

What we do

We regulate barristers and their professional practice and specialised legal services businesses in England and Wales in the public interest.

We are responsible for:

- Setting the education and training requirements for becoming a barrister;
- Setting continuing training requirements to ensure that barristers' skills are maintained throughout their careers;
- Setting standards of conduct for barristers;
- Authorising organisations that focus on advocacy, litigation, and specialist legal advice;
- Monitoring the service provided by barristers and the organisations we authorise to assure quality;
- Handling complaints against barristers and the organisations we authorise and taking disciplinary or other action where appropriate.

The work that we do is governed by The Legal Services Act 2007 (the Act) as well as a number of other statutes.

Our objectives are laid down in the Legal Services Act. We share them with the other legal services regulator. They are:

- Protecting and promoting the public interest;
- Supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law;
- Improving access to justice;
- Protecting and promoting the interests of consumers;
- Promoting competition in the provision of services;
- Encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession;
- Increasing public understanding of citizens' legal rights and duties; and
- Promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles.

The professional principles are:

- That authorised persons should act with independence and integrity;
- That authorised persons should maintain proper standards of work;
- That authorised persons should act in the best interests of their clients;
- That persons who exercise before any court a right of audience, or conduct litigation in relation to proceedings in any court, by virtue of being authorised persons should comply with their duty to the court to act with independence in the interests of justice; and
- That the affairs of clients should be kept confidential.

How we do it

In this section of our website, we provide an overview of how we undertake our work as the regulator of barristers, their professional practice and specialised legal services businesses in England and Wales.

This information is for anyone wanting to find out more about our work. It contains information about our strategy and the way in which we identify risks to our regulatory objectives (see our ['What we do'](#) section) in order to prioritise our work.

This section of the website also contains information about our governance structures, including information about our Board.

Our Strategy for 2016-19

Our 2016-19 strategy sets out the way in which we will regulate during those three years. It also sets out how we will respond to potential proposals for change in the regulatory landscape and its underpinning legislation. Our work over this time period is organised into three programmes:

- Regulating in the public interest
- Supporting those we regulate to face the future
- Ensuring that there is a strong and sustainable regulatory function for the Bar.

You can read more about our strategy and more detailed information about our planned activities during the 2016-2017 business year, [here](#).

Taking a risk-based approach to regulation

Our Strategic Plan is designed to be read in conjunction with our explanation of how we take a risk-based approach to regulation.

Risk-based regulation means that we are constantly monitoring the market for barristers' and advocacy services. We identify all of the potential risks that could prevent the Regulatory Objectives from being met. When we have done this, we focus our attention as the regulator on the risks that we think pose the biggest threats to the public interest.

We then take action to try and prevent those risks from occurring, or to reduce their impact.

You can read more about our risk-based approach to regulation and find out about the risk areas that we are going to be focusing most of our attention on during the early years of our strategy, [here](#).

Our governance

We have robust governance in place to oversee our work, led by our Board. The Bar Standards Board is made up of 15 people, a combination of lay people (non-barristers) and barristers. It has a lay majority.

You can read more about our governance, our Board, our Independent Observer, our work with other legal regulators and our staff [here](#).

Equality and Diversity

We recognise that in promoting and safeguarding the highest standards of legal education and practice, we have both moral and legal duties in respect of equality and diversity practice.

We aim to ensure meaningful compliance with equalities legislation in every aspect of our work, to demonstrate best equalities and anti-discrimination practice and to embed the principles of equality and fairness into the day to day running of BSB business.

In order to meet this core aim, we work hard to ensure that:

- equality is embedded into all aspects of our work;
- our standards apply evenly and fairly to those whom we regulate whether employed or self employed;
- staff recruitment and deployment decisions are in line with our strategic aims and the corporate plan, as well as reflecting equality and diversity;
- equality and diversity issues are taken into account in our own working practices; and
- we promote diversity in the profession at senior levels and across different areas of practice.

The Law Society of England and Wales

About us

- The Law Society exists to represent, promote and support all solicitors, so they in turn can help their clients.

We also work to ensure that no-one is above the law and to protect everyone's right to have access to justice. We promote England and Wales as the jurisdiction of choice and the vital role legal services play in our economy.

We work internationally to open up markets to our members and to defend human rights while supporting our members with opportunities in the domestic market.

How we work

Solicitors pay their annual practising certificate fee to the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The Law Society receives around 30 per cent of this fee to support, represent and promote the profession.

Our other funding comes from commercial activities.

The Law Society Council governs our work, with Council members elected to represent members from England and Wales, including different demographic groups and parts of the profession.

We harness the knowledge of our Council members and around 300 volunteer board and committee members to deliver the advice, support and services our members want.

And we continually listen and respond to our members, so we can be sure we are meeting their needs.

Our work for members

The Law Society helps our current and future members by:

- providing support, advice and guidance on areas of practice and management, tailored to members' individual needs
- supporting equality, diversity and inclusion within the legal profession, enabling and encouraging the best people to join regardless of their background
- campaigning on legal issues of importance to our members and the public
- acting as the approved regulator for solicitors, ensuring regulation is fair and proportionate while protecting the public.

Our values

Everything we do is driven by our values which are to be member focused, to always act with respect and to work collaboratively.

We are committed to demonstrating these values in our day-to-day decision making, through our behaviour and through how we measure success.

Our people

Staff at the Law Society are here to make sure that solicitors across England and Wales are represented effectively. We have offices in London, Brussels and Wales covering everything from legal policy, communications, products and services, and business development, to those dealing with our relationship with the government, parliament and overseas bars.

We have a network of relationship managers based throughout England and Wales. The team has specific responsibility for making sure that members have access to all Law Society news, products and services, regardless of where members are based.

Our membership services

Our products and services meet the needs of the modern legal profession and we focus on making sure that solicitors have the right tools to deliver world-class legal services.

Code of conduct

Solicitors must uphold the principles set out by the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#). These principles embody the key ethical requirements on firms and individuals who are involved in the provision of legal services.

Solicitors must:

- uphold the rule of law and the proper administration of justice
- act with integrity
- not allow their independence to be compromised
- act in the best interests of each client
- provide a proper standard of service to clients
- behave in a way that maintains the trust the public places in them and in the provision of legal services
- comply with legal and regulatory obligations and deal with regulators and ombudsmen in an open, timely and co-operative manner
- run their business or carry out their role in the business effectively and in accordance with proper governance and sound financial and risk management principles

- run their business or carry out their role in the business in a way that encourages equality of opportunity and respect for diversity
- protect client money and assets.

You can be reassured that your solicitor will treat you fairly and professionally, in order to uphold their obligations to this code of conduct.

Complaining about a solicitor

All solicitors must comply with the professional ethics and standards, which are set by the [Solicitors Regulation Authority \(SRA\)](#).

Although your solicitor should strive to provide exemplary service, sometimes disputes occur.