

## SRA Update

Issue 136 - February 2025

- [General updates](#) [#tab\_8a1e1]
- [Compliance updates](#) [#tab\_8a1e2]

Welcome to the latest issue of SRA Update. It is important that we respond to changes in the legal landscape by making sure our arrangements effectively protect clients' money. This is the final month you can respond to our three consultations on this subject, including proposals on our Compensation Fund. We are keen to hear as many views of possible, so we can get the balance right – a practical approach that safeguards client money, while also supporting a dynamic legal market that meets the needs of the public. Please take a look and have your say.

For those of you who work in-house, bookings are now open for our annual in-house conference in London in March. This event has proven very popular in past years, so don't hesitate to book your place. And finally, this week we have published a study on consumer vulnerability in the legal market, providing interesting insights and useful information for how you deal with and onboard your own clients.

**Paul Philip**

Chief Executive

### **Deadline approaching on client money consultations**

[\[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-money-consultation-october-2024/\]](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-money-consultation-october-2024/)

As part of our ongoing review of consumer protection arrangements in the legal sector, there is still time for you to have your say on potential changes to how and when law firms handle client money, and how this money is protected. Our consultation on this, and arrangements for the SRA Compensation Fund, remains open until 21 February.

[Read more about: Deadline approaching on client money consultations](https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-money-consultation-october-2024/)  
[https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-money-consultation-october-2024/]

### **In-house conference 2025 – book your place!**

[\[https://www.eventsforce.net/sra/718/home\]](https://www.eventsforce.net/sra/718/home)

If you work in-house, book your place at this year's in-house conference in London on 12 March. We'll be at County Hall in Belvedere Road for a half day packed with expert panels, useful advice and networking opportunities. As well as SRA speakers, hear from other experts from both the public and private sector at this free event. Don't delay as places are limited.



[Read more about: In-house conference 2025 – book your place!](https://www.eventsforce.net/sra/718/home)  
[<https://www.eventsforce.net/sra/718/home>]

## **Research suggests measures to address consumer vulnerability**

[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-vulnerability-research/>]

We have published an independent study into consumer vulnerability in the legal market, as part of our ongoing commitment to improving access to legal services. The research suggests that there should be a greater focus on making services accessible for all rather than trying to make individual adjustments.

[Read more about: Research suggests measures to address consumer vulnerability](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-vulnerability-research/) [<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/client-vulnerability-research/>]

## **Anti-money laundering sanctions webinar in March**

Our next AML webinar will provide updates on our proactive sanctions work, guidance issued from Office of Trade Sanctions Implementation and a look at the latest trends. This webinar will be of particular interest to firms working in areas of higher risk such as international trade, or any firms dealing with sanctioned entities or people.

[Read more about: Anti-money laundering sanctions webinar in March](https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/730/home)  
[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/730/home>]

## **Learn more about improving your qualifying work experience placements at our virtual SQE conference**

Our SQE virtual conference takes place on Wednesday 2 April. It's open to providers, students and those that offer work experience placements and is free to join. Among the topics up for discussion will be feedback from employers and those that have qualified.

[Read more about: Learn more about improving your qualifying work experience placements at our virtual SQE conference](https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/725/home)  
[<https://events.sra.org.uk/sra/725/home>]

## **Making sure your firm is managing risk effectively**

[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/risk-legal-profession/>]



We have published new research to better understand law firms and solicitors' concerns around potential market-level risks. It also considers how they identify and tackle risks, as well as how they use SRA resources.

[Read more about: Making sure your firm is managing risk effectively](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/risk-legal-profession/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/risk-legal-profession/>]

## **Risks of working in probate and estate administration** [<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/probate-administration-thematic-review/>]

Probate and estate administration generated the third highest volume of reports to us, and complaints to the Legal Ombudsman in 2023. Our latest thematic review looks at the risks and challenges in this area and how firms and solicitors are addressing them.

[Read more about: Risks of working in probate and estate administration](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/probate-administration-thematic-review/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/probate-administration-thematic-review/>]

## **Review of professional obligations** [<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/professional-obligations-thematic-review/>]

Our thematic review of professional obligations looked at how solicitors maintain their knowledge and skills in legal, regulatory and ethical areas. This report sets out our findings and some of the good practices we saw. We also highlight areas where we think there is scope for improvement.

[Read more about: Review of professional obligations](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/professional-obligations-thematic-review/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/professional-obligations-thematic-review/>]

## **Have you thought about working for us?** [<https://sra.tal.net/vx/appcentre-SolicitorsRegulationAuthority/candidate/jobboard/vacancy/2/adv/>]

We are currently recruiting for a wide range of roles, including qualified roles in our Legal and Enforcement and General Counsel functions, and roles in Human Resources, Records Management and Research and Analysis. Our jobs page has more information.

[Read more about: Have you thought about working for us?](https://sra.tal.net/vx/appcentre-SolicitorsRegulationAuthority/candidate/jobboard/vacancy/2/adv/)  
[<https://sra.tal.net/vx/appcentre-SolicitorsRegulationAuthority/candidate/jobboard/vacancy/2/adv/>]

## **Give your views on working with barristers** [<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-133-bsb-survey/>]



The Bar Standards Board (BSB) is carrying out a survey on how solicitors work with barristers. This is your chance to help inform future BSB policy by providing your experiences and expectations of working with barristers.

[Read more about: Give your views on working with barristers](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-133-bsb-survey/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-133-bsb-survey/>]

## **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/)  
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/your-health-your-career/>]

Welcome to the latest issue of Compliance News. This edition features information on newly published guidance on how to avoid being caught up in sham litigation cases. Such cases involve contested legal battles where both sides of the case are actually in cahoots and are using the litigation to launder money or conduct other illegal financial activity. Our guidance highlights red flags, as well as experiences from real firms targeted by criminals in this manner.

Also in this issue, there's new information on the Government's trade sanctions regime, a reminder about our recent warning notice on marketing your services, and on-going regulatory requests requiring some of you to provide information on how you handle complaints, or to confirm you have obtained the necessary accountants' reports.

### **Paul Philip**

Chief Executive

## **Sham litigation - learning from a criminal case** [<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/sham-litigation/>]

We have written guidance about sham litigation following an attempted case that led to a ten-year prison sentence last year. We spoke to some of the firms who were contacted by the perpetrators and can share some of the tactics they spotted as well as other general features related to sham litigation.

[Read more about: Sham litigation - learning from a criminal case](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/sham-litigation/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/sham-litigation/>]



## **Accountants' reports spot-check - final call for firms selected**

[\[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/accounts-rules-spot-check/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/accounts-rules-spot-check/)

The deadline for completing the accountants' reports spot-check has now passed. If your firm was selected to take part, you need to submit the information as soon as possible to avoid the possibility of regulatory action. We will be contacting firms who have not met the deadline, so please get in touch if you have had issues submitting your data.

[Read more about: Accountants' reports spot-check - final call for firms selected \[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/accounts-rules-spot-check/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/accounts-rules-spot-check/)

## **Have you been asked to provide complaints handling information?**

[\[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/first-tier-complaints-survey/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/first-tier-complaints-survey/)

We have written to a randomly selected cross section of 750 firms, requiring your Compliance Officer to provide information on how you identify and handle first tier complaints. If you have been asked to participate, you have until 28 February to reply. It is a regulatory obligation that you respond.

[Read more about: Have you been asked to provide complaints handling information? \[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/first-tier-complaints-survey/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/first-tier-complaints-survey/)

## **Warning around marketing your services**

[\[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2024-press-releases/warning-notice-unsolicited-approaches/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2024-press-releases/warning-notice-unsolicited-approaches/)

We have issued a warning notice about marketing your services to the public. We are particularly concerned about the behaviours of some firms doing high-volume consumer claims work. Unsolicited approaches such as cold calling and door knocking are prohibited, while firms need to make sure that information on 'no win, no fee' arrangements is clear and accurate, including information on charges and the risks around costs.

[Read more about: Warning around marketing your services \[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2024-press-releases/warning-notice-unsolicited-approaches/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2024-press-releases/warning-notice-unsolicited-approaches/)

## **New guidance issued on trade sanctions**

[\[https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-trade-sanctions/\]](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-trade-sanctions/)



The Office of Trade Sanctions Implementation (OTSI), launched in October 2024, has the power to investigate suspected breaches of specific trade sanctions and take enforcement action. OTSI has recently issued new guidance, which has implications for the legal sector.

[Read more about: New guidance issued on trade sanctions](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-trade-sanctions/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-trade-sanctions/>]

**[HM Treasury sanctions UK far-right group](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-blood-honour/)**  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-blood-honour/>]

On 8 January 2025, HM Treasury placed sanctions on a domestic far-right group, Blood & Honour, freezing their assets under the Counter-Terrorism (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This is the first time that these measures have been applied to a far-right group.

[Read more about: HM Treasury sanctions UK far-right group](https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-blood-honour/)  
[<https://guidance.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-136-blood-honour/>]

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