

INITIALS	DONE

Small law firms under the cosh again!

Turning Regulation into a Competitive Advantage

The reasons for writing this document are set out here:

<http://bit.ly/sraupdate> and <http://bit.ly/gazetteupdate>

The new regulations regarding price transparency on websites come into effect from December 2018.

It is important to note that compliance with these new rules:

1. Is not as simple as one might expect it to be. In our opinion it is regulatory overkill; BUT
2. The solution need not be as costly as it seems; AND
3. It provides an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage.

Perhaps the biggest threat of the new regulations is not transparency itself, but the intention the SRA has to facilitate price comparison websites that:

- Cheapen all legal services by making price the only distinguishing criteria;
- Allow the comparison website providers to cream the profit off the legal services – with the encouragement of the SRA!

You cannot rely on the Law Society or the Regulators to assist you. **It is up to you to differentiate your own services where the regulations are trying to make you compete on price alone.**

Representing your services and prices in the most favourable light is your responsibility.

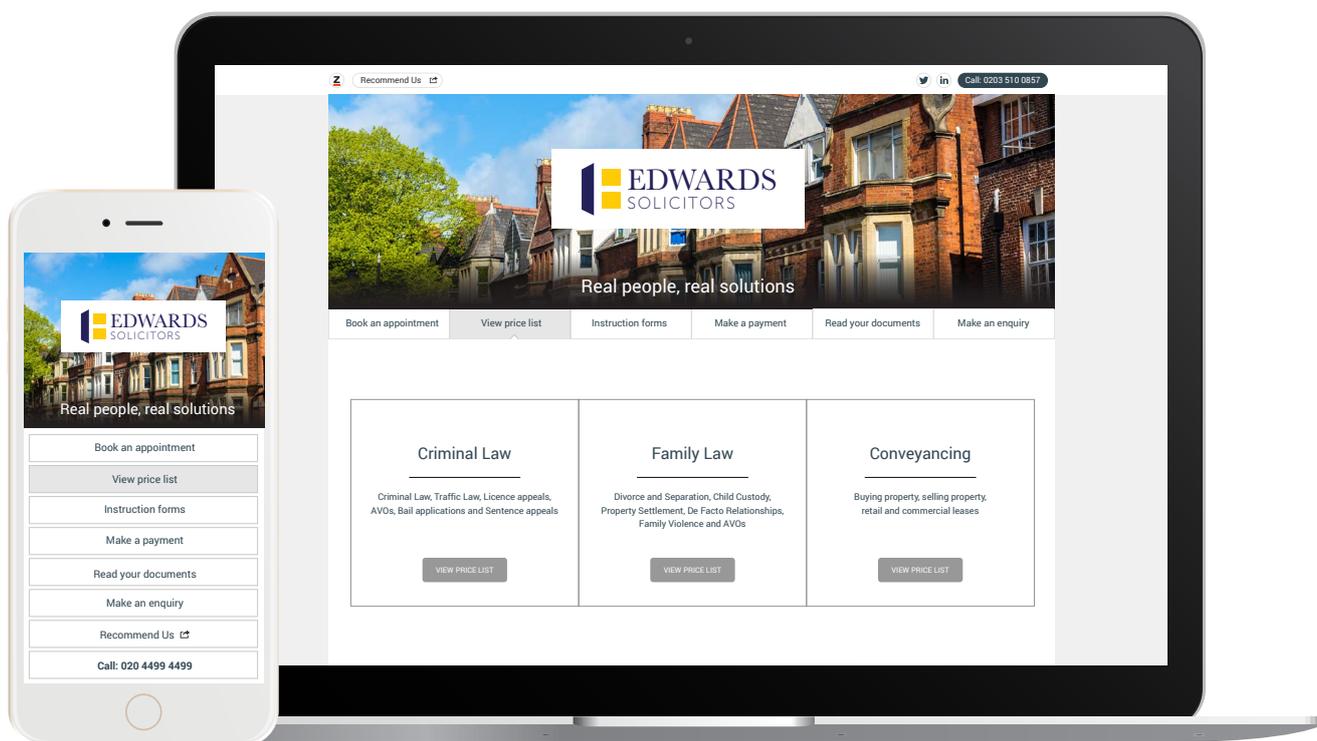
The good news is that you do not need to re-design your whole website, and you can have a flexible ability to update your approach as it matures from initial compliance to compelling persuasion. You can turn this event to your competitive advantage, at a small fraction of the price of any other compliance approach.

Instead of considering minimum compliance, **DO MORE** than the regulations require.

You can achieve everything the regulations call for and a whole lot more using Zaliet, the leading Service Portal. It provides **ONE PLACE** for your clients to engage with your firm.

This is what a Service Portal looks like:

<http://portal.edwardssolicitors.co.uk/>



The Zaliet Service Portal is available stand alone or **as a replacement page for the Contact Us page** on your current website.

It will allow you to:

- Economically comply with the new regulations in a beautiful user-friendly way;
- Provide online booking capabilities that integrate with Outlook and allow you to profile each lawyer and the areas of law practised. You can also capture reviews with ratings;
- Take online payments* directly against the invoice or payment request for both office and client money accounts;
- Allow clients and other parties involved in a matter to securely and safely collaborate on documents without exposing the documents to the risks of email;
- Capture enquiry details online and automatically transfer the details into LEAP once you decide to accept instructions;
- Have clients complete Matter Instruction Forms online and have the information automatically emailed to you.

Give your client a whole new convenient experience.

The New Regulations

- Pricing;
- Services (in some detail);
- Complaints handling.

The regulations cover the following areas of law:

Individuals

- residential conveyancing,
- probate,
- immigration (except asylum),
- road traffic offences, and
- employment tribunal claims (unfair or wrongful dismissal)

Businesses

- employment tribunal claims (unfair or wrongful dismissal),
- debt recovery (up to £100,000), and
- licensing applications for business premises.

As a progressive firm you will probably want to provide pricing in all the areas of law you practice, not just the prescribed areas so that you can extend your competitive advantage across the whole firm. A potential client would probably be put off if you only provided pricing details in some areas, and that the area, for example a family law matter which is where she or he is looking for help, has no details.

Another complication, particularly if you run a solo or small firm, is very often you get clients walking in with problems that you have never before encountered. You need to make sure that your price transparency covers this as well.

The SRA study found that **firms that explained pricing transparently and clearly** were chosen by consumers **65% of the time.**

Price Considerations

You are at liberty to disclose price in the way you choose. There is no prescription and you will want to represent price in a way to attract clients, not chase them away. The overall proviso is that you are fully transparent and accurate in your representations. You need to include the fees you charge, applicable disbursements as well as VAT.

Importantly, you are also required to disclose clearly:

- what services are included in the price,
- the key stages in the matter; and
- likely timescales.

None of this is easy to do. Creating it in a way that is easy for a potential client to understand will be critical.

Our Website SRA Compliance Price Transparency Project Questionnaire, which is attached, will help you with this planning and the simplified design process of Zaliet will enable you to maintain and improve your price list as it changes over time without great expense.

You are Professionals

In addition to price and process, you also need to disclose the experience and qualifications of your professionals carrying out the work, and of their supervisors.

Fortunately, our Booking Engine is designed to profile users and their specialities and abilities. All you will need to do is to complete the information in order to comply.

Complaints

Regarding complaints, firms will have to publish regulatory and complaint-related information on their websites. The regulations also require a link to the SRA complaints site!

The Threat to the Profession and Your Firm

The SRA also plans to create a directory of lawyers, law firms and their costs and to then ENCOURAGE cost comparison website providers to use this information.

This is an incredible threat to the profession and your firm because:

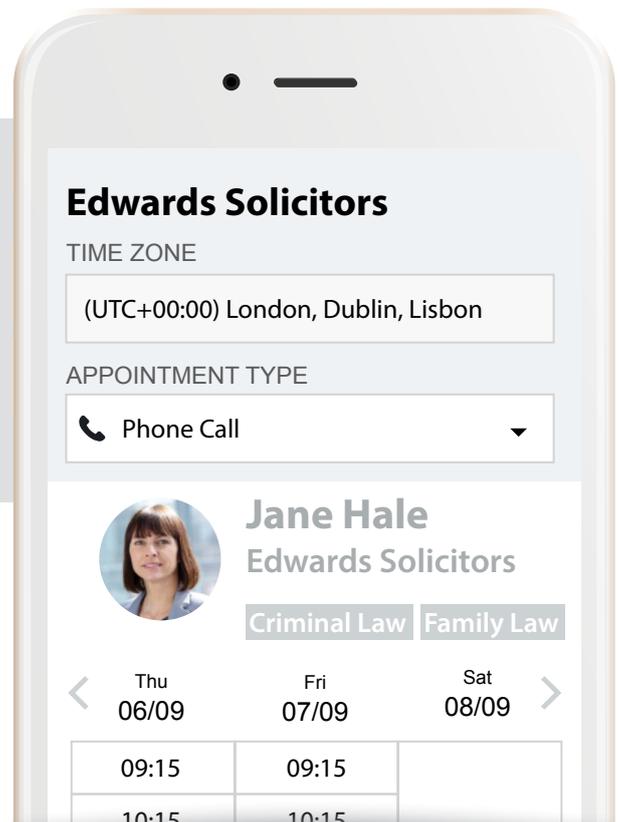
1. It encourages price as the only valid criteria for selection of a law firm. This cheapens everyone and likens the act of lawyering to selling soap; AND
2. More importantly, it will shift revenue away from the profession and into the hands of Cost Comparison website providers probably operated and owned by Private Equity companies. All lawyers should be outraged by this.

To quote the SRA report 'more clients will find solicitors through price comparison websites, which will probably become a frequent and principal tool.'

The Law Society will not come to the aid. The only way of dealing with the threat is to compete.

You have to take responsibility and work out how to convey value to current and prospective clients.

We can and want to help you in a cost effective way to comply, build your business and protect your revenue.



Getting Started

To help you get started, you will find a Questionnaire that will hopefully help you to gather your thoughts on how you plan on responding to this requirement.

The Questionnaire is intent is to provide a checklist for the information gathering and content development needed to comply with the rules.

You will want to do a lot of additional work to the finished product to make it easy for your clients and potential clients to understand.

You might also remember that it need not be perfect first time. You want to make a start on version 1, and you can then improve it as you get to understand how to best comply and communicate.

The Zaliet Service Portal integrates with LEAP providing your clients with greater convenience in their interactions with you and providing your firm with a solution that combines compliance with competitive advantage.

For more information visit www.zaliet.com or email support@zaliet.com.

Our Price List Project Manager is _____

Our Price List

Mandatory Areas of Law	We do work in this area	Person Responsible	Person responsible for drafting the price document for this area of law	Due Date
Residential Conveyancing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Probate	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Immigration (except asylum)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Road Traffic Offences	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Employment Tribunal Claims (unfair or wrongful dismissal for employees)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Employment Tribunal Claims (unfair or wrongful dismissal for employers)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Licensing Applications for Business Premises	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Areas of Law where we should provide price guidance for competitive or completeness reasons				
Divorce	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Custody Dispute	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
High Street Business Lease	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Shareholder Agreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Family and Business Trusts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

