

THINKWILD

Practice 02 · Governance & Compliance

AI Readiness Review

Service Definition

Duration

**Half-day discovery +
report within 5 working
days**

Delivery

Remote or on-site

Entry point

**Tier 1 · Practice 02 —
Governance &
Compliance**

Overview

The AI Readiness Review is a structured, fixed-scope assessment of how a law firm is currently positioned in relation to artificial intelligence — what tools are in use, what the risks are, and what the firm needs to do to adopt AI safely and in line with its regulatory obligations.

It is not a technical audit. It is a practical advisory review, conducted with the COLP, managing partner, or practice manager, that produces a clear written output: a readiness scorecard, a risk summary, and a prioritised next-steps report.

The review draws on the SRA's AI guidance and thematic review findings, the ICO's framework for AI in professional services, and Thinkwild's direct experience of how law firms are actually using AI tools — including the gaps between what firms think is happening and what fee earners are doing in practice.

Why now

The SRA's December 2025 thematic review found that COLPs at 25 of 36 sampled firms could not describe half of their regulatory obligations. A separate finding confirmed that AI tool use is widespread in legal practice, but governance and oversight are absent in the majority of firms reviewed. The review exists in a regulatory environment where the question is no longer whether firms should have AI governance — it is whether they can demonstrate it if asked.

Who this service is for

The AI Readiness Review is designed for law firms at any stage of AI adoption — from those where fee earners are already using tools without formal policy, to those planning a structured AI programme and wanting to start from a defensible baseline.

Role / situation	Typical context	Primary concern
COLP	Responsible for compliance obligations; aware of SRA AI guidance but hasn't acted on it	Regulatory exposure and personal accountability
Managing partner	Knows AI tools are in use; unsure which ones or what data is being shared	Risk to client confidentiality and firm reputation
Practice manager	Fielding questions from staff about approved AI tools; no policy to point to	Operational inconsistency and staff confusion
Technology lead / IT	Evaluating AI tools for firm-wide adoption; needs governance in place before rollout	Implementation without adequate controls
Partners generally	Aware of AI as a competitive issue; want to act but unsure where to start	Falling behind without a clear, proportionate plan

What the review covers

The review is structured around five areas. Each is assessed, scored, and reported on. The output is a single written document — not a slide deck.

Area	What we assess
Current AI tool usage	Which tools are in use, by whom, and whether they have been formally approved. Includes tools used outside official firm systems (personal accounts, free-tier tools, browser extensions).
Data governance and confidentiality	Whether client and matter data is being shared with AI systems, and whether the firm has assessed the data handling practices of those systems against its confidentiality obligations.
Policy and accountability	Whether the firm has an AI policy, whether it is fit for purpose, and whether responsibility for AI governance is clearly assigned to a named individual.
Regulatory exposure	Assessment of the firm's position against current SRA AI guidance, the ICO's framework, and GDPR obligations.

	Identifies specific areas of exposure that would be flagged in an SRA inspection.
Staff awareness and capability	Whether fee earners and support staff understand the firm's position on AI, what they can and cannot use, and what to do if they encounter a problem.

What you receive

The review produces three written outputs, delivered as a single document within five working days of the discovery session.

Output	Description
AI Readiness Scorecard	A scored assessment across the five review areas. Each area is rated and given a brief narrative explanation. Designed to be readable by partners — not just the person who commissioned the review.
Risk Summary	A concise summary of the specific risks identified during the review, ordered by severity. Written to be usable as a board paper or governance document if needed.
Prioritised Next-Steps Report	A practical action plan — typically five to eight actions — ranked by priority and mapped to the specific risks identified. Includes indicative effort level for each action so the firm can plan resourcing.
60-minute debrief call	A structured call with the lead reviewer to walk through the findings, answer questions, and agree next steps. Typically attended by the COLP and managing partner.

A note on format

The written report is designed to be shared. If the COLP wants to present findings to the partnership, use it as a board paper, or file it as evidence of governance activity, it is structured to support that. It is not an internal working document.

How the review works

The review follows a consistent process. It is designed to be low-burden for the firm — we do not require lengthy questionnaires completed in advance or multiple rounds of stakeholder interviews.

Step	Activity	What's involved
1	Intake	Short pre-review questionnaire (15–20 minutes). Covers firm size, practice areas, known AI tool usage, and any existing policy documentation. Completed by COLP or practice manager ahead of the discovery session.
2	Discovery session	Half-day structured conversation with the COLP and, where available, the managing partner. Covers all five review areas. Conducted remotely or on-site. No preparation required beyond the intake questionnaire.
3	Analysis and drafting	Lead reviewer analyses findings against regulatory frameworks and drafts the report. No further input required from the firm at this stage.
4	Report delivery	Written report delivered within five working days of the discovery session. Sent directly to the COLP with a covering note.
5	Debrief call	60-minute call to walk through findings and agree next steps. Scheduled at the time of report delivery.

What this review is not

It is worth being direct about scope. The AI Readiness Review is a diagnostic — it identifies where the firm stands and what it needs to do. It does not implement anything.

- A penetration test or technical security assessment. The review covers governance and policy, not IT infrastructure.
- A legal opinion on any specific tool, contract, or data processing arrangement. Thinkwild does not provide legal advice.
- A substitute for SRA-mandated compliance activity. The review supports and evidences compliance work — it does not replace it.
- An ongoing service. The review is a fixed-scope, one-time engagement. Ongoing advisory support is available separately via the Governance & Compliance Retainer.

What happens next

The review is designed to lead somewhere. Every report includes a clear next-steps section. The most common paths after a review are:

Follow-on service	When firms typically take this step
AI Governance Implementation	Where the review identifies significant policy gaps or regulatory exposure. Thinkwild builds the governance framework, policy suite, and accountability structure. Scoped and priced after the review debrief.
AI Compliance Training	Where the review finds staff awareness gaps. Three-course training suite covering fee earners, COLPs, and general staff. Can be delivered alongside or following a governance implementation.
Ongoing Governance & Compliance Retainer	Where the firm wants continuing support rather than a series of one-off engagements. Covers quarterly regulatory updates, policy maintenance, and ad hoc guidance.
Cyber Security Health Check	Where the review surfaces questions about the firm's broader cyber posture. A separate structured assessment against the NCSC Cyber Assessment Framework and SRA cybersecurity guidance.

What we need from you

The review is deliberately low-burden. Three things make the difference between a useful review and a superficial one:

- The right person in the room. The discovery session needs to be attended by whoever actually knows how the firm uses technology and who is responsible for compliance. That is usually the COLP, the practice manager, or both.
- Honest answers to the intake questionnaire. The review is only as useful as the information it is based on. We are not auditors and will not be reporting to the SRA — candour about current practice produces better findings than a sanitised picture.
- Willingness to share existing documentation. If the firm has an existing AI policy, an IT policy, a data protection policy, or any previous compliance documentation, sharing it before the discovery session improves the analysis.

To commission a review

Contact us to arrange an initial conversation. There is no charge for the initial discussion and no obligation to proceed. We will confirm scope, availability, and timing at that point.

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