

**SRA BOARD**

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**SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY  
Minutes of the SRA Board meeting  
held on 6 March 2019 at 10.00  
at the St David's Hotel, Cardiff, CF10 5SD.**

*Subject to final approval by the SRA Board at its meeting on 23 May 2019*

Present: Anna Bradley (Chair)  
Sharon Darcy  
David Heath  
Peter Higson  
Paul Loft  
Barry Matthews  
Geoff Nicholas  
Dame Denise Platt  
Chris Randall  
Elaine Williams  
Tony Williams  
David Willis

In attendance: Paul Philip, Mark Draisey, Robert Loughlin, Jane Malcolm, Juliet Oliver, Chris Handford, Dominic Tambling

**1 APOLOGIES**

1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Selina Ullah.

**2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2019**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**3 MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no matters arising that would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda and all actions due had been completed or were in hand.

3.2 Interests were as previously declared and available to view on the SRA website. Members would declare any additional particular interest in an individual item if necessary.

**4 CHAIR'S UPDATE**

4.1 The Chair noted that this was the third year running that the Board had met in Cardiff and asked Board members for their feedback on the stakeholder dinner that had been held the previous evening. Board members agreed that discussion with people from higher education, the assembly, key agencies, the profession and

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consumers bodies at the dinner had been useful and should continue. It was also important to ensure that this engagement was maintained outside of such formal events.

- 4.2 The Chair noted that she was continuing to discuss future arrangements with Board members. Consideration was being given to how Board meetings were structured and managed, and how Board could be much more transparent. The Board would have the opportunity to discuss this collectively in more detail in the near future.

## 5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Chief Executive Officer introduced his report and covered a number of issues for noting. These included: the award of the Service Mark Accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service to the Contact Centre in January; the publication of our Annual Authorisation and Monitoring Report for the education courses we oversee for the academic year 2016-17; and progress on our work with Nesta on the Regulators Pioneer Fund which will advance the development of technological solutions to access to legal services.
- 5.2 The Board agreed to delegate to the Chair the appointment of the SRA's member of the Board of the Solicitors Indemnity Fund Limited. The Board also congratulated the Contact Centre on being awarded the Service Mark accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service.

## 6 MODERNISING IT PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 6.1 The Board was asked to consider an update on the Modernising IT Programme including the current status and activity of the Programme and the plan through to completion. The report covered the ongoing close engagement with the public and the profession as systems are designed to meet their needs.
- 6.2 The Board noted the extensive benefits and components which the Programme had delivered to date and discussed the revised timing for the balance of the programme, particularly the operational systems. It also considered the progress towards building an 'in house' IT and development team. The Board discussed the proposed plan at a high level and noted that the Finance and Audit Committee would carry out a more detailed review.

## 7 THE SRA'S PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE AND COMPENSATION FUND ARRANGEMENTS – OUR WAY FORWARD POST CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Board was asked to consider the way forward, following consultation in March 2018, on proposals that would change our professional indemnity insurance (PII) requirements for authorised firms and how we operate the Compensation Fund.
- 7.2 The Board considered an early overview of responses to the consultation along with analysis on the PII market commissioned from an external agency. Board

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members discussed the overall direction of travel and which areas required further work.

- 7.3 The Board agreed recommendations for the next stages of this work. A further paper with recommendations for final decision would be brought to the Board later in the year.

**8 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CHARTER: PROGRESS REPORT**

- 8.1 The Board considered progress on developing a Public Engagement Charter. The Charter would provide a shop front for everything a member of the public might need to know about us and would also set out our commitment to customer service. It would also link through to key documents providing further information about our work.

- 8.2 Board members noted the extensive engagement activity which had been undertaken in developing the Charter so far. Feedback from the public and a wide range of agencies was consistently supportive. The Board agreed that the draft Charter should be finalised, including some amendments to be made following the suggestions of Board members, and published later in the year.

**9 REGULATORY CHANGES REQUIRED IN THE EVENT OF A NO-DEAL BREXIT**

- 9.1 The Board was asked to consider changes to our regulatory arrangements that would be required in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.
- 9.2 The Board noted that we had held a consultation on proposed changes to the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme (QLTS) which arose from the need to remove preferential exemption rights from the QLTS assessments for EU lawyers in the event of a no deal Brexit. All of the respondents to the consultation except one had agreed with our proposals. The Board was therefore being asked to agree to rule changes which would allow any qualified lawyer from outside the UK to apply to us for recognition of their prior qualification or experience. The Board also noted the implications of a no-deal Brexit, and transitional arrangements, for Registered European Lawyers and Exempt European Lawyers.
- 9.3 The Board agreed to make the SRA Regulatory Arrangements (EU Exit) (Amendment) Regulations and to agree to delegate authority to the Chair to revoke the rules in the event that a deal is agreed or amend them in the event that there is a no-deal exit later than 29 March 2019. The Board also agreed to delegate authority to the Chair to make any necessary amendments to the rules in the event that amending legislation to introduce special arrangements for Swiss lawyers is introduced before exit day.

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#### **10 STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS COMMENCEMENT ORDER**

- 10.1 The Board was asked to consider the commencement of the rules and regulations that make up the new SRA Standards and Regulations and to revoke a number of the rules and regulations in the current SRA Handbook.
- 10.2 The Board noted that we had published the new SRA Standards and Regulations along with our new Enforcement Strategy and supporting topic guides on our website in February 2019. Board members discussed the work that remained to be done to ensure that all of the necessary provisions were in place before the new Standards and Regulations could be implemented, including the provision of a register of regulatory information and range of supportive information for both the public and the profession. The Board agreed that in order to give those we regulate sufficient notice and time to prepare, the new Standards and Regulations would be implemented in November 2019.
- 10.3 The Board agreed to make the SRA Commencement and Revocation Rules [2019] which would come into force on 25 November 2019.

#### **11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 11.1 The Board received an update from committee chairs in relation to committee meetings that had taken place since the last Board meeting.
- 11.2 The Chair thanked Board members. There was no other business. The Board would next meet for its away day on Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 April at Vintry and Mercer, EC4V 2AU.