

SRA BOARD
26 October 2016

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Chief Executive's Report

Purpose

- 1 This report sets out progress against our strategic objectives and provides an update on operational performance.
 - Section 1: reports on our priorities and progress against the 2015/16 Business Plan.
 - Section 2: provides an update on operational performance.
 - Section 3: provides details on publication and engagement activity.

If you have any questions about this paper please contact: Paul Philip, Chief Executive, paul.philip@sra.org.uk, 0121 329 6940.

Chief Executive's Report

Section 1: Priorities for 2015/16

- 2 This section provides an update focusing on developments and progress against our 2015/16 Business Plan.

Progress against our 2015/16 Business Plan

- 3 We are making good progress to achieve the objectives set in our Business Plan. Below, I provide detail of our programme and highlight areas of development and points to note.

<p>Objective 1: We will reform our regulation to enable growth and innovation in the market and to strike the right balance between reducing regulatory burdens and ensuring consumer protection</p>	<p>On track</p>
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Risk Outlook - Exiting the EU

- 4 Our report *Exiting the EU: an update for lawyers* (which the board saw in draft at its September meeting) was published in mid-September. It received significant media coverage including an article in legalbusiness.co.uk.

<p>Objective 2: We will work with solicitors and firms to raise standards and uphold core professional principles</p>	<p>On track</p>
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Solicitors Qualifying Examination

- 5 On 3 October, we published the second consultation on the proposed Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), and supporting materials. The initial response has been positive.
- 6 Jonathan Ames published a very supportive piece in *The Brief*, concluding: "Without doubt, streamlining, modernising, re-engineering (select jargon to suit taste) is needed. The SRA will face opposition, but it should stay the course." There has also been other positive comment.

Objective 3: We will improve our operational performance and make justifiable decisions promptly, effectively and efficiently

**On
track**

Practising Certificate Renewal Exercise

- 7 The 2016/17 practising certificate renewal exercise was launched on Saturday 1 October 2016. The Contact Centre offered additional support by opening on the launch date and will continue to do so until the regulatory deadline on 31 October 2016.
- 8 Changes have been made to the renewal forms to make it quicker and easier to complete, including making the forms shorter and clearer. A fundamental change has also been made to support individuals who have forgotten their password by providing a password reset facility. This is expected to improve user experience and reduce calls coming through to the Contact Centre.
- 9 As of 7 October 2017, 3,357 practising certificates had been issued compared to 2164 on the same date last year. £1.6 million of regulatory income had also been collected against a target of £108.4 million.

Legal Panel Tender

- 10 Work is underway to appoint a new external panel to provide legal services. There are currently two panels with a total of ten firms that provide services for disciplinary proceedings and litigation work. We intend to combine the panels and reduce the number of firms to one or two. Firms have been invited to tender with an emphasis on interested suppliers proposing innovative ways of working. We are also planning bringing in a delivery partner to help us work with the appointed panel firm to achieve increasing value for money over the course of the contract.

Objective 4: We will work with our stakeholders to improve the quality of our services and their experience when using them

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12 **On track**

- 14 Overall we are on track to achieve our 4 objectives.

S e c t i o n 2 : O p e r a t i o n a l P e r f o r m a n c e

KPIs

- 15 Our timeliness on operational work continues to be good and, as the Board is aware, we expect to publish a new suit of KPIs in the near future..

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Section 3: Publications and Engagement Activity

Looking to the Future consultation

- 16 Our Looking to the Future consultation closed last month, with over 10,000 people directly engaging with us on the proposals. This included face to face contacts with around 400 members of the public and over 1,500 solicitors.

Party conferences

- 17 We held two events at each of the three main political party conferences and there was keen interest in our fringe events on affordable legal services. The New Statesman also ran a piece from me on access to and affordability of legal services shortly before the Conservative party conference (link below).

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/09/legal-services-needs-many-not-few>

Westminster Legal Policy Forum

- 18 On 12 September 2016 I spoke on meeting unmet need at a Westminster Legal Policy Forum event on the legal services market: regulation, innovation and the future of the Legal Services Act (link below)

<http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/forums/showpublications.php?pid=1173>

International Conference of Legal Regulators

- 19 Executive Director of External Affairs Jane Malcolm unveiled a new website, ICLR.net, to senior legal sector regulators from dozens of jurisdictions at an International Conference of Legal Regulators (ICLR) event in Washington DC on 15-16 September. Created by the SRA Digital Communications team for the ICLR community, the new website received overwhelmingly positive feedback at the conference, and now has 110 registered users, comprising senior regulators and academics from 30 jurisdictions. The website offers regulators a secure, private online space in which to share ideas and resources. And a public-facing area of the site will increasingly be used to showcase research outputs of international significance (link below).

<http://www.iclr.net/>

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