

News release

SRA reviews information published about regulatory decisions

10 May 2022

We are reviewing the way we publish decisions about disciplinary and regulatory action and want views on the principles that will guide how information is made available to the public and profession.

The purpose of publishing decisions about individuals and firms is to give the public and others, such as employers, the information they need to help them make informed choices about engaging a solicitor.

Details of such outcomes are attached to a solicitor or firm's public record. This information is published online, is available through our Solicitors Register [<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/register/>], and can be accessed by external online search engines.

Our current approach to publication was introduced 15 years ago. It says details of sanctions imposed - such as rebukes or fines of up to £2,000 - prosecutions at the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT), the closure of firms, or conditions imposed on an individual solicitor - will remain publicly accessible for at least three years from initial publication. Details of certain types of the most serious sanction, such as strike offs or suspensions, remain public permanently.

The consultation is seeking views on whether the current approach strikes the right balance between protecting the best interests of the public, versus being fair and proportionate to the profession. It looks to consider what is published, in how much detail, when and for how long information should remain public.

Anna Bradley, Chair of the SRA, said: 'We are very much open to views on this. It is well over a decade since we established the principles of our current approach. A lot has changed since then, including significant shifts in what people can - and expect - to be able to access online.'

'There is an argument for more transparency, and that could help both the public and employers make informed decisions, while reinforcing the importance of high professional standards. Yet there are key questions around the practicalities of this, particularly given the needs of different audiences. We are really keen to hear the views of both the public and profession as to what approach we should take.'

As well as considering how long details should remain public, the consultation explores how information on disciplinary outcomes should be

presented online to make the information easier to understand.

Based on feedback received on the principles outlined in the consultation, we will work up specific proposals for how disciplinary information will be handled and published in the future.

The consultation [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/publication-regulatory-decisions/?s=0>] runs until 2 August.