

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12802-2025

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

WILLIAM PETER DOOLEY

Respondent

Before:

Ms A Kellett (in the chair)

Miss O Davies

Mrs L McMahon-Hathway

Date of Hearing: 4 June 2026

Appearances

Matthew Cassells, counsel in the employ of Blake Morgan LLP, 6 New Street Square, London EC4A 3DJ, instructed by the Solicitors Regulation Authority Ltd for the Applicant.

Mr Dooley represented himself.

JUDGMENT ON AN AGREED OUTCOME

Allegations

1. The allegations against the Respondent, William Peter Dooley, made by the Solicitors Regulation Authority Ltd ('SRA'), were that, whilst in practice as a Solicitor at Ellis Jones Solicitors LLP ('the Firm'):

- 1.1 On or around 27 August 2021, he provided misleading information to Person A and Client B by creating correspondence falsely dated 13 August 2021 that asked for an extension of time to deadlines of 19 and 20 August 2021, and created emails falsely dated 24 August 2021 and 25 August 2021.

In doing so, he breached any or all of Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019 ('the Principles'), Principle 4 of the Principles, Principle 5 of the Principles and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs ('the Code of Conduct').

- 1.2 Between March and April 2022, he provided misleading information to his supervising partner as to why an extension for Client A and Client B's submissions on appeal had not been filed within time.

In doing so, he breached any or all of Principle 2 of the Principles, Principle 4 of the Principles, Principle 5 of the Principles and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct.

2. Mr Dooley admitted the allegations, including that his conduct had been dishonest in breach of Principle 4.

Documents

3. The Tribunal considered all the documents in the case, which were included in the electronic bundle.

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

4. The parties invited the Tribunal to deal with the Allegations against Mr Dooley 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.

Findings of Fact and Law

5. 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 Mr Dooley'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.
6. The Tribunal reviewed all the material before it and was satisfied on the balance of probabilities that Mr Dooley's admissions were properly made.
7. 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. Mr Dooley had created correspondence, including an email address that he knew to be false. He had also created an email chain, which included emails that he knew to be false. When he reported the matter to his supervising partner, Mr Dooley explained that the application for an extension of time had not been received due to a typographical error in the email address caused by his secretary when he knew that was not the case as (i) the correspondence purporting to have been sent on 13 August 2021 had not been created until 27 August 2021 and (ii) his secretary had no involvement in the creation of the correspondence. Such conduct, the Tribunal found, was clearly dishonest. Given the clear dishonesty and lack of any exceptional circumstances, the Tribunal determined that the only appropriate and proportionate sanction was to strike Mr Dooley off the Roll. As this was the sanction proposed by the parties, the Tribunal approved the Agreed Outcome.

Costs

8. As at 19 May 2026, the parties were not agreed on costs. The matter was listed for a Case Management hearing for the Tribunal to hear submissions. On 4 June 2026, shortly before the hearing, the Tribunal was informed that the parties had now agreed costs in the sum of £19,500.
9. The Tribunal did not accept that the agreed amount was reasonable and proportionate in circumstances where:
 - (i) Mr Dooley had admitted his misconduct during his Firm's investigation and had self-reported his conduct on 7 November 2022.
 - (ii) The Applicant had chosen to instruct external solicitors with whom it had a commercial agreement, resulting in a minimum fee of £24,400 + VAT notwithstanding Mr Dooley's clear admission from the outset.
 - (iii) The instruction of external solicitors increased costs unnecessarily.
 - (iv) The agreed sum of £19,500 was excessive in the circumstances.
10. The Tribunal considered that costs in the sum of £16,927.50 were reasonable and proportionate. The Tribunal arrived at this amount by removing any VAT element (which would not have been charged if the matter were dealt with in-house by the Applicant), and a further small amount to reflect the duplication of work in the SRA's investigation costs and the preparation costs claimed by Blake Morgan.
11. The parties agreed costs in the sum proposed by the Tribunal.

Statement of Full Order

12. The Tribunal ORDERED that the Respondent, WILLIAM PETER DOOLEY 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 £16,927.50.

Dated this 16th day of June 2026
On behalf of the Tribunal

A Kellett

A Kellett
Chair

CASE NO: 12802-2025

BEFORE THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL
IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974 (as amended)
AND IN THE MATTER OF:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LIMITED

Applicant

- and -

WILLIAM PETER DOOLEY

Respondent

STATEMENT OF AGREED FACTS AND PROPOSED OUTCOME

1. By its application dated 7 July 2025, and the statement made pursuant 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 two allegations of misconduct against William Peter Dooley ("**the Respondent**").

The Allegations

2. The allegations against the Respondent, made by the SRA within that statement, are that, whilst in practice as a Solicitor at Ellis Jones Solicitors LLP ("**the Firm**"):

Allegation 1

On or around 27 August 2021, he provided misleading information to Person A and Client B by creating correspondence falsely dated 13 August 2021 that asked for an extension of time to deadlines of 19 and 20 August 2021, and created emails falsely dated 24 August 2021 and 25 August 2021.

In doing so, he breached any or all of Principle 2 of the SRA Principles 2019 ("**the Principles**"), Principle 4 of the Principles, Principle 5 of the Principles and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs ("**the Code of Conduct**").

Allegation 2

Between March and April 2022, he provided misleading information to his supervising partner as to why an extension for Client A and Client B's submissions on appeal had not been filed within time.

In doing so, he breached any or all of Principle 2 of the Principles, Principle 4 of the Principles, Principle 5 of the Principles and Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct.

Admissions

3. The Respondent admits all of the allegations and breaches that are applicable to each.
4. The SRA has considered the admissions being made and whether these admissions and the outcome proposed in this document, meet the public interest having regard to the gravity of the matters alleged. For the reasons explained in more detail below, and subject to the Tribunal's approval, the SRA is satisfied that the admissions and outcome do satisfy the public interest.
5. The Applicant and Respondent invite the Tribunal to approve this Agreed Outcome on this basis. The Parties consider in all the circumstances that the proposed Agreed Outcome represents a proportionate outcome to the proceedings which is in the public interest.

Agreed Facts

6. The following facts and matters, which are relied upon by the SRA in support of the allegations set out within paragraph 2 of this statement, are agreed between the SRA and the Respondent.
7. References to certain individuals and entities have been anonymised as per the attached schedule.

Professional Details

8. The Respondent was born on September 1987 and was admitted as a solicitor on 1 October 2015. He remains on the roll but does not hold a current practising certificate.

Allegation 1

9. The Respondent commenced his employment at the Firm on 7 May 2019 within its Banking and Finance Litigation department. At the time relevant to the concerns, the Respondent held the position of Senior Associate.
10. The Firm had been instructed by Client A and Client B (who were siblings) since 8 April 2020 in respect of complaints being brought by them against Royal Bank of Scotland ('RBS'). Client A's daughter, Person A, was providing the Firm with instructions on behalf of her mother.
11. These complaints were part of a wider complaints scheme, which was being managed by RBS's Global Restructuring Group ('GRG'). Part of the scheme allowed a complainant, in some circumstances, to apply for consequential losses over and above the standard amount that could be awarded
12. The Clients A and B received standard compensation from GRG in March 2021. The Respondent was subsequently instructed to prepare submissions on a consequential loss claims that were sent to GRG on 30 April 2021. The claims were rejected on 24 June 2021 (for Client A) and 25 June 2021 (for Client B).
13. The Respondent was subsequently instructed to appeal these decisions to an Independent Third Party ('ITP'). The deadlines for filing the appeals at 'appeals@itp.org.uk' were 19 and 20 August 2021 respectively for Clients A and B.
14. Due to ill-health within the clients' family, the Respondent was asked to apply for an extension to the deadline for filing of the appeals.
15. The Respondent did not file the appeals within the deadlines. Instead, on or around 27 August 2021, the Respondent created correspondence to the ITP, dated 13 August 2021, which purported to apply for an extension of time for the filing of the appeals. The Respondent included an email address on the letter for the filing of the application as being 'apeals@itp.org.uk' (i.e. appeals was incorrectly spelt).
16. The Respondent sent the letter dated 13 August 2021 to Person A and Client B by way of an attachment to an email of 27 August 2021. That email also purported to be forwarding,

by way of an email chain, an earlier email to Person A and Client B, of 25 August 2021. The email dated 25 August 2021 in itself appeared to be forwarding an email from the Respondent, purportedly sent by him to Person A and Client B the day before (24 August 2021).

17. The Respondent had not, in fact, sent either of the emails to Person A and Client B on 24 and 25 August 2021. He created those emails by sending himself emails and then manually amending the recipients and time of the email to appear as if he had emailed Person A and Client B on 24 and 25 August 2021.

18. The Respondent accepts that:

- 18.1. He had conduct of Clients A and B's matters, and had authority to correspond with Person A on behalf of Client A;
- 18.2. He was aware that the deadline for filing the appeals was 19 and 20 August 2021;
- 18.3. On 27 August 2021, he created correspondence to the ITP, backdated to 13 August 2021 and asking for an extension of time to file the appeals;
- 18.4. The letter to the ITP, falsely dated 13 August 2021, included an email address for the recipient that the Respondent knew to be incorrect;
- 18.5. He had not filed either appeal by the respective deadline, and the ITP would not therefore have a record of an appeal(s) being filed;
- 18.6. That a reader of the letter dated 13 August 2021 would likely assume that the ITP had no record of an appeal being filed due to the relevant correspondence being sent to an incorrect email address due to a typographical error;
- 18.7. An apparent typographical error, which caused an appeal to not be filed in time would more likely allow an appeal filed late to be accepted;
- 18.8. He did not send emails to Person A or Client B on 24 and 25 August 2021;
- 18.9. The email chain that he sent to Person A and Client B on 27 August 2021, was created by the Respondent sending emails to himself, and then manipulating the recipient;
- 18.10. Person A and Client B would likely assume that the emails of 24 and 25 August 2021 had been sent to them by the Respondent, but not received due to some IT issue;
- 18.11. Person A and Client B would likely assume that the applications to extend the filing date for their respective appeals had been sent by the Respondent to the ITP in good time prior to the given deadlines;

- 18.12. In the absence of a rejection to the apparent application to extend the filing deadlines, Person A and Client B would assume their appeals remained live.
19. By the Respondent's conduct, he admits that he breached any or all of Principles 2, 4 and 5 of the Principles, Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct.

Allegation 2

20. In March 2022, the outcome of the consequential loss claims remained outstanding for Clients A and B. The clients directly contacted the ITP, which confirmed to the Respondent and the clients that it had no record of the clients having submitted an appeal.
21. Following the confirmation correspondence from the ITP, the Respondent informed his supervising partner of an issue on Clients A and B's matters, specifically that the application for an extension of time to file the appeals had been missed in August 2021.
22. The Respondent explained that the extensions had been applied for (by correspondence of 13 August 2021) but had not been received by the ITP due to the typographical error in the recipient's email address : 'apeals@...' rather than 'appeals@...'
23. The Respondent also stated that his secretary had sent the correspondence dated 13 August 2021.
24. The partner accepted what the Respondent informed him, especially as he was aware that the ITP had recently reviewed the clients' matters (albeit that the ITP had rejected the applications for consequential loss).
25. In June 2022, the Firm received a Pre-Action Protocol Letter of Claim ('PAPLOC') from the clients in respect of the Firm's conduct of their cases, and the consequences of the 13 August 2021 correspondence being sent to the incorrect email address.
26. Following the PAPLOC being received, the Firm undertook an investigation, which included an investigation by an independent IT company.
27. The Respondent accepts that when he reported the issues on Clients A and B's matters to his supervising partner:

- 27.1. He was aware that the deadlines for the filing of the appeals with the ITP was 19 and 20 August 2021;
 - 27.2. He had not filed the appeals, nor an application for an extension of time to file the appeals, with the ITP;
 - 27.3. Without the ITP being willing to consider a late application, the clients had lost their opportunity to appeal;
 - 27.4. Correspondence purporting to apply for an extension of time, dated 13 August 2021, had not been created until around 27 August 2021 and deliberately included an incorrect email address for the recipient;
 - 27.5. He stated to his supervising partner that the correspondence had been sent to the ITP, but had not been received, due to the typographical error, and that typographical error was caused by his secretary;
 - 27.6. The correspondence of 13 August 2021 was not created until around 27 August 2021, and had not been sent to the ITP at all;
 - 27.7. His secretary had no involvement in the creation of the correspondence dated 13 August 2021.
 - 27.8. The explanation to his supervising partner would suggest a simple error, which may be rectified, and would reduce the likelihood of any additional investigation being undertaken regarding his conduct in August 2021.
28. By the Respondent's conduct, he admits that he breached Principles 2, 4, and 5 of the Principles, Paragraph 1.4 of the Code of Conduct.

Sanction proposed (save that of costs)

29. It is therefore proposed that the Respondent should be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.
30. The Applicant and Respondent have not, however, reached an agreed position on the quantum of the Applicant's costs that the Respondent should be liable to pay.

Explanation as to why such an order would be in accordance with the Tribunal's sanctions guidance

31. The Respondent has admitted dishonesty, against numerous persons including clients and colleagues, and that the conduct was pre-meditated and repeated.

32. The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal's "Guidance Note on Sanction" (10th edition), at paragraph 47, 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))."

33. In *Sharma* (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..."

34. With reference to allegation 1, the Respondent deliberately created backdated correspondence to a third party, which he then further disseminated by attaching it to backdated email correspondence to Person A and Client B. That backdated correspondence also included an email address of the recipient that the Respondent knew to be incorrect.

35. With reference to allegation 2, the Respondent had the opportunity to be honest to his supervising partner as to the events of August 2021. Instead he maintained the position that he originally created in August 2021, and further distanced himself from any conduct issues by stating it was his secretary who was responsible for the typographical error in the ITP's email address.

36. For these reasons, the case plainly does not fall within the small residual category where striking off would be a disproportionate sentence.

Non Agreed Mitigation

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

37.1. In addition to a report made by the Firm to the SRA, the Respondent made a self-referral to the SRA in recognition of his professional obligations and his willingness to engage openly and transparently. He has co-operated fully throughout the SRA's investigation, with no attempt to obstruct or delay the process and has respected the regulatory process in full. The Respondent has admitted the allegations and acknowledges the seriousness of his conduct, including its impact on his clients, his former firm, and public confidence in the profession. He accepts that his conduct fell below the standards expected of a solicitor;

37.2. Prior to the events in this Agreed Outcome, the Respondent had an unblemished professional record with no previous regulatory findings against him.

37.3. The Respondent did not seek to obtain any financial or personal gain from his conduct and, as confirmed by the Firm, Client A and Client B did not suffer any additional loss as a result; and

37.4. At the time of the misconduct, the Respondent was experiencing significant personal and domestic pressures. He was balancing the demands of a young family (with a child born in June 2021) alongside a demanding professional role. His home life during this period was particularly challenging, with increased pressures and distractions outside of work, which contributed to a deterioration in his focus and judgment at the relevant time. The Respondent does not rely on these matters as an excuse for his conduct.

38. Accordingly, the fair and proportionate penalty in this case is for the Respondent to be struck off the Roll of Solicitors.

39. The quantum of costs to be contributed by the Respondent is to be decided separately.

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Dated: 19 May 2026

Legal representative
For and on behalf of the SRA

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Dated: 17 May 2026

William Peter Dooley
Respondent in these proceedings