

Francesca Nicole Mears

Employee

7004513

Employee-related decision Date: 7 March 2024

Decision - Employee-related decision

Outcome: Approval of employment (section 43)

Outcome date: 7 March 2024

Published date: 23 April 2024

Firm details

No detail provided:

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Andrew Isaacs Law Limited has been granted permission under Section 43 of the solicitors Act 1974 to employ Francesca Mears as a family law Legal Assistant subject to the following conditions:

1. Ms Mears work will be at all times supervised by either Amanda Page (SRA number 130882) and/or Roxanne Woolliams (SRA number 660490).
2. Ms Mears' Mears' employment, duties and supervision at Andrew Isaacs Law Limited (SRA number 626263) are limited to that as outlined by the firm in their initial application, letter dated 28 November 2023 and an email from Ms Glynn dated 5 March 2024.
3. Any proposed variation to the job description, duties or arrangements as to Ms Mears' employment and supervision are notified to the SRA in advance of the changes making place and the variation must not take place until the SRA grants permission.
4. Ms Mears will not have any responsibility for or be involved in the training or supervision of any other employee at Andrew Isaacs Law Limited.
5. Ms Mears will not have responsibility for receiving or holding client money, will not be a signatory to the client or/and client

account.

6. Any applications to the Court, drafted by Ms Mears will be completed by Amanda Page or Roxanne Woolliams.
7. Ms Mears will attend regular meetings with her primary or secondary supervisor.
8. Ms Mears will not represent clients at hearings.
9. This approval will lapse if Ms Mears' employment at Andrew Isaacs Law Limited is terminated.
10. This approval and the conditions attached to it are subject to review at the absolute discretion of the SRA.

For definitions, please refer to the defined terms set out in the SRA Glossary

Reasons/basis

Francesca Mears was made subject to an order under section 43 of the Solicitors Act 1974 on 14 November 2023. In accordance with section 43 of the Solicitors Act 1974, any solicitor wishing to employ or remunerate her in connection with their practise as a solicitor must obtain our approval. The SRA is satisfied that the above employment will not put public confidence in the administration of justice and the provision of legal services or the interests of clients at risk.

Employee-related decision Date: 14 November 2023

Decision - Employee-related decision

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

Outcome date: 14 November 2023

Published date: 15 December 2023

Firm details

Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Sills & Betteridge Solicitors

Address(es): Aquis House, 18-28 Clasketgate, Lincoln, LN2 1JN.

Firm ID: 499219

Firm or organisation at date of publication

Name: Andrew Isaacs Law Limited

Address(es): Unit 7, Atlas Business Park, Balby Carr Bank, Doncaster, DN4 5JT.

Firm ID: 626263

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

Decision details

Who does this decision relate to?

Francesca Nicole Mears whose last known address was in Lincolnshire.

A person who is or was involved in a legal practice but is not a solicitor.

Summary of decision

The SRA has put restrictions on where and how Ms Mears can work in an SRA regulated firm. It was found that:

Ms Mears, who is not a solicitor, was involved in a legal practice and has occasioned or been party to an act or default which involved such conduct on her part that it is undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice in any of the ways described in the order below.

The facts of the case

Ms Mears was employed as a paralegal in Sills & Betteridge LLP, Aquis House, Clasketgate, Lincoln LN2 1JN. Her employment was terminated by the firm on 15 October 2021.

Whilst she was employed there, Ms Mears handled three divorce cases.

Between July 2020 and September 2021, Ms Mears misled three clients into believing that their divorce petitions had been issued by the court when she had no honest belief that they had been.

In addition, Ms Mears advised the clients that there were delays with the court in replying to correspondence on their cases when she had no honest belief that this was true.

Decision on outcome

An order pursuant to section 43(2) of the Solicitors Act 1974 was imposed as Ms Mears's conduct meant that it was undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice without the SRA's prior approval.

This was because of the serious nature of her conduct, which lacked integrity and was dishonest.

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

What our Section 43 order means for Ms Mears

- 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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