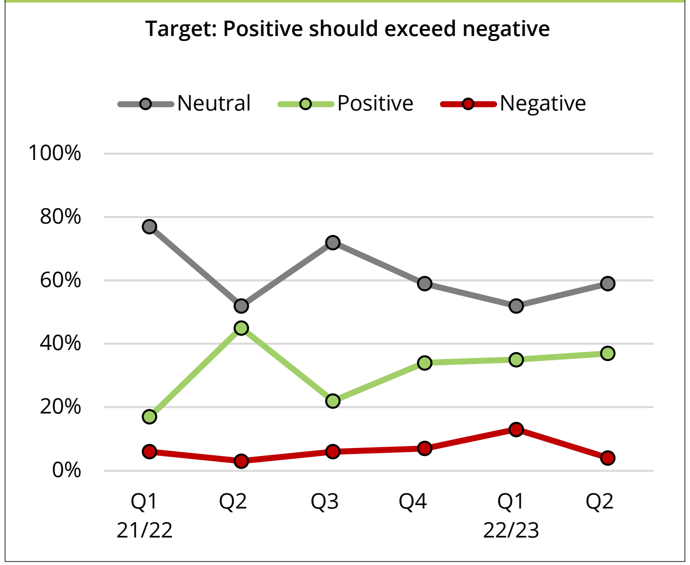
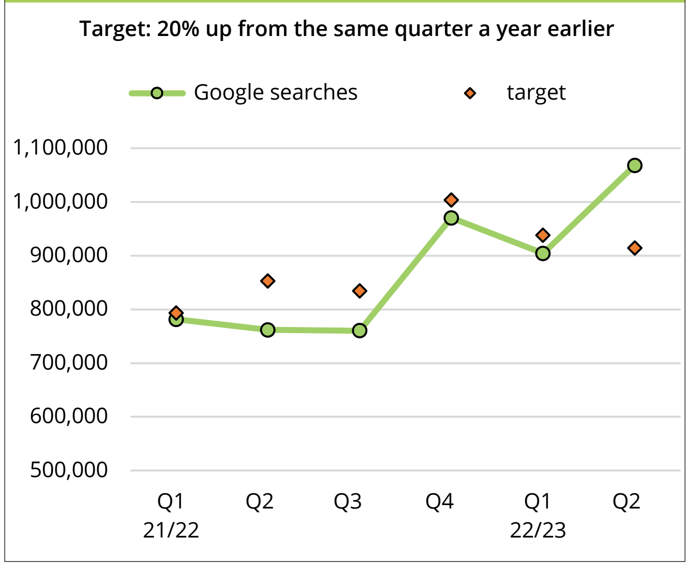
External

Core measures

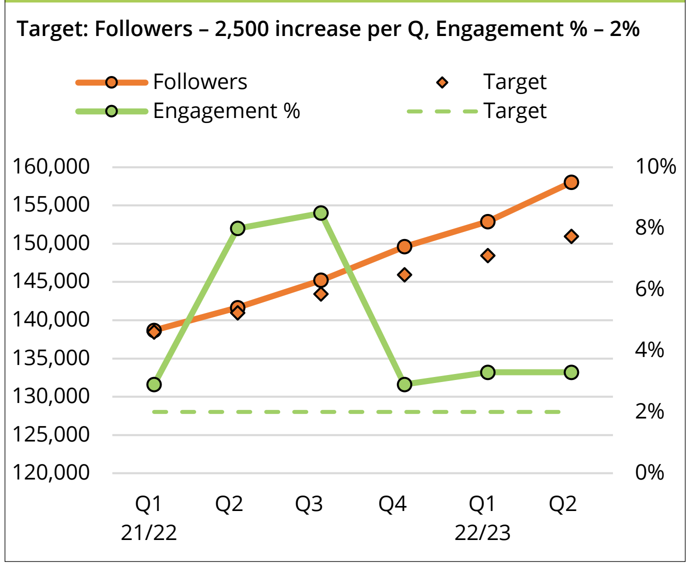
Sentiment of media coverage



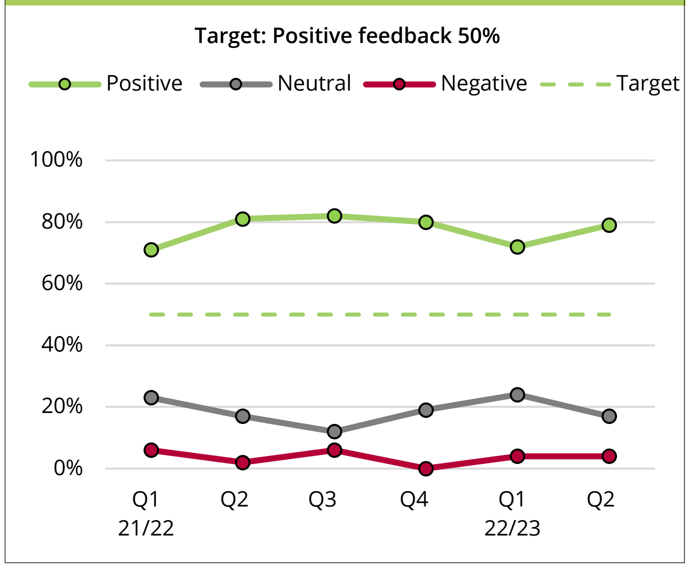
Click throughs to our website from Google searches



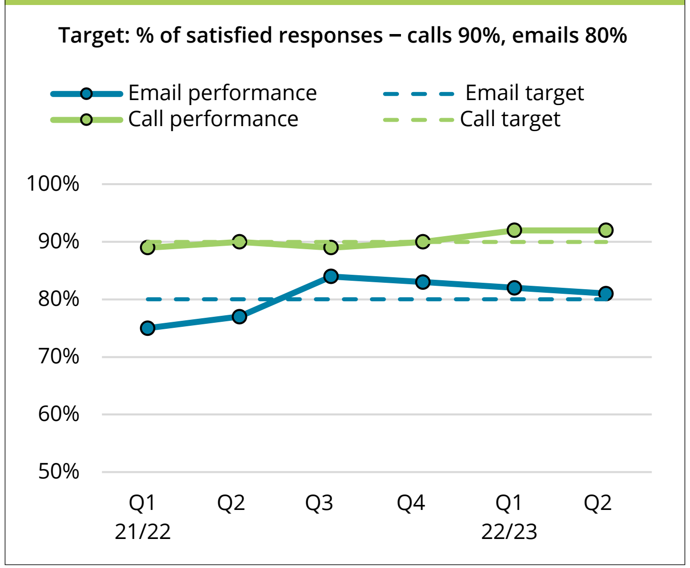
Social media engagements and followers



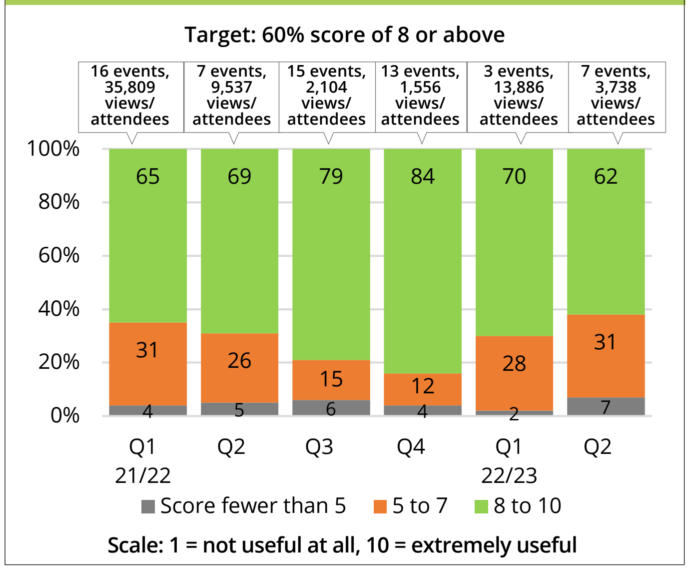
How stakeholders who attend our events view the SRA



Customer feedback on our contact centre calls and emails



Events feedback – usefulness rating

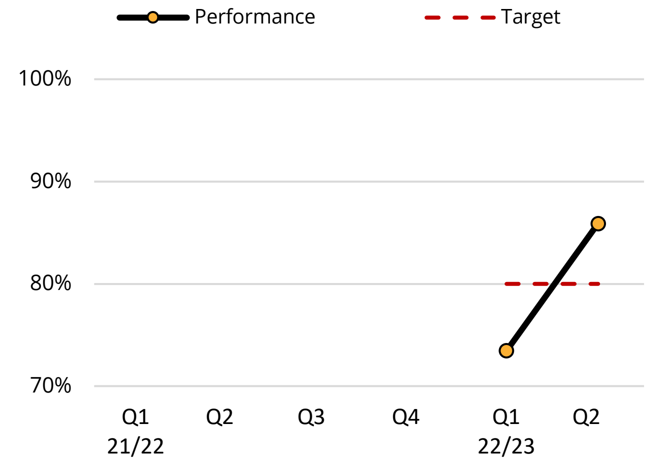


Delivery

Core measures

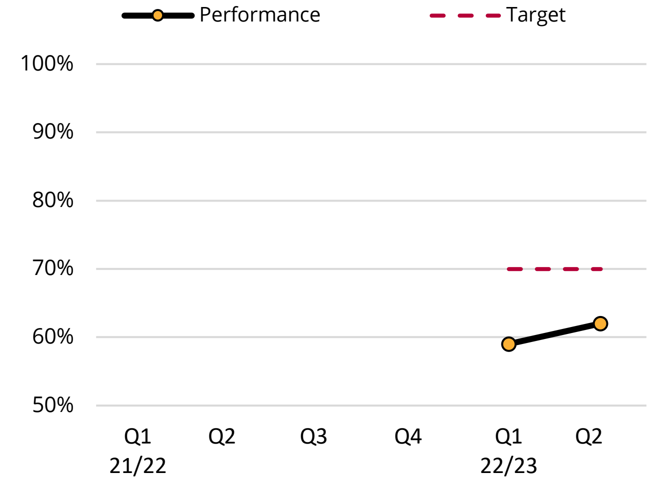
AERT

Target: 80% of assessments to be concluded within 2 months of being reported



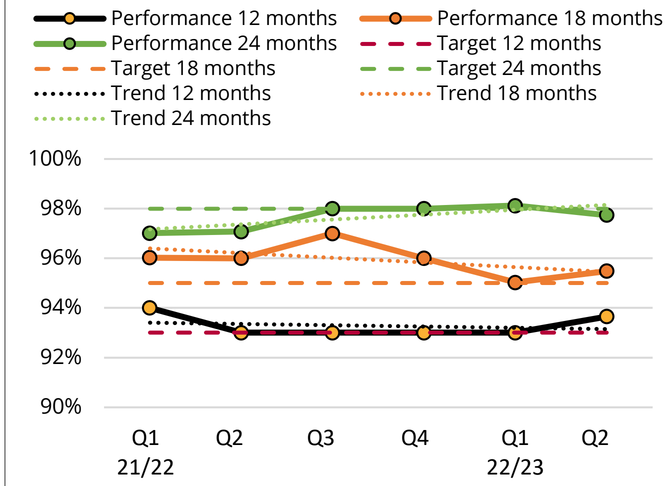
Investigations

Target: 70% of investigations to be concluded within 10 months from case creation (post AERT process)



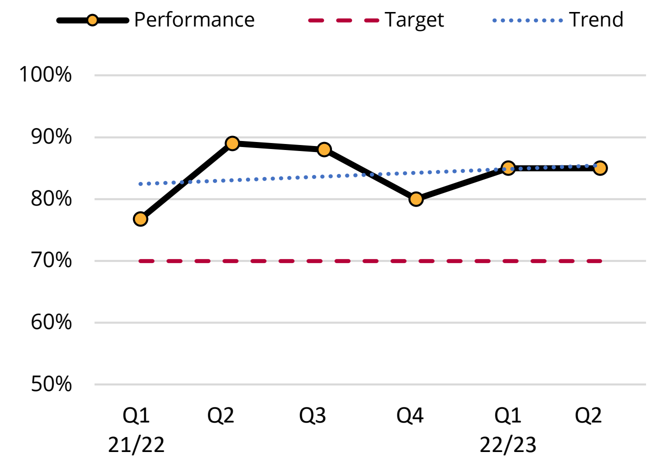
Investigation and enforcement

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



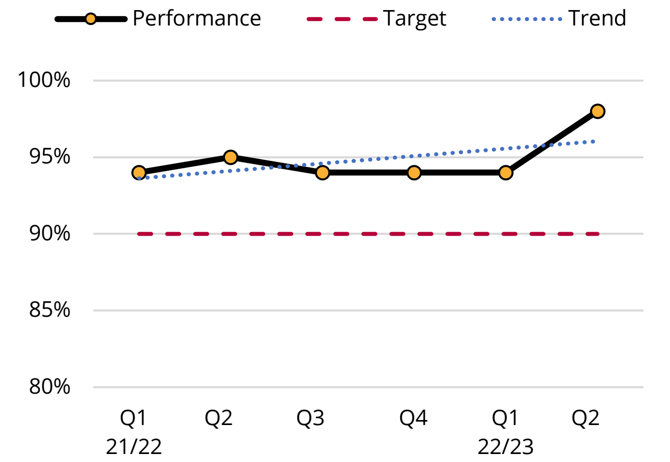
Contact centre

Target: 70% of calls answered in 60 seconds



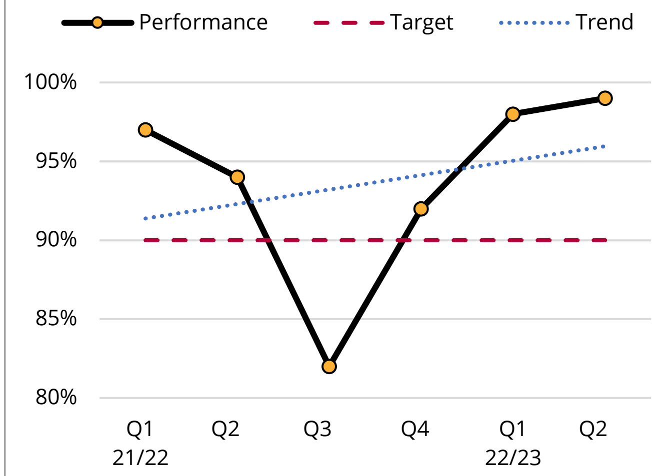
Firm based authorisation

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



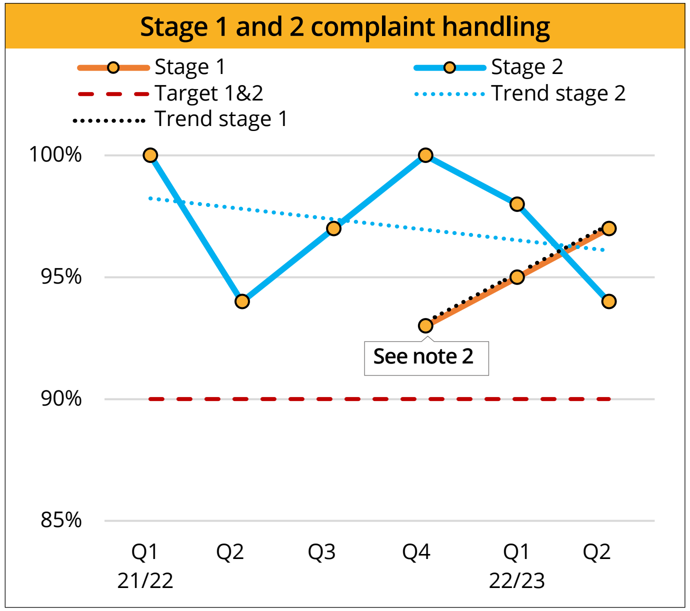
Individual based authorisation

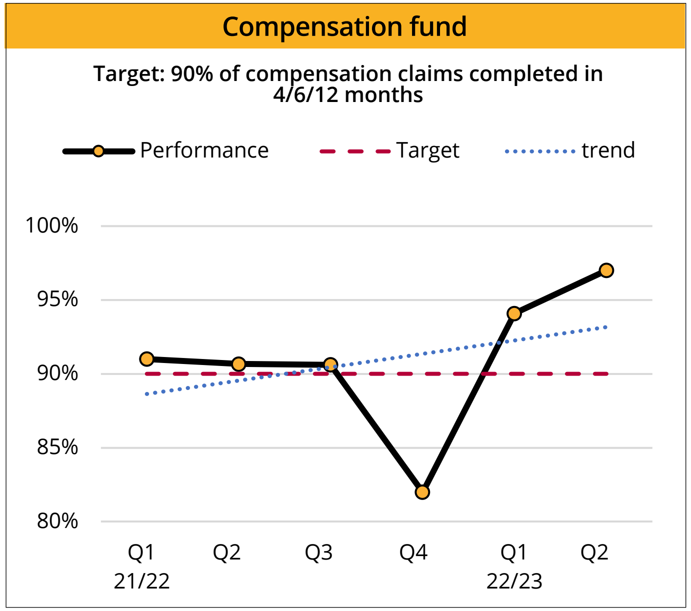
Target: 90% of medium and high-risk applications dealt with in 3/6 months



Notes:

1. Two new KPIs were introduced in March 2023. Investigations, an ongoing measure to demonstrate the benefits of the continuous improvement project, and assessment and early resolution, which measures assessments being concluded within two months of being reported.





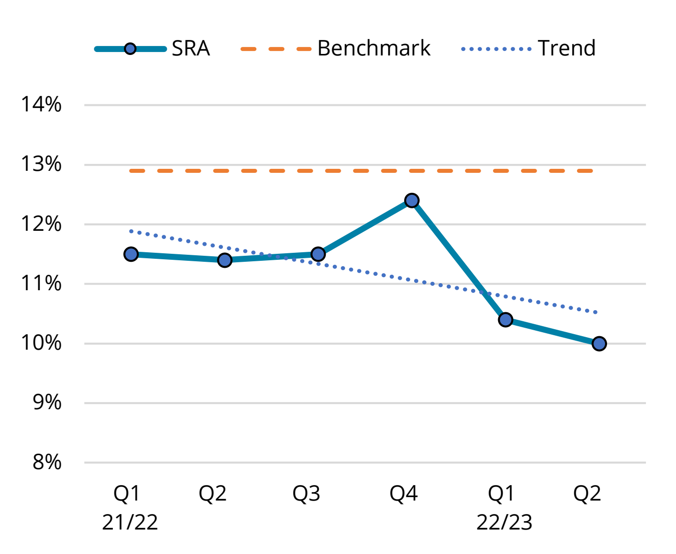
Notes:

1. Stage 1 and 2 complaint handling targets: to handle stage 1 complaints within 15 days and stage 2 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.
2. Reporting was amended in August 2022 to reflect the new 15-day target.
3. 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.

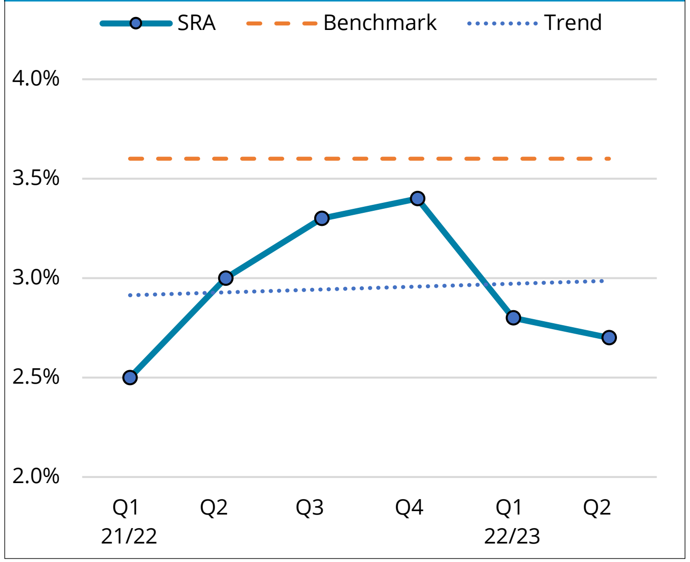
Internal

Core measures

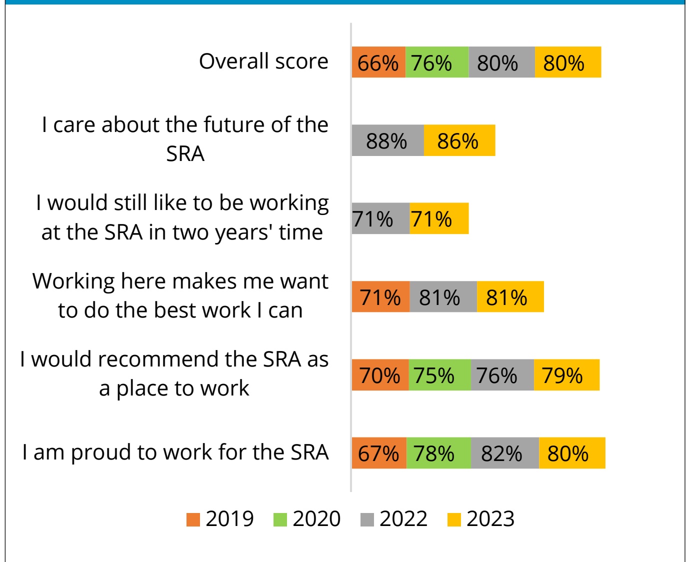
Voluntary staff turnover



Time lost to sickness

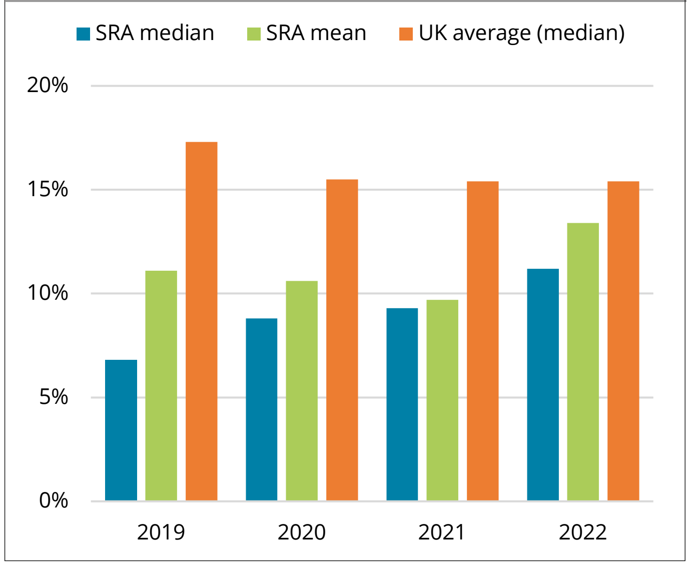


Staff engagement

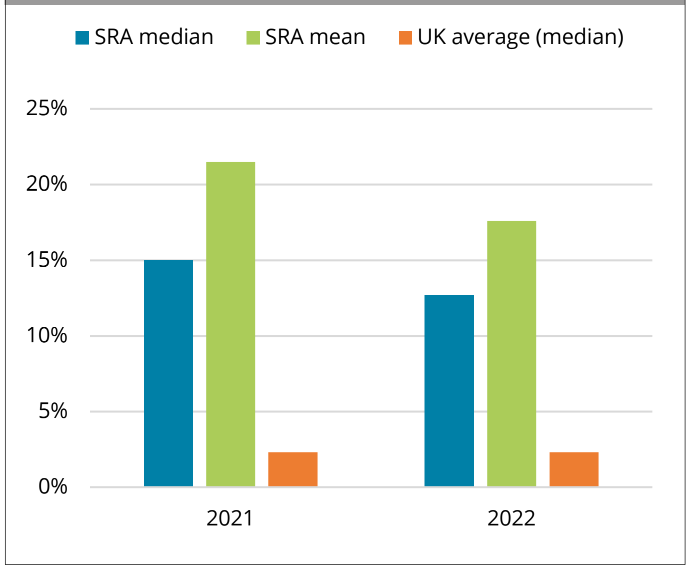


Topical measures

Gender pay gap



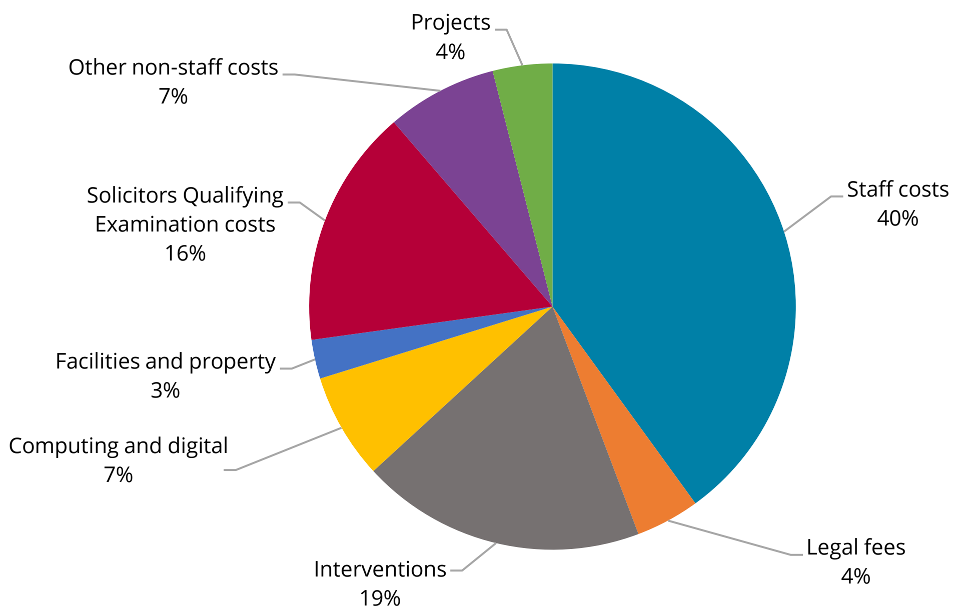
Ethnicity pay gap



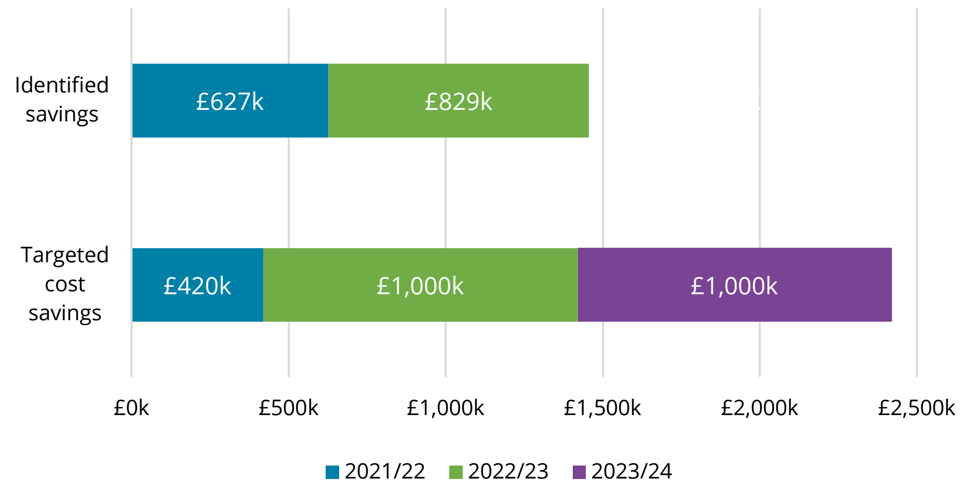
Financial

Core measures

Where our money is spent



Continuous Improvement Programme progress



Variance to budget 2022/23 Q2

£m	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance %
Income	51.37	42.87	8.50	19.8
Staff costs	18.83	18.92	0.09	0.5
Other costs	30.35	22.58	-7.77	-34.4

Variance to forecast 2022/23 Q2

£m	Actual	Forecast	Variance	Variance %
Income	51.37	51.47	-0.10	-0.2
Staff costs	18.83	18.86	0.03	0.2
Other costs	30.35	30.39	0.04	0.1

Quarter 2 2022/23 performance update

External

Media sentiment

In Q2, there was more positive media coverage than negative coverage for a ninth consecutive quarter.

Negative coverage was significantly down as a proportion of all media coverage during Q2 compared to Q1, when there were many negative stories about strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), and fining regime proposals. By contrast, coverage of SLAPPs and proposed changes to the financial penalties regime contributed to the large number of positive stories in Q2.

Other topics that generated positive media coverage in Q2 were:

- our case studies on misuse of client account
- the success of solicitor apprenticeships (in National Apprenticeships Week)
- our annual Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) report
- our risk report on digital ledgers
- our consultation on restricting excessive fees in financial product mis-selling
- our workplace culture rules.

Examples of negative coverage during the quarter were opinion pieces about the SQE and our thematic review of in-house practice.

Web traffic

Visits to our website by Google web search users in Q2 were up 40% from a year earlier, doubling our target of 20% year-on-year growth in click-throughs from Google. There were noteworthy increases in impressions and clicks for the following Google search queries: 'sra find a solicitor' and 'sra decisions'.

Events

We held seven events during Q2, including several standalone webinars and, in March, our successful SQE Virtual Conference 2023. Event attendance for the quarter totaled 3,738 (in- person, virtual streaming and virtual on-demand). Nine out of 10 attendees who scored the usefulness of our events rated them five out of 10 or higher.

Only one in 25 event attendees who responded to the question said they had a negative perception of the SRA, which is unchanged from Q1.

Social media

The number of SRA followers across all social media platforms reached more than 158,000 at the end of Q2, up 12% from a year earlier.

At 3.3%, the overall rate of engagement with SRA social media content during Q2 was unchanged from Q1, remaining above our target rate of 2%. Posts that drove particularly strong engagement in Q2 dealt with solicitor apprenticeships, the SQE and our thematic review into immigration law practice.

Customer feedback on Contact Centre calls and emails

We continued to receive positive feedback regarding our calls to the Contact Centre and achieved a 92% positive response rate in Q2 (against our target of 90%). We also saw email satisfaction levels at 81% (against our 80% target).

We completed our Institute of Customer Service mid-point benchmarking survey. We achieved a customer satisfaction score of 77.8%, which is above the UK all-sector average. Part of the exercise includes a survey of colleagues in our Contact Centre (Survcheck). We scored 83.5%, which is 5% higher than the UK all-sector average, showing our commitment to delivering excellent customer service.

Delivery

Investigation and Enforcement

We achieved all three of our end-to-end Investigation and Enforcement (I&E) key performance indicators (KPIs) in Q2 (93% of investigations in 12 months, 95% within 18 months and 98% within 24 months). We made further inroads into reducing the volume of cases that are open more than 24 months old in our caseload, reducing the numbers from 183 cases at the end of Q1 to 174 cases at the end of Q2.

A new KPI introduced in March will be monitored as an ongoing measure to demonstrate the benefits of our continuous improvement project. The KPI is for 70% of investigations to be concluded within 10 months from case creation (post the assessment and early resolution process). For the months of March and April, 66% and 57% was achieved, respectively, recognising the project improvements have yet to be delivered, with implementation commencing in July.

As the I&E continuous improvement project enters its implementation phase, training is being delivered throughout May and June as we work towards the 'go live' date in July. This is likely to put pressure on the teams as we move through the next two quarters and, despite measures such as overtime and outsourcing, an impact on performance is expected as our teams make the cultural shift to new ways of working.

The Assessment and Early Resolution Team (AERT) has recently introduced a new KPI which sets out 80% of assessments to be concluded with two months of being reported. Reporting of this KPI commenced in March and, in the first two months of reporting, AERT achieved 89% and 87%, respectively.

Authorisation

We continued to deliver a strong performance in both our firm based and individual based authorisation functions, exceeding our KPIs in both areas.
We also started work on the keeping the roll (KOR) exercise. This has involved contacting more than 60,000 non-practising solicitors to confirm they have up to date contact details. We prepared and tested our systems in readiness for the KOR renewal window, which opened in April and is progressing well.

Contact Centre

Performance remained positive in the Contact Centre, with 85% of calls answered in 60 seconds during Q2 (against the 70% KPI). We also responded to 99% of emails received within five days, against our target of 95%. We have ensured colleagues were ready for the KOR exercise and are doing business readiness planning for other upcoming projects.

Client Protection

Compensation fund performance has been good for the quarter, especially given the high claims volumes following the Metamorph intervention. The KPIs have been achieved every month across all types of claims. The key KPI in terms of overall closure of compensation fund claims was, therefore, achieved in all three months, with a quarter average of 99% (target 90%).

Complaints

Our performance in relation to our timeliness in responding to complaints about our work remains on track and within our published targets at both stages of the corporate complaints process. While the number of complaints we receive can fluctuate from month to month, the number of complaints received in the last quarter is comparable with previous periods. No new trends in complaints of note have emerged over the last period.

Internal

Staff turnover has again decreased slightly this quarter. Although the recruitment market is still volatile, our turnover continues to slow down – an indication that staff are fairly settled. This aligns to our recent staff engagement survey, where 70% of colleagues said they still wanted to be working here in two years' time.

Time lost to sickness has also decreased slightly again, for no apparent reason. We will continue to monitor the trend and promote our wellbeing initiatives and other interventions, such as our employee assistance and occupational health provisions. Both the turnover and sickness remain below the external benchmark, although the benchmark is somewhat dated now.

We have seen an increase in both the mean and median in the gender pay gap data, an increase of 3.7% and 1.9%, respectively. This is mostly due to having a higher percentage of female staff in the lower grades. The percentage of male staff decreasing in the lower grades and increasing in the upper grades is also a cause of the increase in the pay gap. The gap is still below the UK median benchmark of 15.5%.

Our ethnicity pay gap data shows that the mean pay gap has decreased by 3.9% and the median by 2.3%. The gap is still driven by a higher proportion of White staff in more senior positions, where 80% of the upper pay quartile are White (a decrease of 8%). We are due to call the next set of data to determine the gender and ethnicity pay gaps towards the end of quarter two with a view to analysing it in quarter three and publishing in quarter four alongside our annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workforce report.

The results of our annual staff engagement survey have recently been communicated to colleagues. The response rate increased by 3% from last year. Although our recent trends of increasingly good outcomes have taken a slight downturn, we have maintained the overall staff engagement index score of 80%. This remains 2% higher than the external sector benchmark. We are planning our next pulse survey towards the end of quarter two/early quarter three to seek staff opinion on the current relationship between their performance and pay. The aim of this is to help inform our future approach to rewarding staff.

Financial

Both income and expenditure for the year show significant variances to budget at first viewing. These are both impacted by a large intervention in late 2022. The costs of interventions are recovered from the compensation fund and there is, therefore, no impact on the SRA overall.

Additionally, we have seen higher than expected revenue from the SQE, which is offset by increased costs associated with delivering the exam.

When intervention and SQE costs are ignored, income is in line with budget for the financial year to date (0.3% more income than expected).

Expenditure on staff costs is marginally in budget by 0.5% in the first half of the year. This was a result of vacancies not filled in the early part of the year. At the end of April, headcount was 96% of the budgeted figure, which is broadly in line with expected levels of staff turnover.

Ignoring the impact of interventions and SQE, expenditure on non-staff costs was 5.3% lower than expected in the first half of the year. Within this were savings in some areas as we were able to renew contracts at lower than expected values. Also, our costs in relation to energy usage were not as high as predicted when the budget was set. At the time energy markets were particularly volatile and the budget was prepared prudently to allow for potential increases. Earlier this year, we fixed our energy costs for the next two years at a rate that is within the budget for the year.

When compared to the reforecast for the financial year, income and expenditure are broadly in line with expectations. The significant variances discussed above were in the first quarter of the year and were, therefore, reflected in the updated forecast.

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 more than £1.5m has been identified so far.

The focus of the programme has shifted in recent months from financial savings to operational outcomes, including improvements in our investigation and enforcement functions, the first phase of which will deliver later this financial year.