

# **James Stephen Preece**

## **Employee**

### **7169923**

[Employee-related decision Date: 1 March 2024](#)

## **Decision - Employee-related decision**

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

Outcome date: 1 March 2024

Published date: 6 March 2024

## **Firm details**

### **Firm or organisation at time of matters giving rise to outcome**

Name: MB Law Limited

Address(es): First Floor, 51-53 High Street, Hounslow, TW3 1RB

Firm ID: 445445

## **Outcome details**

This outcome was reached by SRA decision.

### **Decision details**

### **Who does this decision relate to?**

James Stephen Preece formerly of London who is now believed to live in Spain.

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 Mr Preece can work in an SRA regulated firm. It was found that:

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

## **The facts of the case**

Mr Preece formerly worked at MB Law Solicitors as a self-employed caseworker.

It was found that:

1. Mr Preece on or around 13 September 2019, presented himself to the Central Family Court as a criminal barrister and in doing so he misled the Central Family Court as to his professional status.
2. In doing so, Mr Preece acted dishonestly.

## **Decision on outcome**

An order pursuant to section 43(2) of the Solicitors Act 1974 was imposed as Mr Preece's conduct meant that it was undesirable for him to be involved in a legal practice without the SRA's prior approval. The order pursuant to section 43 was made with immediate effect.

Mr Preece's conduct was serious because:

1. He misled the court in an application made ex parte in children act proceedings. He was dishonest.
2. He told the court he was a criminal barrister when he was not.
3. He allowed a sealed court order to be drafted and approved that referred to him as counsel.
4. The court relied upon Mr Preece to be honest in all proceedings, but particularly in applications made ex parte when the other party and/or their representatives were not in attendance.
5. The order, which led to the removal of a child from their father, was later overturned in full.

Mr Preece was also ordered to pay a proportion of the SRA's costs of £600.

## **What our Section 43 order means**

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

except in accordance with the SRA's prior written permission.

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