

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12779-2025

BETWEEN:

and

VISHAL PATEL

Before:
Ms A. Banks (in the chair)
Mr J. Johnston
Mr D. Kearney

Date of Hearing: 20 November 2025

Appearances

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

JUDGMENT ON AGREED OUTCOME

Allegations

1. The allegations against the Respondent, Vishal Patel made by the SRA are that, while in practice as a solicitor at Aviva Investors:
 - 1.1 On 31 August 2022 he submitted a curriculum vitae¹ to Robert Walters, a recruitment agency, which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information in the knowledge that it would be forwarded on to Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.
 - 1.2 On 27 October 2022 during a meeting with Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP he provided a curriculum vitae² to RB which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.
 - 1.3 On 27 February 2023 he provided a curriculum vitae³ and/or an accompanying table of discrepancies to Aviva Investors which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.
 - 1.4 On 27 March 2023 he made a verbal statement to Aviva Investors that Leicester Grammar School and Crown Hills School had previously merged when he knew or ought to have known this statement was misleading. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

The allegations were admitted by the Respondent.

Documents

2. The Tribunal had, amongst other things, the following documents before it:-
 - The Form of Application dated 17 November 2025.
 - Rule 12 Statement dated 5 June 2025 and exhibits.
 - Statement of Agreed Facts and Proposed Outcome submitted on 17 November 2025.

¹ CV1

² CV2

³ CV3

Background

3. The Respondent is a solicitor having been admitted to the Roll on 11 September 2020. The Respondent was employed by Aviva Insurance from 5 October 2015 to 24 April 2023. At the time, the allegations against him arose he was employed as Legal Counsel (in-house solicitor) at Aviva Insurance.
4. The Respondent does not hold a current Practising Certificate.

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

5. The parties invited the Tribunal to deal with the allegations against the Respondent in accordance with the Statement of Agreed Facts and Outcome annexed to this Judgment. The parties submitted that the outcome proposed was consistent with the Tribunal's Guidance Note on Sanctions (11th Edition February 2025).

Findings of Fact and Law

6. The Applicant was required by Rule 5 of The Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 to prove the allegations to the standard applicable in civil proceedings (on the balance of probabilities). The Tribunal had due regard to its statutory duty, under section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998, to act in a manner which was compatible with the Respondent's rights to a fair trial and to respect for their private and family life under Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
7. The Tribunal reviewed all the material before it and was satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the Respondent's admissions were properly made.
8. The Tribunal considered the Guidance Note on Sanction (11th Edition February 2025). and the proper approach to sanctions as set out in *Fuglers and others v SRA* [2014] EWHC 179. The Tribunal's overriding objective when considering sanction, was the need to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the profession.
9. In determining sanction, the Tribunal's role was to assess the seriousness of the proven misconduct and to impose a sanction that was fair and proportionate in all the circumstances.
10. In determining the seriousness of the misconduct, the Tribunal was required to consider the Respondents' culpability and harm identified together with the aggravating and mitigating factors that existed.
11. The Respondent's misconduct included instances of dishonesty occurring between 31 August 2022 and 27 March 2023, involving interactions with several individuals. The Respondent sought to benefit by providing untrue information about his education and qualifications to secure employment. The misconduct was not spontaneous; it was deliberate and repeated. The Respondent had direct control of the circumstances giving rise to the misconduct. He was a solicitor with two years' post qualification experience and was aware of his regulatory obligations. The Respondent's culpability was high.

12. The Respondent's conduct departed from the integrity, probity and trustworthiness expected of a solicitor, thus harming the reputation of the legal profession. A solicitor must be capable of being "*trusted to the ends of the earth*⁴." The public would not expect a solicitor to mislead prospective employers and recruitment agencies as to their education, qualifications and/or experience. The Respondent's conduct undermined the trust that the public places in the profession. The extent of the harm caused by the Respondent's misconduct could reasonably have been foreseen.
13. The Respondent had admitted dishonesty and acting without integrity, there could be no doubt that his culpability for his conduct was high and that his actions had had the potential to directly harm the reputation of the legal profession. The Tribunal found that this was misconduct of the utmost seriousness.
14. The Respondent's mitigation was noted; he had made full admissions in respect of the allegations and cooperated with his regulator. The Respondent's admissions demonstrated insight.
15. The Tribunal determined that, in light of the dishonesty, the only appropriate and proportionate sanction was to strike the Respondent off the Roll of Solicitors. The Tribunal did not find that there were any exceptional circumstances that would justify a lesser sanction.
16. In all the circumstances the Tribunal accepted that the proposed sanction was a reasonable and proportionate sanction to mark the seriousness of the misconduct, protect the public and maintain the reputation of the profession.
17. Accordingly, the Tribunal approved the sanction proposed by the parties.

Costs

18. The parties agreed that the Respondent should pay costs in the sum of £5,313.00. The Tribunal considered the Applicant's costs schedule and determined that the agreed amount was reasonable and appropriate. Accordingly, the Tribunal ordered that the Respondent pay costs in the agreed sum.

Statement of Full Order

19. The Tribunal ORDERED that the Respondent VISHAL PATEL, 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 £5,313.00.

Dated this 5th day of December 2025

On behalf of the Tribunal

A. Banks

A. Banks
Chair

⁴ Bolton v Law Society [1993] EWCA Civ 32

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

Case No: 12779-2025

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

AND IN THE MATTER OF:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LIMITED

Applicant

and

VISHAL PATEL

Respondent

STATEMENT OF AGREED FACTS AND PROPOSED OUTCOME

1. By its application dated 5 June 2025 and the statement made pursuant to Rule 12 (2) of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 which accompanied that application, the Solicitors Regulation Authority Limited ("the SRA") brought proceedings before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal making four allegations of misconduct against Vishal Patel ("the Respondent").

The allegations

2. The allegations against the Respondent, made by the SRA within that statement were that:
3. On 31 August 2022 he submitted a curriculum vitae¹ to Robert Walters, a recruitment agency, which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information in the knowledge that it would be forwarded on to Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.
4. On 27 October 2022 during a meeting with Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP he provided a curriculum vitae² to RB which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.
5. On 27 February 2023 he provided a curriculum vitae³ and/or an accompanying table of discrepancies to Aviva Investors which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of

¹ CV 1

² CV 2

³ CV 3

Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

6. On 27 March 2023 he made a verbal statement to Aviva Investors that Leicester Grammar School and Crown Hills School had previously merged when he knew or ought to have known this statement was misleading. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.
7. The Respondent admits the allegations.

Agreed Facts

4. The following facts and matters which are relied upon by the SRA in support of the allegations set out at paragraphs 3 - 6 (allegations 1 – 4 of the Rule 12 statement dated 5 June 2025), are agreed between the SRA and the Respondent.

Professional Details

5. The Respondent, who was born on January 1987, is a solicitor having been admitted to the Roll on 11 September 2020. At the time the allegations against him arose he was employed as Legal Counsel (in-house solicitor) at Aviva Insurance (“AI”) from 5 October 2015 to 24 April 2023.
6. The Respondent does not hold a current Practising Certificate. The Respondent made an application for a Practising Certificate for the practice year 2024 to 2025. This application was refused.

Background

8. The conduct in this matter came to the attention of the SRA on 23 November 2022 when a report was received from a Partner at Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP (“SPB”). The report confirmed that the Respondent had applied for a role as a Funds Associate in their London office and provided false and misleading information in a curriculum vitae (“CV”) on two separate occasions.
9. The Respondent notified AI of the SRA’s investigation into the alleged conduct. Following receipt of this information they conducted their own investigation. On 24 April 2023, the Respondent was summarily dismissed for gross misconduct. AI also reported that the Respondent had provided false and misleading information to them during its investigation.

Allegation 1.1 - Submitting a curriculum vitae to Robert Walters, a recruitment agency, which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information in the knowledge that it would be forwarded on to Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP.

10. In August 2022, the Respondent had seen the role of a Funds Associate at SPB advertised through Robert Walters (“RW”), a recruitment agency. The Respondent contacted RW and expressed an interest in the role. On 31 August 2022, RW emailed the Respondent and

requested he provide a copy of his most recent CV. RW also explained that this information would be forwarded to the relevant team. The Respondent emailed RW on the same day attaching a copy of CV 1.

11. On 5 September 2022, a recruiter at RW emailed Rene Bianca ("RB"), the head of Human Resources at SPB. The recruiter explained that she was working with the Respondent and attached copy of CV 1 to the email. In the email she also provided a short summary of the Respondent's academic and employment experience following her review of CV 1⁴. In respect of his academic qualifications, she stated:

"First class honours in LLB, Very Competent in the BPTC and also has the LLM".

12. On 22 and 27 September 2022, the Respondent interviewed for the role at SPB. An offer of employment was then made subject to pre-employment checks via a third party, Vero Screening Limited ("VSL").
13. The Respondent accepted the offer of employment. On 13 October 2022, the Respondent completed VSL's online screening questionnaire. On 24 October 2022, VSL provided a report of the results to SPB. The report identified discrepancies between the information inputted in the online screening questionnaire and CV 1.
14. In respect of his academic qualifications, the Respondent inputted the following information in the online screening questionnaire:
 - 14.1 he attended the University of Law in September 2009 till September 2010, studied BPTC⁵ and LPC⁶ and achieved the grade Competent
 - 12.2 he attended Birmingham City University in September 2007 till September 2009 and achieved an Upper Second-Class Honours degree in LLB Law.
15. CV 1 confirmed the Respondent had studied the BPTC from September 2012 till June 2013 and achieved the grade Very Competent. There was no reference to the LPC or the grade Competent. Furthermore, CV 1 confirmed the Respondent had studied at the University of Aston from September 2009 till June 2012 and achieved a First-Class Honours degree in LLB Law.
16. VSL contacted a company who verify degree certification, and it confirmed the Respondent had achieved a Lower Second-Class Honours degree in LLB Law at Birmingham City University.

⁴ On 8 September 2022, a different recruiter at RW sent an email to another Partner at SPB attaching the same CV and summary of the Respondent's academic and employment experience. The text of the email was the same as the email sent on 5 September 2022.

⁵ Bar Professional Training Course

⁶ Legal Practice Course

17. The report from VSL also confirmed they contacted the Respondent on 14 October 2022 and queried why he had not included any information regarding his LLM at Nottingham University. The report states:

"Additional education identified on the CV at Nottingham University. The Candidate advised that this has not yet been completed, so it has not been added to the screening. Please note that the CV implies completion."

18. On 27 October 2022, RB met the Respondent at a pre-arranged meeting. RB explained there were some discrepancies between CV 1 provided to RW, the information he entered in the online screening questionnaire and the results of the questionnaire. RB requested that the Respondent talk through his academic and professional career. Key examples of the responses provided by the Respondent are set out below:

"VP explained he did his GCSE from 2004 to 2006. He then went to Leicester Montsorrie School to do his A-Levels where he was awarded 2As, B and C between 2006 to 2007. These were in the following subjects: English (A), Law (A), Physics (B) and Chemistry (C)"

VP explained that he studied a Law LLB at Birmingham City University between 2007 to 2010/11 and was awarded a 2.2. VP said that he did a 2 year part-time Masters course between 2012 to 2013/14. He did not finish the course, so he was awarded a diploma. VP said that he did the BPTC course from 2010 to 2011 and did a further module for the LPC.

BR raised that the dates VP is telling her appear to be inconsistent with the CV to which VP said that these were rough dates and this was an error. He sent his CV out to explore the market. He spoke with Sahar at the recruitment agency (Robert Walters) who amended it and sent it on to Squire Patton Boggs.

VP explained that he was a Paralegal from 2013 to 2014 at GT Partners doing asset management and PE. BR asked if (sic) did not do a pupillage at GT Partners which is what his CV says.

VP clarified that he was a paralegal. VP said that he did a pupillage at King Street Chambers from 2014 to 2015. The Chambers have closed now, it was a family law set up.

BR asked VP about the BPTC and he said that he was awarded [sic] "very competent" and this is what his CV says, however when completing the Vero Questionnaire, he has inputted "competent". BR asked VP why there was a difference.

VP said he just put what he remembered. BR noted that VP said he got a 2.2 in his degree but on the Vero Questionnaire he put 2.1 and why there was a difference here. VP said that he copied the information from his CV. BR noted that VP said he got a 2.2 in his degree but on the Vero Questionnaire he put 2.1 and why there was a difference here. VP said that he copied the information from his CV.

BR noted that VP's CV said that he attended the University of Aston and why there is this difference to his Vero Questionnaire where says Birmingham City University. VP said that he initially attended the University of Aston to study business account management degree because they had no law school or qualifying law degree there. VP said that he wanted to study law, so he transferred to Birmingham City University after a couple of months of starting at the University of Aston. BR noted that the University of Aston is called Aston University and would have expected that someone attending the university would have known this.

VP said that he created a persona that he thought was required for a role in private practice.

BR asked VP what "creating a persona" means as the implication is that he was lied or falsified information on his CV to gain a job in private practice. VP said that it was just the Associate vs Counsel job title that was different. BR said that during this meeting we have spoken about a lot more discrepancies. Therefore, would VP say that he has lied or falsified information to get a job in private practice

VP said yes, but it was not deliberate to mislead.

BR said that the information has been incorrect through the CV from the agency, to what he inputted onto the Vero screening platform, to this conversation. VP reiterated that it was not to mislead and that it was just the roles. BR said that it was not just the roles that he provided misleading information, it was the dates, qualifications, grades, career history. BR asked VP he agreed. VP nodded and said that he would prove himself through work and dedication to the role."

19. The explanations provided by the Respondent in his meeting with RB were unsatisfactory. It is clear CV 1 forwarded by the Respondent to RW contained information that was inaccurate in relation to the educational institutions he studied at, his academic qualifications and his work experience.
20. On 23 November 2022, SPB rescinded the offer of employment.

Allegation 1.2 - During a meeting with Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP he provided a curriculum vitae to RB which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information.

21. On 27 October 2022, RB invited the Respondent to attend a meeting following the results of the VSL report. In that meeting RB requested the Respondent send her a copy of CV 1 which he provided to RW. The Respondent sent a CV via email using his mobile phone to RB.
22. RB reviewed the CV⁷ forwarded by the Respondent in the meeting and immediately knew that this was not CV 1. The differences between the CV's were that the Respondent had

⁷ This is known as CV 2

completed his LLB Law degree at Birmingham City University and achieved the grade of Second Class Honours. There was no information regarding completing the LLM at Nottingham University. The information contained in CV 2 was inaccurate in relation to the educational institutions he studied at, his academic qualifications and his work experience. The information is set out below:

- 22.1 attended Leicester Grammar School in September 2004 till June 2007 and achieved three A* grades, four A grades, two B grades, one C grade at GCSE level and IT level 3;
- 22.2 achieved A grades in A-Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics;
- 22.3 attended the University of Law from September 2012 till June 2013 and achieved the grade Very Competent in BPTC; and
- 22.4 completed a pupillage at King Street Chambers in June 2014 till June 2015.

23. The Applicant relies upon paragraph 18.

Allegation 1.3 - On 27 February 2023 he provided a curriculum vitae and/or an accompanying document to Aviva Investors which he knew or ought to have known contained false and/or misleading information.

24. On 20 February 2023, the Applicant notified the Respondent of its investigation into his alleged conduct. The Respondent disclosed the details of the investigation to AI. Following his disclosure AI decided to conduct their own investigation. This was completed by Jonathan Price ("JP"), General Counsel and Andrew Gallant ⁸("AG"), Head of Legal Funds at AI.
25. On 22 February 2023, AG requested that the Respondent provide him a copy of the CV⁹ which was sent to RW on 31 August 2022, a copy of the Respondent's correct CV as of that date, and a table summarising the discrepancies between the CV provided to RW on 31 August 2022 and the correct CV¹⁰.
26. On 27 February 2023, the Respondent emailed three documents (CV1, CV 3 and a table summarising the discrepancies between both CV's) to AG. AG reviewed the documents and stated the following in his witness statement:

"7 Upon investigation by me on or about 27 February 2023:

- 7.1 it was clear that the new CV contained further incorrect information about Mr Patel's education, the dates he attended and various institutions and the grades he received; and*

⁸ AG was also the Respondent's line manager.

⁹ CV 1

¹⁰ CV - A CV which accurately reflected where the Respondent's studied, his correct Academic results and his correct work experience. This is known as CV 3.

7.2 *the Summary Discrepancies did not highlight the full extent of the differences between the CV Mr Patel Supplied to Robert Walters and the new CV".*

27. The information contained in CV 3 provided by the Respondent to AG on 27 February 2023 was inaccurate in relation to the educational institutions he studied at, his academic qualifications and his work experience. The information is set out below:

- 27.1 attended Leicester Grammar School in September 2004 till June 2007 and achieved three A* grades, four A grades, two B grades, one C grade at GCSE level and IT level 3;
- 27.2 attended Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College in September 2007 till June 2009 and achieved A grades in A-Level Biology and Chemistry. Achieved a grade B in A/S Level English;
- 27.3 attended Birmingham City University from September 2009 till June 2012 and achieved an Upper Second-Class Honours degree in LLB Law.
- 27.4 attended the University of Law from September 2012 till June 2013 and achieved the grade Very Competent in BPTC;
- 27.5 attended Nottingham University in September 2013 till 2015 and completed an LLM (Masters in Law and Commercial Contracts); and
- 27.6 completed a pupillage at King Street Chambers in June 2014 till June 2015.

28. The information contained in the table in the "*Summary Discrepancies*" provided by the Respondent to AG on 27 February 2023 was misleading and/or inaccurate. The information is set out below:

- 28.1 attended Birmingham City University in September 2009 till June 2012 and achieved an Upper Second-Class Honours degree in LLB Law;

29. The Respondent also failed to highlight the full extent of the differences between CV 1 and CV 3. The information is set out below:

- 29.1 attended Leicester Grammar School in September 2004 till June 2007 and achieved three A* grades, four A grades, two B grades, one C grade at GCSE level and IT level 3;
- 29.2 attended Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College in September 2007 till June 2009 and achieved three A grades in A Level Law, Biology, Chemistry and one grade B in A/S Level English;
- 29.3 attended the University of Law in September 2012 till June 2013 and achieved the grade Very Competent in BPTC;

29.4 attended Nottingham University in September 2013 till 2015 and completed an LLM (Masters in Law and Commercial Contracts); and

29.5 completed a pupillage at King Street Chambers in June 2014 till June 2015.

30. The Applicant relies upon paragraph 18.

31. On or around 27 March 2023, AG prepared a table comparing the CV's and documents provided by the Respondent. The table highlights all the discrepancies in detail.

Allegation 1.4 - On 27 March 2023 he made a verbal statement to Aviva Investors that Leicester Grammar School and Crown Hills School had previously merged when he knew or ought to have known this statement was misleading. In doing so, he breached all or alternatively any of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and breached Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

32. On 27 March 2023, JP provided a statement which records:

“On 27 March 2023 Mr Patel told me that Leicester Grammar School and Crown Hills School had merged and that was his explanation as to why he had mentioned either one or the other in different CVs submitted to Robert Walters, Andrew Gallant and the SRA respectively. Upon investigation, it was found that Leicester Grammar School and Crown Hills School are entirely separate schools and they have not merged. Leicester Grammar School is a private (fee paying) school and Crown Hills is a state school.”

33. The outcome letter on 28 April 2023 sent to the Respondent by AI stated:

“You told Jonny that the schools had merged and they were, in essence, the same school. This is untrue, the schools are very separate and a Google search shows this. One is a private school and the other is a state school. It is my view that you were dishonest with Jonny in explaining why you put [you] attended Leicester Grammar School on your CV and I therefore uphold this allegation.”

Non-Agreed Mitigation

34. The following mitigation, which is not agreed by the SRA, is put forward by the Respondent:

34.1 I have fully co-operated with the SRA's investigation and the disciplinary process. I have made full admissions to the allegations, provided all requested information, and engaged constructively throughout. I have no prior history of dishonesty. I fully recognise the seriousness of my misconduct.

34.2 I am committed to ensuring that this type of conduct will not happen again and to rebuilding trust in both my professional and personal life.

Penalty proposed & Costs

35. The admitted misconduct is serious and of the highest level. The SRA contends and the Respondent accepts, that the proper penalty in this case is for the Respondent to be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.
36. With respect to costs, it is further agreed that the Respondent should pay the SRA's costs of this matter agreed in the sum of £5,313.00.

Explanation why such an order would be in accordance with the Tribunal's Guidance Note on Sanction (11th edition)

37. The Respondent has admitted dishonesty. The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal's "Guidance Note on Sanction" (11th edition), at paragraph 28, states that: "*The most serious misconduct involves dishonesty, whether or not leading to criminal proceedings and criminal penalties. A finding that an allegation of dishonesty has been proved will almost invariably lead to striking off, save in exceptional circumstances (see Solicitors Regulation Authority v Sharma [2010] EWHC 2022 (Admin)).*"
38. In **Sharma [2010] EWHC 2022 (Admin) at [13]** Coulson J summarised the consequences of a finding of dishonesty by the Tribunal against a solicitor as follows:
 - (a) *Save in exceptional circumstances, a finding of dishonesty will lead to the solicitor being struck off the Roll ... That is the normal and necessary penalty in cases of dishonesty...*
 - (b) *There will be a small residual category where striking off will be a disproportionate sentence in all the circumstances ...*
 - (c) *In deciding whether or not a particular case falls into that category, relevant factors will include the nature, scope and extent of the dishonesty itself, whether it was momentary ... or over a lengthy period of time ... whether it was a benefit to the solicitor ... and whether it had an adverse effect on others...*"
39. For the reasons described below, there are no exceptional circumstances here.
40. The seriousness of the misconduct is such that neither a Restriction Order, Reprimand, Fine or Suspension would be a sufficient sanction or in all the circumstances appropriate. There is a need to protect both the public and the reputation of the legal profession from future harm from the Respondent by removing their ability to practise. The protection of the public and the protection of the reputation of the legal profession justifies striking off the Roll.

41. This assessment takes into account that the level of the Respondent's culpability in respect of the allegations above is high as these were serious acts of dishonesty committed over a period of six months, involving several individuals. He acted in a way to provide a benefit to himself by providing untrue information about his education and qualifications in order to secure new employment. The misconduct cannot be described as spontaneous, it was

deliberate and repeated. He had direct control for the circumstances giving rise to the misconduct. He was a solicitor with two years' post qualification experience and was aware of the relevant Rules and Principles.

42. In terms of harm, the Respondent's conduct departed from the integrity, probity and trustworthiness expected of a solicitor, thus harming the reputation of the legal profession. In the words of Sir Thomas Bingham MR in *Bolton v Law Society* [1993] EWCA Civ 32 a solicitor must be capable of being "*trusted to the ends of the earth.*" The public would not expect a solicitor, who is an officer of the court, to mislead prospective employers and recruitment agencies as to their education, qualifications and/or experience. The Respondent's conduct has served to undermine the trust that the public places in the profession. The extent of the harm caused by the Respondent's misconduct could reasonably have been foreseen.

43. The Respondent's conduct is aggravated by the following:

- 43.1 the misconduct was dishonest.
- 43.2 he knew or ought reasonably to have known that his conduct was in material breach of his obligations to protect the public and reputation of the profession.
- 43.3 he attempted to conceal his wrongdoing on more than one occasion.
- 43.4 the misconduct was deliberate, repeated, committed for a prolonged period, for over six months.

44. Accordingly, the fair and proportionate penalty in this case is for the Respondent to be struck off the Roll of Solicitors. The seriousness of his conduct is such that a lesser sanction would be inappropriate, and a strike off is required for the protection of the public and the reputation of the legal profession.

Ms Rebecca Neale
Head of Legal and Enforcement, on behalf of the SRA

.....
Mr Vishal Patel, Respondent

Dated: 12/11/2024