

Structure of Handbook and Introduction (Annex A)

Consumer interests and the general public interest are the key justifications for any regulatory scheme. Users of legal services are, therefore, the focus of the Solicitors Regulation Authority's (SRA's) regulatory framework.

This Handbook sets out the standards and requirements which we expect our regulated community to achieve and observe, for the benefit of the clients they serve and in the general public interest. Our approach to regulation (i.e. authorisation, supervision and enforcement) is outcomes-focused and risk-based so that clients receive services in a manner which best suits their own particular needs.

Our Handbook brings together the key regulatory elements in the following sections:

- **Principles** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-principles.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-principles.page)] – these are the ten Principles which are mandatory and apply to all those we regulate and to all aspects of practice. They define the fundamental ethical and professional standards that we expect of all firms (including owners who may not be lawyers) and individuals when providing legal services. In some circumstances they apply outside practice.
- **Code of Conduct** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-code.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-code.page)] ("the Code") - this section contains the "outcomes" we require which, when achieved, benefit users of legal services and the public at large. These outcomes are mandatory and, when achieved, will help ensure compliance with the Principles in the particular contexts covered by the various chapters in the Code. We recognise that these mandatory outcomes may be achieved in a variety of ways depending on the particular circumstances, and we have supplemented the mandatory outcomes with non-mandatory "indicative behaviours" to aid compliance. The indicative behaviours which we set out are not exhaustive: the outcomes can be achieved in other ways. We encourage firms to consider how they can best achieve the outcomes taking into account the nature of the firm, the particular circumstances and, crucially, the needs of their particular clients.
- **Accounts** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-accounts-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-accounts-rules.page)] – this section contains the SRA Accounts Rules - requirements aimed at protecting client money.
- **Authorisation and Practising Requirements** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/authorisation-practising.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/authorisation-practising.page)] – this section includes key requirements for the training and admission for individuals intending to become solicitors; exercising higher rights of audience; for individuals and firms setting up in practice and for the holding certain roles in a practice. These are contained in:
 - SRA Practice Framework Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/practice-framework-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/practice-framework-rules.page)]
 - SRA Authorisation Rules for Legal Services Bodies and Licensable

- Bodies [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-authorisation-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-authorisation-rules.page)]
 - SRA Practising Regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/practising-regulations.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/practising-regulations.page)]
 - SRA Recognised Bodies Regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-recognised-bodies.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-recognised-bodies.page)]
 - SRA Training Regulations
 - Training Regulations - Part 1 – Qualification regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/training-regulations-1.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/training-regulations-1.page)]
 - Training Regulations - Part 2 – Training provider regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/training-regulations-2.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/training-regulations-2.page)]
 - Training Regulations - Part 3 – SRA CPD regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/training-regulations-3.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/training-regulations-3.page)]
 - SRA Admission Regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/admission-regulations.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/admission-regulations.page)]
 - SRA Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme Regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-qlts-regulations.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-qlts-regulations.page)]
 - SRA Higher Rights of Audience Regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-hra-regulations.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-hra-regulations.page)]
 - SRA Suitability Test [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-suitability-test.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-suitability-test.page)]
 - Solicitors Keeping of the Roll Regulations 1999
- **Client Protection** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/client-protection.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/client-protection.page)] – this section contains key elements for the financial protection of clients:
 - SRA Indemnity Insurance Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/indemnity-insurance-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/indemnity-insurance-rules.page)]
 - SRA Indemnity Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/indemnity-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/indemnity-rules.page)]
 - SRA Intervention Powers (Statutory Trust) Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/intervention-powers-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/intervention-powers-rules.page)]
 - SRA Compensation Fund Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/compensation-fund-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/compensation-fund-rules.page)]
- **Discipline and Costs Recovery** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/disciplinary-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/disciplinary-rules.page)] – this section contains provisions upon which our disciplinary and costs recovery powers are based:
 - SRA Disciplinary Procedure Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-procedure-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-procedure-rules.page)]
 - SRA Cost of Investigations Regulations [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-cost-investigation-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-cost-investigation-rules.page)]
- **Specialist Services** [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/specialist-services.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/specialist-services.page)] – this section contains provisions which are only applicable when certain services are being provided to clients:
 - SRA Property Selling Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/property-selling-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/property-selling-rules.page)]
 - SRA Financial Services (Scope) Rules [[link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/financial-services-rules.page](/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/financial-services-rules.page)]

- SRA Financial Services (Conduct of Business) Rules [*link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/draft-fsa-business-rules.page]*
- SRA European Cross-border Practice Rules [*link: /solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/cross-border-rules.page]*

Non-mandatory guidance and notes appear, as appropriate, throughout the Handbook as an aid to compliance.

Our approach to regulation is two-pronged: through firm-based requirements and individual requirements. It focuses on the practices of regulated entities as well as the conduct and competence of regulated individuals. This approach allows us to take regulatory action against firms or individuals, or both, in appropriate cases. This could include action against anyone in the firm including non-lawyer owners, managers and employees. We exercise our regulatory powers in a proportionate manner, focusing on risk and outcomes for clients.

Firms will need to ensure that all employees (even if non-qualified and non-fee earners) receive appropriate training on the requirements in the Handbook, but only to the extent necessary for the role they undertake in the firm. For example, all staff will need to understand that they should keep clients' affairs confidential and to behave with integrity; however it is likely that only those in fee-earning roles need be aware of the procedures required for checking for conflicts of interests and giving undertakings.

Although firms now have greater freedom in the way they offer services (e.g. outsourcing certain functions), they may not abrogate responsibility for compliance with regulatory requirements.

We are confident that the contents of this Handbook, coupled with our modern outcomes-focused, risk-based approach to authorisation, supervision and effective enforcement will:

- benefit the public interest,
- support the rule of law,
- improve access to justice,
- benefit consumers' interests
- promote competition,
- encourage an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession,
- increase understanding of legal rights and duties, and
- promote adherence to the professional principles set out in the LSA.

These regulatory objectives can only be achieved if we and our regulated community work together in a spirit of mutual trust for the benefit of clients and ultimate public interest.

Section	Content
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to the SRA Handbook
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 Principles applying to all sections of the Handbook
Code of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Code of Conduct
Accounts Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Accounts Rules
Authorisation and Practising Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction ○ SRA Practice Framework Rules ○ SRA Authorisation Rules for Legal Services Bodies and Licensable Bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Practising Regulations ○ SRA Recognised Bodies Regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Training Regulations ○ SRA Admission Regulations ○ SRA Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme Regulations ○ SRA Higher Rights of Audience Regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Suitability Test ○ Solicitors Keeping of the Roll Regulations 1999
Client Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction ○ SRA Indemnity Insurance Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Indemnity Rules ○ SRA Compensation Fund Rules ○ SRA Intervention Powers (Statutory Trust) Rules
Discipline and Costs Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction ○ SRA Disciplinary Procedure Rules ○ SRA Cost of Investigations Regulations
Specialist Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction ○ SRA European Cross-border Practice Rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRA Property Selling Rules ○ SRA Financial Services (Scope) Rules ○ SRA Financial Services (Conduct of Business) Rules