

About our advocacy resources

31 August 2022

Resources to improve or update your advocacy skills

Criminal and civil advocacy are high risk areas of practice. If you provide poor standards of advocacy then there is a significant risk to your clients, other individuals, the public interest and the administration of justice.

There are challenges in these areas of practice even for advocates with a lot of experience, which include:

- Preparing an effective case theory.
- Applying advocacy skills effectively in different courts, including the higher courts.
- Practising advocacy effectively in video and telephone hearings ('remote advocacy').
- Mastering complex matters of law, procedure, cases or evidence, for example, when dealing with sexual offences.
- Keeping up to date with developments in your area of law, which can be fast paced.
- Adapting to and meeting the needs of vulnerable people.
- Professional isolation - if you practise advocacy as a sole practitioner or as the only advocate in a firm.

These resources can help you:

- Meet your [Code of Conduct](https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/). [https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-solicitors/]. For example, keeping your professional knowledge and skills up to date and in relation to proceedings before courts, tribunals and inquiries.
- Meet the relevant requirements of our [Competence Statement](https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/cpd/competence-statement/) [https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/cpd/competence-statement/], including the requirement to undertake effective spoken and written advocacy.
- Reflect on the quality of your advocacy and address the learning and development needs you identify in line with our approach to [continuing competence](https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/continuing-competence-toolkit/) [https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/continuing-competence-toolkit/].

These resources also help advocacy firms support the learning and development of their advocates. Our [Code of Conduct for Firms](https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/) [https://news.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/code-conduct-firms/] requires firms to make sure that their solicitors are competent and keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date.

How we developed these resources

A wide range of stakeholders helped us develop these resources, including solicitors who practise advocacy and representatives from:

- the barrister profession
- the judiciary
- the Crown Prosecution Service
- the Solicitors' Association of Higher Court Advocates
- the Advocate's Gateway
- a number of consumer and special interest groups.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to add to these resources over time.

How to use these resources

You can use these resources as a reference point alongside other forms of support to help make sure you are a competent and effective advocate. For example:

- Refresh or update your knowledge of the correct terms of address to use in court.
- Provide a particular type of advocacy, such as cross examination.
- Adapt your skills to practising advocacy in the higher courts.
- Deal effectively with a specific challenge or issue, such as building trust with your client or engaging effectively with a vulnerable witness.
- Identify your learning and development needs, and effective ways to address them.

Even if you are an experienced advocate you may still find these resources useful and we expect all solicitors to:

- reflect on the quality of their practice
- address the learning and development needs they identify
- maintain their competence to practise
- keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date.

All advocates, including those who are experienced, may need to:

- Improve their ability to engage effectively with vulnerable people, especially if they haven't done so before or in relation to a specific form of vulnerability.
- Learn how to practise advocacy effectively in a remote hearing, especially if they are new to remote advocacy.
- Be aware of the different requirements of effective advocacy in different courts, tribunals and inquiries.
- Adapt to practising advocacy effectively in the higher courts if their experience is in the lower courts.

