



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Each month we provide our Retainer clients with a highly rated compliance bulletin covering what they need to know and what action they must take. Below is a summary of our compliance bulletin.

COMPLIANCE & MANAGEMENT

Consultation on restricting fees in financial mis-selling claims

The SRA is currently running a consultation on proposals to restrict excessive fee charging in financial mis-selling compensation claims. This consultation proposes an approach that closely aligns to the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the major regulator in the sector.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The SRA's news release can be found at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/fee-restrictions-consultation/>.

The consultation is open until 21 June 2023. The consultation, including guidance as to how to respond online, can be accessed at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/excessive-charges-financial-claims/?s=o>.

The draft rules can be read in full at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/consumer-reports/annex-2---our-draft-rules-pdf-5-pages-180-kb.pdf?version=49671d>.

SRA financial penalties and publication of decisions

Following the conclusion of the SRA's second consultation on its approach to financial penalties, its updated approach has now been published which is due to take effect from 30 May 2023. The SRA has also released the outcome of its consultation to collate views on its proposals to publish regulatory decisions.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The SRA's news release can be found at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/financial-penalties-publication-policy/>.

The financial penalties consultation response, including the new financial penalties guidance, can be accessed at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/financial-penalties-new-approach/?s=c>.

The publication of regulatory decisions consultation response, including principles for such and a proposed template for publication of decisions, can be accessed at:

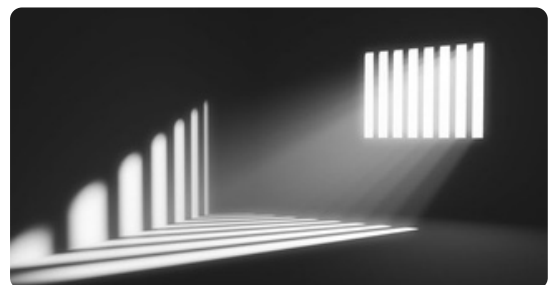
<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/publication-regulatory-decisions/?s=c>.

The SRA's Enforcement Strategy can be read in full at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/corporate-strategy/sra-enforcement-strategy/>.

Police station representation standards consultation response

Following the SRA's 2022 consultation on assuring high standards in the police station, the response has now been published. The consultation included proposals to improve the SRA's regulation of the PSRAS.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The consultation response can be accessed at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/psras-consultation?s=c>

Advocacy standards guidance and training

The Law Society has published new guidance on the preparation and conduct of advocacy, a review of advocacy standards and useful training resources.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The guidance on advocacy preparation and conduct can be accessed at:
<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/Advocacy/Guides/Advocacy-preparation-and-conduct>.

The review of advocacy standards can be read at:
<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/Advocacy/Whats-changing/advocacy-standards>.

The advocacy training resources for criminal practitioners can be found at:
<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/Advocacy/Tools/advocacy-and-the-vulnerable-training>.

Youth Court advocacy good practice guide

The SRA has published a new good practice guide for solicitors undertaking advocacy in the Youth Court. The guidance is designed to:

- help advocates meet their continuing competence obligations under the Code of Conduct for Solicitors
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FURTHER INFORMATION

The full guide can be accessed at:
<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/youth-court-advocacy/good-practice-guide/>

SRA seeking views on new Corporate Strategy

The SRA has published its proposed Corporate Strategy for the next three years. This is accompanied by the Business Plan and Budget for the next year from November 2023. The Corporate Strategy includes a focus on enhancing confidence in legal services through four overriding objectives.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The SRA's news release can be read at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/enhancing-confidence-legal-services/>.

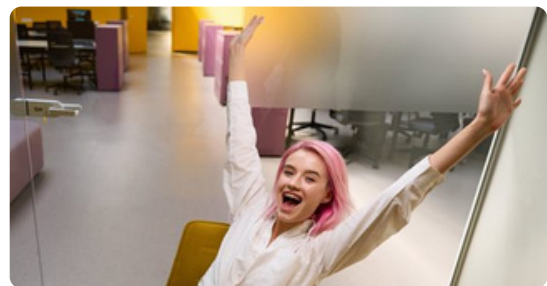
The SRA's 2023-2026 Corporate Strategy & associated consultation can be accessed at: <https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/corporate-strategy-2023-26/>.

The SRA's 2023/2024 Business Plan and Budget, and the consultation on these, can be found at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/business-plan-budget-2023-24/>.

New wellbeing at work guidance

The SRA has published updated guidance to help firms and employees understand what wellbeing at work means, and how they should comply with rules on wellbeing. The guidance outlines the SRA's approach where it considers that firms or individuals have failed to put in place measures to appropriate look after colleagues' wellbeing.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The SRA's news release can be read at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/guidance-wellbeing/>

The updated guidance, including a variety of resources to encourage good practice, can be accessed at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/workplace-environment/>

AML AND FINANCIAL CRIME

OFSI general licence for legal fees

OFSI has issued a new general licence for legal fees. The general licence is designed to make it easier for firms to receive fees for legal advice where they are working with clients from Russia and Belarus, who are subject to financial sanctions regime.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The general licence, the publication notice and forms for reporting use of the general licence can be found on OFSI's website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/legal-services-general-licence>

LEGAL AID

Extension of scope of Family legal aid

The LAA has announced that from 1 May 2023, the scope for private legal aid has been expanded to encompass additional private family law cases. Legal aid will now be available in the following cases:

- prospective guardians making applications for Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in private family law proceedings
- those with parental responsibilities when responding to these SGO applications.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The LAA's news story can be read at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/civil-news-changes-to-scope-of-family-legal-aid>.

The LAA's updated guidance can be accessed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1152915/Civil_representation_guidance_on_proceedings_codes_post_april_2013_v10_May_2023.pdf

Extension of 2022 Standard Crime Contracts

The LAA has announced its decision to extend all 2022 Standard Crime Contracts by a period of 24 months, to 30 September 2025. All existing providers will be contacted individually from May 2023 to issue a notice regarding the extension.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The LAA's news release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/crime-news-extension-of-crime-contract-to-30-september-2025>.

The LAA's headline intentions document regarding the extension can be accessed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1158189/Headline_intentions_on_extending_the_2022_standard_crime_contract_-_May_2023.pdf

Proposal to move all providers to VMP

The LAA is seeking views on its proposal to move all providers to VM), completely removing the option for firms to be paid by SMP, operating one payment method for all providers.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The LAA's news story can be read at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/civilcrime-news-review-of-provider-monthly-payments>.

Detailed information about the engagement exercise, and a copy of the LAA's Impact Assessment, can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-agency-payments-to-providers#proposal-to-remove-standard-monthly-payments-from-future-contracts>

DG LEGAL RETAINER SERVICE

Most of our clients prefer to use our services on a retainer basis simply because the cost is far cheaper than instructing us on an hourly rate or fixed fee basis. The scope and nature of the services provided tends to vary from firm to firm, as each organisation has different needs and priorities.

In addition to our monthly compliance bulletins, all of our retainer clients benefit from:

- assistance with quality assurance accreditations and audits, including Lexcel, SQM, CQS and WIQS
- drafting a suite of compliance documents and provision of templates
- telephone and email support
- guidance in relation to UK GDPR and data protection
- assistance with communications from the SRA, whether these relate to audits, thematic reviews or investigations
- assistance with LAA audits
- COLP & COFA compliance software
- discounted rates on premier training courses.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information about our popular retainer service can be found at:
<https://dglegal.co.uk/services/retainer-service/>

To arrange a discussion with our team about how our retainer service may benefit your firm, please contact us using the details at the bottom of this newsletter.



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