

SOLO

the SPG journal

March 2010

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From the Chairman



2010 is now upon us and since the last issue of SOLO members of the Executive Committee have been busy responding to the various Consultation Papers like the Fairer Fee Policy, ARP and Successor Practice Definition. Please look at the update from Martin Smith on page 21. You can also have your say on consultations by visiting the website on spg.co.uk/forum/ or sra.org.uk/consultations.page. We have been working closely with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and the Law Society on a number of matters that concern Sole Practitioners. I am also attending meetings including the Law Society President's Reference Group on the Future of Legal Regulation.

Sole Practitioners are being targeted by a number of mortgage providers. Ian Lithman's article in this issue highlights the problems we face and what he has been trying to do. Also, there is a helpful update from the Law Society on the current situation and the work they have been doing on behalf of the SPs.

We have benefited greatly from the work of our Council members, Ian Lithman and Sue Carter, who continue to lobby on our behalf in Council. All the members of the Executive Committee have been working on a number of issues closely with the Law Society and the SRA.

We need to start thinking of Professional Indemnity Insurance. Please take a look at the articles by Janis Purdy on pages 17-19. I had a meeting in Bristol with other members of the SPG Professional Indemnity Sub-Committee and the underwriters. I am concerned that this year will be as difficult as the last. I must stress that if you had a visit from the SRA, then you must see that you are officially signed off by them in order to get insurance. So do chase up the SRA.

It is very encouraging to see an increase in the number of Local Groups and I would suggest that you also contribute to SOLO with photographs and a short write up about your meetings.

I have been Chairman for almost a year and I feel very positive about being a Sole Practitioner. I would also encourage you to join the Executive Committee if you think you would be able to make a difference. If you are interested, please contact Clive Sutton our Honorary Secretary or any of the members of the Executive Committee. Being a Sole Practitioner is not easy, do continue to be astute in what you do and do not compromise in the way you practise.

Our annual conference is fast approaching and I hope to see many of you at Ascot. The Business Programme has been specifically tailored to suit Sole Practitioners, with very experienced speakers including essential updates on practice and professional issues from the Law Society and SRA. As always it will be very educational and a good time to socialise with other Sole Practitioners. We are again heavily subsidising the conference, keeping the cost as low as possible to make sure that as many of you as possible are able to attend this premier event. More details, including the business programme and the booking form are in this magazine. I hope to see you all at Ascot in May.

Sushila Abraham
Chairman
SPG

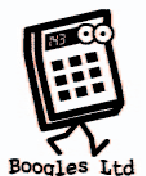
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SPG Conference

The conference will be held at the MacDonal Berystede Hotel in Ascot on 14th – 16th May 2010 offering 8 CPD.

You will find further information and the booking form in this edition.

We hope to see you there.

SOLO magazine

Contributions to SOLO are welcome.

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YOUR LAW SOCIETY COUNCIL MEMBERS

THE FUTURE

In order to test my suggestion that there should be a Rule Change prohibiting any provider of legal services acting for both lender and borrower, the SPG sent out over 4,000 questionnaires by email to those of our members whose email addresses we could obtain.

The questions were cast so as to concentrate minds on what is a very difficult question to answer; namely did you want me to try to persuade Council Members to support a rule change by the Law Society making representations to that effect to Government and the Legal Services Board.

I had the feeling that some of you are fed up with Lenders generally but fear the loss of your remaining residential conveyancing, whereas others feel they cannot continue acting for both parties as it is just not worthwhile.

200 responses were received with some 60 other responses from SPs who had ceased or did not undertake residential conveyancing.

The scores were notified to those 200 respondents who were then asked to vote either "yes" or "no" to the Rule Change regardless of any consequences. The result was 44 "no" and 42 "yes".

Faced with such an even vote I cannot in good conscience take the issue further but I am still trying to obtain further information from the Compensation Fund and to see if they would pay lenders on making a valid claim, with the Fund pursuing recourse themselves instead of requiring the lenders to do so first.

The insurers are not interested in the Bond that I had proposed because they felt that they might have to pick up the whole claim made to the Fund as they think the Fund might try to avoid any payment on the basis that insurance, in the form of the Bond, existed.

The fact of the matter is that the lender could always go for Judicial Review if the Fund acted unreasonably in refusing a claim, but they say that would cause them delay, loss of interest and outlay of costs.

The only good news that I have for you is that after 3 years of my suggesting, when a member of the Representation Board, for Oath Fees be increased, they are now to be doubled at a date to be announced.

It also seems that I was the only one to notice that Aon had given wrong advice in the January Issue 1 of Insurance Matters



by the Law Society (LS) in association with Aon on page 9 under "DO NOT", bullet point 4, which runs counter to the Provision of Services Regulations 2010 requiring the disclosure of the PII insurer details to the Client and worse still Aon say the disclosure may result in indemnity being refused. The LS acted within 48 hours and the result is the Supplement correcting the error.

I am now trying to discover whether mentioning the limitation of liability could avoid the PII policy.

Ian Lithman

Referral fees

You are probably all aware that the Law Society has now changed its policy regarding referral fees. I and a fellow council member from Hampshire, Nick Gurney-Champion (residential conveyancing) brought a motion to the Council which resulted in the change. I know some of you disagree with this move and are in favour of them, and I am sorry to disappoint you. I also know that some of you pay them but would rather not.

I have always been against the payment of referral fees because I do not consider they are in the best interest of clients. Neither do I believe they are in our best interest or that of justice. I am thus delighted that the policy has changed, but regulatory matters are now up to the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Legal Services Board, and those on the Law Society Council can be an influencing voice only.

One of the reasons that the policy was changed was because it was considered that referral fees were contrary to the regulatory objectives contained in Section 1 of the Legal Services Act 2007.

The Office of Fair Trading Home Buying and Selling market study stated



1.18 At present, estate agents may receive a fee or commission for referring prospective buyers to other service providers (for example solicitors or mortgage advisors), provided they disclose to the seller the existence of such fees and commissions if the buyer makes an offer. The prospect of additional income may give the estate agent a financial incentive to prefer some buyers

over others. For example, a £350 fee paid to an estate agent for introducing a buyer could significantly alter the agent's incentives to recommend to a seller that they accept that particular offer:

	Buyer 1	Buyer 2
Offer	£160,000	£175,000
Commission rate	1.60%	1.60%
Fee for Selling House	£2,560	£2,800
Fee for mortgage introduction	£350	£350
Potential income	£2,910	£2,800

Competing Buyers

1.19 In the above example, the agent would be better off persuading the seller to accept the offer from Buyer 1, even though Buyer 2 might offer £15,000 more. There is a risk that the agent either fails to pass on Buyer 2's offer, persuades the seller that Buyer 1 is a more secure prospect than Buyer 2, or, if faced with an offer from Buyer 1 only, persuades the seller to accept that offer rather than hold out for a higher price.

We recommend that, as part of its work on the future of estate agency regulation, the Government consider further whether the potential for conflicts of interest should be removed, including a ban on such payments.

Some of my concerns regarding referral fees are:-

1. They direct consumers to chosen lawyers and there is no guarantee that that lawyer is the right one. Consumers are often now aware that the choice of lawyer is up to them,

and expect at the very least to be directed to an expert, but that does not always happen. Lawyers can buy in work in which they have little or no experience. The work is often referred to inexperienced staff. (I have been told that referral agencies direct work to the best lawyers, yet I was invited to join one of the most respected referral agencies, and when questioned, the caller did not even know my area of work.)

2. A conflict of interest arises. The lawyer must act in the best interest of the client, but the referring agency can also place demands on the lawyer. A conflict of interest may also arise as alleged in the Beresford (miners) disciplinary proceedings in 2008. The SRA are alive to this issue, and has amended its guidance on Rule 9 as follows:-

'If a client is entering into or has already entered into a scheme or arrangement with an introducer which is not in their best interests then you must advise accordingly. Schemes or arrangements which involve the client paying unnecessary or unreasonable fees will not normally be in the client's best interests.'

The lawyer is in an invidious position because referral fees add to the cost, and yet the consumer may have already entered into a contract with the referral agency. Furthermore, if the lawyer refuses the referral that will have an adverse effect on his future business prospects from the referrer.

3. The referring body is merely a middleman and the client can become a product to be bought and sold. Does that middleman add any true value? The claims management business is now worth millions of pounds, and has the manpower, money and time to fight its corner, unlike most lawyers. I maintain that the person who loses out most as a result is the client.

4. Firms have or will become unviable. Some will not be able to continue practising and have ceased practising because of the distortion of the market place brought about by the payment of referral fees. This results in a lack of access to the law for the client (or should I use the parlance forced upon us and say 'consumer'?)

5. We should have some solidarity with other professions. Are we different from the medical profession who also have a duty to act in the best interests of the patient (so far as funding allows) who are not permitted to pay referral fees?

Sue Carter

Google: The Sole Practitioners' New Best Friend

When Harold MacMillan was asked what was the greatest challenge for a statesman he replied "Events, dear boy, events".

Well, as Sole Practitioners we seem always to be dealing with events. I remember writing a response paper in 1993 on behalf of the Bristol Sole Practitioners' Group in response to "The Cost of Default". More recently, we have had to deal with fundamental changes in Legal Aid, Professional Indemnity, Referral Fees and now the Legal Services Act.

Here is a leaflet from Quality Solicitors which has a banner headline;

If "Tesco Law wins will the last lawyer to leave Britain please turn out the lights".

But, how about some good news on referrals.

This week on Monday, I had 48 referrals; on Tuesday I had 44 referrals and yesterday I had 52. At this rate, excluding weekends, I will have some 10,000 referrals this year.

ALL these referrals were **FREE** and courtesy of Google and the Internet.

The Topics which I will cover

1. Google, Websites and Internet Marketing
2. Blogging-and why you should start straight away
3. Twitter: How you can build your brand
4. LinkedIn

Your Website

Before Google can refer potential clients to you, you need a website or a blog.

Your website should form the **HUB** of all your marketing efforts, both on and offline.

Your website should be seen as the start of the process and not the end of the process. Your website is a dynamic tool to attract existing and potentially new clients.

Your mission is to get found by Google. The quality of the content on your website is crucial. Google loves content new and refreshed. The new world is now governed by the maxim "CONTENT IS KING".

The internet has subtly changed the rules of marketing so that it is not so much, who you know, but more, who knows you.

Website Basics

There are literally millions of websites in existence. Yours will not be unique or ground breaking. Do not get hung up on design and look.

You need a 7-10 page site to start the ball rolling. You can always add to it later and change the design if you need to.

You need a straight forward "Content Management System" (CMS) provided by your website company to allow you to update your site whenever you want.

3 Steps

1. CREATE Remarkable Content
2. OPTIMISE your content for search engines (SEO) and other audiences
3. PROMOTE your remarkable content in social media, e-mail marketing and other channels

Your mission should you decide to accept it is to lead people to your website, and convert that traffic into clients.

SEO-Search Engine Optimisation

You will not be able to embark on the creation of a new website or a revision of your existing website without encountering the term SEO or SEM-Search Engine Marketing.

Google looks for relevance when it trawls websites for answers to questions that people type in to its search engine.

Google is particularly keen to get local relevance. You can put your site forward for free to Google Local.

You will have seen this in practice if you type in a localised question to Google and seen the Google Map and a list of firms down the side of the map.

You should also encourage your client to give you a testimonial on Google Local, as those testimonials will give you the edge over a site with no such referrals.

Organic or Paid Links

The so called organic links are the ones you find on the left hand side of the page, normally underneath a couple of paid links. Other paid links are shown on the right hand side.

I have not gone down the paid link or Adwords as it is called and try to produce remarkable content to vie for high spots on the organic left hand side of the page. Adwords can be very expensive as you will pay for any click through to your website. It is possible to limit your expenditure by putting a cap on your monthly expenditure.

Google Analytics

You should also ensure that your new site has the codes included from Google Analytics. This is another powerful and free tool from Google.

It will allow you to check how many people have visited your site, which were the most popular pages and which page they exited on.

Bloggng - Why you need to start straight away

I have mentioned before that moving up the rankings on Google takes time.

The quickest route to success is by way of a blog, or web log for its longer name.

By creating blogs on your areas of specialisms, using keywords and phrases you will be found a lot sooner by Google.

There will be little activity when you first start. If Google finds you within one or two months you will be doing well. Once found Google will revisit your website more regularly.

The more content I add the more frequent Google's robots crawls my site.

I try to blog every 3-4 days or 8 times a month, sometimes more sometimes fewer.

You will also demonstrate to your existing and potential clients your area of expertise.

Every blog post you make is another page added to your website, so your basic site can grow very quickly.

You can also send internal links to other parts of your website for other keywords or phrases.

If you in turn send your blogs to other websites, free or paid for, these will be indexed by Google and provide links back to your website. Every link is a vote for your website in Google's eyes.

These links, plus size of your site, comprise your Google page Ranking score on a 1-10 basis. The BBC will be a 10. Clutton Cox has a Page Rank 4 for its home page.

Getting links from high ranking sites gives you more kudos in Google's eyes. It is better to have 1 link from a high ranking site than many links from low ranking sites.

My property blogs have been shortlisted for the prestigious PrimeLocation blog awards.

Find other blogs on your subject and get into conversations. This increases your visibility on the web.

There is a Law Gazette blog for example. Through leaving comments on the blogs I have begun a joint venture with a marketing expert.

Twitter

Twitter is a micro blogging site where you are limited to 140 characters or a couple of sentences.

For business purposes you follow people of interest and in turn you are followed.

As a rule of thumb for every 10 tweets as they are called 1-2 can be overtly business orientated.

Twitter allows you to put a personality behind the on dimensional website. People tend to do business with people they like.

You will also meet like minded souls. The internet is a giving rather than taking community. Tweeters like to spread knowledge and interest.

I am following and being followed by other solicitors and lawyers in the US and elsewhere.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking site. 27 million registered professionals.

8 million unique visitors each month. The idea is to connect or stay connected with past companies, and join new groups and forums.

It can be characterised as taking business cards to the next level.

Bringing It All Together

I thought I would conclude with an example of how it is working for me and should be working for you.

Last Friday at 5.00pm I posted a blog entitled "Conveyancing in Yate" 10 Things You Need to Know if You Are Moving Home".

Yate is a town a mile away from me in Chipping Sodbury and dominated by corporate Estate Agents from whom we get no business. To get to these potential clients before they do, creating remarkable content on their relevant topics is my strategy.

I checked on Monday morning first thing, and typed into Google "Conveyancing in Yate". My blog had been indexed by Google over the weekend and sat proudly at No. 5 in the organic left hand side list.

Later that morning, I had an email from my website from a new client who had instructed me to do his Conveyancing online.

I telephoned the client and asked what had led him to choose us. He lived about 10 miles away but had found our website through Google. He had read my blog on Conveyancing in Yate and was taken by my local knowledge.

He had all the information he needed to make his choice. We had been pre-selected.

Google had referred him to us.

Work in Progress

I want to put video testimonials on the site, audio content, and more cartoons.

I also want to help as many Sole Practitioners as possible achieve what I have achieved and to fight the next "event", the advent of the Legal Services Act.

Thank you.

This article is a synopsis of an hour long talk given by Sole Practitioner, Paul Hajek of Clutton Cox to the Bristol Sole Practitioners group on Thursday 28th January.

Paul Hajek has been a lawyer for 27 years.

He has been managing partner of Clutton Cox Solicitors in Chipping Sodbury, Bristol, South Gloucestershire for the last 24 years.

His company website is www.cluttoncox.co.uk

You can also follow him on Twitter <http://twitter.com/paulhajek>

His new company Internet Marketing for Solicitors in conjunction with Boyd Butler from Great Legal Marketing www.greatlegalmarketing.co.uk is designed to help SPs achieve their website, blogging and marketing potential from creation of the website and beyond.

The Law Society's Lawyerline – help at the end of a phone

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I am a sole practitioner. I have just received a complaint from a client and intend to resolve the matter in accordance with my internal complaints handling procedure. That policy, however, nominates me to deal with the matter, notwithstanding that I am the subject of the complaint.

(a) Can I appoint a solicitor at another firm to deal with this complaint on my behalf?

(b) If the complaint turns out to be without merit, can I pass the costs of any investigation onto my client?

(a) Yes, you may choose to appoint a solicitor at another firm to deal with a complaint on your behalf. The content of your firm's complaints handling procedure is a matter for your firm, but the procedure must be in writing, clear and unambiguous (see the Guidance to 2.05 of the Solicitors' Code of Conduct 2007 at paragraph 48).

(b) Whether you chose to deal with the complaint yourself or outsource it to another firm to deal with on your behalf, you must not charge the client for the cost of responding to a complaint (2.05(3) of the Solicitor's Code of Conduct 2007). For further information, please see the Law Society's Practice Note on Complaints management at www.lawsociety.org.uk/practicenotes.

Staffed by qualified solicitors in the Practice Advice Service, Lawyerline regularly receives calls from sole practitioners wanting someone at the end of a telephone to run an idea by. We are always pleased to help!

Recently, we have been receiving calls regarding updating client care letters. Does yours need updating?

Several new developments mean that this may be necessary. The removal of the remuneration certificate procedure has led to changes in the Code of Conduct 2007 and there are also new regulations introduced by an EU directive which impose obligations on service providers.

Rule 2 of the Code of Conduct

Many solicitors were taken by surprise by the removal of the remuneration certificate procedure in August 2009. Indeed, the Solicitors' (Non-Contentious Business) Remuneration Order 2009 which removed the remuneration certificate process was laid before Parliament less than three weeks before it came into force on 11 August 2009.

As a consequence of this sudden amendment, "emergency" requirements were inserted into Rule 2 of the Solicitors' Code of Conduct 2007 to ensure that solicitors continued to inform clients of their right to receive information about how they could complain about a solicitor's bill. The emergency rule was designed to cover the interim period whilst the Solicitors

Regulation Authority (SRA) consulted with the profession on the wording of a final rule. That consultation period has now concluded and the SRA has announced the final amendments to Rule 2 which are due to come into effect on 1 March 2010.

There are three periods that solicitors need to be aware of, namely:

- (1) the period before 11 August 2009
- (2) the interim period from 11 August 2009 to 28 February 2010; and
- (3) the way forward from 1 March 2010 onwards.

Solicitors can check the exact wording of the rule which was in force at the relevant time by viewing the changes to rule 2 of the Code of Conduct on the Solicitors Regulation Authority website (www.sra.org.uk).

In order to ensure that your firm is in step with the way forward, you need to ensure that from 1 March 2010 you:

- advise clients at the outset, in writing, of their right to complain about the bill. This would include providing contact details of the Legal Complaints Service; and
- advise clients at the outset, in writing, of their right to object to the bill and to apply for an assessment of the bill under Part III of the Solicitors Act 1974.

The new rule applies to both contentious and non-contentious matters.

Provision of Services Regulations 2009

Whilst updating your client care letter to account of the new Rule 2 requirements, you may also wish to take notice of the additional obligations which have been imposed on service providers under the recent EU Directive 2006/123. These obligations were implemented in the UK in December 2009 by the Provision of Services Regulations 2009.

The Regulations require the following information to be provided to clients:

- your VAT number
- details of your professional indemnity insurance and the territorial coverage of that insurance
- details of how to access the detailed professional rules applicable to you
- details of complaint resolution procedures

This information does not necessarily need to be placed in the client care letter or terms of business. You may instead to make it easily accessible to the clients by, for example, having it available in hard copy at your firm's office or by making it easily accessible to the client electronically by means of a web address supplied by your firm.

The Law Society has updated its Practice Notes on Client care letters and Complaints management and has brought out a new one on the Provision of Services Regulations to assist practitioners. These can be found at www.lawsociety.org.uk/practicenotes.

Barbara Mackintosh
Solicitor
Practice Advice Service
The Law Society

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this article, it does not constitute legal advice and cannot be relied on as such. The Law Society does not accept any responsibility for liabilities arising as a result of reliance upon the information given.



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SPG's 15th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 12 months since our last conference in Northamptonshire have been difficult ones for many Sole Practitioners and your committee appreciates how important it is for as many SPs as possible to get together once a year in order to meet and discuss issues affecting us all.

Therefore it was decided that this year's conference will be in the South of England convenient to London and the South East, where SPG membership is strong.

The conference is being held at the MacDonald Berystede Hotel & Spa in Ascot, Berkshire on the weekend of 14th-16th May 2010.

To assist members the committee has once again decided to subsidise the event and your accommodation costs, please take a look at the booking form overleaf. We would like to thank the sponsors and exhibitors who have helped make this possible.

Accommodation at the hotel is limited so those wishing to stay please confirm your reservations direct with the hotel as soon as possible. The hotel has offered to place delegates in nearby hotels at the negotiated rate if all rooms are taken.

The hotel can be contacted on 0844 879 9104 or email berystede@macdonald-hotels.co.uk, Please quote "SPG Conference, the Law Society" in any communication so that you are able to secure our subsidised special room rate.

Those wishing to see the hotel and its facilities can access a virtual tour at www.MacdonaldHotels.co.uk/Berystede.

Please note that neither your committee or the Law Society Events Team can assist with accommodation queries.

Delegates should also note that places for the Saturday night black tie dinner are limited and admission is by ticket only. Places must be booked and paid for when reserving a place at the conference.

Finally, the annual Golf Tournament will be held at the Royal Ascot Golf Club on Friday 14th May, teeing off at 1.30pm. The cost of the round, which includes lunch at 12.30pm, is £41 and represents excellent value. Further details are on the booking form and further information on the golf club is available at www.royalascotgolfclub.co.uk.

John Scott
Vice Chairman & Conference Organiser

AGM – 15th May 2010

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOLICITOR SOLE PRACTITIONERS GROUP ("THE GROUP")

- (a) That the 17th Annual General Meeting of the Group for 2010 will be held on Saturday, 15th May 2010 at the Macdonald Berystede Hotel, Sunninghill, Ascot SL5 9JH.
- (b) That there will be thirteen vacancies for elected members occurring on the Executive Committee of the group, namely two vacancies in each of the Yorkshire, East Midlands, Wales, London and South West Regional Areas; and one vacancy in each of the Northern, North West and East Anglia Regional Areas. There is one other vacancy which could be filled in any of the Regional Areas except for London and South West.
- (c) That nominations to the Executive Committee must be sent in writing to the Honorary Secretary, Clive Sutton, and be received by him no later than 23 April 2010. (The nomination form can be obtained from Clive Sutton. His address is Buckland Manor, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 8NP).
- (d) That all candidates, proposers and seconders must be members of the Group.

Clive Sutton
Honorary Secretary

SPG AGM Agenda 2010

1. Apologies
 2. Minutes of last meeting
 3. Matters arising
 4. Chairman's report
 5. Hon. Secretary's report
 6. Hon. Treasurer's report
 7. Election of Members of the National Executive Committee
 - *8. Proposals
 9. Any Other Business
- *Any proposals of which prior notice has been given to the Honorary Secretary will be put to the meeting for consideration and a vote, including any proposal to amend the Constitution as may be published on the Group's website.*



Solicitor Sole Practitioners' Group Conference

Supported by the Law Society
Berystede Hotel, Ascot



Friday 14th – Sunday 16th May 2010

*Programme

Friday 14th May		
12.30pm	Golf Tournament You are welcome to attend the golf tournament, held at the hotel. The cost of attending is £41 (bring your own equipment, light lunch provided). Lunch is at 12.30pm, Tee-off is at 1.30pm. To book your place please contact John Scott Tel: 0191 257 3222 or e-mail: reedrydermeikle@unicombox.com	
5.00pm – 9.00pm	Conference – registration desk open	
6.30pm – 7.30pm	Local Groups Meeting Optional meeting for members of local groups and those interested in becoming involved – SPG's Local Groups Convenor is Lubna Shuja	
7.00pm and 9.00pm	Welcome Buffet (2 sittings)	
Saturday 15th May (5 hours CPD)		
8am – 12.00pm	Registration / Help desk open	
9.30am – 9.40am	Welcome to the Conference from SPG Introduction by the Chairman of SPG	Sushila Abraham
9.40am – 10am	Welcome from the Law Society Keynote address from the Chief Executive of the Law Society	Des Hudson
10.00am – 11am	PI Insurance – is 2010 going to be any better? Essential information from SRA & Prime Professions	Richard Brown
11.00am – 11.30am	Refreshments, exhibition and networking	
11.30am – 12.30pm	Annual General Meeting of SPG Question and Answer session and a short address from the Sponsors	
12.30pm – 1.30pm	Lunch, exhibition and networking	
1.30pm – 3pm	Property Law in Focus An update on conveyancing issues and Lenders Chairman of Building Societies Association (BSA) Former President of the Law Society	Adrian Cole Paul Marsh
3pm – 3.30pm	Coffee Break – Law Society Council members, available for questions	
3.30pm – 4.30pm 4.30pm – 5.30pm	Risk Management Important costs information Practice management update and different ways to structure your business	Tony Guise Adrian Heale
7pm for 7.45pm	Drinks Reception Prime Professions Annual Dinner After dinner speaker – Gregory Treverton-Jones QC	
Sunday 15th May (3 hours CPD)		
9.45am	Welcome from the Vice President of the Law Society	Linda Lee
9.55am	SRA update on ABSs and regulatory changes The future of regulation and recent important changes	TBC
10.55am – 11.20am	Refreshments, exhibition and networking	
11.20am – 12.15pm	Anti money laundering – what you need to know!	Tania Tiribus
12.15pm – 1.15pm	Handling complaints successfully Chief Executive of the Office of Legal Complaints (OLC)	Adam Sampson
1.15pm – 1.20pm	Closing comments – SPG Chairman Close – SPG Conference	Sushila Abraham

*Please note this programme is subject to change.



SPG 15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 14-16 MAY 2010

Supported by The Law Society



BOOKING FORM

Please complete this form (photocopy if necessary) and return it with payment by **Wednesday 5th May 2010** to:

Events Unit (ref SPG), The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1PL

Or: DX 56 Lon/Chancery Ln Fax: 020 7316 5667

For queries, email: spgconference@lawsociety.org.uk / Tel: 020 7316 5700

Delegate details

First Name: _____ **Title:** Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr _____

Surname: _____

Firm/organisation: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please tick if you are happy to be contacted by e-mail about events and products by SPG and the Law Society

Address: _____

Town: _____

Postcode: _____ **DX:** _____

Tel: _____ **Fax:** _____

Special requirements: e.g. access, dietary: _____

Delegate Fee (no VAT payable)

Delegate **£ 85.00**
(inc: 8 hours CPD, lunch on Saturday for **delegate only**)

Name of guest (if applicable): _____

- Delegate** – Friday welcome buffet **£15.00**
- Guest of delegate** – Friday welcome buffet **£15.00**
- Delegate** – Saturday black tie dinner **£30.00**
- Guest of delegate** – Saturday black tie dinner **£30.00**
- Guest trip to Windsor Castle** **£10.00** Saturday 11am-4pm (lunch not included, limited spaces)

Total payment: **£** _____

Cheques are made payable to **“Solicitor Sole Practitioners Group”**

Food options

Friday night – buffet (rolling buffet – two sittings – select one and indicate how many people are attending):

7pm 9pm (vegetarian and meat options available)

Saturday – Annual black-tie dinner (select one option per attendee)

Lamb Fish Vegetarian

Accommodation - bookings to be made DIRECTLY BY DELEGATE WITH THE HOTEL

SPG subsidised rooms (cost £80 + VAT per room per night – double/twin, £70 + VAT per room per night – single) have been reserved at the Berystede Hotel. For bookings call 0844 879 9104, and quote ref: “Law Society Events, SPG conference”. To guarantee a room, bookings need to be made by **30th April**. The hotel will assist with bookings at local hotels offering the same rate.

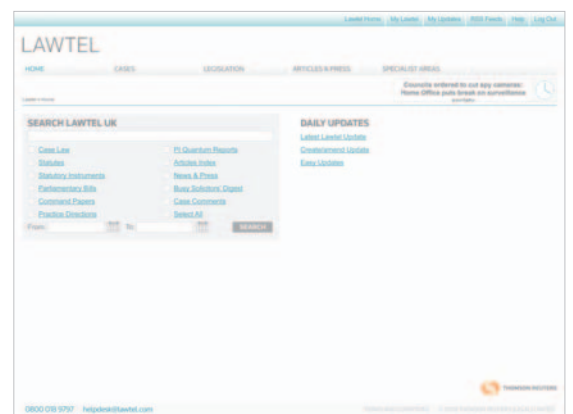


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DOWN SLIPPERY SLOPES . . .

I've just been watching the skeleton bob sleigh racing at the winter Olympics – well, not in Vancouver, unfortunately, but on the box, in the middle of the night. It's that event where these crazy people jump on a tea tray and hurtle headfirst down a mile of ice at 90 mph with no brakes. It reminds me of the legal profession – except the skeleton racers are more in control than we are.

One thing after another is being thrown at us solicitors. Here we are, bobbing and ducking, twisting and turning, heading ever faster down a steep ravine and into the unknown.

We keep being told that the slippery slope is good for us. We keep being told to get out of our starting blocks. Consultation papers on this that and the other rain on our parade.

In case you missed it, the SRA have just finished a consultation on the Assigned Risks Pool. The SRA have got a mind to get rid of it. I had the dubious pleasure of responding to this consultation on your behalf. When it first popped up in my emails, my immediate reaction was, well, maybe, but surely it's the wrong time.

Unprecedented high numbers of sole practitioners went into the ARP on 1 October 2009. The reason for that was the state of the insurance market. It was hard, and that's an understatement. There were sole practitioners whose profile simply didn't fit the bill, and just could not get insurance, even though they were not the kind of bad firm we always think of when we think of the ARP. So, I mused, maybe when the market improved it might be the time to think about it, but not now. And the market was predicted to be even harder this year.

I spoke to a good friend, a pretty forthright and well-known sole practitioner. I have great respect for her views. She didn't mince her words. "Well," she said, "*when I voted in 1999 that we should go onto the open market, my intention was that we should get rid of all these bad firms. I didn't want to go on paying for them. Then they invented the ARP to keep the bad firms going! Yes of course the ARP should be closed.....*" Her words did strike a cord, I must admit, and they probably strike a cord with many of you.

But then I did some research. I talked to people representing BME firms, to other sole practitioners, and to the people who actually know what is really going on in the market place – Prime Professions the SPG's preferred brokers, and Quinn one of the major insurers for sole practitioners. My views started to shift as my eyes were opened. I am now firmly convinced that the ARP should continue but with some radical modifications. To close the ARP would not get rid of the bad firms. Not only that, closure of the ARP would make it much more difficult for

ANY sole practitioner to get indemnity insurance and thus place all of us SP's at grave risk.

Please take a look at the SPG response, approved by the SPG Executive Committee. An extract of the main parts is printed in this Solo. The SPG position is, in a tea tray:

- The ARP should remain open, but be reduced to a one-year term.
- If potential new firms cannot find qualifying insurance, they should not be allowed to enter the ARP.
- The SRA must tighten up their monitoring of all firms in the ARP, and weed out the bad and unsustainable firms in the first month.

The SRA's idea behind this consultation is to abolish the ARP from October this year. It's a frightening timescale. We must keep up the campaign. We must not let the SRA push us down that slippery slope.

Now we know that skeleton sleigh heroine Amy Williams got the gold for Britain, the first individual Winter Olympics gold medal for 30 years, that might give us all hope! I'm very pleased - even though the Aussies came about 22nd and were beaten by the Kiwis...But our Aussie girl Torah won a gold for snowboarding and is Australia's national heroine, which made up for everything.

Oh, before I get carried away, remind me to say a word next time about changes to the successor practice rules, a code of conduct for brokers, targeting your proposal forms to the right market, and getting your applications in early – yes, I know I keep saying it.

Janis Purdy
Chairman Indemnity Committee SPG

Extracts from the SPG response to SRA on the review of the Assigned Risks Pool

Do you agree that the ARP should cease to provide ARP policies, save to firms already covered by the ARP?

NO. It is important to avoid a “knee-jerk” reaction to what was an unprecedented situation at last renewal. The recession created a very hard insurance market for solicitors for reasons we all know about.

There were “good” firms who failed to get qualifying insurance and therefore went into the ARP simply because their profile did not fit insurers’ requirements. Without the existence of the ARP these firms would have had to close.

We think that although the ARP allows bad firms to continue for a bit longer, this is the price for ensuring that good firms are not forced to close virtually overnight.

Closure of the ARP will mean that a large number of firms will be closed down with no proper protection of clients and continuity of care for them. We cannot think that this is in the public interest. The reputation of the profession will suffer.

Closure of the ARP will not mean eradication of bad firms. There will still be a number of bad firms which will continue, even uncertificated and uninsured, and effectively underground. Even a slight change of name will disguise their existence.

It is not the case that all insurers want to see closure of the ARP. The only insurers who want the ARP to be closed down are the insurers of the larger sized firms. Firms most likely to go into the ARP are sole practitioners and small firms; this means that their run-off cover is shared between all of the qualifying insurers. In the absence of an ARP it is of course the insurer who insured the firm in its last year of practice which has to pick up the run-off cover.

There are probably about four main insurers of 1 to 4 partner firms. If this small number of insurers find themselves having to individually pick up the bill for providing run-off cover because the ARP has been abolished, then that cost will have to be absorbed somewhere. Premiums for 1 to 4 partner firms, and particularly for sole practitioners will sky-rocket.

Firms of 1 to 4 partners constitute the majority of firms in England and Wales. The closure of the ARP will affect the way the insurers of that market view them. Either insurers will hang onto bad firms for as long as possible in the hope that some other insurer will take those firms over and ultimately pick up

the burden of run-off cover. Or, insurers will be much more wary of taking on small firms and sole practitioners at all.

The absence of the ARP may well have the effect of driving some insurers of small firms out of the market altogether, so decreasing competition, and making it much more difficult for sole practitioners and small firms to obtain qualifying insurance at any price.

To put it bluntly, if the ARP closes we expect to see complete panic in the market.

Insurers will act as the regulator and effectively close firms down in what we think will be a fairly rough and often arbitrary way.

The ARP is probably not what we would want in an ideal world. But it is a necessary evil. The existence of the ARP allows us to keep the problem firms in the open and provides the opportunity to deal with them. Otherwise the bad firms will go on, and the problems will be swept under the carpet.

Do you agree that new firms should not be eligible to be issued with an ARP policy with effect from 1 October 2010?

YES. It is up to any new firm to produce a business plan which is viable and which will satisfy insurers that the firm is doing appropriate work for the size of the firm and the skill sets of the principles/partners, that there is a sufficient capital base and projected cash flow to ensure that premiums and excesses (in event of claims) can be paid.

Insurers are concerned about small firms and sole practitioners in particular setting up as specialists in works such as aviation law, or international shipping, i.e. work usually done by the city firms. Any claim is going to be huge. It makes little difference that the solicitor or solicitors setting up the firm are breaking away from a big firm and experienced in doing the work. The position is probably even worse if solicitors want to set up on their own simply because they have been made redundant and they feel they have no alternative.

It is not the function of the ARP to act as a launch pad for new firms which would otherwise not even have got off the ground.

Do you agree that the maximum period a firm can be covered by the ARP should be reduced from 24 months to 12 months with effect from 1 October 2010?

YES. A maximum period of 12 months should be sufficient time for any firm to be in the ARP. Two years in the ARP allows firms to drift on, in most cases not paying the premiums, and incurring more claims, and in some cases committing fraud.

The ARP should be operated along the lines of its original intention – either to help reasonable firms rehabilitate themselves so that they can once again find qualifying insurance, or to close down the bad firms as quickly as possible.

The management of firms in the ARP needs to be rigorous. This means that the SRA must ensure that all firms in the ARP are visited and assessed in the first month, if at all possible. Assessments have to be done quickly to be effective. If the SRA does not have the present staff resources to achieve this, then it seems perfectly feasible for the SRA to subcontract to outside assessors of whom there are a number in the marketplace. It is quite possible that insurers would be prepared to put funding towards the cost of visiting and assessing firms in the ARP.

There will be an inevitable rise in the number of interventions as a result of prompt and thorough assessments, with resultant cost of the profession, but this will be worth it in the long run.

Non-payment of premiums is another massive problem in the ARP. Therefore the regulations need to change so that it is a disciplinary offence not to pay the premiums.

For that matter, any non-payment of premium including premiums for qualifying insurance, should be a disciplinary offence.

There is a case for saying that the level of premium in the ARP (27.5% of gross fees for the first £2 million of cover) should be reduced to a rate that is more manageable. It is better to get the premium paid, even if it is less, and none at all.

We understand that there is a problem in identifying those firms who have no insurance and yet continue in practice without having applied to go into the ARP. Apparently this identification can take months. We feel that there must be something the SRA can do to improve this situation. The qualifying insurers have to cover these firms in any event, and again, the longer these firms continue the more it is going to cost us all.

Prime Professions are the SPG's preferred brokers with whom we work very closely on behalf of sole practitioners. Immediately after the last renewal deadline of 30 September 2009, Prime Professions, following discussions with us, set up an initiative to assist deserving sole practitioners who had failed to obtain qualifying insurance by the deadline and had gone into the ARP. The idea was to use the two-month period of grace to get these firms qualifying insurance – albeit at a high premium, but one which was about half of the ARP premium. Following an advertisement placed in the Gazette by the SPG, there were 63 applications to Prime Professions by sole practitioners. Of those, 18 were accepted by qualifying insurers. Those assessments

were done by using fresh and much fuller proposal forms, with a strict requirement for more complete information. The only reason these sole practitioners were helped out of the ARP was because of this specific initiative combined with the permitted period of grace.

What equality and diversity impacts do you believe the proposed changes will have?

Closure of the ARP will clearly have a significant impact on sole practitioners and small firms, many of whom are of ethnic minorities with ethnic minority clients. These firms may find it even harder to obtain qualifying insurance. This must have a knock-on effect on access to justice. Closure of the ARP will unfairly discriminate against sole practitioners and small firms.

Summary

A reduction of the period allowed in the ARP from two years to one year, with rigorous management of firms in the ARP, combined with a rule forbidding potential new start-ups going into the ARP, should begin to bring the problems under control in a way that is fair to the unlucky good firms and sufficiently tough on the bad firms. We think that in the long-term this will bring down costs for the insurers, and hopefully for the profession as a whole.

Obviously this plan needs close monitoring, and needs to be kept under review.

We stress that it is essential that the SRA take steps to improve the enforcement of its regulatory powers. And we hope the SRA will extend its regulatory powers regarding non-payment of premiums. We are conscious of limitations on resources, but it may be possible to have a more streamlined and targeted use of current resources and insurers may well be willing to assist with funding. Bottom line, we do not wish to see insurers having to act as de facto and arbitrary regulators of our profession, which already seems to be the current trend.

Janis Purdy
Chairman Indemnity Committee SPG

Law Society responds to Jackson Review

Following the publication of Lord Justice Jackson's Civil Litigation Cost Review, Law Society President, Robert Heslett, said:

"We are very pleased that Lord Jackson has accepted the Law Society's recommendation that the small claims personal injury limit remains as it is. We regard that as a litmus test of Lord Jackson's commitment to enhancing access to justice through his review. However, his report is a substantial and thorough body of work which demands detailed assessment.

"We are hopeful that the recommendations will provide for fairness between the wronged and the wrong-doer and that the proposition to abolish the recovery of success fees from the wrong-doer does not result in less, rather than more, access to justice.

"The Society hopes that the impact of the changes proposed under the review would remove personal injury work from the claims farm industry which we agree adds no value to the process, only middle man's costs.

"Implementation of these recommendations must be based on fairness of the outcomes and how they serve the public interest and we look forward to working with Lord Justice Jackson's team, and given that much of the implementation work would require statutory change we look forward to working with Parliamentarians to ensure that the voice of the public interest is heard.

"In the coming months, when the review is debated and discussed, we look forward to contributing positively to that debate."

The future of regulation: have your say

Have your say on the SRA's decision to move away from rules based regulation to focus on the principles governing practice and the outcomes for clients. The strategy will give firms more flexibility and it is an important step away from tick-box compliance. We urge practitioners to take part in the process.

This paper explains how the SRA intends to transform the regulation of solicitors and the organisations in which they work, and invites the engagement of consumer groups, the profession, and all those with an interest in legal services in the debate about how we deliver it.

The closing date for this paper is 6th March, more information and the full consultation are available at www.sra.org.uk/consultations/achieving-right-outcomes/

Alternative business structures: help us assess the impact

The Law Society is carrying out research to inform and influence the policy debate around licensing rules for alternative business

structures (ABS). This is to ensure that proper consideration is given to access to justice when licensing ABS in the future. The analysis will involve around 20 telephone interviews with law firms throughout February and March. A small number will be conducted face to face at firms' premises.

The research aims to identify whether some activities are more sustainable than others when ABS firms enter the market, and which activities could more easily be 'commoditised'. Firms' own views of the advantages and disadvantages of ABS will also be taken into account.

We are mainly interested in the current structure of law firms' businesses in order to analyse the market impact of ABS reform. This would include the basic cost structure, the mix of services offered and the relative profitability of providing these different services.

The research will focus on two main types of firm:

- Small high street firms with four or fewer partners, including sole partner practices, that offer a mix of routine and very complex work. Services would include conveyancing or will-writing or both as well as more complex areas such as child custody, contested divorce, immigration or housing.
- Specialist, bulk conveyancing or personal injury firms with high non-solicitor to solicitor staffing ratios, including telephone and internet-based firms, whether or not they intend, themselves, to become ABS firms.

Your input will be invaluable. If your firm fits either of these descriptions and is willing to participate in the research please contact us at enquiriesru@lawsociety.org.uk specifying the category that your firm fits into and your contact details.

ABS Seminars

We are rolling out a series of seminars on ABSs around the country, look out for dates on our website in the near future.

Lenders Update

Work continues on lobbying to get removed members back onto lenders conveyancing panels. Negotiations continue with in particular HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group and Santander. One of the main issues remains the increase in mortgage fraud in small firms and we have issued practice notes and advice on combatting fraud, please take a look at our website for further information. We are also looking again at separate representation and other ways that may be helpful in safeguarding members' conveyancing practices.

Support of SPG conference

Once again we are supporting the SPG conference, helping with its organisation and making sure that the business programme covers important topical issues. The Chief Executive and Vice President of the Law Society will be attending again this year, please do not hesitate to talk with them at the event.

SPG in Action!



Your committee works hard every day to make sure that the concerns of sole practitioners are heard. Here is a look at some of the work of SPG's Practice Sub Committee.

The Practice Sub Committee of the Executive have been concerned with replying to all the consultation papers being issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the Law Society and the Legal Services Board. You may have noticed that, especially on the part of the Solicitors Regulation Authority, there have been very many of these. Where they relate directly or indirectly to the work of practice of a Sole Practitioner I and other members of the Practice Sub-Committee have been responding on behalf of the Group.

Up to the time of going to press the Solicitors Regulation Authority consultation papers that have been answered on behalf of the Group are:-

Consultation Papers answered by SPG

- Assigned Risks Pool Review (answered by Professional Indemnity Insurance Sub-Group)
- Indemnity Insurance Risks Successor practice Definition (ditto)
- Conflict and Confidentiality (2nd consultation)
- Moving towards a fairer fee policy (2nd consultation)
- Handling Complaints against the SRA
- Repeal of the Solicitors (Non-Contentious Business) Remuneration Order 1994
- Schedule of Charges – SRA (Cost of Investigations) Regulations 2009
- Moving towards a fairer fee policy
- An agenda for quality
- Regulating Alternative Business Structures
- Use of enhanced investigatory powers
- Decision making criteria
- Better regulation: a new approach to regulation
- Legal Services firms and solicitors

If you would like to see a copy of any of the responses above please do not hesitate to contact me, my details are available on our website www.spg.uk.com

In addition there are those from the Legal Services Board on which responses have been submitted when the subject matter directly or indirectly concerns Sole Practitioners.

All this has taken up a considerable amount of time and effort on the part of myself and other sub-committee members but

there are other matters that will have to be dealt with. If, for example, the Successor Practice Rule is modified as a result of the Consultation Paper mentioned above then it may well become easier to dispose of one's practice on retirement and the advice given on the SPG website will be altered accordingly.

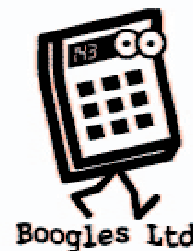
We are also keeping an eye on Practice Management, Conveyancing and Legal Aid issues and any other practice matters that may arise.

If you think that any particular matter should have the attention of the Group Executive please telephone or email any one of the Executive members (see details on the SPG website) and your enquiry will be referred to the one or more of the officers of the Group for attention by either a particular Executive member or members with the relevant specialist knowledge or the Executive Committee itself for decision. The SPG website will also show details of our efforts from time to time.

See you at Conference!

Martin Smith
Chairman – Practice Sub Committee

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LOCAL GROUPS PAGE

Firstly may I remind you all to book a place for the SPG conference which is due to take place on Friday 14th to Sunday 16th May 2010. The evening buffet on Friday 14th May 2010 will be a "Local Groups Night" allowing you to meet/network with other sole practitioners. I would encourage as many of you as possible to attend this event which will kick off at about 6.30pm but is very informal and will continue throughout the evening until about 9pm. Last year the Friday evening buffet had a good turn out and was an excellent opportunity to meet other sole practitioners, exchange ideas, discuss topical issues and generally find out how other sole practitioners are dealing with their practices, the recession etc. If you are thinking of joining or setting up a local group, the Local Groups Night will be a good opportunity to meet up with other sole practitioners in your area, and to speak to other local group representatives about how they run their groups.

SPG is also hoping to start running subsidised CPD seminars for sole practitioners around the country and I will keep you posted on any developments regarding this. They will probably be aimed at practice management issues and will, hopefully, be a cheap and informative way of keeping on top of CPD requirements. If you have any suggestions for suitable topics or suggested venues, then please do let me know.

We currently have a number of local groups in various areas and details of our current Local Group Reps are:

Bristol – Amelia Leung, Leung & Co Solicitors, Albert House, 111 Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6AX
Tel: 0117 9209230 amelia@leung-solicitors.co.uk

East England (Includes Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambs & North Essex) – Nigel George, George & Co Solicitors, Orchard Vale, Borley Green, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9RW
Tel: 01449 737 582 ng@georgeandco.co.uk

Hampshire/Dorset/Wiltshire – Kirsten Woodgate, Woodgate & Co, 95-95 Palmerston Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants, PO5 3PR
Tel: 02392 835790 Kwoodgate@woodgateandco.co.uk

London Central/Essex - Sharan Hassett, Hazelwoods, 1st Floor, Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn, WC1V 7QT
Tel: 0207 203 8460 Sharan@disputeresolvers.com

North East – John Scott, Reed Ryder & Meikle, 19 Northumberland Square, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE30 1QD
Tel: 0191 257 3222 john.scott@unicombox.com

Thames Valley – Chris Stocker, Stocker & Co, 10a Buttermarket, Thame, Oxon, OX9 3EW
Tel: 01844 216995 stocker@solicitors55@freeseve.co.uk

Surrey – Pauline Lawson, Knowles & Co, Wiggle House, Mogador Road, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20 7EW
Tel: 01737 247887 info@knowlesco.co.uk

West Midlands – Mo Afzal, HMA Law Solicitors, 5 Tenby Street, Birmingham, B1 3EI
Tel: 0121 200 1400 mafzal@hma-law.co.uk

Yorkshire – Paul Kaye, Kayes Solicitors, Trinity House, 32 Church Lane, Pudsey, Leeds, LS28 7RF
Tel: 0113 290 0380 paul.kaye@kayesolicitors.co.uk

There are a number of areas where we no longer have Local Group Representatives and are seeking sole practitioners who may be interested in running a group. Funding is available to assist with start up costs and to cover the administrative costs and overheads of running a group. We can also arrange to initially contact all the sole practitioners in your area with details of the first meeting to help get you started. If you are interested in setting up such a group, please do not hesitate to contact me.

May I also urge you to regularly look at the SPG website on www.spg.uk.com, which is an excellent source of information affecting us all, and can be used to communicate with other SPs.

Lastly, there are a number of Local Group meetings due to take place at various venues around the country. Details of these are given below. I do hope as many of you as possible can attend these and, indeed, the SPG Annual Conference in May where I look forward to meeting you.

Mrs Lubna Shuja

Legal Swan Solicitors, 1st Floor, 168 Hamstead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2QR
Tel: 0121 551 7866 Email: info@legalswan.com

Events to pencil into your diary

Group	Event Date	Location
Thames Valley SP Group (formerly Berks Bucks and Oxford) Meeting commences from 6pm with Thai curry to follow at £6 per head	2nd March 2010	The Railway 24 Station Road Wheatley Oxfordshire OX33 1ST
Sussex Solicitors Sole Practitioners' Group (SSSPG) Meeting type: AGM Subject: 10 Ways To Improve Your Practice Speaker: Richard Bisiker Executive Coach Director Personal Summits - Confirmed Lewes station 10 minutes away. Direct lines to Haywards Heath Gatwick London or Brighton Seaford	10th March 2010	The Elephant & Castle Pub, Corner White Hill Road/St John Terrace Lewes BN7 2DJ
Yorkshire Group - AGM meeting Yorkshire Group - AGM meeting is being held on Wednesday 17 March 2010 @ 6.30pm. The venue is Harry's Wine Bar Town Street Wetherby.	17th March 2010	Harry's Wine Bar Town Street Wetherby
West Midlands Group Meeting Safari Bar and Restaurant, 256 Great Lister Street, Birmingham, B7 4DA (off the ring road, nr AB Fletcher's car shop)	22nd March 2010	Birmingham
West Midlands Group Meeting Safari Bar and Restaurant, 256 Great Lister Street, Birmingham, B7 4DA (off the ring road, nr AB Fletcher's car shop)	11th May 2010	Birmingham
Sussex Solicitors Sole Practitioners' Group (SSSPG) Meeting type: General Subject: Prime Professions 2010 Indemnity Ins Renewals Speaker: Richard Brown - Confirmed Lewes station 10 minutes away. Direct lines to Haywards Heath Gatwick London or Brighton Seaford etc...	12th May 2010	The Elephant & Castle Pub, Corner White Hill Road/St John Terrace Lewes BN7 2DJ
2010 Conference The Conference this year will be at the Macdonald Berystede Hotel and Spa in Ascot 14th to 16th May 2010. As well as 8CPD hours, the sessions are very informative, tailor-made for SPs and it's a great opportunity to meet other SPs.	14th-16th May 2010	Macdonald Berystede Hotel and Spa in Ascot
Thames Valley SP Group Thames Valley Group meeting on 1st June 2010 will be at The Railway 24 Station Road Wheatley Oxfordshire OX33 1ST from 6.30pm with speaker to be announced. Please contact Chris Stocker for further information.	1st June 2010	The Railway 24 Station Road Wheatley Oxfordshire OX33 1ST
Sussex Solicitors Sole Practitioners' Group (SSSPG) Meeting type: Social Subject: Bbq Fun! Speaker: At Patrick Newman's Home - Confirmed Lewes station 10 minutes away. Direct lines to Haywards Heath Gatwick London or Brighton Seaford	18th June 2010	The Elephant & Castle Pub, Corner White Hill Road/St John Terrace Lewes BN7 2DJ
Sussex Solicitors Sole Practitioners' Group (SSSPG) Meeting type: General Subject: Insolvency As It Affects Clients & So Our Work For Clients Speaker: Julian Dobson Licensed Insolvency Practitioner & Member - Confirmed	14th July 2010	The Elephant & Castle Pub, Corner White Hill Road/St John Terrace Lewes BN7 2DJ



**Recent Surrey Local
Group meeting**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Richard Brown - 020 7173 2141 **Zarina Malik** - 020 7173 2155 **Helena Burley** - 0207 173 2142

* After qualifying period