



The Law Society

Law Society South West regional review

June 2010

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This review is best read online: www.lawsociety.org.uk/southwest

SUPPORTING
solicitors

National News

Outcomes focused regulation

The SRA's plans for outcomes-focused regulation (OFR) will have a significant impact on the profession and we urge you to review the consultation:

<http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/OFR-consultation.page>. See also our summary of the proposals:

http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/new/documents/2010/ofr_lsummary_may2010.pdf

Practitioners can also attend a series of free SRA roadshows on OFR:

- Tues 22 June - Exeter
- Mon 28 June - Cardiff

<http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/news-events/roadshows-2010.page>

New SRA Handbook published

The draft SRA Handbook is now available (<http://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/freedom-in-practice/new-handbook/new-handbook-overview.page>) containing draft Principles, Code of Conduct, Accounts Rules, Property Selling Rules, European Cross-border Practice Rules, Practice Framework Rules, Authorisation Rules and Practising Regulations, Disciplinary Procedure Rules, Indemnity Insurance Rules, Indemnity Rules and Intervention Powers Rules. The consultation paper on these drafts is available at: <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/OFR-handbook-May.page>.

Alternative Business Structures – exploring the opportunities

Most of the discussion about alternative business structures (ABS) to date has focused on the regulatory framework within which these new businesses will operate. The Law Society's new seminar series shifts the debate to encourage innovative law firms and business leaders to explore the opportunities for business development opened up by the emerging regulatory regime and bring together entrepreneurial lawyers with potential investors and intermediaries to exchange ideas and build networks.

Join Linda Lee, Vice President of the Law Society, as she Chairs the 'Investing in change: opportunities in regional legal markets' seminar in Bristol on 1 July. This event is being run in association with Bristol Law Society.

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52376>

Risk and compliance: new member service

Managing risk and complying with new rules and governance requirements is an increasing challenge for all firms. We have launched a new membership service to provide the tools, support and expertise to help you develop a coordinated approach to risk management and compliance. It will also help you demonstrate to the SRA and the new Legal Ombudsman (LeO) that your firm is focussed on the following core areas:

- improving client care/complaints handling
- supervision
- risk management
- quality assurance
- the exercise of sound professional principles

The service includes discounted prices on in-house consultancy, publications, seminars and events, a monthly e- newsletter and a Lawyerline complaints and compliance support service.

[Find out more and join
http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/specialinterest/riskandcompliance.
page](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/specialinterest/riskandcompliance.page)

2010 Excellence Awards open for entries

The Law Society Excellence Awards reward and promote excellence across the legal profession and celebrate outstanding achievement in areas that are central to the profession today. Nominations are open until 20 August.

www.lawsociety.org.uk/excellenceawards

New CPD Centre launched

The Law Society's new CPD Centre is a free online system that enables you to:

- search hundreds of courses from leading reaining providers
- plan, track, and record your CPD online
- find Law Society online courses that you can take wherever and whenever you want

Find out more: www.lawsociety.org.uk/cpdcentre

PII Support

Find all our PII advice at: www.lawsociety.org.uk/professionalindemnity and see below for free seminars in Bristol and Exeter in June.

Outdated legislation: let us know your views

The proposed Freedom (Great Repeal) Bill intends to repeal unnecessary or burdensome legislation. The Law Society will be lobbying the government and to help us represent your views, let us know what legislation you believe should be repealed and why. [Tell us your views](#)

Campaign to promote solicitor brand starts 14 June



To help solicitors attract new business and retain existing clients we are repeating last year's successful national advertising and PR campaign promoting the solicitor brand to the public. With the strapline 'Your Solicitor – Qualified to Answer', the campaign focuses on the importance of seeking advice from a properly qualified professional. [Order free campaign materials and find out more](#)

LSB receives referral fees advice

The Legal Services Board has formally received the advice of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, chaired by Dianne Hayter, on referral fees and arrangements.

The LSB is building an evidence base to underpin its approach to referral fees and advice from the Legal Services Consumer Panel is a key component. Read more http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/news_publications/latest_news/2010/260510.htm

LSB publishes complaints-handling requirements

New requirements published by the LSB aim to ensure that consumers understand their right to complain about an unsatisfactory service, and the role of the Legal Ombudsman (the requirements will come into force when the Legal Ombudsman opens for business in October 2010).

http://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/Projects/pdf/2010_05_20_signposting_requirements.pdf

Questioning the future role of LSB

In a speech at Said Oxford Business School, Law Society president Robert Heslett gave a frank assessment of the challenges facing the future of law firms and questioned the future role of the Legal Services Board (LSB). [Read the full speech](#)

Building International business

The Law Society's International Division helps members develop their international business and build global relationships and profile. Globalisation has generated many exciting opportunities for lawyers and law firms, but establishing contacts, obtaining market intelligence and developing the ability to promote yourself abroad are necessary to convert this potential into success - this is where the International Division can help. [Read our membership benefits brochure 2009](#)

The International Division is holding an Investing in Canada seminar on 7 July. The seminar will focus on investment in the oil and gas and renewable energy sectors. <http://international.lawsociety.org.uk/node/7944>

Demonstrating commitment to diversity

The Diversity and Inclusion Charter is a public commitment by providers of legal services, regardless of practice size, to develop and implement best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion. Don't miss out on your chance to join the other South West firms who have already signed up (Ashfords, Beachcroft, Berrymans Lace Mawer, Bevan Brittan, Bond Pearce, Burges Salmon, Charles Russell, Clarke Willmott, CSM Cameron McKenna, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Irwin Mitchell, Osborne Clarke, Pinsent Masons, TLT, Trowers & Hamblins). All interested parties are very welcome to email inclusioncharter@lawsociety.org.uk.

For more information

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/inclusioncharter.page>

Reducing your carbon footprint: free webinar

The Legal Sector Alliance is hosting a free webinar on 22 June to help law firms reduce their carbon emissions and achieve the CarbonTrust Standard.

[Register for the free webinar and find out more](#)

Subscribe to Professional Update to receive updates on important news:

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/newsandevents/newsletters.law>

South West News, Events & Training

Council Member re-elected

South West solicitors have returned Helen Davies to one of the four seats representing the West Country and Gwent on the Law Society Council. By convention with the other West Country and Gwent Council Members, Helen represents the Cornwall and Plymouth areas. Helen was first elected to the Council in 1995 and has been returned for a further 4 year term. Details of all Law Society Council Members can be found here

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/documents/downloads/council-constituencies.pdf>

Preparing for Professional Indemnity – Insurance Renewal (10 June Bristol & 14 June Exeter)

These free seminars cover the key aspects of the renewal process, including:

- Current market conditions
- Renewal planning – timescales and gathering information
- Working effectively with your broker and/or insurer
- Presenting your firm favourably – avoiding pitfalls and alleviating insurers' concerns
- Benefits of risk management
- Effect of possible changes to the current arrangements

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52206> (Bristol)

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52205> (Exeter)

Client Care and Complaints Handling (22 June, Bristol)

This course covers best practice client care pointers:

- A refresher on the current regulatory framework
- The 'service' mindset - understanding the client as customer
- Client care fundamentals - an introduction/reminder and a closer look at supervision
- Practical update on Rules 2 and 5 of the Solicitors' Code of Conduct

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52226>

The whys and hows of file auditing (28 June, Bristol)

This seminar will focus on file auditing - the main supervisory function and facet for controlling and managing operational risk - and aims to translate these obligations into a practical audit (designated management training for the purposes of Rule 5.02 ("qualified to supervise" criteria)).

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52300>

MLRO networking group meetings (30 June, Bristol & 13 July, Exeter)

The Law Society is running free money laundering reporting officer (MLRO) networking groups. These events do not replace the anti-money laundering training programmes run by the Law Society, but offer an opportunity for MLROs to discuss challenges they are facing within their own firms and learn about new methodologies and cases.

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52447> (Bristol, 30 June)

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52448> (Exeter 13 July)

Chair of the Judicial Appointments Commission visits Exeter

Baroness Prashar, Chair of the JAC, is visiting Exeter on 1 July, to meet local practitioners and explain the application process for judicial appointment. This event is run in association with the Law Society, and interested individuals should contact regionalsupport@lawsociety.org.uk highlighting the subject line 'JAC Exeter – 1 July 10'.

Investing in change: opportunities in regional legal markets (1 July, Bristol)

Chaired by Linda Lee, Vice President of the Law Society, this event is part of a series of seminars being held to explore new business opportunities created by the Legal Services Act. See above for further information or go to

<http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52376>

Developing and implementing business continuity plans in law firms (29 September, Bristol)

This one-day interactive course also links into the core requirements of the Lexcel Practice Management Standard to help you to improve performance within specific areas of your business by reducing risks and improving client care across your firm. <http://services.lawsociety.org.uk/events/node/52282>

South West Law Societies

Bristol Law Society (<http://www.bristollawsociety.com>)

Forthcoming events:

- 17 June - Bath Summer Drinks Evening. This free event, from 6pm at The Moon and Sixpence upstairs bar, 27 Milsom Place is open to all Bath law firm fee earners and managers. Just turn up on the evening after work and bring your colleagues for drinks and canapés.
- 23 June – free seminar: Pensions Regulations update
- 29 June – free seminar: Practice Standards Unit visits
- 6 July – free seminar: an accountant’s view of legal practice
- 13 July – free seminar: the “less paper” office
- 15 July - BLS Summer Party at The Riverstation. Full details and a booking form will shortly be posted on the BLS website.

Cornwall Law Society (<http://www.cornwalllawsociety.org.uk>)

Cornwall Law Society’s new look website provides regular updates on Committee news, training and events.

Devon & Somerset Law Society (<http://www.dasls.com>)

Read the latest news from DASLS, and the first report by the Society’s incoming President, Rebecca Parkman.

<http://www.dasls.com/uploads/Newsletter%20May%202010%20-%20Web%20Version.pdf>

Forthcoming event:

- 29 June: DASLS’ second Joint Professions Networking Group meeting will be held in Exeter

<http://www.dasls.com/uploads/29%20June%20Networking%20Flyer.pdf>

Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Law Society (<http://www.gwils.org.uk>)

Forthcoming events:

- 11 June – Summer Party at Chavenage House
- 16 June – AGM

Plymouth Law Society

Plymouth Law Society has launched its new website www.plymouthlawsociety.co.uk. Member law firms, their contact details and websites are listed as are training and other events. Plymouth President, Tracey Baker, also writes on her experience of the local law societies’ Presidents and Honorary Secretaries’ Conference held in May at Chancery Lane.

Forthcoming events:

- 1 October Annual Dinner (The Officers Mess, Stonehouse Barracks, Plymouth).

South West Junior Lawyers Division members

Devon & Somerset JLD

- Thursday 24 June, 7pm to 10pm: JLD Football Tournament at University of Exeter Rubber Crumb Pitches. Closing date for entries: 3 June. All enquiries to jld.devon.somerset@googlemail.com
- Saturday 3 July, 7pm till midnight: Summer Ball at Michael Caine's The Abode, Exeter. For more information email jld.devon.somerset@googlemail.com

Plymouth JLD

- Friday 11 June, 1pm to 2.30pm at Foot Anstey, Plymouth: free seminar, "Enhancing your career through the use of Social Media". To book a place email pjld@hotmail.co.uk

Consultations

Outcomes-focused regulation - transforming the SRA's regulation of legal services (closes 27 July)

The SRA is transforming its approach to regulation for the benefit of consumers. It recognises that significant reform of its traditional approach is necessary if it is to be a "fit for purpose" regulator fit for the new legal landscape brought in by the Legal Services Act 2007. In particular, the SRA recognises that:

Its current rule book is detailed and prescriptive. It tends to lead to the use of resources which could better be deployed on higher-risk areas and doesn't help the SRA to get the best out of its relationship with the profession. Even in the current marketplace it becomes increasingly difficult for detailed rules to keep pace with change. This will be even more so with the liberalised legal landscape starting in October 2011. A rule book needs to be fit for purpose.

The SRA's regulatory approach needs to be more effective, proportionate and targeted so it can consistently regulate a greater range of legal service providers with a targeted, risk-based approach. Read more at

<http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/OFR-consultation.page>

Architecture of change: the SRA's new Handbook (closes 20 August)

The SRA signalled its move to outcomes-focused regulation (OFR) in our strategy paper "Achieving the right outcomes" in January, and in its April consultation paper "Solicitors Regulation Authority: Outcomes-Focused Regulation – Transforming the SRA's regulation of legal services". This paper represents the first major step in the practical implementation of OFR through the development of the SRA Handbook of regulations. At the same time it introduces the regulatory requirements for alternative business structures (ABSs), which the SRA intends to license from October 2011. The new Handbook will be published in April 2011 and implemented on 6 October 2011. Read more at

<http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/OFR-handbook-May.page>

New Practice Notes

Insolvency of a qualifying insurer (25 May)

This practice note will provide our members with greater certainty about their position should their qualifying insurer become insolvent. It does not indicate that the Society holds information about the financial position of any qualifying insurers beyond what is publicly available, and does not change our current position on Quinn.

[Read the practice note](#)

Damages based agreements (27 May)

Our practice note advises solicitors who use, or intend to use, a damages based agreement in any employment tribunal matter. You must comply with the new regulation, which imposes specific requirements on the content and limits of any agreement.

[Read the practice note](#)

The Law Society, South West contact details

Regional Manager: Matthew Still

Email: matthew.still@lawsociety.org.uk

Telephone: 07969 046 708

Regional Development Executive: George Wynne Willson

Email: george.wynnewillson@lawsociety.org.uk

Telephone: 07816 929 390

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