

Chester and Co
661 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth,
Dorset , BH7 6AA
Recognised body
625285

[Agreement Date: 29 July 2025](#)

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 29 July 2025

Published date: 27 August 2025

Firm details

No detail provided:

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Decision details

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Chester and Co (the Firm), a recognised body, authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), agrees to the following outcome to the investigation:

- i. Chester and Co will pay a financial penalty in the sum of £14,509, under Rule 3.1(b) of the SRA Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedures Rules,
- ii. to the publication of this agreement, under Rule 9.2 of the SRA Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedures rules; and
- iii. Chester and Co will pay the costs of the investigation of £600, under Rule 10.1 and Schedule 1 of the SRA Regulatory and Disciplinary Rules.

Reasons/basis

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 Our Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Proactive Supervision team carried out an AML desk-based review at the firm, to assess its compliance with

the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulation 2017 (MLRs 2017).

2.2 The Proactive Supervision team identified AML control failings in relation to the firm's firm-wide risk assessment (FWRA) and its policies, controls and procedures (PCPs).

2.3 This resulted in a referral to our AML Investigations Team, where breaches of the Money Laundering Regulations 2007 (MLRs 2007) were also identified.

FWRA

2.4 Between 26 June 2017 to 10 November 2024, the firm failed to have in place a documented assessment of the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing to which its business was subject (a firm-wide risk assessment (FWRA)), pursuant to Regulation 18(1) and 18(4) of the MLRs 2017. P&Ps and subsequently PCPs

2.5 Between 6 October 2015 and 25 June 2017, the firm failed to establish and maintain appropriate and risk-sensitive policies and procedures (P&Ps), pursuant to Regulation 20(1) of the MLRs 2007.

2.6 Between 26 June 2017 and April 2019, the firm failed to maintain a record in writing of its policies, controls and procedures (PCPs), to mitigate and effectively manage the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing, identified in any risk assessment (FWRA), pursuant to Regulation 19(1)(a) of the MLRs 2017 and regularly review and update them pursuant to Regulation 19(1)(b) of the MLRs 2017.

2.7 Between April 2019 and 11 November 2024, failed to maintain fully compliant PCPs, pursuant to Regulation 19(1)(a) of the MLRs 2017.

3. Admissions

3.1 The firm admits, and the SRA accepts, that by failing to comply with the MLRs 2007 and MLRs 2017:

To the extent the conduct took place before 25 November 2019 (when the SRA Handbook 2011 was in force) the firm:

- a. Breached Principle 6 of the SRA Principles 2011 – which states you must behave in a way that maintains the trust the public places in you and in the provision of legal services.
- b. Breached Principle 8 of the SRA Principles 2011 – which states you must run your business or carry out your role in the business effectively and in accordance with proper governance and sound financial risk management principles.

- c. Failed to achieve Outcome 7.2 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011 – you have effective systems and controls in place to achieve and comply with all the Principles, rules and outcomes and other requirements of the Handbook, where applicable.
- d. Failed to achieve Outcome 7.5 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011 – which states you comply with legislation applicable to your business, including anti-money laundering and data protection legislation.

And from 25 November 2019 (when the SRA Standards and Regulations came into force), the firm:

- e. Breached Principle 2 of the SRA Principles [2019] – which states you act in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons.
- f. Breached Paragraph 2.1(a) of the SRA Code of Conduct for Firms 2019 – which states you have effective governance structures, arrangements, systems and controls in place that ensure you comply with all the SRA's regulatory arrangements, as well as with other regulatory and legislative requirements, which apply to you.
- g. Breached Paragraph 3.1 of the SRA Code of Conduct for Firms 2019 – which states that you keep up to date with and follow the law and regulation governing the way you work.

4. 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 The issues identified around not having a FWRA, no P&Ps or PCPs and thereafter non-compliant PCPs are serious AML control environment failings, and the conduct had the potential to cause significant harm. The firm carries out the majority of its work in-scope of the regulations, by way of conveyancing. This had the potential to open up the firm to a greater amount of risk of being exploited by criminals.

4.3 It is a regulatory obligation for the firm to meet the requirements set out in the MLRs 2017 (and previously the MLRs 2007), which the firm failed to do.

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

- a. The agreed outcome is a proportionate outcome in the public interest because it creates a credible deterrent to others and the issuing of such a sanction signifies the risk to the public, and the legal sector, that arises when solicitors do not comply with anti-money laundering legislation and their professional regulatory rules.
- b. There is no evidence of harm to consumers or third parties.



- c. The firm recognises that it failed in its basic duties regarding statutory money laundering regulations and regulatory compliance, as identified during our desk-based review and subsequent investigation.

4.5 The firm has cooperated fully, has admitted and remedied the breaches, shown remorse, and there is low risk or repetition.

4.6 A fine is appropriate to maintain professional standards and uphold public confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons. A financial penalty therefore meets the requirements of rule 4.1 of the Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedure Rules.

5. 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 the firm agree that the nature of the misconduct was more serious (score of three). This is because the firm failed to have a FWRA between 26 June 2017 and 10 November 2024, no P&Ps between 6 October 2015 and 25 June 2017, no PCPs between 26 June 2017 and April 2019 and non-compliant PCPs between April 2019 and 11 November 2024.

5.3 The SRA considers the impact or risk of harm was medium (score of four). The nature of conveyancing is considered high-risk, owing to the risk of abuse of the system by criminals. The firm carries out the majority of its work in conveyancing, which puts it at a significant risk of being used to launder money. There is no evidence of there being any direct loss to clients or actual harm caused as a result of the firm's failure to ensure it had proper documentation in place.

5.4 The nature and impact scores add up to seven, placing the conduct in penalty bracket Band 'C'. The Guidance indicates a broad penalty bracket of between 1.6% and 3.2% of the firm's annual domestic turnover is appropriate.

5.5 The SRA agree a fine in this bracket because the firm should have been aware of its statutory obligations under the MLRs 2017, but there is no evidence of any harm being caused or an unwillingness to improve. Based on the firm's annual domestic turnover, the fine results in a basic penalty of £17,069.

5.6 The SRA considers that the basic penalty should be reduced by fifteen percent, in terms of mitigation discount, to £14,509. This reduction follows the following factors in the Guidance that apply to this case:



- a. The firm has taken steps to rectify its failures, by taking into account our guidance and producing compliant AML documentation (FWRA and PCPs).
- b. The firm has cooperated with the SRA's AML Proactive Supervision and Investigations teams.

5.7 The firm does not appear to have made any financial gain or received any other benefit as a result of its conduct. Therefore, no adjustment is necessary to remove this and the amount of the fine is £14,509.

6. Publication

6.1 Rule 9.2 of the SRA Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedure Rules states that any decision under Rule 3.1 or 3.2, including a Financial Penalty, shall be published unless the particular circumstances outweigh the public interest in publication.

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

7. Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement

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

7.2 If the firm 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 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 3.2 of the Code of Conduct for Firms.

8. Costs

8.1 The firm agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £600. Such costs are due within 28 days of a statement of costs due being issued by the SRA.

[Fined Date: 22 December 2023](#)

Decision - Fined

Outcome: Fine

Outcome date: 22 December 2023

Published date: 11 January 2024

Firm details

Firm or organisation at date of publication

Name: Chester and Co

Address(es): 661 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 6AA

Firm ID: 625285

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Chester and Co was directed to pay a fixed financial penalty of £750 and costs of £150.

Reasons/basis

Chester and Co is a recognised body whose office is at 661 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 6AA.

Firms are expected to take the necessary steps to run their business or carry out their role in a way that encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity.

Firms are also required to respond promptly to the SRA and provide full and accurate information following a request or requirement. This includes the requirement to monitor, report and publish workforce diversity data in a prescribed way.

Chester and Co failed to:

- submit to the SRA its workforce diversity data after the SRA asked it to do so

in breach of paragraph 3.3(a) of the Code of Conduct for Firms.

The firm failed to remedy this breach after being given notice and reasonable time in which to do so.

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