



Report of Finding and Sanction

Case Reference: 2023/1241/D5

Mr Ravi Sidhu

The Director-General of the Bar Standards Board

The Chair of the Bar Standards Board

The Treasurer of the Honourable Society of: Inner Temple, February 1988.

Disciplinary Tribunal

Mr Ravi Sidhu

1. In accordance with an appointment made by the President of the Council of the Inns of Court contained in a Convening Order dated 1 July 2025, I, HHJ Sara Staite, sat as Chair of a Disciplinary Tribunal on 23 July and 24 November 2025 to hear and determine 4 charges of professional misconduct contrary to the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales against Mr Ravi Sidhu, barrister of the Honourable Society of Inner Temple.

Panel Members

2. The other members of the Tribunal were:

Vince Cullen (Lay Member)

Helen Norris (Lay Member)

Alexander Horne (Barrister Member)

Hayley Firman (Barrister Member)

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Charges

3. The charges are set out below. As charges 1 and 3 were found proven it was not necessary to come to separate conclusions in respect of the alternative charges 2 and 4:

Charge 1

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 3 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales (9th Edition), Bar Standards Board Handbook (Version 4.6).

Particulars of Offence

Ravi Sidhu, a barrister, acted dishonestly in that, having been instructed on or about 14 May 2021 to act for a client in respect of an inquest, those instructions having been provided by the client's solicitors through chambers, he subsequently issued no more than five invoices on chambers' letterhead outside of the chambers system as set out in the attached Schedule, that directed the fees be paid into an account in his name, and in doing so, dishonestly avoided and/or sought to avoid his financial obligations to chambers at the time of issuing the invoices and/or at the time of receipt of payment for work done, which was due to chambers in the form of 'rent', and which would have totalled no more than £6,593 net on the fees as billed.

Charge 2 (in the alternative to Charge 1)

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 3 and/or Core Duty 5 and/or rC8 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales (9th Edition), Bar Standards Board Handbook (Version 4.6).

Particulars of Offence

Ravi Sidhu, a barrister, failed to act with integrity and/or acted in a manner which was likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in him or the profession, and/or acted in a manner which could reasonably be seen by the public to undermine his integrity in that, having been instructed on or about 14 May 2021 to act for a client in respect of an inquest, those instructions having been provided by the client's solicitors through chambers, he subsequently issued no more than five invoices on chambers' letterhead outside of the chambers system as set

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out in the attached Schedule, that directed the fees be paid into an account in his name, and in doing so, avoided and/or sought to avoid his financial obligations to chambers at the time of issuing the invoices and/or at the time of receipt of payment for work done, which was due to chambers in the form of 'rent', and which would have totalled no more than £6,593 net on the fees as billed.

Charge 3

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 3 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales (9th Edition), Bar Standards Board Handbook (Version 4.6).

Particulars of Offence

Ravi Sidhu, a barrister, acted dishonestly in that, having been instructed on or about 14 May 2021 to act for a client in respect of an inquest, those instructions having been provided by the client's solicitors through chambers, he subsequently issued no more than five invoices on chambers' letterhead outside of the chambers system as set out in the attached Schedule, and in doing so dishonestly created the misleading impression to the client and/or the instructing solicitor, that the matter was being conducted through Chambers.

Charge 4 (in the alternative to Charge 3)

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 3 and/or Core Duty 5 and/or rC8 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales (9th Edition), Bar Standards Board Handbook (Version 4.6).

Particulars of Offence

Ravi Sidhu, a barrister, failed to act with integrity and/or acted in a manner which was likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in him or the profession, and/or acted in a manner which could reasonably be seen by the public to undermine his integrity in that, having been instructed on or about 14 May 2021 to act for a client in respect of an inquest, those instructions having been provided by the client's solicitors through chambers, he subsequently issued no more than five invoices on chambers' letterhead outside of the chambers system as set out in the attached Schedule, and in doing so created the misleading impression to the client and/or the instructing solicitor, that the matter was being conducted through Chambers.

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Parties Present and Representation

4. The Respondent was present and was not represented. The Bar Standards Board (“BSB”) was represented by Mr Gareth Tilley.

Pleas

5. Mr Sidhu denied all charges.

Adjournment:

6. Following oral evidence, the hearing was adjourned part-heard on 23 July 2025 and re-listed for 24 November 2025. Ms Hayley Firman was unable to sit on the panel for the re-listed hearing on 24 November 2025, as per rE149 the Tribunal continued to sit as a 4-person Tribunal.
7. On adjournment the Tribunal requested that certain documents be provided to it, and further updated documents were provided as well. While Mr Sidhu indicated that we should not admit certain parts of this new evidence, we considered that we should do so noting our powers to admit evidence and that including such evidence would enable us to deal with the case fairly and justly.

Evidence

8. Mr Sidhu did not provide a witness statement. He gave oral evidence before the Tribunal on which he was cross-examined.
9. Ms Rees (the client) provided a witness statement and gave oral evidence before the Tribunal on which she was cross-examined.
10. Mr Binks (Chambers Director of Citadel Chambers) provided two witness statements. As Mr Sidhu did not require him to be called, he did not give oral evidence at the hearing
11. The Tribunal had regard to all of the evidence in the bundles. It also had regard to the various documents that were produced to assist in the determination of the case.

The Arguments

12. It is not necessary to recite all of the evidence and arguments that we heard. However, the following points are noted in summary.

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13. Mr Tilley on behalf of the BSB began by noting that 6 matters were not in dispute: (1) that Ms Rees was Mr Sidhu's client (2) that Mr Sidhu issued 5 invoices to Ms Rees (3) that 4 of the 5 invoices were paid with the final invoice waived (4) that the invoices requested payment into Mr Sidhu's personal bank account (5) that rent owed to Chambers in relation to the work done by Mr Sidhu as a barrister on behalf of Ms Rees would have been in excess of £6,000 and (6) the rent was ultimately paid by Mr Sidhu to Chambers after matters came to light. Mr Tilley referred the Tribunal to the two stage test set out in *Ivey v Genting Casinos* in respect of a finding of dishonesty namely an initial subjective analysis of Mr Sidhu's state of mind followed (if established) by an objective analysis based on the facts of the case.
14. Mr Tilley relied, among other things, on the argument that Mr Sidhu would have known the requirement for rent to be paid to chambers in relation to his work as a member of Citadel Chambers (as set out in the Chambers Members Handbook). He pointed to the clear distinction between Mr Sidhu having worked in the past as an Assistant Coroner for which he had received "sitting fees" (for which no rent would have been payable to chambers) and the rules requiring the payment of rent to chambers when advising a client of Chambers as a barrister. Mr Tilley also pointed out that the Lex IT system used to diarise work in Chambers and create and track billing did not match with the details of work apparently undertaken by Mr Sidhu on behalf of Ms Rees on specified dates.
15. Mr Tilley also referred to Mr Sidhu having made a specific request that the papers in the case from the solicitor and the client should be sent directly to his personal address rather than to Chambers. Mr Tilley also argued that the fees charged directly to Ms Rees by Mr Sidhu in his professional capacity as a barrister did not fit with Mr Sidhu's defence to the charge that the fees were not subject to payment of Chambers rent on the grounds that the instructions related to an inquest and he was confused or mistaken about whether Chambers rent was payable on fees received in those circumstances.
16. Mr Tilley argued (a) that Mr Sidhu knew the Chambers regime for the payment of rent in respect of work done on behalf of Chambers but had asked Ms Rees personally to pay his invoices knowing that the diary entries on the Lex system made no reference to the work he was in fact doing on her behalf and (b) that a reasonable person would be bound to conclude that Mr Sidhu's conduct was a dishonest attempt to evade the payment of rent to

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Chambers. Mr Tilley made alternative submissions on a failure to act with integrity. Given the ultimate conclusion of the Tribunal those submissions are not recited.

17. Mr Tilley also made submissions on charges 3 and 4 which he described as “client facing” charges. He stated that Mr Sidhu’s invoices were sent out on Chambers headed paper and gave the misleading impression of being conducted through Chambers. Mr Sidhu’s instructions had arisen in the challenging context of Ms Rees’ mother’s death and (as she said in evidence) she had felt physically sick when she rang Chambers in May 2022 - after Mr Sidhu had said that he intended to retire - and was advised that the case was not logged on the Chambers system with no record of the existence of the case within Chambers. Mr Tilley also pointed to the fact that the payment terms which Mr Sidhu imposed were less favourable than Chambers 28 day payment terms, and that on two of the invoices Mr Sidhu had sought immediate payment into his personal bank account. Tilley queried why such invoices would have been sent using Chambers letterhead if the work undertaken by Mr Sidhu was associated with his work on the “judicial sittings pathway” and he submitted that there was a clear distinction between invoicing for judicial sitting and invoices sent out for work undertaken as a barrister. Mr Tilley made the same points in respect of the test for dishonesty. However, if that was not accepted Mr Tilley made alternative submissions on a failure to act with integrity. Given the ultimate conclusion of the Tribunal those submissions are not recited.
18. Mr Sidhu began by repeating his deep regret at the position that Ms Rees found herself in following her call to Chambers in May 2022 and being advised that there was no record of the case within Chambers. He accepted that this realisation must have been a “bolt out of the blue” for Ms Rees for which he offered a sincere apology.
19. Mr Sidhu argued further that as Ms Rees did not pay within the period requested for some of the invoices which he had issued and had also sent him a number of complimentary emails about the work which he had done in connection with the case, there was no question of her having been bullied by him while she was his client. He also said that Ms Rees had subsequently made a stream of allegations against him, the majority of which had been dismissed. He argued that in all the circumstances the evidence of Ms Rees had been inconsistent and unsatisfactory.

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20. Mr Sidhu also said that the evidence did not indicate that he had acted improperly in his communication with Ms Rees. He said that he had discussed the case with Ms Rees' solicitor and naturally assumed that he had discussed the case with Chambers. He submitted that the solicitor was at the heart of the barrister/client relationship and that there was a shortfall in the case advanced by the BSB attributable to the lack of any evidence having been adduced by the solicitor who had instructed him on behalf of Ms Rees. In his opinion, the solicitor's silence "spoke volumes" about the client's understanding of the way in which the case had been managed professionally on her behalf.
21. Mr Sidhu noted that the instructing solicitor had known how this case was being progressed and that if there had been any issues then the solicitor would have notified Chambers. He also said that the instructing solicitor had originally emailed Chambers, so Chambers would have known about the instructions. This was a significant case spanning a 12-month period with two hearings and 1000s of emails sent. It was a major part of Mr Sidhu's case that he would not have taken the risk of doing something untoward professionally and that Ms Rees had never been told by him not to contact Chambers.
22. Mr Sidhu explained that Ms Rees had given evidence that she had many complaints about his professional competence but she had not complained to Chambers. All her protections had remained in place despite the arrangement with her for the payment of his fees directly into his personal bank account following acceptance of the instructions.
23. Mr Sidhu noted that the evidence pointed away from any financial gain in circumstances where he had discounted the fees payable by Ms Rees. He explained that he had mistakenly adopted the "judicial sittings pathway" in connection with the fees received from Ms Rees because in cases where he had previously sat as an Assistant Coroner he had usually sent out invoices directly for payment (in very similar format to those sent to Ms Rees) in respect of which no Chambers rent became payable. He said that "coronial invoices" (ie invoices in respect of his sittings as an Assistant Coroner) had included specific items of work preparatory to an inquest and that he had confused fees payable as a barrister (for which Chambers rent was due) with the wide scope of payment of his judicial fees because Ms Rees' instructions had related to work undertaken in relation to her mother's inquest.
24. Mr Sidhu also stated that his conduct was not the conduct of someone who was dishonest; he would not have referred the BSB to evidence relating to the Lex diary system (which

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indicated clear inconsistencies between what had been recorded on the system and work which Mr Sidhu had in fact done on behalf of Ms Rees) if he had been dishonest. This applied to all his dealings with Ms Rees. His conduct was not that of a dishonest person; moreover, as she had been given the impression that his work was being done through Chambers, there was a real likelihood that she would have contacted Chambers. Accordingly, Ms Rees had not been misled nor had he been dishonest.

25. Mr Sidhu said that people make mistakes. He also referred to the evidence of Mr Binks and suggested that despite his evidence, there may have been a footprint of the case on the Chambers system. He said that the clerks made all the entries on the Lex system and that he did not have any control over the wording used on the system or sight of the computerised calendar. He also said that papers were often sent to his home directly when instructed as a barrister.
26. He concluded by noting that everything should be seen in the context of him having acted with compassion towards Ms Rees. He had been generous and she had trusted him. There had been an instructing solicitor involved. The cumulative effect of all of this was that he had not been dishonest towards Ms Rees and the public would have confidence in him as a barrister. He also relied upon his good character.
27. Before considering the findings, the Tribunal asked Mr Sidhu about his comments that his approach in invoicing Ms Rees was the same as invoicing for his coronial work which had involved work billed on an hourly rate and payable as part of the pre-inquest investigation process. He made clear that these coronial invoices would have essentially mirrored the way in which he had billed Ms Rees. The Tribunal asked Mr Sidhu to obtain these earlier coronial invoices to verify his evidence that they had been in the same format as the invoices sent to Ms Rees and would cover work which had been directly billed to the Coroner's Office whether or not any judicial sitting fees were also included. Mr Sidhu was given time to trace any coronial invoice(s) but confirmed that this was not possible, that he had not worked in a coronial role since 2021 and possibly had not worked in a coronial role while a member of Citadel Chambers. The Tribunal asked how this aligned with his "usual practice" for sending out invoices as referred to in evidence. Mr Sidhu also considered that his tax returns would not help him in providing evidence to the Tribunal as to his method of invoicing as an Assistant Coroner.

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28. **Findings:** It is agreed that Mr Sidhu sent 5 invoices which purported to be from his Chambers (Citadel Chambers) when in fact the work was undertaken by him in a personal capacity. These payments were paid by Ms Rees directly into Mr Sidhu's personal bank account in circumstances where the invoices should have been subject to the payment of Chambers rent/expenses. These facts give rise to 4 charges, 2 of which allege dishonesty (Charges 1 and 3) while Charges 2 and 4 allege a lack of integrity and/or bringing the profession into disrepute. The Charges were in the alternative.

29. Charges 1 and 2 related to the non-payment of rent owed to Chambers as set out in the Chambers handbook. Charges 3 and 4 related to misleading the client (Ms Rees) insofar as Mr Sidhu gave the misleading impression that his professional services were being conducted through Chambers when in fact all payments received from the client (Ms Rees) following receipt of the invoices were paid directly into Mr Sidhu's personal bank account with Chambers having no knowledge of the arrangement.

30. The BSB alleged dishonesty in relation to Mr Sidhu's conduct and the test for dishonesty is set out in the leading case of **Ivey v Genting Casinos [2018]**. There is a two stage test for a Tribunal to determine whether dishonesty has been made out on the facts of a given case. The first matter we needed to address was, subjectively, the actual state of Mr Sidhu's knowledge or belief as to the facts. In this regard we considered the submission made on behalf of the BSB that the evidence that Mr Sidhu sought to avoid chambers expenses was encapsulated in the following evidence before the Tribunal: (a) that Mr Sidhu was or should have been aware of the terms on which Citadel Chambers treated professional fee income earned as a barrister (b) that Mr Sidhu intentionally generated invoices to be paid by the client (Ms Rees) in circumstances where billing was otherwise handled by the clerks at Citadel Chambers (c) that there were inconsistencies in his calendar entries on the Lex system in that work done for Ms Rees (as documented by date and time spent as set out on the invoices) did not correspond to entries made on the Chambers Lex system (d) that Mr Sidhu specifically requested all papers in the case to be sent to his home address

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31. We have also noted that at no time did Mr Sidhu obtain any authorisation for his conduct (as set out above) from Citadel Chambers.

32. Mr Sidhu's defence to Charges 1 and 2 was that his conduct represented an entirely honest and genuine mistake on his part and that confusion arose in his mind between fees to which he was entitled when sitting as an Assistant Coroner (on which no Chambers expenses were paid) and fees paid through his practice as a barrister. He had confused instructions to act for a client in respect of a forthcoming inquest with sitting fees previously paid to him which did not attract Chambers rent. Mr Sidhu initially inferred to us that it was his regular practice to use Chambers notepaper in relation to fees sought when sitting as a Assistant Coroner. He advised the Tribunal that when asked to sit as an Assistant Coroner he would sometimes be asked to attend to matters in advance of an inquest for which he was paid over and above the daily sitting fee and for which he produced a specific invoice. When the Tribunal sought clarification of this and explored further with him that he had previously produced invoices for coronial work which had mirrored the invoices he had sent out to Ms Rees in connection with her mother's inquest, Mr Sidhu was unable to provide any example of this despite being asked to make specific enquiries in this regard. When pressed further, he was unable to give any example of a time when he had worked as an Assistant Coroner while a tenant in Citadel Chambers (from 2017 onwards). We considered this to be a serious inconsistency and confusion in his evidence bearing in mind his earlier evidence during the hearing that he had at all times been following his usual invoicing practice for coronial work. This inconsistency, in our view, appeared to undermine Mr Sidhu's defence of a single and honest mistake since he clearly needed to consider how to invoice Ms Rees from May 2021 onwards. We also take into account that approximately one year earlier Mr Sidhu had been asked to represent a client on a direct access basis involving a coronial matter and that on that occasion, the case had been disclosed to and authorised by Chambers. In those circumstances it is hard to understand how a genuine mistake arose in relation to the payment of Chambers expenses when Mr Sidhu accepted instructions via a solicitor in May 2021 to advise and represent Ms Rees.

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33. Having carefully reviewed the evidence, we find that Mr Sidhu knew that he should pay Chambers rent in relation to the fees paid for his professional services to Ms Rees and that the subjective test for his own dishonest state of mind was satisfied in this case. With the actual state of mind of Mr Sidhu having been proved to our satisfaction, we are satisfied further that his conduct overall was dishonest by applying the objective standards of ordinary decent people who would inevitably conclude that Mr Sidhu's motivation for behaving as he did towards Chambers was to avoid paying Chambers the money he owed in respect of the fees received from Ms Rees. If there had been any uncertainty on his part about the arrangement we are satisfied that an honest professional in his position would have made enquiries of Chambers as to the right way to proceed.
34. We also find Charge 3 proved in this case, a charge described by Mr Tilley on behalf of the BSB as "client facing". The particulars of this charge were that having issued 5 invoices on Chambers letterheaded notepaper outside the Chambers system documenting work done on specific dates in connection with Ms Rees' case, Mr Sidhu dishonestly created the misleading impression to the client and/or to the instructing solicitor that the matter was being conducted within Chambers. Mr Sidhu acknowledged that Ms Rees was extremely surprised and distressed to discover in May 2022 that the work that Mr Sidhu had undertaken had been carried out without the knowledge of Chambers despite the invoices bearing Chambers letterhead. Moreover, Ms Rees was not aware that the fees paid by her to Mr Sidhu (totalling in excess of £40,000) had been paid directly into Mr Sidhu's bank without being processed through Chambers and had been understandably shocked by this discovery. Ms Rees was advised in the course of a telephone call to Chambers on 16th May 2022 that there was no record of her case on the Chambers system nor of Mr Sidhu's participation in the case on her behalf.
35. We have also considered in our decision making today that the various invoices rendered directly by Mr Sidhu required urgent payment to be made by Ms Rees outwith Chambers usual timescales for payment. By sending invoices on Chambers headed notepaper, Mr Sidhu clearly created the impression (which was highly misleading) that the invoices were validated by Chambers and that Chambers stood behind the demands for payment of the invoices which were submitted. In our unanimous opinion we are satisfied that Mr Sidhu's actions were blatantly dishonest from his own subjective stance and when applying the

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objective test we are satisfied that ordinary decent people would consider that Mr Sidhu's dishonestly created a misleading impression to Ms Rees that the matter was being conducted through Chambers.

36. In all the circumstances we find unanimously that Charges 1 and 3 are proved to our satisfaction.

Sanction and Reasons

37. Mr Tilley directed the Tribunal to the BTAS Guidance on sanctions and The Tribunal determined that the charges which were proved fell within the category of Misconduct Group A dishonesty. He pointed out that at all levels of culpability and harm the sanction was disbarment. He also noted the limited list of mitigating factors in the case and referred to the vulnerable position of Ms Rees at the time of instructing Mr Sidhu and Mr Sidhu's financial gain. Mr Sidhu pointed out in response that he did try to mitigate the effects on Ms Rees by trying to get her pro bono representation for her mother's inquest which she refused. He also stated that he had last worked in 2024 and was now drawing a modest pension. He invited the tribunal to consider his good character.

38. The Tribunal considered that this was a misconduct group A dishonesty case and noted that Mr Sidhu intended to benefit financially from the fees submitted to Ms Rees directly and without engagement in Chambers policy and practice and that his misconduct produced an adverse effect on the client in a personal capacity. The Tribunal also considered the extent to which public confidence in the profession would have been undermined by Mr Sidhu's deliberate decision to retain a direct billing procedure with Ms Rees in clear breach of Chambers policy and in circumstances where (despite using Chambers letterhead) Chambers knew nothing about the continuing professional relationship between Mr Sidhu and Ms Rees (after he had accepted instructions from Ms Rees) and the direct billing procedure.

39. Accordingly, we consider this to be a case between the mid to high range of culpability. We also had regard to Annex 2 and noted the financial motivation and harm caused to a vulnerable person (Ms Rees) by Mr Sidhu's actions. We have also noted the mitigating factors including the mitigation put forward and some remorse exhibited by Mr Sidhu. We

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also note the waiver of fees in relation to the final invoice, references submitted as to his character and his repayment of rent due and owing to Chambers in relation to fees paid by Ms Rees.

40. However, taking into account all matters , we consider that the only option in this case is disbarment. Nothing else reflects the seriousness of the conduct having regard to the sanctions guidance. We therefore make the requisite order including that the BSB shall not issue Mr Sidhu with a practising certificate.
41. The Treasurer of the Honourable Society of Inner Temple is requested to take action on this report in accordance with rE239 of the Disciplinary Tribunal Regulations 2017.
42. The Tribunal heard arguments on costs and ultimately order Mr Sidhu to pay the BSB's costs assessed at £3000.00.

Appeal

43. The Tribunal confirmed that the date for any appeal runs from the date of these reasons.

Dated: 9th December 2025

HHJ Sara Staite
Chair of the Tribunal

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