

SRA BOARD
3 March 2020



CLASSIFICATION – PUBLIC

SRA Work Programme 2019-20 Quarter One Update

Our Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives 1 - We will set and apply consistently high professional standards for the individuals and firms we regulate and make sure they are appropriate to meet the challenges of today and the future.

Strategic Objective 2 - We will make sure our regulatory requirements are proportionate, providing solicitors and firms with the flexibility to innovate and better meet the needs of members of the public and businesses, while maintaining appropriate levels of public protection.

Strategic Objective 3 - We will increase the availability of relevant and timely information to help people make informed choices in the legal services market.

Strategic Objective 4 - We will make sure that our regulatory arrangements work as effectively as possible for the public, businesses, solicitors and firms in the context of constitutional developments within the UK and any new relationship with the EU.

Strategic Objective 5 - We will work better together, and with others, to improve our overall effectiveness, our responsiveness and the delivery of our regulatory functions.

Our work programme for 2018/19 is available on our website [here](#)¹

Progress² against activities in our annual planned work programme

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
1	●	●	●	●	●
2	●	●	●	●	●
3	●	●	●	●	●
4	●	●	●	●	●
5	●	●	●	●	●
6	●	●	●	●	●
7	●	●		●	●

² Relates to objective status based on progress to date: Red (R) – progress behind expectation and will not succeed without direct action; Amber (A) – generally in line although challenge to maintain progress and deliver overall objective; Green (G) – in line with expectation and overall delivery is expected; Black (B) – in line with planned delivery schedule work not yet started

¹ <https://www.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/sra/strategy/sra-work-programme-2019-20.pdf?version=4ac1fb>

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Exceptions: Updates on Amber and Red activities

Activity 1.6

We will publish diversity data about the solicitors' profession, including the results of the 2019 firm diversity data collection exercise. This is so that we and the profession can see what is going well and where more needs to be done. We will further develop our data collection to make sure it is up-to-date and in line with best practice.

Update

We took the findings from the firm diversity data survey in 2019 to the Board in January. Publication has been delayed from February to March as the Board requested this work be combined with a review of our EDI work and future priorities as a public paper in March.

We are continuing to engage with the MOJ and others to produce a combined report on judicial diversity by providing bespoke data on the diversity of solicitors for the report.

We have launched a project to monitor the diversity of people in our enforcement work the outcome of which will be to publish a report at the end of the summer 2020.

Activity 3.4

We will continue to develop Legal Choices, the consumer-facing website and social media presence that we manage on behalf of the legal regulators. We will be introducing new products that will help people to identify whether they have a legal need and help them to get support. We will promote the new services as widely as possible with the public and small businesses. Our products should also help organisations that support people in difficulty who may not have online access. We will include a service designed in partnership with these groups to assist their advisers and staff to access relevant information on legal services for the people they work with.

Update

Three of four planned flagship content products were released in beta before or during Q1. A fourth beta product remains in development, as work to secure agreement among all regulators on data processing arrangements continues. The BSB's withdrawal in September from participation in the Legal Choices venture leaves a significant gap in funding for the current development plan. Discussions among remaining venture participants on the shortfall and future funding continue.

Activity 4.4

We will continue to work closely with government to manage and monitor the impact of the UK's exit from the EU and consider regulatory change or communication activity if necessary. We will continue to engage with EU regulators and affected parts of the regulated community

Update

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Updated guidance for profession published, some challenges in extent of engagement with other EU regulators

Activity 5.7

We will develop and start to implement our new People Strategy. This will ensure our approach to pay and reward, recognition, leadership and management and training and development delivers the people and culture we need to support our objectives and align with our values. And we will continue to develop and deliver high-quality staff communications through a range of channels, maximising the benefits of our new digital workplace tools, refreshing our values and supporting a truly inclusive workplace.

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Update

A fundamental review of the HR structure and service has taken place- to develop a structure to deliver value-added, strategic HR to support the evolving strategy and future requirements of the SRA. An external independent HR Consultant was engaged in October 2019 to assist in this process. Implementation of the new structure will commence in quarter two. Following the implementation of the new team, a new three-year People Strategy will be developed.

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Achievements in the last period

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Achievements	<p>Standards and Regulations (StaRs) implemented on 25 November. Well received guidance and support package published at same time.</p> <p>We have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run SQE 2 pilot • Published sample questions for SQE 1 • Held SQE December conference • Launched a new SQE Update bulletin <p>We have: a programme of AML visits to high risk firms underway; completed a process of requiring declarations from all</p>	<p>We have published our final position on PII, which is not to undertake fundamental reform.</p> <p>Legal Access Challenge (LAC) is progressing well with final winners to be announced at the beginning of April.</p> <p>Coverage of the implementation of StaRs was positive – a significant achievement in light of the scale of change.</p> <p>We had 146,000 visits to our bespoke online resources in the StaRs launch month. This concluded a campaign that generated more than 80,000 social media</p>	<p>Greater flexibility about where and how solicitors can practise introduced with STaRs.</p> <p>Tone and feedback on Compliance conference positive.</p>	<p>We have in place arrangements governing solicitors working across boundaries, including post us leaving the EU.</p> <p>Two issues of the ICLR.net e-newsletter were delivered.</p>	<p>We launched a new Board website section, with a range of material setting out how the Board works, makes its decisions and is accountable.</p> <p>Successfully delivered Solicitors Register and implemented STaR changes on to legacy systems.</p> <p>Increase in trained environmental auditors (12 staff newly trained to carry these audits out) and audit cycle now in place.</p>

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	<p>firms to assure ourselves they have satisfactory risk assessments in place and are carrying out follow up actions; produced interim guidance to the profession in January on the regulations to implement the Fifth Money Laundering Directive and are working with stakeholders to develop final guidance.</p>	<p>engagements and saw us speak at 55 events, with around 7,000 people.</p> <p>We secured a good range of input to our Corporate Strategy consultation.</p>			
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<p>Impacts and Outcomes</p>	<p>We reviewed and updated or archived all existing guidance. SQE will make sure everyone meets the same high standards however and wherever they learn and remove many of the barriers for people from every background to becoming a solicitor.</p>	<p>Position on PI well received by profession and consumer reps.</p> <p>We have built a community of innovators around the LAC and have held a Corporate Strategy workshop with them as well as a peer and expert support event for applicants that were not chosen as finalists.</p> <p>We have undertaken several consumer workshops and focus groups to support our Corporate Strategy consultation and also to build understanding about the type of information available and what more is needed to help them understand the choice of legal services provider that they have and the</p>	<p>We had 1,400 attendees at the Compliance Officers conference, with 89% finding the event useful or very useful. 96% said they would attend a similar event in the future.</p>	<p>We continue to engage with Government on post EU developments.</p>	<p>Since its launch in December, our Board web content has generated more than 1,500 views; this builds on our Chair’s blog, which so far has generated more than 600 views and more than 300 social media engagements.</p>
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