

SRA BOARD
25 October 2017



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Chief Executive's Report

Purpose

- 1 This report sets out progress against our strategic objectives and provides an update on operational performance.
 - Section 1: reports on our priorities and progress against the 2016/17 Business Plan.
 - Section 2: provides an update on operational performance.
 - Section 3: provides details on publication and engagement activity.

If you have any questions about this paper please contact: Paul Philip, Chief Executive, paul.philip@sra.org.uk, 0121 329 6940.

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Section 1: Priorities for 2016/17

- 2 This section provides an update focusing on developments and progress against our 2016/17 Business Plan.

Practising Certificate Renewal Exercise

- 3 The 2017/18 PCRE was successfully launched on 2 October 2017 with a deadline of 31 October 2017. Minimal changes were completed to the IT system given the priority has been to focus on developing a future PCRE service as part of the Modernising IT programme.
- 4 As of 15 October, 21,737 firm renewal forms had been submitted compared to 18,644 applications in 2016. 13,888 practising certificates had been awarded compared to 12,713 practising certificates in 2016. The IT infrastructure is being continually monitored to ensure that it is running at optimal performance. There has been an increase in calls received in the Contact Centre, but these have been standard queries, for example, fee queries and guidance with using MySRA. The Contact Centre aim is to continue to answer 80% of calls in 20 seconds during this peak period.

Progress against our 2016/17 Business Plan

- 5 We are making good progress to achieve the objectives set in our 2016/17 Business Plan. Below I highlight key areas of development to note against each Business Plan objective.

Objective 1: We will reform our regulation to enable growth and innovation in the market and to strike the right balance between reducing regulatory burdens and ensuring consumer protection	On track
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- 6 We are on track to deliver this objective.

Switching Regulators - waiving run-off cover requirements

- 7 On 28 September, the LSB approved our application to remove the six years of run-off cover required under the SRA's existing Indemnity Insurance Rules, when an insured firm becomes regulated by another approved regulator that has signed a bilateral protocol with us. This follows Board approval at the meeting in March.

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Looking to the Future Consultations

- 8 We launched the next two Looking to the Future consultations on 27 September: [phase two of our Handbook](#) reforms and [better information, more choice](#). They are both due to close on 20 December. During the consultation period, we will be building on the extensive pre-engagement on our thinking, including the focus groups with the public in Manchester around our recent Board meeting. We are undertaking a wide-ranging programme of engagement, including speaking engagements at conferences and meetings with representative bodies and reference groups. In addition, we will continue to use technology to reach a wider audience, through periscope session, blogs, Twitter polls and videos.
- 9 We are putting a particular emphasis on engaging with consumers, especially in relation to the information that they will receive to help them choose legal services provider. For example, we are appearing at the AdviceUK and Citizens Advice annual conferences. We are also hosting a roundtable event to discuss our proposals with representatives from organisations including Which?, the Refugee Council, Resolver, Citizens Advice, Mencap, the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner and the Royal National Institute of Blind People.
- 10 We have already held consumer focus groups, which discussed price transparency and firms' complaints history. We used a case study to show how our proposals might make a difference. We are also commissioning research to understand what information individual consumers need on complaints, protections, quality and redress.

Objective 2: We will work with solicitors and firms to raise standards and uphold core professional principles	On track
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- 11 We are on track to deliver this objective.

Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE)

- 12 The responses to our 'Invitation to Submit an Outline Solution' have now been received from the organisations bidding to be appointed as the SQE assessment organisation. We are currently evaluating the bids and meeting the bidders. The tender process continues to work to the following high-level timetable:

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Date	Activity
15 June 2017	Launch of the first stage of the sourcing process, the Invitation to Submit an Outline Solution (ISOS)
1 December 2017	Launch of the second stage of the sourcing process, the Invitation to Submit a Detailed Solution (ISDS) to shortlisted bidders
23 March - 23 April 2018	Contract award decision and agreement of final contractual terms with selected bidder

Objective 3: We will improve our operational performance and make justifiable decisions promptly, effectively and efficiently	On track
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13 We are on track to deliver this objective.

Modernising IT Programme

14 We completed the full rollout of Windows 10 and Office 365 to all SRA and Shared Services staff by 5 October with a high level of user satisfaction. This is a major success of our MIT Programme. Work continues to progress to plan on the rest of the Programme. Detailed updates continue to be presented to Finance and Audit Committee at every meeting.

Objective 4: We will work with our stakeholders to improve the quality of our services and their experience when using them	On track
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15 We are on track to deliver this objective.

Social Media Update

16 Our social media presence continues to expand rapidly. Average monthly social media impressions are up 47 percent from the same period last year (1 November to 30 September) to 626,000. Average monthly social engagements (clicks, likes, shares, video views, etc.) are up 600 percent

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Section 2: Operational Performance

KPIs

17 Below are the KPI results for August:

- 94% of conduct matters closed within 12 months of receipt in August against a target of 93%.
- 100% of Compensation Fund claims were closed within 12 months against a target of 90%.
- 95% of medium / high risk applications closed within 3 months in Firm Based Authorisation against a target of 90%. We achieved all of our KPIs in Authorisation in August.

Section 3: External Developments, Publications and Engagement Activity

Stakeholder Engagement

- 18 Our ongoing engagement programme with stakeholders continues. We had a successful presence at the three party political conferences, with a record eight events including panel and roundtable discussions on a wide range of issues, attended by hundreds of delegates. 14 senior politicians took part including new Treasury Select Committee Chair Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Work Minister Damien Hinds MP, PPS in the Ministry of Justice Lucy Frazer MP, Shadow Lord Chancellor Richard Burgon MP, Shadow Solicitor General Nick Thomas-Symonds, and Liberal Democrat Chief Whip Alistair Carmichael MP. We achieved extensive social media reach with over 160,000 twitter impressions.
- 19 We attended the International Conference of Legal Regulators in Singapore where we moderated or spoke at plenary sessions on legal regulation in the age of data; anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism; disruption in legal services and success stories in risk based regulation.
- 20 On 19 September, we held a 'keeping your firm healthy' event in Cardiff, attended by around 34 solicitors and compliance officers. We spoke about good financial management, the published consultation on 'better information, more choice' and legal workforce health and well-being. The feedback received from the event was positive with delegates asking similar events and for them to be held in Wales

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