

News

Introduction of varying publication periods for decisions

04 June 2025

A new approach to how long details of regulatory and disciplinary outcomes about solicitors and law firms are published, will see publication lengths vary based on seriousness came into effect as of 2 June.

The new approach, which we consulted on as part of a wider consultation on our publication policy, will see a move away from the previous approach, which saw the majority of regulatory and disciplinary decisions published for a fixed three-year period.

Publishing for fixed periods of time will enable us to consider the seriousness of the outcome and therefore publication lengths will be dependent on the seriousness of the misconduct. This will be a more considered approach regarding what length of publication is fair, proportionate and best serves the public interest. For the most serious outcomes, decisions will remain in public for longer than under the past approach.

We take action against the profession if our rules are broken and publish details of solicitor and law firm disciplinary records on our publicly-available Solicitors Register. This allows users of legal services to check the record of their provider and prospective employers to carry out background checks.

As with the previous approach details of certain outcomes, typically linked to the more serious forms of misconduct, can and will remain in the public domain for longer periods of time, or indefinitely.

The changes include updated principles which underpin all circumstances where we might publish a regulatory decision. The principles incorporate suggestions made by consultation respondents, including to link them to the 'better regulation' principles.

Respondents to the consultation gave broad support to the set time periods for which different decisions are published connected to the severity of the regulatory or disciplinary breach and sanction.

We consulted on our approach to how we published decisions in 2022. The new approach now being implemented was approved by the Legal Services Board in December 2024.

We take around 400 regulatory and disciplinary actions against solicitors every year, ranging from a rebuke up to a £25,000 fine or referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. We also control the way some solicitors can act via conditions on their practising certificates and sometimes closes down firms where there is a serious risk to clients. These are among the decisions that would be published. Very rarely, there are times when we might decide not to publish a decision, for example compelling evidence from a medical expert that to do so could cause harm.