

Research and reports

Last updated July 2019

For alternative formats or historical reports, please contact us [\[/home/contact-us/\]](#).

Open all [\[#\]](#)

Annual reports

Upholding professional standards

Upholding professional standards 2017/18 [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/upholding-professional-standards-2017-2018/\]](#)

Annual review

Annual review 2017/18 [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/review-2017-18/\]](#) Annual review 2016/17 [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/review-2016-17/\]](#) Annual review 2015/16 [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/review-2015-16/\]](#) Annual review 2013/14 [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/review-2013-2014/\]](#)

Research publications

Advocacy in the solicitors' profession [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/advocacy-in-the-solicitors-profession/\]](#)

August 2019

This research was informed by an online survey taken by 2,830 individual solicitors and 851 firms. It looks specifically at advocacy in the profession within the context of the different areas of law of advocacy, and was designed to cover a wide range of topics.

First tier complaints report [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/first-tier-complaints-report/\]](#)

July 2019

Solicitors have a duty to provide a good standard of service, as we set out in our mandatory Principles and as set out in the Legal Services Act. Complaints are an important indicator of service quality. We ask firms to report annually to us on the number of complaints they receive from their clients and they resolve.

Understanding implementation of our approach to continuing competence [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/continuing-competence/\]](#)

July 2019

This report looks at how our new Continuing Competency regime has been adopted by law firms. It is part of an on-going process to make sure all solicitors we regulate continue to keep their competencies up to date and thus provide a proper standard of service.

SRA Transparency Rules: Web Sweep Report [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/web-sweep/\]](#)

June 2019

The first such web sweeps took place during March/April 2019. The following report outlines the findings of these sweeps, and what follow-up action we will be taking as a result.

A thematic review of trust and company service providers [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/aml-thematic-review/\]](#)

May 2019

A thematic review about solicitors that carry out trust and company services work and their compliance with the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017.

Residential conveyancing thematic report [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/residential-conveyancing-thematic-report/\]](#)

March 2019

A thematic review to help us better understand how firms are delivering residential conveyancing services on a day-to-day basis, and whether they are fulfilling their obligations to their clients.

January 2019

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017. This reflects the higher education academic year.

Price transparency in the legal services market: a study of small businesses with legal issues [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/price-transparency/](#)]

October 2018

The survey explored how small businesses choose and use legal and other professional service providers to address problems relating to debt recovery and human resources (HR) matters.

Quality of Criminal Advocacy [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/criminal-advocacy/](#)]

June 2018

To help us better understand the nature and scale of any problem we jointly commissioned, with the Bar Standards Board, an independent report into the views of the judiciary on current standards. We also conducted a thematic review into law firm practices in this area.

Encouraging innovation: transparency about our waiver decisions (PDF 14 pages, 259KB) [[/globalassets/documents/sra/research/waivers-innovation.pdf?version=4a1ac0](#)]

June 2018

While we set out the standards we expect of solicitors and firms, we have always allowed some of our rules to be waived in certain circumstances where this is judged to be in the public interest. Where we grant a waiver the individual or firm does not need to comply with the specific rule or rules to which the waiver applies. Our Encouraging innovation report provides a summary of our approach to granting waivers, including the number granted over the past three years and which areas of our rules these concerned. It also provides more detail on waivers granted, and to which firms, as during the piloting of our new Innovation Space initiative. Under our new waivers approach we will in future publish more information on all waiver decisions, to make sure these decisions are as transparent as possible.

Better information in the legal services market [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/better-information/](#)]

June 2018

Beginning in 2014, our 'Looking to the Future' programme seeks to make sure we regulate solicitors and law firms in the right way. This means a sharp focus on what matters: the high professional standards that mean we can remove outdated bureaucracy constraints and make it easier for firms to provide the legal services that the public and small businesses need.

Impact assessment of the deregulation of the prescribed SRA minimum salary for trainees [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/minimum-salary-trainees/](#)]

May 2018

In 2014, we removed the minimum salary levels for trainee solicitors. The previous levels of prescribed salary were replaced with a requirement for trainees to be paid at least the national minimum or living wage. We thought salaries should be set by market forces and the profession itself and that this could help increase the number of training contracts and access to the profession.

Evaluating our reforms: Accountants' reports [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/evaluating-reforms-accountants-reports/](#)]

May 2018

This report sets out the changes we have introduced so far to the accountant's report requirements, evaluates the impact of these changes, provides examples of reports submitted to us: some that provide us with the information we need to decide whether to take a matter forward and some where we think improvements could be made.

[Impact evaluation of SRA's regulatory reform programme](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/abs-evaluation/]

April 2018

We commissioned the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES) to undertake an early stage impact evaluation of the introduction of Alternative Business Structures (ABSs) and Multi-disciplinary practices (MDPs), and changes to the separate business rule.

[Payment Protection Insurance](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/payment-protection-insurance/]

April 2018

Our thematic review on mis-sold payment protection insurance (PPI)

[Understanding consumer experiences of conveyancing legal services](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/conveyancing-legal-services/]

March 2018

We commissioned IFF Research to conduct independent research involving 1,501 people who had bought or sold a property during the previous two years.

[Preventing Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/preventing-money-laundering-financing-terrorism/]

March 2018

The legal profession plays a vital role in tackling money laundering. Solicitors handle large sums of client money and the reputation of the profession can give a sense of credibility to any transaction carried out through a solicitor's firm.

[Risk assessment: Anti-money laundering and terrorist financing](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/aml-risk-assessment/]

March 2018

This document sets out information on money laundering and terrorist financing risk that we consider relevant to those we supervise.

[Price transparency in the legal services market](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/price-transparency-legal-services-market/]

January 2018

We conducted this research to inform our thinking on whether we should make firms publish price information, and if so, how. Specifically, we sought to identify what type of information would be most useful for firms to publish, and how firms should present this information to consumers.

[Research into the experiences and effectiveness of solicitors' first tier complaints handling processes](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/first-tier-complaints/]

December 2017

Complaints can be an important indicator of service quality and we ask firms to report annually to us on the numbers of complaints they receive from their clients.

[Authorisation and monitoring activity September 2015 to August 2016 \(PDF 24 pages, 706KB\)](#) [/globalassets/documents/sra/research/authorisation-monitoring-2015-2016.pdf?version=4a1ac4]

December 2017

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016. This reflects the higher education academic year.

[Personal injury](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/personal-injury-thematic-review/]

December 2017

This PI project is one of the ways in which we are increasing our understanding of this part of the legal sector and working to improve the experience for the users of legal services.

[Unlocking the benefits of diversity](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/unlocking-benefits-diversity/]

October 2017

We wanted to understand what is being done, and what can be done, to improve the representation of female and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) solicitors in senior roles such as partners or directors.

[Mapping advantages and disadvantages: Diversity in the legal profession in England and Wales](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/diversity-legal-profession/]

October 2017

We commissioned independent quantitative research on solicitor career progression and how it is influenced by gender and ethnicity. The work, conducted by the University of Leeds and Newcastle University Business School, used our data from 1970 to 2016 to undertake a statistical analysis of how solicitors' careers have progressed since admission to the Roll.

[Experiences of consumers who may be vulnerable in family law](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/vulnerable-consumers/]

March 2017

From the perspective of legal firms and consumers, this research explores the accessibility, cost and quality of family law services in the context of recent legal aid reforms. The findings offer insight into the experiences of potentially vulnerable users of family law services.

[Asylum report: The quality of legal service provided to asylum seekers](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/asylum-seekers-report/]

December 2016

In this report, we set out the results of our thematic asylum project (the project). This review was undertaken in the light of the findings of independent research we commissioned in 2014, reported in the, 'Quality of legal services for asylum seekers', published in January 2016 (the research paper).

[An assessment of the market for Personal Injury](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/pi-report/]

October 2016

Our report assessing Personal Injury (PI) legal services has provided us with a detailed and up to date understanding of how this market is functioning following the introduction of legislative reforms under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO).

[Authorisation and monitoring activity September 2014 to August 2015 \(PDF 21 pages 898KB\)](#) [/globalassets/documents/sra/research/monitoring.pdf?version=4a1ad2]

September 2016

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015. This reflects the higher education academic year.

[Solicitors' professional standards \(A Question of Trust\)](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/question-trust/]

July 2016

We commissioned academics from University College London to help us develop and delivery a survey of solicitors to test their approach to ethical and regulatory scenarios. That

work led to a much wider campaign called A Question of Trust in which we asked solicitors and the public how serious they thought different issues were, such as misusing client money, mishandling clients confidential information or being rude to clients.

[Anti money laundering report \(PDF 37 pages, 316K\) \[/globalassets/documents/sra/research/anti-money-laundering-report.pdf?version=4a1ab0\]](#)

May 2016

In September 2014, we announced our plan to undertake a thematic review of anti money laundering (AML) compliance by solicitors. The principal aim was to gain knowledge and understanding of the AML compliance policies, procedures and controls implemented by a wide range of law firms, and determine how effectively firms were managing risks in this area.

[Independent regulation of solicitors: Public opinion poll findings \(PDF 11 pages, 552K\) \[/globalassets/documents/sra/research/independence-polling-headline-findings-january-2016-comres.pdf?version=4a1ab2\]](#)

February 2016

ComRes interviewed 1,810 adults in England and Wales online, in mid-January 2016, about their views on the regulation of solicitors. The poll found widespread support for the idea of solicitors being regulated independently (82 per cent), compared to just 6 per cent of adults in England and Wales who say that solicitors should be self-regulated.

[Download the independent regulation of solicitors data tables \(PDF 20 pages, 264K\) \[/globalassets/documents/sra/research/independence-polling-findings-data-tables-january-2016-comres.pdf?version=4a1ab2\]](#) [Quality of legal services for asylum seekers \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/asylum-report/\]](#)

January 2016

The SRA commissioned a consortium, led by Migration Work CIC, to undertake research on the quality of legal advice provided to asylum seekers. The study involved speaking with 123 asylum seekers, an online survey of solicitors, and interviews with solicitors, community groups and representative bodies. Previous research had identified a lack of understanding about the market for immigration advice, highlighted the complexity of regulation in this area of law and raised concerns about the detriment to asylum seekers of poor quality advice.

[Research on lawyer-client relationships in large firms: Impact on independence, risk and representation \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/independence-report/\]](#)

October 2015

Researchers interviewed 53 senior corporate and finance lawyers from 20 of the largest corporate law firms in England and Wales to understand how the lawyer-client relationships works in larger firms.

[Innovation in legal services: A report for the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Legal Services Board \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/innovation-report/\]](#)

July 2015

The legal services sector plays a critical role in facilitating commercial and domestic activity and in administering justice. Innovation in the sector in the form of new services or better ways of delivering existing services has the potential to deliver significant social value. This report is the first major attempt to examine innovation in the legal services sector using a large-scale survey.

[Education and Training: A report on authorisation and monitoring activity \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/education-training-report/\]](#)

Responsibility for developing the framework for the education and training of solicitors sits within the SRA's regulatory policy unit. We also undertake the authorisation and routine monitoring of education and training providers. The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. It captures authorisation of training providers, including firms and higher education providers. The report covers the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014.

[Research into alternative business structures \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/research-abs-executive-report/\]](#)

May 2015

We have carried out research to explore how ABSs are "doing things differently", how this may lead to future impacts on the legal services sector, and the experience of firms that applied for an ABS licence from the SRA.

Review of SRA Regulatory Management: Survey findings report (PDF 50 pages, 1.5MB) [[globalassets/documents/sra/research/regulatory-management-review-survey-findings-march-2014.pdf?version=4a1ac5](#)]

March 2014

This report examines the effect of our approach to supervising high-impact firms, otherwise referred to as Regulatory Management (RM). It aims to identify the impacts to date of RM on the regulated community and set a baseline from which future impacts can be measured.

Research on the role of in-house solicitors (PDF 105 pages, 1.35MB) [[globalassets/documents/sra/research/role-in-house-solicitors.pdf?version=4a1ac6](#)]

February 2014

The SRA commissioned Oxera to conduct economic research into the role of in-house solicitors. There are now 25,600 solicitors working in-house, twice the number in 2000 and representing 18 per cent of the solicitor population. The aim of the research was to provide a detailed map of the supply of, and demand for, legal services by in-house solicitors. This will help the SRA understand emerging regulatory risks and the challenges that in-house solicitors face.

Measuring the impact of outcomes-focused regulation (OFR) on firms (PDF 83 pages, 3.5MB) []

Based on a telephone survey of 1,000 solicitors, this report examines the impact of OFR on the firms we regulate.

Research on attitudes to regulation and compliance in legal services (PDF 14 pages, 592K) [[globalassets/documents/sra/research/attitudes-regulation-compliance-2011-executive-summary.pdf?version=4a1ad3](#)]

February 2012

The SRA is keen to build an understanding of changes in attitudes to compliance arising from the introduction of outcomes-focused regulation (OFR) in October 2011. For this purpose, we formed a 'baseline' of attitudes towards compliance against which to measure the impact of OFR over time.

Attitudes to regulation and compliance in legal services: 2011 research findings (PDF 139 pages, 1.7MB) [[globalassets/documents/sra/research/attitudes-regulation-compliance-2011-research-findings.pdf?version=4a1ad3](#)] Conveyancing thematic study full report, March 2013 (PDF 60 pages, 1.6MB) [[globalassets/documents/sra/research/supervision-thematic-study-conveyancing-2013-full-report.pdf?version=4a1acb](#)]

In 2012, we undertook 100 visits with firms of solicitors that provide conveyancing services. The visits looked at the ways that these services are delivered, marketed and charged for.

Conveyancing Thematic Study: Summary Report, March 2013 (PDF 13 pages, 167K) [[globalassets/documents/sra/research/supervision-thematic-study-conveyancing-2013-executive-summary.pdf?version=4a1acb](#)] Thematic study of compliance with Principle 9 2013 (PDF 31 pages, 521KB) [[globalassets/documents/sra/equality-diversity/thematic-study-compliance-principle-9.pdf?version=4a1acc](#)]

In the latter part of 2012, we carried out thematic supervision visits with firms to find out what arrangements they had in place to meet Principle 9

QLTS report (PDF 49 pages, 616KB) [[globalassets/documents/solicitors/qlts/qlts-research-final.pdf?version=4a1acd](#)]

In July 2012 the SRA commissioned a review of the current QLTS single assessment body model. ICF GHK conducted an independent evidence based review of QLTS through a desk-based review of high stakes assessment approaches in addition to a series of consultations with providers and regulators.

Review of the Compensation Fund [[sra/how-we-work/compensation-fund/review-of-the-compensation-fund/](#)]

The Financial Protection Committee has completed its 18-month review of the Compensation Fund. Their report is now available to download.

[Review of SRA client financial protection arrangements \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/cra-financial-protection-arrangements/\]](#)

In July 2010, the SRA commissioned Charles River Associates (CRA) to undertake a "roots and branch" review of the current financial protection arrangements.

[The SRA's response to the Independent Complaints Resolution Service's annual report \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/sra-response-icrs-report/\]](#)

In October 2010, following a tender process, the SRA appointed the Independent Complaints Resolution Service (ICRS) to provide a final independent response to individual complaints and to oversee the way we carry out our complaints handling function.

Consumer reports

In 2012—2013 we have worked hard on communicating with, and improving our service for, consumers. This progress report looks at the highlights of the past eighteen months work and our plans for the future.

[A better deal for consumers: The story of the SRA's consumer empowerment work 2012-13 and looking ahead to what's next \[/sra/how-we-work/reports/better-deal-consumers/\]](#).

Consumer research reports

Our consumer research studies are key to developing our engagement with our stakeholders.

Equality and diversity

We publish statistical information about diversity in the profession [\[/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-profession/\]](#) and other reports about diversity [\[/sra/equality-diversity/reports/\]](#) from time to time. We also publish report about diversity in the SRA [\[/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-sra/\]](#).