

Katie Baxter
Employee
839672

[Employee-related decision Date: 10 January 2025](#)

Decision - Employee-related decision

Outcome: Control of non-qualified staff (Section 43 / Section 99 order)

Outcome date: 10 January 2025

Published date: 18 February 2025

Firm details

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

Name: Howard & Co Solicitors LLP

Address(es): 4 Victoria Road, Barnsley, S70 2BB

Firm ID: 8000040

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Ms Baxter, whose last known address was in Barnsley, South Yorkshire. A person who is or was involved in a legal practice but is not a solicitor.

Reasons/basis

Ms Baxter worked on a self-employed basis as a conveyancing executive for Howard & Co LLP (the firm) between March 2020 and May 2023. It was found that during the course of her engagement with the firm she:

- Directed the payment of, and received into her own business bank account, client money – in the form of unpaid disbursements – that should have been paid into the firm's client account;
- Asked a third party to prepare a false invoice for work that was never carried out; and
- Used the false invoice to pay a personal loan using client money.

Ms Baxter's conduct was found to be dishonest.

Decision on outcome

An order pursuant to section 43(2) of the Solicitors Act 1974 was imposed as Ms Baxter's conduct meant that it was undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice without the SRA's prior approval. The order pursuant to section 43 was made with effect from the date of the letter or email notifying Ms Baxter of this decision:

Ms Baxter's conduct was serious because she acted dishonestly in directing clients to pay funds due to the firm into her own business account, arranging for a fabricated invoice to be produced and using that invoice to obtain payment out of the firm's client account to repay a personal debt. Ms Baxter sought to mislead colleagues to cover up her misconduct and acted with impropriety to obtain personal financial advantage.

Ms Baxter was ordered to pay a proportion of the SRA's costs of £1,350.

Other information

What our Section 43 order means

- i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with his/her practice as a solicitor;
- ii. no employee of a solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with the solicitor's practice;
- iii. no recognised body shall employ or remunerate her;
- iv. no manager or employee of a recognised body shall employ or remunerate her in connection with the business of that body;
- v. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit her to be a manager of the body; and
- vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such a body shall permit her to have an interest in the body except in accordance with the SRA's prior written permission

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