

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12793-2025

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

VIPUL KAPOOR

Respondent

Before:

Mr P Lewis (Chair)

Mr J Montague

Mrs C Valentine

Date of Hearing: 8 April 2026

Appearances

Kathryn Hughes, of counsel, QEB Hollis Whiteman 1-2 Laurence Pountney Hill, London, EC4R 0EU instructed by Solicitors Regulation Authority Ltd of The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN for the Applicant.

Geoffrey Williams KC of Farrar's Building, Temple, London EC4Y 7BD for the Respondent, Mr Kapoor, who was present.

JUDGMENT

Allegations

1. The allegations made by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (“SRA”) against the Respondent, Vipul Kapoor, a solicitor, are that:
 - 1.1. On 4 February 2017, drove a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in excess of the legal limit contrary to Section 5(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
 - 1.2. Failed to promptly report to the SRA his conviction for the offence committed on 4 February 2017. In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principles 6 and 7 of the SRA Principles 2011 and Outcome 10.3 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011.
 - 1.3. On 24 December 2019, drove a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in excess of the legal limit contrary to Section 5 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
 - 1.4. Failed to promptly report to the SRA his conviction for the offence committed on 24 December 2019. In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principle 1, 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and Paragraph 7(6)(a) SRA Code of Conduct of Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

Note: Principle 5 (integrity) was withdrawn by the Applicant, solely with respect to Allegation 1.3, prior to the substantive hearing.

- 1.5. On 19 December 2020:
 - 1.5.1. Drove a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in excess of the legal limit contrary to Section 5 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
 - 1.5.2. Drove a vehicle whilst disqualified from holding or obtaining a license contrary to section 103 (1) (b) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
 - 1.5.3. Drove a motor vehicle without a certificate of insurance in place for such use, contrary to section 143 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
 - 1.5.4. Was found to be in possession of cocaine, a controlled drug of class A in contravention of section 5(1) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 contrary to section 5(2) of and Schedule 4 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- 1.6. Failed to promptly report to the SRA his conviction for the offences committed on 19 December 2020. In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principle 1, 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and Paragraph 7. (6)(a) SRA Code of Conduct of Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

- 1.7. On 12 December 2023, was drunk and disorderly in a public place contrary to section 91(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1967. In doing so, the Respondent breached Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019.
2. The Applicant relies on the Respondent's convictions, dated 20 February 2017, 13 January 2020, and 4 February 2021 respectively, for the offences outlined at allegations 1.1, 1.3 and 1.5 above 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.
3. The Certificate of Convictions are dated 18 January 2024 and 21 March 2024 respectively.
4. The Applicant relies on the Respondent's Adult Conditional Caution dated 12 December 2023 for the offence outlined at allegation 1.7 above as evidence that the Respondent was guilty of that offence and relies upon the admission and acceptance of the caution as proof of the facts.

Executive Summary

5. The Respondent, a solicitor admitted in 2009, appeared before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal having accumulated three drink-driving convictions between 2017 and 2020, the last of which was committed whilst subject to a court-imposed disqualification and was accompanied by charges of driving without insurance and possession of cocaine. He subsequently received an adult conditional caution for drunk and disorderly behaviour in December 2023. Compounding the criminal conduct was a failure to report any of these matters to the SRA for the better part of seven years. All allegations were admitted in full.
6. In mitigation, the Tribunal heard expert psychiatric evidence confirming that the Respondent had been physically and psychologically dependent on alcohol throughout the relevant period, driven by a combination of serious personal and occupational pressures. He had been abstinent since December 2023 and was actively engaged with Alcoholics Anonymous. The Tribunal acknowledged that a suspension would have been an entirely defensible outcome, but, having assessed the Respondent directly and being satisfied as to the sincerity of his recovery and remorse, it imposed a fine of £15,000, together with agreed costs of £10,688.

Sanction

7. The Respondent was fined in the sum of £15,000. The Tribunal's reason on sanction can be found [\[here\]](#).

Documents

8. The Tribunal considered all the documents in the case which were contained in the electronic bundle.

Factual Background

9. The Respondent is a solicitor having been admitted to the Roll on 15 October 2009. His SRA ID number is: 390868. At the time of the Respondent's arrest by the police in relation to the first conviction matter (4 February 2017) and the conviction on 20 February 2017, he was employed and practising as a solicitor with Olswang LLP, holding a Practising Certificate free from conditions.
10. At the time of the Respondent's arrest by the police in relation to the second conviction matter (24 December 2019) and the conviction on 13 January 2020, he was employed and practising as a solicitor with TLT LLP, holding a Practising Certificate free from conditions.
11. At the time of the Respondent's arrest by the police in relation to the third, fourth, fifth and sixth conviction matters (19 December 2020) and the convictions on 4 February 2021, he was employed and practising as a solicitor with Naylor Solicitors LLP, holding a Practising Certificate free from conditions.
12. At the time of the Respondent's arrest by the police in relation to the Adult Conditional Caution administered on 12 December 2023, he was a solicitor not in employment, holding a Practising Certificate free from conditions.
13. The Respondent held a Practising Certificate free from conditions and is currently employed as a solicitor with Mezzle Limited (Licensed Body) and Gotelee Solicitors LLP (Recognised Body).

Witnesses

14. **The Respondent** affirmed and gave evidence. He told the Tribunal that hearing the allegations read aloud had left him feeling deeply sad and remorseful, describing his conduct as a period of "madness" brought on by the grip of alcoholism, for which he offered an unreserved apology.
- 14.1 He explained that at the time of the offences he had been physically dependent on alcohol, caught in what he described as a vicious cycle during his time at Olswang. The demands of a three-hour daily commute combined with working hours stretching from seven in the morning until ten at night had led him to rely on alcohol as both a release and a form of self-medication. The inevitable consequence, he told the Tribunal, was a profound fog each morning that rendered him deeply inefficient and compelled him to work even longer hours simply to keep pace with his responsibilities.
- 14.2 His last drink had been in December 2023 following a relapse. Since then, he had attended Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) three to four times per week and now serves as a key holder for a large newcomers' meeting, a position of responsibility within the fellowship that he clearly regarded with pride.
- 14.3 On the question of reporting, the Respondent maintained that he had not become aware of his duty to self-report until April 2023, when he attended a drink-drive rehabilitation course. He attributed his earlier failure to a combination of untreated

alcoholism, an unmanageable personal life, and the distraction of his mother's serious illness, accepting that he had simply not been thinking clearly. His explanation for the subsequent six-month delay between that realisation and his eventual report in November 2023 was that he had been afraid, not of professional sanction, but that the stress of a protracted SRA investigation might precipitate a further relapse and undo the sobriety he had worked so hard to achieve.

- 14.4 Under cross-examination, he acknowledged his professional obligation to know his regulatory duties, but maintained a genuine, if mistaken, belief that road traffic convictions fell outside the reporting requirement. As for the cocaine possession and suspended custodial sentence, he had regarded these as subsumed within the road traffic matter since no separate penalty had been imposed.
- 14.5 The Respondent pointed to the stability he now enjoys: a supportive role at Mezzle, a settled family life, and the imminent arrival of his first child in September. He was unequivocal that he would not reoffend, and reflected that without AA, he believed he would by now be in prison or a psychiatric institution.
15. **Dr Anthony John Wilkins**, Consultant General Adult and Forensic Psychiatrist, gave his testimony (affirmed) via video link. Dr Wilkins confirmed that he had examined the Respondent on two occasions, in February and April 2024, on the instructions of his legal representatives.
- 15.1 Dr Wilkins' current clinical position was that the Respondent does not presently suffer from any significant psychiatric disorder and no longer meets the criteria for alcohol dependence or misuse. His mental state at the time of assessment was stable, with no clinical evidence of depression, anxiety disorder, psychosis, personality disorder, or cognitive impairment. No psychiatric treatment or medication was considered necessary.
- 15.2 Historically, however, the picture was more complex. Dr Wilkins concluded that the Respondent had been psychologically, and in all likelihood physically, dependent on alcohol at the time of his first two drink-driving convictions, and probably at the time of the third. That dependency had not arisen in isolation. A confluence of significant life stressors, the breakdown of his first marriage, the pressures of a promotion that brought with it a punishing three-hour daily commute, his mother's serious illness, and the deaths of both of his grandfathers had collectively precipitated his decline. In response to these pressures, the Respondent had turned to alcohol as a maladaptive coping mechanism for the low mood and anxiety that Dr Wilkins characterised as consistent with an adjustment disorder with depressive features, rather than a depressive illness in the clinical sense. This self-medication, he explained, created a vicious circle: alcohol provided transient relief whilst simultaneously deepening the underlying symptoms and entrenching physical dependence.
- 15.3 On the question of the cocaine possession, Dr Wilkins noted that the Respondent had no recollection of acquiring or consuming the drug and concluded that this was most plausibly explained by a blackout resulting from extreme intoxication. He observed that drug use stood out markedly against the Respondent's otherwise drug-free history and was therefore more consistent with disinhibited behaviour during a severe episode of intoxication than with any habitual or recreational misuse.

- 15.4 Turning to rehabilitation, Dr Wilkins described AA as an evidence-based recovery programme and characterised the Respondent's commitment to attending four meetings per week as an excellent outcome. He did, however, note that a previous AA sponsor had adopted an unhelpfully rigid approach, discouraging the Respondent from remarrying and regarded such inflexibility as potentially detrimental to sustained recovery. In respect of the medical evidence, Dr Wilkins reviewed the Respondent's GP blood tests spanning 2024 to 2026 and found no indicators of excessive alcohol use. A marginally abnormal liver reading was, in his view, attributable to a muscular injury sustained during exercise rather than to alcohol consumption. He was careful to note, however, that whilst such tests lend support to a claim of abstinence, no medical test is capable of proving total non-consumption with absolute certainty.
- 15.5 On the specific question of the Respondent's failure to report his convictions to the SRA and to his employer, Dr Wilkins concluded that this conduct was not materially influenced by mental ill-health. Whilst the Respondent had experienced anxiety, avoidance, and a fear of consequences, he had nonetheless retained the capacity to understand his regulatory obligations. The decision to delay disclosure was, in Dr Wilkins' assessment, a deliberate one, made whilst the Respondent sought legal advice and prepared himself to confront the matter.
- 15.6 Under cross-examination by Ms Hughes, Dr Wilkins' confirmed that the original formal report had been prepared in April 2022, some two years prior to the hearing, and had been based upon a single two-hour assessment together with a select number of documents provided by the defence, rather than a comprehensive review of the Respondent's full medical records. Dr Wilkins accepted that his updated conclusions regarding the Respondent's recent stability rested upon information provided by legal counsel and the more recent blood test results, rather than upon a further formal psychiatric assessment.
- 15.7 Notwithstanding those limitations, Dr Wilkins' overarching opinion remained consistent: alcohol misuse, rather than psychiatric illness, lay at the heart of both the Respondent's offending behaviour and his regulatory failures. Sustained abstinence was, in his view, the single most significant factor in reducing the risk of future misconduct, and he concluded that should the Respondent remain abstinent, his propensity to reoffend would be no greater than that of any other person.

Findings of Fact and Law

16. 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 right to a fair trial.

Integrity

17. The Tribunal had regard to, and applied the following tests in its fact-finding exercise:
The matters set at paragraphs 97 to 107 of [Wingate v SRA \[2018\] EWCA Civ 366](#),

NOTE: While all the evidence was carefully considered the Tribunal does not refer to each and every piece of the evidence or submissions in its judgment and findings.

R12 Statement [here]

18. **Allegation 1.1 - On 4 February 2017, drove a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in excess of the legal limit contrary to Section 5(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.**

Allegation 1.2 - Failed to promptly report to the SRA his conviction for the offence committed on 4 February 2017. In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principles 6 and 7 of the SRA Principles 2011 and Outcome 10.3 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011.

Allegation 1.3 - On 24 December 2019, drove a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in excess of the legal limit contrary to Section 5 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Allegation 1.4 - Failed to promptly report to the SRA his conviction for the offence committed on 24 December 2019. In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principle 1, 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and Paragraph 7(6)(a) SRA Code of Conduct of Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

Note: Principle 5 (integrity) was withdrawn by the Applicant, solely with respect to Allegation 1.3, prior to the substantive hearing.

Allegation 1.5 - On 19 December 2020: Drove a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in excess of the legal limit contrary to Section 5 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Drove a vehicle whilst disqualified from holding or obtaining a license contrary to section 103 (1) (b) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Drove a motor vehicle without a certificate of insurance in place for such use, contrary to section 143 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Was found to be in possession of cocaine, a controlled drug of class A in contravention of section 5(1) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 contrary to section 5(2) of and Schedule 4 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Allegation 1.6 - Failed to promptly report to the SRA his conviction for the offences committed on 19 December 2020. In doing so, the Respondent breached any or all of Principle 1, 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019 and Paragraph 7. (6)(a) SRA Code of Conduct of Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

Allegation 1.7 - On 12 December 2023, was drunk and disorderly in a public place contrary to section 91(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1967. In doing so, the Respondent breached Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019.

The Applicant's Case

- 18.1 It was said by Mr Hughes for the Applicant that the case against the Respondent arose from a prolonged course of criminal conduct between 2017 and 2023, together with a serious and sustained failure to comply with regulatory reporting obligations.
- 18.2 The Respondent's conduct demonstrated persistent disregard for the law, repeated failures to uphold public trust and confidence in the profession, and a lack of integrity incompatible with continued unregulated practice.
- 18.3 Between February 2017 and December 2020, he was convicted on three separate occasions of driving with excess alcohol, each time recording evidential breath readings significantly in excess of the legal limit. These offences were aggravated by repeated road traffic collisions, attempts to avoid police intervention, and disregard of express police instructions. Despite having previously been convicted, sentenced, and made subject to court-imposed disqualification and a community order, the Respondent committed further like offences, demonstrating persistent offending.
- 18.4 The seriousness of the misconduct escalated markedly in December 2020, when the Respondent drove while disqualified, without insurance, and while significantly over the alcohol limit, and was additionally found in possession of cocaine, a Class A controlled drug. These offences were committed in breach of existing court orders and resulted in a suspended custodial sentence, reflecting the magistrates' assessment that the offending was "so serious".
- 18.5 Ms Hughes contended that this conduct showed a fundamental failure to respect the rule of law and the proper administration of justice. As to this issue Mr Lewis, Chair, raised an interpretive point: whether the conjunction "and" meant that both limbs of the principle had to be breached before a violation could be established. The SRA's position was that the two concepts should be read together and that either would suffice.
- 18.6 On the substantive question, Mr Lewis drew a distinction between breaching the law in the ordinary sense, that is, committing a criminal offence, and undermining the rule of law as a constitutional principle. Ms Hughes accepted that a single isolated offence might not automatically engage Principle 1 but argued that the Respondent's conduct crossed that threshold by virtue of its repeated nature and, critically, his decision to drive whilst subject to a court-imposed disqualification. It was that latter conduct, the deliberate disregard of a sanction imposed by a court, that the Applicant characterised as treating the law as something that did not apply to him, and therefore as inconsistent with the principle that the law applies equally to all. Ultimately, the Applicant's case rested on the proposition that the pattern and gravity of the Respondent's offending, in particular the breach of a court order, elevated his conduct from a private failing to a professional one, engaging his obligations as a solicitor to uphold the administration of justice.
- 18.7 In addition to the offences themselves, reliance was placed on the Respondent's failure to report his convictions promptly. Despite being under a clear regulatory obligation to notify the SRA of such matters, the Respondent failed to report any of his convictions until 3 November 2023, nearly seven years after the first conviction.

This extended period of non-disclosure persisted across multiple employers and multiple practising certificates. The Applicant's case was that this delay was neither inadvertent nor trivial and represented a serious failure to deal with the regulator in an open, timely, and co-operative manner.

- 18.8 The Applicant further relied on the Respondent's conduct in December 2023, when he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly in a public place and accepted an Adult Conditional Caution. This incident occurred shortly after his conduct was self-reported to the SRA and formed part of a continuing pattern of alcohol-related offending, demonstrating ongoing risks to public confidence notwithstanding prior convictions, professional consequences, and regulatory scrutiny.
- 18.9 Taken cumulatively, Ms Hughes submitted that the Respondent's conduct breached Principles 1, 2 and 5 of the SRA Principles 2019, as well as the corresponding provisions of the earlier regulatory framework. The behaviour showed repeated disregard for the law, a pattern of offending capable of undermining public confidence in the profession, and a failure to adhere to the ethical standards expected of a solicitor. It was further submitted that the prolonged failure to report convictions aggravated the seriousness of the case and evidenced a lack of integrity.
- 18.10 Ms Hughes granted permission by the Tribunal, to state in concise terms the Applicant's view on sanction, said that in all the circumstances a suspension was the appropriate disposal.

The Respondent's Case

- 18.11 Mr Williams KC, appearing on behalf of the Respondent, opened his submissions by confirming that the Respondent admitted all allegations against him. He declined to engage with what he described as the semantics of integrity or the technicalities of multiple convictions, accepting candidly that his client had fallen short of the standards expected of him as a solicitor. By way of clarification, he noted that the Respondent had never been charged with leaving the scene of an accident in connection with the 2019 incident and invited the Tribunal to confine its consideration to the convictions as proven.
- 18.12 On mitigation, Mr Williams placed considerable weight on the Respondent's professional history. Since his admission in 2009, he had maintained an impeccable record, had never faced any allegation of misconduct in his professional work, and had held an unconditional practising certificate throughout, one that had been renewed shortly before the hearing. He submitted that the Tribunal was dealing with a man whose failings had been entirely private in nature, wholly disconnected from his conduct as a solicitor.
- 18.13 Central to the Respondent's case was the role of alcoholism. Mr Williams was careful to present this not as an excuse but as an explanation of the underlying cause without which the offending would not have occurred. Drawing on the expert evidence of Dr Wilkins, he described how a combination of extreme occupational pressure, the collapse of the Respondent's first marriage, and the loss of close family members had precipitated a psychological and physical dependence on alcohol that came to govern his behaviour during the relevant period. He emphasised that the Respondent had now

been abstinent since December 2023, attended Alcoholics Anonymous four times a week, and had taken on a position of responsibility within the organisation as a key holder for a large newcomers' meeting a commitment that spoke, he submitted to the seriousness and sincerity of his recovery.

- 18.14 Turning to the failure to report, Mr Williams urged the Tribunal to approach the chronology with some nuance. He accepted that on its face the delay appeared to span some six years, but submitted that the more meaningful period was the six months between April 2023, when the Respondent first became aware of his reporting obligations at a drink-drive rehabilitation course, and November 2023, when he self-reported to the SRA. That delay, he argued, was not motivated by any desire to conceal his conduct, but by a genuine and paralysing fear that the stress of a protracted regulatory process might cause a relapse and undo the sobriety he had worked so hard to achieve. As to the earlier years, Mr Williams submitted that the Respondent had laboured under a genuine, if erroneous, belief that road traffic convictions did not fall within the scope of the reporting requirements.
- 18.15 On sanction, Mr Williams submitted that the Respondent stood before the Tribunal as a different man, settled in his personal life, supported by his employer, married, and expecting his first child in September. Relying on Dr Wilkins' expert opinion, he argued that the Respondent posed no present risk to the public or to the reputation of the profession, provided he maintained his abstinence. In those circumstances, he submitted that a suspension would be not only devastating to the Respondent personally but disproportionate in all the circumstances. Such a sanction would, he contended, likely bring his career to an end, blight his future employability, and visit real and undeserved hardship upon his family. He urged the Tribunal to impose a financial penalty, submitting that a sanction directed at the Respondent's pocket represented the least severe outcome capable of satisfying the public interest whilst properly reflecting the gravity of the admissions made.

Previous Disciplinary Matters

19. None.

Sanction

20. The Tribunal carefully considered all the evidence presented by the Applicant and the Respondent, including oral testimony, documentary materials, witness statements, and submissions.
21. The SRA was the Applicant in this matter, and it bore the burden of proof throughout.
22. The Respondent appeared before the Tribunal as a consequence of his criminal conduct. In February 2007, he was convicted before the Magistrates' Court of driving with excess alcohol. He pleaded guilty, was fined and was disqualified from driving. On 24 December 2019, the Respondent was again found to have driven with excess alcohol. He was convicted upon a guilty plea on 3 March 2020 and was sentenced to 100 hours of unpaid work and disqualified from driving for a period of 36 months.

23. On 19 December 2020, the Respondent was once more found to have driven with excess alcohol. By reason of his previous convictions, he committed this further offence whilst subject to a driving disqualification and without insurance. Upon his arrest, he was found to be in possession of a controlled drug, namely cocaine. To his credit, the Respondent again pleaded guilty, doing so on 5 March 2021. He was sentenced, amongst other things, to a term of four weeks' imprisonment, suspended. He was subsequently found guilty of disorderly behaviour whilst drunk and received an adult conditional caution from the police.
24. None of these matters were reported to the regulator at the time they arose. The first notification came on 3 November 2023, from the solicitor then acting on the Respondent's behalf. The Respondent contended that he did not notify the regulator contemporaneously because he was unaware of his obligation to do so, and that he became aware of that obligation only whilst attending a drink-drive rehabilitation course. The Tribunal was broadly prepared to accept that explanation, which was consistent with the Respondent's subsequent self-reporting once he had become aware of his obligations.
25. There were, however, aggravating features to the failure to report promptly. First, the Respondent was an experienced solicitor who should have known, and was indeed obliged to keep abreast of, his professional obligations. Secondly, the Respondent did not in fact report until November 2023, some seven months after he became aware of his reporting obligations in April 2023. Whilst the Respondent spoke of a number of personal difficulties which were troubling him during that period, it was clear that he did not report matters to the regulator as promptly as he ought to have done. That further delay of approximately six months compounded what was already a substantial delay of some six years since his first relevant conviction.
26. Having had the benefit of advice from experienced counsel, the Respondent now accepted and admitted that his conduct constituted breaches of the principles and outcomes as alleged and set out in the Applicant's Rule 12 statement. Having regard to those admissions and to the evidence before it, the Tribunal found the allegations properly proved.
27. In determining the appropriate sanction, the Tribunal had had regard to the oral evidence of the Respondent, the report and oral evidence of Dr Wilkins, a consultant forensic psychiatrist, and the character references submitted on the Respondent's behalf. The Tribunal had also taken careful account of the submissions made by Mr Williams KC on behalf of the Respondent.
28. On behalf of the Applicant, Ms Hughes submitted that the Respondent's conduct was sufficiently serious that the only appropriate sanction was a period of suspension. The Tribunal considered and applied its Guidance Note on Sanctions, 11th edition. It reminded itself that the purpose of sanction is not punitive; its primary purpose is to protect the public from harm and to maintain public confidence in the reputation of the legal profession.
29. The Tribunal has considered the Respondent's culpability and found that he bore full personal responsibility for his conduct. Whilst he was an experienced solicitor at the relevant time, that experience was pertinent only in relation to his failure to report

promptly to the regulator; it was not a factor bearing upon his decision to drive a motor vehicle. His culpability was, however, aggravated by the repeated nature of his offending.

30. In mitigation, the Tribunal noted that the Respondent had no prior regulatory findings against him and that he was admitted to the Roll in 2009. He gave evidence that he is now alcohol-free and is taking active steps to remain so. That was to his credit, and it was consistent with the absence of any further offending since at least December 2023. The Tribunal had also had regard to the evidence of Dr Wilkins, who concluded that the Respondent was alcohol-dependent at the time of at least his first two convictions, and was probably so at the time of his third.
31. In weighing the submissions made, the Tribunal attached particular weight to the character reference provided by the Respondent's employers, who were, in the Tribunal's view, best placed to offer a reliable and informed assessment of his professional practice.
32. Taking all of these matters into consideration, the Tribunal determined that the appropriate sanction was a fine at Level 3 in the sum of £15,000.
33. It was right to observe that, in all the circumstances, a period of suspension would have been entirely defensible and perhaps, on a conventional analysis, the more predictable outcome. The repeated nature of the offending, the presence of aggravating features, not least the commission of a further offence whilst subject to an existing disqualification, and the protracted failure to report convictions spanning the better part of six years, meant that a Tribunal minded to impose a suspension could not have been criticised for doing so. That course was plainly open to it.
34. The Tribunal did not, however, take that course. Having heard the Respondent give evidence, and having had the opportunity to assess him directly, it elected to look beyond the bare chronology of his conduct and to have regard to the man standing before it. It was satisfied that the Respondent was genuinely remorseful, that his offending was rooted in a period of serious alcohol dependency now firmly in the past, and that the steps he had since taken towards recovery were both meaningful and sustained. In those circumstances, the Tribunal adopted a compassionate approach, one grounded in the particular and individual circumstances of this case rather than in a mechanical application of principle.
35. The fine imposed reflected not a diminution of the seriousness with which his conduct was viewed, but a considered and humane judgment that the public interest was adequately served without the imposition of a sanction that would, in all likelihood, have brought an otherwise unblemished professional career to an end.

Costs

36. The parties agreed costs in the total sum of £10,688.

Statement of Full Order

37. The Tribunal ORDERED that the Respondent, VIPUL KAPOOR, solicitor, do pay a FINE of £15,000.00, such penalty to be forfeit to His Majesty the King, and it further ORDERED that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £10,688.00.

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

P. Lewis

P. Lewis
Chair