

Stephen Supple

CALL/INN: Called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn, October 2002

TYPE OF HEARING: 5 Person Disciplinary Tribunal

DATE OF DECISION: 2nd October 2015

In breach of

Contrary to paragraphs 301(a)(iii) and pursuant to paragraph 901.7 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar of England and Wales (8th Edition) and Core Duty 5 and Core Duty 9 [rC64.1 and rC71].

Details of Offence

Stephen Supple engaged in conduct which was likely to diminish public confidence in the legal profession or otherwise bring the legal profession into disrepute contrary to paragraph 301(a)(iii) of the Code of Conduct in that: i) On or about the 11th March 2013 he took without permission or prior warning, via direct debit, the sum of £1,978 from the bank account of his lay client which he paid to himself; ii) he subsequently failed either to provide any explanation to his lay client as to why he had taken such money from his account or to return such monies to his lay client.

Mr Supple engaged in conduct which was likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in him and in the profession in that he failed to respond to requests from his lay client to return the sum of £1,978 which Mr Supple had transferred from his lay client's bank account when not authorised to do. Such requests were made, among other things, by emails sent on the 15th February 2014 and the 1st March 2014.

Mr Supple failed to provide the information required by the Bar Standards Board as set out in the letter dated the 11th December 2014 (and/or the reminder email dated the 22nd December 2014), whether by the required date of the 5th January 2015 or at all, such information being required as part of a regulatory investigation by the Bar Standards Board into a complaint by his lay client. Mr Supple's failure constituted a breach of the requirements of Regulator rC64.1 to provide such information and a breach of his duty to be open and co-operative with his regulator, contrary to Core Duty 9.

Mr Supple failed to give the Legal Ombudsman all reasonable assistance required in connection with the investigation of a complaint against him. This constituted a breach of Regulation rC71 and/or was behaviour likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in him or in the profession. The particulars of the failure to provide reasonable assistance are that he: i) failed to reply to a letter sent by the Legal Ombudsman on the 26th June 2014 to Mr Supple at his Chambers address, explaining the complaint and asking him to contact the Legal Ombudsman to provide specified information and documentation; ii) failed to

respond to a further letter sent on the 9th July 2014 asking him to contact the Legal Ombudsman and provide the previously requested information and documentation; iii) failed to respond to an email sent to him on the 25th July 2014 which asked him to make contact with the Legal Ombudsman; and iv) failed to contact the Legal Ombudsman following a message left on his mobile telephone on the 1st August 2014, asking him to contact the Legal Ombudsman.

Mr Supple failed to provide the information required by the Bar Standards Board as set out in the letters dated the 15th and 30th September 2014, whether by the required date of the 7th October 2014 or at all, such information being required as part of a regulatory investigation by the Bar Standards Board into a complaint by a lay client. Mr Supple's failure constituted a breach of the requirements of Regulation rC64.1 to provide such information and a breach of his duty to be open and co-operative with his regulator, contrary to Core Duty 9.

SENTENCE: Three Suspensions of 1 month and two suspensions of 3 months to run concurrently. Prohibited for accepting or carrying out any public access instructions for 12 months.

STATUS: Final.