

<b>Date</b>	<b>9 JULY 2024</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>09.00</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Communications Engagement Strategy</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>Richard Hood, Interim Director of Governance, Policy &amp; Legal, Paula Charnock, Communications Executive</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>This paper provides the Board with an update on progress made against the Communications and engagement strategy <b>July 2023-June 2024</b>.</p> <p>It also sets out the proposed work activity to the end of 2024 (aligned to the current 2024 CRL Strategy).</p>
<b>Recommendation</b>	The Board is asked to <b>NOTE</b> the update and <b>APPROVE</b> the proposed communications plan.
<b>Timing</b>	n/a
<b>Impact assessment</b>	While there are no decisions requiring an assessment, work being undertaken demonstrates that CRL is well-led, consumer-focused and uses learning to improve performance.
<b>Impact on Regulatory Objectives</b>	<p>The assurance provided by this report has a positive impact on the following regulatory objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public interest</li> <li>- Consumer interest</li> <li>- Independent, strong, diverse profession</li> </ul>
<b>Implications for resources</b>	No additional resource implications.
<b>Impact on consumer empowerment</b>	The consumer facing projects carried out and supported by CRL reported in this paper (specifically continued development of website resources providing guidance for consumers) protect and promote the interests of consumers.
<b>Impact on ongoing competence</b>	N/A
<b>Publication status</b>	For publication
<b>Appendices</b>	09.01 Appendix 1 - CRL 2024 Communications Plan

## Introduction

1. The Board recognises that effective communication and engagement are important in delivering our strategic priorities. The annual communications strategy ensures that consumers have access to the information they need when dealing with the profession, CRL's regulatory expectations are understood by the profession, and CRL's performance and achievements are recognised by the profession and wider stakeholders.

The purpose of this paper is to review progress against agreed workstreams from July 2023-June 2024. Proposed communications an ongoing activity to the end of 2024 are

outlined in *Appendix 1*. A further Communications Plan will be developed following the publication of the CRL 2025-2027 Strategy.

*Appendix 1: CRL Communications Plan 2024* includes details of: Communication Channels, Key Stakeholders, Target Audiences, Target metrics and Content per workstream.

## **Progress July 2023 - June 2024**

### **Progress against overall communications campaign objectives and engagement targets**

#### **1. Overall Communication targets (including regulatory guidance compliance)**

**Strategic objective: ALL**

##### **Actions**

- CRL consultation comms – Specialist Regulation for the future of an independent profession 15 May to 26 June 2023. Management of the consultation webinars plus coverage in all CRL comms platforms.
- Publication of CRL's CILEX consultation response (CILEX consultation 15 August to 5 November 2023)
- CRL's SRA consultation response publication (May 2024)
- Additional consultations: Higher Rights consultation 31 July to 11 September 2023 Probate Education Standards (May 2024 date), Transparency Rule Changes (May 2024). Communications created to increase awareness and engagement.
- BAU and ongoing promotion of CRL including increase awareness of CRL and objectives to both consumers and the regulated community.
- Consumer landing page refresh carried out in March 2023 with the addition of the new CRL explainer video in February 2023. Creation of new [Problems and Complaints](#) webpage (March 2023) and new process flow [infographic](#).
- Accessibility – messaging to increase awareness of our ReachDeck product including translation functionality. Creation of new Welsh language landing page in June 2024.
- Approach made to Citizens Advice to include CRL link on their website (May 2024)
- Google Analytics 4 applied to website in July 2023.
- Monthly content planner maintained for the period, including social media content and editorial.
- Social Media guidance video published in April 2024.
- New Professional Conduct and Ethics webpage created and published in March 2024 Professional Ethics video created in March 2024
- Practice Rights 10 year anniversary
- CRL's 2024 Corporate Plan launch
- WBL and QE assessment fee increase

- LSB Reshaping Legal Services 2024 conference attendance coverage
- London Legal Walk 2024 (and CSR)
- CPD new CILEX resources launched in June 2024

## Measurement and results

Website views and session numbers, Social Media engagement rates and Direct Mail open rates and continue an upward trend in the reporting period (see Progress against communications targets tables below).

- Consultation engagement rates remained positive with a record number of responses to the future of regulation consultation.
- Increase in traffic to *I am a member of the public* landing page from 652 (2022-2023) to 1,514 (2023-2024)
- Web content audit of Consumer and Firms web content completed.
- Editorial pieces published in the Legal Press throughout the year.
- CRL newsletter published monthly – above industry standard open rates.

## 2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

**Strategic objective:** Champion fair access for all in the legal services market

### Actions

- Beyond Buzzwords/Young Foundation EDI research. Comms involvement with Comms representatives and publication.
- Feature *Nearly three in four professionals say they experience 'discriminatory or exclusionary' workplace behaviour* published on Regulation Matters website in March 2024 following publication of the Young Foundation EDI research
- Quality Indicators Pilot evaluation report published.
- RC guidance published on complaint handling.
- Summary of actions since July 2023 and result against KPI's and ongoing activity
- Asylum seekers joint SRA project (Refugee in Action) resource published (TBC)
- Communications aimed Increase reduction in PNS responses.
- CRL attendance at LSB Wales Forum coverage
- Digital Exclusion research published April 2024.
- CILEX member diversity report publication in 2023

## Measurement and results

Increase in visits to the main EDI webpage: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 139 (2022-23) and 234 (2023-24).

Number of PNS responses reduced (see EDI report)

Number of EDI responses increased (see EDI report)

### 3. LawTech Project

**Strategic objective:** Uphold standards while pursuing innovative models to improve access and minimise the regulatory burden

#### Actions

- Communications and signposting LawTech and highlighting the importance and significance of AI in the legal sector
- Artificial intelligence feature *The Impact of AI on the Legal Sector in the UK* published in CILEX Journal summer 2024 edition (July 2024).
- New feature relating to the significance of AI for the Legal Sector created by R Hood to be published in the summer edition of the CILEX Journal.

#### Measurement and results

Increased involvement from CRL on LawTech planned for 2024 following a lull in 2023 due to staff changes and the CILEX redelegation proposal.

### 4. Education Standards

**Strategic objective:** Promote new standards. Engage with LSB, LSCP, Practising community and CILEX

#### Actions

- Higher Rights of Audience LSB approval of CRL application. Higher Rights consultation response and new guidance published.
- High standards / Professionalism / ongoing competence – CPD resources updated and collaboration with CILEX regarding the launch of the new CPD Training Resource Packages in June 2024.
- New Higher Rights of Audience webpage created
- Updated web content and application guidance created for Legacy and New Standards application routes
- No. of leads generated increased – for CILEX as membership function

#### Measurement and results

Number of web visits to the New Standards Route web page increase 1327 (2022-23) and 2688 (2023-24)

Launch of the new CILEX CPD Training Resource Packages in June 2024.

Practice Rights webinar delivered by CRL and CILEX on 19 June had 493 signing up and 263 attending the webinar.

New Higher Rights of Audience webpage - 482 users since its launch in January 2024.

## 5. Practitioner Authorisation and Supervision

**Strategic objective: ALL**

### **Actions**

- Applications process and Timescales – new web page with guidance regarding applications and authorisations published in August 2023
- Review of all PAS webpages and resources completed in 2023 with new PAS manager
- Practice Rights webinar June 2024 – recording to be published alongside extended guidance on the website.

### **Measurement and results**

Visits to the new *Application process and timescales* web page - 2530 since its publication in August 2023.

263 attendees to the Practice Rights webinar.

## 6. Firms and ACCA members

**Strategic objective: ALL**

### **Actions**

- Audit of Financial Conduct / AML pages completed with D Pope in February 2024. Related webpages updated in line with current legislation.
- AML Legal Sector Anti-Money Laundering Guidance – website updates December 2023 and February 2024
- Review of Finance/AML pages carried out in May 2024 to analyse web traffic to priority content. Included SEO refresh.
- OFSI general licence update comms and website updates
- CRL Firms Diversity Data Collection report publication in October 2023.
- Digital Property Market Steering Group (DPMSG) - group meeting attendance, communications regarding the 12 September 2023 launch event and promotion of related podcasts. Promotion of their 2024 Roadmap launch in January 2024.
- Transparency Rule changes consultation – video created and published in May 2024

### **Measurement and results**

Audit of all Firms and ACCA related content completed in 2023.

Number of website visits to the Economic Crime landing page 179 (since publication in November 2023), AML page 89% increase, Financial Sanctions page – 45% drop in views from previous year.

## Progress against communications targets

### CRL monthly newsletter publication

Edition	Open Rate
July 2023	37%
August 2023	36%
September 2023	47%
October 2023	38%
November 2023	36%
December 2023	48%
January 2024	49%
February 2024	43%
March 2024	36%
April 2024	44%
May 2024	35%
June 2024	TBC
Industry Standard	15-35%

### CRL website visits

	Total users	Engaged sessions
June 2023	7789	18,901
July 2023	7800	19,254
August 2023	8796	20,315
September 2023	8231	17,511
October 2023	7077	16,612
November 2023	6473	15,160
December 2023	5048	11,446
January 2024	7269	17,400
February 2024	7073	17,072
March 2024	6394	14,268
April 2024	6221	13,997
May 2024	6401	13,820
June 2024	6138	14,057

Nb. Google Analytics 4 introduced in July 2023 has affected reporting data for this reporting period (please see details in following section).

Channel	CRL Website	LinkedIn	Twitter/ X	CRL Newsletter
<b>Target metric</b>	Average sessions 18,000 and users 10000 per month	5k followers by the end of 2024	2k followers by end of 2024	Maintain open rates of 40-50%
<b>July 22- July 23</b>	Average sessions – 23,082 Average users – 11,663	3,839 July 22  4,602 July.23 (5k target)	1,597 followers July 22  1,611 followers July.23 (2k target)	Average open rate 2022 – 42%  Average open rate 2023 – 43%  (Industry standard = 20-30%)
<b>June 23- June 24*</b>	Average <b>engaged</b> sessions – 17,484 Average users – 7,559	4853 June 2024	June 2024 1624	Average open rate 2023-2024 – 41%

\*Nb. **Google Analytics changes to reporting metrics** came into effect in July 2023 with the change over to GA4. GA4 focuses on Active Users (users with an active session). An Engaged Session is a session that lasts longer than 10 seconds, has a key events, or has at least 2 pageviews or screen views). Previously bounces were included in the Total users count but not in GA4. This means that the data from this reporting year to the previously is not directly comparable).

## Proposed activity for remainder of 2024

*Annexe 1 CRL Communications Plan* sets out CRL communications priorities to the end of 2024. A new communications plan will be developed following the publication of the CRL 2025-2027 Strategy for 2025.

The Board is asked to **APPROVE** the proposed activity outlined in the Communications Plan for the remainder of 2024.