colleagues for the Christmas celebrations. Person A went to the kitchen but Mr Eagle stood in front of the fridge blocking her access. Person A asked Mr Eagle if he would mind moving.

20. In response, Mr Eagle said to Person A “[Person A], you are just so sexy.” Person A laughed this off and replied “*thanks.*” Mr Eagle said to her quietly “*If I was 20 years younger I would like to fuck you right now*”. When he said this, he put his left hand on the left side of Person A’s waist. He stood close to Person A when he did this. Person A removed herself from the situation and ran to three colleagues and told them what had happened. Person A observed that Mr Eagle was intoxicated before and after this encounter.
21. Person A was not interested in having a sexualised conversation or relationship with Mr Eagle.
22. On 28 December 2022 Mr Eagle said to Person A words to the effect of “*I don’t know if I said anything to you, but I’m sorry if I did*”.
23. On 23 December 2022 Person B attended the Christmas lunch with colleagues and returned to the Firm for the Christmas celebrations. Person B went to the kitchen area and at approximately 6.10pm Mr Eagle approached Person B and said to her “*you look nice*”. Person B replied, “*thank you.*” Person B wore a dress which fully exposed her shoulders. Mr Eagle said to Person B “*your shoulders look lovely; I’d love to kiss them.*” Person B responded, “*I’d rather you didn’t*” or “*Oh no Tim, don’t do that.*” Mr Eagle kissed Person B’s right shoulder.
24. Person B told Mr Eagle to stop his behaviour and said, “*no stop it.*” Mr Eagle asked her why he should stop his behaviour. Person B replied, “*because I don’t like it.*” There were further exchanges between Mr Eagle and Person B. Mr Eagle stated, “*I don’t believe you; every woman likes being kissed.*” After further exchanges Person B told Mr Eagle, “*I don’t like it, you are making me uncomfortable.*” He called Person B “*a bitch.*” Person B responded “*Tim!.*” Mr Eagle replied to her “*you’re just a fucking bitch and can fuck off*” and walked away from Person B.
25. On 24 December 2022 Mr Eagle wrote a text message to Person B which stated “*I have been told I acted inappropriately towards you last night. I don’t remember it at all, but of course that is no excuse. I am really really sorry. I never wanted to make you feel angry or upset or angry, and feel very bad about it, now I am aware. So sorry Tim.*”
26. On 23 December 2022 Person C attended the Christmas lunch and returned to the office with colleagues to continue the Christmas celebrations. During the evening, Person C talked with Mr Eagle. Mr Eagle leaned forward and gestured with his index and middle finger towards Person C’s dress where it met in the middle of her thighs. Whilst gesturing, Mr Eagle said to Person C, “*that dress is easy access.*” Person C responded “*err, no it isn’t.*” Person C moved away from Mr Eagle. Person C suggested that Mr Eagle go home as she observed him to be significantly intoxicated.
27. Person C worked from the office on 29 and 30 December 2022. On one of those days Mr Eagle was also in the office. Person C told him what he said to her on 23 December 2022. Mr Eagle apologised to Person C and “*advised he knew he had overstepped the mark and was under the impression that he had probably upset other people.*”

28. On 23 December 2022 Person D attended the Christmas lunch and returned to the Firm with colleagues to continue the Christmas celebrations. During the evening Person D spoke with Mr Eagle in the kitchen area. He said to her that “*we’ve got a bunch of really lovely colleagues here and I’d really love to fuck [Person E].*” Person D spoke with Mr Eagle in the office on 29 December 2022. He apologised for what he said on 23 December 2022. He stated that he could not remember the incident. He added that he believed his behaviour was related to his health concerns.

Witnesses

29. Mr Eagle gave oral evidence at the hearing. Patrick Newton gave oral evidence in support of Mr Eagle’s character at the hearing.

30. The written evidence of witnesses is quoted or summarised in the Findings of Fact and Law below. The evidence referred to will be that which was relevant to the findings of the Tribunal, and to facts or issues in dispute between the parties. For the avoidance of doubt, the Tribunal read all of the documents in the case. The absence of any reference to particular evidence should not be taken as an indication that the Tribunal did not read or consider that evidence.

Findings of Fact and Law

31. 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 his/her/their private and family life under Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Integrity

The test for integrity was that set out in *Wingate v SRA* [2018] EWCA Civ 366, as per Jackson LJ. The court said in well-known passages at para 97ff:

“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....[Professionals] are required to live up to their own professional standards... Integrity connotes adherence to the ethical standards of one’s own profession...”

“The duty to act with integrity applies not only to what professional persons say, but what they do.”

32. **Allegation 1.1 – On 23 December 2022, Mr Eagle said to Person A words to the effect of ‘you are just so sexy’, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or placed his hand on Person A’s waist, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or said to Person A words to the effect of ‘if I was 20 years younger, I would like to fuck you right now’ which was inappropriate and/or unwanted. In doing so, he thereby acted in breach of any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the SRA Principles 2019 and Rule 1.5 of the Code.**

Allegation 1.2 – On 23 December 2022, Mr Eagle said to Person B words to the effect of ‘*your shoulders look lovely, I’d love to kiss them*’, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/ or kissed Person B’s bare right shoulder despite being told by Person B not to do so, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or said to Person B words to the effect of ‘*I don’t believe you every woman likes being kissed*’, after Person B had told him to stop, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted. In doing so, he thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code.

Allegation 1.3 – On 23 December 2022, Mr Eagle said to Person C words to the effect of ‘*that dress is easy access*’, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted; and/or gestured with his index and middle finger towards the middle of Person C’s thighs where her dress met in the middle which was inappropriate and/or unwanted. In doing so, he thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code.

Allegation 1.4 – On 23 December 2022, Mr Eagle said to Person D words to the effect of ‘*we’ve got a bunch of really lovely colleagues here and I’d really love to fuck [Person E]*’, which was inappropriate and/or unwanted. In doing so, he thereby breached any or all of Principles 2, 5 and 6 of the Principles and Rule 1.5 of the Code. Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 inclusive were advanced on the basis that Mr Eagle’s conduct was sexually motivated and/or sexual in nature.

The Applicant’s Case

- 32.1 Oral submissions were made by Mr Walker during the hearing.
- 32.2 The case related to Mr Eagle’s conduct at the Christmas celebrations in the office after the Christmas lunch on 23 December 2022. Mr Eagle admitted the factual allegations. He denied that his conduct constituted a lack of integrity and breached Principle 5 of the Principles and denied that his actions in relation to Person C were sexually motivated. The matters to be determined were whether Mr Eagle acted with a lack of integrity and whether his conduct was sexually motivated in relation to Allegation 1.3
- 32.3 Mr Eagle was the Senior Partner at the Firm and had worked for there for many years. The Allegations concerned Mr Eagle’s conduct in the office premises where the Christmas celebrations continued after the Christmas lunch. Mr Walker submitted that Mr Eagle’s conduct triggered the integrity principle and that his conduct was all sexually motivated..
- 32.4 The SRA’s primary case was that Mr Eagle’s behaviour was intentional, deliberate and was behaviour about which he was fully cognisant. Mr Eagle may not later have recalled all of his behaviour but he was reactive to his surroundings and to other people at the time and was aware of what was happening around him. He was conscious at the time of what he was doing. With regards to Allegation 1.2, for example, Person B protested against his behaviour and he stopped his conduct towards her. This showed that he was aware of what was going on around him and reactive to the circumstances around him. Mr Eagle accepted that he later remembered some of what was going on around him. He did not leave the Firm and go home when he was first told that he was too drunk to remain at the celebrations. However, he reacted to the advice given to him by Person G

and Person F who told him he was too drunk to stay at the Firm. He allowed his partner to collect him and he was taken home.

32.5 The context in which Mr Eagle's conduct took place was relevant to whether he breached Principle 5 of the Principles, acting with integrity. Mr Eagle was under immense pressure personally and at work. It was submitted that all of these pressures weighed heavily on him at the Firm's Christmas celebrations and that his conduct was connected to work disagreements he had had with female colleagues. Mr Eagle had asserted that his behaviour in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 was as a result of the effect of the alcohol he had consumed on his medically challenged body. He had claimed that although he was an experienced drinker his body was unable to tolerate alcohol in the same way after his illness and surgery.

32.6 There was however no medical report to support Mr Eagle's claim that his behaviour on 23 December 2022 was caused by something other than or something in addition to excessive alcohol consumption. On the contrary there was a letter from a Consultant Hepatologist dated 24 November 2020 to Mr Eagle's GP referring to his serious health concerns and actions to be taken. The Consultant referred to a "*Dangerous level of alcohol intake. Important to reduce alcohol gradually aiming to stop completely.....*" There was sympathy for Mr Eagle's health issues. However, the Applicant submitted that Mr Eagle was fully aware of the risks to his health if he continued to drink alcohol from 2020. He was advised to reduce his alcohol consumption and then desist completely but he decided to drink to excess on 23 December 2022. Mr Eagle took a voluntary decision to get drunk at the Christmas celebrations. He acted consciously even if he cannot recall some of the events that took place.

32.7 The SRA's secondary position was that it was entirely foreseeable that if Mr Eagle chose to drink he might not be able to control his behaviour. Therefore, there was intent to behave as he did. Getting drunk at an event is not a defence to improper behaviour. It was submitted that Mr Eagle's behaviour in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 was all sexually motivated as well as sexual in nature.

32.8 In Allegation 1.1 Mr Eagle used highly sexualised language to Person A and placed his hand on her waist. He talked about sexual activity with Person A. This behaviour was unwanted by Person A. Person A was much younger than Mr Eagle. He was the Senior Partner of the Firm and he held a significantly senior position over Person A in the Firm. The conduct was unwanted by Person A. Mr Walker submitted that Mr Eagle's behaviour was clearly sexually motivated as he was showing a clear interest in sexual activity with Person A. Principle 5 was breached as Mr Eagle did not meet the test for integrity set out in *Wingate* which required him to meet the high standards which society expects from professional persons.

32.9 In relation to Allegation 1.2 Mr Eagle used sexualised language towards Person B and kissed her bare shoulder. This behaviour was unwanted by Person B and she protested. Mr Eagle responded to the protest and stopped his behaviour. Mr Eagle's response was a conscious response to the protest by Person B and showed awareness of his actions. Mr Eagle's behaviour towards Person B did not meet the test for integrity set out in *Wingate*.

32.10 In Allegation 1.3 Mr Eagle's behaviour followed a similar pattern. He had noticed what Person C was wearing and directed sexualised language and gestures towards her. This behaviour was unwanted by Person C. Mr Walker submitted that Mr Eagle's behaviour was sexually motivated as the reference to easy access in relation to a dress must refer to access for the purpose of sexual activity. Mr Eagle's behaviour towards Person C did not meet the test for integrity set out in *Wingate*.

32.11 In Allegation 1.4 Mr Eagle made a lewd comment to Person D about Person E. He indicated to Person D that he wanted to engage in a sexual relationship with Person E. This behaviour was unwanted by Person D. Mr Eagle's behaviour towards Person D did not meet the test for integrity set out in *Wingate*.

32.12 Mr Walker submitted that the Allegations show a pattern of repeated behaviour towards women with sexual motivation. If Mr Eagle was not in control of his behaviour he would not have repeated actions where overtly sexual comments and behaviours were made. Mr Eagle acted with sexual motivation and a lack of integrity.

32.13 The SRA's case was that the test for integrity in *Wingate* was primarily objective as opposed to subjective. Mr Eagle's subjective state of mind, it submitted, was principally relevant to sanction not whether he was in breach of Principle 5 at all. According to *Wingate*, integrity meant adherence to the ethical standards of one's own profession. The serious breaches by Mr Eagle of those standards by themselves proved a lack of integrity. There could be no dispute in this case about the connection between Mr Eagle's conduct and his professional status as a solicitor. The conduct which was the subject of the Allegations took place at a work event at the Firm and involved his colleagues. Mr Eagle's conduct was closely connected with his practice as a solicitor and therefore touched on his professional status and the status of the profession. As discussed in *Beckwith* there was a connection between Mr Eagle's conduct and his practice as a solicitor.

32.14 Mr Walker submitted that it was not a defence to the Allegations, including that of breach of Principle 5, that Mr Eagle consumed alcohol on 23 December 2022. He knew that he was in poor health and his liver was affected and that he should not be drinking to excess. He chose to drink significant quantities of alcohol knowing that there was a potential risk to himself and others. Mr Eagle was of generally good character but evidence of good character was not a defence to the Allegations..

The SRA's case on the alleged breaches

Principle 5 (Integrity)

32.15 Mr Walker submitted that Mr Eagle failed to act with integrity i.e. with moral soundness, rectitude and steady adherence to an ethical code. A solicitor acting with integrity would ensure that he did not make lewd and sexually inappropriate comments to colleagues in a professional setting and make sexual advances towards them for the purpose of sexual gratification. Accordingly, Mr Eagle's conduct represented a manifest lack of integrity. In those circumstances, Mr Eagle breached Principle 5 of the Principles.

Principle 2 (Public Trust)

32.16 Mr Walker submitted that the conduct admitted amounted to a breach by Mr Eagle to behave in a way which maintained the trust placed in him by the public in the provision of legal services. Public confidence in Mr Eagle, in solicitors and in the provision of legal services was undermined by the unwanted sexual advances made towards his colleagues. In those circumstances, Mr Eagle breached Principle 2 of the Principles.

Principle 6 (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)

32.17 Mr Walker submitted that the conduct admitted amounted to a breach by Mr Eagle to act in a way that encourages, equality, diversity and inclusion. Mr Eagle made sexual advances only towards women for the purpose of sexual gratification. In those circumstances, Mr Eagle breached Principle 6 of the Principles.

Rule 1.5 of the Code

32.18 Mr Walker submitted that the conduct admitted amounted to a breach by Mr Eagle to act in a way whereby he treated his colleagues fairly and with respect. The sexual advances made by Mr Eagle was harassment through which he unfairly discriminated against women. In those circumstances, Mr Eagle breached Rule 1.5 of the Code.

The Respondent's Case

32.19 Mr Eagle provided oral evidence on oath during the hearing. He also made submissions to the Tribunal on his own behalf.

32.20 Mr Eagle's position was that he was intoxicated during the celebrations at the Firm on 23 December 2022 and that he could not recall the behaviour that formed the basis of Allegations 1.1 to 1.4. Mr Eagle submitted that his subjective state of mind should be taken into account in relation to the issue of integrity and that because, he submitted, he was unaware of his behaviour, his actions were not deliberate and were not intentional. Therefore, his conduct could not be characterised as lacking integrity.

32.21 Mr Eagle accepted that he had adduced no medical report to support his contention that his behaviour must have been caused at least in part by something other than alcohol overconsumption. He relied on his character witnesses including Mr Newton who said how amicable he was when drunk and said that his behaviour at the Christmas celebrations were a shock to everyone he knew and to himself. He said he did not know that his alcohol intake would result in the behaviour detailed in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4. His liver specialist did not inform him that alcohol might cause his behaviour to change in this kind of way.

32.22 At the time of the conduct alleged, Mr Eagle said that he was in a state of automatism. He did not remember how he had behaved towards Person A, Person B, Person C and Person D at the material time. Mr Eagle stated that he had never previously exhibited behaviour when drinking which was similar to that set out in the Allegations. Therefore, he could not have expected alcohol to have affected him in this way nor to cause him to act in such an unexpected manner towards the subjects of Allegations 1.1 to 1.4. This demonstrated a lack of cognisance of what he was doing. Mr Eagle asserted that

he could only remember brief conversations with Persons F and G from the night of 23 December 2022. He concluded that something must have been vastly different that night which resulted in the behaviour detailed in the Allegations. It could not just have been the alcohol.

- 32.23 Mr Eagle said he had friendly and open relationships with Persons C, D and F. Their relationships were rude and jokey. He had no recollection of his conduct towards them but his normal behaviour towards Persons C and D was vastly different to the behaviour detailed in Allegations 1.3 and 1.4.
- 32.24 Mr Eagle confirmed that he self-reported his conduct on 23 December 2022 to the SRA on 13 January 2023. He had then suggested that his drink could have been spiked but accepted in cross examination that in hindsight he did not believe that any of his colleagues would have spiked his drink. He could not have foreseen that his behaviour would have changed if he consumed alcohol to excess as he had never previously acted in this manner after drinking too much.
- 32.25 Mr Eagle admitted in his oral evidence that his behaviour towards Person A in Allegation 1.1 was sexually motivated and sexual in nature. He admitted that his behaviour towards Person B in Allegation 1.2 was sexually motivated and sexual in nature. Mr Eagle did not admit that his behaviour towards Person C in Allegation 1.3 was sexually motivated. He stated that his comment to Person C about access to her dress would have been said as a joke. On account of the nature of his relationship with Person C, she would have known that his comment was a joke. He admitted that the joke was sexual in nature. He admitted that his behaviour towards Person D in Allegation 1.4 was sexually motivated and sexual in nature. He reasserted that he was not in control of his behaviour at the material time.
- 32.26 Mr Eagle addressed the Tribunal on sanction. He submitted that his misconduct was of an extremely serious nature but that it was not misconduct of the highest level. The one and only aggravating feature, he submitted, was sexual motivation. Mr Eagle submitted that suspending him for a period of time rather than striking him from the Roll would be the most appropriate sanction to enforce. Mr Eagle referred to a number of previous SDT cases of sexual misconduct and submitted that sanctions short of strike off were usual. The most serious sanction of strike off had only been ordered in such cases where there was also a lack of integrity and dishonesty.
- 32.27 Mr Walker responded on the point of law that the Tribunal is not obliged by precedent to follow previous SDT decisions when deciding on sanction. He submitted that the focus by the Tribunal in each case should be fact specific followed by application of the SDT Guidance Note on Sanctions.

The Respondent's Case on the alleged breaches

- 32.28 Mr Eagle admitted the conduct in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4. He admitted breaches of Principles 2, 6 and Rule 1.5 of the Code. He asserted that his misconduct did not breach Principle 5 and denied that he lacked integrity. He admitted in oral evidence that his conduct in Allegation 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 was sexually motivated and sexual in nature. He admitted that his conduct in Allegation 1.3 was sexual in nature.

Principle 5 (Integrity)

32.29 Mr Eagle stated that the only matter in dispute between the parties was whether he lacked integrity as he had admitted all of the other breaches. He asserted that he had never been so drunk that he could not recall events. He was mystified when he was informed about the way in which he had behaved. He was an experienced drinker but on 23 December 2022 he behaved in a way in which he had never behaved before. It was clear in his submission that there was an unproven reason for his behaviour and that he was clearly not in control of his shameful behaviour. Mr Eagle disagreed with the SRA's position that when deciding on whether integrity had been breached the evaluation was primarily objective as opposed to subjective and said that his state of mind was relevant. As he did not and could not have had the subjective intention to behave as he did, he could not in his submission have lacked integrity. Mr Eagle asserted that it was relevant that he aware of the damage that alcohol would cause to his liver but he was not warned about alcohol poisoning and that alcohol could change his behaviour. He was told that he made unpleasant comments about his fiancé during the course of the Christmas celebrations. He would never act that way towards one of the most precious people in his life which he said was evidence that he was unable to control his behaviour.

32.30 Mr Eagle stated that he acted shamefully and took full responsibility for his behaviour. On the balance of probabilities, he could not however have anticipated that he would have behaved in the way alleged and the Tribunal should take account of his unblemished career. Mr Eagle took the opportunity to apologise to those affected by his behaviour on 23 December 2022.

The Tribunal's Findings

32.31 The Tribunal considered the evidence presented to it, including the oral evidence and submissions during the hearing and the documentary evidence. In reaching its findings the Tribunal also considered the Principles and the Code.

32.32 The Tribunal found that Mr Eagle's admissions of the facts in Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 in oral and written evidence were unequivocal, supported by the evidence and properly made. Mr Eagle had also properly admitted breaches of Principles 2, 6 and 1.5 of the Code. In oral evidence he also admitted that the conduct in Allegations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 were sexually motivated and sexual in nature and that in Allegation 1.3 was sexual in nature. The only matters to be determined by the Tribunal on the balance of probabilities as a result of its factual findings were whether the conduct in Allegation 1.3 was sexually motivated and whether Mr Eagle had breached Principle 5 of the Principles and failed to meet the test for integrity.

32.33 As to Allegation 1.3 the Tribunal was in no doubt that it was sexually motivated having regard to the test in *Basson v GMC* [2018] EWHC 505 (Admin). The gesture and comment Mr Eagle admitted making were both sexually suggestive. His description "easy access" in relation to her dress where it met her upper legs implied that he might be able or wish to go inside it; it is hard to see what the motivation for this suggestion might be if it were not sexual.

32.34 The Tribunal found that Persons A, B, C and D were in more junior positions in the Firm to Mr Eagle. He held a more senior position and one of power over all of Persons A, B, C and D although to differing extents as the Senior Partner of the Firm. The Tribunal found that all women involved in the Allegations were upset by Mr Eagle's conduct. At the time of the conduct the SRA Guidance on Sexual Misconduct dated 1 September 2022 was in force. As Mr Eagle would or should have known, quite apart from that Guidance, a person in his professional position should not abuse that position to initiate or pursue or suggest an improper sexual or emotional relationship with a colleague or take advantage of them but he nevertheless did so.

32.35 The Tribunal found that Mr Eagle's had suffered from severe poor health relating amongst other things to his liver before the material time for which he had undergone surgery. His state of health was such that he had been signed off work as a result and was still not back at work full time by late 2022. The Tribunal found that Mr Eagle was an experienced drinker of alcohol. He had been advised to reduce his drinking in order to preserve his liver health. The Tribunal found that Mr Eagle did not in fact moderate his drinking on the occasion in question but drank to excess.

32.36 Mr Eagle had asserted that his behaviour on 23 December 2022 was not only as a result of his excessive alcohol consumption. He said it must be at least partly as a result of something else and said that he did not know what he was doing to the point that he was in effect in a state of automatism. The Tribunal did not accept these submissions. Mr Eagle did not dispute that he drank to excess on the day in question. He did not say alcohol alone excused his behaviour. He had not, however, adduced any medical evidence to support his contentions that the cause of his behaviour was something other than or in addition to alcohol and that he had no control over his behaviour. The Tribunal did not accept those contentions. He knew he had been told not to drink. It was or should have been obvious to him that too much alcohol might adversely affect his self-control and behaviour. It was or should have been obvious to him that it might all the more so affect those things as a result of his health conditions in general and the state of his liver in particular. The conduct he had admitted was also not involuntary. At the time he had been able to interact with those present at the time of the incidents and respond to them, altering his behaviour when told it was inappropriate and unwelcome. He reacted to the response of Person B, for example, after he had kissed her shoulder. He might not now be able to recall all his behaviour but he exhibited a level of control over his behaviour at the time which was inconsistent with his contention that it was involuntary and that he was not subjectively aware of what he was doing.

32.37 As a result of its factual findings, the Tribunal considered whether Mr Eagle breached Principle 5 of the Principles. The Tribunal carefully considered the test for integrity as set out in *Wingate*. It also considered the discussion of that test in the *Beckwith* case, which held amongst other things [para 36] that integrity includes the requirement not to take advantage of others and [para 54] that it can reach even conduct that is part of a person's private life if it realistically touches on the practice of the profession. The Tribunal decided that that in all the circumstances of his actions and what he knew at the time they took place Mr Eagle failed to act with integrity. The Tribunal found that Mr Eagle made a conscious decision to attend the Firm's Christmas celebrations and consume alcohol after a prolonged period of illness. He did so knowing that he had been advised not to drink too much. It would have been obvious to him and did not need

telling that alcohol would have an adverse effect on his behaviour if consumed to excess. Mr Eagle's misconduct was closely connected with and touched on his professional role and his senior position in the firm, of which his actions took or sought to take inappropriate advantage. His conduct did not take place in his private but his professional life. It took place at a work event. It was on the Firm's premises. It was directed at work colleagues, one of whom in particular was very much younger than him and worked for him. It took place in the presence of other work colleagues. He was the Senior Partner and (as he well knew) he was in a position of professional seniority, responsibility and authority in relation to all those to whom his actions were directed, of which position he sought to take advantage in acting as he did. The events did touch on his practice and his profession in the sense discussed in *Beckwith*.

32.38 The Tribunal therefore found that Allegations 1.1 to 1.4 were proved in full to the requisite standard, namely on the balance of probabilities.

Previous Disciplinary Matters

33. Mr Eagle had no previous disciplinary findings recorded against him.

Mitigation

34. Mitigation was advanced by Mr Eagle. He submitted that he did not foresee the behaviour that resulted in the Allegations on 23 December 2022. He submitted that he had never previously acted in the manner set out in the Allegations after consuming alcohol. Therefore, his conduct was not deliberate or premeditated. His character witnesses gave evidence that his conduct was totally out of character. Mr Eagle submitted that his health problems had a deep impact on his life at the material time and he struggled to understand what had happened when he was informed about his behaviour. This case was a result of behaviour that took place during a brief period of time following a previously unblemished career.

35. Mr Eagle further submitted that he as soon as he was made aware of his behaviour he went out of his way to apologise to the people who had been affected by his behaviour. He self-reported his conduct to the SRA on 13 January 2023 and he resigned from the Firm. He cooperated fully with the investigation by the SRA. He did not intend to practise as a solicitor again. He would like to practise as a notary and it is possible that any decision made by the Tribunal would affect his ability to practise as a notary and survive financially. He confirmed that the notary regulator was aware of the referral of his case to the Tribunal.

Sanction

36. The Tribunal had regard to its Guidance Note on Sanctions (11th edition February 2025) when considering sanction. The Tribunal's overriding objective, when considering sanction, was the need to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the profession. In determining sanction, it was the Tribunal's role to assess the seriousness of the admitted misconduct and to impose a sanction that was fair and proportionate in all the circumstances.

37. The Tribunal found that Mr Eagle's motivation for his misconduct was sexual motivation which was an aggravating feature of it. His behaviour arose from actions

which were not premeditated. Mr Eagle nevertheless had direct control and responsibility for the circumstances giving rise to his misconduct. He was an experienced professional who had practised as a solicitor for over 40 years without any other regulatory issue. He did not mislead the regulator at any time.

- 38. Mr Eagle caused harm to Persons A, B, C and D during his misconduct. Persons A, B, C and D expressed their upset following his behaviour towards them. Mr Eagle also harmed the reputation of the Firm and the profession of solicitors. The extent of the harm that would be caused by the misconduct was reasonably foreseeable.
- 39. Mr Eagle's misconduct was deliberate but not calculated as the events took place over a brief period of time. He had failed to take full responsibility for his behaviour on 23 December 2022 as he had argued unsuccessfully that it was involuntary and that he had not been advised that his behaviour might unusually be affected by alcohol intoxication.
- 40. The Tribunal noted that by way of mitigation on 13 January 2022 Mr Eagle had voluntarily notified the regulator of the facts and circumstances giving rise to his misconduct. The evidence showed that the misconduct although serious was one of brief duration in a previously unblemished career. Mr Eagle showed insight into the harm that he had caused. He was remorseful and apologised for his misconduct at the earliest opportunities. He made open and frank admissions in a timely manner and cooperated with the regulator.
- 41. The Tribunal carefully considered in reaching its decision the impact of Mr Eagle's misconduct on the reputation of the solicitors' profession. The Tribunal accepted that the misconduct had damaged the reputation of the profession and that a substantial sanction was necessary given the need to maintain public confidence. Given the serious nature of the Allegations, the Tribunal considered and rejected the lesser sanctions within its sentencing power such as no order, a reprimand, a fine or restrictions. The Tribunal determined that a suspension from practice for one year to take effect immediately was fair and proportionate.

Costs

- 42. Mr Walker made an application for costs as set out in the SRA's Schedule of Costs for Substantive Hearing dated 12 January 2026. The total costs claimed amounted to £47,130.00 comprised of Part A costs of £1,650.00 for the SRA's investigation and supervision. The total costs also comprised of Part B costs of £37,900.00 for solicitor agent work and VAT, bringing the total agent costs to £45,480.00.
- 43. Mr Walker submitted that the costs were inevitable given the sexual motivation of the allegations and represented the true economic cost to the regulator. He stated that there was no duplication of work between the two senior lawyers working on the case. Mr Walker directed the Tribunal to the combined total units for all stages which added up to 1156 units. The hourly rate worked out at £345.00 per hour for the solicitor agent work. In terms of the time taken to manage the case the units were proportionate. Mr Walker further submitted that representations were put forward by Mr Eagle and medical issues were raised. Unused material such as the Firm's investigation was also

considered by the solicitor agents. The overall time spent on preparing for the case was reasonable.

44. There was active engagement with Mr Eagle so what would have been a 4 day hearing was reduced to 2 days. Mr Eagle had legal representation at the start of the proceedings and then went on to represent himself. Mr Walker submitted that Mr Eagle's position in terms of integrity and sexual motivation was unclear at the start of the hearing. The combined total units for all stages reflected the amount of preparatory work that had to go into the case. The starting point was for a full costs order to be made.
45. Mr Walker referred to Mr Eagle's Statement of Means. He submitted that he was a man of means and capacity. He ran a professional business and should be able to pay a costs order within a reasonable time frame.
46. Mr Eagle agreed that costs were payable but submitted that the amount claimed was neither reasonable nor proportionate particularly given the early admissions. He accepted the reasonableness of the Part A costs but challenged the Part B costs of £37,900.00 plus VAT for solicitor agent work.
47. Mr Eagle submitted that this was not a document heavy case in terms of preparation. Additionally, he submitted his documents in April 2025 with his Respondent's Answer. The only part of the case unadmitted related to integrity and sexual motivation. Mr Eagle submitted that the application of the Fixed Fee Part B costs was unfair in this case as large blocks of time were recorded in the case and he was unable to see without a fuller breakdown of solicitor agent costs whether the time recorded was proportionate. He asserted that an hourly rate of £345.00 was excessive. He submitted that some preparation for the case could have been undertaken by junior lawyers on a lower hourly rate.
48. Mr Eagle referred to his Statement of Means. He confirmed that his current notary business had been running for less than three years. He was making a profit and also received income from state and private pensions but his outgoings exceeded his income. Mr Eagle confirmed however that he was paying outgoings for his partner in addition to paying for his own outgoings. He also accepted that the equity in his house was a six figure sum. Mr Eagle further submitted that the decision of the Tribunal to suspend him for one year would affect his notary practice. It would take him 2 to 3 years to build up his practice again if he were suspended from that work.

The Tribunal's Decision on Costs

49. The Tribunal noted that under Rule 43(1) of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 it has discretion to make such order as to costs as it thinks fit, including the payment by any party of costs or a contribution towards costs of such amount (if any) as the Tribunal considers reasonable. Under Rule 43(4), when deciding whether to make an order for costs, against whom and in what amount, the Tribunal must take into account all relevant factors, including the parties' conduct, compliance with directions, the reasonableness and proportionality of time spent and rates claimed, and the means of the paying party.

- 50. The Tribunal was satisfied that the proceedings had been properly brought by the SRA and that, in principle, it was reasonable for a costs order to be made in its favour. The preparation undertaken by the SRA and its solicitors was appropriate given the nature of the case and the need to present the matter before the Tribunal. The Tribunal accepted that the SRA had incurred genuine economic costs and that a proportion of those costs were properly recoverable.
- 51. In considering the amount to be ordered against Mr Eagle, the Tribunal had regard to the early admissions made by him, which simplified the case considerably, as well as the relatively limited volume of documentation. Mr Eagle was not wholly impecunious and it was not a case where he had no prospect of paying costs. The Tribunal nevertheless took into account his means, including the impact of the one-year suspension on his ability to generate income in the near term, and the need for any costs order to be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.
- 52. The Tribunal reminded itself of the principles established in *R v Northallerton Magistrates' Court, ex parte Dove* [1999] 163 JP 894, that an order for costs is compensatory, not punitive, and must not exceed costs reasonably incurred. It also had regard to relevant authorities confirming that costs should be moderated where circumstances, including admissions and ability to pay, make full recovery disproportionate.
- 53. Applying those principles, the Tribunal concluded that while the SRA was entitled to recover its costs in principle, a reduction was appropriate to reflect the early admissions, the fact that there had been some duplication between senior fee earners working on the SRA's behalf and that the hearing had been shorter and less complex than originally envisaged. Accordingly, the Tribunal fixed the final costs order at £30,000.00 including VAT.

Statement of Full Order

- 54. The Tribunal ORDERED that the Respondent, TIMOTHY EAGLE be SUSPENDED from practice as a Solicitor for the period of one year to commence on the 21st day of January 2026. The Tribunal further ordered that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £30,000.00.

Dated this 6th day of February 2026
On behalf of the Tribunal

A. Horrocks

A. Horrocks
Chair