



Law Society
of Scotland

COVID-19

Economic impact on the private practice sector of the
Scottish Solicitor profession

Analysis of research

Third Report

November 2021



Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

The Law Society of Scotland is the professional body for over 12,000 Scottish solicitors. With our overarching objective of leading legal excellence, we strive to excel and to be a world-class professional body, understanding and serving the needs of our members and the public. We set and uphold standards to ensure the provision of excellent legal services and ensure the public can have confidence in Scotland's solicitor profession.

We have a statutory duty to work in the public interest, a duty which we are strongly committed to achieving through our work to promote a strong, varied, and effective solicitor profession working in the interests of the public and protecting and promoting the rule of law. We seek to influence the creation of a fairer and more just society through our active engagement with the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments, Parliaments, wider stakeholders, and our membership. Ever since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and the first lockdown in March 2020, we continue to be affected by it both in our personal and professional lives. We have all over the last nineteen months had to adapt our daily lives to minimise the spread of infection and save lives. It appears at present that we will have to continue to adapt our daily lives for the foreseeable future.

While the continuing roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in 2021 has seen the vast majority of the adult population now double-vaccinated, allowing restrictions on movement to ease to such an extent that, as of the time of writing, we slowly return to our normal lives, the virus remains a serious health risk.

We should, accordingly, remain cautious in both our working and personal lives as we begin to return to offices, face-to-face meetings, take holidays both at home and abroad and attend social gatherings.

This research, undertaken in September 2021 in respect of the private practice sector of the Scottish solicitor profession, is the latest of a number of Covid-19 related reports published by the Society since the outbreak of the pandemic which include the following:

1. The [first report](#) on the financial impact of coronavirus on the private practice sector of the Scottish solicitor profession. This research was undertaken by way of a telephone survey of 158 cashroom partners and was published in May 2020. It disclosed that the vast majority of the private practice sector at that time had been adversely affected by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.
2. The impact of Covid-19 on the in-house sector of the Scottish solicitor profession. This [research](#) was also undertaken by way of a telephone survey of 56 in-house Heads of Legal/General Counsel and published in June 2020. Its findings disclosed that the value of in-house legal teams was being felt as they had turned to the specialist in-house counsel to provide advice, with a particular focus on employment law and how to meet their statutory obligations.
3. An online survey of all in-house solicitors undertaken in June 2020. The Society's In-House Lawyers Committee co-conveners Sheekha Saha and Vlad Valiente sent this survey by email to all in-house solicitors on 5 June 2020 and invited them to complete and return the survey by 26 June 2020. 468 responses were received. The [report](#) was published in July 2020. It complemented the report at 2 above. Its findings in relation to the effect that Covid-19 had on in-house solicitors were broadly in line with that report. This survey also asked questions relating to support the Society may consider, wellbeing and preferred training the Society could make available to the inhouse community.

4. An online survey on the experiences of Scottish solicitors with virtual custody courts. This online survey was open between 30 June 2020 and 9 July 2020. 215 responses were received. The [report](#), published in July 2020, focused on the 144 responses from criminal court practitioners, both crown and defence, who indicated that they had been involved in one or more virtual custody court hearing at the date of survey response. The report highlighted both the practical problems experiences arising from virtual courts as well as the potential advantages of holding virtual custody courts during the pandemic.

5. The [second report](#) on the economic impact of Covid-19 on the private practice sector of the Scottish solicitor profession. A telephone survey of 128 of the 158 cashroom partners referred to at 1 above was undertaken and published in December 2020. It highlighted that there had been a marked improvement in the fortunes of many of those firms since last surveyed in April/May 2020. In particular, the pandemic in October 2020 had been having less of an impact on practitioners than previously anticipated. 62% of firms reported either a significant increase (30%) or an increase (32%) in workload since April 2020.

6. An online survey into remote civil court procedure was undertaken in February/March 2021 and the [results](#) published in April 2021. 445 responses were received. According to the Society's records at that time, 1,013 solicitors were carrying out civil court work. This meant that 44% or almost one half of our members who practise civil litigation took part in the online survey, which is a tremendously high response rate. Respondents were generally positive about remote civil court working, in particular for procedural hearings. However, a significant number of respondents expressed concerns around technical difficulties as well as practical difficulties with obtaining instructions and clients not being able to fully participate in proofs.

As the pandemic is now almost at two years, the Society continues to actively represent the profession by collecting information on its economic impact. It has been and continues to be of enormous benefit in key stakeholder contact. We intend to continue to canvass the views of our members throughout its duration and mark any distinguishing trends that may emerge with regard to how practitioners operate during these difficult times.

Methodology

A telephone survey was carried out by the Society's Research Team. Cashroom managers at 136 private practice firms were interviewed. The sample was selected to provide a representative profile of private practice by rurality and size of firm. None of the 158 cashroom managers who formed part of the sample selected for the first or second surveys were contacted for this survey. While further benchmarking of the original sample may have been of some benefit, a new sample was selected to provide a wider representation across private practice firms as to Covid-19's economic impact.

Calls were made by the Research Team Alan McCreadie, Solicitor and Head of Research, and Nicola Johnstone, Solicitor and Research Executive, between 6 and 27 September 2021. The full questionnaire used can be found in the Appendix.

Comparisons have been made with earlier research of private practice firms referred to above, published in May and December 2020. A different representative sample of firms was contacted and interviewed for the first two surveys. Whilst the results may not be directly comparable, analysis across the research provides useful insights into the impact of Covid-19 and how the solicitor profession in private practice has been impacted by the pandemic.

Key findings

Both solicitor staffing levels and support staff levels appeared to be much the same as they were at this time last year, which suggests that Covid-19 has not had the economic impact on the Scottish solicitor profession that was perhaps initially anticipated.

Almost every firm surveyed indicated that they had no solicitor or support staff member on furlough. This compares with 35% of solicitors and 41% of support staff who were on furlough at the outbreak of the pandemic and reflected in the first report published in May 2020.

At the end of the furlough period on 30 September 2021, almost all firms indicated their intention was to have all staff back to work. This followed on from very few firms reporting that they still had staff on furlough. Only one firm out of the 136 surveyed indicated that it would consider staff redundancy once the furlough scheme came to an end. This suggests a marked recovery over the course of the pandemic in relation to staff returning to work.

The effect of Covid-19 had not had much of an impact on firms' decisions to change current staffing levels. Indeed, almost a quarter of the 136 firms surveyed indicated that they would increase their number of solicitor staff in the next 12 months and almost one fifth of the 136 firms surveyed indicated that they would increase their number of support staff in the next 12 months.

With regard to trainee solicitors, most firms indicated that they would not change trainee numbers in the next year. A majority of those firms advised that they do not normally recruit trainees. Encouragingly, 25 firms, or almost one in five of those surveyed, indicated that they would increase trainee numbers next year.

Almost half the firms indicated that workloads had either increased or significantly increased since before the pandemic, although just over one quarter of the firms surveyed indicated a decrease or significant decrease in workloads as compared with pre pandemic.

Most firms surveyed were positive regarding future workloads. While almost half thought that workloads would remain the same for next year as they were for this year, almost half again thought workloads would increase. Only 14 firms thought their workloads would decrease over the next year. There was a similar response regarding anticipated turnover in the next 12 months.

There was an overall willingness to continue with various strategies that firms had adopted during the pandemic. In particular, 90 out of the 136 firms advised they would either implement or continue with hybrid working and 26 firms, or just over one fifth of those surveyed, advised that they would implement home working, that is having some staff work exclusively from home. Most firms advised that there was no current strategy that they would discontinue and would operate post pandemic as they do now. However, one firm did indicate that hybrid working had not worked well.

In terms of staff wellbeing during the pandemic, most firms indicated that they would have regular staff conversations to help with any issues that may have arisen due to the pandemic. A number who answered that they had no wellbeing measures in place indicated that this was because they worked entirely on their own. Almost one fifth of firms indicated that they had a formal wellbeing strategy in place.

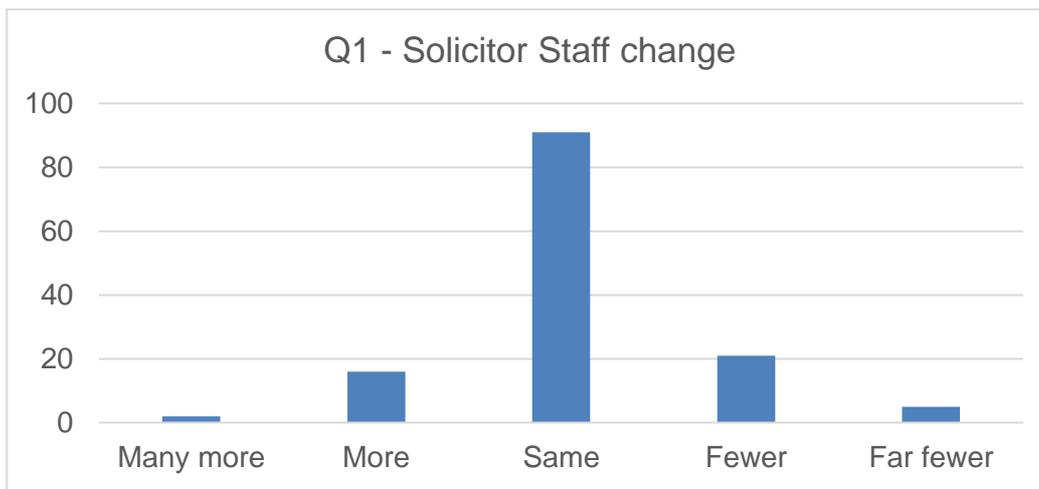
Most firms thought that client expectations and demands on their business would change in future, either for better or for worse and chose the various answer options such as less face-to-face contact, less travel, and more videoconferencing. Interestingly, only 18 firms thought that their clients would expect fees to reduce as a result of the pandemic.



In terms of overall client satisfaction with firms over the next 12 months, almost one half indicated that this would remain the same as it is at present, although a third thought clients would be either satisfied or much more satisfied. Just under a fifth of firms indicated that their clients would be either less satisfied or much less satisfied with their service.

Results and analysis

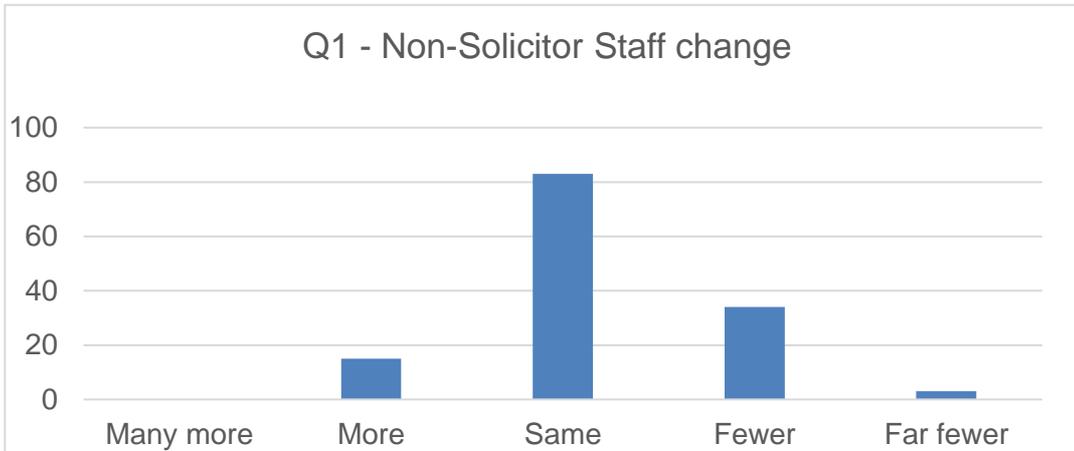
Question 1: How would you compare your (a) solicitor and (b) non-solicitor staff at present to April 2020?



The vast majority, 91 out of 136 firms, or two thirds, answered that solicitor staff levels remained the same as they were in May 2020 report. While it is encouraging to note that 16 firms had more solicitor staff, 21 firms had fewer solicitor staff than in April 2020.

In the December 2020 report, just under 80%, or four fifths of that sample, answered that solicitor staff levels were the same in October 2020 as at April 2020.

This suggests that the impact of Covid-19 has not had the downturn on solicitor staffing level in the way that, at its outset, may have been anticipated.

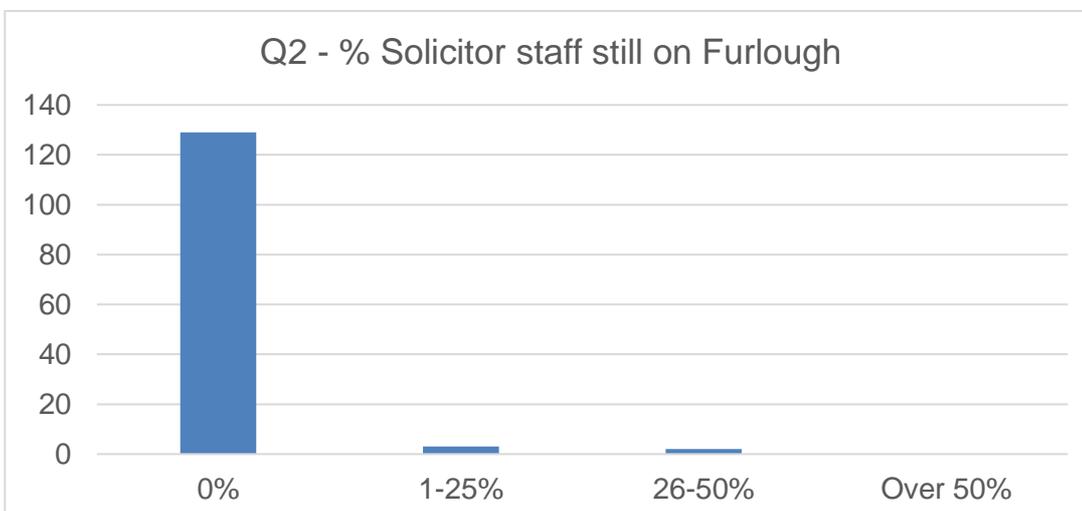


Again, the vast majority of firms, 83 out of 136, answered that they were employing the same number of non-solicitor staff than they were in April 2020. Of more significance is that 34 firms, or exactly one quarter, answered that they were employing fewer support staff than in April 2020.

Interestingly, numbers here are broadly in range with the December 2020 report when almost 60%, or nearly two thirds, indicated that they were employing the same number of support staff.

Accordingly, it would appear that non-solicitor staff levels have, for the majority of firms, remained stable throughout the pandemic. However, those firms who have had to reduce staffing levels would appear to have firstly reduced support staff rather than solicitor staff.

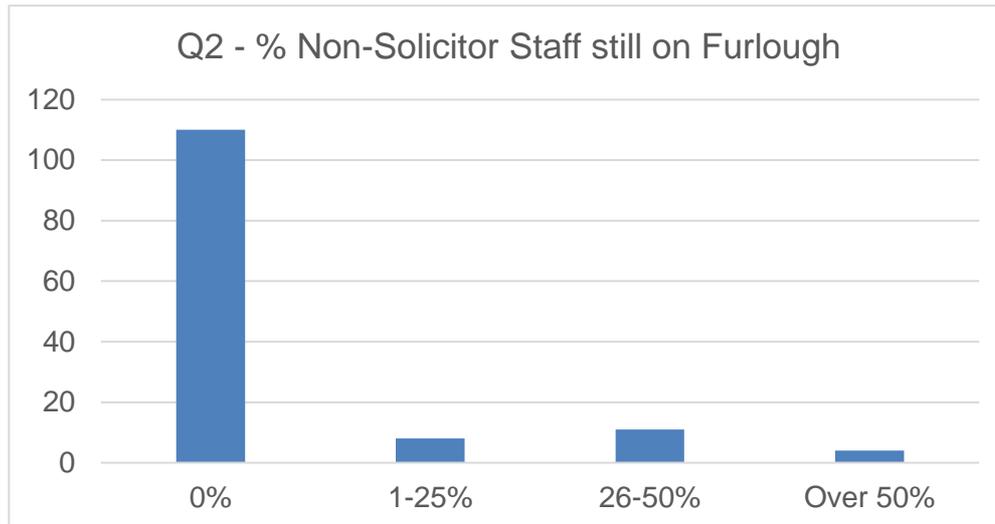
Question 2: In relation to the UK Government 's job retention scheme, approximately what percentage of (a) solicitor and (b) non solicitor staff remain on furlough?



Almost all respondents, 129 out of 136 firms, indicated that they had no solicitor staff on furlough.

The May 2020 report indicated that around 35% of solicitors were on furlough.

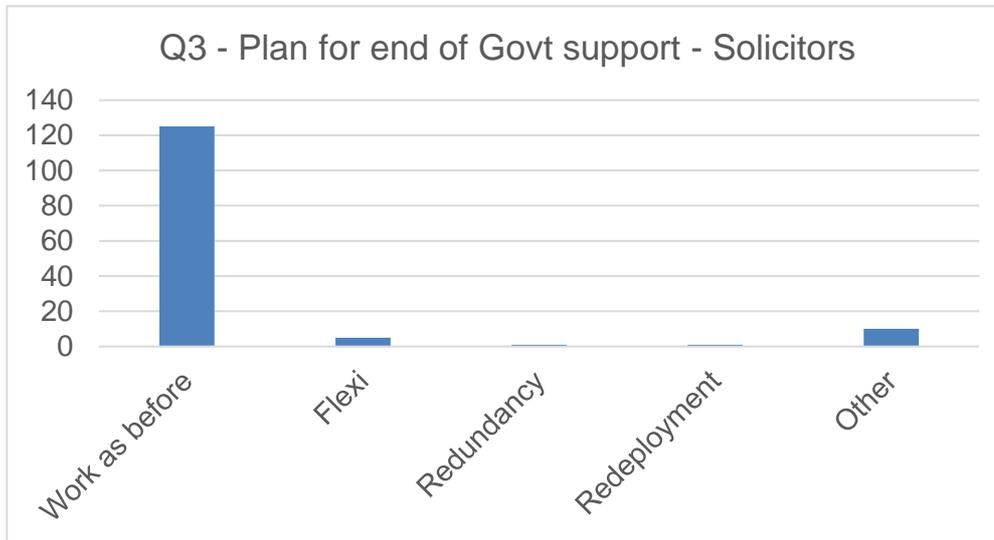
This demonstrates that there has been a significant recovery in terms of solicitors who have gone back to work since the outbreak of the pandemic.



110 out of 136 or over four fifths of firms had no support staff on furlough. The May 2020 report indicates that, at that time, 41% of support staff were on furlough.

This again demonstrates that there has been a marked recovery over the course of the pandemic in terms of support staff who have returned to work.

Question 3 - From September, when the job retention scheme is due to end, what is your strategy in relation to staff employment?



125 out of 136 of firms reported that it was their intention to have everyone back to work when the furlough scheme ends. In relation to question 2, this followed on from the majority of firms having neither solicitor staff nor non solicitor staff on furlough at present in any event.

However, one firm indicated that it would have to consider redundancy of furloughed staff while another was undecided. Another firm stated that succession planning would be a factor in its strategy regarding staff employment. Five firms had opted to place furloughed staff members on flexible part time working.

This again indicates that the private practice sector has recovered well in terms of furloughed staff returning to work.

Question 4 - Has Covid-19 caused your firm to change its recruitment plans for the following roles over the next 12 months? (a) solicitor staff (b) non-solicitor staff (c) trainees

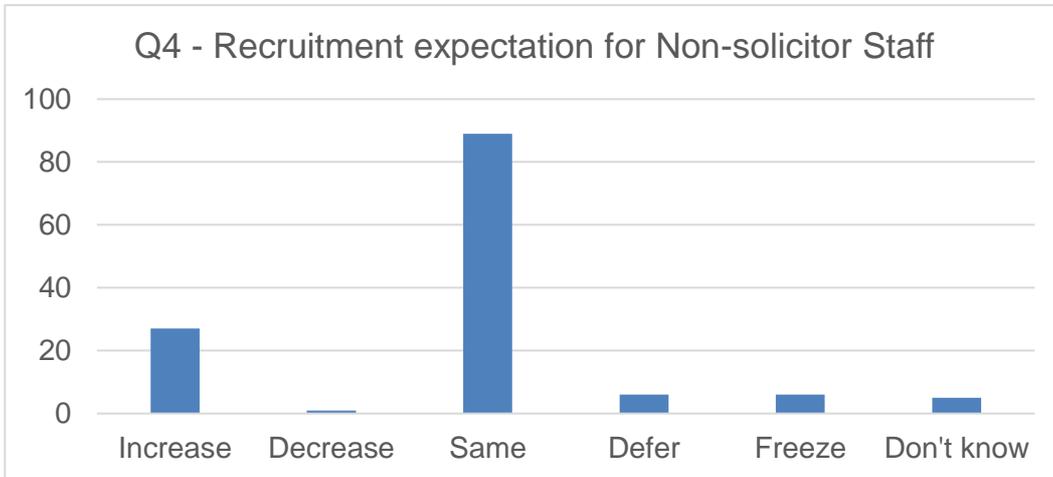


Most firms, 80 out of 136, indicated that the number of solicitors would remain at the same level over the next 12 months. On a positive note, 33 firms, or almost one quarter of the sample, indicated that they would increase their number of solicitor staff in the next 12 months.

No firms indicated that they would be decreasing solicitor staff numbers in the next 12 months.

In the December 2020 report, almost 80% of the firms surveyed indicated that they had the same number of solicitor staff at the firm in October 2020 as they had in April 2020.

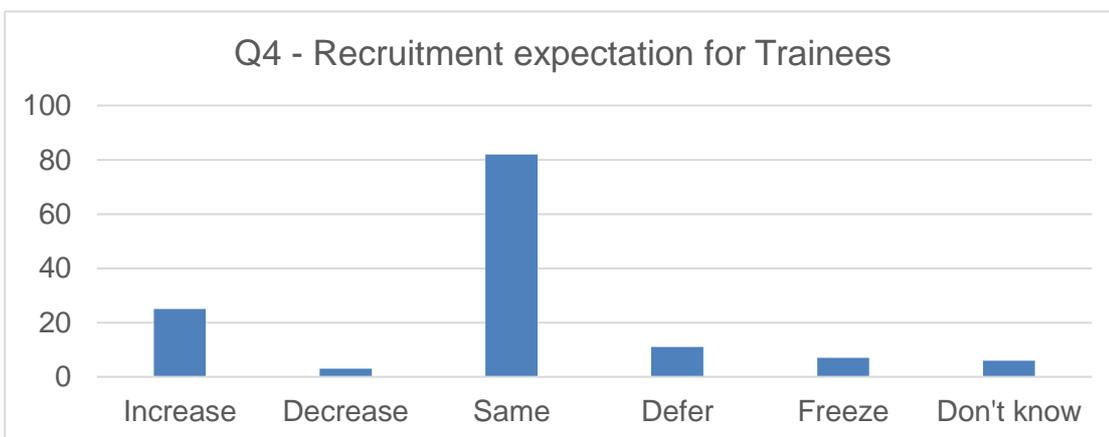
This suggests that firms' staffing levels in respect of solicitors have been consistent throughout the pandemic and that a sizeable number of firms are even considering employing more solicitors in the next year.



Again, most firms, 89 out of 136, indicated that they would remain with the same number of support staff in the next 12 months. 27 out of 126 firms, or almost one fifth of firms, indicated that they would increase support staff members in the next 12 months. Only one firm indicated that it was considering decreasing support staff numbers in the next 12 months.

With reference to the December 2020 report, almost 60% of the firms surveyed indicated that their numbers of support staff were at the same level in October 2020 as they were in April 2020.

This again suggests a relative consistency regarding firms' support staff numbers during the pandemic. It is also encouraging to note that a small but significant number of firms are considering increasing the number of their support staff.

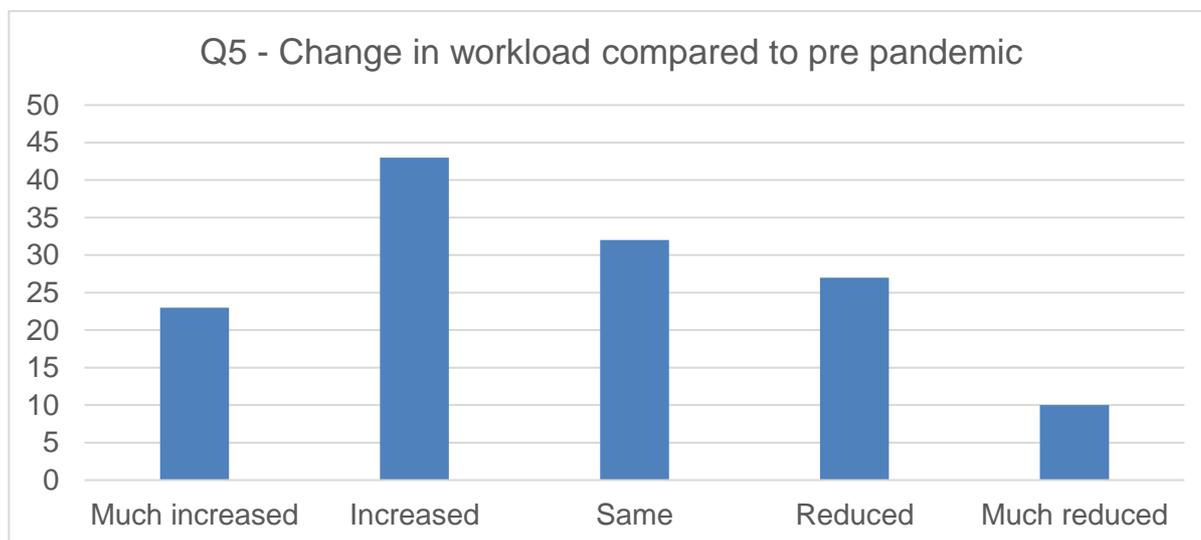


In terms of changing recruitment plans for trainees, the vast majority, 82 out of 136 or almost two thirds of firms, answered that their recruitment plans in respect of trainees would see no change. Encouragingly, 25 firms, or almost one in five, indicated that they would increase trainee solicitor numbers over the next 12

months. However, a significant number of firms indicated that, in keeping trainee numbers the same, those firms currently employ no trainees and did not intend to employ trainees in future.

This response is once again consistent with the December 2020 report. In terms of that report, just over 60% of those firms asked indicated that their plans for trainee recruitment had not changed due to the pandemic and that they had no plans to recruit trainees in any event.

Question 5 - How would you compare your firm's workload at present with pre-pandemic?



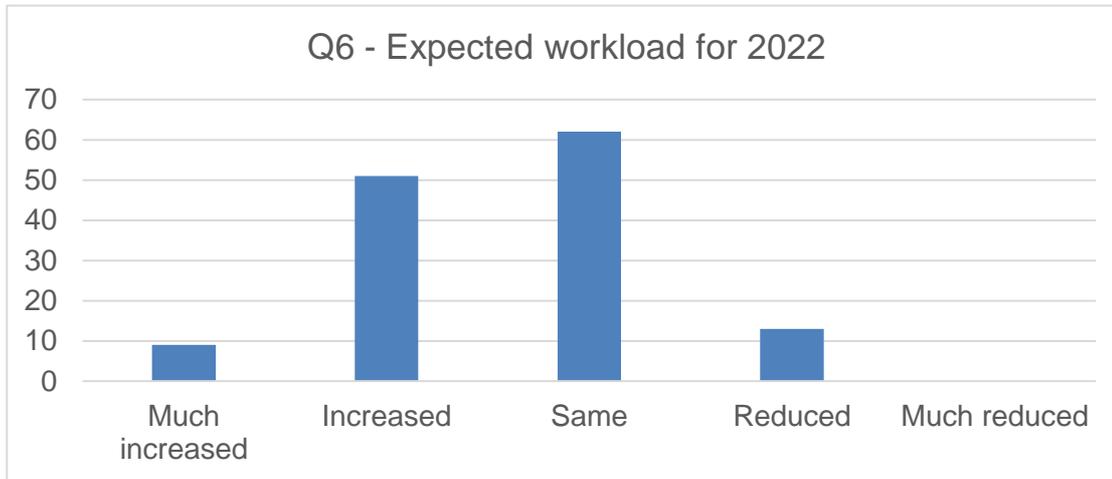
66 firms, or almost one half of those surveyed, indicated that their workloads had either significantly increased (23) or increased (43) as compared with pre pandemic. 32 firms reported that workload remained the same.

However, 37 firms, or just over one quarter of firms indicated that workloads had either reduced (27) or significantly reduced (10) since pre pandemic.

In comparing these results with the results in the December 2020 report, it is noted that half of the firms had reported as of October 2020 either a significant decrease (17%) or a decrease (33%) in workload since October 2019. Also at that time, one third of firms had experienced either a significant increase (12%) or an increase (21%) in workload since October 2019.

It would appear that, on the whole, workloads are continuing to either remain constant or even increase past pre pandemic levels for most private practice firms.

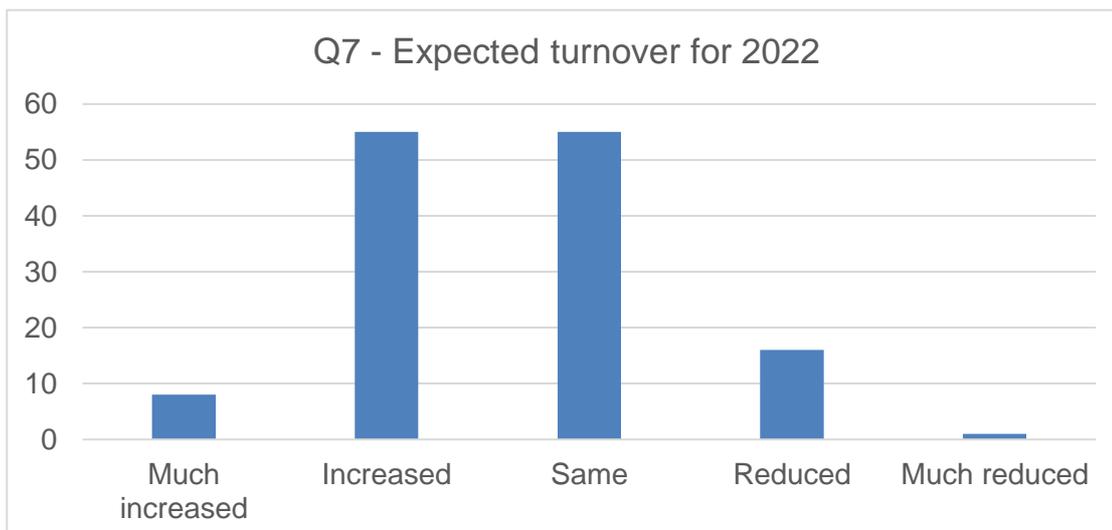
Question 6 - What are your firm's expectations on workload in the next 12 months?



While this question was a projection, most firms were relatively positive regarding future workloads. While almost half (62) answered that workload would remain the same over the next 12 months, almost half (60) firms stated that workload would either increase (51) or significantly increase (9) over the next 12 months.

Only 14 firms indicated that workload would reduce over the next 12 months.

Question 7 - What are your firm's expectations on turnover in the next 12 months?



In respect of turnover in the next twelve months, projections were much the same in respect of workload at question 6.

While almost half of firms (55) answered that turnover would remain the same, a similar number (63) indicated that turnover would either increase (55) or significantly increase (8) over the next 12 months.

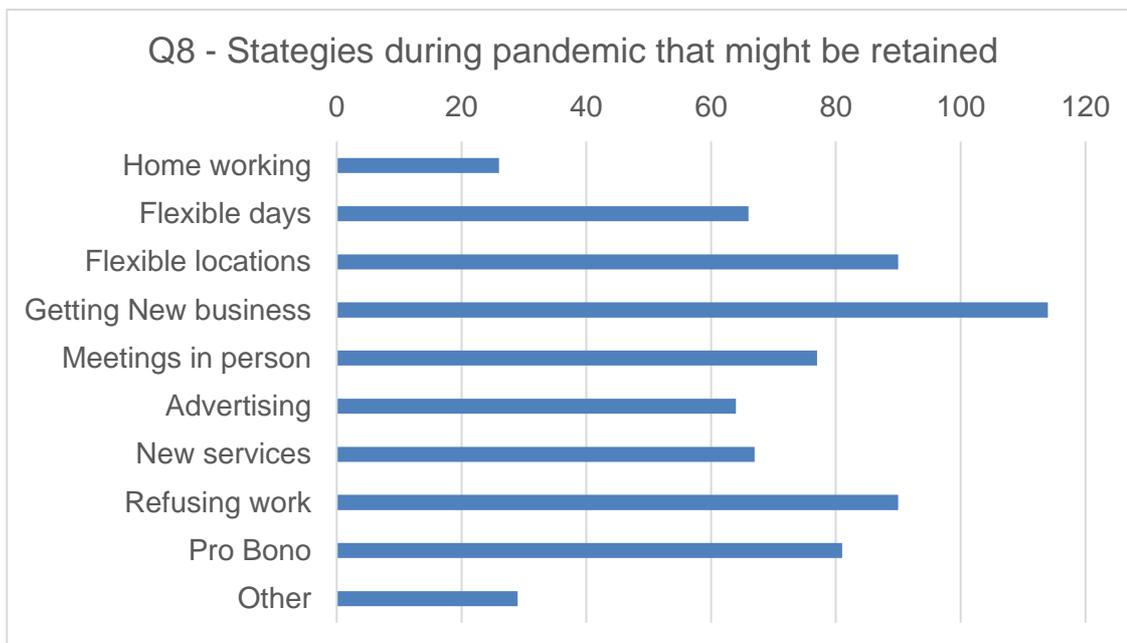
However, 17 firms thought that turnover over the next 12 months would either reduce (16) or significantly reduce (1).

A similar question on both projected workload and subsequent turnover forms part of the December 2020 report. In October 2020, only 28% projected either a significant increase (4%) or an increase (24%) in workload and subsequent turnover, 27% projected the same and 44% projected either a decrease (36%) or significant decrease in income and subsequent turnover from October 2020 to October 2021.

It is clear that there is much more positivity in these projections now as compared with October 2020. In the December 2020 report, many firms indicated that this was a difficult question given the continued uncertainty around Covid-19. Almost one year later, firms were more confident in providing projections which were in turn more optimistic than those provided during the period of the second survey.

Question 8 - What working practice changes, if any of the following list, might you implement or continue with post pandemic?

Choosing multiple options in answer to this question was permitted.



There was a reasonably even spread of responses to the various options available. The majority of firms (114) indicated that they would either implement or continue post pandemic with methods of attracting new business. In this respect one firm indicated that face-to-face networking events should start up again. 90

firms also indicated that that they would either implement or continue hybrid working, for example, working part of the working week at home and part of the working week in the office. 90 firms indicated that they would either implement or refuse new work, although many of those firms who chose this option stipulated that the new work they would refuse would usually be work out with that firm's expertise. One firm indicated that it was turning away work it used to do but does no longer. Interestingly, 26, or almost one fifth of firms surveyed, answered that they would implement or continue with home working, meaning that they would have some staff work exclusively at home.

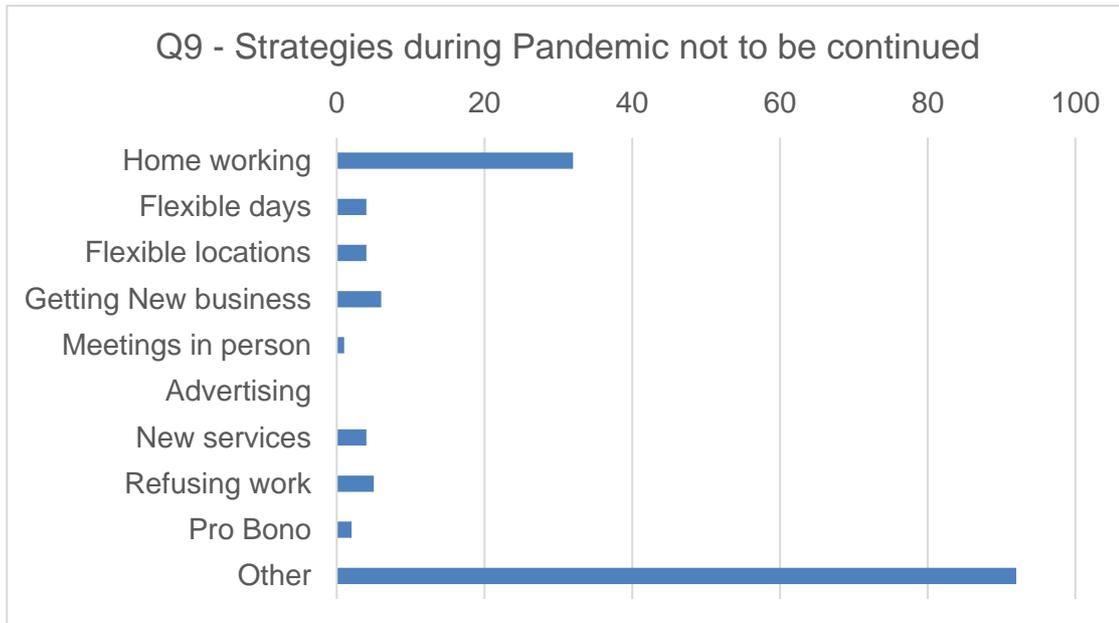
Over half the firms in the survey also indicated that they would either implement or continue with pro bono work (81) and undertake client meetings in person (77). Just under half the firms surveyed (67) indicated that they would implement any decision on new or existing services.

With particular reference to face-to-face meetings, there were a number of responses which highlighted that some firms continued having such meetings throughout the pandemic to other respondents who said they would implement this strategy again only after the pandemic has ended.

In terms of other strategies that might be considered, one firm pointed out that its recruitment policy may have to change to attract new employees to meet client demand. Another advised that its strategic decisions were yet to be made. Another advised that evening and weekend client meetings had commenced during the pandemic together with a decision to become an LLP. Another firm indicated that a decision had been taken to stick to core business only while another indicated a locked door "appointments only" system of meeting clients in person, rather than the pre pandemic open-door policy.

Question 9 - Which of these changes would you like to stop doing/not continue with?

Choosing multiple options to this answer was permitted.



This question was asked as a reverse to the previous question in order to ascertain from firms whether there were any strategies they had implemented during the pandemic that they would like to either stop doing or not continue.

The vast majority of answers to the various options (92) were under “other”. In this regard most firms indicated that there is nothing being done at present that they would either stop or not continue.

This suggests that most firms have already implemented the necessary strategies during the pandemic that they would continue with post pandemic.

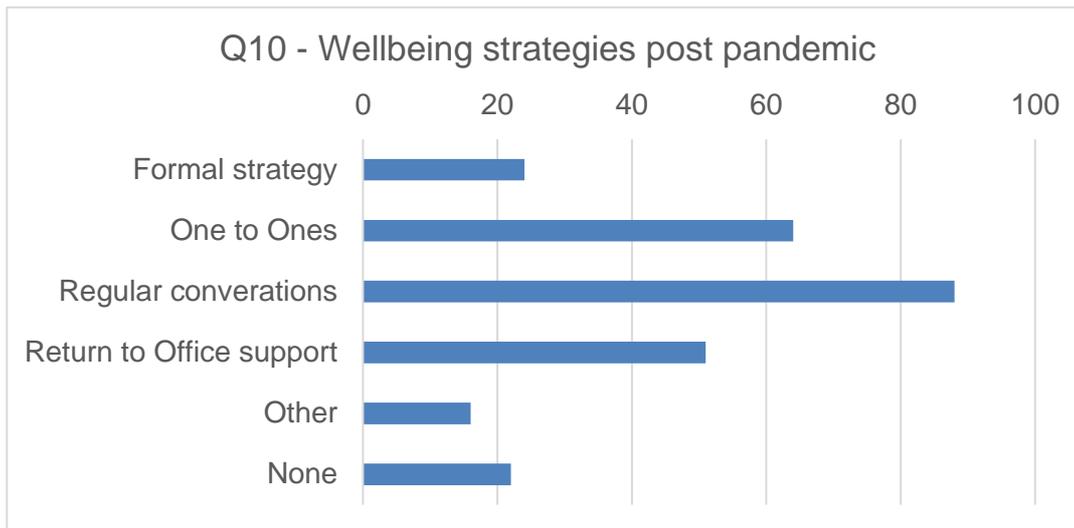
However, it is worth noting that 32 firms, or almost one quarter of those surveyed, indicated that they would either stop or not continue with home working, for example, some staff working from home exclusively.

One firm in particular indicated that hybrid working had not worked at all well and was keen to have staff back in the office full time.

In response to all other options, the vast majority of firms stated that they would keep doing the various options rather than stop or not continue.

Question 10 - Which of the following measures in relation to staff wellbeing, if any, will you implement or continue with post pandemic?

Choosing multiple options to this answer was permitted.



Most firms (88) indicated that regular conversations with team members was a strategy that would either be implemented or continued post pandemic. The second most popular strategy was a one to one conversation with a line manager or boss, (64 or almost one half of firms). Almost one third of firms, (51) stated that they would support staff as they return to the office. 24 firms, or almost one fifth, advised that they had a formal strategy in place.

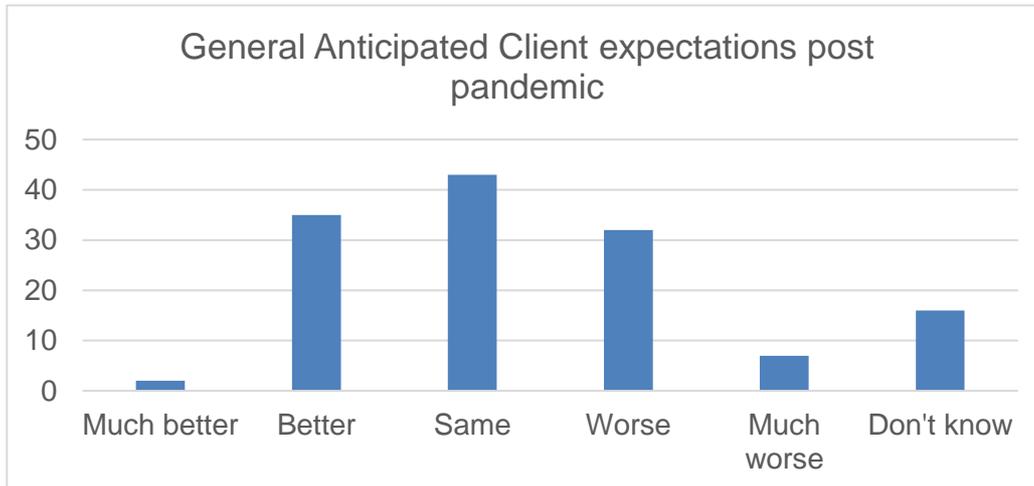
While 22 firms advised that they had nothing in place, it should be noted that many of these firms were operating on a sole practitioner basis with no other solicitors or support staff. Accordingly, this question did not apply.

In terms of other measures, informal meetings together with good covid protection measures was mentioned by one firm. Another indicated that the controlled entry system installed in the office had seen a big improvement in staff wellbeing.

In the December 2020 report, almost two-thirds of firms surveyed indicated that more one to one conversations regarding staff wellbeing were being held and just over 40% indicated that regular communications were taking place. Just under 10% of firms indicated that they had a formal wellbeing strategy in place.

It would therefore appear that many firms have processes in place to manage staff wellbeing.

Question 11 - How do you anticipate client expectations and demands on your business will change in future?

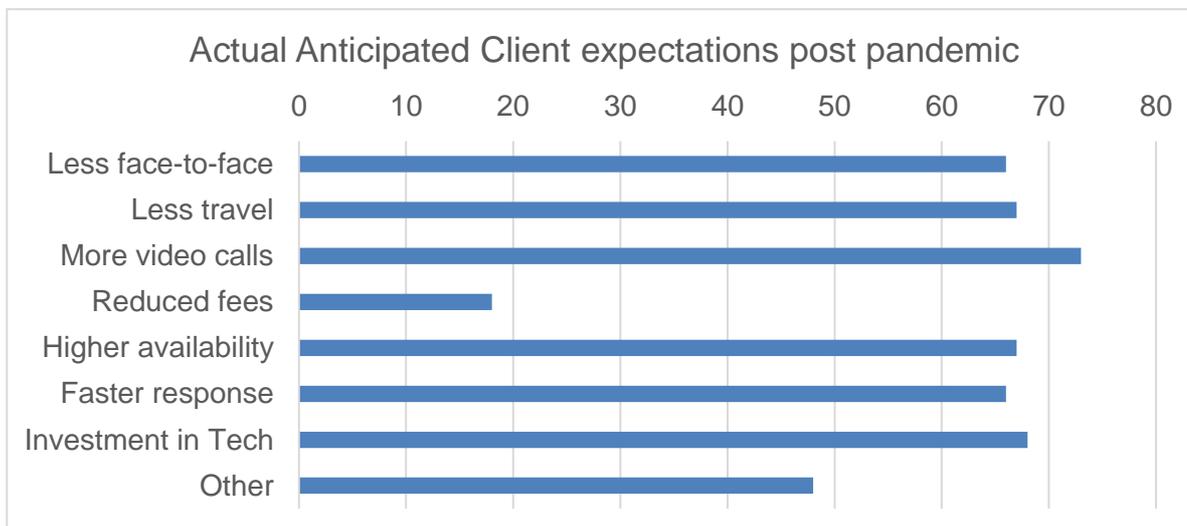


This was another future looking question. 43 firms anticipated that client expectations and demands would remain the same post pandemic, while 35 firms anticipated them to be better and 32 firms opted for worse.

This question led into the next question, which provided a number of answer options as to why client expectations may change in future. This prompted different responses, suggesting that client expectations would change.

Question 12 - How do you think they will change?

Choosing multiple options was permitted.



The answers which firms provided to the various options demonstrate that the various changes to working practice brought about as a result of Covid-19 may mean that clients' expectations and demands will in turn change, either for the better or for the worse.

While 73 firms chose the option of more videoconferencing, 68 chose more investment in technology, 67 chose higher expectations of availability, 67 chose less travel, 66 chose less face-to-face contact and 66 chose a faster turnaround as digital means are used, only 18 chose reduced fees for clients an option.

This would tend to suggest that, in general, while firms saw that the necessary changes implemented due to Covid-19 would have an effect on client expectations, they did not think that clients would be expecting lower fees as a result of all the other Covid -19 related changes.

Also, 48 firms chose the "other" category and provided more information. One firm highlighted the need for clients to provide solicitors with more time to reflect upon and assess a legal issue. In general, there was a feeling of clients having more time available to them and seeking case/transaction updates from solicitors perhaps more often than they would have done pre pandemic.

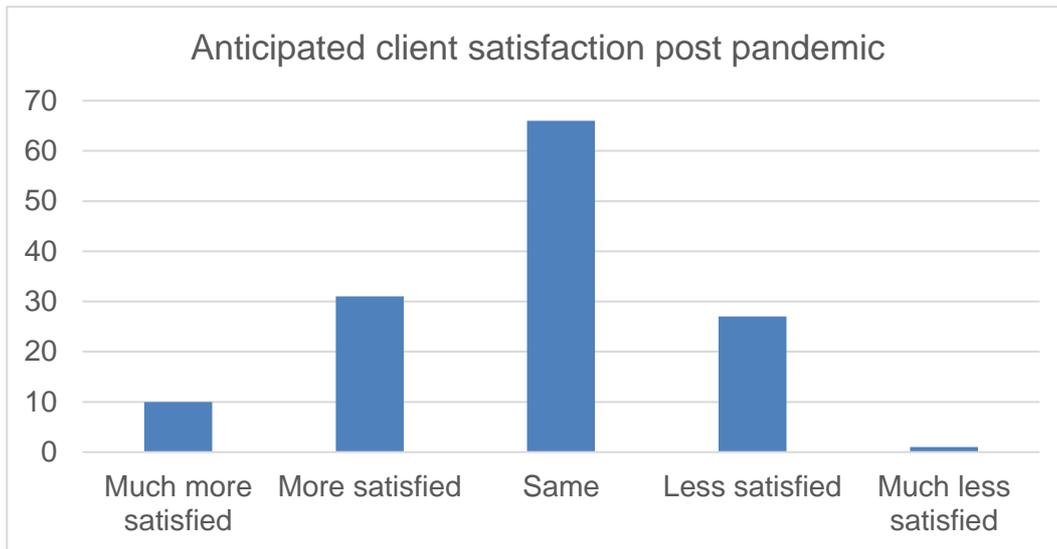
Another firm mentioned that clients were more demanding in the speed of service and that longer telephone calls have taken the place of emails where technical issues may be explained better.

Another firm highlighted some of its clients being more understanding when the courts were closed at the outset of the pandemic, but they became more demanding when courts started to open and deal with backlogs which were clearly out with the firm's control.

The various advantages and disadvantages of remote contact were also discussed. Some firms indicated that older clients preferred face-to-face meetings rather than videoconferencing.

It would be interesting to analyse whether client expectations do change over the short term and the reasons for any changes.

Question 13 - Based on your experience during the pandemic, do you expect client satisfaction to change over the next 12 months? This may be due to increased use of technology, transactions taking longer, delays with court hearings or any other reason?



Almost half of the firms (66) anticipated that client satisfaction would remain the same post pandemic. Encouragingly, almost one third of firms (41) anticipated that clients will either be satisfied with the service (31) or much more satisfied with the service (10). Only 28 firms, or just under one fifth of participants, anticipated that clients will either be less satisfied (27) or much less satisfied (1) with the service received.

One firm highlighted that online title registration had helped improve client satisfaction and made efficiencies for both firm and client. Another mentioned virtual courts and virtual consultations saving clients the time and expense of having to travel to the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

In the December 2020 report, a question on present client satisfaction was asked. At that time, around 28% of firms indicated that clients were less satisfied, 47% of firms indicated that there had been no change in client satisfaction and 23% advised that their clients were now more satisfied.

It would appear from these figures that there has been a slight improvement in client satisfaction, and it is anticipated this should be the case post pandemic.

As noted above, it would be interesting to analyse any change in client expectations and the possible reasons behind the change.

Question 14 - Is there anything that your firm needs from the Society going forward?

This was an additional open question asked at the end of the survey.

As all 136 firms provided a response, these are grouped in common themes

1. Nothing at this time
2. Happy with current support
3. More support needed from the Society
4. Less regulation/more proportionate regulation
5. Assistance with recruitment
6. More/better representation regarding legal aid
7. Free CPD for struggling firms. More tailored CPD. Could have waived CPD compliance this year

1. In terms of those firms who had nothing to add, a large number qualified that with answering that there was nothing they could think of straight away.
2. There were a number of positive comments around the Society serving the profession well during the pandemic, with some referring to the trainee solicitor fund and the legal aid resilience fund as examples of good representation. One firm answered that the Society had improved in raising its awareness and dealing with Society staff had been a very positive experience.
3. Comments on support needed tended to come from smaller firms. A common theme was for more support on IT issues. Two separate firms had welcomed the Society's initiative in having the Coronavirus legislation amended to allow for remote online notarisation of documents. One firm specifically mentioned the issue of comparatively low conveyancing fees as against estate agent fees, other administrative costs such as LBTT and land registration fees. Another asked for support in lobbying for better regulation of estate agents. More support in keeping the courts open was referred to by another firm.
4. The Society's regulatory role was highlighted by a number of firms and in particular its role in ensuring compliance with anti-money laundering. One firm called for a more proportionate approach. Another firm mentioned the issue of double regulation as it was a firm entitled to provide financial advice and accordingly regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. There were also comments received about how current Professional Indemnity insurance arrangements could be improved. Another firm called for the review of the SLCC's current role and the abolition of third-party complaints.
5. A number of firms advised that recruitment was a real problem, particularly in rural areas and Society assistance by way of, for example, better circulation of advertisement would be useful. One practitioner mentioned that it was difficult to take holidays due to difficulties in finding cover. Another felt that assistance in recruiting someone of a fixed hours basis to would allow that firm more time

to network and hopefully grow what was a new business. Succession planning, particularly for older practitioners on the point of retirement was also mentioned as an issue by some firms. A concern that some rural practices may no longer be able to operate due to there being no-one to take over the practice was also raised as an issue by some firms.

6. Legal aid provision was also raised as an issue where continued representation was needed. In particular, the rates of remuneration were considered by many to be inadequate. One firm highlighted this was now an issue in recruiting and retention of defence agents who were leaving to join Crown Office where the terms and conditions of employment for newly qualified solicitors were considered to be better.
7. Some firms referred to CPD provision. Out of those firms, a number were content that risk management CPD continued to be free. One firm thought that CPD compliance this year should also have been waived as it had been last year. One firm was happy with current online webinar provision as it allowed flexibility.



Appendix

Covid-19 Survey

1	How would you compare your firm's number of: (a) solicitor and (b) non-solicitor staff at present to April 2020?	Insert X
	Solicitor:	
(i)	Many more	
(ii)	More	
(iii)	Same	
(iv)	Fewer	
(v)	Far fewer	
	Non-solicitor staff:	
(i)	Many more	
(ii)	More	
(iii)	Same	
(iv)	Fewer	
(v)	Far fewer	

2	In relation to the UK Government's job retention scheme, approximately, what percentage of (a) solicitor staff and (b) non-solicitor staff remain on furlough?	Insert %
(i)	Solicitor staff	



(ii)	Non-solicitor staff	
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3	From September, when the job retention scheme is due to end, what is your strategy in relation to staff employment?	Insert X
(i)	Status quo - All be back to work (same as pre Covid-19)	
(ii)	Flexible part-time working	
(iii)	Redundancy	
(iv)	Redeployment	
(v)	Other (please tell us more)	

4	Has Covid-19 caused your firm to change its recruitment plans for the following roles over the next 12 months?	Insert X
	<p>(a) solicitor staff</p> <p>(b) non-solicitor staff</p> <p>(c) trainees</p>	
	Solicitor staff:	
(i)	Increase number of staff	
(ii)	Decrease number of staff	
(iii)	Stay the same (replace anyone who leaves a current role)	
(iv)	Defer recruitment	
(v)	Recruitment freeze (no recruitment of any type)	
(vi)	Don't know	
	Non-solicitor staff	
(i)	Increase number of staff	



(ii)	Decrease number of staff	
(iii)	Stay the same (replace anyone who leaves a current role)	
(iv)	Defer recruitment	
(v)	Recruitment freeze (no recruitment of any type)	
(vi)	Don't know	
	Trainees	
(i)	Increase number of staff	
(ii)	Decrease number of staff	
(iii)	Stay the same (replace anyone who leaves a current role)	
(iv)	Defer recruitment	
(v)	Recruitment freeze (no recruitment of any type)	
(vi)	Don't know	

5	How would you compare your firm's workload at present with pre-pandemic?	Insert X
(i)	Significant increase	
(ii)	Increase	
(iii)	Remained the same	
(iv)	Decrease	
(v)	Significant decrease	

6	What are your firm's expectations on workload in the next 12 months?	Insert X
(i)	Significant increase in workload	



(ii)	Increase in workload	
(iii)	About the same level of workload	
(iv)	A decrease in workload	
(v)	A significant decrease in workload	

7	What are your firm's expectations on turnover in the next 12 months?	Insert X
(i)	Significant increase in turnover	
(ii)	Increase in turnover	
(iii)	About the same level of turnover	
(iv)	A decrease in turnover	
(v)	A significant decrease in turnover	

8	What working practice changes, if any of the following list, might you implement or continue with post pandemic? Select all that apply	Insert X
(i)	Only working from home	
(ii)	Working flexibly (in terms of when during the day you can work)	
(iii)	Hybrid working (flexibility in terms of where you work)	
(iv)	Client meetings in person	
(v)	Methods of attracting new clients or business	
(vi)	How your business advertises	
(vii)	Decision on new or existing services	



(viii)	Turning away work	
(ix)	Pro bono	
(x)	Other (please tell us more)	

9	Which of these changes would you like to stop doing/not continue with? (Answer options are stop, keep doing, don't apply)	Insert X if answer stop
(i)	Only working from home	
(ii)	Working flexibly (in terms of when during the day you can work)	
(iii)	Hybrid working (flexibility in terms of where you work)	
(iv)	Client meetings in person	
(v)	Methods of attracting new clients or business	
(vi)	How your business advertises	
(vii)	Decision on new services or stopping offering existing services	
(viii)	Turning away work	
(ix)	Pro bono	
(x)	Other (please tell us more)	

10	Which of the following measures in relation to staff wellbeing, if any, will you implement or continue with post pandemic?	Insert X
(i)	A formal strategy	
(ii)	One to ones with line manager or boss	
(iii)	Regular conversations with team members	



(iv)	Supporting staff as they return to work in the office	
(v)	Other (please tell us more)	
(vi)	None of these options	

11	How do you anticipate client expectations and demands on your business will change in future?	Insert X
(i)	Yes, change significantly for the better	
(ii)	Yes, change to some extent for the better	
(iii)	No change expected	
(iv)	Yes, change to some extent for the worse	
(v)	Yes, change significantly for the worse	
(vi)	Don't know	

12	How do you think they will change? Select all that apply	Insert X
(i)	Less face-to-face contact	
(ii)	Less travel	
(iii)	More video conferencing	
(iv)	Reduced fees for clients	
(v)	Higher expectations of availability	
(vi)	Faster turnaround as digital means are used	
(vii)	More investment in technology	
(viii)	Other (please tell us more)	



13	Based on your experience during the pandemic, do you expect client satisfaction to change over the next 12 months? This may be due to increased use of technology, transactions taking longer, delays with court hearings or any other reason	Insert X
(i)	Clients will be much more satisfied with the service received	
(ii)	Clients will be satisfied with the service received	
(iii)	No change expected	
(iv)	Clients will be less satisfied with the service received	
(v)	Clients will be much less satisfied with the service received	

Thank you for taking part in our survey.

14	Is there anything that your firm needs from the Society going forward?	