

News from the Board

Reflections on our June Board meeting – Anna Bradley

10 June 2021

Our June meeting was a real landmark - the first meeting of the Board since SRA Ltd started regulating as a distinct legal entity within the Law Society Group on the 1 June.

We have worked closely with the Law Society to make the change, which we think will help to provide clarity for both consumers and the profession on the role of the SRA as the regulator, and of the Law Society as the professional body. We will of course be continuing to work together in lots of ways, for example on diversity, AML and law tech.

As well as approving the necessary formal resolution transferring regulatory functions to SRA Ltd, we looked at next steps, including our application for charitable status.

We also had a useful discussion on our usual quarterly performance reporting, which gives us a clear picture of how the organisation is doing. Good progress overall with updates on progress against the business plan and key areas such as the timeliness of our operational work, our digital outreach, plus some staff and financial metrics. We plan to hold our quarterly monitoring meetings virtually for the foreseeable future because the experience of the last year has shown that this works well for monitoring purposes.

One of our work programmes relates to fee capping for claims management work. We talked through an update on that and our plans to issue a discussion paper to inform our final decisions.

We went on to consider the provision of post six year run off cover through the Solicitors Indemnity Fund. A really significant issue on our agenda and one we will be reporting back on separately in due course.

Board reviewed and approved the 2019/20 Compensation Fund financial statements. We were pleased to see that Covid-19 does not seem to have had an adverse impact on the fund, but we will of course continue to monitor. It is important that we continue to strike the right balance between making sure money is available to make discretionary grants, while keeping the costs proportionate for the profession that pays for the Fund. In past years we had been built up in the expectation of some high value claims, we are now in a position to reduce those reserves and so reduce the costs of the scheme. This is why the consultation on our 2021/22 Business Plan

and budget is able to propose a fee reduction for individuals from £50 to £40.

Finally, on this, Board agreed that we will publish the statements on our website, not just as part of the published Board pack, to make them more accessible and so consistent with our commitment to transparency.

Last year Board decided that we would have more of a presence in Wales, and our meeting coincided with the appointment of our first ever Head of Welsh Affairs [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2021-press-releases/head-welsh-affairs/>]. The legal landscape in Wales is changing and we want to play our part, not least through the phased introduction of the Solicitors Qualifying Examination in Welsh. I am looking forward to further developing our approach in Wales, including setting up an office and a planned Board meeting in Cardiff in October.

Our draft Business Plan tells you more about our future work and the consultation [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/business-plan-budget-2021-2022/>] remains open until 25 June. If you haven't already responded, please do so, we really want to hear what you think.