

Who we are and what we do

11 December 2019

Who we are

We are the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), regulating

- solicitors of England and Wales
- law firms of England and Wales
- non-lawyers, who can be either managers or employees of firms that we regulate; and
- other types of lawyer, such as registered foreign lawyers (RFLs) and registered European lawyers (RELs).

We are not the only regulatory body within the legal profession, as there are different types of legal professionals regulated by other regulatory bodies—read more about where we fit with other approved regulators [\[#sra-and-approved-regulators\]](#).

What we do

We set the Principles [\[consumers/who-we-are/sra-regulate/#principles\]](#) and a Code of Conduct [\[consumers/who-we-are/sra-regulate/#code-of-conduct\]](#) that those regulated by us have to abide by in order to provide legal services. We make sure the individuals and firms we regulate operate independently and with integrity in the interests of their clients and in the wider public interest.

We supervise firms and individuals who are regulated by us, and can take enforcement action against those caught breaching our Principles. We have a range of legal powers that enable us to take a variety of different actions according to the severity of the breach and the risk posed to the public and the profession. For example, we can

- issue a warning about future conduct
- impose a disciplinary sanction, such as a fine
- control how a firm or individual practises
- refer a firm or individual's conduct to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal
- revoke recognition of a firm or refuse to renew recognition of a firm
- close a firm with immediate effect (we call this "intervention").

We may publish our regulatory decisions [\[consumers/solicitor-check\]](#).

Where a firm has closed it is possible for clients to apply to us for money [\[consumers/problems/solicitor-owes-money\]](#) they have already paid to the firm. We can also return documents to clients; however, we do not reduce or refund legal fees. Please see information on what we do not do [\[#what-we-dont-do\]](#), below.

We also make sure that those we regulate are qualified and insured to provide legal services, by

- setting qualification standards in England and Wales
- monitoring the performance of training organisations providing qualifications

- mentoring students [\[students/\]](#) who are training to become solicitors
- assessing the character and suitability of individuals we regulate
- administering the Roll of solicitors, and
- making sure that lawyers from overseas (REs and RFLs) meet our standards of training, suitability, and English language requirements [\[solicitors/qts/\]](#) before they can register with us to practise as solicitors within England and Wales.

Read more about how we regulate [\[consumers/who-we-are/sra-regulate/\]](#) .

What we don't do

We cannot give legal advice, or tell you which solicitors or lawyers to use, because we are independent. We do, however, have guidance on

- how to find a solicitor or firm [\[consumers/choosing/\]](#)
- how to get the best from legal services [\[consumers/using-solicitor/get-best-solicitor/\]](#) , and
- what to expect from a solicitor [\[consumers/using-solicitor/what-to-expect/\]](#) .

We don't take complaints about solicitors providing poor service; we deal mainly with cases of fraud, misconduct and dishonesty. The Legal Ombudsman [\[http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/\]](http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/) is the organisation that handles complaints about poor service. We cannot refund or reduce legal fees. See our information on how to report a solicitor or firm [\[consumers/problems/report-solicitor/\]](#) to find out more about the best way to resolve a problem with your solicitor.

Where we fit with other approved regulators

The regulation of lawyers

The Legal Services Board [\[http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/\]](http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/) is responsible for overseeing the regulation of all lawyers in England and Wales. There are then eight separate regulators directly regulating the different types of lawyer on a day-to-day basis.

The different types of lawyer, and their approved regulators, are as follows:

- Solicitors—regulated by us, the Solicitors Regulation Authority; we also regulate other types of individual and firms [\[#regulating-firms\]](#)
- Barristers—regulated by the Bar Standards Board [\[http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/\]](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/) , the independent regulatory arm of the Bar Council [\[http://www.barcouncil.org.uk/\]](http://www.barcouncil.org.uk/)
- Legal executives—regulated by CILEx Regulation [\[http://www.cilexregulation.org.uk/\]](http://www.cilexregulation.org.uk/) , the independent regulatory arm of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) [\[http://www.cilex.org.uk/\]](http://www.cilex.org.uk/)
- Licensed conveyancers—regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers [\[http://www.conveyancer.org.uk/\]](http://www.conveyancer.org.uk/)
- Patent and Trade mark attorneys—regulated by the Intellectual Property Regulation Board (IPReg) [\[http://www.ipreg.org.uk/\]](http://www.ipreg.org.uk/) , the independent regulatory arm of the Chartered Institute of Patent attorneys (CIPA) [\[http://www.cipa.org.uk/\]](http://www.cipa.org.uk/) and the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (ITMA) [\[http://www.itma.org.uk/\]](http://www.itma.org.uk/)
- Costs lawyers—regulated by the Costs Lawyer Standards Board (CLSB) [\[http://www.clsb.info/\]](http://www.clsb.info/) ; the independent regulatory arm of the Association of Costs Lawyers (ACL)

[<http://www.costslawyer.co.uk/>]

- Notaries—regulated by the Master of the Faculties [<http://www.facultyoffice.org.uk/>]

The regulation of firms

The SRA and the Council for Licensed Conveyancers (CLC) have powers to regulate the firms within which different types of lawyer work. The CLC has the power to regulate firms providing conveyancing and probate services. The SRA is able to regulate all types of legal work a firm may deliver, including conveyancing and probate services.

Lawyers are allowed to set up law firms with other lawyers and non-lawyers. This means that, while individuals are regulated by their own approved regulator, the firm for which they work are regulated by either the SRA or the CLC.

Firms are primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with regulators. But individuals within those firms are responsible for their own conduct.

You can find out if we regulate a firm using the Solicitors Register [[consumers/register/](#)].