

Equality impact assessment: Publication of regulatory decisions

June 2026

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Why we publish decisions

Our approach to publication is built on the principle that we are transparent and accountable to members of the public and those that we regulate for decisions we make.

Publishing our regulatory decisions wherever possible contributes towards ensuring that what we do, and how we work, is transparent. It helps to inform people who may use, or be considering using, legal services; it also helps others to hold us accountable by helping them to assess if we are acting proportionately and consistently.

Making sure our publication approach is fair and consistent

Our approach was first introduced in 2007. Since then, demand for regulatory information and transparency has only increased. In 2022 we consulted on proposals to test views on the principles underpinning our publication policy and our approach in relation to certain aspects of it.

Following our consultation we introduced some changes to our approach, which are to:

- publish more information, written in plainer English, for all individual decisions
- introduce set periods, based on decision type, for which individual decisions will remain on the public record, ranging from three years for warnings or fines to strike-off decisions that are to remain public permanently.

We use a template format to publish appropriate levels of information about our decisions. We think this is important to make sure that we handle publication consistently across the full range of decisions, and to make certain that we uphold confidence in the provision of legal services, and that people we regulate can understand what is expected of them.

Our publication approach is built around measures and controls to promote fair, proportionate and consistent decision making. It includes:

- published [guidance](#) that sets out our principles, examples, and how we consider decisions to publish case-by-case
- confirming [who can take regulatory decisions at the SRA](#)
- providing opportunities for individuals or firms to be heard before decisions are made, and to appeal or challenge decisions, alongside our [adjudication approach](#).

Our decision makers have discretion to not publish decisions at all, or to cease publishing decisions in certain situations, case-by-case. We may also redact or reduce some information, rather than withholding or removing decisions from publication entirely.

In most cases we also advise firms and individuals about our intention to publish a decision about them before we do so. They are provided with opportunity to make submissions to us, and to set out their reasons if they believe we should not publish. This helps to make sure

that our final publication decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, using all available information.

This case-by-case approach helps us to make sure that we understand and consider potential additional impact for solicitors with protected characteristics that might be increased if we publish a decision about them. We also consider other factors and circumstances, such as situations where individuals have health particular health issues or conditions, or may be placed at additional risk of detriment by a published regulatory decision about them compared to individuals who do not have those issues. We think this strikes a good balance between the public interest and the rights of individuals who may be subject to a decision.

We have considered whether our publication policy complies with the European Convention of Human Rights, and in particular Article 8 - the right to protection of private life and, in this context, the right to a professional reputation.

The High Court in the SRA V Andersons case rejected a claim that our publication approach breached Article 8, largely because it did not provide for 'carte blanche' publication but did provide for individual decisions made for each case, on individual facts. However through our decision-making criteria we take account of Article 8 and related considerations each time we take regulatory decisions and intend to publish them.

Here are two examples of our case-by-case consideration.

Example 1

In an investigation of dishonesty against a senior conveyancing executive, we found that the subject was at risk from a violent and abusive spouse, that the dishonesty was due to threats to the subject and that their children were being safeguarded. The subject also made representations that they were suffering from medical post-traumatic stress disorder, severe anxiety disorder and depression. We concluded that publication would be disproportionate in all the circumstances.

Example 2

A solicitor involved in a road traffic incident was convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol and was subsequently disqualified from driving. The solicitor notified us of their conviction and agreed to pay a financial penalty. We decided not to publish the regulatory decision as we decided this would have a disproportionate adverse impact on the individual and their young children. Through the course of our investigation, the individual's psychologist disclosed that they had previously attempted suicide. We also recognised that the individual did not provide legal services to the public. It therefore followed that the public interest in publishing our decision was more limited than in many other cases and in reference to Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and consideration of a professional psychologist assessment, we concluded that the likely impact of publication of our decision outweighed the public interest.

Over-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in published decisions

There is an overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in our regulatory enforcement processes. This is seen in our annual diversity monitoring reports and over a number of years.

This means that there is a correlation to an over-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in regulatory decisions that may then be published.

We continue to work hard to understand the drivers for this, and to also understand what mitigating actions we might take. We published the research report '[Overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in reports made to the SRA](#)' in October 2024. The research found that, compared to White solicitors, Asian solicitors are 14% more likely to be reported to us, and Black solicitors 9% more likely.

While a range of factors influence whether an individual report is then progressed through for further assessment, the research also shows that, compared to reports about White solicitors, those about Asian solicitors are 54% more likely to be taken forward for investigation and 43% more likely for Black solicitors. In matters that result in a regulatory decision, this overrepresentation may also be seen in the decisions that we subsequently publish.

The research was an independent process undertaken by a consortium of universities and it did not find any evidence of direct bias within our processes. However it found a complex picture of drivers, and where some factors are intersecting with ethnicity, including the size of the law firm where the solicitor works and the firm's practice area.

Impacts for individuals with other protected characteristics

We monitor the diversity characteristics of people in our enforcement processes on an ongoing basis, and publish our findings, including through our '[Upholding professional standards - diversity monitoring](#)' report. There are very low numbers of individuals from some protected characteristic communities – for example we are not able to provide a breakdown of disabled individuals within our enforcement processes because numbers are so small, and doing so risks revealing someone's identity. This means that it is also difficult to assess the potential impacts of our publication approach towards certain protected characteristic groups.

However we continue to monitor the impacts of our overall enforcement activities – where our publication approach is the final stage – all protected characteristic communities, and if we do identify potential adverse impacts over time we will then be able to consider how to respond accordingly.

Accessibility of information about our regulatory decisions

We aim to make sure that information we may publish about our decisions provides the right level of detail for our audiences to understand the decisions we have made and why. We know that:

- according to the [National Literacy Trust](#), in England 1 in 6 adults have very poor literacy skills, and 1 in 8 adults in Wales lack basic literacy - this means they can understand short straightforward texts on familiar topics, but reading information from unfamiliar sources, or on unfamiliar topics, could cause problems
- the [Office for National Statistics](#) reports that in 2021, 7.1% of the overall population of England and Wales were proficient in English but did not speak it as their main language
- the [Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](#) reports that up to 14 million people in the UK experience communication difficulty at some point in their lives.

For these reasons and others we think it is important that we aim to provide information about our decisions in straightforward, non-technical, plain language, and through the most accessible channels.

Through our consultation process in 2023 we tested different publication formats with members of the public in focus groups, to understand more clearly how our decisions might be published in the best possible style, format and length to work for people with different literacy skills. Following this we finalised a template that reflected the feedback we received, for our decision makers to use to explain our decisions clearly and consistently, in plain language, and with an adequate amount of information.

Our published decisions can be searched-for on our website, and including through our [Solicitors Register](#) which allows members of the public to check an individual or firm's regulatory record at-a-glance. Members of the public who prefer not to, or are unable to, access digital information can also get in touch with our Contact Centre in different ways to ask us to check an individual's regulatory record.

Mitigating potentially adverse impacts

In response to the issues we have highlighted in this assessment there are actions that we will continue to take to mitigate against adverse impact for people with protected characteristics.

Making sure our approach is fair and consistent

Through our publication approach we will continue to:

- consider publication on a case-by-case basis, and maintain our discretion to consider whether an individual's protected characteristics or other case-specific circumstances justify us to consider redacting information, to removing decisions from publication, or to not publishing a decision at all
- provide individuals with good opportunities to make representations to us if they believe we should not publish a decision.

Responding to the overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in published decisions

We have set out a number of actions in response to the underlying factors that can drive this overrepresentation within reports that are made to us, and subsequent investigations. As our publication approach takes effect at the end stage of our enforcement activities we think the actions we have outlined may also help to mitigate against potential adverse impact associated with our publication approach. These actions include:

- more effectively tailoring compliance and support materials to smaller and one partner firms, in light of challenges they might face
- developing guidance for SRA staff on handling complex borderline cases, and taking forward a process for improving the systematic recording of relevant information
- improving how we collect and use data, to enable us to have better insights, spot issues and trends, and respond more effectively.

Making sure our decisions are as accessible as possible

We will continue to use, and keep under review, our decision information template, to make sure that it continues to provide members of the public with the right amount of information about our decisions, in plain language.