



## Compliance services Legal Sector

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Compliance with the SRA's Accounts Rules can be challenging and failures can be hugely damaging.

### COMPLIANCE AND ASSURANCE

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) rightly put the protection of client money at the heart of their Accounts Rules. Compliance with the rules, and the associated SRA procedure and system guidelines, can be challenging. However, where significant failures occur, be it due to fraud or error, the results can be hugely damaging for a firm.

UHY have the technical understanding of the SRA Accounts Rules 2011 combined with legal sector experience to enable us to support you with your compliance needs.

#### Accountant's Reports

We will work closely with you to ensure that the examination of your accounting records and client files, necessary for the annual Accountant's Report, is carried out efficiently, cost effectively and with minimum disruption to your practice. Our overriding priority though is always to perform a necessarily robust and thorough review, which fully complies with the SRA's requirements. This ensures that we meet our obligations as reporting accountants but also, and just as importantly, allows us to provide your with valuable feedback and advice.

#### Assistance with systems, controls and procedures

We provide comprehensive details of our findings and suggested improvements as a standard part of our annual Report assignment, and can also provide additional bespoke assistance as required. We have solicitor clients of all sizes, from sole traders

to major national firms, and can gear our advisory services to your specific needs accordingly; be this a comprehensive review of their accounts department policies to providing occasional technical advice to a firm's cashier.

#### COFA support and self-regulation

The SRA describe the Compliance Officer for Financial Administration (COFA) as the champion of risk management and compliance within a firm. The role was introduced in the Accounts Rules 2011 and reflects the SRA's move towards an outcomes-focused regulation approach.

The COFA must be a manager or employee of your firm. We are able to provide training, advice and support to assist the COFA in meeting the responsibilities of their role. We can also help the COFA take advantage of the increased flexibility offered under outcomes-focused regulation by establishing suitable procedures and policies which are tailored to the particular needs of your firm.

#### Statutory audit

Larger incorporated firms of solicitors, either Company or Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), may be subject to statutory audit. This is completely distinct from the SRA requirements and requires an independent auditor to make an assessment of whether the annual financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the business.

Our highly experienced audit teams have the technical skills to provide a cost effective



Our legal sector clients benefit from a people focused and partner-led service.



statutory audit, which is carried out in accordance with the relevant technical and ethical standards. We always look to go beyond the statutory compliance service however, and will use the knowledge accumulated in the course of our assignment to provide practical and commercial advice.

### ACCOUNTS PREPARATION

Firms of solicitors come in all shapes and sizes and this is reflected in their year-end accounting requirements. We make it our business to understand your business, and are committed to providing a service that is tailored to your particular needs. Our approach is underpinned by proactive communication to avoid surprises, and ensuring that timescales are set and adhered to.

Where we are appointed as your statutory auditor to a firm, as opposed to the reporting accountant for SRA purposes, we are obliged to remain independent from the preparation of the financial statements. However, we are able to provide objective, impartial assistance with the preparation of annual accounts by creating independent teams to work on the firm's behalf.

Aside from the preparation of year end accounts, we can assist with improving your financial management reporting. With solicitors now operating in such a challenging and fast-changing environment, timely management accounts information has never been more important, and can significantly improve your capacity to manage cash-flow and profitability.

We have experience of the various specialist accounting software systems used by solicitors to comply with the Accounts Rules, and can help ensure that these are set-up and operated properly. We can also provide advice and support with the introduction of new accounting software.

### EXPERIENCED LEGAL SECTOR SPECIALISTS

Our legal sector clients benefit from a people focused and partner-led service, enhanced by local knowledge and access to the wider resources of the UHY Hacker Young Group and UHY International.

UHY work with many firms of solicitors around the UK. We have specialists, including numerous members of the ICAEW Solicitors Group, throughout our UK network, and pool national technical knowledge and experience through regular meetings of the UHY Legal Sector Group.

### THE NEXT STEP

For further information on our compliance services, or to arrange a meeting to discuss your specific requirements, please contact one of our specialists:

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Alternatively, read more about us on our website at [www.uhy-uk.com](http://www.uhy-uk.com).



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