

mySRA updates

Bulk renewing your practising certificates (2023/24)

04 October 2023

Practising certificate and registration renewals will take place from 1 to 31 October 2023, inclusive.

There are no new questions or changes to what we are asking for. However, we have made enhancements to the application to improve your experience.

Below is useful information and advice to help you complete the application.

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About the application process

Open all [#]

Verifying your mySRA account

To make your mySRA account more secure we have introduced an additional verification step [<https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/updates/verifying-mysra-account/>] . Next time you log in to mySRA you will need to register a phone number.

You will need to have this phone with you whenever you log in, so we recommend using a personal number. We will send you a code by SMS text or call you to verify your identity every time you access mySRA.

Form name and location

The bulk renewal application form can be found in mySRA under 'Start a new application' and in 'Organisation applications'. It will appear at the top of the list and is called 'Pay your periodic fees and apply for bulk renewal'.

Once started, you will find your draft application in 'Applications and documents' within 'My organisation'.

Accessing your application form

You can access the application form at any time from 1 October up until you submit it. This means you can look at the questions and decide what information you will need before completing it. You can also partially complete and save sections.

The application can be completed by an authorised signatory or organisation contact. But it can only be submitted by the authorised signatory.

Also, your solicitors and registered foreign lawyers can opt into your bulk renewal [https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/manage-account/individual-account/#heading_8f1c]

at any time before you submit.

Recommended browsers

For the best experience completing the application form we recommend you use either Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge as your web browser.

Please avoid using the back arrow on your browser and instead use the navigation bar on the righthand side. We also suggest you save your application regularly.

Before starting the application

- Please review your employees list in 'My Organisation' and to see who is included in your renewal application. Once the section is marked as completed (green tick) it cannot be edited.
- Check your head office address is correct in 'My Organisation' as this will appear on your invoice as the billing address.
- Please note if you need to access your previous practising certificates, these can be found in 'My Organisation' and under 'Applications and documents'. For some firms, these will be in sub folders called 'PFBR store'.
- In the areas of work section you will need to give us a breakdown of your firm's turnover as a percentage. You must enter a number with no decimal places and the total should add up to 100 per cent.

Completing the application

- Complete the renewal application in order where possible, finishing each section in turn before moving on to the next.
- Save the application regularly in case you lose data and each page before moving on to the next.
- Save the application and log out of mySRA when you are not actively completing it.
- If you have more than one bulk renewal application to complete we recommend you complete one at a time. You will need to submit each application before starting the next one.
- Avoid using the back arrow on your browser and instead use the back button at the bottom of the application.

Making a payment

- Once you have chosen a payment method you cannot go back and change this.



- Your invoice should appear in your 'Organisation Applications and Documents' within 24 hours.
- If you are paying online with a credit or debit card, you will need to pay immediately after submitting your application.
- If you have requested an invoice and to pay by BACS, this will be available within 24 hours of submitting your application. You will find this in the 'My organisation' and under 'Applications and documents'. Please search 'INV' to filter the list.

Questions in the application form

To help you get ready, here are the questions you will be asked.

Open all [#]

Getting started

This section tells you what your application is for and what information you need to give us.

Client money

In this section, we are seeking information about the amount of client money your firm has received and held. This will be used, in combination with other information, to assess the potential impact your firm may have on us meeting the regulatory objectives within the Legal Services Act 2007 (LSA).

Did the organisation, or individuals within the organisation, hold or receive client money or operate a client's own account as a signatory in the 12 months to 31 October 2023?

If you answer 'yes' you will then be asked the following:

- If the organisation first held or received client money in the 12 months to 31 October 2023, tell us when.
- What was the highest statement or passbook balance recorded in your monthly reconciliations in the 12 months to 31 August 2023?
- What was the lowest statement or passbook balance recorded in your monthly reconciliations in the 12 months to 31 August 2023?
- What was the average statement or passbook balance of your monthly reconciliations in the 12 months to 31 August 2023?
- If you answer 'no' please confirm the date the organisation ceased to hold or receive client money.

More about client money

Related rule and definition

- Client money is defined in section 2.1 of the SRA Accounts Rules
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/accounts-rules/>] .
- Client money (overseas) is defined in the SRA Glossary
[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/glossary/>] .

For organisations

Holding client money includes:

- Client money received and held in an unincorporated practice is held by the principals in that organisation.
- Client money received and held in an incorporated practice is held by either the company or the LLP.

For individuals

Individual solicitors are not permitted to personally hold client money save as permitted under regulation 10.2(b)(vii) of the Authorisation of Individuals Regulations [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/authorisation-individuals-regulations/#reg-10>] .

We may require you to obtain or deliver an accountant's report if you cease to operate as an authorised body and to hold or operate a client account, or when we consider that it is otherwise in the public interest to do so.

Operation of a client's own account as signatory

Under the current SRA Accounts Rules if you (a solicitor or authorised firm) operate a client's own account as signatory, it is not necessary for you to include any such accounts in your calculation of the statements or passbook balances in the questions. However, you must comply with Rule 10.1 of the Accounts Rules.

Statement or passbook balance

A statement or passbook balance is the total balance, obtained at least once every five weeks, from a bank or building society. This applies to all general client accounts and separate designated client accounts, and accounts that are not client accounts but are holding client money, when carrying out reconciliations in accordance with rule 8.3 of the SRA Accounts Rules.

If you hold client money because you or your firm operates a client's own account as signatory, it is not necessary for you to include any such



accounts in your calculation of the statements or passbook balances in the questions. However, you do need to comply with rule 10.1 of the SRA Accounts Rules.

Client accounts in foreign currencies: please convert any statement or passbook balances into sterling. If the exchange rate at the time the balance was obtained is unknown, please use your bank or building society's exchange rate at the date you undertake the conversion.

Indemnity insurance

Is the organisation exempt, or partially exempt, under Annex 2 of the SRA Indemnity Insurance Rules [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/indemnity-insurance-rules/>] ?

To answer, you can choose from:

- Exempt
- Partially exempt
- Not exempt (this includes a waiver) – if you choose this answer, you will then be asked to choose one of these options:
 - **We have qualifying professional indemnity insurance** – if you choose this answer we will need the details of your insurer, policy number and start/end dates. You only need to add the names of insurers that provide minimum cover.
 - **We have a professional indemnity insurance waiver** – if you choose this answer you will need to add a brief summary of the waiver, the date it was granted and your current insurer.
 - **We are not required to have professional indemnity insurance** - if you choose this answer you will be asked if you are not, and have never, provided legal services in England and/or Wales.

More about indemnity insurance

If the firm's indemnity insurance cover is provided by more than one qualifying insurer, please provide details for each additional policy. You only need to add details of the insurers that provide minimum cover. If the policy is underwritten by more than one insurer, please provide details of the designated lead insurer. This information will be on your Certificate of Insurance.

If an exemption or partial exemption under Annex 2 of the SRA Indemnity Insurance Rules has been granted by us on the basis of insurance cover under a registered European lawyer's home professional rules, please select exempt or partially exempt and provide details of the date the

exemption was granted. If the exemption is partial, you will also need to provide details of your difference in conditions policy or insurance.

If you have not been able to secure professional indemnity insurance you must notify us if you have entered the extended policy period.

Anti-money laundering

Does your firm provide services in scope of the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017 (as amended)?

You can find out what services are included in our money laundering guidance for law firms [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/money-laundering/aml-regulations-apply/>] .

Introductions and referrals

Did the organisation have any arrangements with third parties, including other lawyers, for the introduction of work to your organisation in your last complete accounting period?

If you answer 'Yes, you will need to tell us of any arrangements with third parties (introducers) and where the organisation has to share fees. You will be asked for this information:

- organisation or individual's name
- date the arrangement began
- main type of work
- percentage of the organisation's turnover arising from this arrangement
- fee paid by the organisation for this arrangement
- arrangement description.

More about introductions and referrals

You only need to tell us about any arrangements that are at least 1% of the organisation's turnover.

If the fee paid for the arrangement is zero, enter 0.1 and explain in the description box that the correct figure is zero.

If the fee paid is in a currency other than pound sterling, convert the fee and enter the closest estimate.

An introducer means any person, business or organisation who introduces or refers clients to your business. This includes anyone who recommends

your business to clients or otherwise puts you and clients in touch with each other.

The latest acceptable complete accounting period end date is 31 October 2023.

Sharing fees

Does the organisation have arrangements to share its professional fees with another individual or business, directly or indirectly?

Does the organisation have arrangements to receive a share of the fees or profits of another individual or business, directly or indirectly?

If you answer 'Yes' to either of these you will need to tell us of any arrangements:

- organisation or individual's name
- date the arrangement began
- main type of work
- percentage of the organisation's turnover arising from this arrangement
- fee paid by the organisation for this arrangement
- arrangement description.

More about sharing fees

Sharing of professional fees

This could include, for example, a referral fee calculated as a percentage of fees or an arrangement where fees are shared in exchange for the provision of services.

Receiving a share of fees

This could include, for example, commissions, discounts or rebates received from another individual or business.

You only need to tell us about any arrangements that are at least 1% of the organisation's turnover.

If the fee paid for the arrangement is zero, enter 0.1 and explain in the description box that the correct figure is zero.

If the fee paid is in a currency other than pound sterling, convert the fee and enter the closest estimate.

Involvement and influence

Are there any arrangements, relationships or connections with third parties that may allow them to influence the running of the organisation?

If you answer 'Yes' you will need to tell us about anyone who has any role or can exert any influence in the organisation (when this is not evident from the details of ownership).

More about involvement and influence

Please provide details of any contractual or other type of relationship that the organisation or any of the managers or owners has that might affect, or might be perceived to affect, the integrity or independence of the organisation.

This type of situation is likely to be unusual but might arise, for example, where:

- an individual's role in the organisation could include being a representative in any way of a non-lawyer body which he or she is involved in
- the role or involvement of an employee in the running of the organisation includes some element of control over it
- finance agreements or loans to your organisation have particular strings attached
- certain contractual conditions in agreements with referrers of business or funders effectively pass control of your organisation to an outside body
- granting an option to purchase your interest in your organisation is for nominal value
- you form a relationship or enter arrangements that put any outsider in de facto control of your organisation.

This information will enable us to assess who controls the organisation and make sure that the organisation, and its managers and owners, retain their independence.

Fee earners

How many qualified lawyer fee earners (full-time equivalent) are based in the organisation's offices in England and Wales?

How many fee earners (full-time equivalent) who don't have legal qualifications are based in the organisations offices in England and Wales?

More about fee earners

The number of fee earners you have means the total number of full time equivalent (FTE) individuals generating fee income for the organisation.

Some examples of roles (both qualified lawyer and non-legally qualified) that may generate fee income for your organisation are:

- solicitor or other lawyer (eg barrister, legal executive, etc)
- trainee solicitor
- paralegal, research assistant
- specialist support staff
- professional support lawyers
- support/administrative staff doing fee earning work.

This would exclude support/administrative staff whose work might result in incidental expenses/disbursements such as charges to a client for photocopying. You should include, for example, a member of staff photocopying a bundle of documents for court if they had reviewed the file and decided the contents of the bundle themselves.

Full time equivalent

This is not intended to be a highly technical calculation. For example, a solicitor whose role is dedicated to client matters and who works three days per week should represent 0.6 FTE.

If the individual spends a variable amount of time on activities that generate fee income you should calculate an average.

Once you have completed these calculations for your organisation you should round the figures up to the nearest whole number for both questions.

Please note we are unable to offer specific advice on whether a person within your firm is a fee earner.

Qualified lawyers in this context means a member of one of the following professions, entitled to practise as such:

- solicitor
- other UK lawyers such as barristers, licensed conveyancers
- Scottish solicitors
- European lawyers
- registered European lawyers
- other overseas lawyers including registered foreign lawyers.

Negligence claims

How many claims were made against the organisation in the last complete indemnity period?

How many claims were paid by the insurer or the organisation in the last complete indemnity period?

More about negligence claims

Claim

This is a demand for, or an assertion of a right to, civil compensation or civil damages or an intimation of an intention to seek such compensation or damages.

For these purposes, an obligation on an insured firm and/or any insured to remedy a breach of the Solicitors' Accounts Rules 1998 (as amended from time to time), or any rules (including, without limitation, the SRA Accounts Rules) which replace the Solicitors' Accounts Rules 1998 in whole or in part, shall be treated as a claim. The obligation to remedy such a breach shall be treated as a civil liability for the purposes of clause 1 of the Minimum Terms and Conditions.

This is the case whether or not any person makes a demand for, or an assertion of a right to:

- civil compensation or civil damages, or
- an intimation of an intention to seek such compensation or damages as a result of such breach.

An exception to this is where any such obligation may arise as a result of:

- the insolvency of a bank (as defined in Section 87 of the Solicitors Act) or a building society which holds client money in a client account of the insured firm, or
- the failure of such bank or building society generally to repay monies on demand.

Paid claims

This includes any claim fully paid in the last indemnity year regardless of the indemnity year in which the claim was made.

Aggregate claims

If you are dealing with an aggregated claim, please disclose the actual number of claims or, if not known, please provide an estimate.

First-tier complaints

Did you receive any complaints in the 12-month period to 31 August 2023?

If you answer 'yes' you will be asked to enter the number of complaints against each of these:

- complaints received
- complaints resolved
- referred to Legal Ombudsman.

You'll also need to record a category (you can only use one per complaint):

- Conduct
- Costs information deficient
- Costs excessive
- Criminal activity
- Data protection/breach of confidentiality
- Delay
- Discrimination
- Failure to advise
- Failure to comply with agreed remedy
- Failure to follow instructions
- Failure to investigate complaint internally
- Failure to keep informed
- Failure to keep papers safe
- Failure to progress
- Other

More about first-tier complaints

Complaints handling by your organisation

Section 112(1) of the Legal Services Act 2007 requires us to ensure that regulated organisations have effective procedures in place to deal with complaints. In order to meet these requirements, we need a clear picture of how organisations are performing in relation to first-tier complaints handling. This will help us build an evidential base which we will use to monitor compliance.

We will use the information in two main ways:



- to identify any thematic risks emerging about complaints handling in the legal services market
- to highlight where there may be a risk that a specific organisation has inadequate systems for dealing with complaints.

Complaint

A formal complaint to you (written or oral) raised under your organisation's complaint handling procedure and includes complaints made initially to a third party and referred back to you to address in the first instance. This does not include concerns raised by a client about your service provision but not taken forward as a formal complaint.

Resolved complaints

This refers to clients who are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint to you (regardless of whether the client decides later to refer the same matter to the Legal Ombudsman). A part resolved complaint is not classed as resolved. However, in situations in which you do not hear back from the client but write to them again explaining that, if you do not hear anything further you will assume their complaint is resolved, it is reasonable to class the outcome as known and record the complaint as resolved. A complaint may be resolved in a different period to that which it is received.

Client

The person for whom you act including prospective and former clients.

If you have received any complaints in the 12 month period to 31 August 2023 you should complete the table by providing the number of complaints:

- received from clients
- resolved
- referred to the Legal Ombudsman.

If one complaint covers two different categories, choose the most appropriate category to record the data.

Turnover

Tell us about your organisation's turnover arising from legal work carried out in England and Wales.

What was your organisation's turnover for the last complete accounting period ending before 1 November 2023?

We will also show you the figure you gave us last year and cannot be changed. This is what your firm fees will be based on.

The difference between turnover reported last year and turnover reported this year will be automatically calculated based on your responses and shown in the form. We will then ask:

- What is the turnover figure based on?
- Has the organisation's accountant provided written confirmation of your organisation's turnover for the last complete accounting period ending before 1 November 2023?
- Does any single client, group of clients or referral source, account for more than 20 per cent of the organisation's turnover in the last complete accounting period?
- What percentage of the organisation's turnover is funded by legal aid?

New firm completing your first renewal application

If you do not have a complete 12 month accounting period ending before 1 November 2023, you should enter:

- the same estimate you provided when the firm was set up or
- an amended figure if your estimate needs to be revised (for instance, due to a delay in starting trading).

The difference between turnover reported last year and that reported this year will be automatically calculated based on your responses.

The turnover period start and end dates will also be shown and can be edited. You should enter the same dates as when the firm was set up. This is unless you started trading at a later date, in which case change these to the correct dates.

As you have not completed 12 months trading, under 'What is the turnover figure based on?' you should choose the option of 12 months estimate.

Second renewal application since your firm was set up

If this is your second renewal application since your firm was set up the turnover figure you provide could be the same as the one you entered in last year's renewal.

The difference between turnover reported last year and the one this year will be automatically calculated based on your responses.

The turnover period start and end dates will be shown and can be edited. These should be same dates as last year unless you started trading at a later date, in which case change these to the correct dates.

As you have now completed 12 months trading, in field eight 'What is the turnover figure based on?' you should choose either closed accounts or estimated unaudited turnover.

Areas of work

Please give a breakdown of the areas of work your organisation carried out as a percentage of its turnover.

The work areas you can chose from are:

- Arbitration and alternative dispute resolution
- Children
- Claims management
- Commercial/corporate work for listed companies
- Commercial/corporate work for non-listed companies
- Consumer
- Criminal
- Discrimination/civil liberties/human rights
- Employment
- Family/matrimonial
- Financial advice and services (regulated by the SRA)
- Immigration
- Intellectual property
- Landlord and tenant (commercial and domestic)
- Litigation - other
- Mental health
- Non-litigation (other)
- Payment protection insurance
- Personal injury
- Planning
- Probate and estate administration
- Property commercial



- Property - residential
- Social welfare
- Wills, trusts and tax planning
- Youth court
- Other

More about areas of work

If you have difficulties, you should provide the best information that you can. Your choice of category will depend on the particular work you have undertaken.

The total percentages of your work types should add up to 100 percent.

Work areas

- Arbitration and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) - this category should cover all types of arbitration and ADR
- Litigation – other - this encompasses all those types of dispute work not specifically covered elsewhere in the list
- Commercial/corporate work - this includes work for listed and unlisted companies. In circumstances in which you act in relation to both listed and unlisted companies, you may need to decide between these risk categories.

For example, if you act for a group of companies and some are not listed but the parent company is, the work is likely to be best categorised as for listed companies. Likewise, if you are acting for a listed company in acquiring an unlisted company, the work may also be best categorised as listed company work.

When carrying out commercial/corporate work for non-corporate clients, such as a building society, an LLP or a government body, this can be included in the 'commercial/corporate for non-listed companies' category—please give details of what has been included.

- Landlord and tenant - all such work should be included, whether the work is commercial or domestic.

Other work areas

The list of work types is intentionally short and cannot include all categorisations that will be used by organisations. However, the following may help.

- Banking/international capital markets/competition/anti-trust/solvent restructuring work - these work types are not separately categorised at this



stage. They are likely to be most appropriately included within 'Commercial/corporate' category

- Pensions - much pension-related work, such as establishing and running funds, advising on issues relating to ongoing funds, and so on is likely to be classed as 'employment'. But there could be variations, for example, pension dispute resolution would be more appropriately included within 'litigation – other'. In some instances, the commercial/corporate category may also be appropriate.
- Regulatory investigations - this is more likely to be more appropriately included in 'non-litigation - other' than in 'criminal' or 'commercial/corporate'.

Solicitors and registered European or foreign lawyers

This section allows you to update the details of solicitors, registered European or foreign lawyers in your organisation.

For solicitors, this includes questions on:

- Whether the solicitor has met our continuing competence requirements [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/continuing-competence/>] by identifying and addressing their learning and development needs. This applies to all solicitors who have a practising certificate, whether they work in the UK or overseas.
- If they are currently on maternity leave (or equivalent), or were between 1 November 2021 - 31 October 2023, and so may be eligible for a reduced fee.

Equivalent is shared parental or adoption leave

More about solicitors and registered European or foreign lawyers

Continuing competence and reporting potential regulatory breaches

All solicitors must remain competent to carry out their role and keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date. As part of practising certificate renewals we ask if they have identified and addressed any learning and development needs in the past year.

This applies to all solicitors who have a practising certificate, whether they work in the UK or overseas. Learn more about continuing competence .

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/continuing-competence/cpd/continuing-competence/>]

Solicitors must also comply with our Code of Conduct

[https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/#a_rule-7] and tell us if something happens that could be a breach of their regulatory arrangements. For example, if they have had a criminal charge, conviction or caution, if they have been declared bankrupt or have significant health issue.

Find out more [<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/enforcement/solicitors-reporting-themselves/>]

Summary

You can select the 'Summary' link to view your answers or you can go straight to the declaration.

Declaration, fee information and payment

This is where you confirm that the information you are providing in your application is correct. The declaration statement must be ticked to proceed and the application can only be submitted by an authorised signatory.

You will then be shown a breakdown of the fees you will need to pay. This will show you how the fee is broken down - administration, regulatory and Compensation Fund contribution.

In most cases we will approve all your practising certificate and registration applications immediately and you will pay all your fees in one go.

However, if we need to further assess any of the practising certificates or registrations in your application, you will only pay your administration fee for now.

If we approve the application you will then pay the regulatory fee and Compensation Fund contribution.

Find out more about practising fees and Compensation Fund contributions [<https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/fees/>] .

Help and guidance

Get help using mySRA [<https://www.sra.org.uk/mysra/manage-account/>] .