

# FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT (UKFIU)

## Introduction to Suspicious Activity Reports (SARS)

This is a United Kingdom Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) communications product, produced in line with the Serious Organised Crime Agency's (SOCA's) commitment to share perspectives on the Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) regime.



SOCA is a Home Office Non-Departmental Governmental Body

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## Introduction to Suspicious Activity Reports (SARS)

### What is a SAR?

A SAR is a Suspicious Activity Report, a piece of information which alerts law enforcement that certain client/customer activity is in some way suspicious and might indicate money laundering or terrorist financing.

### Why do I have to submit a SAR?

Submitting a SAR provides law enforcement with valuable information on potential criminality as well as protecting you, your organisation and UK financial institutions from the risk of laundering the proceeds of crime.

By submitting a SAR to SOCA you will be complying with any potential obligations you have under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

### When do I submit a SAR?

As soon as you **'know'** or **'suspect'** that a person is engaged in money laundering or dealing in criminal property, you must submit a SAR.

### Do I have to submit a SAR if I am not in the regulated sector?

Even if you are not in the regulated sector, you may have an obligation to submit a SAR. You may commit an offence if you have **'knowledge'** or **'suspicion'** of money laundering activity or criminal property, do something to assist another in dealing with it, and fail to make a SAR. Submitting a SAR provides a defence against committing a money laundering offence.

**Is the information contained in the SAR I submit held securely?**

All users of SARs adhere to specific guidelines to protect the confidentiality of SARs. Once a SAR is received by SOCA it is held on a secure database with strictly limited access to appropriate law enforcement and government agency staff. **THE INFORMATION IS ALWAYS HELD IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.** If, in the unlikely event, you are made aware that any confidentiality may have been breached, you should contact SOCA on Freephone 0800 234 6657 immediately.

**May I inform a client/customer that I have made a report?**

You must not say anything to your client/customer which leads to an investigation being prejudiced. If that provides you with particular difficulties you can seek guidance from SOCA. In certain cases a form of words can be agreed that may overcome problems.

**What is consent in relation to SARs?**

Persons and businesses generally, and not just those in the regulated sectors, may avail themselves of a defence against money laundering charges by seeking, via a SAR, the consent of the SOCA UKFIU to conduct a transaction or undertake other activity about which they have concerns. The legislation gives SOCA seven working days to respond. Where SOCA refuses consent, the transaction or activity must not proceed for a further 31 calendar days or, if earlier, until further notified by SOCA.

Further information is available at [www.soca.gov.uk](http://www.soca.gov.uk) or SOCA Consent desk on 020 7238 8282 option 4.

### Who do I send SARs to?

To: The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

How: Through the SAR Online System.

SOCA's electronic SAR Online system will allow your business to submit SARs in a secure and efficient manner and to receive a prompt acknowledgement. The SAR Online system is accessible through a link on the SOCA website ([www.soca.gov.uk](http://www.soca.gov.uk)) or directly at <https://www.ukciu.gov.uk/saronline.aspx>

### How do I register with SAR Online?

You will require a unique email address in order to register for this service, and you can register by internet at the above address. You will be supplied with a password by email, and when your account has been activated, you will be able to login, complete and submit SARs.

### Enquiries and Support

Further help or guidance is available at [www.soca.gov.uk](http://www.soca.gov.uk). SOCA's dedicated support team provides a helpdesk facility to address problems encountered with any aspect of SAR Online. The support team is available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). Please telephone 020 7238 8282 and select option '3' from the menu.

Further details on the UK's legislation and money laundering regulations are available from your regulator or the websites of Her Majesty's Treasury or the Home Office. Hard copy SARs can still be faxed to SOCA's UK Financial Intelligence Unit on 020 7238 8286 or posted to: UKFIU, PO Box 8000, London SE11 5EN. Please Note: No acknowledgement will be sent out by SOCA for SARs submitted in hard copy.

**We need your help**

UKFIU Bulletins are the way in which SOCA provides information regarding SARs to the regulated sector. In order to assist the UKFIU in improving this service we welcome any comments, especially with regard to the following questions:

- Was this document useful to you or not, and why?
- As a result of reading this document are you more likely to submit a SAR in the future?
- If you are not currently registered with SAR Online, are you now likely to register within the next two months?

Please email the UKFIU Dialogue Team at [ukfiusars@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ukfiusars@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk) quoting the code “**FF327FF**”. This code can also be quoted in any SARs that are subsequently submitted to SOCA as a result of reading this document.

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## UKFIU Dialogue and Special Projects Team

The aim of the Dialogue and Special Projects Team is to drive the UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU) agenda on interfacing with stakeholders on Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) activity. The team strives to improve communication and understanding between the SARs Regime participants, to increase the value extracted from the SARs Regime, to provide, facilitate and contribute to various forums to share perspectives on the operation of the Regime as a whole. In essence the Dialogue Team seeks to improve the quality of SARs intelligence, and promote the value and greater use of this intelligence in mainstream law enforcement activity.

For further information, please contact SOCA UKFIU Dialogue and Special Projects Team by email at [ukfiusars@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ukfiusars@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk). For more information about the Serious Organised Crime Agency go to [www.soca.gov.uk](http://www.soca.gov.uk).

## Reducing harm – Providing information back to SOCA

We would like to remind you of the provisions contained in Section 34 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005. These provisions say that any information provided by you to SOCA, in order to assist SOCA to discharge its functions which include the prevention and detection of crime, will not breach any obligation of confidence which you may owe to any third party or any other restriction on the disclosure of information.

S34 requires that disclosures of personal information about living individuals by you to SOCA must still comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), but you may be satisfied that disclosure by you of such personal information to SOCA in order to assist SOCA to prevent and detect crime is permitted by the DPA. Please, therefore, submit all S34 information to [ukfiusars@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ukfiusars@soca.x.gsi.gov.uk).