# Garfield Law approval marks new era for AI-driven legal services in UK



The legal landscape in the UK has recently witnessed a significant development with the approval of Garfield Law, a start-up firm that aims to provide legal services powered by artificial intelligence (AI). The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) heralded this as a “landmark moment” in the evolution of legal services, with Chief Executive Paul Philip expressing particular enthusiasm. However, the excitement surrounding this validation may have overshadowed a more nuanced understanding of the role of AI in legal practice.

While Garfield Law is indeed the first firm to offer services through a large language model AI, it is essential to recognise that the use of AI in law is not a novel concept. The SRA’s claim overlooks the long-standing history of AI applications, particularly those dating back to the 1980s when "expert systems" began assisting legal practitioners. This historical backdrop serves as a reminder that AI's integration into the legal sector has progressed incrementally rather than appearing as a sudden innovation.

Garfield Law, co-founded by Philip Young, a former litigator, and Daniel Long, a quantum physicist, focuses on providing assistance primarily to small and medium-sized enterprises. The firm's offerings include an AI-powered litigation assistant that aids users in recovering unpaid debts, an area with annual losses estimated between £6 billion and £20 billion in the UK alone. This affordable service starts at just £2 for a “polite chaser” letter and £50 for filing legal claims, making legal assistance accessible to those who might otherwise struggle to afford it.

Crucially, Garfield Law has designed its AI system to operate under stringent safeguards, including client approval at every stage of the process and oversight by qualified solicitors. This dual approach not only seeks to uphold regulatory standards but also aims to enhance client confidence in using AI-driven legal services.

The approval of Garfield Law aligns with broader efforts within the legal community to incorporate AI technology. Other prominent firms, such as Allen & Overy and Shearman & Sterling, are currently investing in AI for routine legal tasks, aiming to reduce administrative burdens and allow human lawyers to engage in higher-level strategic work. The integration of AI not only promises to streamline processes but also holds the potential to alleviate growing court backlogs, which have become an increasing concern in recent years.

Furthermore, the support from key judicial figures, including Lord Justice Colin Birss, reinforces the perceived benefits of AI in augmenting access to justice. Advocates assert that this technological shift can democratise legal services, enabling greater participation from individuals who have historically faced barriers within the system.

Yet, while the advantages of introducing AI into legal practices are evident, the SRA’s focus on the novelty of Garfield Law's approval prompts questions regarding the regulator's understanding of AI's existing applications. As the legal profession continues to evolve in response to technological advancements, there remains an essential need for ongoing assessment of these innovations to ensure they meet both regulatory standards and consumer protection mandates.

In sum, Garfield Law's debut as an AI-driven legal service is a noteworthy milestone, embracing the future of legal practice while highlighting the existing frameworks where AI has long been implicated. As the firm moves forward, the legal community will be watching with keen interest, not only to gauge its success but also to inform wider discussions about the role of AI in enhancing access to justice.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2
2. Paragraph 3
3. Paragraphs 4, 6
4. Paragraphs 5
5. Paragraph 3
6. Paragraph 6
7. Paragraph 4

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/obiter/first-ai-law-firm-er-not-quite/5123324.article> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/news/press/garfield-ai-authorised/> - The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) has authorized Garfield.Law Ltd as the first law firm providing legal services through artificial intelligence (AI). Garfield.Law offers small and medium-sized businesses, as well as law and other firms, the use of an AI-powered litigation assistant to help them recover unpaid debts, guiding them through the small claims court process up to trial. The SRA emphasizes the potential consumer benefits of AI-driven legal services, such as improved accessibility and affordability, while ensuring appropriate checks are in place to protect consumers.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/e56cb23e-bc10-4235-997c-186df5bd963c> - Garfield AI, an innovative artificial intelligence-based law firm, has gained approval from the Solicitors Regulation Authority in what is being called a 'landmark moment' for the legal industry. Co-founded by former London litigator Philip Young and quantum physicist Daniel Long, Garfield AI provides legal services at significantly reduced costs, such as £2 for debt collection letters and £50 for filing legal claim forms. It aims to help individuals, particularly small businesses and tradespeople, recover unpaid debts, which amount to an estimated £6 billion to £20 billion annually in the UK. The AI tool guides users through court procedures and even prepares legal arguments, with initial outputs reviewed for quality control. The firm has received support from judicial figures, including Lord Justice Colin Birss, highlighting its potential to enhance access to justice and reduce court backlogs. This approval reflects broader efforts in the legal sector to integrate AI while maintaining data protection and accuracy, as firms like A&O Shearman also invest in developing AI for routine legal tasks. Garfield represents a pioneering step in deploying AI to handle entire legal cases from start to finish.
4. <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news-focus/in-depth-worlds-first-ai-law-firm-targets-high-street-practices/5123234.article> - Garfield Law, a pioneering firm providing legal services through AI, has been approved by the SRA. The founders, a City lawyer and a quantum physicist, are targeting litigants in person (LiPs) and high street firms. Garfield Law specializes in small-claims debt recovery and aims to remove repetitive, administrative work from each case, thereby freeing up lawyers to focus on higher-level and more valuable work. The system operates with client approval at every step and under solicitor oversight, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.
5. <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/sra-approves-2-letter-ai-law-firm/5123191.article> - The Solicitors Regulation Authority has authorized the first law firm providing a legal service through large language model artificial intelligence. Garfield.Law Ltd, based in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, specializes in helping businesses recover debts of up to £10,000, with costs starting at £2 for sending a 'polite chaser' letter. The SRA emphasizes the potential benefits of AI-driven legal services, such as improved accessibility and affordability, while ensuring appropriate checks are in place to protect consumers.
6. <https://www.newlawjournal.co.uk/content/ai-law-firm-gets-regulatory-approval> - The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) has authorized the first law firm providing legal services through artificial intelligence (AI). Garfield.Law Ltd is a purely AI-based firm that offers businesses the use of an AI-powered litigation assistant to help them recover debts, guiding them through the small claims court process. The SRA has worked closely with the firm to ensure it meets regulatory standards, including quality checks, client confidentiality, and safeguards against conflicts of interest.
7. <https://www.law360.com/articles/2335962/sra-oks-1st-ai-law-firm-in-bid-to-broaden-access-to-justice> - The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) has approved the first legal services provider powered entirely by an artificial intelligence large language model, Garfield.Law. The firm assists small to midsized businesses in recovering unpaid debts of up to £10,000 through the English small claims court, with services starting from as little as £2. The SRA views this as a significant step toward enhancing access to justice and plans to monitor the progress of this new model closely.