

SRA Update

Issue 102 - April 2022

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Welcome to the latest issue of SRA Update. There is a lot going on at the moment, not least the rapidly-changing situation in Ukraine and the UK Government's reaction to it. We continue to be in touch with Government departments and others to clarify what we are doing to help you adhere to the latest sanctions laid down against Russia and its interests. Against that, we have a busy programme of our own to deal with.

We are digesting your responses to our proposals on the future of post six-year run-off cover. And we want your views on a wide range of other subjects to, such as re-introducing keeping of the roll and rules on making sure workplace environments are safe.

Paul Philip

Chief Executive

Working with clients affected by the Russia/Ukraine conflict

[\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/financial-sanctions-update-march-2022/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/financial-sanctions-update-march-2022/)

With new and updated sanctions continuing to be added against individuals and organisations linked to Russia, it is critical that you and your firm stay up-to-date with the last measures being introduced. We have produced guidance to make sure you are aware of your obligations regarding these sanctions and other implications – such as money-laundering reporting.

Read more about: Working with clients affected by the Russia/Ukraine conflict [\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/financial-sanctions-update-march-2022/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/financial-sanctions-update-march-2022/)

Annual exercise for solicitors without a practising certificate

[\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/keeping-roll-2022/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/keeping-roll-2022/)



Following changes to laws on how personal data is handled, we are consulting on proposals to reintroduce a requirement for solicitors without a practising certificate to complete an annual application confirming that they wish to remain on the roll.

Read more about: Annual exercise for solicitors without a practising certificate [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/keeping-roll-2022/>]

Solicitors Indemnity Fund extended to allow for further consideration

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/solicitors-indemnity-fund-extended/>]

Following consultation on the future of post six-year run off cover, we are seeking a further 12-month extension to the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF), to September 2023, to enable detailed consideration of key points raised in feedback.

Read more about: Solicitors Indemnity Fund extended to allow for further consideration [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/solicitors-indemnity-fund-extended/>]

Have your say on our proposed new rules on wellbeing in the workplace

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/wellbeing-consultation/>]

Find out more and have your say on our proposed rule changes on wellbeing. They would reinforce our powers to deal with risks to the public which stem from a poor work culture in law firms. The proposals also seek to clarify our approach to situations where a solicitor's health issues affect their ability to practise, or to participate in our enforcement processes.

Read more about: Have your say on our proposed new rules on wellbeing in the workplace [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/wellbeing-consultation/>]

Find out more on wellbeing in our webinar

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/595/home>]

As part of the consultation on wellbeing in the workplace, we are holding a webinar. This free event is your chance to learn more about, and ask questions about the proposed changes. It takes place on Wednesday, 4 May.

Read more about: Find out more on wellbeing in our webinar

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/595/home>]

Solicitors' duties in Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme matters

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-bar-strike/>]

Criminal Bar Association members voted to adopt no returns in relation to its Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme, as of 11 April. That means that in certain situations, your client risks being unrepresented at a hearing. You have certain duties if this happens to you and your client.

Read more about: Solicitors' duties in Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme matters [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-bar-strike/>]

Find out more about SQE at our roundtables

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-sqe-roundtables/>]

We are holding a series of roundtables in England and Wales to discuss how the qualifying work experience element of our new Solicitors Qualifying Examination affects would-be entrants to the profession. There are events in Birmingham, Manchester and Swansea for those involved in the training of potential solicitors.

Read more about: Find out more about SQE at our roundtables

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-sqe-roundtables/>]

Cybercrime threat continues

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-cybercrime/>]

Cyber-criminals continue to try their hardest to get hold of your clients' money or sensitive information. You should keep doing all you can to protect yourselves and your clients from increased attacks on your systems.

Read more about: Cybercrime threat continues

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-cybercrime/>]

Quality of legal representation in the youth justice system

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-advocacy/>]

The Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research (ICPR), Birkbeck is conducting research on legal representation and advocacy in the youth justice system. Have your say by completing a short questionnaire.

Read more about: Quality of legal representation in the youth justice system [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-advocacy/>]

An insight to reducing complaints

[<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/media/235poj2y/211129-annual-complaints-summary-2020-21-final.pdf>]

The Legal Ombudsman's overview of annual complaints 2020/21 suggests there are improvements to make and that the basics remain key. Simple customer service failings are driving a huge bulk of work, with a large amount linked to poor communication. The report highlights the areas where customer service needs to improve and where service providers can do more to resolve complaints in-house.

Read more about: An insight to reducing complaints

[<https://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/media/235poj2y/211129-annual-complaints-summary-2020-21-final.pdf>]

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 latest issue of SRA Update. There is a lot going on at the moment, not least the rapidly-changing situation in Ukraine and the UK Government's reaction to it. We continue to be in touch with Government departments and others to clarify what we are doing to help you adhere to the latest sanctions laid down against Russia and its interests. For example, the Economic Crime Bill brings new obligations under your duty to guard against money laundering, and this is outlined in an anti-money laundering focus section of this month's issue.

There are also changes to the way leasehold conveyancing matters are dealt with, and we have updated our guidance for those solicitors owning separate businesses.

Paul Philip



Chief Executive

Working with clients affected by the Russia/Ukraine conflict

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2022-press-releases/financial-sanctions-update-march-2022/>]

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New rules around ground rent

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-ground-rent/>]

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022 received Royal Assent in February and will come into effect at the end of June. You should be aware of the changes so that you can properly advise clients looking to be leasehold properties.

Read more about: New rules around ground rent
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-ground-rent/>]

Owning a separate business, updated guidance [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-separate-business/>]

Some solicitors own separate businesses, offering a one-stop shop for clients who need other professional services. We have updated our guidance on the rules relating to the owning of separate businesses.

Read more about: Owning a separate business, updated guidance
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-separate-business/>]

Focus on AML

The new Economic Crime Act

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-aml-act/>]



The Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act 2022 (ECTE) is designed to prevent money laundering by establishing a new register of overseas entities that records beneficial ownership of properties. It also has enhanced unexplained wealth order powers. You need to be aware of this as this might affect you and your work.

Read more about: The new Economic Crime Act

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-aml-act/>]

Carry out proper due diligence on clients in high-risk countries

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-aml-high-risk/>]

Your firm has a responsibility to carry out enhanced due diligence on any business partner in a 'high-risk third' country. The Government has updated the list of countries this applies to. You can check your business partners against this list.

Read more about: Carry out proper due diligence on clients in high-risk countries [<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-102-aml-high-risk/>]

Changes to the UK's International Sanctions regime

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-aml-international/>]

The UK has recently implemented changes to its international sanctions regime in response to the conflict in Ukraine. A new set of sanctions centred around asset freezes and travel bans have been introduced against a large number of individuals, under The Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

Read more about: Changes to the UK's International Sanctions regime

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-aml-international/>]

CPS creates new unit

[<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-responds-changing-nature-serious-economic-and-organised-crime-new-team>]

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has created a Serious Economic, Organised Crime and International Directorate, which brings together specialists in economic crime, organised crime, and proceeds of crime. Preventing money laundering is not just professional obligation, it's a criminal matter too. This new CPS directorate demonstrates an even stiffer resolve to sanction those professionals that help criminals.

Read more about: CPS creates new unit [<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-responds-changing-nature-serious-economic-and-organised-crime-new-team>]

How we select firms for AML visits

[https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/aml-questions-answers/#heading_5bbd]

As part of our AML supervision, we will visit firms to see if they have the right processes in place to detect and prevent against money launderers. We have published information on how decide which firms to call upon during our visits.

Read more about: How we select firms for AML visits

[https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/guidance-support/aml-questions-answers/#heading_5bbd]

Webinar – firm-wide assessments

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/589/home>]

Your firm-wide risk assessment is the keystone for all your anti-money laundering work. It's also a legal requirement to have one. Find out how to make sure your assessment is doing its job at our free webinar, where we will share tips, best practice and areas to avoid. It takes place on Wednesday 22 June.

Read more about: Webinar – firm-wide assessments

[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/589/home>]

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