

Attitudes to regulation and compliance in legal services

October 2012

Introduction

On 6 October 2011, the Solicitors' Regulation Authority (SRA) began regulating solicitors and firms in a new way; moving from a more prescriptive and reactive approach to regulation to a more pro-active, risk-based outcomes-focused approach (OFR). The SRA is keen to build an understanding of the impact of this reform and for this purpose has formed a 'baseline' of firm attitudes towards compliance against which to measure the impact of OFR over time. This work has also provided us with an insight into the drivers of regulatory compliance and non-compliance by firms which will aid our supervisory activities. In particular, it will help us to understand what helps and motivates individuals and firms to comply with our regulatory requirements.

This attitudinal study uses social and behavioural science approaches to shed light on the factors that influence compliance behaviour. The SRA has incorporated the findings from this study into our regulatory approach, particularly into how we supervise firms.

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