

30 September 2026

Dear Mr Romain

Letter to the SRA - *A Law Unto Themselves?*

Thank you for your letter (dated 1 September) and for taking the time to share your views on the SRA's approach to assessing concerns raised about solicitors and law firms.

The SRA's role

The SRA's role is to protect the public, support the rule of law and maintain high professional standards. When concerns are raised with us, we assess them independently to determine whether regulatory action is required in the public interest.

It is important to distinguish between the role of an individual who provides information to the regulator and the role of the regulator itself. We do not act on behalf of individuals or seek to resolve private disputes. Our role is to assess the information available and determine whether there is evidence of a potential breach of our standards or requirements that warrants regulatory action.

Assessing concerns

Not every concern raised with us will require investigation or enforcement action. We use our published Assessment Threshold Test and Regulatory and Disciplinary Procedure Rules to determine whether concerns raise matters that are sufficiently serious, and capable of proof, to justify further regulatory action.

This approach helps ensure that regulatory resources are focused on the areas of greatest risk to consumers, confidence in legal services and the public interest.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that assessment decisions are made fairly, consistently and proportionately. Decisions are taken using our published regulatory framework and are supported by guidance, supervision and quality assurance

We are the regulator of solicitors and law firms in England and Wales.

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Our registered offices are: The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN.
Our company registration number is: 12608059.

processes. Where relevant new information becomes available, or where there is evidence that a decision may be materially flawed, we have established processes to consider those circumstances and determine whether any further action is required.

Accountability and oversight

The SRA operates within a broader framework of accountability and oversight. Our activities are subject to scrutiny through established governance arrangements and oversight. We also have management oversight and quality assurance arrangements designed to support consistency and effectiveness in regulatory decision-making.

Transparency

We are committed to transparency about our regulatory work. We publish annual investigations and enforcement data to help stakeholders understand the concerns raised with us, the decisions we make and the outcomes of our regulatory activity. This sits alongside our published rules, guidance and policies, which explain how concerns are assessed and how regulatory decisions are reached.

We continually review our processes and engage with a wide range of stakeholders to help ensure that our regulatory arrangements remain effective, proportionate and focused on protecting the public.

Thank you again for writing to us.

Yours sincerely,

Kay Kinman

Head of Investigations - AERT
Solicitors Regulation Authority



Blind Justice

1 September 2026

Sarah Rapson, Chief Executive, Solicitors Regulation Authority

Richard Orpin, Chief Executive, Legal Services Board

By email. Published at blindjustice.org.uk/research

Re: A Law Unto Themselves? An investigation into the absence of any right to require review of SRA decisions not to investigate

Dear Ms Rapson and Mr Orpin,

Today Blind Justice UK publishes *A Law Unto Themselves?*, an investigation into a question that affects everyone who reports a solicitor to the Solicitors Regulation Authority: what can they do if they believe the decision to close their report is wrong? The report is enclosed and is published at blindjustice.org.uk/research.

The answer, established from the SRA's own rules, its own policies, its own published data and its own Independent Reviewer's reports, is that they can do nothing the regulator cannot decline. In 2023/24 the SRA's Assessment and Early Resolution Team closed 8,317 matters with no further action, roughly seven in ten of the matters it dealt with. Annex 1 of the SRA's Application, Notice, Review and Appeal Rules gives regulated persons formal rights to a review of specified decisions and gives a member of the public exactly one: when they are refused money from the Compensation Fund. A closure with no further action is not in the list. The Independent Reviewer cannot overturn any regulatory decision and says so in its own reports. The Legal Services Board has no jurisdiction over individual cases and says so. The reporter's entire entitlement under the rules is a letter with reasons.

The report makes no claim that any individual closure was wrong and no allegation of bad faith against anyone. Its subject is the architecture: a gatekeeping judgment exercised more than eight thousand times a year which nobody outside the SRA can be required to look at.

Ms Rapson, section 11 of the report puts nine questions to the SRA, including how many of the 2023/24 closures were made under rule 2.4 and at what grade, what quality assurance applies to those decisions, and whether the SRA accepts that no person or body can currently be required to review such a decision on its merits. We ask for a substantive response by 30 September 2026, and we undertake to publish it in full and unedited.



Blind Justice

Mr Orpin, the report asks the Legal Services Board to examine, in its next assessment of the SRA's performance, who if anyone checks the quality of these closure decisions. The Board's Decision Notice of 5 March 2026 shows that the statutory tools exist and that the Board will use them where the evidence requires it. We ask that the front door of the SRA's enforcement system now receive the same attention as the failures that follow when it is wrongly closed.

We have today written separately to the Chair of the Justice Select Committee, asking the Committee to consider taking evidence from the SRA's Chair and Chief Executive on the questions this report raises. That letter is also published alongside the report.

This letter is open. It is published alongside the report, and any reply from either recipient will be published in full.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Romain ACILEX

Founder & CEO