Information for lawtech providers

10 December 2021

We understand that innovators need targeted support in a highly regulated market, especially if it needs coordination across overlapping regulated markets.

Even where an online platform or service helping people get legal support is unregulated, we found that we could help innovators design these in a way that means regulated solicitors could use them and / or receive a referral from them.

Things to be aware of when working with solicitors

Before approaching solicitors or firms seeking their support or to offer your product or service, you should be aware of solicitors ethical and regulatory obligations.

Solicitors operate under a Code of Conduct [https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/] for themselves and for their firms [https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/] The principles of the Code are to act:

- in a way that upholds the constitutional principle of the rule of law, and the proper administration of justice.
- in a way that upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons.
- with independence.
- with honesty.
- with integrity.
- in a way that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion.
- in the best interests of each client.

We worked with Tech Nation Law Tech Sandbox Team to help develop a navigation tool that can help you understand whether your service needs to be legal services regulated.

The Information Commissioners Office has also provided data protection tips [https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/advice-for-small-organisations/frequently-asked-questions/getting-started-with-data-protection/] for innovators that anybody involved in any sector can utilise when innovating to ensure that they are building in the right data protection compliance from the outset. By following these it will help you to make sure that consumers who share their personal data with your organisation are confident that this data will be treated fairly, lawfully and transparently.

As part of our research with Oxford University, we spoke to a number of investors in startups to understand what they look for. We have summarised this as a top ten list of tips.

International work

The SRA are developing the Agile Nations [https://referral.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/innovate/innovate-projects/] Lawtech Innovation Network (ANLIN) to foster global cooperation on rulemaking in response to innovation.

Lawtech companies looking to expand overseas should be excited by the first in principle digital economy agreement [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-agrees-worlds-most-comprehensive-digital-trade-deal-with-singapore] announced by the Department of Trade and Industry. This provides new opportunities to expand digital services into Singapore by promoting trusted cross border data flows, removing the requirement for localised data storage and processing, and stronger cyber security. It signals a deep commitment between the UK and Singapore to collaborate in supporting lawtech innovators.

Get involved

Following a Business Planning roundtable event in May 2021, we are looking to take forward a proposal suggested legal innovators to set up and host a forum where innovators and other relevant parties can convene to discuss issues and developments, share thinking and learning and explore any arising regulatory issues. If this is of interest to you, please contact us [https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/contactinnovate] to find out more.

Contact us

We want to hear about your ideas for delivering legal services in new ways and about any barriers regulation may present. We want to hear from you if regulation has stopped you from operating in new and innovative ways.

To discuss your ideas for innovation and growth or get involved in our projects contact SRA Innovate [https://form.sra.org.uk/s3/contactinnovate] .