

News release

SRA publishes latest suite of annual reports

20 July 2023

We have published our latest [annual corporate reports](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/corporate-reports-2021-22/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/corporate-reports-2021-22/], on our operational work during 2021/22.

The reports cover areas including education and training, enforcement, approval of new firms and solicitors, and the activity of the compensation fund. A full annual report on preventing money laundering is published separately in October.

Key facts highlighted include:

- The issue of strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPPs) became prominent in our enforcement work with 49 cases opened.
- Alternative business structures now make up nearly 12 per cent of firms. The sector in Wales continues to thrive, turnover from all firms is now £480m, up £100m since 2015/16.
- In its first year of running, 433 individuals entered the profession through the new Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), while 5,196 individuals qualified through the Legal Practice Course. SQE-qualified lawyers will increase significantly in coming years.
- The number of solicitor apprenticeships has more than doubled from 222 in 2020/21 to 584 in 2021/22.
- The compensation fund paid out £15.2m, down from £26.9m last year, but consistent with the average across the previous seven years (£14.8m).

The report on enforcement work includes a review of the diversity characteristics of solicitors involved, alongside a supporting report setting out the detail, which again shows an overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors, and men, in both concerns raised with us and then investigated, when compared with the diversity of the profession as a whole.

We have commissioned independent research into the societal and structural factors that might be driving the overrepresentation in reports made to us, and the first part of this research, [the literature review](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/over-representation-in-complaints/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/over-representation-in-complaints/], was published last month. We have also published [the literature review](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/review-influencing-outcomes-assessments/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/review-influencing-outcomes-assessments/] which forms the first phase of [independent research](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2021-press-releases/exeter-university-research/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2021-press-releases/exeter-university-research/]

[attainment-gap-research-launch/](#) into the long-standing picture of differential outcomes for some groups in professional assessments.

Anna Bradley, Chair of the SRA Board said: 'Our annual reports offer an overview of our operational work last year. Overall, we are content that this work is efficient and effective but are aware that there is always room for improvement.

'One area of particular focus, where we already have a robust programme of work in hand, is looking to conclude cases in our enforcement processes more quickly.

'We also remain committed to finding out why there is an overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in these processes. We have recently published the literature review undertaken by the independent researchers we have commissioned to look into this widely seen, complex and troubling pattern. We are looking forward to the full report being completed next year so we can consider next steps.'

Our annual reports cover:

- [Upholding professional standards](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/upholding-professional-standards-2021-22/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/upholding-professional-standards-2021-22/]
- [Client protection](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/client-protection-interventions-compensation-2021-22/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/client-protection-interventions-compensation-2021-22/]
- [Authorisation](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/authorising-profession-2021-22/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/authorising-profession-2021-22/]
- [Education and training](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/education-training-2021-22/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/education-training-2021-22/]
- [Diversity monitoring](https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/professional-standards-diversity-monitoring-2021-22/) [https://rules.sra.org.uk/sra/research-publications/professional-standards-diversity-monitoring-2021-22/]

The annual report on anti-money laundering is due for publication in October.