

News release

Dedicated guidance issued to support in-house solicitors

18 November 2024

Following [stakeholder feedback on drafts published earlier this year](https://beta.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2024-press-releases/views-in-house-solicitors/) (<https://beta.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2024-press-releases/views-in-house-solicitors/>), we have issued a range of new guidance materials designed to directly support the 34,500 plus solicitors working in-house across England and Wales.

The guidance addresses the unique challenges and issues facing in-house solicitors working across a range of employers and sectors. We developed it following requests from the profession and issues identified in our thematic review. It is published at a time when high-profile cases such as the Post Office shine a light on the role of in-house lawyers.

Topics covered in our guidance include identifying the client, and reporting concerns of wrongdoing. We also address issues such as legal professional privilege, balancing ethical obligations and managing legal risk. Our guidance for employers aims to enhance understanding of solicitors professional obligations, and strengthen the support that employers provide to help solicitors to meet them.

Building on the drafts we published in March 2024, we have consulted with our virtual in-house solicitor reference group, made up of in-house professionals from the private, public and third sectors at various levels of seniority. We also engaged the wider in-house community through surveys, round tables, direct discussions and more than 50 formal responses to the draft documents.

We have made a number of changes as a result of feedback, including:

- More practical examples, resources and checklists.
- More information on acting for third parties and managing conflicts of interest.
- New guidance focused solely on legal professional privilege for the in-house solicitor.
- Clearer guidance on managing internal investigations and providing support for individuals involved.

Juliet Oliver, General Counsel at the Solicitors Regulation Authority said: 'This is the first time we have produced such a breadth of guidance for in-house solicitors. I want to thank all of those who took time to comment. The input we received from professionals was invaluable.'

'These documents reflect the unique challenges and issues that in-house solicitors encounter in their day-to-day roles and aim to support solicitors in meeting these, and to highlight the value that in-house solicitors can bring to organisations in promoting ethical behaviour and managing legal risk.'

The materials build on issues that arose from our 2023 [thematic review on working in-house](https://beta.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/in-house-thematic-review/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/2023-press-releases/in-house-thematic-review/]. We include guidance for organisations employing in-house solicitors, which seeks to establish mutual expectations and understanding of solicitors' professional obligations. Also, what these obligations mean they can - and cannot - do for their employer, and what employers can do to support solicitors to meet these.

- [Identifying your client when working in-house](https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/identifying-client-working-in-house-guidance/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/identifying-client-working-in-house-guidance/]
- [Reporting concerns about wrongdoing when working in-house](https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/reporting-concerns-wrong-doing-working-in-house-guidance/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/reporting-concerns-wrong-doing-working-in-house-guidance/]
- [Internal investigations](https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/internal-investigations/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/internal-investigations/]
- [Guidance for employers on a solicitor's professional obligations](https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/understanding-in-house-solicitors-professional-obligations-employer/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/understanding-in-house-solicitors-professional-obligations-employer/]
- [New separate document for governing boards, chief executives and senior officers in organisations employing in-house solicitors](https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/governing-boards-chief-executives-senior-officers/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/governing-boards-chief-executives-senior-officers/]
- [New guidance on legal professional privilege when working in-house](https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/professional-privilege-in-house/) [https://beta.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/professional-privilege-in-house/]