

# Clare Godden

## Employee

### 7255966

[Agreement Date: 17 December 2024](#)

## Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 17 December 2024

Published date: 9 January 2025

## Firm details

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

Name: Goodhand and Forsyth Solicitors Ltd

Address(es): 76 Station Road, Redhill RH1 1PL

Firm ID: 8004796

## Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

### Decision details

#### 1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Clare Godden, a former employee of Goodhand and Forsyth Solicitors Ltd (the Firm), agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of her conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA):

- a. to the SRA making an order under section 43 of the Solicitors Act 1974 (a section 43 order) in relation to Clare Godden that, from the date of this agreement:
  - i. no solicitor shall employ or remunerate her in connection with his 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



- vi. no recognised body or manager or employee of such body shall permit her to have an interest in the body except in accordance with the SRA's prior permission
- b. to the publication of this agreement
- c. she will pay the costs of the investigation of £300.

## **2. Summary of facts**

2.1 Clare Godden was an employee of the Firm, previously known as Goodhand and Forsyth, for 35 years. Her last role was as a conveyancing executive. In 2024 the Firm became aware of an anomaly on a commercial property where the Firm had acted for the buyer. The property was shown to have a charge date of 27 November 2019 at the Land Registry and 16 March 2020 at Companies House.

2.2 Following an internal investigation the Firm found further similar anomalies from registrations in 2020. The review showed that Ms Godden had filed the charges for these properties after the 21 day deadline required by HMRC. After this deadline HMRC would only accept registration of the charge with a Court Order allowing the extension of time.

2.3 The Firm's findings were put to Ms Godden on 26 March 2024 who confirmed she had amended the charge dates on the copy mortgage deeds sent to Companies House after missing the 21 day deadline for submission.

2.4 Ms Godden was dismissed by the Firm on 26 March 2024.

## **3. Admissions**

3.1 Clare Godden makes the following admissions which the SRA accepts:

- a. That she changed the charging dates on five deeds that were submitted to Companies House in 2020.
- b. That the falsification of documents involved conduct which means that it is undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice.
- c. The documents published at Companies House could mislead third parties who wished to rely on them.
- d. That her conduct set out above was dishonest.

## **4. Why a section 43 order is appropriate**

4.1 The SRA's Enforcement Strategy and its guidance on how it regulates non-authorised persons, sets out its approach to using section 43 orders to control where a non-authorised person can work.

4.2 When considering whether a section 43 order is appropriate in this matter, the SRA has taken into account the admissions made by Clare

Godden and the following mitigation which she has put forward:

- a. Ms Godden says she had no experience in commercial property transactions.
- b. Ms Godden did not believe the training and support she received were adequate for this role

4.3 The SRA and Clare Godden agree that a section 43 order is appropriate because:

- a. Ms Godden is not a solicitor
- b. her employment or remuneration at the Firm means that she was involved in a legal practice
- c. by falsifying documents Clare Godden has occasioned or been party to an act or default in relation to a legal practice. Ms Godden's conduct in relation to that act or default makes it undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice.

4.4 Clare Godden's conduct makes it undesirable for her to be involved in a legal practice because it demonstrates she was willing to create misleading records to circumnavigate the processes of HMRC. A person willing to do this is not suitable to work in legal practise. If such conduct were to be repeated in future, it would pose a risk to clients and public trust.

## **5. Publication**

5.1 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory process. Clare Godden agrees to the publication of this agreement.

## **6. Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement**

6.1 Clare Godden agrees that she will not deny the admissions made in this agreement or act in any way which is inconsistent with it.

## **7. Costs**

7.1 Clare Godden agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £300.

Such costs are due within 28 days of a statement of costs due being issued by the SRA.

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