

News release

Solicitors warned over immigration services

27 September 2023

We have issued a [warning notice](https://indemnity.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/immigration-work/1) [https://indemnity.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/immigration-work/1] to solicitors and law firms reminding them of the rules and requirements they must adhere to when providing immigration services to clients.

The notice reminds solicitors of their obligations to uphold the rule of law and to act with honesty and integrity. Specifically in the context of immigration this means they need to:

- Make sure clients provide honest and accurate information in any applications
- Not be complicit in providing false or fabricated information or claims, or making applications that are totally without merit
- Provide clients with realistic assessments on the strength of any potential case

The warning notice focuses on themes that we have picked up through recent investigations, as well as through our wider work. Issues identified have included poor drafting of applications, advising clients to pursue totally-without-merit appeals, and solicitors supporting clients in the submission of false or exaggerated evidence to support applications.

Most recently, in July 2023, we intervened into three firms and made an order restricting the practice of a further individual, as a result of evidence supplied to us by the media.

Paul Philip, Chief Executive of the SRA, said: 'Users of immigration and asylum legal services can be among the most vulnerable people in society, and can potentially face severe consequences if not advised properly. This warning notice should act as a reminder that our rules are clear about the high professional standards we expect. We won't hesitate to take action against solicitors or firms who fall short.'

The warning notice builds on our wider activity to support law firms and solicitors working on immigration matters, and to protect the public by taking action where expected standards are not being met. In the last year, this work has included publishing:

- a [thematic review](https://indemnity.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/immigration-asylum-thematic-review/1) [https://indemnity.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/immigration-asylum-thematic-review/1] looking at continuing competence among those providing immigration services

- [new guidance](https://indemnity.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/immigration-work-guidance/) [https://indemnity.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/immigration-work-guidance/], focussing on how solicitors work with immigration clients
- information [tailored to asylum seekers and interpreters](https://www.legalchoices.org.uk/legal-choices/got-a-legal-issue/im-claiming-asylum) [https://www.legalchoices.org.uk/legal-choices/got-a-legal-issue/im-claiming-asylum] on the public-facing Legal Choices website in August 2023

We have also committed to publishing further new guidance to support law firms, and to conducting a follow-up thematic review, looking specifically at the provision of asylum services.