

SRA Update

Issue 78 - March 2020

The COVID-19 situation is an enormously worrying time for everyone.

We understand that law firms and solicitors face uncertainty and difficult business conditions. These are exceptional circumstances and we are looking at what we can do to help and support the legal community, while continuing to protect the public.

We have already published a range of information to help with that. Please keep your queries coming in - we will continue to monitor the situation closely and will keep this information up to date as the situation develops.

Paul Philip

Chief Executive

Coronavirus information on our website

[\[/sra/news/coronavirus-update/\]](/sra/news/coronavirus-update/)

Information to help you deal with some of the issues coming out of the coronavirus pandemic is now on our website. We have summarised some of the key information below.

Read more about: Coronavirus information on our website [\[/sra/news/coronavirus-update/\]](/sra/news/coronavirus-update/)

COVID-19: our services [\[/home/contact-us/\]](/home/contact-us/)

We have contingency plans in place to make sure we can continue to provide a service to the public and profession. With staff now all homeworking, we are moving towards digital services. If you cannot find the answer to your query on our website, please get in touch by email. Our Professional Ethics team can help with any compliance queries, and are offering a call back service if you email them.

Read more about: COVID-19: our services [\[/home/contact-us/\]](/home/contact-us/)

COVID-19: our approach to compliance

[\[/sra/news/coronavirus-update/\]](/sra/news/coronavirus-update/)

We expect solicitors and firms to continue to meet the high standards the public expect. This means they must do everything to comply with our rules and Principles. This includes serving the best interests of their clients and upholding the rule of law. We recognise, however, these are exceptional circumstances. We must all remain pragmatic. We will take a proportionate approach to enforcement. Consistent with our enforcement strategy, we will focus on serious misconduct, and clearly distinguishing between people who are trying to do the right thing, and those who are not.

Read more about: COVID-19: our approach to compliance [\[/sra/news/coronavirus-update/\]](/sra/news/coronavirus-update/)

Coronavirus: common questions

[\[/sra/news/coronavirus-qa/\]](/sra/news/coronavirus-qa/)

We have published some answers to common questions about our rules. Topics covered include client confidentiality, wills and our accounts rules. We will add to this as the situation develops.

Read more about: Coronavirus: common questions [[/sra/news/coronavirus-qa/](#)]

Coronavirus: other helpful resources

[<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/coronavirus-advice-and-updates/>]

The Law Society is providing advice and updates on coronavirus for the legal profession, including guidance, Q and A and links to useful resources. We are liaising closely with the Law Society as the situation develops to help support the profession and help solicitors continue to work in their clients' best interests.

Read more about: Coronavirus: other helpful resources [<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/coronavirus-advice-and-updates/>]

Consulting on Principles for Qualified Lawyers

[</sra/consultations/consultation-listing/consultation-principles-qualified-lawyers/>]

We are consulting on minor changes to exemptions for qualified lawyers who are seeking admission through the new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) once it is introduced in Autumn 2021, subject to Legal Services Board approval. The revisions provide assurances that qualified lawyers, who may be exempt from all or part of the SQE2 assessment, have the necessary language knowledge to practise as a solicitor. The consultation runs until 6 May 2020.

Read more about: Consulting on Principles for Qualified Lawyers [</sra/consultations/consultation-listing/consultation-principles-qualified-lawyers/>]

Read up on SARs

[<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/429-sars-in-action-issue-4-march-2020/file>]

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has started publishing a new magazine that could help when it comes to filing a suspicious activity report (SAR). The latest issue of SARs in Action is available now on the NCA's website.

Read more about: Read up on SARs [<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/429-sars-in-action-issue-4-march-2020/file>]

Compensation Fund, finding the balance

[</sra/consultations/consultation-listing/comp-fund-reform-2020/>]

We are currently consulting on updated proposals on how the SRA Compensation Fund operates. The proposed changes seek to strike the right balance between protecting clients' money and making sure the Fund remains sustainable. The Fund provides an essential safety net for those who need it when things go wrong. However, funding the scheme comes at a cost, borne by the wider profession and therefore ultimately, the users of legal services.

Read more about: Compensation Fund, finding the balance [</sra/consultations/consultation-listing/comp-fund-reform-2020/>]

Immigration services consultation [/]

We are consulting on rules governing where solicitors are allowed to work while offering

immigration services. The proposed new rules would allow solicitors, RELs and RFLs to continue to provide immigration services to the public through regulated law firms and non-commercial OISC regulated firms.

Read more about: Immigration services consultation [\[/\]](#)

Solicitors Indemnity Fund – supplementary cover after run-off

[\[/solicitors/guidance/indemnity/solicitors-indemnity-fund/\]](#)

Owners of closed firms should be aware that the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF) will cease providing supplementary run off cover to firms on 30 September 2020. That means that former firm owners should consider whether they need to make arrangements for cover for claims made after that date. This also affects those of you looking to close in the near future.

Read more about: Solicitors Indemnity Fund – supplementary cover after run-off [\[/solicitors/guidance/indemnity/solicitors-indemnity-fund/\]](#)

Support for those working with younger clients in the courts [\[/solicitors/resources/cpd/youth-court-advocacy/resources/\]](#)

We have a support package for those of you working in youth courts, which includes an easy-to-read leaflet that tells young people how solicitors can help them. You can find this leaflet on our website and request copies to support you when talking to younger clients.

Read more about: Support for those working with younger clients in the courts [\[/solicitors/resources/cpd/youth-court-advocacy/resources/\]](#)

Don't get caught by cybercriminals [\[/sra/news/sra-update-issue-61-cybercrime/\]](#)

Cybercrime is the fastest-growing crime in the country, accounting for more than 75 percent of all reports to the police. Law firms, handling large amounts of client money, are prime targets for such criminals. Are you doing all that you can to minimise the risk of your firm being caught out?

Read more about: Don't get caught by cybercriminals [\[/sra/news/sra-update-issue-61-cybercrime/\]](#)

Round-up to help you tackle scams [\[/consumers/scam-alerts/scams-round-up/\]](#)

Do you want to know about the high-risk scams that could affect your business? Our new round-up brings together the latest risks and advice on how to help keep your firm safe.

Read more about: Round-up to help you tackle scams [\[/consumers/scam-alerts/scams-round-up/\]](#)

Your health, your career [\[/solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/\]](#)

Are you worried about your health affecting your work? Life as a solicitor can be challenging and the demands and pressures can easily build up. We can signpost you to sources of help and make adjustments for you if you are in difficulty.

Read more about: Your health, your career [\[/solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/\]](#)

Subscription

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As a regulated individual, please **simply ensure that the SRA has your current contact email address on record.**

To ensure we have your current email address, log in to mySRA [[/mySRA](#)] and check your profile.

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