

Mohammed Islam

Solicitor

455464

Fined Date: 21 August 2025

Decision - Fined

Outcome: Fine

Outcome date: 21 August 2025

Published date: 26 August 2025

Firm details

Firm or organisation at date of publication and at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Knightbridge Law Limited

Address(es): 128 Dickenson Road, Manchester, M14 5HT, England

Firm ID: 618578

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Agreed outcome

1.1 Mr Mohammed Mahbubul Islam, a solicitor and director of Knightbridge Law Limited (the Firm), agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of his conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA):

- a. That he is fined £6,190.
- b. To the publication of this agreement.
- c. That he will pay the costs of the investigation of £300.

Summary of Facts

2.1 Mr Islam is the director and the Compliance Officer for Finance and Administration (COFA) at the firm. Following a Qualified Accountant's Report (QAR), an on-site inspection of the firm identified several



breaches of the SRA Standards and Regulations arising from issues with the books of account.

Client account shortage

2.2 The firm had a pre-inspection client account shortage of £15,163.20 at 31 May 2023. This shortage had arisen as the result of several incidents occurring between 14 December 2021 and 12 May 2023 inclusive. Each of the incidents that gave rise to this shortage fell into one of the following categories:

- a. monies posted were banked into a different account, which was not a properly designated client account, in error.
- b. payments were made from the client ledgers to which the items were posted but the monies to enable this had not been received and were not expected to be so (for example due to duplicate postings or other entry error).

2.3 This client account shortage persisted until 28 June 2023, when the firm took remedial action to address the shortage. The shortage had thus been fully replaced prior to the forensic inspection being carried out. However, the firm had continued to transact using the client account prior to the shortage being rectified (i.e. while a client account shortage still existed).

Late client account reconciliations

2.4 Client account reconciliations were not completed in a timely manner:

- a. on 17 occasions between 31 December 2021 and 31 August 2023, the firm had failed to perform client account reconciliations as they fell due.
- b. between 28 February 2022 and 30 April 2023, 15 consecutive reconciliations had been performed late, with some having been performed over 12 months later than required.

Admissions

3.1 Mr Islam makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts:

- a. that, in his role as director and COFA, by:
 - i. failing to properly adhere to SRA Accounts Rules, giving rise to an increasing client account shortage which reached a total of £15,163.20 by 31 May 2023,
 - ii. continuing to transact using this same client account after a potential shortage had or should have been identified, and
 - iii. failing to rectify the relevant client account shortage until 28 June 2023.



as set out at paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above, he breached:

SRA Accounts Rules 2019

- **Rule 2.3** - You ensure that client money is paid promptly into a client account.
- **Rule 5.3** - You only withdraw client money from a client account if sufficient funds are held on behalf of that specific client or third party to make the payment.
- **Rule 6.1** - You correct any breaches of these rules promptly upon discovery. Any money improperly withheld or withdrawn from a client account must be immediately paid into the account or replaced as appropriate.
- **Rule 8.1(a)(i)** - You keep and maintain accurate, contemporaneous, and chronological records to record in client ledgers identified by the client's name and an appropriate description of the matter to which they relate all receipts and payments which are client money on the client side of the client ledger account.

SRA Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs

- Paragraph 4.2 - You safeguard money and assets entrusted to you by clients and others.
- b. That, in his role as director and COFA, by failing to complete timely reconciliations as set out at paragraph 2.4 above, he breached:
 - Rule 8.3 SRA Accounts Rules 2019: You complete at least every five weeks, for all client accounts held or operated by you, a reconciliation of the bank or building society statement balance with the cash book balance and the client ledger total, a record of which must be signed off by the COFA or a manager of the firm. You should promptly investigate and resolve any differences shown by the reconciliation.

Why a fine is an appropriate outcome

4.1 The SRA's Enforcement Strategy sets out its approach to the use of its enforcement powers where there has been a failure to meet its standards or requirements.

4.2 When considering the appropriate sanctions and controls in this matter, the SRA has considered the admissions made by Mr Islam and the following factors:

- a. There is no evidence to suggest that either Mr Islam or the firm have improperly financially benefitted as result of the identified conduct, or any evidence to suggest that client funds were misappropriated.
- b. Given that Mr Islam was directly and personally responsible, as COFA and the firm's sole director, for the relevant conduct breaches it is appropriate for the relevant penalty to be applied to Mr Islam personally, rather than to the firm.



4.3 The SRA considers that a fine is the appropriate outcome because:

- a. Mr Islam was the firm's COFA and director at the time of the relevant conduct and thus bears direct personal responsibility for the firm's compliance with the SRA Standards and Regulations relevant to the identified breaches.
- b. There is a pattern of repeated misconduct. Client account reconciliations were repeatedly not completed as they fell due. Similarly, the growing client account shortage arising between December 2021 and May 2023 was the result of repeated errors of a similar nature that went unrectified for a prolonged period.
- c. Mr Islam continued to transact using the client account experiencing a shortage well after the shortage was or should have been identified. He also did not properly rectify the relevant shortage, either in full or in part, until 28 June 2023. Accordingly, while appropriate remedial action was eventually taken, the conduct breaches continued longer than can be considered reasonable.
- d. In accordance with our warning notice on client account shortages, the growing client account shortage and lack of timely reconciliations impacted all clients of the firm, as all clients' monies were at risk until the underlying issues were finally resolved in June 2023. As such, this conduct posed a significant risk of harm to the interests of all the firm's clients.
- e. While there were delays to the client account reconciliations over a prolonged period, Mr Islam was alerted to the key issues giving rise to the initial client account shortage via account reconciliations close to the time they first arose. Accordingly, these issues should have been recognised as a risk and promptly investigated and resolved. Given that a client account shortage poses a potential risk to all of a firm's clients, as highlighted in our warning notice, it was thus reckless for Mr Islam to:
 - i. Continue to transact using a client account on which a shortage had arisen after that shortage had, or should have, been identified.
 - ii. Knowingly fail to ensure prompt client account reconciliations were conducted on this client account for a prolonged period, while knowing that a potential shortage had previously been identified and that client funds were at risk as a result.

4.4 In accordance with the SRA's Enforcement Strategy, these factors support that a financial penalty is the appropriate outcome for breaches of this nature. A financial penalty is also appropriate to maintain professional standards and uphold public confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons, as this will act as a credible deterrent to any repeat of such conduct by Mr Islam



and will reinforce to the wider profession and the public that the SRA considers breaches that put client funds at risk to be a serious matter. A financial penalty therefore meets the requirements of rule 4.1 of the Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedure Rules.

Amount of the fine

5.1 The amount of the fine has been calculated in line with the SRA's published guidance on its approach to setting an appropriate financial penalty (the Guidance).

5.2 Having regard to the Guidance, the SRA and Mr Islam agree that the nature of the misconduct was more serious because of the inherent recklessness of the conduct and the fact that the relevant breaches continued for a prolonged period of time. The Guidance gives this type of misconduct a score of three.

5.3 The SRA considers that the impact of the misconduct was medium because there existed a real risk of harm to clients as a result of the relevant conduct. Given the nature of the firm's work and the average size of its client account, the conduct had the potential to cause moderate loss or have moderate impact on clients. The Guidance gives this level of impact a score of four.

5.4 The nature and impact scores add up to seven. The Guidance indicates a broad penalty bracket of between 16% and 49% of Mr Islam's gross annual income is appropriate.

5.5 In deciding the level of fine within this bracket, the SRA has considered the following mitigation:

- a. While the relevant issues had been allowed to persist for a prolonged period, Mr Islam took remedial action to address the key issues (including the client account shortage) prior to the SRA forensic inspection taking place.

5.6 Given the seriousness of the relevant conduct breaches and the mitigation outlined above, the SRA considers a basic penalty in the lower middle of the bracket to be appropriate.

5.7 Based on the evidence Mr Islam has provided of his gross annual income for the most recent tax year, this results in a basic penalty of £7,282.

5.8 The SRA considers that the basic penalty should be reduced by 15% to £6,190. This reduction reflects:

- a. Mr Islam's early admittance of the issues raised in the QAR.
- b. The remedial action subsequently taken by Mr Islam, albeit belatedly.

c. Mr Islam's level of co-operation with our investigation.

5.9 Neither Mr Islam nor the firm appear to have made any financial gain or received any other benefit as a result of this conduct. Therefore, no adjustment is necessary to remove this and the amount of the fine is £6,190.

Publication

6.1 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory and disciplinary process. Mr Islam agrees to the publication of this agreement.

Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement

7.1 Mr Islam agrees that he will not deny the admissions made in this agreement or act in any way which is inconsistent with it.

7.2 If Mr Islam denies the admissions or acts in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement, the conduct which is subject to this agreement may be considered further by the SRA. That may result in a disciplinary outcome or a referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal on the original facts and allegations.

7.3 Denying the admissions made or acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement may also constitute a separate breach of principles 2 and 5 of the Principles and paragraph 7.3 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

Costs

8.1 Mr Islam agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £300. Such costs are due within 28 days of a statement of costs due being issued by the SRA.

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