

Standards and Regulations resources

Our new Standards and Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/\]](#) came into effect on 25 November 2019. Learn more about what their introduction means.

- [Solicitors](#) [\[#tab_aa451\]](#)
- [Firms](#) [\[#tab_aa452\]](#)
- [Working in-house](#) [\[#tab_aa453\]](#)
- [Accounts Rules](#) [\[#tab_aa454\]](#)
- [Working outside a law firm](#) [\[#tab_aa455\]](#)

Whether you work in a big or small firm, in-house or want to work outside a regulated law firm, all solicitors must follow certain rules and meet high ethical standards.

Our shorter, simpler Standards and Regulations focus on high professional standards and protecting the public. They also put more trust in your professional judgment and give you more choices over how and where you work.

If you are a solicitor, you should:

- [read the new code of conduct for solicitors](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#) and our [Principles](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- [understand our enforcement strategy](#) [\[sra/corporate-strategy/sub-strategies/sra-enforcement-strategy/\]](#) which underpins our rules
- [be aware of your duty to report serious concerns promptly](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/#rule-7\]](#).

The below resources cover key areas of change compared to the existing/previous SRA Handbook. Wider guidance [\[solicitors/guidance/\]](#) on other issues is also available.

Open all [\[#\]](#)

Videos

What the new Standards and Regulations mean for solicitors

Carol Westrop

Our new Standards and Regulations

Chris Handford

Compliance Officers Conference 2018

Julie Brannan and Richard Collins

The new Standards and Regulations

Sections of our new Standards and Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/\]](#) that may be of particular interest for solicitors include:

- [Code of conduct for solicitors](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#)
- [Principles](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- [Authorisation of Individuals Regulations](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/\]](#)
- [Transparency rules](#) [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/transparency-rules/\]](#)

Key new guidance

To help you adapt to our new Standards and Regulations, we have created new guidance. Here is a selection of guidance that is particularly relevant to solicitors:

Authorisation guidance

- Firm authorisation [\[solicitors/guidance/firm-authorisation/\]](#)
- Can my business be authorised? [\[solicitors/guidance/can-my-business-be-authorised/\]](#)
- Does my business need to be authorised? [\[solicitors/guidance/business-need-authorised/\]](#)
- Preparing to become a sole practitioner or an SRA-regulated freelance solicitor [\[solicitors/guidance/preparing-sole-practitioner-regulated-independent-solicitor/\]](#)
- When do I need a practising certificate? [\[solicitors/guidance/practising-certificate/\]](#)

Conflicts of interests guidance

- Conflicts of Interest [\[solicitors/guidance/conflicts-interest/\]](#)
- Putting matters right when things go wrong, and own interest conflicts [\[solicitors/guidance/putting-matters-right-own-interest-conflicts/\]](#)

Other guidance

- Public trust and confidence [\[solicitors/guidance/public-trust-confidence/\]](#)
- Acting with integrity [\[solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/\]](#)
- Confidentiality of client information [\[solicitors/guidance/confidentiality-client-information/\]](#)
- Reporting and notification [\[solicitors/guidance/reporting-notification-obligations/\]](#)
[\[solicitors/guidance/overseas-rules-case-studies/\]](#)
- Client care letters [\[solicitors/guidance/client-care-letters/\]](#)
- Acting with integrity [\[solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/\]](#)
- Registered Foreign Lawyers [\[solicitors/guidance/registered-foreign-lawyers/\]](#)
- Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion [\[solicitors/guidance/sra-approach-equality-diversity-inclusion/\]](#)

You can also see the full package of new guidance [\[solicitors/guidance/\]](#) on our Standards and Regulations.

Our approach to enforcement

Our enforcement strategy [\[sra/corporate-strategy/sub-strategies/sra-enforcement-strategy/\]](#) underpins our new Standards and Regulations.

Updated in January 2019 it sets out the type of situations where we would step in to protect the public - what we see as serious, when we would take action and what we would do.

We have also provided support materials [\[sra/corporate-strategy/sub-strategies/enforcement-practice/\]](#) for the main factors we would consider when looking at potential breaches in certain areas, such as criminal offences outside of practice and use of social media and offensive communications.

Reporting concerns

Reporting behaviour that potentially puts a client, the public or wider public interest at risk goes to the core of the professional principles of trust and integrity.

It is important that solicitors let us know about serious concerns promptly. Our expectations are set out in our:

- Code of conduct for solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#)
- Enforcement Strategy [\[sra/corporate-strategy/sub-strategies/sra-enforcement-strategy/#collapse_fd1f1\]](#)

If you are an SRA-regulated law firm you must follow our rules.

Our shorter Standards and Regulations focus on high professional standards and protecting the public. With simpler, less prescriptive rules, we have cut unnecessary bureaucracy making it easier for you to run your business.

If you are a law firm, you should:

- read the new code of conduct for firms [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/\]](#) and our Principles [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- understand our enforcement strategy [\[sra/corporate-strategy/sub-strategies/sra-enforcement-strategy/\]](#) which underpins our rules
- review the new Account Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/accounts-rules/\]](#)
- be aware of your reporting obligations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/\]](#)
- display the SRA clickable logo [\[solicitors/resources/transparency/clickable-logo/\]](#) on your website

The below resources cover key areas of change compared to the previous SRA Handbook. Wider guidance [\[solicitors/guidance/\]](#) on other issues is also available.

Open all [#]

Videos

What the new Standards and Regulations mean for firms

Carol Westrop

Our new Standards and Regulations

Chris Handford

Driving high standards - What our reforms mean for you

Julie Brannan and Richard Collins

Our reforms - opportunities for you and your firm to work differently

Chris Handford

The new Standards and Regulations

Sections of our new Standards and Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/\]](#) that may be of particular interest for a law firm include the:

- Code of conduct for firms [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/\]](#)
- Code of conduct for solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#)
- Principles [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- Account Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/accounts-rules/\]](#)
- Authorisation of Firms Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-firms-rules/\]](#)
- Financial Services (Scope) Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/financial-services-scope-rules/\]](#)

- [Financial Services \(Conduct of Business\) Rules \[solicitors/standards-regulations/financial-services-conduct-business-rules/\]](#)
- [Indemnity Insurance Rules \[solicitors/standards-regulations/indemnity-insurance-rules/\]](#)
- [Overseas and Cross border Practice Rules \[solicitors/standards-regulations/overseas-cross-border-practice-rules/\]](#)
- [Transparency rules \[solicitors/standards-regulations/transparency-rules/\]](#)

Key new guidance

To help you adapt to our new Standards and Regulations, we have created new guidance. Here is a selection that is particularly relevant to law firms:

Accounts rules guidance

- [Accountant's report and the exemption to obtain one \[solicitors/guidance/accountant-report-exemption-obtain-one/\]](#)
- [Do I need to operate a client account? \[solicitors/guidance/operate-client-account/\]](#)
- [Helping you keep accurate client accounting records \[solicitors/guidance/accurate-client-accounting-records/\]](#)
- [Joint accounts and record keeping \[solicitors/guidance/joint-accounts-record-keeping/\]](#)
- [Planning for and completing an accountant's report \[solicitors/guidance/planning-completing-accountants-report/\]](#)
- [Third-party managed accounts \[solicitors/guidance/third-party-managed-accounts/\]](#)

Authorisation guidance

- [Firm authorisation \[solicitors/guidance/firm-authorisation/\]](#)

Conflicts of interests guidance

- [Conflicts of Interest \[solicitors/guidance/conflicts-interest/\]](#)
- [Putting matters right when things go wrong, and own interest conflicts \[solicitors/guidance/putting-matters-right-own-interest-conflicts/\]](#)

Other guidance

- [Unsolicited approaches \(advertising\) to members of the public \[solicitors/guidance/unsolicited-approaches-advertising/\]](#)
- [Public trust and confidence \[solicitors/guidance/public-trust-confidence/\]](#)
- [Acting with integrity \[solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/\]](#)
- [Confidentiality of client information \[solicitors/guidance/confidentiality-client-information/\]](#)
- [Reporting and notification \[solicitors/guidance/reporting-notification-obligations/\]](#)
- [Reporting duties under the SRA Overseas Rules \[solicitors/guidance/overseas-rules-case-studies/\]](#)
- [Client care letters \[solicitors/guidance/client-care-letters/\]](#)
- [Acting with integrity \[solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/\]](#)
- [Registered Foreign Lawyers \[solicitors/guidance/registered-foreign-lawyers/\]](#)
- [Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion \[solicitors/guidance/sra-approach-equality-diversity-inclusion/\]](#)

You can see the full package of new guidance [\[solicitors/guidance/\]](#) on our Standards and Regulations.

Accounts Rules

We have produced a range of materials to help you understand the changes to our Account Rules. (See tab above)

SRA clickable logo

From 25 November, all firms with a website must display the SRA clickable logo (known as the 'digital badge' in our rules). Resources to help you do this include:

- Adding the clickable logo to your website [\[solicitors/resources/transparency/clickable-logo/\]](#)
- A Q&A [\[solicitors/resources/transparency/clickable-logo/digital-badge-q-a/\]](#)

A video to help explain to the public and clients what the clickable logo means.

Our shorter Standards and Regulations focus on what really matters – high professional standards and appropriate public protection.

If you are an in-house solicitor our new rules could offer you greater flexibility in how you work. For instance, it will be easier for you to do pro-bono work. And in-house solicitors will be able to offer non-reserved legal services to external third parties.

If you are an in-house solicitor, you will need to:

- read the new code of conduct for solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#) and our Principles [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#) - they apply to all solicitors, wherever they work
- understand our enforcement strategy [\[sra/corporate-strategy/sub-strategies/sra-enforcement-strategy/\]](#) which underpins our rules
- be aware of your duty to report serious concerns promptly [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/#rule-7\]](#)
- if you are considering working in new ways, make sure you understand our rules

Below is a range of support and guidance to help you adapt to our changes.

Open all [#]

The new Standards and Regulations

Sections of our new Standards and Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/standards-regulations-search/\]](#) that may be of particular interest for solicitors who work in-house include the:

- Code of conduct for solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#)
- Principles [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- Authorisation of Individuals Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/\]](#)
- Transparency rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/transparency-rules/\]](#)

Key new guidance

We have created new guidance to help you adapt to our new Standards and Regulations. Here is a selection of new guidance that is particularly relevant to solicitors working in-house:

Conflicts of interests guidance

- Putting matters right when things go wrong, and own interest conflicts [\[solicitors/guidance/putting-matters-right-own-interest-conflicts/\]](#)
- Conflicts of Interest [\[solicitors/guidance/conflicts-interest/\]](#)

Other guidance

- Public trust and confidence [\[solicitors/guidance/public-trust-confidence/\]](#)
- Acting with integrity [\[solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/\]](#)
- Confidentiality of client information [\[solicitors/guidance/confidentiality-client-information/\]](#)
- Reporting and notification [\[solicitors/guidance/reporting-notification-obligations/\]](#)
- Reporting duties under the SRA Overseas Rules [\[solicitors/guidance/overseas-rules-case-studies/\]](#)
- Client care letters [\[solicitors/guidance/client-care-letters/\]](#)
- Acting with integrity [\[solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/\]](#)
- Not for profit sector - summary [\[solicitors/guidance/not-for-profit-sector---summary/\]](#)
- Guidance on the SRA's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion [\[solicitors/guidance/sra-approach-equality-diversity-inclusion/\]](#)

Not for profit sector

We have produced specific guidance [\[solicitors/guidance/not-for-profit-sector---summary/\]](#) for solicitors working in the not for profit sector.

For instance, it explains your duties in relation to:

- handling client money - a solicitor working in the not for profit sector will only be able to hold client money on prescribed terms [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/hold-client-money/\]](#) .
- professional indemnity insurance requirements for solicitors doing reserved legal activities
- complaints handling requirements

Our new Accounts Rules focus on what really matters – keeping client money safe. Our changes mean they are:

- shorter, with a simpler definition of client money
- less prescriptive, with the removal of arbitrary timescales
- more flexible, trusting you to act in your clients' best interests.

Before the new Rules come into effect, you need to make sure you:

- read the new accounts rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/accounts-rules/\]](#)
- read the Principles and Codes of Conduct for firms and solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#)
- review your systems and processes

- set transactional timescales
- ensure your staff understand what they need to do.

The below resources highlight a range of support and guidance to help you adapt to the change.

Open all [#]

Videos

A quick guide to our new Standards and Regulations: Account Rules

Jatinderpal Loyal

SRA Accounts Rules: Updates

Jatinderpal Loyal

The SRA's Account Rules Q&A

Sean Hankin and Jatinderpal Loyal

Law firms and third-party-managed accounts

Jatinderpal Loyal

The new Standards and Regulations

The Accounts Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/accounts-rules/\]](#) are part of our new Standards and Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/\]](#).

Prescribed circumstances referenced within the Accounts Rules include:

- Rule 5.1 (c) prescribed circumstances in which you can withdraw client money from client account to pay to a charity of your choice [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/withdraw-client-money/\]](#)

Key new guidance

We have created a range of new guidance to help you adapt to our new Accounts Rules:

- Accountant's report and the exemption to obtain one [\[solicitors/guidance/accountant-report-exemption-obtain-one/\]](#)
- Do I need to operate a client account? [\[solicitors/guidance/operate-client-account/\]](#)
- Helping you keep accurate client accounting records [\[solicitors/guidance/accurate-client-accounting-records/\]](#)
- Joint accounts and record keeping [\[solicitors/guidance/ethics-guidance/Joint-accounts-and-record-keeping.page\]](#)
- Planning for and completing an accountant's report [\[solicitors/guidance/joint-accounts-record-keeping/\]](#)
- Third-party managed accounts [\[solicitors/guidance/third-party-managed-accounts/\]](#)

Our shorter Standards and Regulations focus on what really matters – high professional standards and appropriate public protection, while making it easier for the public to access the legal help they need.

If you are a solicitor, you will have the option to work in new ways. This includes being an:

- SRA-regulated solicitor within a non-regulated organisation
- SRA-regulated freelance solicitor who can provide reserved services
- SRA-regulated freelance solicitor who only offers non-reserved services

If you decide you want to work in one of these ways, you should make sure you understand:

- the different types of services you can offer, and the requirements for you to work in this way. For instance, what insurance or experience you might need, and the rules around holding client money.
- what you need to tell your clients [\[solicitors/guidance/unregulated-organisations-giving-information-clients/\]](#). For instance, being clear about the way you are working and the protections this brings.
- if relevant, what your employer needs to know. [\[solicitors/guidance/unregulated-organisations-employers-sra-regulated-lawyers/\]](#) For instance, your employer is vicariously liable for your actions, and will want to consider how best your work as a solicitor is covered.

Wherever you work, solicitors need to follow our rules and work to high professional standards as set out in our Principles [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#) and Code of conduct for solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#).

The below resources offer support if you want to work in new ways.

Open all [\[#\]](#)

Videos

Our reforms - opportunities for you and your firm to work differently
Chris Handford

The new Standards and Regulations

Sections of our new Standards and Regulations [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/\]](#) that may be of particular interest for a solicitor who wants to work outside a regulated firm include the:

- Code of conduct for solicitors [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/\]](#)
- Principles [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/principles/\]](#)
- Authorisation of Firms Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-firms-rules/\]](#)
- Transparency rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/transparency-rules/\]](#)

Freelance solicitors who want to provide reserved legal services can only hold client money in limited circumstances. You should read the Accounts Rules [\[solicitors/standards-regulations/accounts-rules/\]](#) to find out more.

Key new guidance

To help you adapt to our new rules, we have created new guidance. Here is a selection that is particularly relevant to solicitors who are considering working outside a regulated firm:

Authorisation guidance

- Firm authorisation [\[solicitors/guidance/firm-authorisation/\]](#)
- Does my business need to be authorised? [\[solicitors/guidance/business-need-authorised/\]](#)
- Preparing to become a sole practitioner or an SRA-regulated freelance solicitors [\[solicitors/guidance/preparing-sole-practitioner-regulated-independent-solicitor/\]](#)
- When do I need a practising certificate [\[solicitors/guidance/practising-certificate/\]](#)

Unregulated organisations

- Unregulated organisations - Conflict and confidentiality [\[solicitors/guidance/unregulated-organisations-](#)

[conflict-confidentiality/](#)

- [Unregulated organisations - giving information to clients /solicitors/guidance/unregulated-organisations-giving-information-clients/](#)
- [Unregulated organisations - for employers of SRA-regulated lawyers /solicitors/guidance/unregulated-organisations-employers-sra-regulated-lawyers/](#)

Conflicts of Interests guidance

- [Conflicts of Interest /solicitors/guidance/conflicts-interest/](#)
- [Putting matters right when things go wrong, and own interest conflicts /solicitors/guidance/putting-matters-right-own-interest-conflicts/](#)

Other guidance

- [Public trust and confidence /solicitors/guidance/public-trust-confidence/](#)
- [Acting with integrity /solicitors/guidance/acting-with-integrity/](#)
- [Confidentiality of client information /solicitors/guidance/confidentiality-client-information/](#)
- [Reporting and notification /solicitors/guidance/reporting-notification-obligations/](#)
- [Adequate and appropriate indemnity insurance /solicitors/guidance/adequate-and-appropriate-indemnity-insurance/](#)
- [Client care letters /solicitors/guidance/ethics-guidance/Client-care-letters.page](#)
- [Acting with integrity /solicitors/guidance/ethics-guidance/Acting-with-integrity.page](#)
- [Not for profit sector - summary /solicitors/guidance/not-for-profit-sector—summary/](#)
- [Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion /solicitors/guidance/sra-approach-equality-diversity-inclusion/](#)

You can see the full package of new guidance [/solicitors/guidance/](#) on our Standards and Regulations.