



Report of Finding and Sanction

Respondent	Mr Rajiv Chopra
Case reference	2024/0194/D5
Inn of Court	Lincoln's Inn (2020)
Status at hearing	Registered
Hearing date/s	13 th and 15 th May 2026, 12 th August 2026
Tribunal Type	5 Person Tribunal

Tribunal members

Chair	HH Nigel Godsmark KC
Barrister member	Sirah Abraham
Barrister member	Carlos Conceicao
Lay member	Stéph Pandit
Lay member	Ian Arundale

Representatives

Bar Standards Board	Winston Jacob
Respondent	Neil Sheldon KC

Outcome

Findings	Charges 1 and 2 dismissed following Mr Chopra's admission of Charge 3.
Sanction	See paragraph 83 for details.
Costs	£660 payable to the BSB.

1. In accordance with an appointment made by the President of the Council of the Inns of Court contained in a Convening Order dated 27 April 2026 The Tribunal sat on 13th and 15th May 2026 to hear and determine 2 charges of professional misconduct contrary to the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales against Mr Rajiv Chopra, barrister of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn.

Charges

2. On 15 May 2026 the Tribunal used rE161 to bring an additional charge which was admitted by the respondent and found proved by the Tribunal. The two charges put to the respondent at the outset of the hearing were denied.

Charge 3

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 5 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar Standards Board Handbook (version 4.7).

Particulars of Offence

On 8 November 2023, Rajiv Chopra, a barrister, whilst acting for a defendant in a criminal trial, behaved in a way likely to diminish the trust and confidence that the public places in him or the profession, in that, during his closing speech, he made statements about witness evidence that were incorrect and/or misleading, resulting in the Judge sending out the jury and later giving the jury further directions to correct the statements made. The statements included the following:

- (a) When referring to one of the prosecution witnesses, "when he came here, he was wearing glasses ... and they were quite thick. They looked like prescription glasses". Mr Chopra should not have made these submissions as he had not put these matters to the witness in cross-examination and there was therefore no, or insufficient, evidence to support them.
- (b) When referring to the defendant's attendance at the police station, that "... one of the solicitors ... represented Mr [G]. Obviously, he ... advised Mr [G], 'this is the evidence' and nine out of ten times the solicitors would say: 'You heard the caution says you don't have to say anything. The police is asserting you've done that. They have to prove the case against you. You don't need to do anything' as the judge already told you." Mr Chopra should not have made these submissions as there was no evidence to support them.
- (c) When referring to the consequences of a conviction, that "immigration will kick in, he will be deported." This statement was misleading because it suggested that the defendant would automatically be deported if convicted, which was untrue,

When referring to alleged inconsistencies between the evidence of prosecution witnesses given in court and in their witness statements, that “if you wish, we can provide you the witness statements to read”. This statement was untrue because it was not legally permissible to provide the witness statements to the jury.

Parties Present and Representation

3. The Respondent was present and was represented by Mr Neil Sheldon KC. The Bar Standards Board (“BSB”) was represented by Mr Winston Jacob.

Pleas

4. Mr Chopra denied Charge 1 and Charge 2 but admitted Charge 3 as introduced by the Tribunal under rE161

Evidence

5. Mr Chopra is before the tribunal in response to charges brought by the Bar Standards Board.

Charge 1

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 3 and/or rC3.1 of the Bar Standards Board Handbook (version 4.7).

Particulars of Offence

On 8 November 2023, Rajiv Chopra, a barrister, whilst acting for a defendant in a criminal trial, failed to act with integrity, in that, during his closing speech, he made statements about witness evidence that were incorrect and/or misleading, resulting in the Judge sending out the jury and later giving the jury further directions to correct statements made. The statements included the following:

- (a) When referring to one of the prosecution witnesses, “when he came here, he was wearing glasses ... and they were quite thick. They looked like prescription glasses”. Mr Chopra knew that he should not make these submissions as he had not put these matters to the witness in cross-examination and there was therefore no, or insufficient, evidence to support them.
- (b) When referring to the defendant’s attendance at the police station, that “... one of the solicitors ... represented Mr [G]. Obviously, he ... advised Mr [G], ‘this is the evidence’ and nine out of ten times the solicitors would say: ‘You heard the caution says you don’t have to say anything. The police is asserting you’ve done that. They have to prove the case against you. You don’t need to do anything’ as the judge already told you.” Mr

Chopra knew that he should not make these submissions as there was no evidence to support them.

- (c) When referring to the consequences of a conviction, that “immigration will kick in, he will be deported.” This statement was misleading because it suggested that the defendant would automatically be deported if convicted, which was untrue, and which Mr Chopra knew was untrue.
- (d) When referring to alleged inconsistencies between the evidence of prosecution witnesses given in court and in their witness statements, that “if you wish, we can provide you the witness statements to read”. This statement was untrue because it was not legally permissible to provide the witness statements to the jury, which Mr Chopra knew.

In making the statements at (c) and (d) above, Mr Chopra recklessly misled the jury.

Charge 2

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 5 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar Standards Board Handbook (version 4.7).

Particulars of Offence

On 8 November 2023, Rajiv Chopra, a barrister, whilst acting for a defendant in a criminal trial, behaved in a way likely to diminish the trust and confidence that the public places in him or the profession, in that, during his closing speech, he made statements about witness evidence that were incorrect and/or misleading, resulting in the Judge sending out the jury and later giving the jury further directions to correct the statements made. The statements included the following:

- (a) When referring to one of the prosecution witnesses, “when he came here, he was wearing glasses ... and they were quite thick. They looked like prescription glasses”. Mr Chopra knew that he should not make these submissions as he had not put these matters to the witness in cross-examination and there was therefore no, or insufficient, evidence to support them.
- (b) When referring to the defendant’s attendance at the police station, that “... one of the solicitors ... represented Mr [G]. Obviously, he ... advised Mr [G], ‘this is the evidence’ and nine out of ten times the solicitors would say: ‘You heard the caution says you don’t have to say anything. The police is asserting you’ve done that. They have to prove the case against you. You don’t need to do anything’ as the judge already told you.” Mr Chopra knew that he should not make these submissions as there was no evidence to support them.

- (c) When referring to the consequences of a conviction, that “immigration will kick in, he will be deported.” This statement was misleading because it suggested that the defendant would automatically be deported if convicted, which was untrue, and which Mr Chopra knew was untrue.
- (d) When referring to alleged inconsistencies between the evidence of prosecution witnesses given in court and in their witness statements, that “if you wish, we can provide you the witness statements to read”. This statement was untrue because it was not legally permissible to provide the witness statements to the jury, which Mr Chopra knew.

In making the statements at (c) and (d) above, Mr Chopra recklessly misled the jury.

- 6. The charges arose out of Mr Chopra’s behaviour while defending a man (Mr G) on trial for an offence of engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child. During the course of his closing speech to the jury, Mr Chopra made the submissions particularised in a) to d) of the charges.
- 7. At the end of the speech the judge sent the jury out and there followed a discussion of a number of the points made by Mr Chopra in his speech which were viewed by the judge and prosecution counsel as improper. Mr Chopra acknowledged at the time that he should not have said these things. Consideration was given to discharging the jury and aborting the trial. After reflection, the judge decided that she could adequately repair the damage done in Mr Chopra’s closing speech by way of further directions to the jury and the trial continued to a conclusion.
- 8. The judge complained to the BSB about Mr Chopra’s behaviour in his closing speech resulting in the charges above. When the charges were put to Mr Chopra before this tribunal he denied them.
- 9. There was no dispute that Mr Chopra said these things to the jury. They are on the court transcript. In discussion with the trial judge after his speech, Mr Chopra acknowledged that he should not have said these things. He used the term “a slip of the tongue”.
- 10. In his responses to the BSB investigation Mr Chopra gave further explanation. In relation to the “glasses point” he said that when the witness had entered court, he had noticed him wearing glasses which were then put into a pocket. Mr Chopra described these as thick glasses. He said that he made a mental note to cross-examine the witness about his eyesight and ability to see what the witness alleged he had seen. However, Mr Chopra forgot to ask about these things in cross examination and flagged that failure up to judge and prosecuting counsel in a note on the DCS sidebar. Having not raised this in cross examination of the witness, Mr Chopra accepted that there was no evidence of materially defective eyesight in the witness and he should not have made the comment in his closing speech.

11. In relation to the “solicitor’s advice” point, it was correct that Mr G had answered questions put to him in police interview. Mr Chopra accepted that he should not have speculated about the advice Mr G was given before that at the police station.
12. In relation to the “deportation point”, Mr G is Romanian. Mr Chopra said that Mr G and his family had been very concerned about potential deportation if convicted. Mr Chopra said that this was in his mind when he made his speech. Mr Chopra described this comment as a slip of the tongue and acknowledged that it was speculative and inappropriate.
13. In relation to the “witness statements” point, Mr Chopra said that there were inconsistencies between the evidence of two witnesses and their witness statements which had been put to those witnesses in cross examination. He accepted that he should not have suggested that the jury could be given copies of their witness statements. What he meant to say was that the jury could be reminded of the relevant passages from the witness statements.
14. Mr Chopra also raised the issue of his health on the day. He said it had been a stressful few weeks before the trial that he had reacted badly to a Covid vaccination and felt unwell during the trial.
15. In his witness statement for the tribunal hearing Mr Chopra essentially repeated what he had told the BSB investigation albeit in greater detail. He expanded on his “deportation” comment to the jury by saying that the point that he had wanted to make was that it was unlikely that Mr G would commit such an offence and jeopardise his immigration status. He continued to accept that he should not have made any of the comments to the jury but emphasised that there was no intention on his part to mislead.
16. Mr Chopra also expanded upon his health on the day saying that he had been totally exhausted. He said that he had told Mr G and family that he did not feel well during the trial and they had insisted that they wanted him to continue.
17. The tribunal was also provided with a large number of personal and professional references which spoke of Mr Chopra’s professionalism and integrity. Mr Chopra evidently has a strong reputation within the Romanian community.
18. In skeleton arguments submitted to the tribunal, it was clear that there was an issue of law between the parties as to the term “reckless”. The BSB relied upon the definition from the case of *R v G* [2003] UKHL 50 whereby
A person acts recklessly..... With respect to-
 - i) *a circumstance when he is aware of a risk that it exists or will exist;*
 - ii) *a result when he is aware of a risk that it will occur;**and it is, in the circumstances known to him, unreasonable to take the risk.*
19. This has been applied in the context of professional misconduct proceedings concerning misleading the court in the case of *Brett v SRA* [2014] EWHC 2974 (Admin).

20. On behalf of Mr Chopra there is a preference for the definition of recklessness from *Berry Piling Systems Ltd v Sheer Projects Ltd* [2013] EWHC 347 (TCC), a case involving contempt of court in which the requirement (in this context) is that a person makes a statement which is false and that the maker consciously has no idea whether it is right or wrong.
21. It is of note that the BSB's own Guidance states that reckless means being indifferent to the truth, not caring whether it is true or false. This is more closely allied to the *Berry Piling* formulation.
22. The hearing proceeded on the basis that the BSB evidence was essentially documentary - the transcript - and that Mr Chopra's witness statement could stand as his evidence in chief.
23. When Mr Chopra gave evidence it became increasingly difficult to unravel what he was saying about the submissions which he undoubtedly had made to the jury. At one stage he appeared to say that he had been entitled to make all of those submissions. At another stage he accepted that he should not have made any of them. His evidence was generally confusing, inconsistent and overly defensive. He said on several occasions that Mr G had been acquitted (unanimously) by the jury and at one stage suggested that this demonstrated that he had made good and proper points to them.
24. During his evidence to us Mr Chopra sought to excuse or minimise his behaviour by suggesting that because the trial judge had been able to correct matters by further directions to the jury and thus save the trial, no harm had been done.
25. He also sought to justify his jury comments about the witness's glasses by saying that he had flagged up his failure to cross-examine on this point on the DCS sidebar and because no-one had commented further, he thought there was no objection to him saying what he did to the jury.
26. Mr Chopra was emphatic that he had not meant to mislead anyone. He accepted that in making the points that he did to the jury in his closing speech, he was trying to persuade them to acquit.
27. Mr Chopra portrayed himself as an experienced and capable criminal advocate who was successful in achieving results favourable to his clients. We do not share Mr Chopra's view as to his professional capabilities.
28. A reading of his closing speech to the jury shows it to be unstructured, unfocused and ill-prepared. Insofar as Mr Chopra suggests that this was due to his poor health on the day, we would apply a similar description to Mr Chopra's oral evidence before us.
29. One point of interest was Mr Chopra's account to us of what he had intended to suggest could be done with the witness statements. Whilst accepting that he should not have suggested that the jury could be provided with the whole witness statement of a witness, he maintained that they could have been provided with those parts of the witness statement which contained the passages upon which he had cross-

examined. Those witness statements had not been exhibited in the trial in whole or in part. Even two years on, with so much time to reflect upon his position, Mr Chopra did not appreciate that when he made his closing speech, his jury could not have been provided with any witness statement or any part of any witness statement which had not already been exhibited to them.

30. We found parts of Mr Chopra's evidence particularly unconvincing. His account in his witness statement in relation to his deportation comment was that the point he had wanted to make was that Mr G would be unlikely to commit an offence if it jeopardised his immigration status. He reiterated that to us. However the transcript of his closing speech shows that he went nowhere near making this point. We reject this evidence from Mr Chopra and find it far more likely that he made the deportation comment because that was his own expectation at the time.

Findings

31. Having considered the content of the closing speech in full and having seen and heard Mr Chopra give evidence to us, we have come to certain conclusions. The first is that we find that Mr Chopra often does not think about what he says. Certainly before us there seemed to be a tendency to say whatever he believed might assist at the time without great thought. That impression underpins our findings which we make on the balance of probabilities, the burden of proving the allegations being on the BSB

The glasses submission

32. We find that Mr Chopra said what is particularised in a) of the charges.
33. We find that this was an attempt by him to influence the jury by making them think that an eyewitness had defective vision and thus could not have seen what he described the jury.
34. We find that this was a point which Mr Chopra could not properly make to the jury it being unsupported by evidence and speculative.
35. We find that at the time that he made the comment, Mr Chopra did not appreciate that he could not properly make that point in that way. He simply did not address his mind to that.

The solicitor advice submission

36. We find that Mr Chopra said what is particularised in b) of the charges.
37. We find that this was an attempt by Mr Chopra to influence the jury by making them think that Mr G had answered questions in his police interview despite legal advice to the contrary.
38. We find that this was a point which could not properly be made as there was no evidence as to the advice given - and as Mr Chopra acknowledged to us in his evidence, he did not know what advice had been given.

39. We find that Mr Chopra did not at the time appreciate that he should not make this point in this way. He simply did not address his mind to that.

Deportation

40. We find that Mr Chopra said what is particularised in c) of the charges.
41. We find that Mr Chopra attempted to influence the jury by making them think that, if convicted, Mr G would be deported.
42. We find that assertion was untrue. Deportation would depend upon sentence and the view taken by the Home Office.
43. We find that at the time Mr Chopra made this statement, he did not believe that it was untrue. We find that he assumed that there would be deportation without properly applying his mind to the question

Witness statements

44. We find that Mr Chopra said what is particularised in d) of the charges.
45. We find that in saying this Mr Chopra attempted to influence the jury by suggesting to them that they could look at witness statements in assessing the consistency and credibility of a witness.
46. We find that this was untrue. The witness statements had not been exhibited as evidence in the trial and the jury could not call for them or be provided with them.
47. We find that the time Mr Chopra believed that what he was saying was true. We find that his belief was based upon ignorance of the law of evidence on this point. That ignorance persists.
48. The consequence of our findings is that the BSB have failed to prove that in relation to any of the things that Mr Chopra said to the jury:-
- a) that in making those submissions to the jury Mr Chopra knew that they were false or even might be;
 - b) that he was aware that the jury might be misled.
49. We are satisfied and find that the clearly inappropriate remarks made by Mr Chopra to the jury arose out of his incompetence rather than anything more.
50. Our findings mean that the BSB has failed to prove adequate knowledge or recklessness against Mr Chopra according to either definition of recklessness. It is therefore unnecessary for us to resolve the competing submissions as to the correct test for recklessness in this tribunal.

The effect of our findings in relation to the charges

51. Charge 1 is an allegation that the submissions made by Mr Chopra to the jury were incorrect and misleading to the extent that they amounted to a failure to act with

integrity (Core Duty 3). We consider that charge under the guidance of Jackson LJ in the case of *Wingate v SRA* [2018] EWCA Civ 366 where integrity is said to connote an adherence to the ethical standards of one's own profession. It is an objective test.

52. Objectively, Mr Chopra's behaviour in making those submissions to the jury did not meet the standards of the Bar. However the state of a person's knowledge is relevant in determining whether they have acted without integrity. Inadvertent transgression does not have the flavour of dishonesty or sharp practice that is associated with lack of integrity. In this case we have found that Mr Chopra's behaviour arose out of his incompetence rather than anything akin to dishonesty or sharp practice. Charge one is accordingly dismissed.
53. The position in relation to Charge 2 is more subtle. The charge is of behaving in a way likely to diminish the trust and confidence that the public places in the barrister or the profession (Core Duty 5). Whilst the BSB has not proved the elements of knowledge or recklessness on the part of Mr Chopra, they have proved behaviour of an alarmingly incompetent nature.
54. There were four improper or inaccurate submissions made to the jury in the course of the short closing speech. At one point we considered whether that of itself pointed to something more than incompetence but in the end came to the conclusions we have set out. However the behaviour of Mr Chopra as found by us and the reasons for it (a high degree of incompetence) readily amount to behaviour likely to diminish the trust and confidence that the public places in a barrister or the profession. This is so with or without the elements of knowledge or recklessness specified in the charge.
55. In his closing submissions to us, Mr Sheldon on behalf of Mr Chopra, accepted that Mr Chopra was admitting behaviour which would amount to a breach of Core Duty 5 in any event. The clarity of that submission stood in contrast to the evidence of Mr Chopra himself.
56. Accordingly, before delivering this decision, we drafted an alternative version of Charge 2 excluding references to knowledge and recklessness. That charge reads:-

Statement of Offence

Professional misconduct, contrary to Core Duty 5 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar Standards Board Handbook (version 4.7).

Particulars of Offence

On 8 November 2023, Rajiv Chopra, a barrister, whilst acting for a defendant in a criminal trial, behaved in a way likely to diminish the trust and confidence that the public places in him or the profession, in that, during his closing speech, he made statements about witness evidence that were incorrect and/or misleading, resulting in the Judge sending out the jury and later giving the jury further directions to correct the statements made. The statements included the following:

- (a) When referring to one of the prosecution witnesses, "when he came here, he was wearing glasses ... and they were quite thick. They looked like

prescription glasses". Mr Chopra should not have made these submissions as he had not put these matters to the witness in cross-examination and there was therefore no, or insufficient, evidence to support them.

- (b) When referring to the defendant's attendance at the police station, that "... one of the solicitors ... represented Mr [G]. Obviously, he ... advised Mr [G], 'this is the evidence' and nine out of ten times the solicitors would say: 'You heard the caution says you don't have to say anything. The police is asserting you've done that. They have to prove the case against you. You don't need to do anything' as the judge already told you." Mr Chopra should not have made these submissions as there was no evidence to support them.
- c) When referring to the consequences of a conviction, that "immigration will kick in, he will be deported." This statement was misleading because it suggested that the defendant would automatically be deported if convicted, which was untrue.
- (d) When referring to alleged inconsistencies between the evidence of prosecution witnesses given in court and in their witness statements, that "if you wish, we can provide you the witness statements to read". This statement was untrue because it was not legally permissible to provide the witness statements to the jury.

57. To avoid uncertainty, we asked for this charge to be put to Mr Chopra. He admitted it. It is Charge 3 and is in effect a cutdown version of Charge 2. With the admission to Charge 3 in place we can dismiss Charge 2 on the basis that it has not been proved as presented, elements of knowledge and recklessness having not been made out.

That leaves us with new Charge 3 and we thus have to deal with Mr Chopra for a breach of Core Duty 5 in terms of the new charge.

58. In anticipation of that, there is a further point which we need to deal with and that relates to Mr Chopra's health on the day in question. Mr Chopra's evidence as to his personal circumstances and health is double-edged. If he was not fit to effectively and properly represent his client, then that in itself raises questions of his professionalism.

59. It is curious to us that at no point in his post speech-exchange with the trial judge (or at any other time in the trial) did Mr Chopra raise any issue as to his health. There is no evidence of ill-health before us save the Mr Chopra's own account.

60. It is for Mr Chopra to prove on the balance of probabilities that he was ill on the day of his closing speech. We are not satisfied on the balance of probabilities that any personal circumstances or ill-health being experienced that day were sufficient to cause or explain his conduct before the jury. Even if he was so unfit that he could not professionally represent his client it would afford no excuse. The greater relevance

would be in supporting Mr Chopra's suggestion that his speech is not representative of his usual professionalism in court.

61. Having seen Mr Chopra give evidence to us, about which we have made observations above, we do not accept that his closing speech was an uncharacteristic performance by him. We reject his suggestion that he was just having a particularly bad day.
62. From the testimonials for Mr Chopra which we have seen, he evidently works hard on behalf of his clients and in their defence. He has a professional duty to his clients. However we are of the view that Mr Chopra needs to have a greater understanding of where his duty to his client ends and his duty to the court begins.

Sanction and Reasons

63. When the tribunal came to consider sanctions the BSB provided a document for guidance in which it was noted that Mr Chopra had no previous disciplinary record. This turned out to be incorrect. It was discovered, by chance, that Mr Chopra had in 2023 received a formal rebuke from the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) in respect of the contents of an email he had sent while a solicitor. This did not sit comfortably with the evidence that Mr Chopra had given on oath before the tribunal when he told us that he had not been the subject of a complaint to the BSB before or since. Whilst factually accurate, this did create a false impression.
64. When the previous SRA finding was raised, and after a short adjournment for Mr Sheldon KC to take instructions, Mr Chopra admitted that he had been the subject of the SRA rebuke.

Misconduct Group

65. We turn now to the question of sanction in relation to the now admitted charge relating to the events of that trial. Having heard the submissions of counsel, we are satisfied that the appropriate description of the misconduct with which we are concerned is Misleading the Court under Group F. That is what this case has always been about. The fact that we have found the misleading to be inadvertent does not affect categorisation of the conduct. It is relevant to the seriousness and culpability within that categorisation. If the matter had been deliberate and involved behaviour akin to dishonesty, we would have been looking more towards dishonesty misconduct in Misconduct Group A.

Culpability and Harm

66. We have considered all of the factors listed in the Sanctions Guidance in respect of culpability. In relation to the nature, scope and extent of the misleading, it is significant that in this case there are four instances of misleading conduct within a short closing speech. Further, this was in a professional context and particularly in submissions made to a jury. Submissions made to a judge can immediately be questioned and challenged and a judge is in a far better position than any jury to put any such submissions out of his or her mind if necessary. A jury does not answer

back; it must sit and listen. It is more difficult for a jury to put something they have heard out of their minds. Therefore, the scope for misleading is potentially wider and the care required in addressing a jury is all the greater.

67. Other culpability factors do not add anything in our view. In the light of our observations above, we regard culpability as moderate.
68. We agree with Mr Sheldon KC that the harm occurring is limited. However, this was only because of the skilful handling of these submissions by the trial judge. There had been a serious risk that the trial would have to be aborted, which would have been a far more serious consequence than in fact occurred. In the event that did not arise. Looking then overall at where this lies in Group F, we consider culpability to be moderate with a low degree of harm.

Sanction Range

69. Moving to indicative sanctions, moderate culpability with limited harm does not sit neatly into any of the three Seriousness Ranges. There are features of middle range (moderate culpability) but limited harm. In our judgment, the appropriate sanction would lie towards the lower end of the middle range of seriousness. The indicative sanction is a suspension of 12 months or less and we are looking to the lower end. This was our unanimous view.

Aggravating and Mitigating features

70. We turn then to aggravating and mitigating factors. The aggravating factors include the previous disciplinary involvement with the Solicitors Regulation Authority together with the failure to disclose this, if not actively seeking to suggest that there was no previous disciplinary finding. We have already noted Mr Chopra's lack of insight. He does not seem fully to understand the position in which he has put himself.
71. Moving to mitigating factors, we deal first with the question of the personal circumstances and illness that Mr Chopra says are responsible, at least in part, for what occurred on that day. This is relevant because if the closing speech was a one-off "bad day" that is rather different to a more widespread potential to mislead juries. We were not satisfied that any personal circumstances or ill health being experienced by Mr Chopra on that day were sufficient to cause or explain his conduct before the jury. We are not saying that there were no personal stressors in his life, or that he was not feeling under the weather, or anything similar. We are simply saying that we are not satisfied that those matters are sufficient to explain what occurred on that day. We have already noted that his evidence before us bore similar characteristics to his behaviour that day before the jury with no suggestion of ill-health.
72. The other factor that we need to bear in mind as a mitigating factor is cooperation with the investigation, and it is correct that Mr Chopra has engaged with this investigation fully. To some extent, that is counterbalanced by his not being entirely candid with us about his disciplinary record. But we need to take care about double counting since we have already mentioned this non-disclosure as an aggravating feature.

73. We accept that Mr Chopra has long been willing to admit to the conduct we have found proved. However his continuing lack of insight as to that conduct is troubling.

The need for public protection.

74. Our findings raise a large question mark over Mr Chopra's competence and professionalism as a barrister. The fact that he lacks the insight to fully recognise his professional shortcomings is a further concern. His attempt to paint an incomplete picture of his disciplinary record suggests that he does not recognise the standards that are expected of him.

75. We have come to the conclusion, balancing all of those factors, that a period of suspension is appropriate in this case. But that will not solve the problem. Part of the problem is that Mr Chopra needs to be more professional and better trained for the job that he seeks to undertake.

76. Identifying an appropriate method of re-training for Mr Chopra has protracted this hearing. Initially, at the end of the hearing on 15th May 2026 we raised the possibility of Mr Chopra undergoing a period of mentoring or shadowing with an experienced criminal barrister. Mr Chopra expressed a willingness to undergo such training and confidence that he could arrange it.

77. We required details of the proposed mentor and ordered the immediate interim suspension of Mr Chopra's practising certificate. The proposed mentoring arrangements subsequently submitted by Mr Chopra for our approval were totally unsatisfactory. In essence, they amounted to a repeat of the supervision he had undergone earlier in his career (with the same mentor) and which had resulted in his current unsatisfactory position.

78. We gave time for Mr Chopra to find an alternative mentor but he was unable to do so. This led to the Panel meeting on 30th June 2026 to discuss the way forward. We were inclined to require Mr Chopra to undertake something like the barristers' New Practitioner Programme (NPP) and decided to reconvene with parties present so that representations could be made. We identified a hearing date of 12th August 2026 and invited any alternative suggestions to NPP re-training to be submitted to us by 5th August 2026.

79. It transpired that the potential problem with requiring Mr Chopra to complete the NPP course was that there is pressure on spaces for the 9 hour advocacy component of these courses and Mr Chopra would face eligibility questions as he is not a pupil. Whilst it may be that a specific request from this tribunal to the Inns might help Mr Chopra get a place on the course, that is not guaranteed.

80. The alternative suggested on behalf of Mr Chopra was that he complete an equivalent number of CPD hours (45 hours) with specific requirements. Those requirements would involve:-

- a) at least 20% of these hours being by way of face-to-face course attendance, which is similar to the attended advocacy course requirement of the NPP;
- b) 3 hours training in ethics (as on the NPP);

- c) a proportion specific to criminal practice.

Mr Chopra's return to practice would be conditional upon the satisfactory completion by him of this retraining.

81. We are attracted by this suggestion subject to introducing a requirement that Mr Chopra produce a CPD plan identifying the courses he proposes to attend so that these can be approved in advance by the BSB. In the circumstances of this case we would also require that there be a course dealing specifically with the law of evidence.

Sanction Decision

82. Having identified the misconduct as lying within the middle band of seriousness for misleading the court, albeit towards the lower end, and adjusting for aggravating and mitigating circumstances, we consider that Mr Chopra should be suspended from practice for a minimum of 4 months commencing on 15th May 2026 (when we imposed the interim suspension) such suspension to continue until Mr Chopra provides sufficient proof of completion of the CPD requirements of this Order. This decision was unanimous.

The Order

83. Mr Chopra is suspended from practice for a minimum period of 4 months commencing on 15th May 2026 such suspension to continue until he provides the Bar Standards Board with satisfactory proof that he has completed 45 hours of continuing professional development of which:
- a) at least 20% must include personal face-to-face attendance;
 - b) at least 3 hours must be training in professional ethics at the Bar;
 - c) at least 30 of the 45 hours must be specific to criminal practice and must include a course specific to the law of evidence.

Mr Chopra shall complete a CPD plan identifying the courses he proposes to undertake in compliance with this Order and submit that plan to the Bar Standards Board for advance approval. In the event of any dispute as to whether any proposed course adequately meets the requirements of this Order, the parties are at liberty to refer such dispute to [the Chairman of] this panel for resolution on written representations.

Costs

84. At the end of the hearing on 15th May 2026 the BSB applied for its costs of that hearing. It was pointed out on behalf of Mr Chopra that the Schedule of Costs had only recently been provided and certainly not 24 hours before the commencement of this hearing as required by Regulation E245. Whilst the tribunal has a discretion to order costs (Regulation E244) the requirement for a party applying to serve the schedule under Regulation 245 is mandatory. Absent a valid application for costs we made no order on that application.

85. Following the further hearing on 12 August 2026, the BSB applied for its costs of that hearing in the sum of £660. No “out of time” objection (or any other) could be raised against that application, and we accordingly order Mr Chopra to pay £660 in costs to the BSB.

Dated: 13th August 2026

**HH Nigel Godsmark KC
Chairman of the Tribunal**