

Research and reports

Last updated July 2021

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Research publications

Technology and Innovation in Legal Services [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/technology-innovation-in-legal-services/\]](#)

July 2021

This report summarises the key findings of research we commissioned from the University of Oxford on technology and innovation in the legal sector. It also sets out our response to the findings.

SQE Business readiness review report [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/sqe-business-readiness-review-report/\]](#)

April 2021

The latest business readiness report from the SQE's independent reviewer, Geoff Coombe. We are pleased that the review shows that we are on-track for introduction of the SQE in September, with preparations fit for purpose. We welcome the recommendations of the report and are taking action to make sure they are implemented.

Education and training authorisation and monitoring activity September 2018 – August 2019 [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/education-training-authorisation-monitoring-activity/\]](#)

February 2021

This report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training.

Sectoral Risk Assessment: Anti-money laundering and terrorist financing [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/aml-risk-assessment/\]](#)

January 2021

This document sets out information on money laundering and terrorist financing risk that we consider relevant to those we supervise.

Anti-Money Laundering Visits 2019-2020 [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/anti-money-laundering-visits-2019-2020/\]](#)

November 2020

This is the first report reviewing the effectiveness of firms' systems to prevent criminals using the profession to launder money.

SRA Transparency Rules: Year One Evaluation [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/better-information-legal-services-market/\]](#)

October 2020

This report provides a summary of our wider evaluation into the impact of the SRA Transparency Rules, one year on from these being fully implemented.

[First tier complaints 2019-2020](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/first-tier-complaints-2019/]

July 2020

Solicitors have a duty to provide a good standard of service, as we set out in our mandatory Principles and as set out in the Legal Services Act.

[The Legal Access Challenge – conclusion and next steps](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/legal-access-challenge/]

June 2020

This report provides a headline summary of the Legal Access Challenge - what we did, how it went, what we learnt and next steps.

[Promoting disability inclusion in law firms – setting out good practice](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/disability-workplace/]

March 2020

This work sets out disability inclusive measures that law firms can put in place for employees, clients and others they deal with in the course of their work.

[Regulation and Education Authorisation and Monitoring Activity September 2017 to August 2018](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/monitoring-activity-2017-18/]

January 2020

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018. This reflects the higher education academic year.

[Reasonable adjustments in the provision of legal services](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/reasonable-adjustments/]

October 2019

We commissioned YouGov to explore what reasonable adjustments law firms could offer to make sure their services are more accessible for disabled people.

[Advocacy in the solicitors' profession](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/advocacy-in-the-solicitors-profession/]

August 2019

This research was informed by an online survey taken by 2,830 individual solicitors and 851 firms. It looks specifically at advocacy in the profession within the context of the different areas of law of advocacy, and was designed to cover a wide range of topics.

[First tier complaints report](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/first-tier-complaints-report/]

July 2019

Solicitors have a duty to provide a good standard of service, as we set out in our mandatory Principles and as set out in the Legal Services Act. Complaints are an important indicator of service quality. We ask firms to report annually to us on the number of complaints they receive from their clients and they resolve.

[Understanding implementation of our approach to continuing competence](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/continuing-competence/]

July 2019

This report looks at how our new Continuing Competency regime has been adopted by law firms. It is part of an on-going process to make sure all solicitors we regulate continue to keep their competencies up to date and thus provide a proper standard of service.

[SRA Transparency Rules: Web Sweep Report](#) [/sra/how-we-work/reports/web-sweep/]

June 2019

The first such web sweeps took place during March/April 2019. The following report outlines the findings of these sweeps, and what follow-up action we will be taking as a result.

[Authorisation and monitoring activity September 2016 to August 2017 \[sra/how-we-work/reports/authorisation-monitoring-activity-2016-17/\]](#)

January 2019

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017. This reflects the higher education academic year.

[Price transparency in the legal services market: a study of small businesses with legal issues \[sra/how-we-work/reports/price-transparency/\]](#)

October 2018

The survey explored how small businesses choose and use legal and other professional service providers to address problems relating to debt recovery and human resources (HR) matters.

[Quality of Criminal Advocacy \[sra/how-we-work/reports/criminal-advocacy/\]](#)

June 2018

To help us better understand the nature and scale of any problem we jointly commissioned, with the Bar Standards Board, an independent report into the views of the judiciary on current standards. We also conducted a thematic review into law firm practices in this area.

[Encouraging innovation: transparency about our waiver decisions \[sra/how-we-work/reports/encouraging-innovation-transparency-waiver-decisions/\]](#)

June 2018

While we set out the standards we expect of solicitors and firms, we have always allowed some of our rules to be waived in certain circumstances where this is judged to be in the public interest. Where we grant a waiver the individual or firm does not need to comply with the specific rule or rules to which the waiver applies.

[Better information in the legal services market \[sra/how-we-work/reports/better-information/\]](#)

June 2018

Beginning in 2014, our 'Looking to the Future' programme seeks to make sure we regulate solicitors and law firms in the right way. This means a sharp focus on what matters: the high professional standards that mean we can remove outdated bureaucracy constraints and make it easier for firms to provide the legal services that the public and small businesses need.

[Impact assessment of the deregulation of the prescribed SRA minimum salary for trainees \[sra/how-we-work/reports/minimum-salary-trainees/\]](#)

May 2018

In 2014, we removed the minimum salary levels for trainee solicitors. The previous levels of prescribed salary were replaced with a requirement for trainees to be paid at least the national minimum or living wage. We thought salaries should be set by market forces and the profession itself and that this could help increase the number of training contracts and access to the profession.

[Evaluating our reforms: Accountants' reports \[sra/how-we-work/reports/evaluating-reforms-accountants-reports/\]](#)

May 2018

This report sets out the changes we have introduced so far to the accountant's report requirements, evaluates the impact of these changes, provides examples of reports submitted to us: some that provide us with the information we need to decide whether to take a matter forward and some where we think improvements could be made.

Impact evaluation of SRA's regulatory reform programme [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/abs-evaluation/\]](#)

April 2018

We commissioned the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES) to undertake an early stage impact evaluation of the introduction of Alternative Business Structures (ABSs) and Multi-disciplinary practices (MDPs), and changes to the separate business rule

Understanding consumer experiences of conveyancing legal services [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/conveyancing-legal-services/\]](#)

March 2018

We commissioned IFF Research to conduct independent research involving 1,501 people who had bought or sold a property during the previous two years.

Preventing Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/preventing-money-laundering-financing-terrorism/\]](#)

March 2018

The legal profession plays a vital role in tackling money laundering. Solicitors handle large sums of client money and the reputation of the profession can give a sense of credibility to any transaction carried out through a solicitor's firm.

Price transparency in the legal services market [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/price-transparency-legal-services-market/\]](#)

January 2018

We conducted this research to inform our thinking on whether we should make firms publish price information, and if so, how. Specifically, we sought to identify what type of information would be most useful for firms to publish, and how firms should present this information to consumers.

Research into the experiences and effectiveness of solicitors' first tier complaints handling processes [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/first-tier-complaints/\]](#)

December 2017

Complaints can be an important indicator of service quality and we ask firms to report annually to us on the numbers of complaints they receive from their clients.

Authorisation and monitoring activity September 2015 to August 2016 [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/authorisation-monitoring-activity-september-2015-16/\]](#)

December 2017

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016. This reflects the higher education academic year.

Personal injury [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/personal-injury-thematic-review/\]](#)

December 2017

This PI project is one of the ways in which we are increasing our understanding of this part of the legal sector and working to improve the experience for the users of legal services

Mapping advantages and disadvantages: Diversity in the legal profession in England and Wales [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/diversity-legal-profession/\]](#)

October 2017

We commissioned independent quantitative research on solicitor career progression and how it is influenced by gender and ethnicity. The work, conducted by the University of Leeds and Newcastle University Business School, used our data from 1970 to 2016 to undertake a statistical analysis of how solicitors' careers have progressed since admission to the Roll.

Experiences of consumers who may be vulnerable in family law [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/vulnerable-consumers/](#)]

March 2017

From the perspective of legal firms and consumers, this research explores the accessibility, cost and quality of family law services in the context of recent legal aid reforms. The findings offer insight into the experiences of potentially vulnerable users of family law services

An assessment of the market for Personal Injury [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/pi-report/](#)]

October 2016

Our report assessing Personal Injury (PI) legal services has provided us with a detailed and up to date understanding of how this market is functioning following the introduction of legislative reforms under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO).

Authorisation and monitoring activity September 2014 to August 2015 [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/authorisation-monitoring-activity-september-2014-2015/](#)]

September 2016

The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. Unless otherwise stated, it relates to the period 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015. This reflects the higher education academic year.

Anti money laundering report [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/anti-money-laundering/](#)]

May 2016

In September 2014, we announced our plan to undertake a thematic review of anti money laundering (AML) compliance by solicitors. The principal aim was to gain knowledge and understanding of the AML compliance policies, procedures and controls implemented by a wide range of law firms, and determine how effectively firms were managing risks in this area.

Independent regulation of solicitors: Public opinion poll findings [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/independent-regulation-of-solicitors-public-opinion-poll-findings/](#)]

February 2016

ComRes interviewed 1,810 adults in England and Wales online, in mid-January 2016, about their views on the regulation of solicitors. The poll found widespread support for the idea of solicitors being regulated independently (82 per cent), compared to just 6 per cent of adults in England and Wales who say that solicitors should be self-regulated

Quality of legal services for asylum seekers [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/asylum-report/](#)]

January 2016

The SRA commissioned a consortium, led by Migration Work CIC, to undertake research on the quality of legal advice provided to asylum seekers. The study involved speaking with 123 asylum seekers, an online survey of solicitors, and interviews with solicitors, community groups and representative bodies. Previous research had identified a lack of understanding about the market for immigration advice, highlighted the complexity of regulation in this area of law and raised concerns about the detriment to asylum seekers of poor quality advice.

Research on lawyer-client relationships in large firms: Impact on independence, risk and representation [[/sra/how-we-work/reports/independence-report/](#)]

October 2015

Researchers interviewed 53 senior corporate and finance lawyers from 20 of the largest corporate law firms in England and Wales to understand how the lawyer-client relationships works in larger firms.

Innovation in legal services: A report for the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Legal Services Board [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/innovation-report/\]](#)

July 2015

The legal services sector plays a critical role in facilitating commercial and domestic activity and in administering justice. Innovation in the sector in the form of new services or better ways of delivering existing services has the potential to deliver significant social value. This report is the first major attempt to examine innovation in the legal services sector using a large-scale survey.

Education and Training: A report on authorisation and monitoring activity [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/education-training-report/\]](#)

Responsibility for developing the framework for the education and training of solicitors sits within the SRA's regulatory policy unit. We also undertake the authorisation and routine monitoring of education and training providers. The purpose of this report is to tell our stakeholders about the outcomes of our quality assurance activity in relation to education and training. It captures authorisation of training providers, including firms and higher education providers. The report covers the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014.

Research into alternative business structures [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/research-abs-executive-report/\]](#)

May 2015

We have carried out research to explore how ABSs are "doing things differently", how this may lead to future impacts on the legal services sector, and the experience of firms that applied for an ABS licence from the SRA.

Review of SRA Regulatory Management: Survey findings report [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/review-of-sra-regulatory-management/\]](#)

March 2014

This report examines the effect of our approach to supervising high-impact firms, otherwise referred to as Regulatory Management (RM). It aims to identify the impacts to date of RM on the regulated community and set a baseline from which future impacts can be measured.

Research on the role of in-house solicitors [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/the-role-of-in-house-solicitors/\]](#)

February 2014

The SRA commissioned Oxera to conduct economic research into the role of in-house solicitors. There are now 25,600 solicitors working in-house, twice the number in 2000 and representing 18 per cent of the solicitor population. The aim of the research was to provide a detailed map of the supply of, and demand for, legal services by in-house solicitors. This will help the SRA understand emerging regulatory risks and the challenges that in-house solicitors face.

Measuring the impact of outcomes-focused regulation (OFR) on firms [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/measuring-impact-outcomes-focused-regulation/\]](#)

February 2013

Based on a telephone survey of 1,000 solicitors, this report examines the impact of OFR on the firms we regulate.

Research on attitudes to regulation and compliance in legal services (PDF 14 pages, 592K) [\[globalassets/documents/sra/research/attitudes-regulation-compliance-2011-executive-summary.pdf?version=4a1ad3\]](#)

February 2012

The SRA is keen to build an understanding of changes in attitudes to compliance arising from the introduction of outcomes-focused regulation (OFR) in October 2011. For this purpose, we

formed a 'baseline' of attitudes towards compliance against which to measure the impact of OFR over time.

Attitudes to regulation and compliance in legal services: 2011 research findings [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/attitudes-to-regulation-and-compliance-in-legal-services/\]](#)

On 6 October 2011, the Solicitors' Regulation Authority (SRA) began regulating solicitors and firms in a new way; moving from a more prescriptive and reactive approach to regulation to a more pro-active, risk-based outcomes-focused approach (OFR).

QLTS report [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/qualified-lawyers-transfer-scheme-qlts-research/\]](#)

In July 2012 the SRA commissioned a review of the current QLTS single assessment body model. ICF GHK conducted an independent evidence based review of QLTS through a desk-based review of high stakes assessment approaches in addition to a series of consultations with providers and regulators. The SRA's response to the Independent Complaints Resolution Service's annual report [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/sra-response-icrs-report/\]](#)

In October 2010, following a tender process, the SRA appointed the Independent Complaints Resolution Service (ICRS) to provide a final independent response to individual complaints and to oversee the way we carry out our complaints handling function.

Reviews

Cyber Security - A thematic review [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/cyber-security/\]](#)

September 2020

This report shows what we wanted to know more about the experiences of firms that had been targeted by cybercriminals.

Investment schemes that are potentially dubious [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/investment-schemes-that-are-potentially-dubious/\]](#)

August 2020

A thematic review to enhance our understanding of typical schemes and explore how and why solicitors become involved.

Firms risk assessment exercise [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/firms-risk-assessment-exercise/\]](#)

October 2019

On 28 March 2019, we called in 400 firms' anti-money laundering firm risk assessments. All firms had declared to us that they were offering services within scope of the money laundering regulations.

A thematic review of trust and company service providers [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/aml-thematic-review/\]](#)

May 2019

A thematic review about solicitors that carry out trust and company services work and their compliance with the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017.

Residential conveyancing thematic review [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/residential-conveyancing-thematic-report/\]](#)

March 2019

A thematic review to help us better understand how firms are delivering residential conveyancing services on a day-to-day basis, and whether they are fulfilling their obligations to their clients.

Payment Protection Insurance [\[sra/how-we-work/reports/payment-protection-insurance/\]](#)

April 2018

Our thematic review on mis-sold payment protection insurance (PPI)

[Unlocking the benefits of diversity \[sra/how-we-work/reports/unlocking-benefits-diversity/\]](#)

October 2017

We wanted to understand what is being done, and what can be done, to improve the representation of female and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) solicitors in senior roles such as partners or directors.

[Asylum report: The quality of legal service provided to asylum seekers \[sra/how-we-work/reports/asylum-seekers-report/\]](#)

December 2016

In this report, we set out the results of our thematic asylum project (the project). This review was undertaken in the light of the findings of independent research we commissioned in 2014, reported in the, 'Quality of legal services for asylum seekers', published in January 2016 (the research paper).

[An assessment of the market for Personal Injury \[sra/how-we-work/reports/pi-report/\]](#)

October 2016

Our report assessing Personal Injury (PI) legal services has provided us with a detailed and up to date understanding of how this market is functioning following the introduction of legislative reforms under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO).

[Anti money/laundrying report \[sra/how-we-work/reports/anti-money-laundrying-report/\]](#)

May 2016

In September 2014, we announced our plan to undertake a thematic review of anti money laundering (AML) compliance by solicitors. The principal aim was to gain knowledge and understanding of the AML compliance policies, procedures and controls implemented by a wide range of law firms, and determine how effectively firms were managing risks in this area.

[Conveyancing thematic study full report \[sra/how-we-work/reports/conveyancing-thematic-study-full-report/\]](#)

In 2012, we undertook 100 visits with firms of solicitors that provide conveyancing services. The visits looked at the ways that these services are delivered, marketed and charged for.

[Conveyancing Thematic Study: Summary Report \[sra/how-we-work/reports/conveyancing-thematic-study/\]](#)

This report summarises the findings from these visits and highlights implications for the SRA's strategy for regulating firms engaged in conveyancing.

[Thematic study of compliance with Principle 9 \[sra/how-we-work/reports/thematic-study-compliance-principle-9/\]](#)

In the latter part of 2012, we carried out thematic supervision visits with firms to find out what arrangements they had in place to meet Principle 9

[Review of the Compensation Fund \[sra/how-we-work/compensation-fund/review-of-the-compensation-fund/\]](#)

The Financial Protection Committee has completed its 18-month review of the Compensation Fund. Their report is now available to download.

[Review of SRA client financial protection arrangements \[sra/how-we-work/reports/cra-financial-protection-arrangements/\]](#)

In July 2010, the SRA commissioned Charles River Associates (CRA) to undertake a "roots and branch" review of the current financial protection arrangements.

Consumer reports

[Legal Choices summary report 2017–2020 \[sra/how-we-work/reports/legal-choices-summary-report-20172020/\]](#)

17 November 2020

In response to recommendations in the December 2016 Competition and Markets Authority report on how the legal sector was working for consumers, the regulators agreed a three-year

development plan for Legal Choices. This report sets out what we did and looks ahead to the next stages.

Equality and diversity

We publish statistical information about diversity in the profession [[/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-profession/](#)] and other reports about diversity [[/sra/equality-diversity/reports/](#)] from time to time. We also publish an annual report about diversity in the SRA [[/sra/equality-diversity/diversity-sra/](#)].