

News release

SRA awards £360,000 for disadvantaged candidates to take SQE

06 August 2025

We have distributed £360,000 to 11 organisations to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds with the cost of sitting the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE).

The [11 successful organisations](https://beta.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/access-reinvestment-fund/) provide a range of legal, educational and social mobility services. Their remits range from making the legal industry more accessible to people from underrepresented groups to providing, through volunteering, legal advice to veterans and their families.

The funding will help candidates qualify as a solicitor by covering their entry fee for the SQE1 (£1,934) or SQE2 (£2,974) exams, or both. Successful candidates could sit their first examination as early as January 2026.

Paul Philip, SRA Chief Executive, said: 'One of the objectives of the SQE is to promote a diverse profession by removing artificial and unjustifiable barriers. Our decision to distribute the fund in this way reflects our commitment to meeting the SQE objectives. The fund recognises that talent, not financial circumstances, should determine who can become a solicitor. Up to 190 candidates could be supported through the scheme. We look forward to following their journeys.'

We have published several [case studies](https://beta.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/sqe/sqe-case-studies/) to illustrate the diverse ways in which aspiring solicitors are preparing to take the SQE. They demonstrate how SQE candidates can balance work and study, and, if desired, independently prepare for the assessments.

Our [SQE Annual Report 2024](https://sqe.sra.org.uk/exam-arrangements/sqe-reports/sqe-annual-report-2024) shows that the solicitor's apprenticeship route is widening access to the profession. When compared with the wider SQE cohort, solicitor apprentices are more likely to be state-educated and from working-class backgrounds. The data also shows their pass rates are favourable.

We will monitor the impact of this funding and use the findings to inform future access and reinvestment initiatives. [Find more information about the SQE and becoming a solicitor](https://beta.sra.org.uk/become-solicitor/).

The funding is sourced from the SQE Access and Reinvestment Fund, which we manage and fund through performance-based payments from Kaplan, the SQE provider, under their contractual agreement. The fund has been building since the SQE launched in 2021, and this marks its first distribution. Future initiatives will be determined by available funding payments and business priorities.

We invited organisations that support aspiring solicitors to apply for a share of the fund. The successful organisations will select candidates who will benefit from the funding; each organisation will run its own candidate selection process.

The 11 organisations supporting aspiring solicitors that have been selected to receive funding are:

- Aberystwyth University Veterans' Legal Link
- Accutrainee Ltd
- Black and Proud CIC
- Bristol Law Society
- Law Training Centre
- Legal Social Mobility Fund
- Social Welfare Solicitors' Qualification Fund
- The College of Legal Practice
- The Law Society of England and Wales (The Diversity Access Scheme)
- The University of Central Lancashire
- The University of Law