



Disciplinary Tribunal Order

Disciplinary Tribunal held on 22 April 2021

In the matter of Amanda Towers 8015428

Misconduct

Amanda Towers' conduct was found to be in breach of AAT's *Code of Professional Ethics* and to have posed a risk to the public and/or undermine public confidence in the Association and its members as follows:

1. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to have in place adequate Anti-Money Laundering procedures
2. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to carry out an adequate firm-wide money laundering risk assessment
3. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to have in place adequate Anti-Money Laundering training for staff members
4. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to carry out any or any adequate review of Anti-Money Laundering procedures
5. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to carry out any or any adequate client due diligence in respect of one or more clients
6. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to adequately record the carrying out of client due diligence in respect of one or more clients
7. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to issue any or any adequate letters of engagement to one or more clients
8. For an unknown period up until on or around 21 August 2018 she failed to have in place any or any adequate continuity of practice agreement

9. On or around 14 August 2017 she submitted a completed AAT Licensed Accountant renewal form to AAT, wherein she answered "yes" to each of the following questions:

- a) "If you use subcontractors, do you have written arrangements specifying responsibilities, supervision and requirements for independence, confidentiality and competence?"
- b) "Are you carrying out customer due diligence on your clients including identifying and verifying who your clients are (including beneficial owners where relevant)?"
- c) "Are copies of identification and verification evidence on file?"
- d) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures for...reporting knowledge or suspicion of money laundering?"
- e) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures for...record keeping?"
- f) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures for...internal controls?"
- g) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures for...risk assessment and management?"
- h) "Are records maintained of matters reported to the MLRO and any action taken?"
- i) "Are procedures in place to cover external reports to the NCA?"
- j) "Do you have a quality control process to ensure everyone is complying with these policies and procedures?"
- k) "Have all principals and staff received anti-money laundering training?"
- l) "I provide letters of engagement to all clients"
- m) "I deliver my services in compliance with the Provision of services Regulations"

10. Her answers to the questions set out in paragraph 9 above were:

- a) Misleading
- b) Dishonest, in that you knew them not to be true

11. On or around 18 June 2018 she submitted a completed licence renewal application online to AAT, wherein she answered "yes" to each of the following questions:

- a) "If you use subcontractors, do you have written arrangements specifying responsibilities, supervision and requirements for independence, confidentiality and competence?"
- b) "Are you carrying out customer due diligence on your clients including identifying and verifying who your clients are (including beneficial owners where relevant)?"
- c) "Do you retain copies of client identification and verification evidence on file?"
- d) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures for reporting knowledge or suspicion of money laundering?"
- e) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures for in place for record keeping?"
- f) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures in place for internal controls?"
- g) "Do you have appropriate policies or procedures in place to risk assess a client?"
- h) Do you have a quality control process to ensure all principals and staff are complying with your firm's money laundering policies and procedures?
- i) "I provide letters of engagement to all clients"
- j) "I deliver my services in compliance with the Provision of Services Regulations"

12. Her answers to the questions set out in paragraph 11 above were:

- a) Misleading
- b) Dishonest, in that you knew them not to be true

13. Between 17 December 2018 and 25 March 2019, she failed to deal in an open and cooperative manner with AAT in respect of a proposed action plan arising from the Practice Assurance Review conduct on 21 August 2018.

Findings

The Disciplinary Tribunal considered that Ms Towers' actions in relation to all allegations amounted to misconduct.

The Tribunal found that Ms Towers had breached AAT's *Code of Professional Ethics* and that her actions were likely to impact public confidence in the Association and bring the Association and the profession into disrepute.

The Disciplinary Tribunal took account of AAT's submissions on sanction and accepted the advice of a legal assessor. The Tribunal had regard for the *Indicative Sanctions Guidance* and referred to the purpose of imposing a sanction, which is to protect the public, maintain confidence in the profession and ensure high standards of professional conduct by members of the Association.

The Tribunal considered the following to be aggravating features:

- Dishonesty
- Lack of insight
- Lack of remorse
- Her conduct through the investigation and the proceedings

The following were considered as mitigating features:

- Previous good character
- Positive testimonials provided by Ms Towers, with the reservations noted above.
- Evidence that Ms Towers had eventually responded to the proposed action plan arising from the Practice Assurance Review conducted on 21 August 2018.

The Tribunal considered the available sanctions in ascending order of severity and considered that the nature of the misconduct found represented a serious departure from professional standards and honesty and that the allegations were at the most serious end of the scale.

Order

Amanda Towers is hereby:

1. Expelled; the term of the expulsion is indefinite
2. Ordered to pay costs of £10,000.