

## SRA statement

### WW&J McClure and Jones Whyte

Updated 13 August 2025

We are continuing to deal with outstanding issues related to work and clients of the former firm WW&J McClure Ltd (McClure's) which entered administration in 2021.

McClure's had offices in Scotland, England and Wales, serving a significant number of clients in work such as family protection trusts (FPTs), wills, deeds and powers of attorney. Because it had offices in Scotland, England and Wales, it was regulated by both us and the Law Society of Scotland.

The information on this page focuses on the position relating to former clients of McClure's who were dealing with one of the firm's **English or Welsh** offices. Former clients of any of McClure's **Scottish offices** should refer to the [Law Society of Scotland's website](https://www.lawscot.org.uk/news-and-events/law-society-news/mcclures-jones-whyte-faqs/) (<https://www.lawscot.org.uk/news-and-events/law-society-news/mcclures-jones-whyte-faqs/>) for further information.

The work in progress and certain assets of McClure's were transferred to Jones Whyte by the administrators in 2021 when McClure's went into administration. Clients could choose – and can still choose – to take their file back and not have Jones Whyte act for them. However, most of McClure's clients have had their files transferred to Jones Whyte.

Jones Whyte is regulated by us for its work in England and Wales, and by the Law Society of Scotland for its work in Scotland.

Making sure former clients of McClure's get the quality of service we expect from a firm that we regulate is a priority. We are still concerned that it is taking too long to deal with all the issues arising from McClure's, and that too many former clients are experiencing stress and frustration arising from delay and uncertainty.

Concerns have also been raised by former clients of McClure's, the families of former clients, elected representatives and consumer groups. We have investigated these concerns. We worked in partnership with other agencies across England, Wales, and Scotland, including the Legal Ombudsman covering England and Wales, the Law Society of Scotland and the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission.

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[Concerns with Jones Whyte](#)



Jones Whyte, based in Glasgow, took on the work in progress and certain assets of McClure's in April 2021 when the latter went into administration. We are aware that the handover process has not been carried out to the standards we and clients would normally expect. Some former clients of McClure's still need to be contacted and for us, response times have been slow in too many cases.

Jones Whyte provided a formal written compliance plan, which included commitments to carry out specific tasks to tackle the issues arising out of the handover. The compliance plan includes time-specific deadlines and close monitoring of progress.

Specifically the compliance plan included an obligation to complete a review of the family protection trust (FPT) files no later than 31 December 2024. This was to determine in respect of each file whether client contact was required. Where contact with the client was required, Jones Whyte committed to contact these clients by 30 June 2025. It has told us that this was achieved by 30 May 2025, a month ahead of the target date.

The plan also required Jones Whyte to return any residual client balances it held for former England and Wales clients by 30 April 2025. Jones Whyte has confirmed it has done this but there have been some instances where it has not been possible to trace the original client, the cheque was issued to a solicitor who is no longer instructed, or the original payee had passed away. In these instances, Jones Whyte is re-issuing the cheque to a suitable person.

We are taking steps to independently verify both of these obligations have been met and our forensic investigation team were onsite last month (July 2025).

Further compliance plan commitments have been provided by Jones Whyte which build on the steps taken in the initial plan. They make sure Jones Whyte has the governance and systems in place to mitigate risks and make sure clients' interests are protected in respect of client files with wills.

It includes requirements to take all reasonable steps to contact other former McClure's clients - specifically testators of wills - to inform them of the availability of their will and return it within four weeks of any request, without charge. We specifically agreed this commitment to return wills free of charge following concerns raised by clients and victims' groups with us.

In addition, there are obligations on Jones Whyte to report to us for certain tasks. Jones Whyte has committed to meet its obligations under the plan and we are currently working with the firm to make sure it does so in acceptable timescales and in a way that provides the level of assurance needed. We retain close oversight and, as with the initial



compliance plan, we will undertake our own reviews to satisfy ourselves the commitments have been met.

The current time frame for completion of this work is August 2027, although there is a key milestone within this of October 2025 which represents a commitment to cleanse and validate data currently held. We appreciate that this reflects a long period for completion, but it does also reflect the scale of the task where there are around 60,000 Wills, which means the firm needs to be contacting an average of around 550 clients each week. The deadline of August 2027 is a long-stop deadline, and we will use all reasonable efforts, through active discussion with Jones Whyte, to make sure the work is completed earlier where possible.

The compliance plan does not restrict us from taking any further regulatory action that may prove necessary. It does however provide Jones Whyte the opportunity to address concerns and protect clients' interests with a view to minimising additional disruption to their existing clients.

We consider that the compliance plan described above is in clients' best interests at this time. However, we continue to keep the position under close and careful review and will take any further action where necessary.

We have been working with the firm in other ways - for example we have reviewed a sample of the firm's communications with clients to make sure they are clear and helpful, and made suggestions for improvement.

## **Investigation into Jones Whyte**

We previously explained we were investigating potential breaches of our Account Rules by Jones Whyte in relation to the transfer of client files and money from McClure in April 2021.

We identified that, in relation to England and Wales matters only, the firm had failed to maintain compliant books of account, carry out compliant account reconciliations, obtain and submit annual accountants reports to us and hold client accounts in England and Wales.

While compliance with our Accounts Rules is important to make sure client money is protected, considerable efforts had been made by the firm to try to put matters in order since taking on McClure's clients. In deciding on an appropriate sanction, we took into account that the firm had taken remedial action and there was a low risk of repetition. Also, there did not appear to have been lasting significant harm to consumers or third parties caused by breaches of our Accounts Rules.

We have worked with the firm to address the Account Rules issues through the compliance plan and continued engagement. We have also issued Jones Whyte with a rebuke and ordered it to pay costs of £1,350.



This [decision has been published on our website and recorded against the firm \[https://update.sra.org.uk/consumers/solicitor-check/8001477/\]](https://update.sra.org.uk/consumers/solicitor-check/8001477/).

## **Engagement with stakeholder groups**

As well as working with the relevant official bodies, we continue to meet with various stakeholder groups, including those representing former clients of McClure's. This helps us understand any other emerging issues from the transfer of work.

We have met with representations from the Victims of McClures Solicitors group, Victims of McClures Gateway 2 Justice Campaign Group, TLOS, and Consumer Scotland. This engagement continues.

## **Upfront fees for ongoing work**

Some clients paid McClure's an upfront fee to cover ongoing work. McClure's entering administration meant it was no longer able to deliver that ongoing work.

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent body that has a different remit to us – it deals with service complaints about law firms, and it can direct firms to put things right.

The Legal Ombudsman has started looking into cases involving Jones Whyte dealing with ongoing matters following McClure's entering administration. This includes concerns around poor service and charges for work.

If you are a former client of McClure's and you are not happy with the level of service you are receiving from Jones Whyte, you should complain to Jones Whyte first. If you are still not happy, you should complain to the Legal Ombudsman.

You are not obliged to instruct Jones Whyte to take on your work – you can request the return of your file and can look for a different legal advisor or firm.

We provide further details below about complaining to the Legal Ombudsman under 'Poor standard of service'.

## **Obtaining your file**

As a client or representative of a client you can contact Jones Whyte directly in writing asking for your file to be returned to you.

## **Conduct complaint**



Our role is to uphold standards and protect the public using, where appropriate, a range of powers. If you feel that Jones Whyte, in dealing with your matter, has breached our [Standards and Regulations](https://update.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/) [\[https://update.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/\]](https://update.sra.org.uk/solicitors/standards-regulations/) in any way, you can make a complaint to us through this form.

#### [Reporting a solicitor complaint form](https://update.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/)

[\[https://update.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/\]](https://update.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/report-solicitor/)

In Scotland, you can make a complaint to the [Scottish Legal Complaints Commission](https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/) [\[https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/\]](https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/). Any eligible conduct complaints will be passed to the Law Society of Scotland for investigation.

### **Concerns with McClure**

We have investigated and gathered evidence on a range of issues involving McClure's. We examined its work on family protection trusts (FPTs), including potential mis-selling and the quality of advice given to clients.

Whenever we find evidence of misconduct, we look at what action is needed, if any, to protect the public by seeking to restrict or stop solicitors from practising.

However, the former directors of WW&J McClure's who were England and Wales solicitors at the time, are no longer on our Roll and we are therefore unable to take any enforcement action against them. We therefore decided the evidence would lie on file, and if the former directors applied to rejoin the profession, we would then decide if any action was needed.

However, we have had additional reports of potential misconduct. We are considering these to decide if any further action is needed.

If there is evidence that other individuals who worked at McClure's - whom we still regulate - were involved in potential misconduct, we will investigate and take action where necessary to protect the public.

### **Help for clients seeking redress**

We know that some former clients of McClure's believe they have a claim for financial redress because they are unhappy with the services they have received.

While there is an SRA Compensation Fund, it deals with money that goes missing or is lost due to dishonesty. It does not cover redress linked to potential service issues or negligence.



We have set out here the potential avenues for redress in cases linked to poor service or negligence.

## Poor standard of service

If you dealt with a McClure's office in England or Wales and feel you have received a poor standard of service from McClure's, Jones Whyte or any other law firm, you should make [a complaint to the Legal Ombudsman](https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/dUV9CM8xPtqnkG1twfzS8mTi2?domain=legalombudsman.org.uk/) [https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/dUV9CM8xPtqnkG1twfzS8mTi2?domain=legalombudsman.org.uk/]. The Legal Ombudsman's service is free, you do not need any legal representation to make a report, and it can support you to make your complaint. It will assess each case on its individual merits and can direct law firms to make remedies such as refunds or compensation.

Complainants should note that the Legal Ombudsman will consider whether there has been 'inadequate professional service' or 'poor service', which is a lower bar than negligence.

Those who dealt with an office in Scotland should make [a complaint to the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission](https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/) [https://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk/].

## Negligence

Alternatively, if you consider that McClure's has been negligent, clients or their representatives can make a claim against the firm's indemnity insurance, which was provided by the [Law Society of Scotland's Master Policy](https://www.lawscot.org.uk/for-the-public/client-protection/how-solicitors-are-insured/) [https://www.lawscot.org.uk/for-the-public/client-protection/how-solicitors-are-insured/].

Clients should make a claim directly to Lockton, the brokers responsible for providing professional indemnity cover under The Law Society of Scotland Master Policy. Lockton can be contacted via 0131 345 5599 or [masterpolicyteam@uk.lockton.com](mailto:masterpolicyteam@uk.lockton.com) [mailto:masterpolicyteam@uk.lockton.com].

If you believe that Jones Whyte has been negligent, then you must direct your claim to Jones Whyte in the first instance, and not to Lockton.