

SRA Update

issue 114 - April 2023

- General updates [#tab_194c1]
- Compliance updates [#tab_194c2]

Welcome to Issue 114 of SRA Update. This month we have a lot of information to share and we are also asking for your feedback. We are consulting on a model for restricting excessive fees in claims for mis-sold financial products, as well as your views on our apprenticeship standard, and we want to hear from those that have found innovative ways of working in recent years. It would also be particularly helpful if newly-qualified solicitors could take part in a survey on professional assessments being carried out for us by the University of Exeter. For those that have previously given us their feedback, we have published responses to our consultation on police station representatives. There are a number of webinars coming up which may interest you, for example, on financial sanctions and on the SQE, and we've now published guidance and good practice for working in the youth and coroners' courts.

Paul Philip

Chief Executive

Restricting fees in financial mis-selling work, have your say

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/fee-restrictions-consultation/>]

We are consulting on specific rules to restrict fees for work in compensation claims for mis-sold financial products. We want to find the right balance for making sure consumers get value for money and keeping this area a viable service to offer for law firms. If you work in this area, please make sure you have your say.

Read more about: Restricting fees in financial mis-selling work, have your say [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/fee-restrictions-consultation/>]

Applying to remain on the roll - now open for solicitors without practising certificates

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/updates/apply-to-remain-on-roll/>]



Solicitors without a practising certificate can now apply to remain on the roll if they wish to. As part of new annual exercise, you will need to apply through mySRA and pay a £20 administration fee. Deadline to apply is 28 May 2023.

Read more about: Applying to remain on the roll - now open for solicitors without practising certificates [<https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/updates/apply-to-remain-on-roll/>]

First review of SQE shows good progress

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/sqe-annual-reports-2023/>]

A suite of reports reviewing the first year of the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) has shown that overall implementation of the new assessment has gone well. The reports cover the first year of assessments, in which there were sittings testing candidates' legal knowledge, the application of legal knowledge, and skills.

Read more about: First review of SQE shows good progress
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/sqe-annual-reports-2023/>]

In-house solicitors cope well with challenges

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/in-house-thematic-review/>]

We have carried out a review of our in-house population to see what the main issues currently affecting the sector were. It found most solicitors working in-house feel their independence is valued although a minority struggle to balance their duties with their organisation's priorities.

Read more about: In-house solicitors cope well with challenges
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/in-house-thematic-review/>]

Guidance for those working in coroners' courts

[<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/resources/guidelines-coroners-courts.html>]

Working in partnership with the Bar Standards Board and CILEx Regulation, we have published guidance to make sure those working in coroners' courts uphold the high professional standards expected of them. The guidance has in part been driven by concerns about adversarial approaches being taken in some cases.

Read more about: Guidance for those working in coroners' courts

[<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/resources/guidelines-coroners-courts.html>]

Professional assessments – have your say [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-114-attainment-research/>]

As part of research looking at certain aspects of professional education experiences, the University of Exeter is looking for individuals who have completed the Legal Practice Course (LPC) recently. If this describes you, then the university wants you to fill out an online survey and share your viewpoints.

Read more about: Professional assessments – have your say

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-114-attainment-research/>]

SRA Innovate - register your interest for Bristol or London [<https://www.eventsforce.net/sra/637/home>]

Our SRA Innovate events are a popular way for firms to look at how they can change and do things in new ways. They focus on sharing ideas about innovation, including making legal services more accessible and insights on new ways to serve clients or run your firm. This year they will take place in summer in Bristol and London. If you would like to book a place, please register your interest and we will email you when bookings open.

Read more about: SRA Innovate - register your interest for Bristol or

London [<https://www.eventsforce.net/sra/637/home>]

Youth court solicitor good practice guide

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/youth-court-advocacy/good-practice-guide/>]

We have produced a good practice guide for youth court solicitors that address the challenges of practising in the youth justice system. This can help solicitors to understand and meet our competence expectations and covers topics such as awareness of needs, checking understanding and helping children participate.

Read more about: Youth court solicitor good practice guide

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/youth-court-advocacy/good-practice-guide/>]



Get ready to submit your diversity information this summer

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/your-data/#5486>]

Once again, we will be collecting diversity information from all law firms this summer. To help you get ready and start gathering the information you will need, we have published our new questionnaire. Please encourage your staff to complete this and tell them how the data will be used and who will have access to it.

Read more about: Get ready to submit your diversity information this summer [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/your-data/#5486>]

Assuring high standards in the police station consultation

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/psras-consultation/>]

We have published a response to our recent consultation on improving the delivery and assessment of the Police Station Representative Accreditation Scheme (PSRAS). We have updated the assessment standards and introduced new guidelines for assessment organisations and candidates. We will also introduce regulations to enhance and regularise our oversight of the PSRAS (subject to approval by the Legal Services Board).

Read more about: Assuring high standards in the police station consultation [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/psras-consultation/>]

Webinar – Menopause, creating a supportive firm culture

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/633/home>]

Learn about steps your firm can take to support women of all backgrounds who experience the menopause to overcome barriers to retention and progression at our free webinar on 17 April. We'll be joined by speakers from City firms, support groups and the Law Society to discuss best practice.

Read more about: Webinar – Menopause, creating a supportive firm culture [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/633/home>]

Webinar – how all firms can comply with the sanctions regime

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/636/home>]



The Government's sanctions regime applies to all firms, not just those captured by the money-laundering regulations. Find out how you can uphold your obligations and stop those associated with hostile countries from getting around bans on them obtaining legal services.

Read more about: Webinar – how all firms can comply with the sanctions regime [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/636/home>]

Webinar – SQE, mitigating circumstances

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/634/home>]

Information for candidates whose SQE assessments have been negatively impacted by circumstances beyond their control will be available through this free webinar that we're holding on 19 April. Such mitigating or extenuating circumstances can be taken into consideration when taking the assessments, and this webinar will outline the process.

Read more about: Webinar – SQE, mitigating circumstances [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/634/home>]

Webinar – Practising in the youth courts [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/635/home>]

Speakers from the Magistrates Association and youth justice experts are among those discussing best practice at our free webinar. This webinar on May 4 accompanies the guidance we have published for those working in the youth courts.

Read more about: Webinar – Practising in the youth courts [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/635/home>]

Webinar – Qualified lawyers qualifying through SQE

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/631/home>]

This free webinar on 17 May is aimed at those lawyers already qualified in another jurisdiction and who want to be admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales. We'll talk about what work you can do and the process for qualifying.

Read more about: Webinar – Qualified lawyers qualifying through SQE [<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/631/home>]

Fixed penalties to come in this summer

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023->



press-releases/financial-penalties-publication-policy/

Subject to pending approval by the Legal Services Board, our new approaches to issuing financial penalties will come into effect over the coming months. This includes new fixed penalties for lower level/administrative breaches, such as failure to comply with a regulatory request or our transparency rules.

Read more about: Fixed penalties to come in this summer

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/financial-penalties-publication-policy/>]

Latest issue of Lawtech Insight out now [https://publications.sra.org.uk/lawtech-insight/]

The latest issue of Lawtech Insight, where the latest news and opinions on technology and innovation in the legal sector and beyond are captured, is out now. Find out how the techpreneurs who made it to the Legal Access Challenge's final stages carried on developing their products have fared three years on. How are they making legal services more accessible and affordable?

Read more about: Latest issue of Lawtech Insight out now

[<https://publications.sra.org.uk/lawtech-insight/>]

Solicitor Apprenticeship Standard, have your say

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/solicitor-apprenticeship-standard/>]

We are consulting on proposals to update the solicitor apprenticeship standard and would like to hear your views. This consultation on whether our updates still reflect the required skills and knowledge runs until 14 April.

Read more about: Solicitor Apprenticeship Standard, have your say

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/solicitor-apprenticeship-standard/>]

How has technology helped you get ahead? [https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-113-technology-case-studies/]

Firms have made great strides in using new technology to improve how legal services are delivered, a process accelerated by the pandemic. As part of our SRA Innovate initiative, we are looking for great examples of where firms used new developments to get ahead.



Read more about: How has technology helped you get ahead?

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-113-technology-case-studies/>]

Find out more about Legal Ombudsman scheme rules changes

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-114-leo-rule-changes/>]

We have previously told you about the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) consulting on changes to its scheme rules. The proposed amendments came into effect on 1 April. The Ombudsman has produced a range of resources about what's changed and how it might affect you.

Read more about: Find out more about Legal Ombudsman scheme rules changes [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-114-leo-rule-changes/>]

Your health, your career

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/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

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/>]

Welcome to the Compliance News version of SRA Update Issue 114. This is one of our anti-money laundering focused issues, mindful that this is an important subject for us all. The Government continues to make changes in this area and we mention some of those in this month's edition. We also have updates on the Government's financial sanctions regime – this affects all firms so it's not only relevant to those of you subject to the anti-money laundering regulations. Please make sure that you keep up to date with this important and fast-moving area.

Paul Philip

Chief Executive

More updates to the financial sanctions regime

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/financial-sanctions-regime/>]

All law firms have an obligation to comply with the Government's financial sanctions regime. This is a fast-moving area and there have been two



significant developments in the last month, one involving trust services work, another is the renewal of the Legal Services General Licence for six months from 28 April to 28 October 2023. Our guidance helps you keep on top of these issues.

Read more about: More updates to the financial sanctions regime

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/financial-sanctions-regime/>]

Review shows firms need to do more on SLAPPs

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/conduct-dispute-thematic-review/>]

Law firms need to do more to guard against the risk of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) and other types of abusive litigation, our new review has shown. We visited 25 law firms, including those who work on the claimant and defendant side. Through interviews and file reviews, we assessed how well firms understand and manage the risks around abusive litigation.

Read more about: Review shows firms need to do more on SLAPPs

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/conduct-dispute-thematic-review/>]

Client accounts and accountants' reports [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-113-accountants-reports/>]

If you hold or receive client money then you must obtain an accountant's report for the relevant period. Any report that is qualified because it shows a failure to comply with our rules should be delivered to us.

Read more about: Client accounts and accountants' reports

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-113-accountants-reports/>]

Make sure you do not provide banking facilities

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/banking-facilities-ban-case-studies/>]

As the High Court has said, banks do not give legal advice, so solicitors should not provide banking facilities. Our rules explicitly prohibit a law firm from providing banking facilities through its client account. Any movement of money from a client account must be in respect of the delivery of regulated services provided by a law firm.



Read more about: Make sure you do not provide banking facilities

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/banking-facilities-ban-case-studies/>]

Focus on AML

LSAG guidance now updated

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-114-lsag-guidance/>]

The Legal Services Affinity Group (LSAG) guidance on best practice dealing with the Money Laundering Regulations and the obligations they put on you and your firm has been updated. You should be familiar with the various sections on risk assessments and due diligence.

Read more about: LSAG guidance now updated

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-114-lsag-guidance/>]

Underground banking and funds from China

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/>]

The Legal Services Affinity Group (LSAG) has also produced guidance for those acting for clients that involves receiving funds from China. These funds might come to you via unconventional sources and you will need to be wary of the risks.

Read more about: Underground banking and funds from China

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/>]

Proliferation finance, find out what you must do

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/aml-questions-answers/>]

We have a whole range of Q&As on money laundering on our website. The most recent looks at obligations around proliferation finance. Firms must now carry out a risk assessment to guard against this issue. Find out more about this and other matters on our Q&A page.

Read more about: Proliferation finance, find out what you must do

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/aml-questions-answers/>]

Reporting discrepancies to Companies House

[\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-issue-114-companies-house-registers/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-issue-114-companies-house-registers/)

Companies House has an amended reporting regime which came in on 1 April. To help firms comply with the new regime for discrepancies on persons with significant control or registrable beneficial owners, it has also published guidance.

Read more about: Reporting discrepancies to Companies House
[\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-issue-114-companies-house-registers/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-issue-114-companies-house-registers/)

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