

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12786-2025

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

SOHAIL BASHIR

Respondent

Before:

Mrs L. Boyce (in the chair)

Mrs A. Sprawson

Ms L. Hawkins

Date of Consideration: 22 January 2026

Appearances

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

JUDGMENT ON AGREED OUTCOME

Allegations

1. The allegations made by the SRA against the Respondent, Sohail Bashir, are that whilst in practice as a solicitor:
 - 1.1 On 15 February 2020, distributed an indecent photograph, namely one Category B video, of a child, contrary to sections 1(1)(b) and 6 of the Protection of Children Act 1978.
 - 1.2 On 15 February 2020, had in his possession three extreme pornographic images, which portrayed, in an explicit and realistic way, a person performing an act of intercourse with a live animal, namely a dog, which were grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character and a reasonable person looking at the image would think that any such person or animal was real, contrary to sections 63(1), 7(d) and 67(3) of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principles 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019.

2. The Applicant relies on the Respondent's convictions on 8 May 2024 for the allegations listed at 1.1 and 1.2 above, with the Certificate of Conviction dated 29 July 2024, as evidence that the Respondent was guilty of each offence and relies upon the findings of fact upon which those convictions were based as proof of those facts.

Admissions

3. The Respondent admitted all the allegations.

Documents

4. The Tribunal had, amongst other things, the following documents before it:-
 - The Form of Application dated 17 June 2025.
 - Rule 12 Statement and exhibit AS1 dated 17 June 2025.
 - Statement of Agreed Facts and Proposed Outcome dated 20 January 2026

Background

5. The Respondent is a solicitor having been admitted to the Roll on 15 May 2008. At the material time of the Respondent's arrest on 21 August 2020 and subsequent convictions, the Respondent was practising as a consultant solicitor at Allied Law Chambers Solicitors Ltd ('the Firm') until 14 March 2024.
6. The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, based in the USA, notified the National Crime Agency in the UK that on 20 June 2018 they had identified that a Facebook account under the name of Sohail Bashir, along with the associated email address, had accessed a Category B video involving a child.
7. Following further investigation by the Police's Sexual Crime Unit the Respondent was charged with possessing extreme pornographic image/images portraying an act of

intercourse with a dead or alive animal and distribution of an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child on 14 March 2024.

8. The conduct in this matter came to the attention of the SRA on 7 May 2024 following a report made by an external consultant instructed by the Firm.
9. On 8 May 2024 the Respondent notified the SRA that he had entered a guilty plea and the matter had been adjourned for sentence. A certified copy of the Certificate of Conviction, dated 29 July 2024 was obtained by the SRA which indicated that the Respondent had first appeared before the Magistrates' Court at Manchester for plea on 8 May 2024. At that appearance, the Respondent entered guilty pleas to the matters and was subsequently convicted. The Magistrates' decided to commit the Respondent to the Crown Court at Bolton for sentence. The Respondent was bailed unconditionally to appear before the Crown Court at Bolton. The Respondent appeared and was sentenced by the Crown Court at Bolton on 25 July 2024.
10. The Certificate of Conviction reflects that the Respondent was convicted on 8 May 2024 of the Offences set out at Paragraph 1 above. On 25 July 2024, at the Crown Court at Bolton, the Respondent received the following sentence:
 - A term of imprisonment of 6 months, suspended for a period of 2 years
 - Required to register with the Police for a period of seven years.
 - Subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for a period of seven years, terms of that Order include the prohibition of contact with a child under 16 years of age via electronic means and possessing or using any computer or storage device which is capable of storing digital images with the consent of the Police
 - Required to attend rehabilitation activities up to maximum of 30 days;
 - 180 hours unpaid work, to be carried out within twelve months from the date of the sentence.
11. In his sentencing remarks dated 25 July 2024 HHJ Clarke set out the seriousness of the Respondent's conduct. HHJ Clarke, stated

"I have no doubt that by the commission of these offences you will lose your professional status" and that the Respondent "...on 15 February 2020 [was] responsible for distribution to three other people of what is described by lawyers as a category B image. It is a very young girl disrobing herself, that you sent out via a WhatsApp group chat to three others. In addition, and on the same date you were in possession of an extreme image of a woman having intercourse with a dog, which was an example of 70 such images". HHJ commended the work of the United States National Crime Centre for Missing and Exploited children "...for having identified your IP address and Facebook page and sending that intelligence to this country so that the Greater Manchester Police could then in turn investigate your illegal activities".

12. HHJ Clarke also noted the significant impact that the Respondent's conduct had on the subject of those images. He said

“the distribution of such images as you sent out cause incalculable harm to those people who are the subject of those images who become aware that their images have been uploaded onto the internet or shared amongst others and can be viewed essentially for all time and that is why it is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified for it”.

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

13. The parties invited the Tribunal to deal with the Allegations against the Respondent in accordance with the Statement of Agreed Facts and Proposed 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

14. 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 private and family life under Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
15. The Tribunal reviewed all the material before it and was satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the Respondent's admissions were properly made. The Tribunal considered the Guidance Note on Sanction (11th Edition / February 2025). In doing so, the Tribunal assessed the culpability and harm identified together with the aggravating and mitigating factors that existed.
16. The Respondent was convicted of serious offences involving indecent images of children pursuant to the Protection of Children Act 1978 and possession of extreme pornographic images, which portrayed, in an explicit and realistic way, a person performing an act of intercourse with an animal that were grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character contrary to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. The Respondent was sentenced for these offences at the Crown Court at Bolton on 25 July 2024.
17. Within the sphere of regulatory and disciplinary conduct there could be no mitigation to minimise the harm. The Respondent's misconduct could only be viewed as extremely serious and no sanction less than a strike off would be sufficient to protect the public and the reputation of the profession.

Costs

18. The parties had agreed that the Respondent should pay costs in the sum of £2,680.00. 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, SOHAIL BASHIR, 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 £2,680.00.

DATED AND FILED WITH THE LAW SOCIETY

This 10th day of February 2026
On behalf of the Tribunal

L. Boyce

L. Boyce
Chair

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

Case No:12786-2025

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

AND IN THE MATTER OF:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LIMITED

Applicant

and

SOHAIL BASHIR

Respondent

STATEMENT OF AGREED FACTS AND PROPOSED OUTCOME

1. By its application dated 17 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 "Applicant") brought proceedings before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (the "Tribunal") making two allegations of misconduct against Mr Sohail Bashir (the "Respondent").

The allegations

2. The allegations against the Respondent, made by the Applicant within that statement are, that whilst in practice as a solicitor he:
 - 2.1 On 15 February 2020, distributed an indecent photograph, namely one Category B video, of a child, contrary to sections 1(1)(b) and 6 of the Protection of Children Act 1978.
 - 2.2 On 15 February 2020, had in his possession three extreme pornographic images, which portrayed, in an explicit and realistic way, a person performing an act of intercourse with a live animal, namely a dog, which were grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character and a reasonable person looking

at the image would think that any such person or animal was real, contrary to sections 63(1), 7(d) and 67(3) of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principles 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019.

3. The Applicant relies on the Respondent's convictions on 8 May 2024 for the allegations listed at 2.1 and 2.2 above, with the Certificate of Conviction dated 29 July 2024, as evidence that the Respondent was guilty of each offence and relies upon the findings of fact upon which those convictions were based as proof of those facts.

Admissions

4. On 3 October 2025, the Respondent filed and served an Answer to the Rule 12 Statement in which he admitted all the allegations. The Respondent also accepts the factual basis of the admitted allegations set out within this document.

Agreed Facts

5. The following facts and matters, which are relied upon by the Applicant, in support of the allegations set out within paragraph two of this Statement, are agreed between the Applicant and Respondent.

Professional details

6. The Respondent, who was born on [redacted] October 1964, is a solicitor having been admitted to the Roll on 15 May 2008. His SRA ID number is 482627.
7. At the material time of the Respondent's arrest on 21 August 2020 and subsequent convictions, the Respondent was practising as a consultant solicitor at Allied Law Solicitors Limited (the "Firm") until 14 March 2024.
8. The Respondent remains on the Roll but does not currently hold a practising certificate. The last practising certificate the Respondent held was for the 2023/2024 practice year and was subject to an immediate condition, which was imposed on 21 August 2024. The condition imposed during this period was that the Respondent "*shall not carry on*

legal activities or supervise others carrying on legal activities in connection with the provision of legal services”.

Background

9. The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, based in the USA, made a notification to the National Crime Agency in the UK. They had identified that on 20 June 2018, a Facebook account under the name of 'Sohail Bashir', along with the associated email address, had accessed a Category B video involving a child. The Sexual Crime Unit analysed the internet protocol address of the Facebook account, which was attributed to the Respondent. This information was passed to Greater Manchester Police who commenced the investigation. They arrested the Respondent on 21 August 2020 and seized his mobile phone. The mobile phone was analysed by the Digital Investigation Unit, and several indecent images and videos were found. The Respondent was interviewed under caution and legally represented. He denied the offences alleged and a prepared statement was given. Following further investigation, the Respondent was charged on 14 March 2024.
10. The conduct in this matter came to the attention of the Applicant on 7 May 2024. The Firm had instructed an external consultant, who specialises in regulatory compliance, to make a report to the Applicant on their behalf. The Report said that the Respondent had been charged with the following offences on 14 March 2024: (1) Possessing extreme pornographic image/images portraying an act of intercourse with a dead or alive animal; and (2) Distribution of an indecent photograph of a child.
11. The Applicant was also informed that the Firm were instructed by the Respondent to represent him in his criminal case. The Respondent notified the Applicant on 8 May 2024 that he had been charged on 14 March 2024 and provided details of the offences. The Respondent said that he had pleaded guilty, and the matter had been adjourned for sentence.

Criminal proceedings

12. A certified copy of the Certificate of Conviction, dated 29 July 2024, was obtained by the Applicant. This records the Respondent had first appeared before the Magistrates' Court at Manchester for plea on 8 May 2024. At that appearance, the Respondent entered guilty pleas to the matters and was subsequently convicted. The Magistrates' Court decided to commit the Respondent to the Crown Court at Bolton for sentence.

The Respondent was bailed unconditionally to appear before the Crown Court at Bolton. The Respondent appeared and was sentenced by the Crown Court at Bolton on 25 July 2024.

13. The Certificate of Conviction records that the Respondent was convicted on 8 May 2024 of the following offences:

13.1 On 15 February 2020, at Bolton in the County of Greater Manchester, distributed an indecent photograph, namely one Category B video, of a child, contrary to sections 1(1) (b) and 6 of the Protection of Children Act 1978.

13.2 On 15 February 2020, at Bolton in the County Court of Greater Manchester, possessed extreme pornographic images, namely three, which portrayed, in an explicit and realistic way, a person performing an act of intercourse with a live animal, namely a dog, which were grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of obscene character and a reasonable person looking at the image would think that any such person or animal was real, contrary to sections 63(1), (7)(d) and 67(3) of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008.

14. On the 25 July 2024, at the Crown Court at Bolton, the Respondent was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for six months, which was suspended for a period of two years. The Respondent was also required to register with the police for a period of seven years and was subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for a period of seven years. The terms of that Order include the prohibition of contact with a child under 16 years of age via electronic means and possessing or using any computer storage device which is capable of storing digital images without the consent of the police. The Respondent was also required to attend rehabilitation activities up to a maximum of 30 days, and carry out 180 hours unpaid work, to be carried out within twelve months from the date of his sentence.

Details of the offences

15. The offences the Respondent has been convicted of are serious. The Respondent distributed an indecent Category B video of a child. The Sentencing Council describes 'category B' as "*sharing of images involving non-penetrative sexual activity*". This is particularly serious as it involves distributing a video of a vulnerable child. The Respondent also had in his possession images of a person performing an act of

intercourse with a live animal, namely a dog, which is also serious given its obscene and grossly offensive character.

16. The Applicant relies on the sentencing remarks of His Honour Judge Clarke, KC ("HHJ Clarke"), dated 25 July 2024, arising from those convictions, as proof of the underlying facts. HHJ Clarke sets out the seriousness of the Respondent's conduct. HHJ Clarke, said at page two paragraph one, *"I have no doubt that by the commission of these offences you will lose your professional status"*. At page two paragraph two, that the Respondent, *"On 15 February 2020 were responsible for distribution to three other people of what is described by lawyers a category B image. It is a very young girl disrobing herself, that you sent out via a WhatsApp group chat to three others. In addition, and on the same date you were in the possession of an extreme image of a woman having intercourse with a dog, which was an example of 70 such images"*.
17. HHJ Clarke said that the Respondent would be subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and would be subject to notification requirements. He said, at page two paragraph seven, *"You will be subject to the notification requirements and, as you know, the police will be monitoring your device usage in the future and you will be required to let the police know where you are living and under what name so that again they can continue to monitor your future behaviour"*. These Orders demonstrate that HHJ Clarke considered that given the seriousness of the offence, it was necessary to mitigate any future risks of the Respondent re-offending.
18. HHJ Clarke also notes the significant impact the Respondent's conduct had on the subject of those images. He said, at page two paragraph seven, *"the distribution of such images as you sent out cause incalculable harm to those people who are the subject of those images who become aware that their images have been uploaded onto the internet or shared amongst others and can be viewed essentially for all time and that is why it is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified for it"*.

Non- Agreed mitigation

19. The Respondent on 19 January 2026, was asked whether he would like to put forward any mitigation, and on 20 January 2026 he confirmed that he did not want to include any mitigation.

Penalty Proposed and costs

20. It is therefore proposed, and the Respondent accepts, that the proper penalty in this case is for him to be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.
21. With respect of costs, it is further agreed that the Respondent should pay the Applicant's costs of this matter agreed in the sum of £2,680.

Explanation as to why such an order would accord with the Tribunal's sanctions guidance

22. The parties submit that the proposed outcome represents the appropriate resolution of the matter, consistent with the Tribunal's Guidance Note on Sanctions 11th Edition ("Guidance Note") dated February 2025. The Guidance Note, at page three, sets out one of the main functions of the Tribunal which is *"to protect the public from harm, and to maintain public confidence in the reputation of the legal profession (and those that provide legal services) for honesty, probity, trustworthiness, independence and integrity"*.
23. The Guidance Note details the Tribunal's approach to sanction, which is set out in *Fuglers and Others v Solicitors Regulation Authority* [2014] EWHC 179 (per Popplewell J) as follows: *"28. There are three stages to the approach. The first stage is to assess the seriousness of the misconduct. The second stage is to keep in mind the purpose for which sanctions are imposed by such a tribunal. The third stage is to choose the sanction which appropriately fulfils that purpose for the seriousness of the conduct in question"*.
24. The Tribunal, when determining the appropriate sanction, first must consider the seriousness of the misconduct. In determining seriousness, the Tribunal must consider the Respondent's culpability for their conduct and the harm caused or harm that was intended or might reasonably be foreseen to have been caused by their actions.
25. The Tribunal's Guidance Note says *"The Tribunal will determine the harm caused by this misconduct and in doing so will assess: (1) the impact of the Respondent's misconduct on those directly or indirectly affected by the misconduct, the public, and the reputation of the legal profession. The greater the extent of the Respondent's*

departure from "complete integrity, probity and trustworthiness" expected of a solicitor the greater harm to the legal profession's reputation; (2) the extent of the harm that was intended or might reasonably have been foreseen to be caused by the Respondent's misconduct". The Respondent was convicted of distributing an indecent category B video of child. The child was undoubtedly vulnerable. He also had in his possession extreme pornographic images, which portrayed, in an explicit and realistic way, a person performing an act of intercourse with a live animal. The Respondent knew or ought reasonably to have known that his misconduct was in material breach of his obligations to protect the public and the reputation of the legal profession.

26. At the time of the Respondent's offences, he was 55 years of age, had nearly 12 years post qualification experience, and had direct control and responsibility for the circumstances giving rise to the misconduct. The Respondent's culpability for his offences is high.
27. The Respondent's misconduct has caused significant damage to the reputation of the profession. Solicitors are expected to abide by the law and a failure to do so diminishes the reputation of the profession. The public would not expect a solicitor, who is an officer of the court, to be convicted of a serious crime and to receive a suspended custodial sentence, nor be subject a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for a period of seven years or required to register with the police for a period of seven years. The Respondent's actions have 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. The Respondent has admitted both allegations made against him, and his culpability is high.

Aggravating factors

28. The Tribunal's Guidance Note says that there are factors that aggravate the seriousness of the misconduct. The relevant aggravating factors relating to the Respondent's conduct are as follows:
- misconduct, involving the commission of a criminal offence, not limited to dishonesty;
 - misconduct which was deliberate and calculated or repeated;
 - misconduct involving violence, bullying; coercion by the Respondent and/or a sexual element; and

- misconduct where the Respondent knew or ought reasonably to have known that the conduct complained of was in material breach of obligations to protect the public and the reputation of the legal profession.

Criminal Offences

29. Whilst the Respondent's conduct occurred in his private life, it is so serious that it breaches Principles 2 and 5 of the Principles because it realistically touches on the standing of the profession (Principle 2) and his practise of the profession (Principle 5). In **Beckwith v Solicitors Regulation Authority [2020] EWHC 3231 (Admin) at [54]** *"There can be no hard and fast rule that either regulation under the Handbook may never be directed to the regulated person's private life, or that any/every aspect of her private life is liable to scrutiny. But Principle 2 or Principle 6 [the predecessors to Principle 5 and 2 of the SRA Principles] may reach into private life only when conduct that is part of a person's private life realistically touches on her practise of the profession (Principle 2) or the standing of the profession (Principle 6). Any such conduct must be qualitatively relevant."* The nature and the seriousness of the conviction and sentence would have a clear impact on the Respondent's practise as a solicitor. There is also a clear link between the commission of criminal offences by a solicitor and the resulting diminution of the trust and confidence the public has in the profession if such a solicitor is permitted to practice without sanction. Adherence to the ethical standards of the profession must and does include adherence to the wider law of the land, especially the criminal law, not least because solicitors are officers of the court.
30. The Tribunal's Guidance Note says that misconduct involving the commission of a criminal offence aggravates the seriousness of the misconduct.
31. Solicitors who commit serious criminal offences should not be permitted to remain on the Roll, as was said by Sir Brian Leveson, then the President of the Queen's Bench Division, in *Solicitors Regulation Authority v Farrimond [2018] EWHC 321 (Admin) at [34]* *"...it is beyond argument that a solicitor sentenced to any substantial terms of imprisonment should not be permitted to remain on the Roll even if suspended indefinitely..."*. The Respondent received a term of imprisonment of six months which was suspended for a period of two years. The offence of which he was convicted is unquestionably serious.

32. The Tribunal's Guidance Note makes it clear that criminal conduct that has been proved will almost invariably lead to striking off. The Guidance Note refers to the case of *Solicitors Regulation Authority v Emeana, Ijewere and Ajanaka* [2013] EWHC 2130 (Admin), and says, "Striking off can be appropriate in the absence of dishonesty where, amongst other things: the seriousness of the misconduct is itself very high; and the departure by the respondent from the required standards of integrity, probity and trustworthiness is very serious. In such cases, the Tribunal will have regard to the overall facts of the misconduct, and in particular the effect that allowing the respondents name to remain on the Roll will have upon the public's confidence in the reputation of the legal profession".

33. In the circumstances, the Respondent's misconduct is at the highest level of seriousness, and the appropriate sanction to protect the public and the protection of the reputation of the legal profession, which is proportionate to the seriousness of the admitted misconduct, is that the Respondent should be struck off the Roll of solicitors.

Summary

34. In all the circumstances of the case, the seriousness of the misconduct in which the Respondent was convicted of is at a high level. It is therefore proportionate and necessary for the protection of the public and the reputation of the legal profession, that the that the Respondent should be struck off the Roll of Solicitors. Further that the Respondent should pay the Applicant's costs in the sum of £2,680.

Dated this 20 day of January 2026

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Head of Legal and Enforcement on behalf of the SRA

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Sohail Bashir 