



# 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

### Extension to video-witnessing of wills

In September 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, legislation came into force to permit the video-witnessing of wills. The effectiveness of the legislation has now been extended to 31 January 2024. The extension aims to support vulnerable people who may need to self-isolate or in case of further government-imposed restrictions.



#### FURTHER INFORMATION

The Law Society's guide to the temporary legislation, and its extension, can be found at: <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/Private-client/Guides/Video-witnessing-wills>

The MOJ's guidance on making wills using video-conferencing can be read at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-making-wills-using-video-conferencing>

The legislation can be accessed in full at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/952/introduction/made>

## Diversity data reporting window now open

The SRA is conducting its regular diversity data collection exercise. The window for reporting your firm's results commenced on Monday 26 June and will remain open until Sunday 23 July 2023.



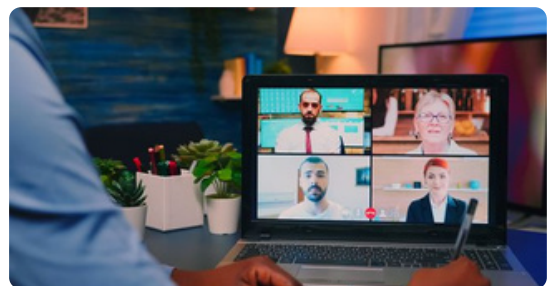
### FURTHER INFORMATION

Information about the data collection exercise can be found at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/diversity-toolkit/your-data/>

## New HMCTS video hearing service

As part of HMCTS plans to digitise the court system, video hearings will transition to a new video hearing service by March 2024. HMCTS continues to hope the remote hearings will help to clear the backlog of cases waiting to be heard.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The Law Society's update can be read at:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Campaigns/Court-reform/Whats-Changing/Remote-hearings>

## Updated SRA approach to health issues

The SRA has published updated guidance regarding how it would approach health issues related to its regulatory work and where medical evidence of such health issues may be requested. Health issues the SRA may consider include:

- physical health conditions
- mental health conditions
- disabilities.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The SRA's full guidance can be accessed at:  
<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/sra-investigations-health-issues-and-medical-evidence/>

## Professional executor practice note

The Law Society has published a new practice note on the appointment of a professional executor and the offering of such services by solicitors and law firms. The practice note reminds firms that they must provide clients with sufficient information to make an informed decision about the appointment of a professional executor.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The Law Society's practice note can be found at:  
<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/Private-client/Practice-notes/Appointment-of-a-professional-executor>

# AML & FINANCIAL CRIME

## New Suspicious Activity Reports guidance

The NCA has produced updated guidance on submitting SARs. The guidance covers topics including:

- crime reporting
- how to submit a SAR
- basic structure of a SAR
- obtaining a DAML
- good practice tips
- example SARs
- SAR glossary codes



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The updated guidance can be accessed at:

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/650-guidance-on-submitting-better-quality-suspicious-activity-reports-sars-v9-0/file>

## Trust services sanctions guidance

On 16 December 2022, HM Treasury brought the provision of trust services within the scope of its financial sanctions regime. OFSI, which is part of HM Treasury and has responsibility for enforcing the sanctions regime, has published a blog issuing guidance on the topic.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The OFSI blog, which provides guidance on the trust services sanctions, can be found at:

<https://ofsi.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/30/trust-services-sanctions-5-months-on/>

The SRA's news story can be read at:

<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/sra-update-116-trust-sanctions/>

Further information about the trust services sanctions can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanctions-trust-services>

# LEGAL AID

## October 2023 duty rota amendments deadline

The LAA has announced the deadline for making amendments ahead of the October 2023 duty rotas as 11:59pm on Monday 10 July 2023. The LAA will not accept any late applications for amendments.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The LAA's latest updates on CRM12 deadlines, members lists and duty rotas can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-solicitors-rotas-information-and-guidance>.

## Legal aid accessibility broadened

The MoJ has announced plans to extend the accessibility of publicly funded legal services. The MoJ believes the plans, which are a result of the government's legal aid means test review within the Legal Support Action Plan, will enable a further six million vulnerable people and families to access legal aid.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The MoJ and LAA's joint press release can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/access-to-vital-legal-support-extended-to-millions-of-vulnerable-people>.

The Law Society's response to the announcement can be read at:

<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Topics/Legal-aid/Whats-changing/Legal-aid-means-test-review>.

## New criminal preparation fee guidance

In April 2023, an additional preparation work fee was introduced where a matter proceeds to trial or is a cracked trial. Following the introduction of this fee, the LAA has prepared new guidance for advocates claiming this fee.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

The LAA's new story can be read at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/crime-news-crown-court-additional-prep-fee-guidance-update>.

Updated guidance can be found at section 2.17A of the Crown Court Fee Guidance at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crown-court-fee-guidance>.

The new Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2023 can be accessed in full at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/542/contents/made>

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## 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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