

# Coronavirus

20 October 2021

Since the first lockdown in March 2020, we have been providing support and information to help you understand your regulatory obligations during the coronavirus outbreak.

We made it clear that we appreciated that the unprecedented situation at that time and the urgent move to homeworking created many practical difficulties for law firms and individuals. These ranged from how best to continue to act in your client's best interests in light of social distancing (such as completing on a property sale and witnessing wills) to tackling business and operational challenges, such as needing more time to obtain accountants' reports or preparing client account reconciliations.

We explained that we were committed to being pragmatic and proportionate in our compliance approach should we later receive any reports or complaints of non-compliance with our regulatory arrangements.

Now eighteen months on, as we all start to move back to a more normal situation, including by adapting to new 'normal' ways of working, many of these difficulties or concerns no longer apply.

We have set out below links to some of the key areas of external help and guidance.

**Execution of Wills** - the Law Society has issued some best practice questions and answers [<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/coronavirus-advice-and-updates/>] and have updated practice notes on execution of documents by virtual means [<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/practice-notes/execution-of-documents-by-virtual-means/>] and execution of a document using an electronic signature [<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/practice-notes/execution-of-a-document-using-an-electronic-signature/>] in the context of the Covid-19 restrictions

**Client due diligence and other AML issues** - the Legal Services Affinity Group has issued detailed guidance [[solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/covid-19-preventing-money-laundering-terrorist-financing/](https://www.lsa.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/covid-19-preventing-money-laundering-terrorist-financing/)] on dealing with anti-money laundering compliance during the coronavirus pandemic. You may also want to look the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) guidance on electronic due diligence.

**Money laundering** - The Legal Services Affinity Group's detailed guidance [<https://www.sra.org.uk/link/0c4b835d7c0e43739663af10accdca17.aspx>] on remaining compliant with money-laundering obligations during the outbreak.

**Cybercrime** - our report on Technology and legal services [[risk/risk-resources/technology-legal-services/](https://www.lsa.org.uk/risk/risk-resources/technology-legal-services/)] gives advice on cyber security, including while working away from the office. The NCSC has also issued guidance [<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/home-working>] on cyber security while homeworking, as has The Law Society cybersecurity while working from home [[https://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/practical-support-features/cybersecurity-when-working-from-home/6000880.article?utm\\_source=professional\\_update&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=PU-03%2f27%2f2020](https://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/practical-support-features/cybersecurity-when-working-from-home/6000880.article?utm_source=professional_update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=PU-03%2f27%2f2020)]. And finally the ICO has produced guidance on data protection and the coronavirus [<https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/>].

## ***Your health and wellbeing***

We appreciate that the pandemic has not gone away and that returning to work or working in a hybrid way may still be likely to have an impact upon the mental or physical health of many.

Our Your Health, Your Career [<https://www.sra.org.uk/link/174dc20c38414079ab0f3fd740ba055f.aspx>] page provides information, advice and links to organisations who can offer you help and support across a wide range of areas.