

News from the board

Reflections on December Board - Anna Bradley

6 December 2019 | Anna Bradley

I'm delighted that we have now implemented the new Standards and Regulations [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2019-press-release-archive/standards-and-regulations-is-launched/>] and launched the new Solicitors Register [<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/register/>]. This is the culmination of more than four years' work. We think it should make a real difference - giving solicitors more flexibility about how they work and offering the public more opportunities to access the expert legal help they need.

It is very early days, of course. We will be doing regular reviews of the impact of these changes, but I was pleased to hear that the team have been getting a lot of queries about the practicalities of working as a freelance solicitor and we already have several on the Register.

So we started our Board meeting by recording our thanks to all the teams involved in the preparation and delivery of our new Standards and Regulations. We went on to have a detailed workshop on our risk management framework and an enhanced approach to public performance reporting.

Consumer protections

In our formal meeting, we discussed next steps on two consultations - one on professional indemnity insurance and the other on our Compensation Fund. Both focused on making sure that the public are properly protected when something goes wrong.

We received more than 150 responses, and the feedback has been invaluable. In both cases, it has challenged us such that we have shifted our thinking significantly and will now be taking forward more focused pieces of work. We will publish our full response and next steps in January.

Increasing the openness of our Board

When I joined the SRA in January, one of my core priorities was reviewing our Board's approach to openness. It is important that the public and profession can have confidence in our governance and the decisions we make.

We have already taken a range of steps, such as publishing more Board papers and this blog. But there is more to do. Before Christmas we will be

publishing a set of documents which will explain how we make Board decisions, what we will make available for the public and stakeholders by way of Board and other documents, and how we give account of what we do to the public and stakeholders. The Board agreed that this information should also be in plain English and easily accessible on our website.

The new approach to performance reporting will be part of this enhanced public information. In particular, a new balanced scorecard will be part of a wider suite of Board reporting which should help everyone review how the SRA is performing. The plan is that it will cover four areas: external views; delivery, such as operational performance; an internal perspective; and a financial perspective, such as key budget variations.

Corporate strategy

We are now over half-way through the consultation period on our new corporate strategy

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/sra/consultations/corporate-strategy-2020-2023-consultation.pdf?version=4a79e7>] . So far, we have had useful feedback from the profession, consumer representatives and members of the public.

We have been particularly keen to hear from those whose voices can be overlooked when discussing strategic priorities. We are working with groups such as the UK Asian Women's Centre, Age UK, Just for Kids Law, and St Basil's, a charity working with young homeless people, to speak directly to the people they help.

The consultation closes on 23 January, so please let us know your views. Or if you only have a minute, take our quick survey

[<https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/2020-2023>] .