

**CLASSIFICATION – PUBLIC**

**SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY  
Minutes of the SRA Board meeting  
held on 13 July 2016 at 13:30  
at The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN  
PUBLIC**

Present: Enid Rowlands (Chair)  
Julia Black  
Sharon Darcy  
Jane Furniss  
David Heath  
Geoff Nicholls  
Paul Marsh  
Barry Matthews  
Dame Denise Platt  
Deep Sagar  
David Willis

In attendance: Paul Philip, Richard Collins, Jane Malcolm, David Middleton, Robert Loughlin, Juliet Oliver, Crispin Passmore and Dominic Tambling.

**1 APOLOGIES**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including the journalists in attendance. Apologies had been received from Chris Randall, Shamit Saggarr and Elaine Williams.

**2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2016**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2016 were agreed.

**3 MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no matters arising that were not covered on the agenda. The Board reviewed the action log and noted that the update on the research programme was item 7 on the agenda.

3.2 The Chair noted that interests were as previously declared and available to view on the SRA website. Members would declare any particular interest in an individual item if necessary.

**4 CHAIR'S UPDATE**

4.1 The Chair thanked David Heath, David Willis and Geoff Nicholas for attending the Meet the Board event in Bournemouth on 30 June 2016. They reported that it had been particularly interesting because a number of compliance officers had attended.

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- 4.2 The Chair reminded attendees that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 13 September 2016 and also that the 8 March 2017 meeting would be held in Cardiff.

### **5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

- 5.1 Paul Philip introduced his report and drew the Board's attention to paragraphs 4 to 7 which set out some of the engagement work which was under way in relation to the Looking to the Future consultation. We were also working to raise awareness of the introduction of the new approach to continuing competence on 1 November 2016.
- 5.2 Preparation for the Practising Certificate Renewal Exercise 2016 were well under way and include review of all of the renewal forms to ensure that the language is in line with the "writing the SRA way" communication strategy.
- 5.3 The SRA launched its wellbeing campaign during Mental Health Awareness week. Paul Marsh thanked the SRA for its support with LawCare, of which he was a trustee. Paul Philip noted that we had had a successful and enjoyable day at Pride in Birmingham on 28 May 2016 and thanked Jane Malcolm and her team for their work on this and their participation on the day.

### **6 2016/17 PRACTISING FEES AND COMPENSATION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS FINAL DECISIONS**

- 6.1 Richard Collins explained the approval process for these fee and contribution levels. TLS Council needed to agree the total amount required to be raised in the following year, which it was doing that day, the SRA Board needed to agree the fee and contribution levels and then the Legal Services Board's needed to agree that the figures were based on the correct regulatory approach.
- 6.2 The Board were therefore asked to make the five determinations set out in the paper. David Wills, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, noted that the reductions in some of the fees were the culmination of a good deal of work done by the Committee and the Executive to reduce our portion of the total TLS Group funding requirement.
- 6.3 In response to questions from Board members Richard Collins said that a review of the fee structure was under way and the Board would receive further information in 12 to 18 months time.
- 6.4 The Board made its final decisions on Practising Fees and Compensation Fund contributions apportionment for 2016/17, subject to the decision of the Law Society Council on the total funding requirement to be made on 14 July 2016 and the approval of the Legal Services Board, and approved:
- (a) the Practising Certificate Fee Determination [2016];
  - (b) the Recognised Body and Recognised Sole Practice Fee Determination [2016]
  - (c) the Licensed Body Fee Determination [2016]
  - (d) the Determination of Compensation Fund Contributions [2016]

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- (e) the Determination of Compensation Fund Contributions for Licensed Bodies [2016].

### **7 RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2015/16: UPDATE**

- 7.1 Crispin Passmore introduced the paper which provided the Board with an update on each of the research projects included in the 2015/16 research programme, following the overview provided at the 2 December 2015 meeting.
- 7.2 The projects listed covered operational as well as regulatory reform areas and work was under way on the following year's programme which would be brought to the Board later in the year. The team was in close contact with the Legal Services Board (LSB) and other regulators to identify gaps in knowledge and coordinate research. He agreed that consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion issues should always be part of the commissioning process.
- 7.3 Board members suggested that the apparent narrowing in scope of the research project on vulnerable consumers contradicting the recommendation of the recent Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) report should be looked at again. Crispin Passmore agreed and explained that the paper had been written before the CMA report had been published. In relation to that particular project it had been decided that a narrowing of focus would provide a better insight into the needs of vulnerable consumers and that lessons learned could then be more broadly applied. The CMA's views would though be fed into the development of the following year's programme.
- 7.4 The Board noted the update on the research programme.

### **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 8.1 There was no other business. The Chair thanked members for their contributions to the meeting.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT THE GRANGE HOLBORN HOTEL, 50-60 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, WC1B 4AR COMMENCING AT 13:30**

## SRA BOARD

### Solicitors Regulation Authority Action Log: Public - 13 September 2016

Meeting date	Paragraph	Action	Owner	Date for action
1 June 2016	6.2	Provide the Board with information on when we would be able to say that we have improved on the current gradings against the regulatory standards.	Paul Philip	End 2016
13 Jul 2016	7.3	Include consumer research on SRA Research Programme	Crispin Passmore	December 2016

### Solicitors Regulation Authority Board Record of Actions Completed: Public

Meeting date	Paragraph	Action	Owner	Date completed
2 Dec 2015	7.4	Update the Board on SRA Research Programme	Crispin Passmore	13 July 2016