

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12733-2025

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

PRIYANK TANWAR

Respondent

Before:

Mrs C Evans (in the chair)

Mr D Green

Mr A Pygram

Date of Hearing: 07 – 08 January 2026

Appearances

Tom Walker, Barrister, of Blake Morgan LLP, One Central Square, Cardiff, CF10 1FS for the Applicant.

Geoffrey Williams KC, of Farrar's Building Temple, London EC4Y 7BD for the Respondent.

JUDGMENT

Allegation 1

- 1.1. On or about 24 August 2023, the Respondent provided misleading information to the Family Court at Leicester County Court, namely as to his location during the hearing, when questioned by the court as to where he was located at the time of the hearing.

In doing so, he breached any or all of following:

- a. Principle 1 of the SRA Principles 2019 (“the Principles”);
- b. Principle 2 of the Principles;
- c. Principle 4 of the Principles;
- d. Principle 5 of the Principles;
- e. Paragraph 1.4 of the SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs (“the Code for Solicitors”);
- f. Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors.

Proved

Allegation 2

- 1.2. On or about 24 August 2023, he failed to attend a hearing in person at the court as required by an order of the court dated 27 July 2023, and/or failed to arrange for a suitable representative to attend to cover for him at the hearing.

In doing so, he breached any or all of the following:

- a. Principle 1 of the Principles;
- b. Principle 2 of the Principles;
- c. Paragraph 2.5 of the Code for Solicitors;
- d. Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors.

Proved

Executive Summary

2. Mr Tanwar was working as a self-employed consultant for Glen Solicitors Limited (“the Firm”) at the material time. The Firm was instructed in relation to private family law proceedings under Part II of The Children Act 1989, acting on behalf of Person A, the father. Mr Tanwar had conduct of the matter. The matter proceeded in the Family Court at Leicester County Court. On 27 July 2023, the court made an order listing the matter for a final contested hearing on 24 August 2023 before Recorder Matthew O’Grady (“the Recorder”). It was a point of contention whether there was a requirement for the parties to attend at that hearing in person. Counsel appeared in person for the mother, who was also physically present. The father attended via video link. Mr Tanwar attended by telephone from Munich, Germany.
3. There were communication issues at that hearing which form the basis of this matter. Mr Tanwar failed to attend in person or to arrange for a suitable representative to attend on his behalf and provided misleading information to the court as to his location during the hearing. Mr Tanwar denied the allegations against him, on the basis that he had a

genuine belief that the Recorder was trying to establish his credentials as a representative, and therefore it was appropriate for him to respond to the Recorder's questions about his whereabouts with details of the Firm's office location.

4. On 4 October 2023, the Recorder reported Mr Tanwar to the SRA in respect of his conduct during the hearing on 24 August 2023.
5. The Tribunal found both allegations proved in their entirety, including dishonesty. As the Tribunal also determined that there were no exceptional circumstances, and made an order that Mr Tanwar be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.

Sanction

6. The Tribunal ordered that the Respondent be struck off the Roll of Solicitors. The Tribunal's reasons can be found [\[here\]](#)

Documents

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

Applicant

- Rule 12 Statement [\[here\]](#)
- Exhibit AD1 dated 12 February 2025
- The Applicant's Opening Note dated 07 January 2026
- Schedule of Costs dated 30 December 2025

Respondent

- The Respondent's Witness statement in case no. EX23P00184 dated 29 August 2023
- The Respondent's Affidavit in case no. EX23P00184 dated 31 August 2023
- The Respondent's Witness Statement dated 21 May 2024
- The Respondent's Answer dated 14 April 2025
- The Respondent's Statement of Means dated 5 January 2026

Professional Details

8. Mr Tanwar, was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors on 15th November 2010. As a result of the allegations before the Tribunal, his practising certificates for the years 2023/24 and 2024/25 were subject to the condition that he act as a solicitor only as an employee and only where the employment has first been approved by the SRA. Mr Tanwar was working as a self-employed consultant for the Firm at the material time.

Witnesses

9. The written and oral 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 and made notes

of the oral evidence of Mr Tanwar. The absence of any reference to particular evidence should not be taken as an indication that the Tribunal did not read, hear or consider that evidence.

Findings of Fact and Law

10. The Applicant was required to prove the allegations on a 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 right 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.

Integrity

With reference to its consideration of integrity, the Tribunal had regards to [Wingate v SRA](#) EWCA Civ 366.

“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”

Dishonesty

In its determination of the issue of dishonesty the Tribunal considered the test set out at paragraph 74 of [Ivey v Genting Casinos \(UK\) Ltd t/a Crockfords](#) [2017] UKSC 6.

The Tribunal applied the two-step test and first established the actual state of Mr Tanwar's knowledge or belief as to the facts, noting that the belief did not have to be reasonable, merely that it had to be genuinely held. It then considered whether that conduct was honest or dishonest by the standards of ordinary decent people.

11. **Allegation 1 – 1.1 On or about 24 August 2023, the Respondent provided misleading information to the Court, namely as to his location during the hearing, when questioned by the Court as to where he was located at the time of the hearing. In doing so, he breached any or all of following: (a) Principle 1 of the Principles; (b) Principle 2 of the Principles; (c) Principle 4 of the Principles; (d) Principle 5 of the Principles; (e) Paragraph 1.4 of the Code for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs; and (f) Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors.**

The Applicant's Case

- 11.1 Mr Walker emphasised how important context was in this matter as these proceedings arose from a sensitive case involving serious concerns regarding the welfare of children. He submitted that Mr Tanwar's failure to comply with a court order of 27 July 2023 (requiring him to appear in person), or to make the court aware of his difficulties in obtaining instructions, should be seen in this context.

- 11.2 Mr Tanwar referred in his witness statements (dated 29 August 2023, his affidavit dated 31 August 2023 and his second witness statement dated 21 May 2024), to the difficulties he encountered in taking instructions. It was submitted that this was not an answer to the allegations against him as he neither sought to come off the record, nor apply for an adjournment to secure alternative representation.
- 11.3 Whilst it was acknowledged by Mr Walker that Mr Tanwar had not embarked on a wholesale plan to deceive the court as to his whereabouts, it was submitted that his actions, when providing misleading information to the court, were motivated by the intention to conceal his location from the Recorder. His actions did not arise from any misunderstanding, but were deliberate, and his intention to conceal his location from the Recorder was dishonest. Mr Tanwar failed to take several opportunities to clarify that he was in Munich. His responses followed a repeated pattern which developed into a persistent series of misleading comments.
- 11.4 Mr Walker acknowledged that Mr Tanwar's case was that he had informed the court clerk and his opponent that he was abroad and that his client was also aware that he was away. This was supported by the statement dated 22 February 2024 from the court clerk, Ms Atanasova and the submissions made by opposing counsel, as detailed in the transcript.
- 11.5 Mr Walker submitted that the focus of this case was the exchanges Mr Tanwar entered into with the Recorder on the question of his location. These exchanges spanned a spectrum, from stilted to obfuscatory, and, at worst, were outright untruthful. However, all the exchanges were motivated by a dishonest intention to conceal his location. Mr Walker contended that Mr Tanwar's thesis, that he was seeking to convey the location of his *office* to the Recorder, was nonsensical in the context of what is recorded in the transcripts. Mr Walker relied upon the full transcript from the hearing on 24 August 2023 and drew the Tribunal's attention to paragraph 16 of the Rule 12 Statement where a long excerpt from the transcript was set out, which evidenced the Recorder repeatedly asking Mr Tanwar about his location.
- 11.6 Mr Tanwar told the Judge that he was in Ealing, London and that was the reason he could not attend the hearing in Leicester on that day. He then took every opportunity to manufacture the appearance of misunderstanding the Recorder's questions, precisely so he could conceal his actual location, which was outside the UK.
- 11.7 The following exchange was set out in Mr Walker's Opening Note as an example:

Recorder: So, how soon can you get to the court building?

Respondent: ... we are in London

Recorder: You're in, you're in London at the moment, are you?

Respondent: Yes Recorder: Whereabouts in London are you at the moment?

Respondent: Ealing

Recorder: You're in Ealing, are you? Well, can you then –

Respondent: Yes Judge

Recorder: Then can you, are you in your offices in Ealing? Are you in your offices- Respondent: Yes

- 11.8 There then followed an exchange about landlines, and Mr Tanwar suggested he was calling on his office landline, which could not have been true. He subsequently asked if he could be called on his mobile number.
- 11.9 Mr Tanwar then informed the Recorder that he had thought the hearing would be vacated, as the draft consent order had been sent to the court the day before, on 23 August 2023.
- 11.10 The exchange between Mr Tanwar and the Recorder continued:

Recorder: I did not approve the order because there were contents of that which are not orders the Court makes and I'm, I'm going to need to be persuaded that I will accede to the application being withdrawn. So, as far as I'm concerned there's a lot to talk about today. Now, you told me earlier on, I asked you how soon you could get here, you recall me asking you how soon you could get here? Mr Tanwar?

Respondent: Sir, I, I can't get to Leicester today

Recorder O'Grady: No, no, no, I, I'm asking, you, you recall that earlier on I asked you if you could get here, I asked you that earlier on and you said to me you couldn't get here. Respondent: yes, yes ...

Recorder: Yes, you said to me that you were in Ealing at the moment. Yes?

Respondent: In London, yes.

Recorder: So, you're in Ealing in London, is that right, and that's why you can't get to court today?

Respondent: I'm working remotely, our office is in Ealing, yes.

Recorder: Right. No, I'm, I'm just checking the reason you can't come to court today is because you're in Ealing in London, is that right?

Respondent: Yes, I'm, I'm in London but I'm working remotely, not in, in the office today, yes.

- 11.11 It was clear that the Recorder was asking Mr Tanwar where he was *at that moment*. There were no question about where his office was. The focus was on where Mr Tanwar was, in order to establish why he had not attended in person, and whether he could attend that day. Mr Tanwar stated several times, untruthfully, that he was in London. He then engaged in an obfuscatory exchange, aimed at manufacturing an appearance of a misunderstanding, by reference to his office being "*in Ealing*", and then reverted to another untruth by stating again that he was "*in London*" when that was not the case.
- 11.12 Mr Tanwar did not at any point seek any clarification as to the questions being asked or refer to the quality of the line as a bar to understanding what the Recorder wanted to know.
- 11.13 Mr Walker submitted that Mr Tanwar could not have had a genuine belief that he was being asked for his office location. Such an explanation would have involved such an unreasonable and irrational interpretation of the questions that it could not plausibly be genuine. Mr Tanwar sought to frustrate the Recorder's questions with a range of deliberately misleading comments designed to provide a smokescreen for his account, should his dishonesty be discovered. When Mr Tanwar was challenged, he referred to a misunderstanding, but, as the Recorder noted, there was no scope for any reasonable

misunderstanding. It followed that Mr Tanwar knew, subjectively that he was deliberately misleading the Recorder, in breach of principle 4.

11.14 Mr Walker also alleged that by virtue of this conduct, Mr Tanwar did not act with integrity in breach of Principle 5; did not act in a way that upheld the proper administration of justice in breach of Principle 1; did not act in a way such as to uphold public trust and confidence in the profession in breach of Principle 2; mislead the Court by his actions in breach of Paragraph 1.4 of the Code for Solicitors and wasted the Court's time in breach of Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors, (in that he engaged in protracted and misleading exchanges as to his location with the Recorder, rather than dealing with the issue truthfully and concisely).

The Respondent's Case

11.15 Mr Tanwar denied the allegation on the basis that he had disclosed his location to opposing counsel and/or the court clerk, and therefore any misleading comments to the Recorder were because of a misunderstanding. There was no dishonesty.

11.16 Mr Tanwar had been dis-instructed by his client on 17 August and only re-instructed on the morning of 24 August. This was the basis for Mr Tanwar's belief that the Recorder was seeking to ascertain whether he was appearing as a solicitor or as a McKenzie Friend. When Mr Tanwar told the Recorder, "*We are in London*," he was referring to the location of the Firm, so that the Recorder could check his credentials as a lawyer.

11.17 It was submitted that Mr Tanwar's responses to the Recorder's questions was a matter of 'crossed wires'. The Recorder wished to ascertain Mr Tanwar's physical whereabouts whereas Mr Tanwar was seeking to establish his credentials by reference to the Firm. Mr Tanwar had informed the court clerk and counsel for the opposing party, Person B, that he was abroad. He then joined hearing by telephone and subsequently by CVP link. Both connections proved to be poor, as is evidenced in the transcript of the hearing. It was not reasonable to imply that Mr Tanwar had deliberately misled the Recorder, in circumstances where he had told other parties to the case that he was abroad. Efforts had been made to call the court clerk as a witness, but she had left her job and was untraceable. The only reasonable explanation was that he was genuinely confused, which resulted in the inadvertent misleading of the Recorder which arose from the chaos of the hearing caused by the connectivity issues. Mr Williams pointed out that there were at least seven separate occasions of poor connectivity noted in the transcript.

11.18 Mr Williams asked the Tribunal to examine Mr Tanwar's evidence as to his belief that he was being asked by the Recorder about his credentials, and not his location. He supplied the Firm's phone number, so that his involvement could be checked, and he acknowledged to the Recorder that he was working remotely. The exchange with the Recorder was only evidence of a mix-up and a misunderstanding. Mr Tanwar had nothing to gain from implying he was in London when he was not. There was no dishonesty or lack of integrity.

- 11.19 By way of context, it was submitted that Mr Tanwar was feeling unwell at the hearing and suffering from dizzy spells. This affected his ability to give clear evidence. He adduced a letter from his GP to support his contention that this was an ongoing problem.
- 11.20 Mr Williams submitted that this was a matter of inadvertent or innocent misleading of the court, which did not breach any aspect of the Code of Conduct, in light of Mr Tanwar's honest belief that his remote attendance satisfied the terms of the court order.
- 11.21 Mr Williams referred to the test for dishonesty as set out in *Ivey*. He submitted that the allegation of dishonesty against Mr Tanwar fell at the first hurdle, because he had a genuinely held belief that he was being asked to give the location of the Firm in order that his credentials as a legal representative could be established. As this belief was genuine, it did not need to be reasonable. The belief was bolstered by the fact that it did not matter where he was; being present remotely was the same as being in court in person, for all practical purposes. Mr Tanwar was an honest man of deep religious faith, a respector of both Hinduism and Catholicism, who had taken his oath on the Holy Bible.
- 11.22 It was submitted that Mr Tanwar had nothing to gain from suggesting that he was joining the hearing from the offices of the Firm in London, and if the court was misled it was inadvertent and not a matter of professional misconduct.

The Tribunal's Findings

- 11.23 The Tribunal found that there was a court order dated 27 July 2023 in force, which required Mr Tanwar's physical attendance at court on 24 August 2023. On 23 August 2023, when Mr Tanwar was still in the UK, he had received an email from the court advising him that the hearing the following day, on 24 August 2023, had not been vacated although the hearing had been shortened to 1 hour.
- 11.24 The Tribunal determined that prior to joining the hearing by telephone on 24 August 2023, Mr Tanwar had not taken any, or adequate, steps to notify the court that he was no longer instructed by Person A and/or that Person A was intending to represent himself at the hearing.
- 11.25 The Tribunal found that Mr Tanwar was not in the UK at the time of the hearing as he had travelled to Germany early that morning.
- 11.26 It was abundantly clear from the exchanges between Mr Tanwar and Recorder O'Grady, as set out in the transcript, that the factual matrix was established and indeed admitted by Mr Tanwar. On at least four occasions during the earlier part of the hearing, Mr Tanwar confirmed that he was located at the Firm's offices in Ealing in London when he was not. This caused a delay in progressing the case as there was then a period where the court sought to make contact with Mr Tanwar by way of the landline at the office, to improve the connection via CVP and communications at the hearing. During this process, Mr Tanwar's client, Person A, became distressed; Mr Sultan, counsel who had previously represented Person A, tried to come to the Courts aid. It was opposing counsel for Person B who eventually corrected the false impression given by Mr Tanwar about his location in an oral exchange with the Recorder.

11.27 It was crystal clear from those exchanges that Mr Tanwar sought to give the misleading impression that he was at the office of the Firm. He did not seek at any time to clarify what he was being asked by the Recorder, in order not to mislead the court. The Tribunal did not accept that Mr Tanwar's responses were a result of him seeking to clarify his status rather than his location.

11.28 It was right that in later exchanges Mr Tanwar sought to depart from that position and pass off the earlier exchanges about his whereabouts as a misunderstanding. Even at that stage, however, he still sought to persuade the Recorder that he was in London and working remotely, rather than out of the country entirely.

11.29 The Tribunal therefore determined:

- When considering a breach of Principle 4, the duty to act honestly, Mr Tanwar failed the first limb of *Ivey*, the subjective test for dishonesty, because he knew that he was not in Ealing, or even in the UK, when he said he was. He did not at any point tell the Court that he was simply giving his office address so that his credentials could be established. Mr Tanwar did not explain or clarify why he was unable to answer the landline of the Firm which he proffered to the Court.
- Mr Tanwar was in breach of Principle 5, the duty to act with integrity, because *Wingate* makes it clear that when a legal professional is making submissions to a judge the professional must, "...take particular care not to mislead. Such a professional is expected to be even more scrupulous about accuracy than a member of the public in daily discourse."
- Mr Tanwar was in breach of Principle 1, the duty to uphold the proper administration of justice, because he misled the court, or knowingly or recklessly allowed it to be misled. The Tribunal had regard to the passage in *Brett v SRA* [2014] EWHC 2974 which states, "misleading the court is regarded by the court and must be regarded by any disciplinary tribunal as one of the most serious offences that an advocate or litigator can commit."
- Mr Tanwar was in breach of Principle 2, the duty to act to uphold public trust and confidence, because he had acted with less than complete probity, integrity and trustworthiness. He had provided misleading information, thereby acting in a way that did not uphold public trust and confidence in the profession.
- Mr Tanwar, as an officer of the court, had failed to provide accurate information to the court and thereby breached the obligation, under Paragraph 1.4 of the Code for Solicitors, not to mislead or attempt to mislead the court by his own acts or omissions.
- Furthermore, Mr Tanwar was in breach of Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors, which requires solicitors not to waste the court's time. As a result of the Recorder's extended attempts to establish Mr Tanwar's whereabouts, which were aggravated by his obfuscatory responses, and because of the multiple connectivity issues that arose from remote attendance, the court stated that Mr Tanwar's "*participation in the hearing had caused considerable inconvenience to the efficient management of the court day and disruption to the hearing itself*".

- 11.30 To mislead a Judge in court is a serious misconduct matter. The first duty of a solicitor is to assist the court. In those circumstances the Tribunal found all the allegations proved against Mr Tanwar, including dishonesty.
12. **Allegation 2 – 1.2 On or about 24 August 2023, the Respondent failed to attend a hearing in person at the Court as required by an order of the Court dated 27 July 2023, and/or failed to arrange for a suitable representative to attend to cover for him at the hearing. In doing so, he breached any or all of the following: (a) Principle 1 of the Principles; (b) Principle 2 of the Principles; (c) Paragraph 2.5 of the Code for Solicitors; and (d) Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors.**

The Applicant's Case

- 12.1 Mr Walker again emphasised the context of the case, which concerned Family/Children proceedings which were, by their very nature, sensitive. The interests of the children were paramount and inter-party discussions were an integral part of the proceedings, hence the importance of directions given by the court that parties attend 'in person' for the purpose of those discussions. Mr Tanwar acknowledged in cross-examination that he understood there was a risk to the children, which was the reason for the involvement of CAFCASS, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, an independent body that represents children's interests in family court cases, to ensure that court decisions have regard to their needs, and not just those of the parents.
- 12.2 In this case a vulnerable mother, Person B, had made allegations of domestic abuse against Person A, Mr Tanwar's client. Person B, and the two children, were living away from Person A. There were serious concerns of a risk of harm to the two children and the ability of either parent to care for them. There were, inevitably, concerns regarding Person B, her susceptibility to duress from Person A and his family, and her ability to take sufficiently into account the needs and interests of their children. Person B also required an interpreter.
- 12.3 On 27 July 2023, District Judge Asjad had listed the case as follows:
- “23. The matter shall be listed for a contested final hearing of the 24 August 2023 at 10-am with a time estimate of 1 day before Recorder O’Grady in the Family court in Leicester, 90 Wellington street, Leicester
24. Parties to attend at 9am for the purposes of discussions.”*
- 12.4 The court therefore ordered an in-person hearing and required the parties, which included Mr Tanwar, to attend for the purposes of discussion. The full text of the order and recitals, set out in Exhibit AD1 to the Rule 12 Statement, confirmed the complexity and sensitivity of the proceedings. The order expressly noted the attendance of Mr Tanwar at the earlier hearing when the directions were set down. As the hearing on 24 August was to be a final hearing, it would almost inevitably have involved the cross-examination of Persons A and B. The consideration of interim care orders in respect of the children was also a realistic possibility. Such orders were in fact made, confirming the judicial assessment that this was a case where there was significant risk of harm posed to the children by Mr Tanwar's client, Person A.

- 12.5 In the particular circumstances of the case, which concerned allegations of domestic abuse and concerns about the mother, Person B, being able to resist pressure by Person A and/or the wider community, it was an unrealistic notion that the court would vacate the hearing on the basis of a proposed reconciliation between the parties and a consent order. The email exchanges between the parties regarding a draft consent order took place on 16-17 August 2023, but the draft consent order was filed at court the day prior to the scheduled hearing, on 23 August. It was Mr Tanwar's case, however, that he was not involved in the lodging of the consent order, following his self-described 'sacking' by Person A on 17 August.
- 12.6 Mr Walker returned to his point that children in such proceedings are represented by CAFCASS, which meant it was also unrealistic to anticipate that the in-person hearing listed for 24 August 2023 would be vacated simply by consent without any detailed consideration being given to the interests of the children or to representations made on their behalf by CAFCASS. The Recorder expressed concerns at the hearing that Mr Tanwar was not engaging with the heart of the case, which was the protection of the children.
- 12.7 Unless and until the hearing was vacated, the default position was that the case was listed for an in-person hearing by way of order of the court and Mr Tanwar should have planned and prepared on that basis, to include updating the court as to the position if he was dis-instructed. Mr Tanwar should not have planned to travel on 24 August without communication with the Court.
- 12.8 The draft consent order was in fact rejected, and the Recorder was critical of the document, stating:

"In the days preceding the hearing the Court received several emails from the parties' representatives. One included a Word document purporting to be a consent order ... The document was unsigned and included an order that is not known to the Court ... I declined to approve the document or vacate the hearing."

- 12.9 It followed that there was a court order in force for Mr Tanwar to attend the court hearing in Leicester in person on 24 August 2023. Although this was not accepted by Mr Tanwar in cross-examination, (who was of the view that the order could encompass remote attendance as it did not specifically state 'in-person attendance'), the Tribunal found that the inclusion of the address in the direction made clear that the requirement was for him to attend the Court building.
- 12.10 Mr Tanwar had made travel arrangements on 19 August 2023 to leave the UK on 24 August 2023, despite there being no guarantee that the hearing would be vacated when the unsigned consent order was filed.
- 12.11 Mr Tanwar said in cross-examination that, following the order of 27 July 2023, he instructed Mr Sultan of counsel to represent Person A. This statement contradicted paragraph 10 of his witness statement dated 29 August 2023, in which he had said,
- "... it's important to note that I wasn't initially directed by the court to prepare for a full-day hearing, and neither was a legal counsel engaged...."*

- 12.12 Mr Tanwar stated that his client sought to dis-instruct him on the basis that a consent order would be filed and the hearing would be vacated. However, the consent order was seemingly filed the day prior to the scheduled hearing, at a point when Mr Tanwar said he was dis-instructed. There was no evidence that Mr Tanwar sought to communicate this to the court or come off the record. The indicators were in fact that Mr Tanwar was still acting, was still on the record and remained in communication with court.
- 12.13 On 23 August 2023, the day prior to the scheduled hearing, the parties were informed that the hearing had not been vacated. It was Mr Tanwar's evidence that his client sought to re-instruct him at this point, and he requested funds on account.
- 12.14 It was submitted that Mr Tanwar did not take any, or any adequate, steps to notify the court as follows:
- a. to 'come off the record' as Person A's solicitor on the basis of his being de-instructed prior to 24 August 2023; and/or
 - b. that Person A was intending to represent himself; and/or
 - c. that he had been re-instructed on 23 August 2023; and/or
 - d. that he was seeking counsel to act for Person A; and/or
 - e. that he may be seeking an adjournment on 24 August 2023.
- 12.15 Mr Tanwar had opportunities to address the above, both prior to the communication of 23 August 2023 that the hearing had not been vacated, and subsequently, and yet failed to do so.
- 12.16 Mr Tanwar flew to Munich on the morning of the hearing on 24 August 2023, which was accepted, although no documentary evidence was produced in connection with the flight. It was averred that at, or around, the point at which he decided to depart on his flight to Germany, he knew that the hearing had not been vacated. The evidence of previously instructed counsel, Mr Chowdhury, was generic and of no particular assistance as it did not give specific assistance to the chronology of instruction and dis-instruction. The court, public and the profession would expect a solicitor to appear before the court in person when so directed, and/or to ensure the court was fully informed of any difficulties or issues concerning representation as soon as practicable.
- 12.17 Mr Tanwar failed to attend the hearing in person and failed to arrange suitable representation in circumstances which breached the principles referred to in the Rule 12 Statement. The scenarios posited by Mr Tanwar, that he had been dis-instructed, and then re-instructed, did not provide an answer to his professional breaches in this sense, not least because he failed to inform the court, or any other party, as to the changing position.
- 12.18 It was alleged that by virtue of this conduct Mr Tanwar did not act in a way that upheld the proper administration of justice, in breach of Principle 1; did not act in a way such as to uphold public trust and confidence in the profession, in breach of Principle 2; did not comply with court orders which placed obligations on him, in breach of Paragraph 2.5 of the Code for Solicitors; and wasted the court's time, in breach of Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors. When he did appear, by telephone, the connection had to be re-established several times and this disrupted the proper conduct of the hearing in a manner which would not have occurred had Mr Tanwar attended in person.

The Respondent's Case

- 12.19 Mr Tanwar denied the allegation on the basis that his non- attendance in person could not be criticised because (i) there was not an express obligation to attend in person in the order of 27 July 2023, (ii) it was anticipated that the hearing date would be vacated and (iii) there were difficulties in taking instructions due to dis-instruction and re-instruction.
- 12.20 Paragraphs 23 and 24 of the order of 27 July did not expressly state that personal attendance was required. It was submitted that if the Tribunal found the wording of the order to be ambiguous, it should be construed in favour of Mr Tanwar. Mr Williams submitted that the Recorder did not directly challenge Mr Tanwar on this point and the lack of Mr Tanwar's physical presence was not the thrust of his questions at the hearing. Had the Applicant called the Recorder to give evidence, Mr Williams would have wished to question him as to his interpretation of the wording. Mr Walker sought to correct this point by referring the Tribunal to paragraph 45 of the judgment for the hearing on 24 August, in which the Recorder said,
- “The order of 27 July 2023, which listed this case for final hearing, did not give permission for Mr Tanwar to attend remotely.”*
- 12.21 Mr Tanwar had first been instructed by Person A in early 2023 but was dis-instructed about a week before the hearing on 24 August, as Person A and Person B had apparently reconciled. It was submitted that at that stage Mr Tanwar assumed and was entitled to assume that his involvement in the case was over and he had been dis-instructed.
- 12.22 On the afternoon of 23 August 2023, Mr Tanwar received an email from the court stating that the hearing scheduled for 24 August had not been adjourned but had been listed for a one-hour hearing. Mr Tanwar contacted his former client, Person A, who told Mr Tanwar that he was intending to act as a litigant in person. Person A knew that Mr Tanwar was intending to travel.
- 12.23 On the morning of 24 August Person A contacted Mr Tanwar and “*begged*” him to act at the hearing without Counsel, for the purpose of seeking an adjournment. Counsel, having been dis-instructed, was engaged on a different brief. Person A said he had paid funds on account, but this turned out not to be true. Mr Tanwar agreed to represent Person A in a one-hour adjournment hearing. He was trying to help his former client.
- 12.24 Mr Williams, in response to the submission that Mr Tanwar had failed to remove himself from the record, stated that there was no evidence that he was on the record.
- 12.25 Mr Tanwar genuinely believed that he was not obliged to attend the hearing in person. His non-attendance in person could not therefore be characterised as misconduct. The test set out in *Ivey* fell at the first hurdle because if a belief was genuinely held it did not have to be reasonable. This belief was held by a devout man of principle.
- 12.26 Mr Tanwar was an honest man with a large number of good character references confirming his honest conduct, integrity, sense of responsibility and propensity to act honestly in all circumstances. In support of this contention, Mr Williams invited the Tribunal to consider, and briefly detailed, references from the following:

- Two barristers, including the head of chambers, and a senior clerk at Bolt Chambers
- Former civil service colleague
- The settlor of a trust for which Mr Tanwar was a trustee
- The spiritual leader of the International Siddhashram Shakti Centre
- Disability rights and race equality champion
- Resident priest at Lakshmi Narayan Temple
- Radio presenter and broadcaster
- A client

The Tribunal's Findings

12.27 The Tribunal was in no doubt that the requirement in the order of 27 July 2023 was for Mr Tanwar to attend at an in-person hearing on 24 August 2023, considering the inclusion of the address where the hearing would take place. The order included the following directions:

“23. The matter shall be listed for a contested final hearing of the 24 August 2023 at 10-am with a time estimate of 1 day before Recorder O’Grady in the Family court in Leicester, 90 Wellington street, Leicester
24. Parties to attend at 9am for the purposes of discussions.”

12.28 Mr Tanwar had attended the hearing of 27 July in person, even though Person A had been represented on the day by counsel.

12.29 The Tribunal found there was a professional obligation to comply with the court order which fell on Mr Tanwar personally and the firm more generally, as they were on the record as the solicitor/firm acting. Any failure to come off the record created an expectation that the solicitor with conduct would either attend or make arrangements for another advocate to attend. Mr Tanwar (or his firm) had attempted to file an unsigned consent order only the day before the hearing, giving the impression that he remained instructed.

12.30 Mr Tanwar should have known that the court was not bound to vacate a hearing that concerned care proceedings for children and allegations of domestic abuse. He was made clearly aware of the fact that the hearing had not been vacated on the afternoon of 23 August. In those circumstances the public would expect a solicitor to either appear in court or notify the court if he was no longer instructed and his client intended to represent himself, or, alternatively, ensure appropriate representation on his behalf. Mr Tanwar wasted valuable court time.

12.31 The Tribunal held that Mr Tanwar was thereby in breach of:

- Principle 1, the duty to act in a way that upholds the proper administration of justice;
- Principle 2, the duty to act to uphold public trust and confidence;
- Paragraph 2.5 of the Code for Solicitors which obliged him, as an officer of the court, to comply with court orders that placed an obligation on him; and
- Paragraph 2.6 of the Code for Solicitors, which obliged him not to waste the court's time.

Previous Disciplinary Matters

13. None

Sanction

Applicants Submissions on Sanction

14. The Tribunal refused Mr Walker's application to make submissions on sanction as it was an expert panel which did not need help from the applicant to determine the matter of exceptional circumstances. The Tribunal is guided by its own published procedure and policy. A submission on any points of law which sat outside its own published guidance would be welcome.

Respondent's Submissions on Exceptional Circumstances

15. Mr Williams acknowledged that a finding that an allegation of dishonesty has been proved will almost invariably lead to striking off, save in exceptional circumstances (*SRA v Sharma* [2010] EWHC 2022 (Admin)). He referred, however, to paragraph 7 of *Sharma* which says, "Support for the proposition that a finding of dishonesty against a solicitor will not all automatically lead to striking off can be found in the decision of this court in *Burrowes v The Law Society* [2002] EWHC 2900 (Admin)." In that case the solicitor had permitted a will to be completed with witnesses who were not present. There was no personal gain for Mr Burrowes and his act was described as a "moment of madness."
16. Mr Williams then took the Tribunal to paragraph 13 of *Sharma* which refers to a small residual category of cases where striking off will be a disproportionate sentence in all the circumstances, relevant factors including 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.
17. Mr Williams also referred the Tribunal to paragraph 48 of *SRA v James* [2018] EWHC 3058 (Admin) which sets out that the principal focus, in assessing whether exceptional circumstances exist, is on the nature and extent of the dishonesty and the degree of culpability.
18. In support of his contention that this was a case where exceptional circumstances existed, Mr Williams made the following points:

- Striking off would be disproportionate by terminating a previously unblemished career as Mr Tanwar was fundamentally honest, with exemplary testimonials and no adverse regulatory or disciplinary history;
 - Mr Tanwar was not a risk to the public;
 - Mr Tanwar did not hatch a plot in advance and did not have a wholesale plan to deceive the Court. The exchanges with the Recorder took place over a short period of time;
 - His actions did not bring him any personal gain and he was the only person who suffered loss in this matter;
 - He found himself in a difficult situation which was not of his own making; his downfall was agreeing to help his client;
 - Mr Tanwar's client lied in order to get him to act as a representative - Mr Tanwar had not been put in funds, contrary to what his client had promised;
 - The hearing on 24 August 2023 was chaotic, largely because of repeated connectivity issues. Amidst the confusion, Mr Tanwar did acknowledge to the Recorder that he was "*not in the office today;*"
 - Persons A and B did not suffer from what happened as they did in fact reconcile; and
 - Medical evidence provided mitigation – Mr Tanwar suffered from anxiety and depression which could result in episodes of confusion and impaired concentration; not only had this been evident in Mr Tanwar's dealings with the Recorder, but also when he gave evidence at the Tribunal.
19. Mr Williams suggested that it would be appropriate for Mr Tanwar's activities as a solicitor to be controlled by conditions on his practising certificate.

The Tribunal's Decision on Exceptional Circumstances

20. The Tribunal had regard to its Guidance Note on Sanctions and revisited the authorities it was taken to by Mr Williams. It also considered all of the points set out above which were made by Mr Williams on behalf of Mr Tanwar on the issue of exceptional circumstances. It also noted that the exceptional circumstances must relate in some way to the dishonesty, as set out in *James*.
21. Whilst it had regard to the medical evidence proffered, the Tribunal was only able to give limited weight to it in light of the general practitioner's letter not being an independent medical report, the Tribunal's Guidance Note on Sanction and guidance in *James* that mental health issues are unlikely, without more, to amount to exceptional circumstances.
22. When making its decision the Tribunal had regard to the criteria in *Sharma* as to what amounts to exceptional circumstances, namely 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. It had particular regard to paragraph 51:

“In the context of the solicitors' cases, striking off is the almost invariable sanction for any dishonesty and whilst dishonesty at the lowest end of the scale may mean that the case falls within the small residual category of cases justifying a lesser sanction, it will not do so unless the overall assessment is that there are "exceptional circumstances". There is thus a limitation on the discretion of the SDT which is absent for the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service in medical cases. Likewise, it is no answer to striking off being the almost inevitable sanction for dishonesty for a solicitor to point to other more serious cases of dishonesty where the solicitor had been struck off and suggest that because his dishonesty was less serious, he should not be struck off. This point was made by Moses LJ in Emeana at [26]:

"The principle identified in Bolton means that in cases where there has been a lapse of standards of integrity, probity and trustworthiness a solicitor should expect to be struck off."

23. The Tribunal found that Mr Tanwar did not act in a ‘moment of madness.’ His misleading responses were sustained over the course of the hearing. His behaviour made the conduct of the hearing more difficult and other parties were affected, including the children of Persons A and B.
24. The Tribunal accepted that there was no financial benefit to Mr Tanwar in providing untruthful information about his whereabouts, but he had placed himself in professional difficulties and was seeking to avoid embarrassment. He had fallen below the standards of “*unquestionable integrity, probity and trustworthiness*” and the principle that “*The reputation of the profession is more important than the fortunes of any individual member,*” as determined by Sir Thomas Bingham MR in Bolton and referred to by Flaux LJ in James at paragraph 52.
25. Mr Tanwar misled a judge, which was misconduct of the highest order. The Tribunal also found that he was neither truthful nor persuasive when giving evidence, which was relevant to their evaluation of whether there were exceptional circumstances. Mr Tanwar did not show any insight into the nature or effect of his misconduct.
26. Mr Tanwar caused harm by wasting the court’s time. He participated in a hearing which lasted almost 45 minutes, during which the question of his whereabouts was one which the Recorder returned to on several occasions, meaning that this was not a ‘moment of madness’ case. His location was relevant, as the court was trying to establish a stable connection for CVP via a landline. This was necessary because Mr Tanwar had appeared remotely, as opposed to in person, as directed.
27. The hearing was chaotic in part at least due to Mr Tanwar’s decision to attend by telephone with a poor signal. He also provided and then gave a land line number for the office which the court tried in vain to connect to, but which he knew he would not be able to answer. Mr Tanwar misled the court and the main aggravating feature of his conduct was the finding of dishonesty. The seriousness of his proven misconduct was high.

28. The Tribunal noted that Mr Tanwar had no previous disciplinary findings against him and also carefully scrutinised the medical evidence provided by Mr Tanwar's general practitioner.
29. The Tribunal next considered the purpose for which sanctions are imposed, noting that an important purpose of sanctions is to maintain the reputation of the solicitors' profession (*Bolton v The Law Society* [1993] EWCA Civ 32). The Tribunal determined that the reputation of the profession was undermined by Allegations 1 and 2.
30. The Tribunal therefore determined that this was not a case which fell into the small residual category of cases which could be regarded as exceptional and therefore found the appropriate sanction to be one of striking off.

Costs

31. The Tribunal had regard to its jurisdiction pursuant to Rule 43(4) SDPR.
32. Mr Walker sought costs in the sum of £32,542.50 as set out in the Applicant's updated Schedule of Costs dated 30 December 2025. This was based on an hourly rate for the Applicant's investigation costs which equated to approximately £75 per hour (43.5 hours totalling £3,265.50), and an hourly rate for the Applicant's representative's legal fees which equated to approximately £163 per hour (149.7 hours totalling £24,400).
33. Mr Williams submitted that this figure included duplication of work as six fee earners had been involved. He also pointed out that there were no case management hearings and that the Applicant did not call any witnesses and therefore could not have liaised with them. The hearing was also a day shorter than the three days that had been anticipated.
34. In response, Mr Walker took instructions and confirmed that SRA investigation costs quoted earlier in the proceedings were included in the supervision costs claimed and that there was limited duplication of work as all but one of the fee earners involved had carried out discrete tasks. He submitted that the Applicant's investigation and legal costs were reasonable.
35. The Tribunal considered Mr Tanwar's Statement of Means dated 5 January 2026. In the light of this, the Tribunal noted that it should not make an order for costs where it was unlikely ever to be satisfied on any reasonable assessment of the Respondent's current or future circumstances (*Barnes v SRA Ltd* [2022] EWHC 677 (Admin)).
36. The Tribunal also found that the costs applied for were broadly just and reasonable, save for a reduction the Tribunal would have made for the hearing being reduced from three days to two days.
37. The costs applied for were substantially reduced in light of Mr Tanwar's means, and the Tribunal ordered the Respondent to pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £7,500.

Statement of Full Order

38. The Tribunal ORDERED that the Respondent, PRIYANK TANWAR, 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 fixed in the sum of £7,500.00.

Dated this 2nd day of February 2026

On behalf of the Tribunal

C. Evans

C. Evans

Chair