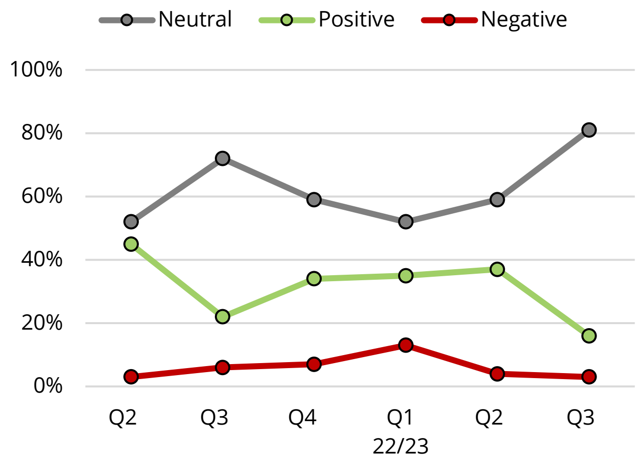
External

Core measures

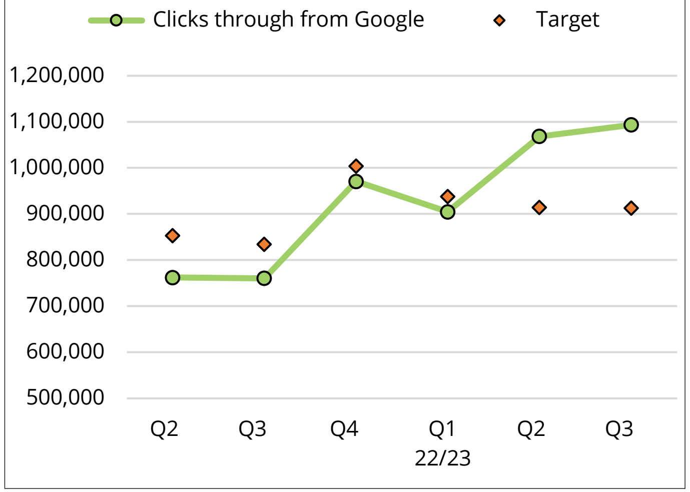
Sentiment of media coverage

Target: Positive should exceed negative



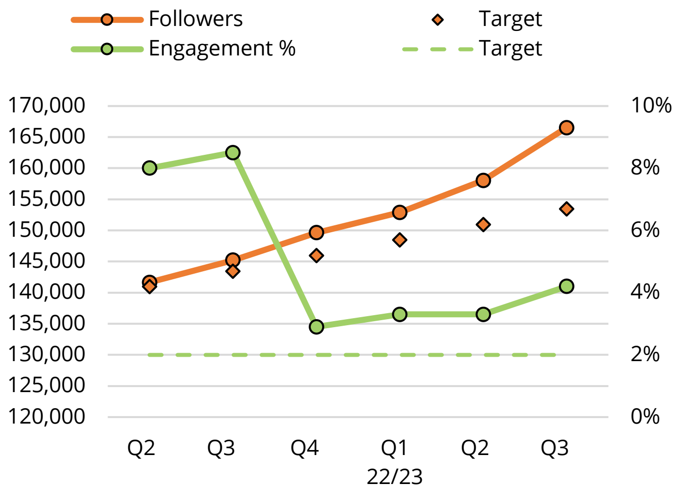
Click throughs to our website from Google searches

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



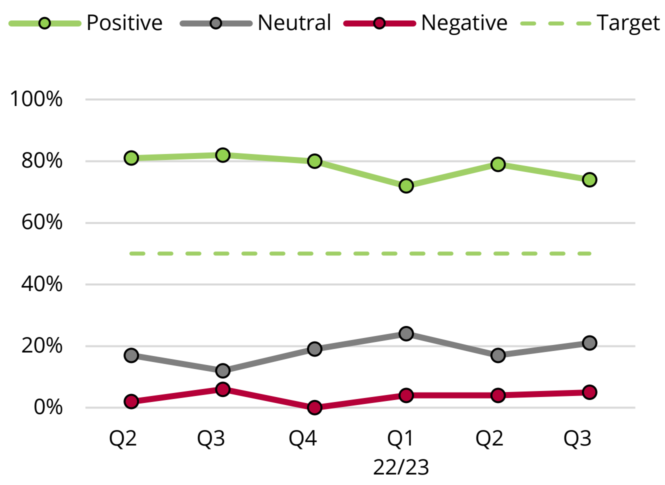
Social media engagements and followers

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



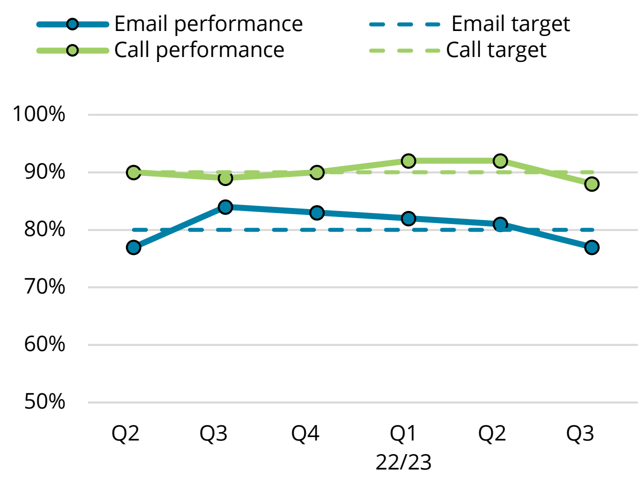
How stakeholders who attend our events view the SRA

Target: Positive feedback 50%



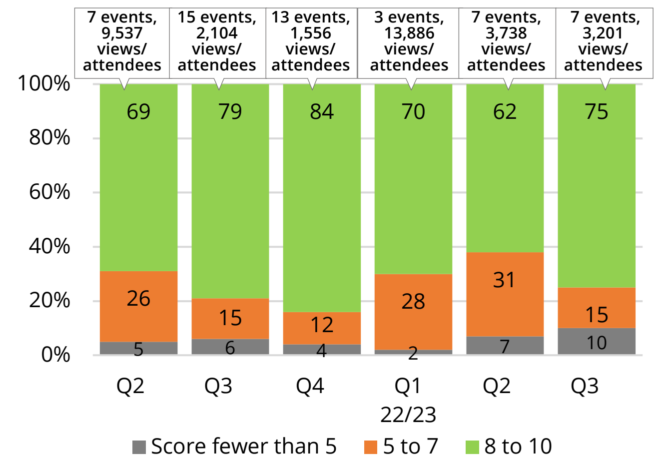
Customer feedback on our contact centre calls and emails

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



Events feedback – usefulness rating

Target: 60% score of 8 or above

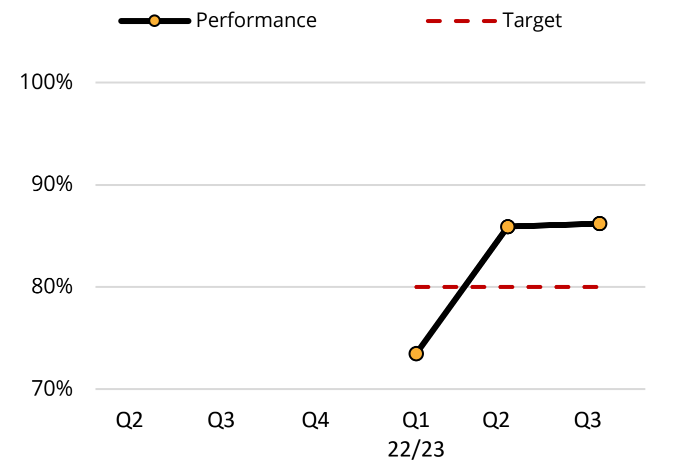


Scale: 1 = not useful at all, 10 = extremely useful

Core measures

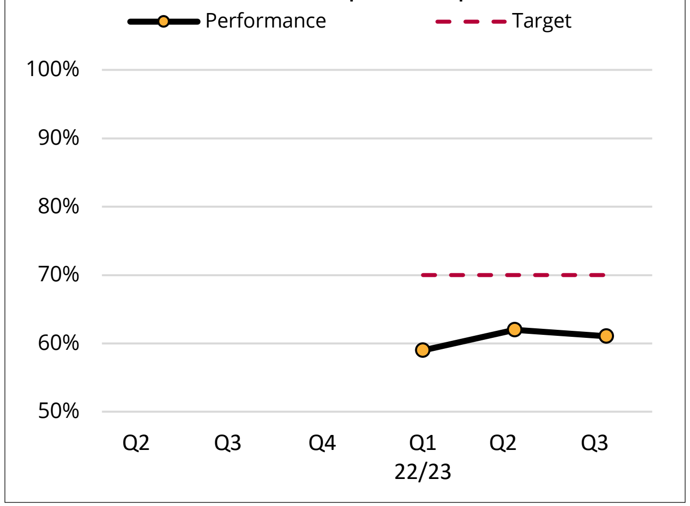
Assesment and early resolution

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



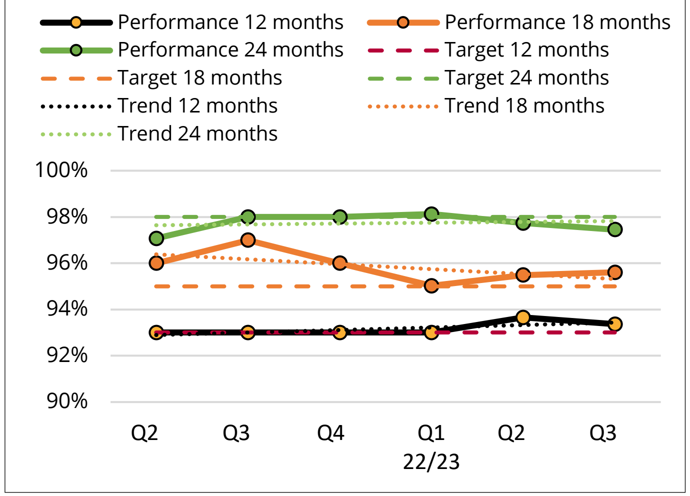
Investigations

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



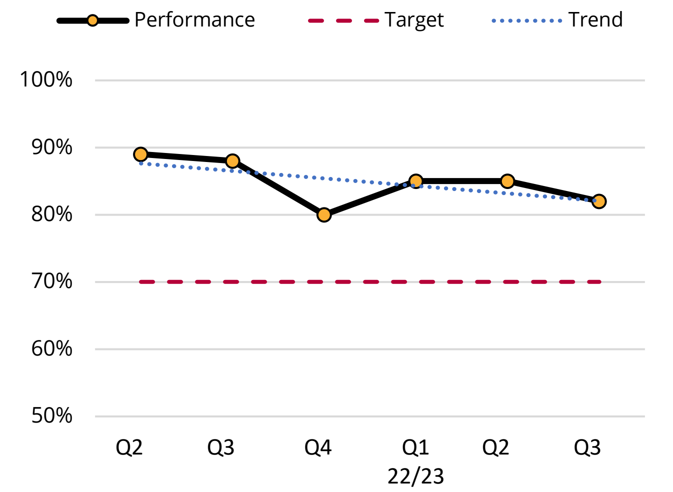
Investigation and enforcement

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



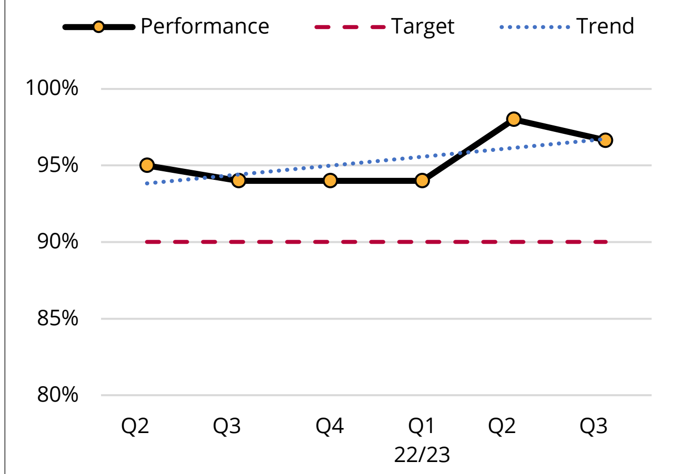
Contact centre

Target: 70% of calls answered in 60 seconds



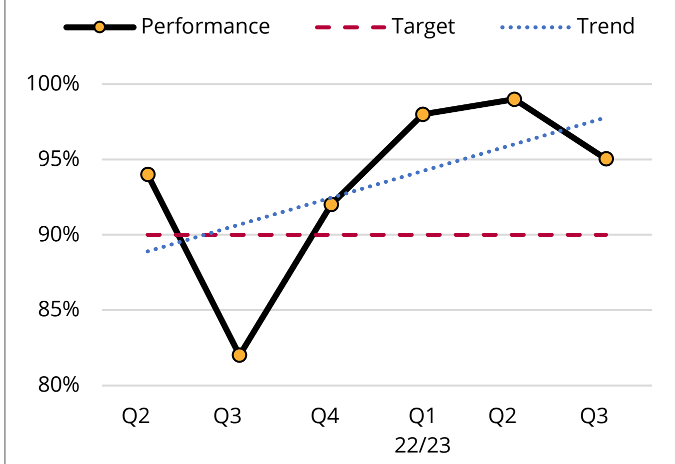
Firm based authorisation

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



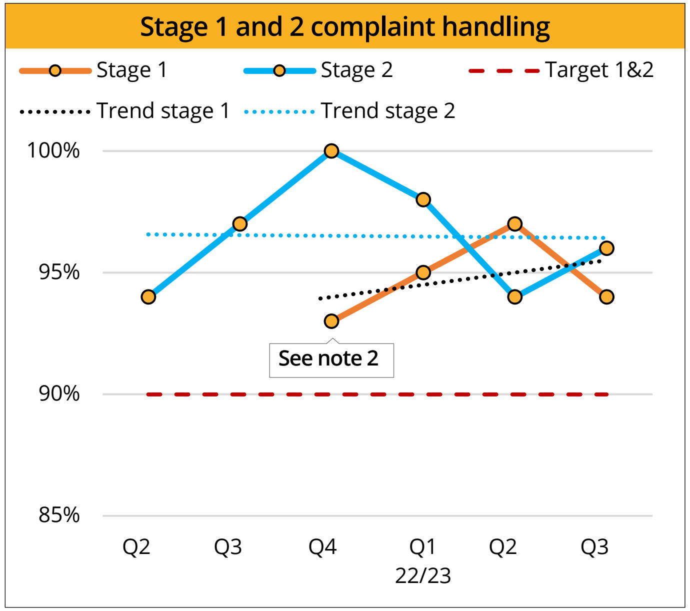
Individual based authorisation

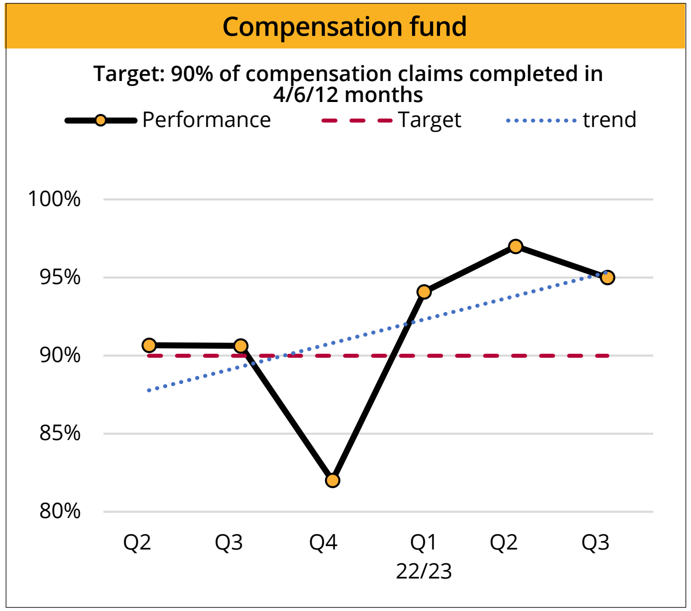
Target: 90% of medium and high-risk applications dealt with in 3/6 months



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:

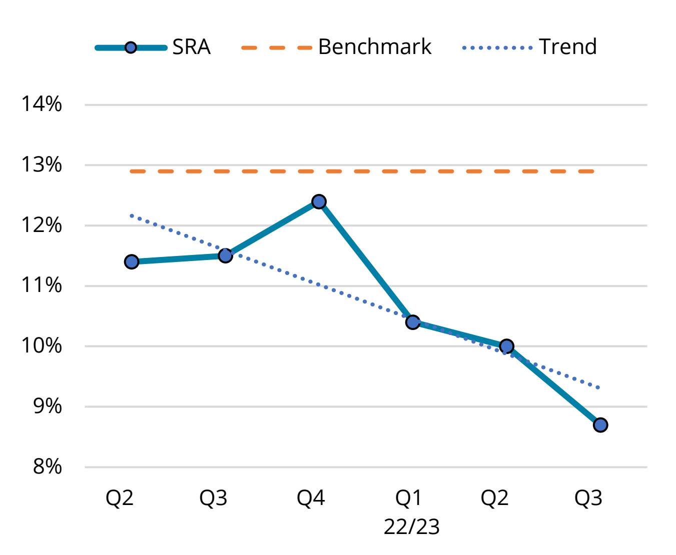
1. Stage 1 and 2 complaint handling targets: to handle stage 1 complaints within 15 days and stage 2 within 20 days. Stage 1 is the response from the team concerned and stage 2 is the response from our Corporate Complaints team, where the matter is not resolved at stage 1.
2. Reporting was amended in 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

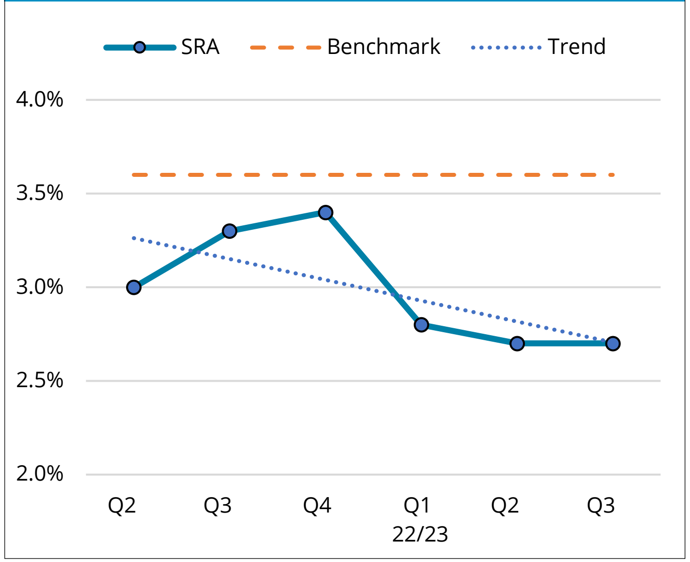
Core measures

Topical measures

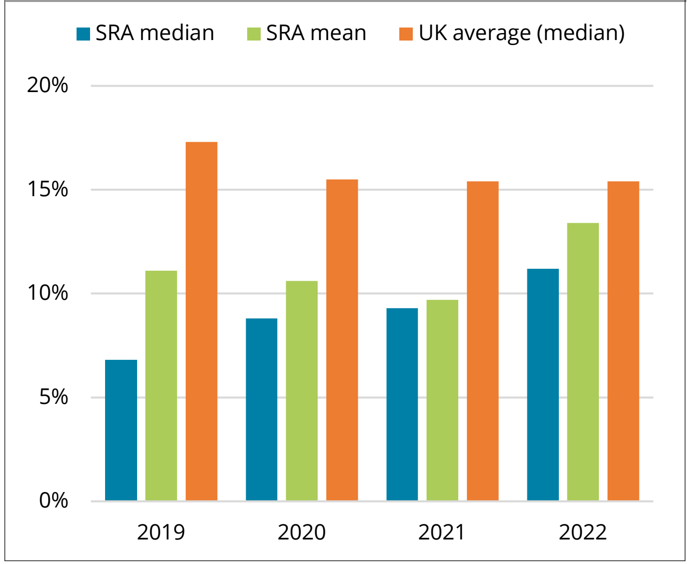
Voluntary staff turnover



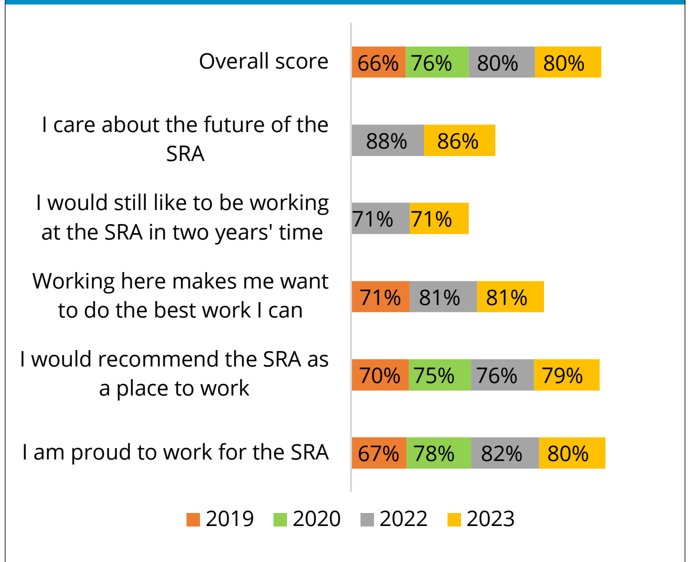
Time lost to sickness



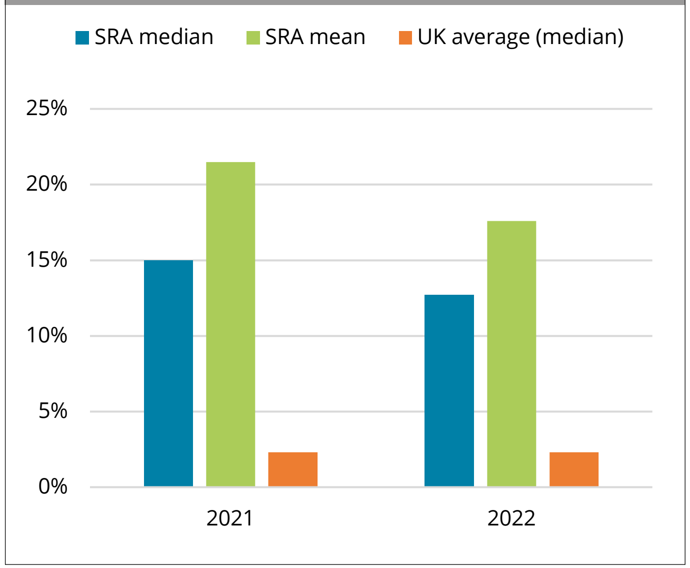
Gender pay gap



Staff engagement



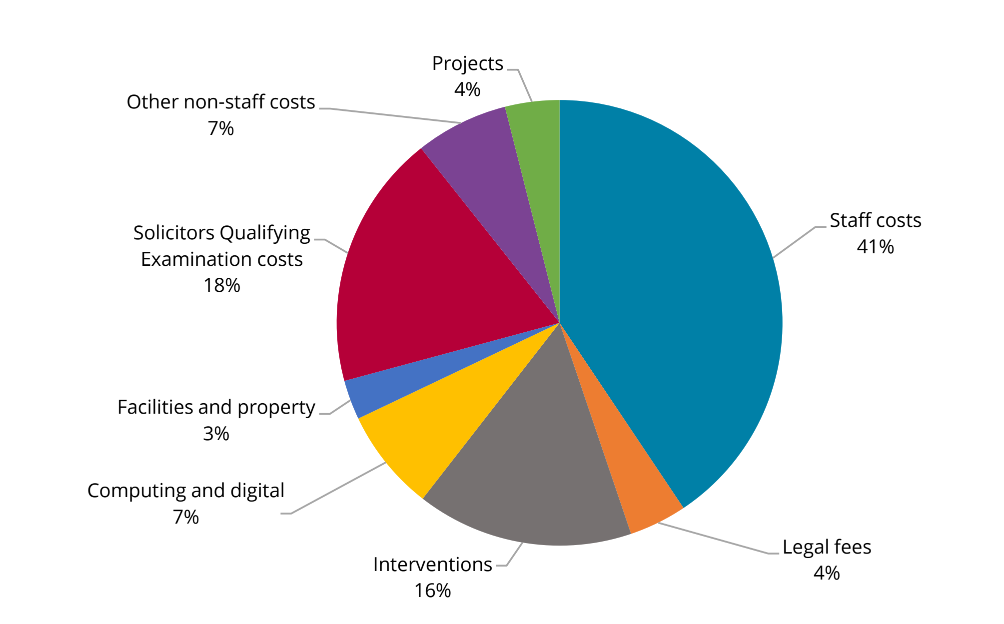
Ethnicity pay gap



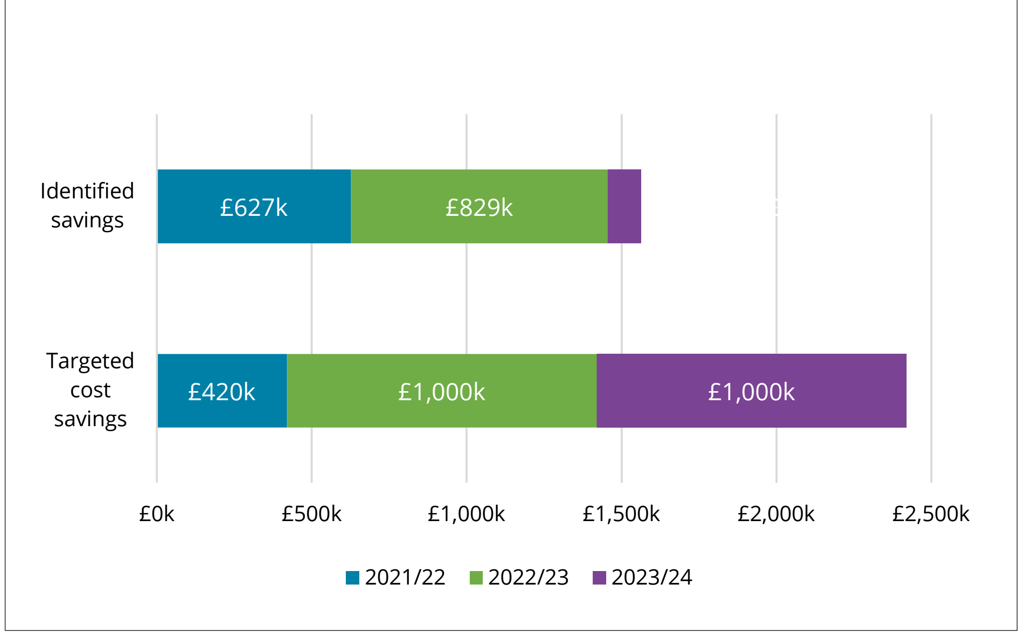
Financial

Core measures

Where our money is spent



Continuous Improvement Programme progress



Variance to budget 2022/23 Q3

£m	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance %
Income	77.30	64.72	12.58	19.4
Staff costs	29.01	28.32	-0.69	-2.4%
Other costs	45.36	34.63	-10.73	-31.0%

Variance to forecast 2022/23 Q3

£m	Actual	Forecast	Variance	Variance %
Income	77.30	74.08	3.22	4.3%
Staff costs	29.01	28.77	-0.24	-0.8%
Other costs	45.36	42.98	-2.38	-5.5%

Quarter 3 2022/23 performance update

External

Media sentiment

Quarter 3 (Q3) was the tenth consecutive quarter in which there was more positive media coverage than negative coverage. Negative coverage as a proportion of all media coverage was lower in Q3 compared to the previous quarter and compared to the same period a year earlier.

Topics generating positive media coverage in Q3 were:

- our new rules and guidance addressing the risks of failing to protect and support colleagues (ie our wellbeing rules and guidance)
- publication of our annual reports
- a thematic review into powers of attorney
- our response to issues highlighted by a Daily Mail undercover investigation of immigration advice
- research reports we released on unbundling services, customer review websites and the unreserved legal services sector.

Examples of negative media coverage during the quarter dealt with:

- overrepresentation of Black, Asian and ethnic minority solicitors in disciplinary outcomes
- the results of a CILEX members survey about future regulation arrangements.

Web traffic

More than one million Google web search users clicked through to our website in Q3. Google referrals in Q3 were up 44% from a year earlier, more than doubling our target of 20% annual growth. There were notable increases (compared to the previous quarter) in click-throughs from search queries about (one) diversity data and (two) disciplinary decisions.

Social media

The number of followers to Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) accounts across all social media platforms reached more than 166,000 at the end of Q3, up 15% from a year earlier.

The overall rate of engagement with our social media content during Q3 was 4.2%, more than double our target of 2%. Social posts that drove particularly strong engagement in Q3 dealt with our response to issues highlighted by a Daily Mail undercover investigation of immigration advice, which made national headlines in July. But there was greater-than-usual engagement in May and June, too. These were led by videos we posted about compliance with the Russia sanctions regime, the definition of qualifying work experience and our keeping of the roll exercise.

Events

We held seven events during Q3, including well-received, one-day SRA Innovate events in London and Bristol. We also delivered several standalone webinars on topics. These ranged from compliance with the Russia sanctions regime to Youth Court practice standards and tips on taking the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) as a qualified lawyer. Event attendance for the quarter totaled 3,201 (in-person, virtual streaming and virtual on-demand). Three out of four attendees who scored the usefulness of our events rated them eight out of 10 or higher.

One in every 20 event attendees who responded to the question said they had a negative perception of the SRA, up from one in 25 during Q2.

Customer feedback on Contact Centre calls and emails

We have seen a slight decline in our customer satisfaction scores in the Contact Centre. Call satisfaction had an 88% positive response rate (against our target of 90%) and our email satisfaction of 77% positive response rate (against our 80% target). Customer satisfaction was mainly impacted by the Contact Centre supporting the following projects: keeping of the roll, multi-factor authentication and our firm diversity data exercise.

Delivery

Investigation and Enforcement

The I&E continuous improvement programme worked, through May and June, towards a successful 'go live' date in July. This has inevitably put pressure on teams and, while a package of support has been put in place for staff, we anticipate that this will continue in the next quarter as we embed the new ways of working.

In the meantime, however, we achieved our end-to-end investigation and enforcement key performance indicators (KPIs) in Q3 of completing 93% of investigations in 12 months and 95% within 18 months. We narrowly missed the target of completing 98% within 24 months, achieving 97%. We made further progress with reducing the volume of cases that are open for more than 24 months. This decreased from 183 cases at the end of Q1 to 174 cases at the end of Q2. It has decreased further to 162 at the end of Q3.

We recently introduced further KPIs to track the benefits of the continuous improvement programme. The Assessment and Early Resolution team (AERT) KPI is to complete 80% of assessments within two months of being reported. Performance against this new KPI remains strong, with 85% in May and 87% in both June and July. The associated KPI for the investigation stage 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 May, June and July, 61%, 66% and 57% was achieved, respectively, giving an average of 61%.

Authorisation

We continued to deliver a strong performance in both our firm based and individual based authorisation functions, exceeding our KPIs with 95% of all cases across both areas closed within service level agreement over the third quarter. The keeping of the roll exercise also neared completion, affecting 61,000 solicitors who are on the roll with no practising certificate. The exercise was preceded by an extensive contact plan to raise awareness of those affected, accompanied by press and social media communications. Some 33,500 solicitors applied and paid the £20 administration fee to remain on the roll. The remaining 27,000 were removed from the roll in July. We have informed them of this and provided guidance on how to apply for restoration to the roll, should they wish to.

Contact Centre

Performance remained positive in the Contact Centre, where 75% of calls were answered in 60 seconds against the 70% key performance indicator (KPI) during Q3. This was a reduction compared to Q2, due to supporting multiple projects (see more below) and training. We responded to 98% of emails received within five days, against our target of 95%. During this period, the Contact Centre supported the following projects: keeping of the roll, multi-factor authentication and our firm diversity data exercise.

Client Protection

Compensation fund performance has continued to be strong, especially given the continuing high volume of claims following the Metamorph intervention and the growing volume of interventions as the year has progressed. The KPIs have been achieved every month across all types of claims. The KPI in terms of overall closure of compensation fund claims was therefore, also achieved in all three months, with a quarter average of 95% (target 90%).

Complaints

Our performance in relation to dealing with complaints remained good in Q3, exceeding KPIs at both stages of our corporate complaints process. Volumes of stage 1 complaints increased in the third quarter, but we have seen a downward trend in the percentage of complaints escalating from stage 1 to stage 2 from Q1 to Q3.

Internal

Staff turnover has decreased this quarter. It’s not unusual for Q3 to remain static or decrease as August is a typically quiet month for recruitment.

Time lost to sickness has remained the same. We 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 now dated.

We are currently analysing both the gender and ethnicity pay gap data for this year and are on target to publish in quarter four alongside our annual equality, diversity and inclusion workforce report. Progress against our ethnicity action plan to increase representation in our leadership population continues. A pulse survey on barriers to career development within the SRA goes out to all staff in September. The first year of our Black, Asian and minority ethnic mentoring programme has successfully concluded and we will run a similar programme in 2023/24. Likewise, the success of our reverse mentoring programme for Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff will now expand into our director population and widen to include LGBTQ+ staff and staff with a disability.

We have recently published our corporate action plan in response to our annual staff engagement survey, focusing on reward, change, leadership, visibility and wellbeing.

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 intervention costs are recovered from the compensation fund, so there is no impact on the SRA.

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 broadly in line with budget for the financial year to date (1.5% more income than expected).

Expenditure on staff costs is ahead of budget by 2.4% in the first nine months of the year. This was a result of a decision taken earlier in the year to utilise underspending in the wider budget to increase headcount to support our investigation and enforcement (I&E) work. This increase has been included in the 2023/24 budget as a permanent increase. At the end of July, headcount was less than 1% above the budgeted figure as a result of the agreed increases.

Ignoring the impact of interventions and SQE, expenditure on non-staff costs was 5.2% lower than expected at the end of July. Within this were savings in some areas, as we could renew contracts at lower-than-expected values. Also, our energy use costs were not as high as we predicted when the budget was set. At the time, energy markets were 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 within the year's budget.

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 had expected to identify £2.4m of cost savings by the end of the 2022/23 financial year, of which more than £1.6m 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 work, the first phase of which has recently been completed.