



LEGAL SERVICES
BOARD

Quarterly Performance Report

2020/21 – Q2

Strategic objective 1 - Promoting the public interest through ensuring independent, effective and proportionate regulation

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

Ongoing competence											
Call for evidence closes			Analysis of evidence			Public engagement to test policy options			Consultation on policy options		
Call for evidence closes			Analysis of evidence			Analysis of evidence			Public engagement to test policy options		

IGR review outcomes											
			Revised IGR into force 23 July			Ongoing monitoring			Ongoing monitoring		
			Revised IGR into force 23 July			Ongoing monitoring			Ongoing monitoring		
R	R		R								

Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We analysed our ongoing competence evidence in Q2. We received 40 submissions in our call for evidence, on top of 50 stakeholder meetings that we conducted over the Q1 period. This has given us a rich evidence base to analyse. The revised internal governance rules came into force in Q2. By the deadline of 23 July, we received certificates of compliance from all approved regulators and regulatory bodies, confirming that they had taken the necessary steps to comply with the rules.

Strategic objective 2 - Making it easier for all consumers to access the services they need and get redress

Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

Public legal education											
Consider next steps & publish lit review			TBC			TBC			TBC		
Consider next steps						Publish literature review Engagement			TBC		

Consumer engagement											
Scoping			Develop proposals			Consult on proposals					
Scoping			Develop proposals			Stakeholder engagement and research			Drafting and consult on proposals		

Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We intend to publish the public legal education literature review in Q3. The university that we had commissioned to write the review had a resourcing pressure, which delayed the project. We have been developing our consumer engagement proposal in Q2 and intend to begin research with our public panel shortly.

Strategic objective 3 – Increasing innovation, growth and the diversity of services and providers

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Technology												
Publish first phase findings												
Establish expert reference group												
Conduct research with public panel												
Publish final series of papers and podcasts												
Publish first phase findings												
TBC												
							R					
Prices research												
Analysis of fieldwork												
Publish report												
Analysis of fieldwork												
Publish report												
Diversity												
Analysis and report findings												
Publish report												
Analysis and report findings												
Review and research												
Stakeholder engagement												
Develop Policy Statement												
R												

Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Q1 we published the final technology papers and podcasts in our series on developing approaches to regulation for the use of technology in legal services. We intend to publish an overarching paper on our findings from this phase of work in Q3. We completed our prices research in Q2 and published it alongside interactive dashboards on our website. Diversity is an area in which we increased our focus over Q2. This included scoping the next phase of this work.

Other areas of work

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Strategy development												
Stakeholder engagement												
Engage & research with public panel												
Publ. State of Sector & consult on draft												
Finalise strategy and business plan												
Stakeholder engagement												
Engage & research with public panel												
Publ. State of Sector & consult on draft												
Finalise strategy and business plan												
				R								
Covid-19 project												
Project Scoping												
Sector monitoring / Evidence Gathering												
Project Scoping												
Sector monitoring / Evidence Gathering												

Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We continued to engage widely on strategy development in Q2, including hosting a senior stakeholder summit. We intend to publish the State of the Legal Services Sector in Q3 and then consult on a draft Strategy and Business Plan. We gathered evidence and monitored the impact of Covid-19 on the sector in Q2. This included regularly updating the Covid-19 impact dashboard on our website.

Rule changes and exemptions directions

Application ≤ 28 days Extension Warning Exemption direction



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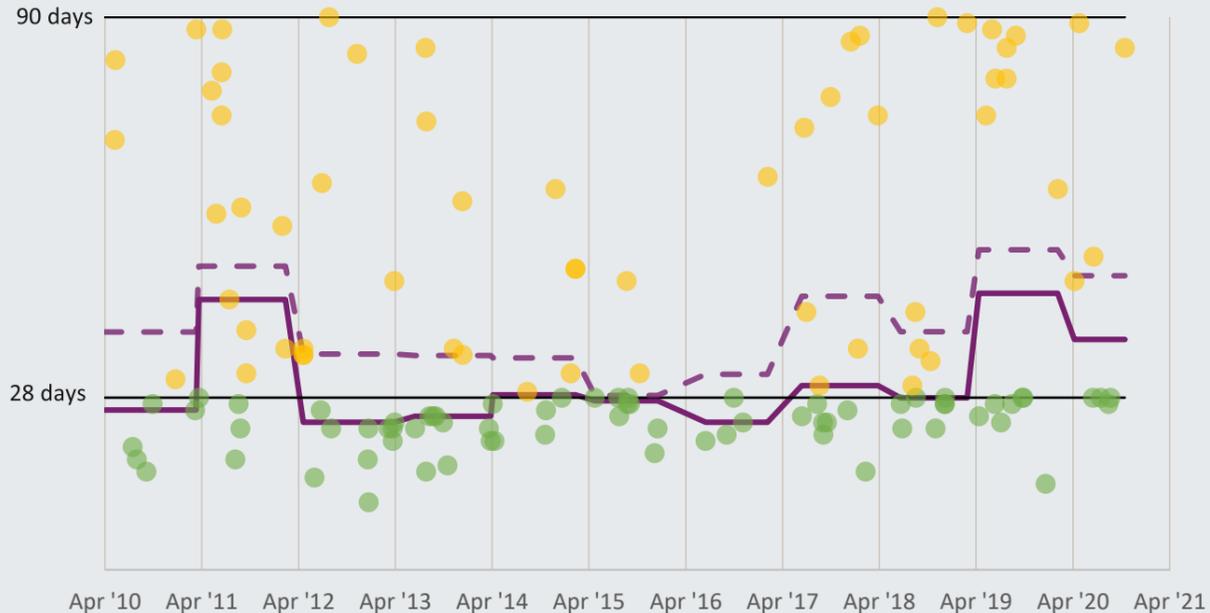
Analysis

- We are on track for another busy year for our statutory decisions. At the midway point of 2020/21, we received nine applications, made eight decisions, issued 13 exemption directions and had one application withdrawn (Chart 1). In Q2, we considered the Solicitors Regulatory Authority's Solicitors Qualifying Exam application and issued an extension notice. We made our decision early in Q3.
- This follows a busy 2019/20, which saw an increase in workload for the statutory decision team, as the complexity of applications increased. This contributed to the highest median decision time (45 days) and average decision time (52 days) in our history. Thus far in 2020/21 our median and average decision time is high (Chart 2).
- In Q2, there were no new decisions where an extension notice had been issued for a lower risk application (Chart 3). This compares to two instances in Q1 where extensions on two lower risk applications were to allow the regulator time to respond to issues raised by the LSB and to make minor changes to its proposed regulatory arrangements.

Days for rules change decision

Excludes warning notices

Median Average ≤ 28 days Extension



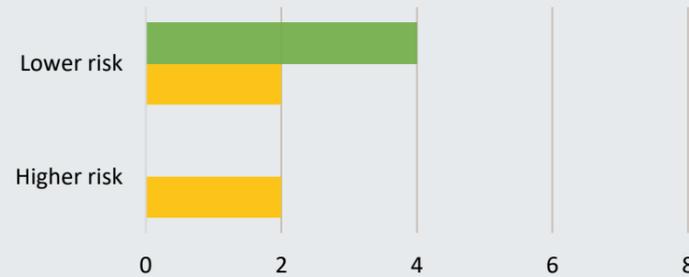
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Risk assessments

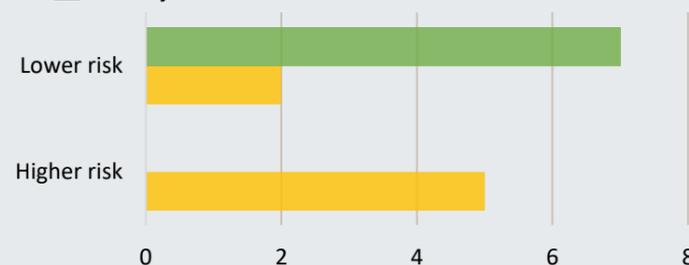
Decisions categorised by application risk

≤ 28 days Extension

2020/21



2019/20



3

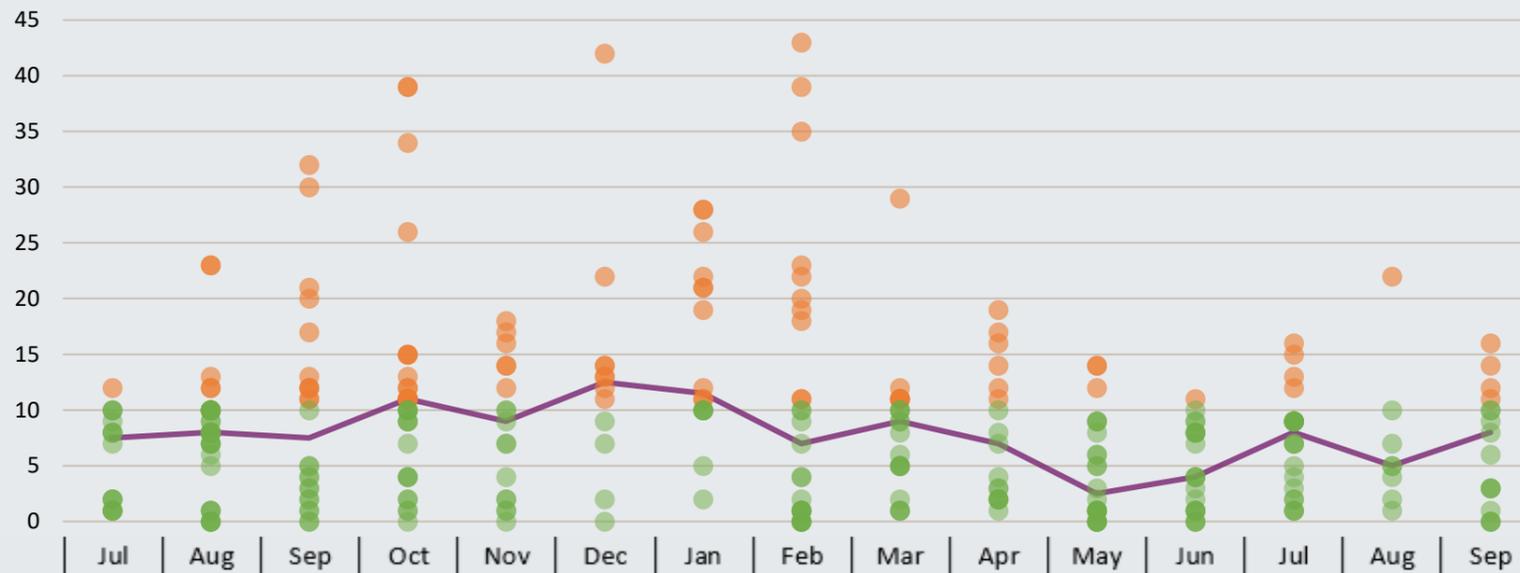
Background

- Under the Legal Services Act 2007 ('the Act'), alterations to approved regulators' regulatory arrangements ('rule changes') must be approved by the LSB before coming into effect. This is one of the LSB's principal and most frequently exercised statutory functions.
- The Act prescribes an initial 28 day period for making a decision that can be extended by the LSB by up to 90 days via an extension notice or by a further year if the LSB is considering refusing an application and issues a warning notice. The LSB can only refuse an application if one of the statutory refusal criteria is met.
- In our consideration process, we take a risk-based approach whereby applications are assessed as lower risk or higher risk. For lower risk applications, our target is a decision in 28 days or less. For higher risk applications, our target is a decision in 90 days or less.
- Under the Act, the LSB also has the power to exempt certain general or specific changes from the approval process by issuing an exemption direction.

LSB responses

Days to respond, target ≤ 10 working days

— Median ● > 10 Days ● ≤ 10 days Note: A brighter marker indicates more responses



	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
> 10 Days	1	5	11	17	6	8	10	10	7	6	3	1	4	1	4
≤ 10 days	15	33	13	16	11	4	6	17	15	11	21	20	18	7	12

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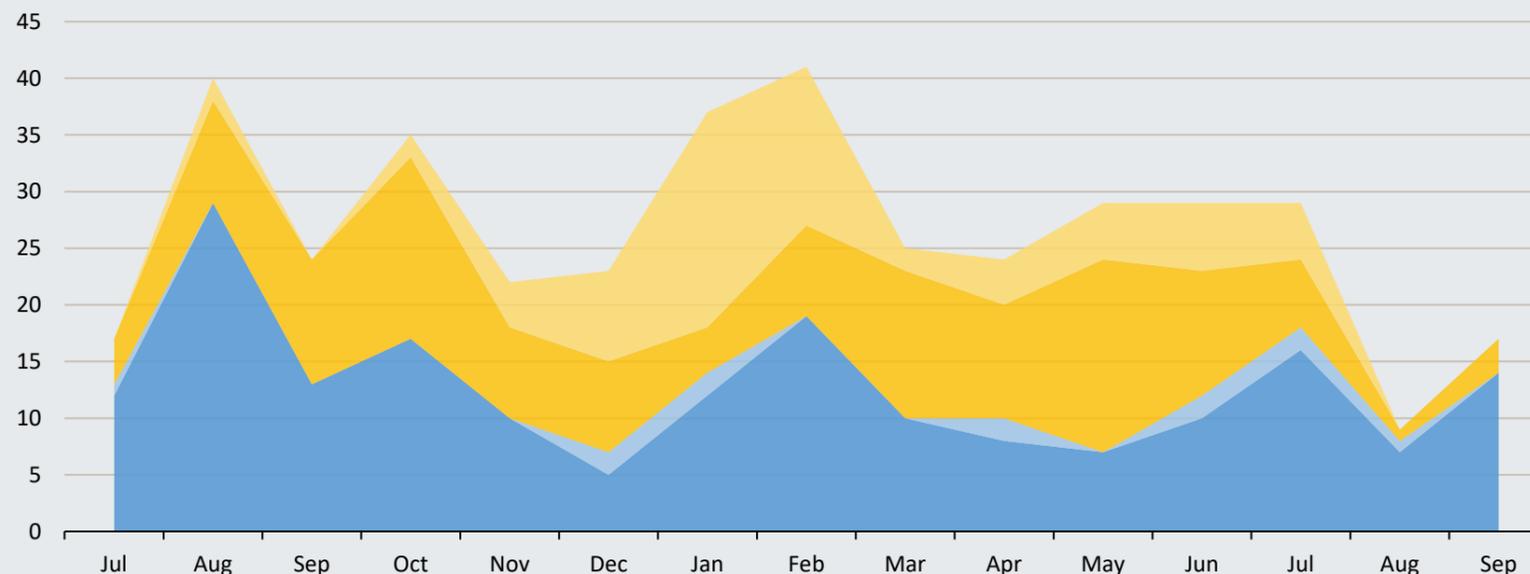
Analysis

- Over the last year, responding within our target response time has been challenging (Chart 1). This resulted in our median response time exceeding our target for several months across Q3 and Q4 of 2019/20.
- Our response time improved in Q1 of 2020/21, with fewer responses outside our target and our median response time decreasing to low levels (Chart 1). In Q2 of 2020/21, our median response time remained within our target, although there continues to be some correspondence falling outside our target. Typically this was because correspondence was especially complex, requiring legal input or other considerations which can create delays.
- Since late 2019, there has been a high proportion of *repeat* correspondence (Chart 2). In Q2 of 2020/21, *repeat* correspondence decreased to low levels not seen in the last year. We are continuing to monitor this situation and our approach to deliver value for money.

Correspondence

Count of correspondence, stacked

■ Initial or one-off, LSB response ■ Initial or one-off, no LSB response ■ Repeat, LSB response ■ Repeat, no LSB response



2

Background

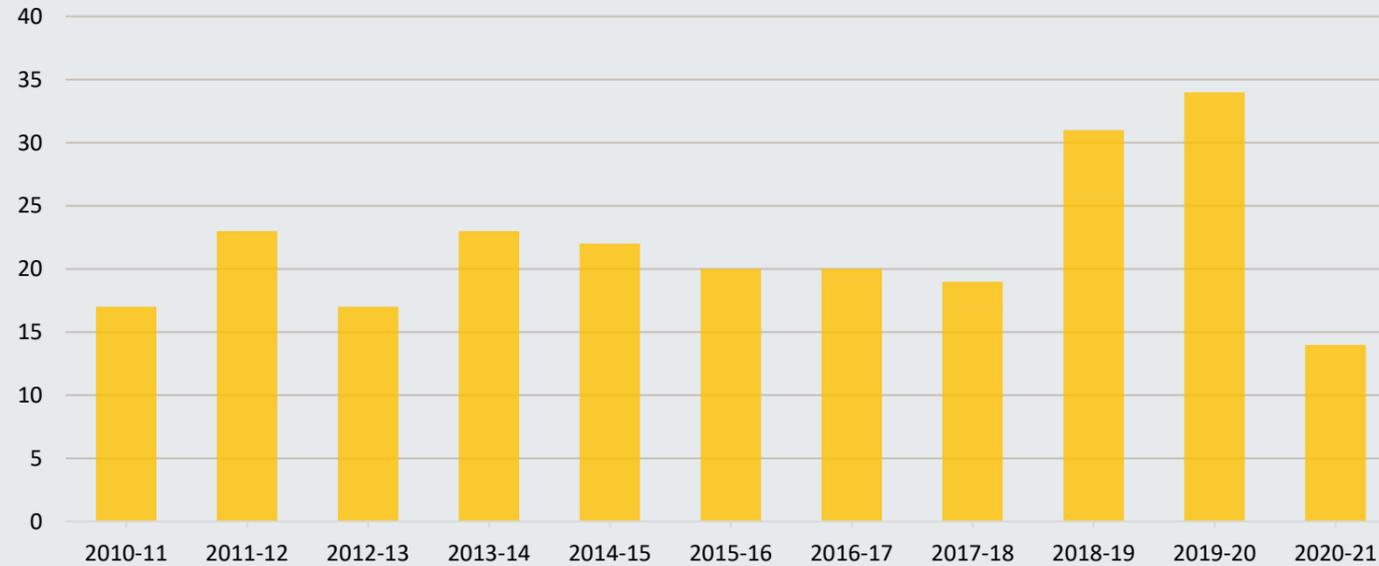
- Contact Us is our inbox for receiving correspondence from the public. It is monitored by the administration team, who individually monitor the inbox on a weekly basis. The public typically contacts us to complain about an approved regulator, lawyer, the Legal Ombudsman, or with general enquiries about legal services and legal aid. All responses are reviewed by a relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Definition

- Initial or one-off: When a person emails us for the first time on an issue.
- Repeat: When a person emails us again on the same issue, for example, with follow-up questions.

Requests

Count of requests



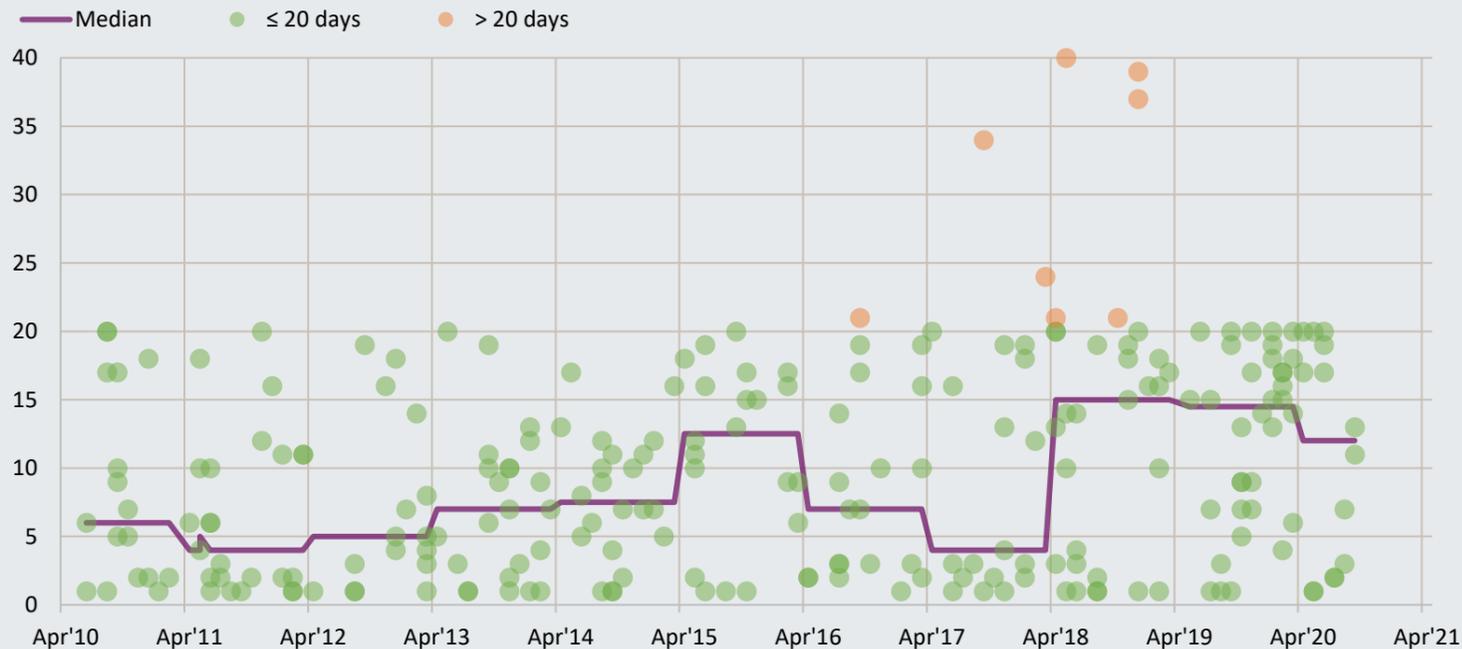
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Analysis

- Over the last two years there has been a large increase in the amount of information requests (Chart 1). This has been driven by requests relating to approved regulators and IT. A high number of requests are expected again in 2020/21. We responded to 14 requests across Q1 and Q2.
- Over the last year we have met our target response time (Chart 2). This compares to recent years where we missed our target multiple times. At the end of Q1 of 2020/21, our median decision time was on the cusp of our target. In Q2, our response time improved, lowering our median response time for 2020/21 to below levels of recent years.

Responses

Days to respond, target ≤ 20 working days



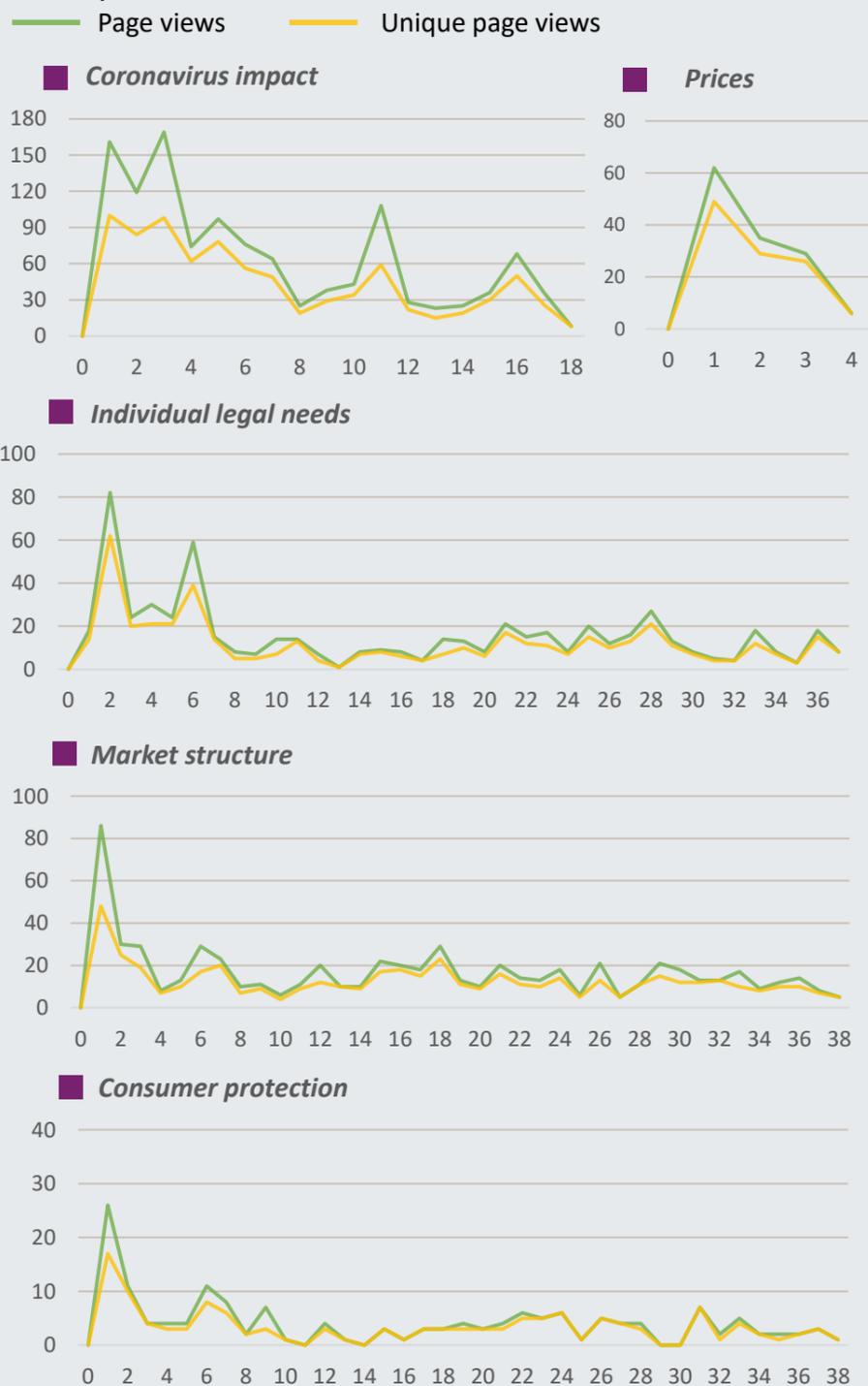
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Background

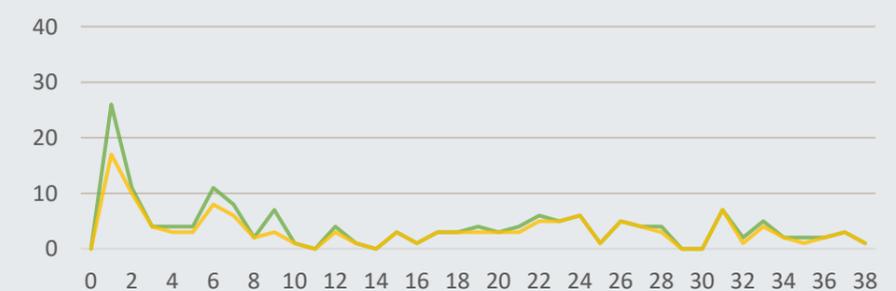
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') gives people a right of access to the information held by, or on behalf of, public authorities ('authorities'). This applies regardless of the age, format, origin or classification of the information, and covers for example: reports, letters, emails, notebooks and photographs.
- The Act requires authorities: (1) to publish information proactively in accordance with their publication schemes; and (2) to provide within not more than 20 working days other information requested by any person ('information requests').

Research dashboards

Weekly views since launch

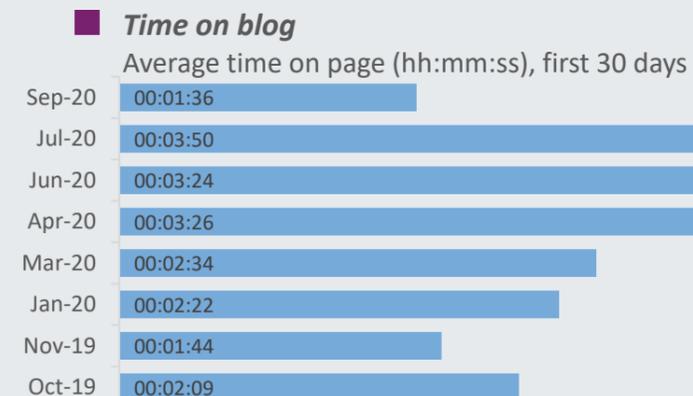
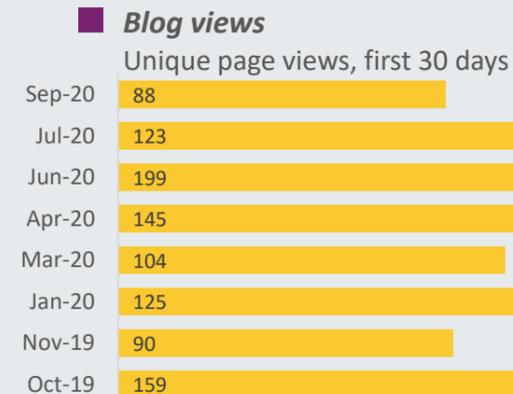


Consumer protection



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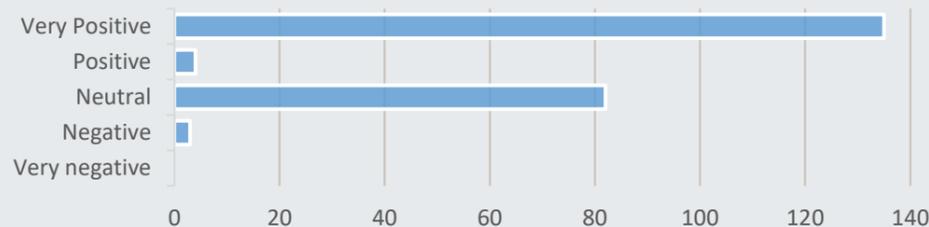
Chair's blog



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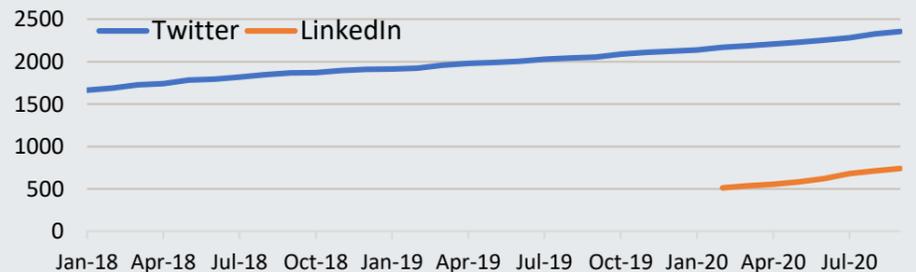
Media coverage sentiment

2020/21 sum of coverage, categorised by sentiment



3

Social media followers



4

Analysis

- Our new Market Intelligence research hub launched on our website in January 2020. It currently consists of five interactive research dashboards: market structure, consumer protection, individual legal needs, coronavirus impact, and most recently in Q2, prices. We continue to see the greatest level of engagement with our coronavirus impact dashboard (Chart 1).
- Our recent initiative to publish a Chair's blog after every Board meeting was generally being met with increased levels of engagement up until Q2 (Chart 2). Engagement dropped in Q2, particularly in September. We are continuing to monitor this situation.
- Media coverage sentiment has been positive in 2020/21. This includes 135 pieces of very positive coverage and 4 positive. These were primarily driven by our media releases, with most stories about prices research, internal governance rules, public legal education, diversity and Board appointments. There were 82 pieces of neutral coverage, primarily in association with the Solicitors Qualifying Exam. There have been 3 pieces of negative coverage, 2 on our prices research and 1 on our annual report. Overall, our media coverage has been made up of 217 trade pieces and 7 national pieces (5 in the Times and 2 in Which).
- Our social media following continues to grow steadily (Chart 4).
- September saw our highest level of senior led engagement meetings (Chart 4). This follows several relatively quiet months where Covid-19 temporarily impacted our ability to schedule further meetings.

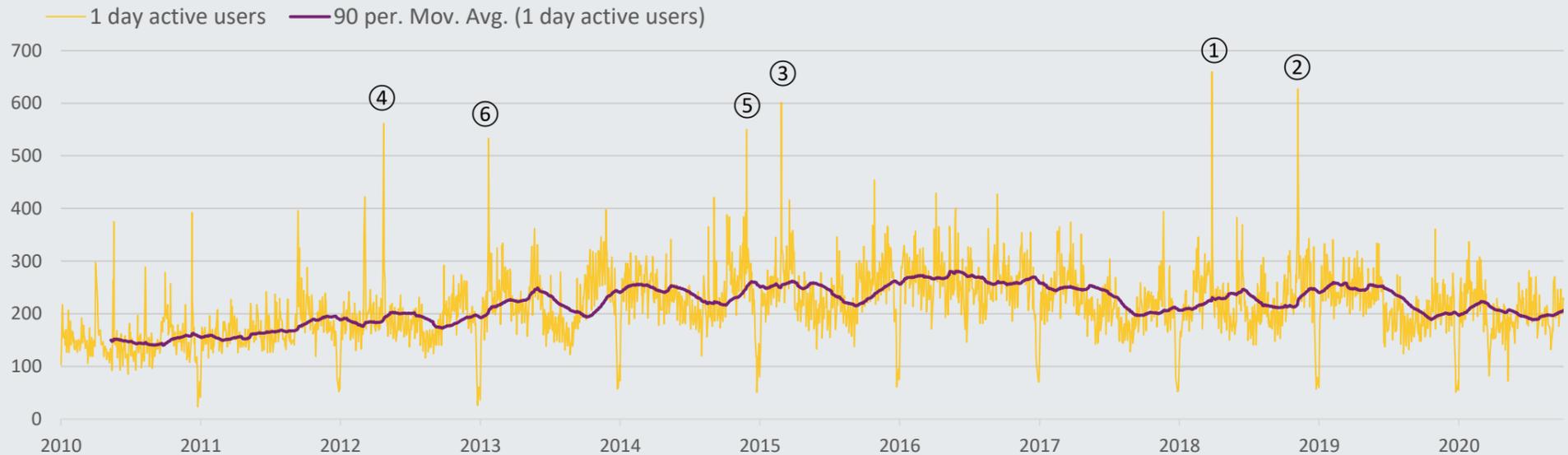
Senior led engagement meetings



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Website users

1 day active users, 90 day moving average

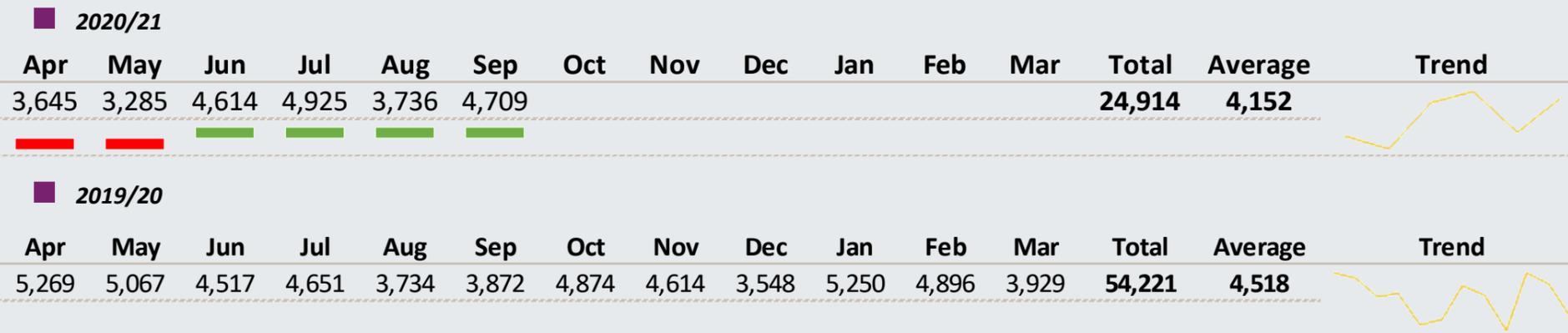


1

- ① LSB approves framework for SRA's new admission requirements for solicitors (27 March 2018)
- ② LSB approves SRA's Looking to the Future rule change application (6 November 2018)
- ③ LSB puts spotlight on regulation of in-house lawyers (26 February 2015)
- ④ LSB announces proposals for greater protection of consumers of will-writing and estate administration services (23 April 2012)
- ⑤ LSB publishes its SRA PII application decision (27 November 2014)
- ⑥ LSB publishes research into the cab rank rule (22 January 2013)

Website users

Monthly sum of 1 day active users compared to same period last year



2

Analysis

- Q2, on the whole, saw an increase in the amount of visitors to our website compared to Q1 (Chart 1 and 2). This is likely due to the impact of Covid-19, with the attention of many placed elsewhere in Q1.
- Q2 also saw an increase in visitors relative to the same period last year (Chart 2). The top pages by growth in Q2 align with our high profile and public facing work for the period, including our consideration of the Solicitors Regulatory Authority's Solicitors Qualifying Exam rule change application, our consultation on our proposed practising fee rules and several exemption directions related to complying with the revised internal governance rules (Chart 3).
- Historically, visitors to our website have been highly variable, with peak periods driven by particular statutory decisions or policy (Chart 1). The top two peak days affirm the interest and scrutiny that will be placed on our decision on the Solicitors Regulatory Authority's Solicitors Qualifying Exam rule change application. It is likely that around this time we will receive an increased level of attention.

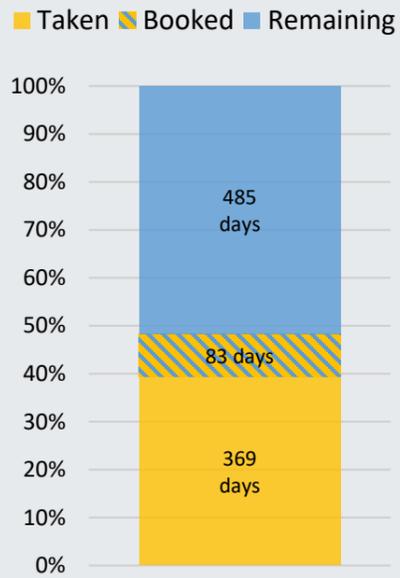
Top 5 pages by growth

Growth over previous quarter, minimum 100 unique views

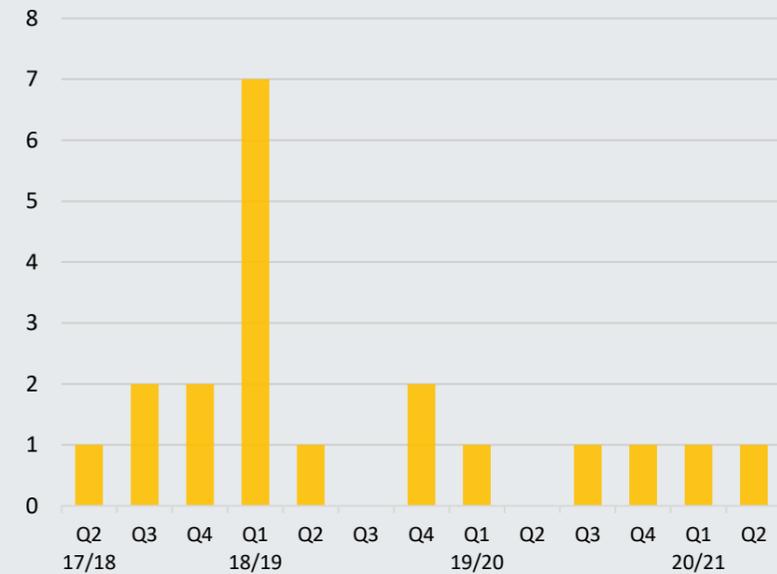
Page	Unique views	Growth
Statutory decision making - current applications	1,102	270%
Open consultations	379	183%
Statutory decision making - exemption directions	201	142%
Our work - public legal education	135	108%
Work for us	340	79%

3

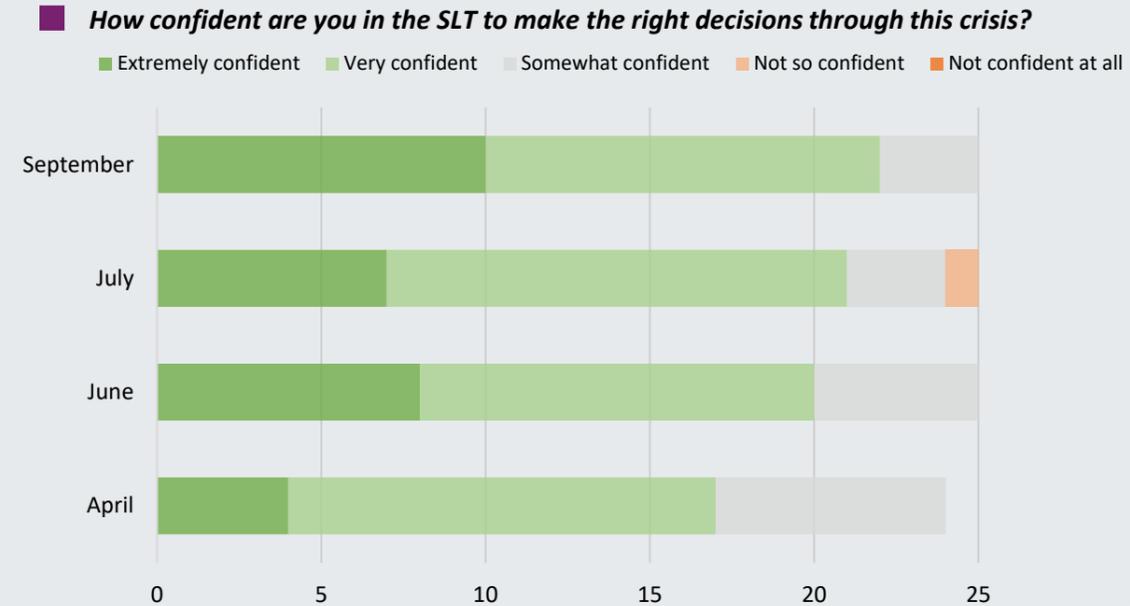
1 Annual leave



2 Turnover



3 Colleague pulse survey regarding Covid-19



5 Analysis

- Colleagues did not take much leave in Q1, with around 10 percent of leave taken during the period. This was expected as it coincided with lockdown. More leave was taken during Q2, with around 40 percent in total as at the end of Q2 (Chart 1).
- Similarly, use of the training budget was low in Q1, with some scheduled training being postponed to later in the year. More of the training budget was used in Q2 and we are still forecasting to utilise close to the full budget for 2020/21 (Chart 2).
- Turnover was low again in Q2 (Chart 3). Sick days were also low in Q2, lower than any other Q2 period in the last three years (Chart 4).
- Colleague pulse survey's were paused in August but were restarted in September (Chart 5). Colleagues continue to be increasingly confident in SLT's ability to make the right decisions. Colleagues continue to express a desire to do more remote working once the crisis is over. In September, 96 percent of colleagues expressed a desire to work remotely most days.

2 Training budget



4 Sick days



4 Once this crisis is over, what is your preference for time spent in the office?

