

SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12919-2026

BETWEEN:

KULWANT SINGH MANAK

Applicant

and

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Respondent

Before:

Mr J Abramson (in the chair)

Mr J Johnston

Ms J Rowe

Date of Hearing: 13 August 2026

Appearances

The Applicant represented himself.

Charlotte Elves, Counsel of Outer Temple Chambers, The Outer Temple, 222 Strand, London, WC2R 1BA for the Respondent.

JUDGMENT ON AN APPLICATION TO REMOVE CONDITIONS

Background

1. The Applicant was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors on 15 February 1993.
2. At the time of the conduct which gave rise to the allegations relevant to this application, the Applicant was practising as a solicitor at Heer Manak Solicitors (“the Firm”) in Coventry, where he was a manager and owner. He held the position of Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (“COLP”) from 27 September 2013 until the Firm’s closure on 29 December 2013.
3. The Applicant was responsible for the supervision of an assistant solicitor, Mr Chahal, and for the supervision of Rajbinder Dhillon (“Miss Dhillon”). Miss Dhillon was initially a trainee solicitor at the Firm and, following qualification, continued to work there as an assistant solicitor. Her parents, Mr and Mrs Dhillon, were clients of the Firm.
4. The background to the Tribunal proceedings in 2017 and 2018, which resulted in the practising restrictions now under consideration, concerned three areas of the Applicant’s work as a solicitor.
5. First, it was alleged that the Applicant had failed adequately to supervise Mr Chahal. There were irregularities in a number of conveyancing transactions undertaken by Mr Chahal which, it was alleged, would not have occurred had the Applicant properly discharged his supervisory responsibilities.
6. Secondly, it was alleged that there had been an irregularity in relation to a conveyancing transaction undertaken by the Applicant on behalf of Mr Chahal.
7. Thirdly, allegations of dishonesty, impropriety and misconduct were made against both the Applicant and Miss Dhillon in relation to a number of transactions concerning Mr and Mrs Dhillon.
8. In early 2007, Mr and Mrs Dhillon remortgaged their home to fund the purchase of another property (“the High Street property”). The Firm was instructed in relation to the purchase, with Miss Dhillon having conduct of the matter and the Applicant supervising her work. The mortgage advance of £150,000 was received into the Firm’s client account in February 2007, but completion of the purchase was delayed.
9. Between February 2007 and August 2009, a number of payments were made from the mortgage advance. These included payments to Mr Dhillon, a payment to Miss Dhillon, a series of private loans to other clients of the Firm, and a loan of £60,000 to the Firm.
10. Mr and Mrs Dhillon asserted that they had no knowledge of, and had not authorised, those loans. The Applicant’s case was that Mr and Mrs Dhillon had authorised the loans or, alternatively, that he believed that they had done so. His position was that Miss Dhillon had conduct of her parents’ legal matters and that he had no reason to suspect any wrongdoing. Miss Dhillon’s position was also that her parents were aware of and had authorised the loans.
11. Mr Dhillon was provided with a document purporting to be an official copy of the register issued by HM Land Registry, which stated that Mr and Mrs Dhillon had become

the owners of the High Street property with effect from 20 September 2007. It was accepted by all parties that the document was a forgery. Mr Dhillon asserted that the Applicant had provided the document to him. The Applicant denied doing so. Examination of Miss Dhillon's work computer provided evidence that the document had been created by her.

12. Mr and Mrs Dhillon took up occupation of the High Street property in 2007 or 2008, although they were not in fact its owners. Correspondence between the Firm and the seller's solicitor proposed that Mr Dhillon should enter into an Assured Shorthold Tenancy ("AST") as an interim measure. The AST was dated 25 May 2010 and was signed by Miss Dhillon. Mr and Mrs Dhillon asserted that they were unaware of the AST and had not authorised Miss Dhillon to sign it on their behalf.
13. Ultimately, completion of the purchase did not take place, and Mr Dhillon forfeited his deposit of £32,000 to the seller. The SRA commenced its investigation in 2009.
14. The hearing before the Tribunal which resulted in the practising restrictions commenced in April 2017 and took place over 18 days in April, August, and November 2017. On 12 January 2018, the Tribunal delivered its judgment and found the following allegations proved against the Applicant:
 - (i) that he caused or permitted monies to be withdrawn from client account contrary to Rule 23 of the Solicitors' Accounts Rules 1998 ("SAR 1998").
 - (ii) that, on discovering a cash shortage, he failed promptly to remedy the breach of Rule 22, contrary to Rule 7 of the SAR 1998, by failing to replace the money improperly withdrawn from client account.
 - (iii) that he obtained a loan from a client without insisting that the client take independent legal advice, providing any security or preparing legal documentation to record the loan, contrary to Principle 15 and Rules 1(a), (c) and (d) of the Solicitors' Practice Rules 1990 ("SPR 1990") and/or, where the conduct occurred after 1 July 2007, Rules 1.02, 1.04, 1.06 and 3.01 of the Solicitors' Code of Conduct 2007 ("SCC 2007").
 - (iv) that he failed to comply with Rule 30 of the SAR 1998.
 - (v) that he failed promptly to return client monies to clients contrary to Rule 15 of the SAR 1998.
 - (vi) that he failed adequately, or at all, to supervise the work undertaken by staff contrary to Rule 13 of the SPR 1990 and/or, where the conduct occurred after 1 July 2007, Rule 5 of the SCC 2007.
 - (vii) that he acted recklessly by allowing the client account to be operated in breach of the rules, knowingly taking the risk, that client money could be misused; and
 - (viii) that he acted without integrity and in a way likely to diminish the trust placed in him and the legal profession by the public. The Tribunal found that his conduct

demonstrated a reckless disregard for the Solicitors' Accounts Rules and therefore lacked integrity.

15. On 12 January 2018, the Tribunal suspended the Applicant from practice as a solicitor for a fixed period of two years, commencing on 15 November 2017. The Tribunal ordered that, upon expiry of the fixed period of suspension, the Applicant's practising certificate would be subject to the following restrictions:
 - (i) the Applicant might not practise as a sole practitioner, or as the sole manager or sole owner of an authorised or recognised body.
 - (ii) the Applicant might not be a partner or member of a Limited Liability Partnership ("LLP"), Legal Disciplinary Practice ("LDP"), Alternative Business Structure ("ABS") or other authorised or recognised body.
 - (iii) the Applicant might not be a Compliance Officer for Legal Practice ("COLP") or Compliance Officer for Finance and Administration ("COFA").
 - (iv) the Applicant might not hold client money.
 - (v) the Applicant might not be a signatory on any client account; and
 - (vi) the Applicant might not work as a solicitor other than in employment approved by the SRA.
16. The restrictions were imposed indefinitely.
17. By a Notice of Appeal dated 1 February 2018, the Applicant appealed the Tribunal's decision. By an Order dated 31 July 2018, the High Court quashed restrictions (iv) to (vi). The High Court held that the Tribunal had erred in law by imposing such substantial restrictions without providing reasons explaining why each restriction was necessary and appropriate and without giving the Applicant an opportunity to make representations before the restrictions were imposed.
18. The restrictions which remained were therefore that the Applicant might not:
 - (i) practise as a sole practitioner, or as the sole manager or sole owner of an authorised or recognised body.
 - (ii) be a partner or member of an LLP, LDP, ABS or other authorised or recognised body; or
 - (iii) be a COLP or COFA of an authorised or recognised body.
19. On 18 November 2019, following the expiry of the period of suspension, the Applicant applied for a practising certificate for the 2019/2020 practising year. On 23 January 2020, an Authorisation Officer at the SRA decided to grant a practising certificate subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) Kulwant Manak was not to be the manager or owner of any authorised body.

- (ii) Kulwant Manak might not act as a COLP or COFA of any authorised body; and
 - (iii) Kulwant Manak might not practise on his own account under Regulation 10.2(a) and (b) of the SRA Authorisation of Individuals Regulations.
20. The Applicant was subsequently granted practising certificates subject to the same conditions for each of the practising years from 2020 to 2025. He has worked at Maya & Co Solicitors as a consultant solicitor since 2 January 2022.

The Applicant's Submissions

21. The Applicant applied pursuant to Rule 18 of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 ("SDPR 2019") for the removal of the practising restrictions imposed following proceedings before the Tribunal in 2017. The Applicant stated that he had made the application at the direction of the Respondent, which had advised him that an application to the Tribunal was the appropriate procedure by which he could seek the removal of the practising restrictions.
22. The Applicant emphasised that he did not seek to challenge the Tribunal's original decision or to relitigate its findings. He accepted that he had misjudged the circumstances which had given rise to the proceedings and that greater diligence had been required. He described those circumstances as exceptional and isolated, arising from a matter involving a client and the client's daughter, who worked at his firm. He rejected any suggestion that he lacked remorse or insight. His grievance was directed instead to the continued operation of the practising restrictions, which he submitted no longer served any proper regulatory purpose and had become punitive in their practical effect.
23. The Applicant advanced three principal challenges to the Respondent's position. First, he disputed that the burden rested upon him to establish that the conditions were no longer necessary. He submitted that the relevant issue was whether their continued imposition remained necessary, reasonable, and proportionate. Applying the evidential maxim that he who asserts must prove, he contended that it was for the Respondent, as the party asserting the continuing necessity of the conditions, to justify their retention. Although he accepted his obligation to cooperate with the process and to provide appropriate assistance, he submitted that this did not relieve the Respondent of that burden. He observed that the Respondent had identified no authority establishing that the burden lay upon him in the manner asserted.
24. Secondly, the Applicant submitted that, if the burden did rest upon him, the evidential threshold advanced by the Respondent was unrealistically high. The practising restrictions themselves prevented him from acting as a manager or owner of a firm, or from undertaking the management, ownership, or compliance functions to which the restrictions related. Although the Applicant practised as a consultant and exercised a degree of supervision over junior colleagues in his current role, he had not undertaken the management of a firm or its accounts since the closure of his former firm. He had therefore not been afforded an opportunity to demonstrate through practical experience that he could now discharge those functions safely and appropriately. The Respondent was said to be requiring evidence which, by reason of the practising restrictions, he could not realistically obtain.

25. Thirdly, the Applicant relied upon the passage of time and the absence of any further complaint. The relevant incidents had occurred between 2007 and 2011. He had managed his firm from 1997 until 2007 without difficulty, and he said that there had been no further complaint after 2011. Following the expiry of his suspension and his return to practice as a consultant solicitor in 2019, the Applicant submitted that he had practised without any identifiable regulatory concern arising. This practising record was said to provide evidence that the risk which had originally justified the practising restrictions had abated.
26. The Applicant also relied upon his professional history following the closure of his former firm in December 2013. He explained that the firm had closed because the cost of obtaining professional indemnity insurance made its continued operation impracticable. He submitted that, notwithstanding the circumstances, he had been permitted to manage the closure of the firm, including the closure and transfer of files, the accounts, and the necessary reconciliations. He contended that this experience was relevant to the Respondent's submission that there was insufficient evidence of his ability to manage or operate a practice safely.
27. The Applicant further submitted that the High Court had not intended the practising restrictions to operate indefinitely. He relied upon the High Court's statement that the restrictions should not operate as an indefinite penalty and that any future variation should be considered upon a proper application. The Applicant queried how long the Respondent considered that the restrictions should remain in place and what evidence would be sufficient to secure their removal. In the absence of any identified threshold or guidance, he submitted that he had been left in a position of continuing uncertainty.
28. The Applicant emphasised that, were he in the future to seek authorisation to become a manager or owner of a firm, to practise as a sole practitioner, or to undertake a role such as COLP or COFA, he would remain subject to scrutiny by the Respondent. At that stage, the Respondent could require references, testimonials, business plans, and any other material it considered necessary; it could investigate the proposal, object to it, or impose appropriate conditions. The Applicant submitted that this constituted an adequate regulatory safeguard and rendered the indefinite continuation of the existing conditions unnecessary.
29. The Applicant maintained that the conditions had become punitive, embarrassing, and disproportionate in their practical effect. He relied upon examples contained in his application concerning Land Registry identity verification, the rejection of proposed commercial instructions and challenges to wills which he had prepared. These incidents were said to demonstrate that the publication of the practising restrictions had led others to draw adverse inferences about his competence, character, and professional standing.
30. In response to the Respondent's contention that these difficulties arose from the historic disciplinary findings rather than from the practising restrictions themselves, the Applicant submitted that this distinction was artificial. Those considering his position would first consult the Respondent's public record, where the restrictions were recorded, and would then be directed to the relevant decisions. He maintained that the continued publication of the restrictions materially contributed to the adverse treatment of which he complained.

31. The Applicant referred to ***Bryant v Solicitors Regulation Authority* [2012] EWHC 1475 (Admin)** ('**Bryant**') and the description of practising conditions as capable, in practical terms, of amounting to a "kiss of death". He accepted that his position was not identical to that in **Bryant**, where the solicitor had been unable to secure employment at all. He submitted, however, that the decision did not establish that complete exclusion from practice was a necessary threshold before conditions could be regarded as punitive or disproportionate. He maintained that the absence of guidance as to the applicable threshold remained a central difficulty.
32. As to rehabilitation, the Applicant relied upon training undertaken in 2024 concerning equality and diversity management and regulatory responsibilities, the SRA Code of Conduct, and MLRO and MLCO responsibilities. He also referred to subsequent in-house conveyancing training. He described the courses as both a refresher and a means of ensuring that he remained familiar with regulatory developments.
33. The Applicant submitted that the original proceedings and subsequent appeal had had a profound effect upon his approach to practice. He explained that he had learned that regulatory requirements must be followed without exception, that matters should not be taken for granted, and that client priorities could not override his professional obligations or compliance with the applicable rules. He emphasised the importance he now attached to regulatory requirements and relied upon this understanding as evidence of the practical insight he had gained.
34. The Applicant rejected the Respondent's criticism that the evidence of his training and rehabilitation was insufficient. He submitted that he had provided course certificates and a character reference and had indicated that further testimonials could be obtained. He argued that, if the Respondent considered additional evidence necessary, it could have requested it before opposing the application. He therefore regarded the Respondent's characterisation of the evidence as insufficient, without first seeking further information, as arbitrary and unreasonable.
35. The Applicant accepted that the absence of evidence from Maya & Co was an omission on his part. He said that supporting evidence from the firm could have been obtained and that there had been no attempt to evade scrutiny or mislead the Tribunal. He had believed that the information contained in his application was sufficient and had expected that any request for further evidence would have been communicated to him.
36. In relation to his current practice, the Applicant explained that he had worked as a consultant solicitor at Maya & Co since resuming practice. He undertook predominantly commercial lease, wills, and probate work. He attended the office on Mondays and Wednesdays for appointments and worked flexibly on other days as required. He described himself as semi-retired. The Applicant managed his own client matters, while the firm's administrative, accounting, and anti-money laundering processes were dealt with through its accounts department and its COLP and COFA arrangements. He did not have a management role within the firm. The principal retained ultimate responsibility and decision-making authority, although the Applicant was trusted to conduct and manage his own client work.
37. The Applicant also described his supervisory responsibilities within the commercial department. A junior solicitor and a trainee worked within the department, and he

reviewed their files to ensure that matters of title and legal substance were addressed correctly. He described this supervision as partly formal and partly informal. By reason of his seniority and experience, he was expected to oversee work on files for which he was responsible, although he received no separate remuneration for doing so.

38. The Applicant submitted that the guidance he gave to junior colleagues reflected the lessons he had learned from the original proceedings which including avoiding assumptions, checking requirements, and ensuring compliance with regulatory rules irrespective of any pressure from clients. The Applicant relied upon his current practice and supervisory responsibilities as further evidence that he had applied those lessons in practice.
39. The Applicant confirmed that he had no present intention of becoming an owner or manager of a firm, practising as a sole practitioner or assuming a formal compliance role. His application was not prompted by any immediate proposal to do so. Rather, it arose from his concern that the conditions had remained in place for an excessive period, had caused repeated embarrassment and criticism, and had become punitive in their effect.
40. The Applicant submitted that, if the conditions were removed, the Respondent would retain the ability to scrutinise any future application involving ownership, management, supervision, or compliance responsibilities. He therefore contended that the continued imposition and publication of the restrictions was unnecessary and disproportionate.
41. The Applicant maintained that the Respondent had failed to identify any current risk or demonstrate that the continued imposition of the conditions remained necessary, reasonable, or proportionate. He accordingly invited the Tribunal to remove them.

The Respondent's Submissions

42. The Respondent opposed the Applicant's application for the removal of the practising restrictions. Ms Elves, on behalf of the Respondent, emphasised that the practising restrictions under consideration had not been imposed administratively by the Respondent as conditions on a practising certificate, but had been imposed by the Tribunal and subsequently considered by the High Court. Three of the original restrictions remained in place and were the subject of the present application.
43. Ms Elves submitted that it was not necessary for the Respondent to justify afresh the original imposition of the conditions. Rather, the burden lay upon the Applicant, as the party seeking the removal of existing restrictions imposed by the Tribunal, to satisfy the Tribunal that they were no longer necessary. Ms Elves submitted that the Applicant had not discharged that burden, contending that the material before the Tribunal did not establish that the risks which had justified the original restrictions had abated, or that their removal would be consistent with the protection of the public or the maintenance of public confidence in the solicitors' profession.
44. The Respondent acknowledged that the Tribunal was required to consider whether the continued imposition of the conditions remained necessary in the public interest. It submitted that this involved two related considerations: first, whether there remained a continuing risk to the public; and secondly, whether removal of the practising

restrictions would have a deleterious effect upon public confidence in the profession. In addressing those considerations, the Respondent invited the Tribunal to have regard to the relevant factors identified in The Guidance Note on Other Powers¹ ('the Guidance Note'), including the seriousness of the original misconduct, any training undertaken, evidence of employment and supervision, evidence of genuine reform of character, the length of time since the original order, whether any risk to the public continued, and whether the public might have concerns about the propriety of removing the conditions.

45. As to the original misconduct, Ms Elves submitted that the underlying conduct was serious and included findings of a lack of integrity. She submitted that a significant part of the Applicant's application appeared to relitigate, or to invite the Tribunal to reinterpret, the findings made in the original disciplinary proceedings. Included within the material exhibited in support of the application were witness statements from the underlying proceedings. This was said to be relevant to the Tribunal's assessment of the Applicant's insight because an attempt to revisit the original findings was inconsistent with a clear acceptance of the seriousness of the misconduct.
46. In relation to the Applicant's contention that the practising restrictions had become punitive or disproportionate in their practical effect, the Respondent submitted that the evidence relied upon by the Applicant did not establish that the adverse consequences identified by him had arisen solely, or even materially, from the continued existence of the practising restrictions themselves. Of the three examples relied upon by the Applicant, namely the Land Registry correspondence, the rejection of commercial instructions and the challenge to the validity of a will, none was said to substantiate the case advanced in the application.
47. In relation to the Land Registry example, Ms Elves submitted that the correspondence did not amount to a refusal to accept the Applicant's verification of identity. Rather, the correspondence sought confirmation that the conditions attached to his practising certificate did not restrict his ability to provide the relevant verification or alternatively requested a fresh form. It was submitted that no further correspondence had been produced to demonstrate that, once that confirmation was provided, the matter did not proceed. The correspondence therefore did not establish the adverse inference alleged by the Applicant.
48. In relation to the commercial work, the Respondent submitted that the correspondence relied upon appeared to refer to adverse information and included a link to the High Court decision in the Applicant's case. Ms Elves maintained that this indicated that the difficulty arose, at least in part, from the existence of the disciplinary findings themselves, rather than from the conditions as such. Ms Elves made the same point in relation to the will dispute, submitting that the complaint referred to the sanction imposed by the Tribunal and reviewed by the High Court, rather than demonstrating that the conditions themselves had a separate punitive effect.
49. Ms Elves submitted that this distinction was material. The Respondent accepted that there may be cases in which conditions imposed upon a solicitor's practice have such a punitive or practically disabling effect that they require close scrutiny. It was submitted, however, that the Applicant's case was a considerable distance from the "kiss of death"

¹ 7th edition, February 2025.

circumstances considered in Bryant. In that case, the solicitor appeared unable to obtain employment because of the conditions imposed upon his practising certificate. By contrast, the Applicant remained in practice as a solicitor and was able to undertake commercial lease, wills, and probate work.

50. Ms Elves further submitted that Bryant recognised an important distinction between adverse consequences flowing from conditions and adverse consequences flowing from the historical fact of disciplinary findings. Even if the conditions were removed, a solicitor might continue to experience practical difficulties by reason of the disciplinary record itself. The Respondent considered that the Applicant's evidence fell into the latter category or at least did not establish that the consequences of which the Applicant complained were specifically attributable to the practising restrictions.
51. The Respondent's position was that the Applicant's evidence of rehabilitation and training was insufficient. Although the Applicant had described a number of steps taken to strengthen his professional competence, the documentary evidence was said to consist of three course certificates completed over two days in October 2024, relating to equality and diversity management, regulatory responsibilities, the SRA Code of Conduct, and MLRO and MLCO responsibilities. Ms Elves submitted that this could not properly be characterised as extensive. More importantly the Applicant had not explained what he had learned from the courses, how that learning would assist him in the future, or how the courses demonstrated that the risks previously identified had been effectively mitigated. Ms Elves submitted that, if relied upon as evidence of rehabilitation, those matters could have been addressed in the Applicant's witness statement.
52. In relation to supporting character references, the Applicant had indicated in his application that he could produce references from prominent and respected individuals, including professionals, community leaders, and those with whom he had worked. However, only one reference appeared to have been provided. That reference, dated 4 March 2026 and provided by Mr Manohar Singh, was said by Ms Elves to be of limited utility. It covered a broad period, apparently extending back to the time when the Applicant opened his firm, and therefore did not assist the Tribunal in assessing any trajectory of change between the imposition of the conditions and the present application. Ms Elves rejected the suggestion that it was for the Respondent to request further references. This was the Applicant's application, and it was for him to place before the Tribunal such evidence as he considered necessary to establish that the relief sought should be granted.
53. The Respondent cited the absence of evidence concerning the Applicant's present employment, supervision, and future intentions. There was no supporting evidence from his current firm explaining his role, the extent to which he undertook or wished to undertake supervisory or managerial functions, how any such functions were structured, by whom he was supervised, or how relevant risks were presently being managed. The Respondent regarded that omission as significant, particularly because the Applicant's alternative position appeared to contemplate a variation permitting him to hold supervisory or managerial roles subject to SRA approval.
54. If management or supervision was a material objective of the application, the Respondent submitted that the Tribunal would expect evidence addressing what such a

role would involve, what support would be available to the Applicant, what safeguards would be in place and what assessment the firm had made of the associated risks. Without that material, the Respondent submitted that the Tribunal could not be satisfied that the conditions were no longer necessary.

55. The Respondent also relied upon the contents of the application as relevant to the Applicant's insight. Although the Applicant stated that he did not seek to challenge the original findings, Ms Elves submitted that significant aspects of his case and supporting evidence appeared to invite the Tribunal to revisit or reinterpret those findings. She contended that this raised concerns as to whether the Applicant had fully accepted the findings and the seriousness of his conduct, which was relevant to the extent of his insight.
56. Drawing those matters together, Ms Elves submitted that the Tribunal could not be satisfied on the evidence that the public interest no longer required the practising restrictions to remain in place. The Respondent relied upon the seriousness of the original findings, the absence of persuasive evidence of rehabilitation, the limited nature of the training evidence, the absence of current workplace evidence and what it characterised as an attempt to revisit aspects of the underlying findings. Those matters were said to support the continuation of the practising restrictions. The Respondent's case was that the public would be entitled to have concerns about the removal of restrictions imposed following serious findings, including findings of lack of integrity, where the Applicant had not demonstrated by cogent evidence that the risks had abated.
57. The Respondent acknowledged that, if the Applicant were subsequently to seek approval for a management, ownership, or compliance role, it would have the opportunity to investigate the proposal and require further evidence. It nevertheless maintained that the existence of a separate regulatory approval process did not resolve the issue before the Tribunal. The restrictions were safeguards imposed by the Tribunal, and their removal required the Tribunal to be satisfied, on the evidence before it, that their removal was justified.
58. For those reasons, the Respondent submitted that the Applicant had failed to establish that the practising restrictions were no longer necessary, reasonable, or proportionate. It further submitted that the evidence did not demonstrate that the conditions, as distinct from the continuing consequences of the disciplinary findings themselves, operated as a punitive bar to practice. The Respondent maintained that the restrictions continued to serve a proper regulatory purpose and that their removal was not justified on the material before the Tribunal. It submitted that the Tribunal could not be satisfied that the public interest and confidence in the solicitors' profession would be adequately protected if the restrictions were removed. Accordingly, the Respondent invited the Tribunal to dismiss the application.

The Tribunal's Decision

59. The Tribunal had read all of the documents in the case and carefully considered the oral submissions made by the parties. The absence of any reference to particular evidence should not be taken as an indication that such evidence was not considered.

60. The Applicant submitted that the burden was upon the Respondent to justify the continued imposition of the restrictions. The Respondent submitted that the burden was upon the Applicant to demonstrate that the restrictions were no longer necessary.
61. Rule 18 of the SDPR 2019 provides for an application to vary or remove restrictions imposed by the Tribunal and requires such an application to be supported by a statement setting out the facts and matters relied upon in support of the application. Having regard to the nature of the application before it, the Tribunal was satisfied that it was for the Applicant to establish the basis upon which the restrictions should now be varied or removed. The Tribunal did not consider that this required the Applicant to reopen or relitigate the findings made in the original proceedings. The issue for determination was whether, on the evidence before it, there were sufficient grounds for varying or removing the restrictions.
62. In determining that issue, the Tribunal had regard to the need to protect the public and maintain public confidence in the profession. It also had regard, insofar as relevant, to the factors identified in the Guidance Note.
63. The Applicant submitted that the continuing restrictions were punitive in effect and had caused him difficulties in obtaining work. He relied, in particular, upon three pieces of correspondence. In relation to the first two documents, comprising correspondence from the Land Registry and correspondence concerning a dispute as to the validity of a will, the Tribunal did not consider that either established that the Applicant had lost work as a result of the restrictions. The Land Registry correspondence concerned a request for further confirmation, while the correspondence relating to the will evidenced a challenge based upon the Applicant's regulatory history. Neither document established that the restrictions themselves had caused the Applicant to lose instructions.
64. The third document was undated and referred to a High Court decision concerning the Applicant's appeal against the Tribunal's decision. That decision formed part of the Applicant's publicly available disciplinary record, irrespective of whether the practising restrictions remained in force. The Tribunal was therefore not satisfied that the rejection of the proposed instructions had resulted specifically from the continuing restrictions or that the document demonstrated that the restrictions were punitive in effect.
65. The Tribunal also considered the evidence concerning the Applicant's current practice. The Applicant told the Tribunal that he had resumed practice in 2019 and was currently working as a consultant solicitor at Maya & Co Solicitors. However, he had provided no documentary evidence confirming his position with the firm, nor any supporting evidence from the principal, another solicitor or employee of the firm, or a client. When asked about this omission, the Applicant explained that it had not occurred to him that such evidence would be relevant to his application.
66. The Tribunal noted that the Respondent had set out its opposition to the application in detail in its response dated 15 June 2026 and that the Applicant had responded on 30 June 2026. In those circumstances, the Tribunal was not persuaded that the Applicant had not appreciated the relevance of evidence concerning his current practice, his role within the firm and the circumstances in which he was practising. Such evidence

would have been directly relevant to the Tribunal's assessment of whether the practising restrictions continued to serve a necessary regulatory purpose.

67. Similarly, there was no clear evidence as to the Applicant's intentions regarding his future practice. In particular, the Tribunal had not been provided with cogent evidence as to whether the Applicant intended to remain in his current role, seek greater responsibility within the profession, or practise in a capacity that would engage the restrictions imposed upon him.
68. The Tribunal also considered the evidence concerning the Applicant's professional development and rehabilitation. The documentary evidence comprised certificates relating to three courses completed in October 2024. The certificates provided limited information about the content of the courses or the learning derived from them. In his oral evidence, the Applicant explained that the courses had served as a refresher and helped him remain familiar with regulatory developments. He also stated that the original proceedings had taught him that regulatory requirements must be followed without exception, a principle he conveyed to junior colleagues whose work he reviewed. The Tribunal took this evidence into account. However, it considered that the Applicant's explanation remained general and did not demonstrate with sufficient particularity how the training had addressed the risks arising from the original misconduct or how the lessons learned had been applied in practice. The Tribunal was therefore not satisfied that the certificates, considered alongside the Applicant's oral submissions, demonstrated that the concerns arising from the original misconduct had been adequately addressed.
69. The Tribunal also considered the character reference provided in support of the application. While supportive of the Applicant as a professional, the reference was general in its terms and provided little specific evidence of rehabilitation, the Applicant's development since the original proceedings, or the extent to which the matters giving rise to the restrictions had been addressed.
70. The Tribunal recognised that the Applicant had resumed practice following his suspension and that a significant period had elapsed since the misconduct which gave rise to the original proceedings. Those matters were relevant to the determination of the application. However, neither the passage of time nor the fact that the Applicant had continued to practise was, without more evidence, sufficient to establish that the restrictions were no longer necessary. The Tribunal considered that the application was supported by insufficient evidence concerning the Applicant's current position, including his role and responsibilities, professional development and insight, intentions regarding his future practice, and the extent to which the risks addressed by the original restrictions had been mitigated.
71. The Tribunal considered that the Applicant could have provided more substantial evidence in support of his application, including evidence which he had indicated was available or could be obtained. The application provided an opportunity for the Applicant to place such evidence before the Tribunal to demonstrate the extent of his professional development and rehabilitation and to address the matters relevant to the continued necessity of the restrictions.

72. In the absence of sufficient evidence, the Tribunal was not satisfied that the Applicant had established grounds for the restrictions to be varied or removed. In particular, it was not satisfied that their removal or variation would adequately protect the public or maintain public confidence in the profession.
73. The Tribunal therefore concluded that the practising restrictions should remain in place and dismissed the Applicant's application to vary or remove them.

Costs

74. The Respondent applied for its costs in the sum of £6,670.00 as set out in its Statement of Costs dated 4 August 2026. Ms Elves submitted that the costs were reasonable and proportionate. Ms Elves noted that the Applicant had not filed a Statement of Means and that there was no evidential basis upon which the Tribunal could take his means into account pursuant to Rule 43(5) of the SDPR 2019.
75. The Applicant opposed the application. He submitted that the Respondent had repeatedly informed him, when renewing his practising certificate, that the conditions had been imposed by the Tribunal and could be removed only by an application to the Tribunal. He contended that he had therefore had no practical alternative but to make the application and that it would be unfair to require him to pay the Respondent's costs of opposing it.
76. Ms Elves contested the Applicant's submission that the Respondent had directed him to bring the application and emphasised that it had been required to respond to the application as advanced. She further submitted that the Applicant was obliged to assess the merits of his case and the attendant risk as to costs.
77. The Tribunal considered the parties' submissions and the further documentation provided during its deliberations. It was not satisfied that the evidence demonstrated that the Respondent had directed the Applicant to bring the application.
78. The Tribunal was satisfied that the Respondent had been required to participate in the proceedings and that the costs claimed were reasonable and proportionate. Accordingly, the Tribunal ordered the Applicant to pay the Respondent's costs, fixed in the sum of £6,670.00.

Statement of Full Order

79. The Tribunal **ORDERS** that the application of Kulwant Singh Manak, solicitor, for the removal of the conditions imposed by the Tribunal on 12th January 2018 be **REFUSED** and it further Orders that the Applicant do pay the costs of the response of the Solicitors Regulation Authority Ltd to this application fixed in the sum of £6,670.00.

Dated this 23rd day of October 2026

On behalf of the Tribunal

J Abramson

J Abramson
Chair