Solicitors Regulation Authority

The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RN

UK: 0370 606 2555
Int: + 44 (0)121 820 2250
DX: 72[redacted] BIRMINGHAM[redacted]

sra.org.uk

Our ref: RGC-[redacted]

Private & Confidential
To be opened by addressee only

Mr Christopher Bury
By email to: c[redacted]

5 September 2025

Dear Mr Bury,

Your complaint about our service

I write further to my email dated 26 August 2025, to provide my response to your service complaint.

As a Complaints Officer at the SRA, my role is to review complaints we receive regarding our service. My role therefore differs to that of an Investigation Officer as it not my role to investigate the reports made to us.

In May this year, you reported concerns to us about Mr Sean O'Connor and Ms Claire Porter who are employed at Herefordshire County Council. In brief, your concerns were that both individuals had breached the SRA Principles and Code of Conduct. Your concerns included misrepresentation of data rights, obstruction of subject access and failure to act on legal obligations relating to surveillance and data protection. You believe this undermined your ability to seek redress before the Investigatory Powers Tribunal.

Investigation Officer, Mr Mohammed Rayhan, assessed and responded to your report on 31 July 2025 and I am sorry to read that you are unhappy with the response.

I will not be duplicating Mr Rayhan's assessment of your report; I will be considering whether the assessment conducted by Mr Rayhan was reasonable.

Please note that there is no appeal process against the Investigation Officer's decision. However, if I identify any significant failings with our assessment, I can refer the matter back for further consideration.

Having reviewed the file, I am satisfied that the outcome reached by Mr Rayhan was reasonable.

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

Solicitors Regulation Authority Limited is a company limited by guarantee.
Our registered offices are: The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham, B1 1RN.
Our company registration number is: 12608059.

Your service complaint

In your email dated 19 August 2025, you consider there to be material flaws in our decision-making process. These include:

- Failure to apply the Assessment Threshold Test properly without undertaking reasonable enquiries where key evidence was known to exist and could be obtained.
- Misapplication of Rule 1.1 RDPRs to avoid review.

You requested a Stage 1 investigation in accordance with our Complaints Policy and confirmation of whether we will exercise Rule 3.2 powers to review the decision given the procedural defects raised.

You state that your complaint is separate from any Subject Access Request you may make under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Our response to your service complaint

In considering your complaint, I have reviewed all the information on our file and note the circumstances which prompted you to make your report to us.

When we receive reports from the public about the conduct of solicitors, we use our Assessment Threshold Test (ATT), to determine whether we need to investigate further. Our assessment process aims to identify when a solicitor's actions pose a risk to the wider public.

Our ATT considers whether there has been a potential breach of our rules and standards, the seriousness of the breach, and if it is capable of proof. We will only investigate further if each of these criteria are met.

As part of his assessment, Mr Rayhan considered the issues you raised above, and all the information provided to him. Please note that it is for the Investigation Officer to decide whether additional information is required, and, in your matter, Mr Rayhan did not consider it necessary.

It is the role of Mr Rayhan to consider the circumstances described against our criteria. In his view, the concerns that you had raised did not breach our regulations and a further investigation was not required.

I hope you can appreciate that, having provided us with the information, it is for us to determine whether the concerns we have assessed require us to take regulatory action against the firm or individuals reported to us.

The organisation that deals with concerns relating to data breaches or subject access requests is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and you may wish to raise

your concerns directly with them. If the ICO were critical of the conduct of the individual's concerned, you could refer the matter back to us at that time.

Whilst we can assess any concerns that we may have regarding a Solicitor's conduct independently, on this occasion, we are satisfied that there has not been a breach of our regulatory rules, and no further action is required.

It is regrettable that you are not satisfied with our decision, but I cannot see that we have failed in our service to you. The decision as to whether to take regulatory action remains ours to make.

I am satisfied that Mr Rayhan followed the process and procedures that are required during the assessment process, and I will not be referring the matter back for further consideration.

I hope the explanation provided in this letter will help you understand why we are taking no further action.

If you remain unhappy, you can write to our Corporate Complaints team at the postal or email address below, asking for an escalation of your service complaint to stage two of our complaint policy.

Please note that writing to our Corporate Complaints Team will not change Mr Rayhan's decision to take no further action. It will be limited to a review of the service you have received from us and will not lead to a reassessment of your report about the firm.

Thank you for taking the time to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss Sanjit Salh
Complaints Officer
Investigation and Supervision
Solicitors Regulation Authority
www.sra.org.uk

Email: complaintsteam@sra.org.uk
Corporate Complaints Team
Solicitors Regulation Authority
199 Wharfside Street
The Cube
Birmingham
B1 1RN

If you require this letter in an alternative format, please do not hesitate to contact me.