

| | |
|--|---|
| Date | 14 November 2024 |
| Item | 8 |
| Title | Director of Governance Report |
| Author | Richard Hood, Interim Director of Governance, Policy and Legal |
| Purpose | This paper provides an update on the work undertaken in the governance, policy and legal team since the last Board meeting. |
| Recommendation | To NOTE the update and actions identified |
| Timing | N/A |
| Impact assessment | 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. |
| Impact on Regulatory Objectives | The assurance provided by this report has a positive impact on the following regulatory objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public interest - Consumer interest - Independent, strong, diverse profession |
| Implications for resources | No additional resource implications. |
| Impact on consumer empowerment | The consumer facing projects carried out and supported by CRL reported in this paper. |
| Impact on ongoing competence | The Head of Education oversees and manages all matters relating to on-going professional competence. |
| Publication status | For Publication |
| Appendices | None |

(A) EDUCATION

Apprenticeships/ New Education Standards

1. The LSB has confirmed that proposed amendments to new Education Standards Pathways submitted to them under Exemption Direction 181 would not be approved. Instead, Full Exemption applications must be submitted this month.
2. Revised handbooks to be published and promoted on the CRL website once Full Exemption applications have been authorised by LSB.

3. CRL has been approached by a private assessor who wish to gain authorisation as an Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment Organisation for the Level 6 and Level 7 Apprenticeship Standards. If accepted they will provide additional capacity to CILEX who are currently, the only EPAO approved for these standards. Work on IfATE readiness checks will begin in mid-November 2024.

Higher Rights of Audience

4. Following a meeting on Tuesday, 29 October 2024, CRL are hoping to finalise the contract for delivery of training on Practice Rights and Higher Rights of Audience.

Rights of Audience Advocacy Scheme

5. CILEX have decided not to partner with CILEX Law School to develop provision for stand-alone Advocacy qualifications. Judith Bourne, Principal of CILEX Law School has declared an interest in seeking approval in their own right. Application forms and standards have been sent.
6. Requirements for a proposed contract for stand-alone Advocacy qualifications have been sent to our legal advisors. The contract will ensure that the provider:
 - schedules a minimum of 3 courses per type of proceedings per year,
 - meets turnaround times on issue of results,
 - pays appropriate fees to cover CRL QA costs, and
 - complies with CRL Quality Assurance model.
7. As part of our Quality Assurance activities this year, a number of concerns were raised and once the contract is signed, a 'deep-dive' of the provider's quality assurance model will be undertaken to identify any proposed improvements. Compliance with the action plan will be monitored at quarterly contract review meetings. The Admissions and Licensing Committee are fully supportive of this approach.

LSB Statement of Policy on Ongoing Competence

8. CRL's response to the LSB Statement of Policy on Ongoing Competence has now been published on our website [here](#)

CPD Non-Compliance

9. The total number of non-compliant members for CPD year 2023/2024 was 3,135 after the portal closed on 30 September 2024.
10. In partnership with the PAS Team Manager, we have developed an action plan to take a pro-active approach of 'regulating' members achievement of their CPD obligations rather than 'assisting' them meet the regulatory requirements.
11. Each non-compliant members has had their access to the 2023/2024 CPD record within the MyCILEX portal extended until 31 December 2024 and been emailed clear instructions on what actions they need to take to make themselves compliant.
12. Emails queries received from member's will be responded to each Friday and will simply repeat the instructions previously provided. The aim is to significantly reduce the CPD workload of the PAS Team moving forward.
13. Each Friday starting 1 November 2024, the PAS Team will run a report highlighting how many members remain non-compliant and this will be reported to the CRL SMT.
14. Members who remain non-compliant as of 1 January 2025 will be added to the 2023/2024 CPD Sampling exercise.
15. We are also working in partnership with colleagues within CILEX to develop a joint messaging campaign to remind members that CPD is a mandatory component of their CILEX membership.

(B) POLICY

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

16. The work we have commissioned the Bridge Group to carry out relating to career progression is moving forwards with a recent meeting to discuss the work to date and clarify information to progress the project.
17. CRL participated in the Legal Regulators EDI Forum September meeting. Discussions covered inclusive language and definitions following the BSB's recently consultation on proposed EDI changes; harmonisation across legal regulators of diversity questions and responses; updates from regulators; future meeting formats and governance arrangements for the Forum.

18. At the end of September we met with the MoJ's UK Legal Services Policy department. We shared information about our EDI work to feed into that department's understanding of the current stage of the legal sector's diversity initiatives to facilitate understanding of how its work might impact diversity in the legal sector. We agreed to the MoJ's proposal of future bimonthly catch-up meetings.
19. During September/October we ran CRL's collection of diversity data for our staff, Board and panels. We asked people to self-certify against the same range of diversity questions as our regulated community. We will report against a range of high-level characteristics to ensure anonymity.
20. At the end of October we participated in the Judicial Diversity Forum's Combined Statistics Working Group meeting. Discussions covered feedback on the 2024 Combined Statistical Publication process and preparation for the 2025 publication including a discussion of declaration rates for Disability, Social Mobility and Sexual Orientation concluded that they are not at a sufficient level for 2025 publication.

Consumer

21. On 13 September 2024, the LSB published its [Decision notice](#) approving CRL's application to change our Transparency Rules and Regulation 16 of the CILEx Regulation-ACCA Handbook. Following approval, we updated our website with the new requirements and guidance and emailed each of our firms to advise of the changes. The entity team's work to support firms into compliance with the new transparency requirements has progressed well.
22. During August and September, we collaborated with the SRA and CLC to update the Digital Comparison Tools (DCT) Voluntary Code. The new Code has been published on CRL and Legal Choices website, together with updated information for firms, consumers and a contact form to enable DCTs to apply to participate in the Code.
23. At the end of September 2024 CRL submitted a document with evidence to the LSB to provide assurance that we are meeting the expectations in the LSB Statement of policy on empowering consumers.
24. We met with the BSB, CLC and ICAEW in early November to discuss the progress of the digital exclusion research. The research partner is considering mitigating actions if interview responses rates are lower than initially anticipated.
25. In October, CRL contacted LeO again following our meeting with the Legal Ombudsman at the end of August to discuss LeO providing additional

information and data to CRL to support and augment CRL's enforcement, entity and first-tier complaints work. LeO has advised that it is looking to engage with all regulators to capture what each needs and then look at a solution.

26. CRL participated in the Legal Choices Governance Board meeting on 30 September where consideration was given to the delivery plan, budget and progress of the Regulatory Information Service (RIS) project.
27. CRL took part in the RIS data group meeting at the beginning of October. Discussions covered the good progress of the phase one work on the proof of concept, user testing findings and planned next steps.

(C) Communications Report – 20 August to 20 October 2024²⁰

(Previous reporting period June 2024 – 20 August 2024)

28. Since 20 August 2024, CRL has run the following communications campaigns and provided support as follows:

Campaigns

- Transparency Rule Changes implementation (following consultation) comms campaign including direct email and newsletter coverage.
- CPD 2024 communications (deadline 30 September 2024) emails to membership, regular newsletter updates and social media. Including promotion of the new CILEX CPD training packages.

Consultations

- CRL new three-year strategy consultation launched 22 July-14 September, all associated communications.
 - PCF Consultation launched 12 August-16 September, member communications and social media.
29. The Policy and Stakeholder Engagement Team also provided support to the Executive Team and wider team for:
 - Creation of Transparency article for use in October newsletter and CILEX Journal
 - CPD follow-up communications for non-compliance cases (October)
 - Sectoral Risk Assessment 2024 – publication on website and in newsletter

- National Inclusion Week – social media
- Publication of the chair’s blog following the September board meeting – publication on website and associated social media.
- Publication of board papers for September 2024 session
- Publication of the CRL’s new 3 year strategy – prep for November publication
- AML review of related communication activities in relation to sanctions for the HM Treasury report
- Audit of Regulation Matters content, creation of action plan and liaison with developers (Spindogs) ahead of site decommissioning
- CILEX Journal winter 2024 edition – November 2024
- Creation of CRL Internal Communications Plan – October 2024
- Monthly newsletter creation and publication - open rates in section 2 below.

30. CRL Press Coverage

- [CILEx Regulation leads transparency charge as law firms told to display all prices for consumer services | Law Gazette](#)
- [CILEx Regulation pushes ahead with transparency for all legal services - Legal Futures](#)
- [Firms face new rule to publish price information for all services - Legal Futures.](#)
- [Law firms to display all their pricing as regulations on transparency tighten - Today's Family Lawyer \(todaysfamilylawyer.co.uk\)](#)
- [New rules require UK law firms to publish full pricing and service details for all legal services](#)
- By John Barwick: [The role of regulators in promoting EDI in the legal profession - Solicitors Journal](#)

31. Work has also continued for ongoing projects including:

- a) **Website monitoring and SEO updates** – ongoing.
- b) **Google Analytics** – Reporting on engagement stats for CRL website and Regulation Matters.
- c) **Review of the Regulation Matters website** –

Continuation of cataloguing all content to identify what will be moved to the main CRL website.

Due to continued low engagement we have decided to decommission the site.

Existing Features and Case Studies to be moved to the main CRL website. Currently waiting for final quote and timescales and full costings from Spindogs.

Meeting with Spindogs 16 October to discuss project status and final costings. Delay due to staff changes.

- d) **LegalTech** – horizon scanning for innovation initiatives including lawtech and AI activity.
- e) **Brand awareness** – increase awareness and understanding of the CRL brand amongst legal services consumers and the role of CLE's.

CRL's communication channels continue to show steady engagement across our main platforms, including the CRL website, social media and newsletters.

32. Website and Newsletter Engagement

CRL newsletter email open rates are as follows:

| Edition | Open Rate |
|-------------------|------------------|
| August 2024 | 37% |
| September 2024 | 37% |
| October 2024 | TBC |
| Industry Standard | 15-35% |

33. CRL Press Releases

| Date | Press release |
|-------------|---|
| 19.09.2024 | LSB approve CRL's Transparency rule change to cover all legal services. |

34. Engagement and Reach

The following is a summary of CRL's communications engagement* and reach for the reporting period:

| Channel | 20 April 24 – 20 June 24 | 20 June 24 – 20 August 24 | 20 August to 20 October 24 | Highest engagement (for reporting period) |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| CRL Website | Total users: 11,877 Engaged sessions: 28,309 | Total users: 11,942 Engaged sessions: 32,218 | Total users: 12,562 Engaged sessions: 30,155 | Top 5 pages views: 1. Practitioners Directory – 4,528 users (10,818 views) 2. Schedules – 882 users (5,578 views) 3. Home page – 1,644 users (3,586 views) 4. Resource library – 608 users (2,769 views) 5. Chartered legal executives – 1,646 users (2,289 views) |
| LinkedIn followers | 4853 | 4887 | 4928 | LinkedIn posts with the highest engagement (top 3): 1. CRL Board update September 2024 – 3.58% 2. CPD 2024 – last few days! – 3.55% 3. Transparency Rule change approval – 3.21% |
| LI average post engagem ent rate* | 4.1% | 5.26% | 3.50% | |
| Twitter followers | 1624 | Currently unable to access `X` analytics | Currently unable to access `X` analytics | Twitter posts with highest the engagement: (top 3) (Currently unable to access Twitter `X` analytics - upgrade required) |
| Twitter average post engagmnt rate** | 2.0% | Approx 2.5% | Tbc | |
| Regulation Matters website | Total users: 400 Engaged sessions: 355 | Total users: 327 Engaged sessions: 143 | Total users: 311 Engaged session: 160 | Top 5 page views: 1. Home page – 117 (86 users) 2. Features home page – 98 (19 users) 3. Case studies page – 39 (19 users) 4. Independent prac rights – 35 (28 users) 5. Keep things simple WBL guide – 19 (16 users) |

*Industry standards: 2% and above is considered good engagement

**0.33 to 1% is considered very high

Recommendation

The Board is asked to **NOTE** this update and any actions identified.

Richard Hood

Interim Director of Governance, Policy and Legal