



# Consumer polling

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Summary of consumer research conducted to inform the SRA's consumer protection review

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# Summary of consumer polling

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## Overview

The SRA conducted online polling with 2,009 consumers using the online consumer panel, Prolific. The polling sought to determine some aspects of awareness of consumer protection and regulation of legal services, gauging how essential consumers feel a range of protections to be as well as capturing views on client accounts.

Fieldwork took place between 14 and 17 March 2024. The sample was representative of the population of the United Kingdom for age, sex, ethnicity and working status and reflects population proportions for England and Wales.

No quota was applied for respondents' use of legal services. Thirty percent of respondents had used a regulated legal services provider in the last two years. Of these, 90% had used a solicitor and 47% of them checked whether their provider was regulated before instruction. Legal services providers were most used for residential conveyancing, Wills, trusts and tax planning and Probate and estate administration.

Data tables are presented in the Appendix. Significance testing has been conducted at the 95% confidence level. Where reported, this means we can be 95% confident that any differences are real.

For a sample of 2,000, where at least 70% of respondents agree, the confidence interval at the 95% confidence level is +/- 2%. Where 60% or 50% of respondents agree, the confidence interval is +/- 3%.

The confidence interval is the range of values the true response is likely to fall between. The confidence level is how sure we are. For example, if 90% of respondents agree, with a confidence interval of +/-2% and a confidence level of 95% we can be 95% confident that the real value lies between 88% and 92%.

This polling was designed to be the first step in our mixed method approach to consumer research. It helped us to understand consumer views, often unprompted or with little background knowledge.

The findings have been used to help shape the design of the subsequent in-depth deliberative research with consumers.

## Client account

Following an explanation that some solicitors can hold money on behalf of their clients in a bank account called a client account, the polling found that almost every respondent agreed that there should be protection in place for the money if it is stolen or misappropriated (99%) and that the legal service provider should tell clients how and where the money is held (96%) (Tables 1 and 2).

Initial responses indicated consumers appeared to be more comfortable with legal services providers managing their money than a third-party financial and payments specialist working with the legal services provider:

- 79% of respondents said they are comfortable or very comfortable that the regulated legal services provider holds all their money relating to a transaction, is responsible for managing its safety and that payments are made correctly (Table 3).

## Sensitivity: General

- 55% are comfortable that a third-party financial and payments specialist, who the legal services provider works with, holds all your money for legal transactions. The third-party is responsible for making sure your money is safe and that payments are made correctly (Table 4).

## Appendix A – Data tables

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**Table 1: The legal service provider should tell clients how and where the money is held**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	1426	71.0	71.0	71.0
Agree	498	24.8	24.8	95.8
Neither agree nor disagree	74	3.7	3.7	99.5
Disagree	8	0.4	0.4	99.9
Strongly disagree	3	0.1	0.1	100.0
Total	2009	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2: There should be protection in place for the money if it is stolen or misappropriated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	1838	91.5	91.5	91.5
Agree	141	7.0	7.0	98.5
Neither agree nor disagree	22	1.1	1.1	99.6
Disagree	4	0.2	0.2	99.8
Strongly disagree	4	0.2	0.2	100.0
Total	2009	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3: Level of comfort that a regulated legal services provider holds all your money relating to a transaction, is responsible for managing its safety and that payments are made correctly:**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very comfortable	642	32.0	32.0	32.0
Comfortable	944	47.0	47.0	78.9
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	293	14.6	14.6	93.5
Uncomfortable	120	6.0	6.0	99.5
Very uncomfortable	10	0.5	0.5	100.0
Total	2009	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4: Level of comfort that a third-party financial and payments specialist, who the legal services provider works with, holds all your money for legal transactions. The third-party is responsible for making sure your money is safe and that payments are made correctly**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very comfortable	317	15.8	15.8	15.8
Comfortable	796	39.6	39.6	55.4
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	506	25.2	25.2	80.6
Uncomfortable	330	16.4	16.4	97.0
Very uncomfortable	60	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	2009	100.0	100.0	