

SRA BOARD  
18 January 2017

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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 2016/17 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](mailto:paul.philip@sra.org.uk), 0121 329 6940.**

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### Section 1: Priorities for 2016/17

- 2 This section provides an update focusing on developments and progress against our 2016/17 Business Plan.

#### *Progress against our 2016/17 Business Plan*

- 3 Our 2016/17 Business Plan has now been published online. Our priorities are to continue to improve operational delivery, with a particular focus on improving our IT systems, and on progressing our regulatory reform work. We are making good progress to achieve the objectives set in our Business Plan. Below, I highlight areas of development and points to note.

<p><b>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</b></p>	<p><b>On track</b></p>
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- 4 We are on track to deliver this objective.

<p><b>Objective 2: We will work with solicitors and firms to raise standards and uphold core professional principles</b></p>	<p><b>On track</b></p>
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- 5 We are on track to deliver this objective. Our consultation on the Solicitors Qualifying Examination closed on 9 January and we are currently analysing the responses.
- 6 Following discussion at the last Board meeting, we have published the results of our thematic asylum project: 'The quality of legal service provided to asylum seekers'. This review was undertaken in the light of the findings of independent research we commissioned in 2014, reported in the, 'Quality of legal services for asylum seekers', published in January 2016. The report can be viewed at: <http://www.sra.org.uk/sra/how-we-work/reports/asylum-seekers-report.page>.

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

**On track**

***Practising Certificate (PC) Renewals Exercise***

- 7 On 7 December 2016, the bulk revocation process was completed with 3,298 individual PCs and registrations revoked. The Contact Centre proactively contacted 313 firms who had not paid to help them. The remaining 93 firms that have still not paid will receive notices of revocation from 9 January.

***Legal Panel Tender***

- 8 We have appointed a new panel firm to act as our single provider for disciplinary proceedings and litigation work for a three year period. We are currently discussing contractual obligations with the firm.

***IT Transformation Programme***

- 9 Our IT Transformation Programme is progressing well. We are currently working on the procurement for the first substantial stage of the programme and we expect to issue the Request for Proposal within the next four weeks.

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

**On track**

***Warning Notice on Investment Schemes***

- 10 Our warning notice to the public about law firms' involvement in investment schemes has at the time of writing reached a potential audience of more than 2 million in print media, and more than 7 million online. Our social media campaign, which has been targeted at groups most likely to fall victim to such scams, has reached 158,000 people, with more than 3000 people directly engaging with our message.

***Risk Outlook***

- 11 As the Board is aware, our Autumn update to the Risk Outlook was released in December with a report on Information Security. We also published a report on the risk to the public and the reputation of the profession, caused by the small number of solicitors who became involved in helping investment schemes that may well be frauds. There has been a relatively wide trade press coverage of

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the issues covered with over a 1000 views on the website already and over 400 people viewing the accompanying online tools.

- 12 Our Information Security paper has attracted positive comment from organisations such as Microsoft for its content on cybercrime. We will be hosting a cybercrime roundtable in January to discuss how firms can keep client details safe with academics, law enforcement agencies, consultants and law firms.

## Section 2: Operational Performance

### *KPIs*

- 13 Following our review of KPIs in 2016, the Board agreed to publish three new KPIs in my public report. These include:
  - 93% of conduct matters closed within 12 months of receipt - this was achieved in December with 93% of matters closed within 12 months.
  - 90% of Compensation Fund claims closed within 12 months - this was achieved in December with 90% of matters closed within 12 months.
  - 90% of medium / high risk applications closed within 3 months in Firm Based Authorisation - this was achieved in December with 93% of applications closed within 3 months. We achieved all of our KPIs in Authorisation in December.

## Section 3: Publications and Engagement Activity

- 14 We arranged, in partnership with the Black Solicitors Network, a December event for small firms in Manchester. Attendees met operational staff, discussed managing some current challenges facing the profession and looked at how we can support small firms. We have held several of these events in 2016, receiving positive feedback. Our plans are to hold more throughout 2017.
- 15 We have also held a number of engagement events in December to raise awareness of diversity and wellbeing in the profession, including an event with firms in Birmingham to raise awareness of disability and wellbeing. We heard from Elizabeth Rimmer, CEO of LawCare about their work and the issues facing the legal profession and from Pinsent Masons about the work of their staff network and their approach to wellbeing. We have also met with law firms as part of our project on 'trans inclusion in the profession' to promote awareness and good practice of a Trans inclusive workplace. We are documenting firm initiatives in a variety of ways, which will be published at the end of March 2017 to coincide with the International Transgender Day of Visibility.

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