

Solicitors  
Regulation  
Authority

**From the Chief Executive**

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10 June 2013

Dear Chris

**ABS Authorisation**

Thank you for your letter of 24 May. I set out below our response to your comments.

**Timetable for changes**

With regard to the changes highlighted at a) – h) of your letter, the timetable is as follows:

| Item  | Comment  | Deadline                    |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| a) The scrapping of the 2-stage application process.  | Applicants are now enabled to request an ABS pack via the website. Once the new application form is online this facility will be removed and all applicants will simply apply using the form on the website. | Interim solution completed. |
| b) A new time-limited approach to screening all applicants to ensure eligibility (triggering an invoice at the beginning of the statutory decision period). | This has been implemented. We are currently working on reducing the time period for the initial assessment; the target is for 90% of applications to be assessed within 28 days.                             | Completed.                  |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| c) Full application form available on SRA website.   | This will be loaded on to the website in w/c 3 June.  | W/c 03.06.2013.   |
| d) A rewrite of the relevant website pages   | We have a rolling programme of work for the website. Some new material has already been loaded onto the new FBA pages.  | 31.10.13  |
| e) SMT "owners" of complex applications from the start of an application to ensure immediate identification of major regulatory risk issues. | This is already in place. The initial assessment process identifies major regulatory risks and a member of SMT is allocated to each complex case and the risk assessment discussed with them at the outset. | Completed.  |
| f) Implementation and reporting of KPIs to the Board and publication.  | The new KPIs were discussed at the April Board meeting and reporting will commence at the June Board.   | Implementation completed. Publication to commence in Q3 |
| g) A survey of applicants at point of decision on an application, beginning in Q3.   | This is in the process of being developed.  | 30.09.13  |
| h) A conference and webinar for applicants and potential applications on 4 June.   |   | Conference – 04.06.13<br>Webinar – 18.06.13             |
| i) Internal "How to authorise" guidance for staff  | This is being finalised. Staff already have access to this guidance but it is now being collated.   | W/c 10.06.13  |

With regard to the handling of additional applications from current licence holders, this very much depends on the nature of the application, since it could be anyone one of:

- approval of a new COLP/COFA/owner/manager;
- an application for a new licensed body, in which the licensed body will participate as an owner (for example, via a joint venture);

- an application for temporary emergency approval as a recognised body if the body ceases to be licensable.
- applications for waivers/waiver extensions;
- applications to amend/remove licence conditions.

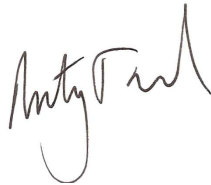
All of these applications are dealt with in Authorisation, but not necessarily in the Firm Based Authorisation team. Our handling is dependent on the nature of the application and the perceived degree of risk. Our aim is to achieve consistency and continuity for the applicant and the introduction of the risk assessment and the allocation of owners should ensure this happens.

[Redacted]

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[FOIA s44 and s167 LSA 2007]

Yours sincerely



Antony Townsend  
Chief Executive  
SRA