

SRA Update

Issue 88 - January 2021

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Welcome to SRA Update Issue 88, and a Happy New Year to you all, despite the difficult start to the year for everyone. Lockdown does of course place even more emphasis on online information, so we are reminding you of our rules and the need to publish the key information we have set out. We are also considering the best indicators of quality for legal services, so please consider joining our pilot exercise on this project. This edition includes lots of information on the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), as you would expect as we look ahead to introducing SQE in autumn. Finally, we look back to 2018/19 through our Annual Review documents, which include reporting on the profile of solicitors in our enforcement processes and our next steps to look at the reasons for the overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in the concerns brought to us that we have again seen.

Enforcement work around transparency rules continues [\[/sra/news/sra-update-88-transparency-compliance/\]](#)

Our rules on what law firms should be publishing are all the more important as lockdown means that potential clients are going online to choose their providers. We will be carrying out further exercises throughout 2021 to check individual firms are complying with our rules. So if you are not up to date, it's time to act.

Read more about: [Enforcement work around transparency rules continues](#) [\[/sra/news/sra-update-88-transparency-compliance/\]](#)

Annual review of 2018/19 operational work [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/2018-19-review/\]](#)

We have published our Annual Reviews for the business year 2018/19. Read the reviews to find out more about our work on money laundering, education and training, and the enforcement action we took. There is also information on the diversity of outcomes in our disciplinary work.

Read more about: [Annual review of 2018/19 operational work](#) [\[/sra/how-we-work/reports/2018-19-review/\]](#)

Quality indicators – join our pilot [\[/sra/news/sra-update-88-quality-indicators/\]](#)

In February 2021 we, and other legal regulators, are launching a pilot to trial further approaches to improving the information available to the public about lawyers and their services. In particular we are going to be looking into encouraging greater use, by both firms and the public, of customer reviews and we are looking for law firms to take part.

Read more about: [Quality indicators – join our pilot](#) [\[/sra/news/sra-update-88-quality-indicators/\]](#)

SQE information strategy and qualifying work

experience details now available

[\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/sqe-information-strategy/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/sqe-information-strategy/)

Our new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) launches in September. We have published further guidance setting out our expectations for qualifying work experience, so that employers and employees will know what we want from them. We have also published our information, strategy, which sets out our approach to publishing information, including when key information will be made available, as well as the approach to evaluation.

Read more about: SQE information strategy and qualifying work experience details now available [\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/sqe-information-strategy/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/sqe-information-strategy/)

Solicitor examiners recruitment [\[/sra/news/sqe-update-examiner-recruitment/\]](/sra/news/sqe-update-examiner-recruitment/)

With the design of the new SQE assessment finalised, Kaplan is expanding its team of examiners ahead of the first assessments in November 2021 and applications for positions are now open. The roles available include question writers, markers and assessors. Kaplan is also recruiting for a number of other roles.

Read more about: Solicitor examiners recruitment [\[/sra/news/sqe-update-examiner-recruitment/\]](/sra/news/sqe-update-examiner-recruitment/)

SQE timings survey [\[https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE-timings-survey\]](https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE-timings-survey)

In October 2019 stakeholders gave us very helpful feedback in relation to possible SQE assessment timings. The timings of the initial sittings of SQE1 and SQE2 are likely to be slightly different from those in subsequent years to balance various factors. We'd like your feedback on dates for future years, which you can do through our survey before 31 January.

Read more about: SQE timings survey [\[https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE-timings-survey\]](https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/SQE-timings-survey)

Webinar - The SQE2 Assessment [\[https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/513/home\]](https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/513/home)

Book your place on this webinar to find out more about the way we will be testing new entrants' skills through the SQE2 assessment. It takes place between 14.30 and 15.00 on Monday, 18 January.

Read more about: Webinar - The SQE2 Assessment [\[https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/513/home\]](https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/513/home)

Webinar – Qualifying Work Experience [\[https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/514/home\]](https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/514/home)

Everyone looking to qualify through the SQE route will need to complete at least two years' work experience. Book your place at our webinar to find out more about common queries. The webinar takes place on Thursday 21 January between 12 midday and 12.30.

Read more about: Webinar – Qualifying Work Experience [\[https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/514/home\]](https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/514/home)

New Board members take up posts [\[/sra/news/press/new-board-members-2021/\]](/sra/news/press/new-board-members-2021/)

Four new Board members have taken up their posts. Ann Harrison, Dermot Nolan, Vikas Shah MBE and Elizabeth Smart have joined the other seven members of our Board following

a rigorous recruitment process in the autumn that attracted 200 applicants.

Read more about: [New Board members take up posts \[/sra/news/press/new-board-members-2021/\]](#)

Share your innovation experiences [/sra/news/sra-update-88-innovation-research/]

We are conducting research on the use of technology in legal services and new ways of working. You could help at this early stage by sharing your examples of innovative thinking involving technology with our research partners at Oxford University.

Read more about: [Share your innovation experiences \[/sra/news/sra-update-88-innovation-research/\]](#)

Your health, your career [/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 \[/solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/\]](#)

Welcome to the compliance news section of SRA Update Issue 88, and a Happy New Year to you all. We enter 2021 as we spent much of 2020 – in a lockdown. When the first call to stay at home was announced in March, we produced guidance for law firms, and we are keeping that under review and relevant. We have of course also left the European Union, so we cover some of the implications. Finally, we again remind you of the importance of our transparency rules, especially as potential clients are going online to choose their providers. We will be taking action where we see firms fall short of our requirements so make sure you and your firm are up to date and fully compliant.

Enforcement work around transparency rules continues [/sra/news/sra-update-88-transparency-compliance/]

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Brexit and the effects on your business [/sra/news/sra-update-88-brexit/]

Now that we have officially left the EU, there are some changes that could affect the way you work. You can find out about some of these on our Brexit pages. We continue to update the pages as new information about how you might be affected comes to light.

Read more about: [Brexit and the effects on your business \[/sra/news/sra-update-88-brexit/\]](#)

Coronavirus and our rules [/sra/news/coronavirus-qa/]

We are again in a lockdown due Covid-19. We originally published advice on staying compliant with our rules in these difficult times in March, and we continue to revise and update

to make sure it remains relevant.

Read more about: Coronavirus and our rules [\[sra/news/coronavirus-qa\]](#)

Check your firm for tax advice and AML regulations [\[sra/news/press/tax-advice-money-laundering/\]](#)

As of Sunday (January 10), the definition of tax advice for money-laundering regulation purposes changed. You should check to see if your firm is now captured by regulations introduced last year, and take appropriate steps if you are.

Read more about: Check your firm for tax advice and AML regulations [\[sra/news/press/tax-advice-money-laundering/\]](#)

Check on proper authorisation for immigration work [\[sra/news/sra-update-87-immigration-services/\]](#)

We have updated the way that those providing immigration work are authorised. This followed consultation in the spring on the best way forward for providers after we introduced Standards and Regulations in November 2019. Read our provisions to make sure you have the right status.

Read more about: Check on proper authorisation for immigration work [\[sra/news/sra-update-87-immigration-services/\]](#)

Changes to your phone systems [\[sra/news/sra-update-88-telephony-upgrade/\]](#)

The next four years will see significant changes made to the telephone network that could affect your equipment. Ofcom asked you to make you aware that the upgrades made by BT Openreach might mean you need to make similar upgrades to you own systems.

Read more about: Changes to your phone systems [\[sra/news/sra-update-88-telephony-upgrade/\]](#)

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