

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12804-2025

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

DARREN SHAW

Respondent

Before:

Mr A Horrocks (in the chair)

Miss O Davies

Mr P Hurley

Date of Hearing: 12 May 2026

Appearances

Delme Griffiths, solicitor of Blake Morgan LLP, One Central Square, Cardiff CF10 1FS, for the Applicant.

The Respondent did not attend and was not represented.

JUDGMENT

Allegations

1. The allegation against the Respondent, Mr Darren Shaw, made by the Solicitors Regulation Authority Ltd was that he had been guilty of conduct of such a nature that, in the opinion of the SRA, it would be undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice in that, on 6-7 October 2022, whilst an employee of Keller Postman UK Limited (“the Firm”) and during the course of an event held by the Firm and post-event drinks in Manchester:
 - 1.1 In relation to Colleague A, he behaved inappropriately, in that, with reference to a raffle prize of a ‘Virgin Experience Day’, said, on one or more occasion, a comment that referenced spending “*a night*” with Colleague A.
 - 1.2 Inappropriately coerced or attempted to coerce Colleague C and/or Colleague E to dance with him.
 - 1.3 In relation to Colleague B, he behaved inappropriately and/or engaged in conduct which he knew or ought to have known was unwanted and/or uninvited, in that he said words to the effect of:
 - 1.3.1 “*Come on [Colleague B], you’ve got a great face, you’ve got a great name, are those your eyes*”, having adjusted Colleague B’s headwear; and/or
 - 1.3.2 “*Has anyone ever told you you’re beautiful, gorgeous, really attractive*”.
 - 1.4 In relation to Colleague C, he instigated physical contact which was inappropriate and/or unwanted and/or uninvited, in that he:
 - 1.4.1 Placed his hands on Colleague C’s waist and attempted to prevent her from moving away from him; and/or
 - 1.4.2 Moved his hand to the front of Colleague C’s stomach and/or the top of her leg.
 - 1.5 In relation to Colleague D, he behaved inappropriately and/or engaged in conduct which he knew or ought to have known was unwanted and/or uninvited, which included any or all of:
 - 1.5.1 Instigating physical contact, in that he:
 - a) Put his arm around Colleague D; and/or
 - b) Put his hand on Colleague D’s waist.
 - 1.5.2 Made comments to the effect of:
 - a) Suggesting Colleague D should accompany him on her own to a bar; and/or
 - b) Commenting on how Colleague D smelt; and/or

- c) Asking about Colleague D's relationship status and/or that she was too pretty to be single; and/or
- d) Commenting on Colleague D's eyes, describing them as nice and/or beautiful; and/or
- e) Referencing what he would do to/for Colleague D's eyes.

By his conduct in allegations 1.1 to 1.5, Mr Shaw committed an act or acts of such a nature that, in the opinion of the SRA, it would be undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice in accordance with section 43(1) of the Solicitors Act 1974 ("the Act").

2. Mr Shaw's conduct in allegations 1.3 and/or 1.4 and/or 1.5 was sexual in nature and/or in relation to allegations 1.3.2 and/or 1.5.1 and/or 1.5.2(b) to (e) was sexually motivated. This was alleged as an aggravating feature of his conduct, but it was not an essential feature in proving the allegations.
3. Mr Shaw's conduct in allegations 1.1 and/or 1.2 and/or 1.3 and/or 1.4 and/or 1.5 was an abuse of his position. This was alleged as an aggravating feature of his conduct, but it was not an essential feature in proving the allegations.
4. Mr Shaw's conduct in allegations 1.2 and/or 1.3 and/or 1.4 and/or 1.5 was tantamount to harassment. This was alleged as an aggravating feature of his conduct, but it was not an essential feature in proving the allegations.

Executive Summary

5. The case arose from the actions of Mr Shaw at and following the Firm's annual conference in October 2022. Mr Shaw was, at that time, employed by the Firm in a senior role. It was alleged that Mr Shaw made inappropriate comments and engaged in unwanted physical contact with a number of colleagues, mostly much younger and more junior than he was. It was the Applicant's case that some, but not all, of these interactions were sexual in nature and sexually motivated. The undisputed evidence of those affected was that they suffered distress as a result of the alleged conduct.
6. The conduct in question took place on one evening only, but it was repetitive and persistent in the sense that it involved a number of colleagues on separate occasions during that evening. Mr Shaw did not engage with the proceedings and did not dispute the factual allegations. The Tribunal found the allegations to be proved.
7. The Tribunal found Mr Shaw's conduct damaged the reputation of the profession. It noted that Mr Shaw had not apologised or shown remorse in any meaningful way. The Tribunal therefore considered that there was a risk of him acting in the same way again.
8. The Tribunal was satisfied that a Section 43 Order was necessary, as it was undesirable for Mr Shaw to be involved in legal practice without the prior consent of the SRA. The order under Section 43 was not a prohibition on Mr Shaw being involved in legal practice; it simply required the prior consent of the SRA.

The Tribunals findings can be accessed here:

- [Allegations 1.1 – 1.5](#)

The Tribunals reasoning on sanction can be accessed here:

- [Sanction](#)

Preliminary Matters

9. Application to proceed in the absence of the Respondent

- 9.1 Mr Griffiths applied to proceed in the absence of Mr Shaw, who did not attend the hearing and was not represented. The Tribunal was referred to the correspondence sent by the Applicant to Mr Shaw. It was plain that Mr Shaw had been served with the proceedings in accordance with Rule 44 of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 (“the Rules”); on 8 January 2026 (the date of a Case Management Hearing) Mr Shaw emailed the Tribunal stating, amongst other things, that he would not be attending that hearing.
- 9.2 Further, correspondence had been sent to Mr Shaw detailing the hearing, which had been signed for by him.
- 9.3 Pursuant to Rule 36 of the Rules, the Tribunal had the power to proceed in Mr Shaw’s absence and determine the application. Mr Griffiths referred the Tribunal to *R v Jones [2002] UKHL 5* and *GMC v Adeogba [2016] EWCA Civ 162* as to the factors that should be taken into account when determining whether to proceed in the absence of a Respondent. Mr Shaw, it was submitted, had chosen not to attend the proceedings. Mr Griffiths submitted that adjourning the proceedings would be of no benefit, and that it was in the public interest to proceed.
- 9.4 The Tribunal was satisfied that Mr Shaw had been served with notice of the hearing in accordance with its Rules. That he was aware of the proceedings was plain from his email of 8 January 2026. The Tribunal had regard to the principles in *Jones* and *Adeogba*. The Tribunal was satisfied that in this instance Mr Shaw had chosen voluntarily to absent himself from the hearing. It was in the public interest and in the interests of justice that this case should be heard and determined as promptly as possible. There was nothing to indicate that Mr Shaw would attend or engage with the proceedings if the case were adjourned. In the light of these circumstances, it was just to proceed with the case, notwithstanding Mr Shaw’s absence.

10. Application to amend the Rule 12 Statement

- 10.1 Mr Griffiths applied to remove the words “*and/or manager*” from paragraph 1 of the Rule 12 Statement and the words “*and/or was a manager of*” from paragraph 12 of the Rule 12 Statement. Section 207 of the Legal Services Act defined a manager as a member, partner, or director. Whilst Mr Shaw might have been a manager in general terms, he did not satisfy the defined term. Accordingly, the Tribunal had no jurisdiction to deal with the matter on the basis that Mr Shaw was a manager as defined.

- 10.2 The removal of the words did not affect or alter the meaning of the allegations and thus, it was submitted by Mr Griffiths, the deletion of those words caused no prejudice to Mr Shaw. It was submitted by him that it was in the interests of justice for the pleadings to be accurate and to reflect the proper legal basis upon which the allegations were brought.
- 10.3 Mr Griffiths also applied to amend Paragraphs 34 and 43, where the reference to Colleague and or Person A ought to have been to Colleague and or Person B. That this was the case was clear from the context of the paragraphs and did not alter the case Mr Shaw faced.
- 10.4 The Tribunal was satisfied that it should allow the amendments and deletions requested. There was no prejudice to Mr Shaw in allowing the application as there was no change to the case that he faced. Further, it was important to ensure that the pleadings accurately reflected the legal basis upon which allegations were brought. Accordingly, the Tribunal granted the application.

Documents

11. The Tribunal reviewed all the documents submitted by the parties, which included (but was not limited to):
- Rule 12 Statement and Exhibit DG1 dated 16 July 2026
 - Applicant's schedule of costs dated 4 May 2026

Professional Details

12. Mr Shaw was a Chartered Legal Executive, regulated and authorised by the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives. At the material time, he was an employee of the Firm (which was a Recognised Body) as its Head of Financial Products. The Tribunal had jurisdiction pursuant to Section 43 of the Act to exercise control over those involved in legal practice but were not solicitors.

Jurisdiction

13. Section 43(1A) of the Act stated that a person was involved in a legal practice for the purposes of that section if the person:
- “(a) is employed or remunerated by a solicitor in connection with the solicitor’s practice.*
 - (b) is undertaking work in the name of, or under the direction or supervision of, a solicitor.*
 - (c) is employed or remunerated by a recognised body.*
 - (d) is employed or remunerated by a manager or employee of a recognised body in connection with that body’s business.*
 - (e) is a manager of a recognised body.*
 - (f) has or intends to acquire an interest in such a body.”*

- 13.1 Mr Shaw was employed by the Firm. The Tribunal was therefore satisfied it had jurisdiction under section 43.

Background

14. On 11 November 2022, the Firm reported to the SRA that Mr Shaw had acted inappropriately towards female members of staff during and after its annual conference. The Firm appointed Gowling WLG (“Gowling”) to investigate the matters. Gowling interviewed staff members and Mr Shaw. Following the production of Gowling’s findings in a report, the Firm held a disciplinary hearing. The Firm found that Mr Shaw’s conduct constituted (individually and/or collectively):
- Inappropriate behaviour towards junior female employees by a senior manager.
 - Potential acts of harassment as defined by the Firm’s Dignity at Work policy and in breach of its Equal Opportunities Policy.
 - Potential acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment; and
 - Amounted to misconduct under the Firm’s Disciplinary Procedure Policy (“the DPP”).
15. The Firm imposed a first (and final) written warning. It also imposed the following conditions on Mr Shaw:
- No alcohol consumption by the Respondent at work/at work events.
 - No physical attendance at the Firm’s offices and/or events outside of Manchester without prior written approval; and
 - Functional and hierarchical isolation from female staff in offices other than Manchester.

Witnesses

16. None

Findings of Fact and Law

17. 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 Shaw’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.

The Allegations

18. In summary, it was the Applicant’s case that Mr Shaw engaged in inappropriate and unwanted behaviours towards Colleagues A to E at and following the Conference. Each

of Colleagues A to E were junior members of staff at the Firm, whereas Mr Shaw was manager of the Manchester Office and Head of Product at the Firm.

Factual Background

19. The annual conference was a Firm wide, all-day event with a drinks reception and dinner in the evening. Mr Shaw was involved in presentations and speeches during the event. The evening included a raffle of which one of the prizes was a “Virgin Experience Day.”
20. When the Virgin Experience Day was announced, Mr Shaw made a comment about spending and/or winning a night with Person A. Person B stated that the comment implied Colleague A was a “virgin” and that the winner could take her virginity; it was said loudly in a tone suggesting it was a joke. Mr Shaw repeated the comment shortly afterwards (“*I didn’t realise you could win a night with [Person A]*”).
21. After dinner, attendees socialised with a band and DJ, with some dancing. Colleague E said Mr Shaw was on the dancefloor pulling female staff to dance, holding their hands, or pulling them by the waist; he danced with multiple women, some of whom appeared uncomfortable and tried to pull away.
22. Colleague E stated that later in the evening, Mr Shaw approached her while she was seated in her wheelchair, took her hands uninvited and tried to pull/move her onto the dancefloor; he moved the wheelchair onto the sloped edge by its wheels/push rims, positioning his hands either side of her and controlling the chair so she could not move away. Colleague D witnessed this and perceived Colleague E to be uncomfortable.
23. Colleague E stated that Mr Shaw later approached again, held her hands and tried to move her wheelchair; she repeatedly said she did not want to dance and said “*no,*” but he replied with words to the effect of “*oh stop, you’re teasing me*” while continuing to hold her hands.
24. Person B said Mr Shaw approached her while she was wearing a hat, adjusted it to show more of her face, saying “*come on, come on ... you should wear it like this. You’ve got a great face; you’ve got a great name. Are those your eyes?*” Person B stated that she consciously did not look at him and she moved away.
25. Colleague D stated that Mr Shaw approached her “*uninvited and out of nowhere,*” leaned close to her ear and said words to the effect of “*do you want to come to the bar alone with me?*” in a way that only Colleague D could hear.
26. The evening ended at about midnight and around 10–15 attendees (including Mr Shaw) went to a bar in Manchester. Colleague B stated that at the bar, Mr Shaw approached her uninvited, leaned in to speak and said words to the effect of “*has anyone ever told you you’re beautiful, gorgeous, really attractive?*”
27. Colleague D stated that Mr Shaw came to her table, moved close, put his arm around her back, and placed his hand on or near her waist without invitation. He then remarked “*you smell like coconuts*” and asked if she was married or single, adding she was “*too pretty to be single;*” she felt he was sufficiently close to be “*violating her private*

space.” Mr Shaw made further comments including “*you have really nice eyes*” and “*oh what I’d do to you with those eyes,*” which she understood as sexual/intimate. As Colleague D moved away, she felt Mr Shaw’s hand on her waist drop to on/near her lower back for a few seconds in what she described as a “*stroke*” motion.

28. Colleague C stated that when asked to dance by Mr Shaw, she initially agreed. However, when she tried to walk away, he held her and prevented her leaving. Mr Shaw put his hands on her waist and pulled her to him, whispering words to the effect of “*I haven’t finished yet, I’m just taking a sip of my drink.*” Mr Shaw then moved his hand to the front of her stomach and/or the top of her leg in a motion akin to rubbing. A colleague intervened and pulled Colleague C away from Mr Shaw.

The Applicant’s Case

29. Mr Griffiths submitted that as regards allegations 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5, Mr Shaw’s conduct was either sexual by its nature, or was sexual due to the circumstances together with the nature of Mr Shaw’s actions.
30. *Basson v GMC [2018] EWHC 505 (Admin)*, Mostyn J defined sexual motivation as conduct which was done either in pursuit of sexual gratification or in pursuit of a future sexual relationship.
31. Mr Griffiths submitted that Mr Shaw’s conduct with regard to (i) allegation 1.3.2, (ii) allegation 1.4, (iii) allegation 1.5.1 and (iv) allegation 1.5.2(b) – (e) was sexually motivated. Sexual motivation was evidenced by:
- The nature of Mr Shaw’s actions in making physical contact with Colleague C and/or Colleague D.
 - Making comments regarding Colleague B’s and/or Colleague D’s physical attributes, appearance, attractiveness, and/or relationship status.
 - The context to his behaviour, whereby his actions amounted to propositions, overtures or advances seeking to elicit positive responses of a romantic and/or sexual nature from Colleague B and/or Colleague C and/or Colleague D.
32. Mr Griffiths submitted that Mr Shaw’s conduct in relation to all allegations amounted to an abuse of his position. Mr Shaw knew (or ought to have known) that he held a position of seniority and authority in respect of these colleagues and, as such, that he was required to behave professionally and maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times. Instead, he used his position to engage in behaviour and pursue a course of conduct that was highly inappropriate.
33. He submitted that his conduct also amounted to harassment. Section 26 of the Equality Act 2010 defined harassment as occurring where:
- A person engages in unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which includes sex and/or disability; and

- The conduct has the purpose or effect of either violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.
34. Mr Griffiths submitted that Mr Shaw’s conduct with regard to allegations 1.2 – 1.5 was unwanted, related to gender and/or disability and had the effect of either violating the dignity of the colleagues in question or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them, whether or not that was his purpose.
35. Further, Mr Shaw’s conduct with regard to allegations 1.3 – 1.4 also amounted to sexual harassment for the purposes of the section 26.2 of the Equality Act 2010 on the basis that it was unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance advised that the word ‘unwanted’ meant the same, essentially, as ‘unwelcome’ or ‘uninvited.’ No express objection was required for conduct to be deemed unwanted.
36. Mr Griffiths submitted that Mr Shaw’s conduct fell below the standard expected of an individual involved in legal practice for the following reasons:
- Mr Shaw was a senior figure in the Firm, with a prominent role at the annual conference. Colleagues A to E were junior employees, creating a power imbalance.
 - The alleged misconduct was closely connected to Mr Shaw’s managerial role: it involved junior colleagues and occurred during and after a work event.
 - Mr Shaw used his seniority to initiate contact in circumstances where Colleagues B to E found it difficult to object and/or where he did not desist, for example:
 - Colleague E said that when Mr Shaw attempted to move her wheelchair for a second time, she repeatedly told him to stop. She also said she did not want to jeopardise her career because *“he’s a partner within the Manchester team”* and she had just joined the company.
 - Colleague C said she did not speak up at the time because of Mr Shaw’s senior management role and the prospect of working with him in future.
 - Mr Shaw engaged in unwanted and/or uninvited physical contact with Colleague C and/or Colleague D, which was inappropriate in a professional context.
 - Mr Shaw’s actions risked causing offence, embarrassment, and/or discomfort to colleagues, for example:
 - With regard to allegation 1.1, the comment alluded to Colleague A’s sex life, had sexual connotations, and was potentially demeaning and embarrassing when made in front of colleagues. Colleague B said she felt *“incredibly uncomfortable”* about the comment.
 - Colleague B said, regarding Mr Shaw’s conduct alleged at allegation 1.3.1, that she did not want to engage and felt cautious and uncomfortable. Regarding allegation 1.3.2, she said she was *“shocked,” “wanted to cry,”*

and did not understand why an older senior colleague was speaking to her that way in a club; she walked away and felt “*very, very uncomfortable.*”

- Colleague C said she felt “*violated*” and “*uncomfortable.*”
 - Colleague D said the conduct alleged at allegation 1.5.2(a) made her feel “*awkward*” and caused “*frustration and disgust;*” she regarded it as inappropriate from a person in power and felt he was abusing his senior position.
 - Colleague D said she was made uncomfortable when Mr Shaw placed his hand on her.
 - Colleague D described the conduct at allegation 1.5.2(b)–(e) as “*weird and unprofessional,*” said Mr Shaw was “*violating [her] personal space,*” and that she felt “*angry,*” “*uncomfortable and uneasy*” and “*vulnerable,*” and that he showed “*no respect*” to her as a woman and colleague. She added that “*sexual verbal communication is enough to trigger emotions of anger, disgust, and vulnerability.*”
 - Colleague E said she felt uncomfortable and vulnerable because Mr Shaw controlled her wheelchair, removing her autonomy and leaving her unable to move away.
- Mr Shaw failed to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with multiple individuals.
37. Mr Griffiths submitted that, taken together, the conduct was sexual in nature and/or sexually motivated and/or an abuse of position and/or tantamount to harassment, involving more than one individual and showing a pattern of behaviour. It also amounted to sexual misconduct.
38. A manager acting appropriately would maintain professional boundaries, stop when asked, and treat junior colleagues with respect. Employees in regulated firms should feel safe and respected at work and work events, not offended, uncomfortable, vulnerable, or intimidated. Accordingly, considering the allegations individually and cumulatively, Mr Griffiths submitted that it was undesirable for Mr Shaw to be involved in legal practice without the SRA’s prior approval.

The Tribunal’s Findings

39. The Tribunal found the unchallenged facts proved on the balance of probabilities. The Tribunal then considered whether those factual findings meant that it was appropriate to impose a Section 43 Order, such that Mr Shaw could only be involved in legal practice with prior approval from the SRA.
40. Having found the allegations proved, the Tribunal was satisfied that Mr Shaw’s misconduct was serious and wholly inconsistent with the standards expected of an individual involved in legal practice. The misconduct occurred in the context of a firm-

wide work event and post-event socialising, where Mr Shaw held a senior position and was perceived as having authority over junior colleagues.

41. The proven misconduct involved unwanted and inappropriate sexualised remarks and/or advances, and unwanted physical contact and coercive behaviour, directed at more than one colleague. It included behaviour towards a wheelchair user which restricted her autonomy and ability to move away. The Tribunal accepted that Mr Shaw did not desist when objections were made or when discomfort was apparent, and that the power imbalance made it more difficult for junior colleagues to challenge his behaviour at the time. Accordingly, the Tribunal was satisfied that Mr Shaw's misconduct was in some respects sexually motivated as alleged.
42. Viewed cumulatively, the Tribunal considered the conduct to demonstrate a failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries, an abuse of seniority, and behaviour apt to cause offence, humiliation, and distress. Such misconduct undermined public trust in those working within regulated legal services and was liable to diminish confidence in the profession. The Tribunal was satisfied that Mr Shaw's conduct amounted to an abuse of his position and harassment as alleged.
43. The Tribunal therefore found that it was undesirable for Mr Shaw to be involved in legal practice without the prior consent of the Solicitors Regulation Authority.
44. For the avoidance of doubt, whilst there were matters detailed in the papers relating to other instances of where it was alleged that Mr Shaw had behaved inappropriately, those matters were not considered by the Tribunal and did not contribute to the Tribunal's findings.

Previous Disciplinary Matters

45. None

Mitigation

46. None

Sanction

47. The Tribunal had regard to the Guidance Note on Sanctions (11th Edition – February 2025). The Tribunal's overriding objective, when considering sanction, was the need to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the profession. In determining sanction, it was the Tribunal's role to assess the seriousness of the proven misconduct and to impose a sanction that was fair and proportionate in all the circumstances.
48. In an email dated 8 January 2026, Mr Shaw stated (amongst other things):

"I maintain that I never set out to cause harm or distress to anyone, it is not in my DNA, never has been or will. I tried everything I could to make the Manchester office summit a success, almost single handedly managing circa. 100 people at an event. The fact that there was a corral of people in Birmingham office encouraging each other to make wild assertions without evidence after the event,

as witnessed by the Chief Operating Officer, and me being reassured by the COO & Managing Partner that this was a “process to be followed” because the management team were in attendance at the event and saw no issues. The phone call I received from the COO stating I was required to speak with Gowlings immediately, I was ambushed and the process was flawed. My employer saw no reason for me to be dismissed, and I remained with the firm; CILEX saw no case to be pursued but The SRA believed there was an investigation. Everything was settled with my employer and CILEX - my regulator - The SRA referral was a “paper exercise” and the compliance officer at Keller Postman reached out to apologise because this was not the firm's intention or requirements. It simply should have been noted ...” (The Tribunal's emphasis).

49. Given the views expressed, the Tribunal was particularly concerned about the future risk of misconduct by Mr Shaw, who failed to recognise the seriousness of his misconduct. Given its findings that Mr Shaw's conduct was such that it was undesirable for him to be involved in legal practice without the prior consent of the SRA, the Tribunal determined that it was appropriate to make an order in the terms of Section 43(2) of the Act (as detailed below).

Costs

50. Mr Griffiths applied for costs in the sum of £31,950 comprised of:
- £2,250 SRA investigation/supervision costs
 - £24,400 + VAT costs for Blake Morgan
 - £350 + VAT Enquiry Agent fees
51. Mr Griffiths submitted that the SRA costs and those of the Enquiry Agent were reasonable, proportionate and should be recovered in full.
52. Blake Morgan's costs were a category 1 fixed fee. This was the lowest fixed fee on their scale according to Mr Griffiths. It was acknowledged by him, however, that the Tribunal was not bound by the contractual arrangement between the SRA and Blake Morgan and that the Tribunal would award costs that it considered to be reasonable and properly incurred. The schedule of costs included a breakdown of the hours spent in the preparation and presentation of the case. Dividing the fixed fee by the time spent gave a nominal hourly rate of £301 according to Mr Griffiths. The civil guideline hourly rate was £295. Mr Griffiths submitted that the actual time spent was reasonable and that the nominal hourly rate was also reasonable. Accordingly, the Tribunal should award costs in the amount claimed.
53. The Tribunal was satisfied that the SRA costs and those of the Enquiry Agent were reasonably incurred and should be recovered in full. The Tribunal was not satisfied that the fixed fee was reasonable and proportionate taking into account the few issues to be determined given that the facts were not ultimately in dispute, the small number of documents to be considered and the work already undertaken by the law firm who had investigated the incidents in question for the firm, the result of which investigation were available to the SRA and should have saved them time. The Tribunal also considered

that there was duplication of work in the preparation for the hearing case, which had in the event taken less than the time estimate on which the SRA's schedule of costs was based. The Tribunal determined that costs in the sum of £15,000 + VAT was reasonable and proportionate for the preparation and presentation of the case by Blake Morgan. Mr Shaw had not provided any evidence of his means and so no further reduction was applied to the costs awarded. Accordingly, the Tribunal ordered that Mr Shaw pay costs in the sum of £20,670.00.

Statement of Full Order

54. The Tribunal ORDERS that as from 12 May 2026 except in accordance with Law Society permission: -

- (i) no solicitor shall employ or remunerate, in connection with his practice as a solicitor Darren Shaw of 1 Albany Road, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 1NA.
- (ii) no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate, in connection with the solicitor's practice the said Darren Shaw;
- (iii) no recognised body shall employ or remunerate the said Darren Shaw;
- (iv) no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate the said Darren Shaw in connection with the business of that body.
- (v) no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit the said Darren Shaw to Darren Shaw be a manager of the body.
- (vi) no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit the said Darren Shaw to have an interest in the body.

And the Tribunal further Orders that the said Darren Shaw do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £20,670.00.

Dated this 19th day of May 2026

On behalf of the Tribunal

A Horrocks

A Horrocks
Chair