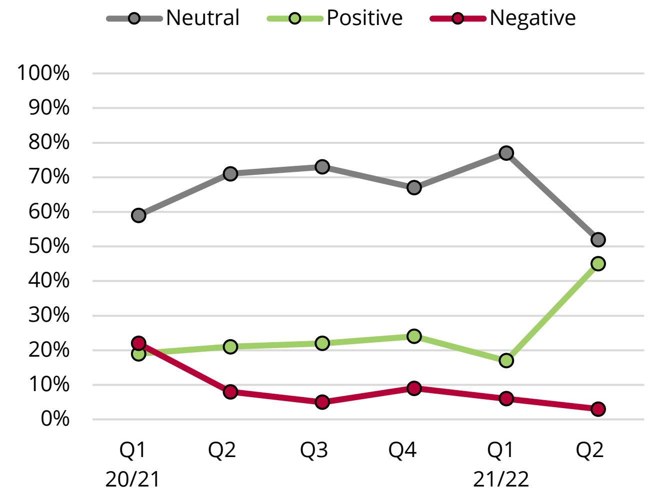
External

Core measures

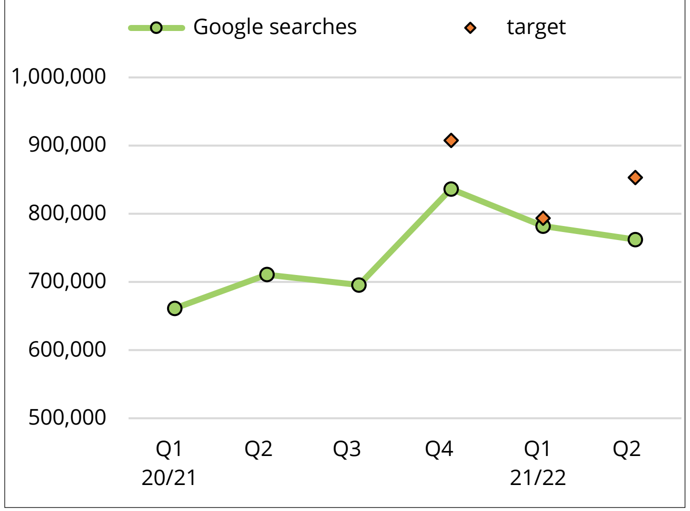
Sentiment of media coverage

Target: Positive should exceed negative



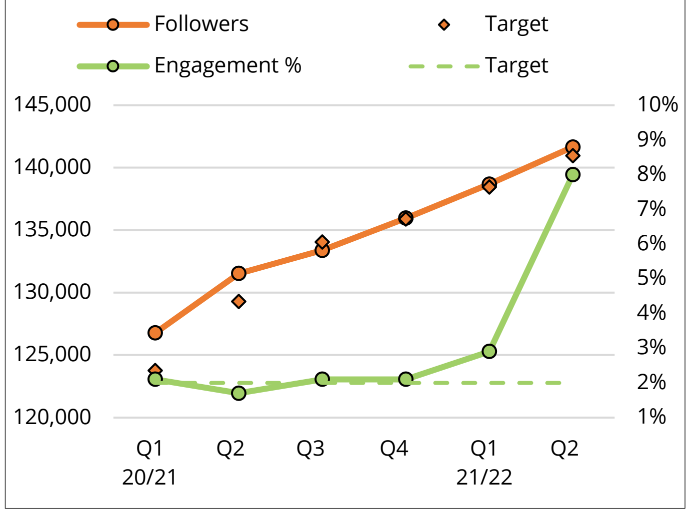
Click throughs to our website from Google searches

Target: 20% up from the same quarter a year earlier



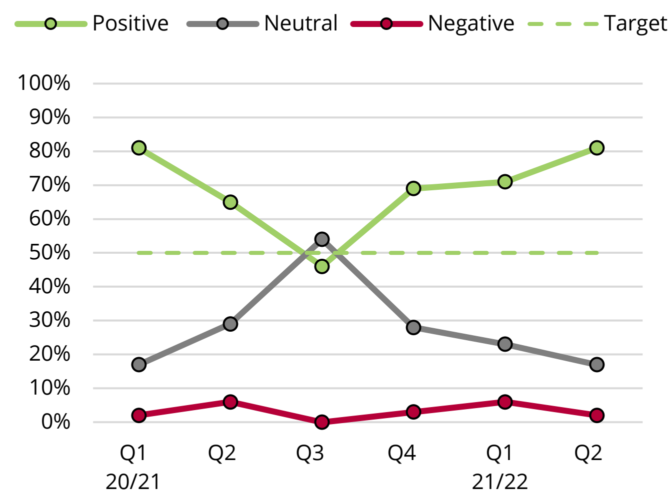
Social media engagements and followers

Target: Followers - 2,500 increase per Q, Engagement % - 2%



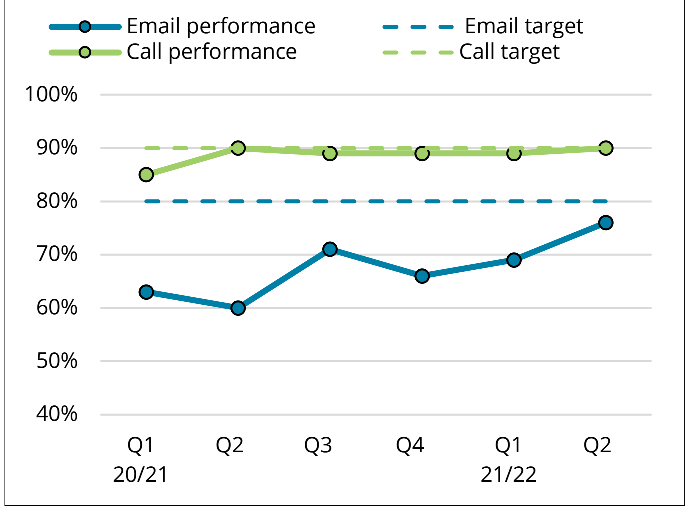
How stakeholders who attend our events view the SRA

Target: Positive feedback 50%



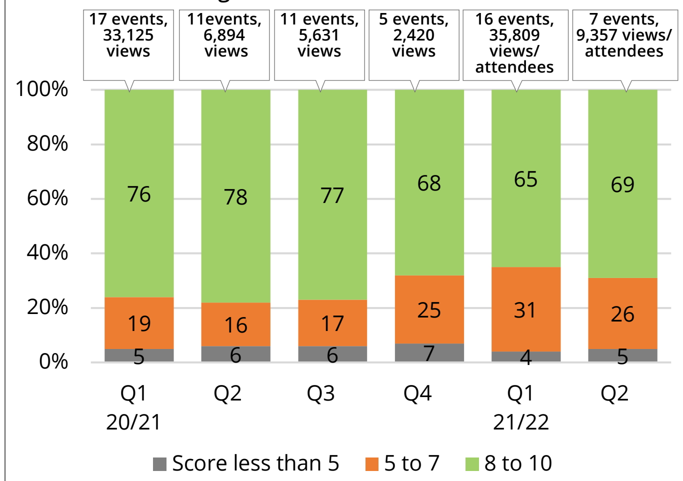
Customer feedback on our Contact Centre calls and emails

Target: % of satisfied responses – calls 90%, emails 80%



Events feedback – usefulness rating

Target: 60% score of 8 or above



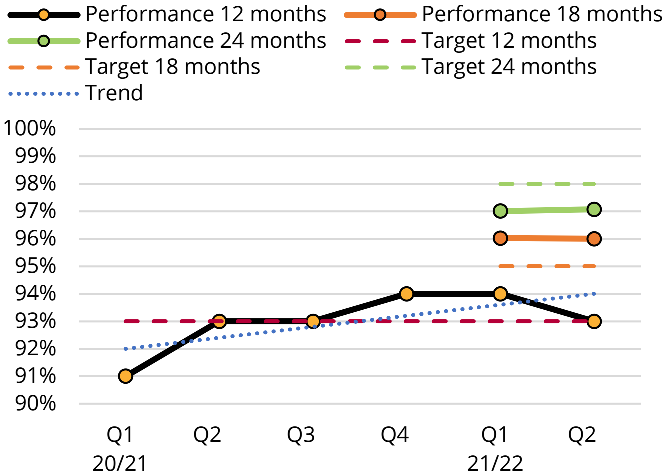
Scale: 1 = not useful at all, 10 = extremely useful

Delivery

Core measures

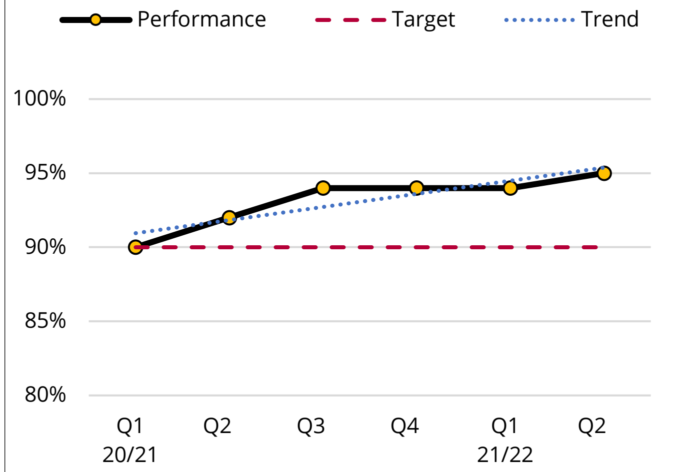
Investigation and Enforcement

Target: 93% of cases to be completed within 12 months; 95% within 18 months and 98% within 24 months.



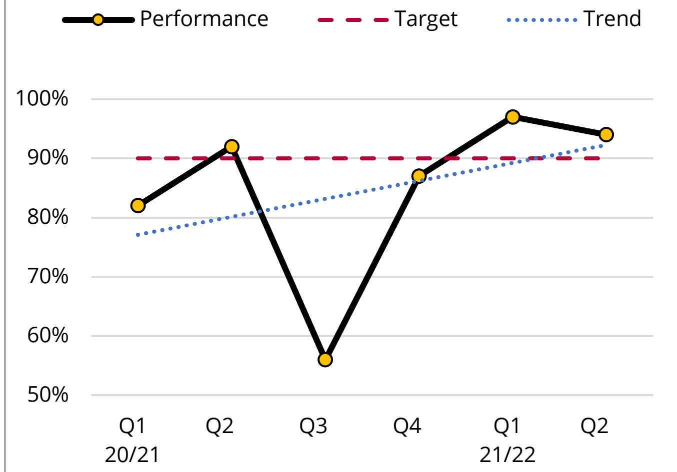
Firm based authorisation

Target: 90% of medium and high risk applications dealt with in 3/6 months



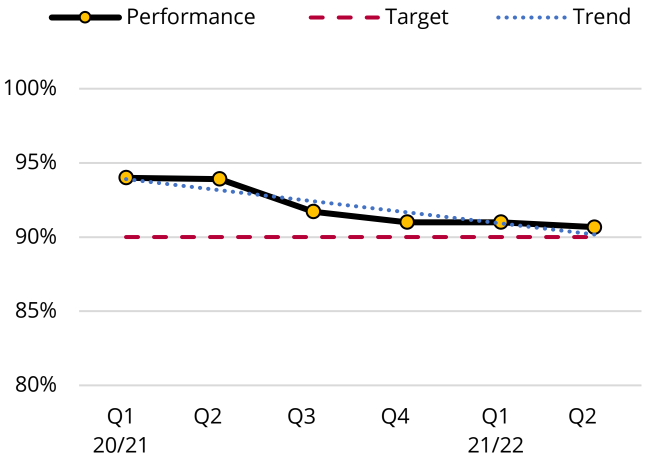
Individual based authorisation

Target: 90% of medium and high risk applications dealt with in 3/6 months



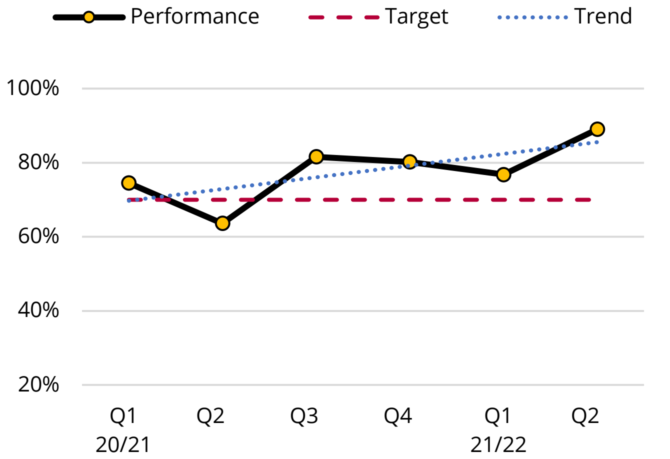
Compensation Fund

Target: 90% of compensation claims completed in 4/6/12 months

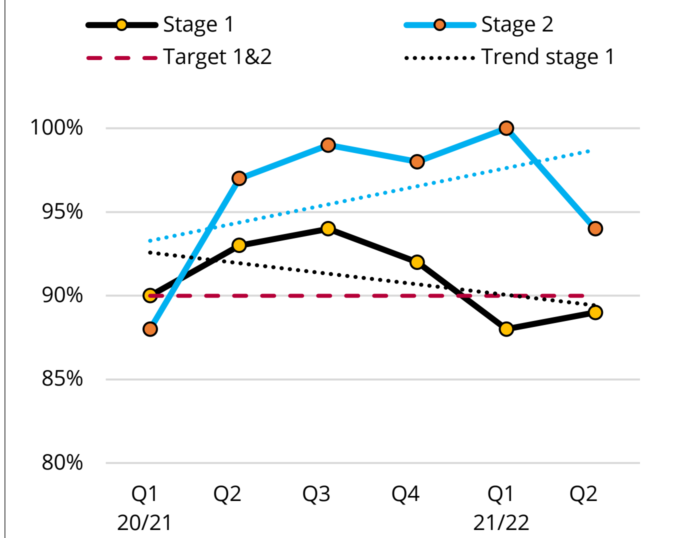


Contact Centre

Target: 70% of calls answered in 60 seconds



Stage 1 and 2 complaint handling



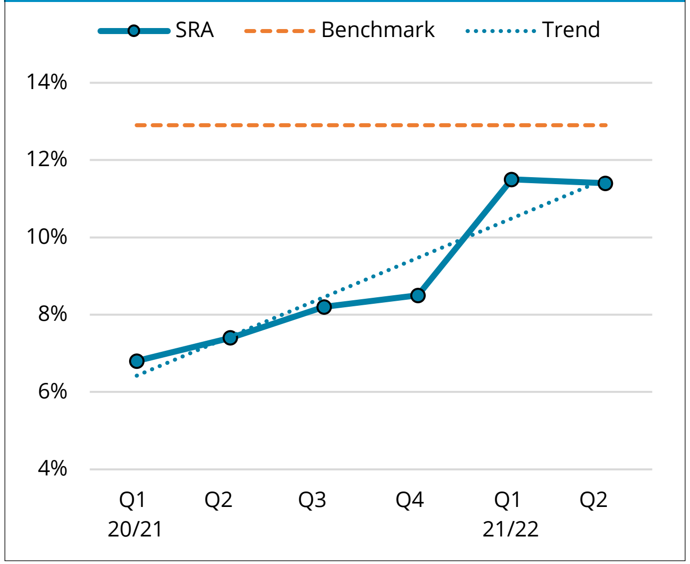
Notes:

1. Compensation Fund targets: 90% of straightforward claims concluded in four months; 90% of moderate complexity claims concluded in six months; and 90% of complex claims concluded in 12 months.
2. Stage 1 and 2 complaint handling targets: To handle stage 1 complaints within 10 days and stage 2 complaints within 20 days. Stage 1 is the response from the team concerned and stage 2 is the response from our Corporate Complaints team, where the matter is not resolved at stage 1.

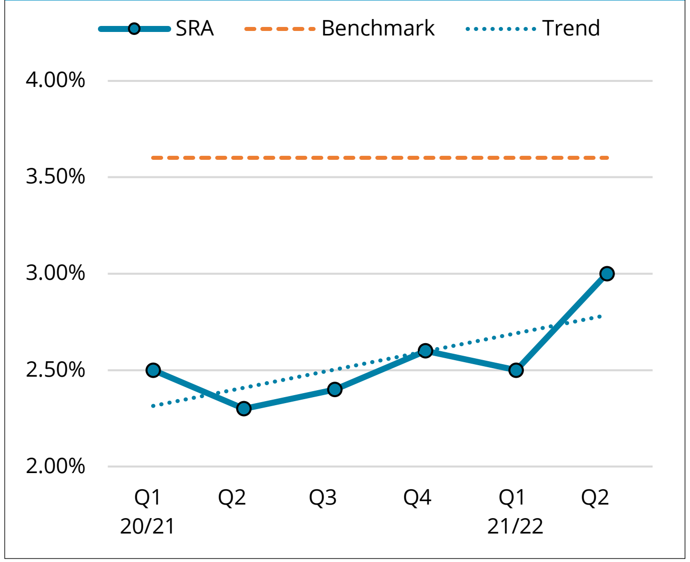
Internal

Core measures | Topical measures

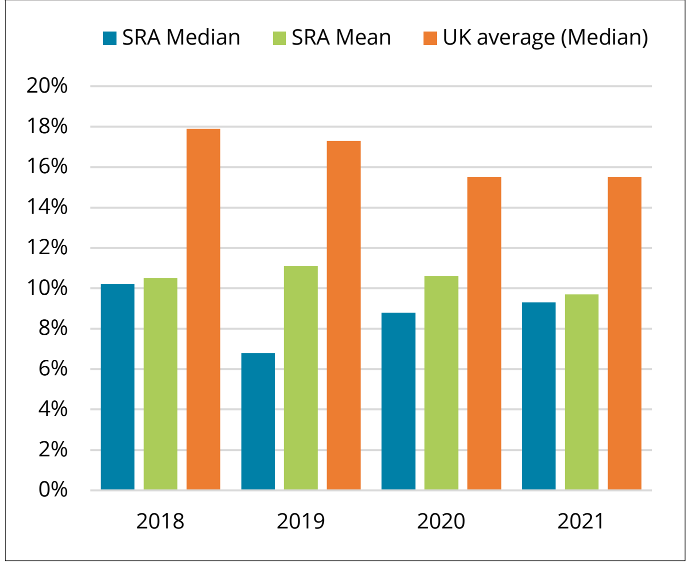
Voluntary staff turnover



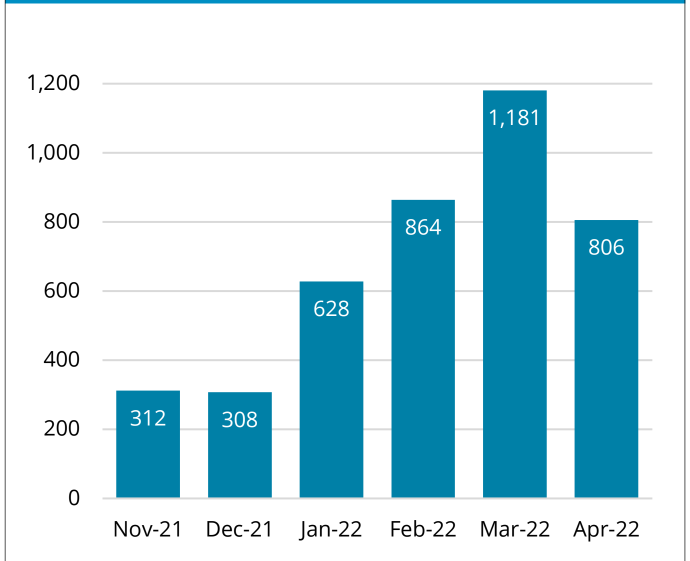
Time lost to sickness



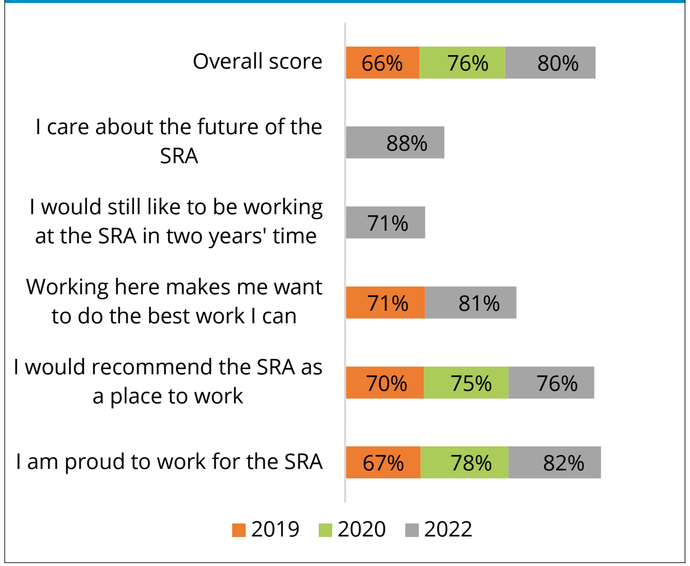
Gender pay gap



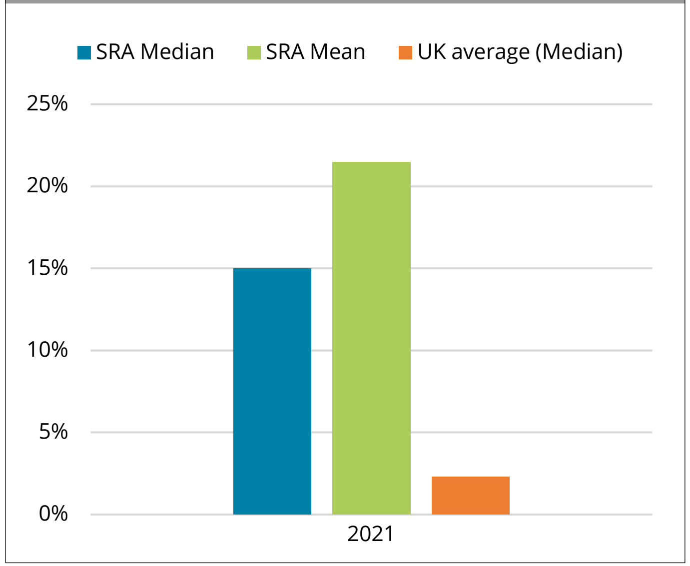
Number of training hours



Staff engagement



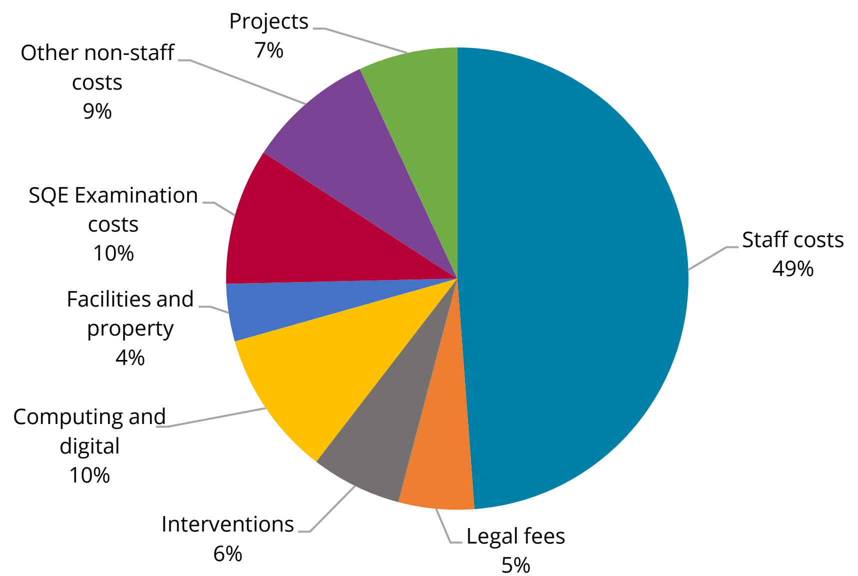
Ethnicity pay gap



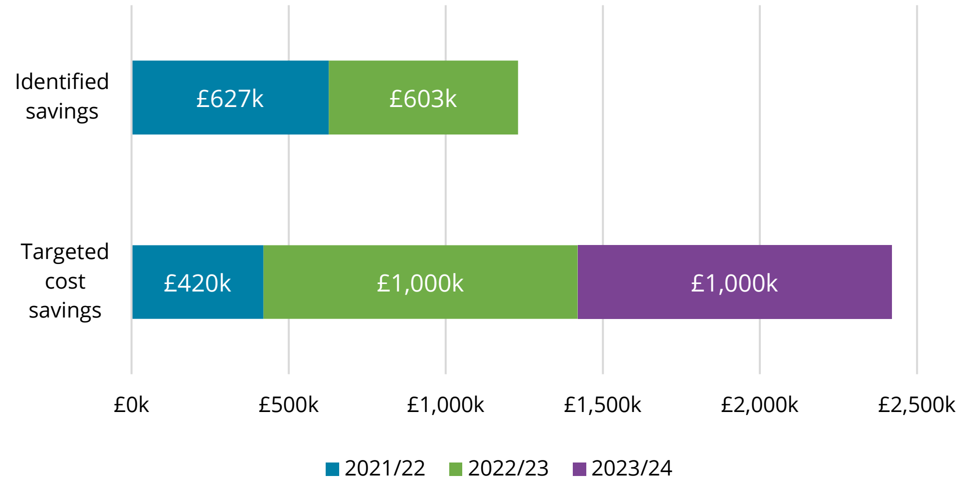
Financial

Core measures

Where our money is spent



Continuous Improvement Programme progress



Variance to budget 2021/22 Q2				
£m	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance %
Income	36.85	37.24	-0.39	-1.0%
Staff costs	16.99	16.82	-0.17	-1.0%
Other costs	18.24	19.97	1.73	8.7%

Variance to forecast 2021/22 Q2				
£m	Actual	Forecast	Variance	Variance %
Income	36.85	36.99	-0.14	-0.4
Staff costs	16.99	17.15	0.16	0.9%
Other costs	18.24	18.61	0.37	2.0%

Quarter 2 2021/22 performance update

External

Media sentiment

Positive coverage increased significantly as a proportion of all media coverage during Q2. This was partly a result of stories dealing with our guidance on the way solicitors should deal with Russian clients in the light of the invasion of Ukraine.

For a fifth consecutive quarter, positive media coverage exceeded negative coverage. Areas of our work earning favourable coverage included the publication of firm diversity data, our thematic review of workplace culture and our consultation on wellbeing. SQE fees, SQE sittings availability and an SDT case backlog generated negative coverage during the period.

Web traffic

Visits to our website by Google web search users in Q2 were up 7% from the same period a year ago, which is positive although below our target of 20% year-on-year growth. Google has recently adjusted downwards data in its Search Console reports, for recent and historical periods, which has an impact on the results we report here. In light of the reporting adjustments, there may be a need to reconsider our annual growth target.

Events

We held seven events during Q2, generating attendance of almost 10,000 in total (in person, virtual streaming and virtual on-demand). Almost two-thirds of attendees who scored the usefulness of our events rated it as 8 out of 10 or higher.

More than 4 out of 5 of all event attendees who responded to the question said they had a positive perception of the SRA.

Social media

The number of SRA followers across all social media platforms reached almost 142,000 by the end of Q2, up 8% from a year earlier.

The rate of engagement with our social media content during Q2 was up by several factors, at 8.0%, compared to 1.7% in the same quarter a year earlier. The increase in engagement was a result of a highly targeted Facebook paid campaign promoting content for consumers about comparison services.

Customer feedback on Contact Centre calls/emails

We continued to receive positive feedback regarding our calls to the Contact Centre and achieved a 90% positive response rate in Q1 (against our target of 90%). We also saw an increase in our email satisfaction levels, achieving 76% against our 80% target in Q2 (57% in February, 82% in March and 79% in April). We expect to see this improve further in Q3 as the small number of system defects (the root-cause of the underperformance in this area), have now been resolved.

Delivery

Delivery Measures

We performed well against the Delivery Measures once again in Q2, achieving all three of our new Investigation and Enforcement KPIs for the first time in April, reflecting the immediate steps that we have taken to reduce aged cases. We have also seen continued strong performance in Authorisation and the Contact Centre: two areas that were impacted in Q4 by low-level system defects related to PCRE. The establishment of our Investigation and Enforcement Case Handling Improvement Project (which is exploring longer-term solutions to issues around our timeliness and case handling in our Investigation and Enforcement work) has also got off to a good start with work undertaken at the discovery stage to date.

Investigation and Enforcement

Performance against the 12-month (93%) and 18-month (95%) KPIs were successfully achieved in the last quarter averaging 94% and 97% respectively. The new 24-month KPI was at 97% for the last 3 months, narrowly missing the 98% target, however, in April we achieved 98%, and are forecasting that all three will be met in Q3.

We have also seen a continued reduction in the overall number of Investigation and Enforcement cases that are over 24-months old as we have targeted immediate actions to reduce cases within this cohort (as agreed with the board in February). This was sitting at 248 cases at the end of Q2, a reduction of 38 cases from our starting position of 286 cases at the end of Q4 last year.

We remain confident that the immediate steps that we are taking (which includes overtime, recruiting additional Investigation Officers and regular senior staff reviews of aged cases) will continue to deliver the downward trend. As well as the reduction in cases that are over 24 months old for example, we are also seeing a reduction in the 19-24 months cohort (reducing from 177 cases at the end of Q4 to 136 at the end of Q2). The overall number of cases over 12 months old is currently at 633, down from 719 at the end of Q4.

The establishment of our Investigation and Enforcement Case Handling Improvement Project (which is exploring longer-term solutions to issues around our timeliness and case handling) has also got off to a good start with work undertaken at the discovery stage to date. This has included a series of workshops exploring key issues such as how we use investigation plans and undertake early case analysis, how use our CRM system, how we secure evidence at the early stages of a case, the ongoing disclosure process, how we handle health cases and how notices are prepared once the initial investigation is concluded. During May and June, we will be exploring these opportunities further using our in-house Lean Six Sigma resource (which we have recently recruited to support our Continuous Improvement Programme) and expect to be in a position to implement further improvements from July.

Authorisation

Both Individual-based (IBA) and Firm-based Authorisation (FBA) continued to perform well during the second quarter achieving 94% and 95% respectively against the 3/6 month 90% targets. This strong performance was delivered throughout the ‘mini’ admissions peak in spring and continued growing demand in applications for SQE Qualified Lawyer Exemptions (QLE), with these cases leading to additional admissions demands, as applicants follow the SQE application process.

Contact Centre

We saw a continued improvement in our performance within the Contact Centre during Q4, with an overall performance of 89% against our target of answering 70% of calls in 60 seconds. We also responded to 98% of emails received within five days, against our target of 95%.

Client Protection

Client Protection maintained performance against its main KPI over the last quarter. The key KPI in terms of overall closure of Compensation Fund claims has been achieved each month with an average of 91%. The downward trend in performance over the last two quarters is due to a particularly high volume of claims that we processed last year due to the Kingly intervention (the higher volume of claims led to higher levels of performance during that period).

Complaint Handling

The number of corporate complaints being made to us remains stable and comparable to previous periods with no new trends of note emerging. We fell a little short against our target response times at stage 1. In the last quarter overall 89% of our stage 1 responses were sent within 10 working days against our target of 90%.

Internal

Staff turnover has slightly decreased this quarter. We continue to observe the volatile recruitment market and it continues to indicate uncertainty. The percentage this particular quarter continues to demonstrate staff are starting to make a move post the uncertainty of the pandemic.

Time lost to sickness has increased. As we staff gradually return to work towards a hybrid way of working, we continue to promote well-being initiatives and other interventions such as our employee assistance and occupational health provisions. Both the turnover and sickness continue to be below the external benchmark. However, the benchmark for voluntary turnover is based on 2019 data. The source of the benchmark has recently communicated that the current sample size is not large enough to provide a more up to date benchmark.

The number of training hours is consistent for this time of year although there is a spike in training hours during March where a new eLearning module on conscious inclusion - equality, diversity and inclusion in practice continues.

We are reporting the ethnicity pay gap for the first time as an organisation. Around 9 out of 10 of our staff disclosed their ethnicity, with 66% of the workforce White and 26% from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The data shows that the mean pay gap is 21.5%, and the median pay gap is 15%. The gap is driven by a higher proportion of White staff in more senior positions (88% of the upper pay quartile). Our data shows that we have a long way to go. Although we have good ethnic diversity in our workforce, we don't when it comes to diversity in senior positions. We are committed to improving this and will be working hard to do all we can to address this problem. We will look to publish both our 2022 gender and ethnicity pay gaps again in the autumn of this year.

Our latest staff engagement survey results are shown this quarter. The overall staff engagement index score has increased four percent from our last survey in 2020 and two per cent higher than the external all sector benchmark. The survey continues our recent trend of great outcomes. This revised shorter survey approach enables more achievable action planning and the ability to run much shorter 'pulse' surveys throughout the year on certain subject matters such as the new working environment.

Financial

Income for the year is ahead of budget and forecast due to additional income from practising fees. We continue to see increasing numbers of solicitors entering the profession (over 155,000 practising solicitors at the end of April 2022, an increase of 2.4 per cent on the same point in 2021).

Expenditure is being managed within the overall budget for the year and where possible we are looking to bring forward activity to ensure we make the best use of the available resources. The additional income will also allow us to mitigate the impact of the high inflation rates in the wider economy. We have begun to see the impact of this in increased energy bills and expect to experience additional pressures in the second half of the financial year. Around 50 per cent of our expenditure continues to be on staff costs and we are beginning to see the impact of inflationary pressures on the employment market which may impact later in the year and particularly into 2022/23.

The ongoing Continuous Improvement Programme is expected to identify £2.4m of cost savings by the end of the 2022/23 financial year, of which £1.4m is expected to be identified by the end of the 2021/22 financial year. The programme remains on track to identify these savings in line with the targets although the impact of that saving may be offset to some degree by the inflationary pressures discussed above.