

Title Performance Monitoring Report

Status Public Format To note

From Hugh Simpson (Chief Executive and Registrar)

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#### 1. Purpose

To provide the Board with an overview of ARB operational performance.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note and comment on the operational performance of ARB as set out in this paper.

#### 3. Background and overview

- **3.1** The Board's responsibilities cover, broadly, three main areas: Setting of strategy, approving regulatory policy and standards, and assurance of the operational performance of the ARB.
- **3.2** Additionally, as part of the Framework Agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, there is an expectation that we regularly report on performance across each of our statutory functions, as well as finance and human resources.
- **3.3** As we are at the start of our financial year, this month's report provides only a high level summary of key metrics in relation to HR and staffing. However, a more detailed update is provided to the Board in relation to the annual retention process as well as periodic updates on Professional Standards, Registration and Accreditation.
- **3.4** We have continued to review the format for these papers so that they are accessible, both for the Board as well as stakeholders. This report blends a summary narrative in this cover paper with the highlighted performance data set out in a single **Annex** presentation document.
- **3.5** Our goal is to present these performance monitoring updates to the Board on a roughly quarterly basis. This cycle will depend on where Board meetings fall in each calendar year. The next update on performance is scheduled to be presented to the Board in May.

### 4. Professional Standards: Performance Update

**4.1** Levels of incoming complaints both in relation to the conduct and competence of architects and about those misusing the title have been lower in 2021 than average. This is likely in part to be as a result of the various Covid-19 lockdowns experienced in the year, as levels outside of those periods were higher than usual.

- 4.2 Covid-19 restrictions have also continued to have an impact on the swift disposal of cases; there have been a higher number of PCC hearings adjourned on health grounds, and the much publicised problems with the magistrates' court service has meant that we could not conclude any of the misuse of title cases we have referred for prosecution. This has had a knock-on effect on the overall end-to-end case conclusion time frames.
- **4.3** At mid-year a risk of failing to meet KPIs at our investigations stages was identified, and additional training following a case-audit. Performance has improved in the latter six months.

### 5. Registration: Performance Update

- 5.1 The Annex contains the update of performance data dashboard summary. It shows comparisons with previous years' data and includes a summary of our analysis of the impacts or actions taken. We have focussed this activity into three key operational areas of performance: the UK route to registration; the EU route to registration; and, re-joining the register after an absence
- 5.2 UK route to registration activity continues to meet the Board's KPI of 90% of applications processed within 15 working days of receipt. Both 2020 and 2021 concluded 90% of applications within the KPI. There are some variations of performance within 2021, due to external factors including the impact of Covid-19 on schools issuing the qualifications needed for first time registration, and the reliance on temporary members of staff within the team. There are also some factors in the phasing of the receipt of applications, and therefore income assumptions, that we have factored into our budget. Performance has improved over 2021 due to the changes we have made, and is sustained into 2022.
- 5.3 EU route to registration does not meet the Board's KPI of 90% of applications processed within 15 working days. The 2021 year figure is 59%, and like 2020 activity was affected by large volumes of incomplete applications submitted around the EU Exit transition period deadlines, and the inability to influence competent authorities once the UK became a third party country, to get required information. The volumes of expected applications is 40%+ lower than previous years, and shows a consistent trend. We have factored this into future budget assumptions. Performance improved in the second half of the year, due to changes we made to processes and staffing, and has been sustained.
- processed in five working days. The volumes of re-joining is lower than in previous years, mainly due to the reduced number of people removed in January 2020 for non-payment of their retention fee, after a successful fee campaign. There were some, limited, IT issues that affected a small number of applications (nine), which affected the performance. This has now been resolved. We have received over 300 re-joins in January 2022 (almost three-quarters of those received in the whole of the 2021), and 100% of these have met the KPI, so our systems are working.

#### 6. Accreditation: Performance Update

- **6.1** We have focussed this activity into two key operational areas of performance: Prescribed Examination outcomes; and, the Prescription process.
- 6.2 Prescribed examinations: the volume of examinations has increased in 2021, by 20%. The pass rate of Part 1 exams is stable, and the pass rate of Part 2 exams has returned to 2019 levels. More exam candidates are female (at both parts), and the proportion of

- those with a borderline fail (and therefore the opportunity to be considered by the Lead Examiner and then passed) has increased. We are continuing to monitor the changes in volumes of exam applications, now that they are continuing to run remotely. We have commenced the review of external guidance for applicants, and will be making changes to our website and application processes in Q2.
- Qualifications: we do not have any KPIs for qualifications, and will develop new ones for the new processes, as part of the Initial Education and Training work. We do monitor the time taken for both Annual Monitoring and New/Renewal applications, from receipt to consideration by Board. We have noted an increase in turnaround from institutions, as a result of Covid-19. We have recruited, trained and inducted three new members of the team, and all six team members are now working on all aspects of qualification review work.

### 7. Retention Fee 2022: Update

- 7.1 The annual retention fee process is established in both our legislation and procedures. We are required to write, in hard copy form, to the registered business address of every architect, to advise them of the fee for the coming year. We are obliged to give at least 60 calendar days notice of the fee deadline, which is 31 December.
- **7.2** We sent the paper copy of the Statutory Notice on 14th October 2021, giving the architects 78 working days to the deadline. Recognising the impact of Covid-19 and the impact of the festive season, we extended the deadline to 7th January, meaning that architects had 85 days notice of the retention fee.
- 7.3 The Statutory Notice sets out the methods of payment, and links to more detailed information on our website. This year, we used a tailored QR code, that architects could scan to take them directly to their own entry on the online payment portal.
- 7.4 Whilst we are not required to communicate beyond the paper Statutory Notice, we also send a series of reminder communications, using interactive emails and SMS text messages. These direct the architects to their retention fee payment site details, and assist in ensuring we have the correct contact details. There is demonstrable impact of these communications on the levels of payment, with 70%+ open rates, and 60%+ response within 48hrs of receiving the messages.
- 7.5 There are a range of payment methods available: an online portal using a credit or debit card, and making a bank transfer, setting up a direct debit, or paying over the telephone. Our preferred payment route is the online portal, as it operates 24 hours each day, and issues immediate confirmation of continued registration. Currently circa 22,000 of the 43,000 registrants pay this way.
- 7.6 Bank transfers allow architects to pay directly into ARB bank account. We have no control over how much architects pay, or how they identify their payments. This means there is significant error or misidentification of payments, resulting in duplication, or omission of payments. Each of the 8000 payments needs to be identified, added manually to the registration database, and reconciled in the financial systems. We have calculated the staff cost of this is more than £40,000 each year. This is also likely an underestimate, as there is an additional opportunity cost associated with the delay this causes; namely, architects call or email to ask if their payment has been received, which also requires intervention and checking by staff.
- 7.7 Telephone payments provide a significant risk and cost to ARB. Taking and processing credit card numbers over the telephone is not best practice, and the time taken to process the 606 payments this year is estimated to be around £3000 in staff costs. We

- tailored our communications to discourage telephone payments this year, reducing the number from 1047 the previous year.
- **7.8** We ceased taking cheques and cash this year, and have had only 23 attempts to pay this way. We propose to move to online payment and direct debit only for the 2023 fee, as this also supports the Board's strategic direction of establishing systems that allow "self service".
- **7.9** Summary of lessons learned from retention fee:
  - Size of Register: the demographics of architects and the impact of the economic circumstances in which they work may mean that the Register does not continue to grow each year.
  - Budget assumptions: slightly larger number of resignations and non-payers were seen this year, when compared to our budget assumptions. We are rephasing the assumptions, and have seen larger numbers of re-joiners, which has replenished the income.
  - Resignations: retiring architects make the largest proportion of resignations, though there are significant volumes of those who are not using the title due to leaving the UK, or not able to work in the profession.
  - Removals: a third of those who did not pay have an EU route to registration. It is likely these architects chose not to pay. Similarly, 10-15% of those who did not pay the fee are in the age group that corresponds with likely retirement.
  - Impact of external factors: we have direct feedback that some architects have responded to our guidance on whether they need to remain registered, depending on whether they are practising, whether they are working in the UK, or whether they are operating in the profession.

Detailed explanation of the analysis is included in the **Annex**.

### 8. Human Resources: Update

### **Staff Turnover**

- **8.1** There were a total of 8 employees who had left ARB between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021. This represents a turnover of 22.85% which is an increase of 2.4% from the previous year. A majority of the leavers were those staff with between 2 and 3 years of service.
- **8.2** We are currently reviewing our on-boarding and induction policies and procedures to ensure that staff receive the best start to working with ARB. Combined with a review of our pay and progression policies, as well as carrying out a review of our job descriptions, annual review process and a pay benchmarking exercise and we hope that this will help retain staff for a longer period, as it will allow growth and development within their roles.
- **8.3** The reasons given for leaving have been career development and returning to full time education this may not highlight the full reasons for leaving as exit interviews are voluntary.

### Sickness

8.4 In July 2021 office working restrictions were eased allowing us to give staff the option of adopting/ trialling a hybrid style of working. The ability to work flexibly benefitted staff's wellbeing with a noticeable improvement in engagement and motivational levels.

- **8.5** In the 12 months (January 2021 to 31 December 2021 there was a total of 132.5 days of sickness absence recorded based on a headcount of 44. There is a slight decrease in absence, which may be due to the ease in lockdown restrictions which we believe had a significant effect on most people's mental health.
- 8.6 Although in saying this, our most common reasoning remains the same being Covid-19 absence related and mental health. In the last 12-month period, a total of 98 working days of the 132.5 days was lost due to mental health reasons. We continue to offer support to all staff via our employee assist programme, Civil Service Benevolent Charity, Health cash plan as well as raising awareness within the workforce and encouraging open conversation around mental health and wellbeing.

### 9. Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from this performance monitoring report, although we continue to track our performance data to consider wider policy implications in relation to EDI.

#### 10. Communications

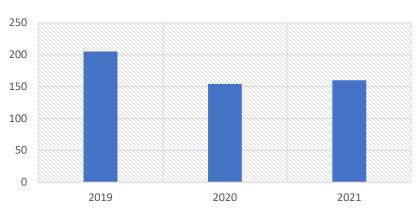
We continue to report regularly to our sponsor department on our operational performance and this paper is a public record of current performance

### 11. Resources

There are no specific resource implications arising from this paper.

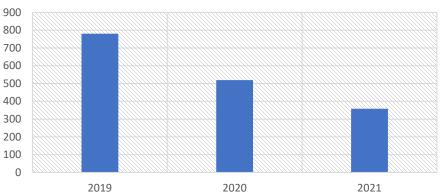
## Caseload activity and KPIs

### Allegations against architects



The number of incoming allegations is consistent with previous years.

# Misuse of title investigations



The number of new title investigations has been lower than in previous years. 2019 was particularly high due to an audit of all those removed from the Register previously. We plan to carry out a similar audit in 2022 so numbers will increase.

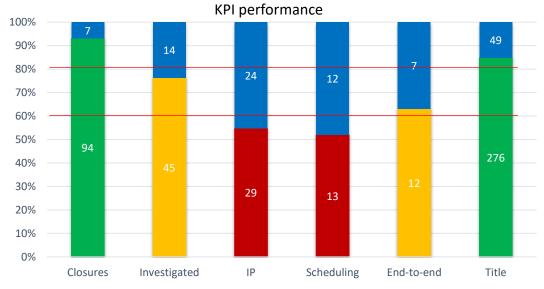
#### **KPIs**

Initial closures: 14 weeks
Cases investigated: 14 weeks
Investigations Panel decisions: 12 we

Investigations Panel decisions: 12 weeks PCC hearing scheduling: 29 weeks

End-to-end: 56 weeks

Title investigations: 14 weeks

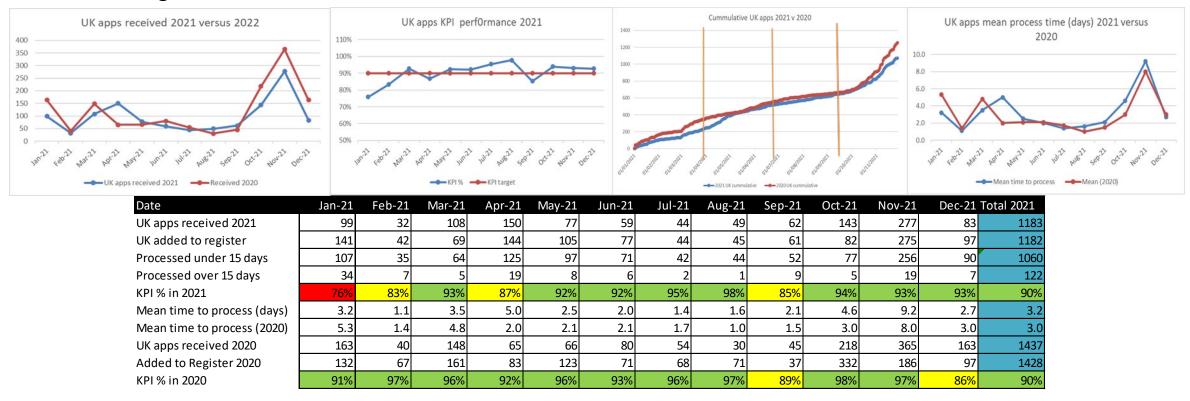


At mid-year a risk of failing to meet KPIs at our investigations stages was identified, and additional training following a case-audit. Performance has improved in the latter six months.

Scheduling of PCC cases has been affected by numerous adjournments, many of which are Covid related. This has had a knock-on effect on the overall end-to-end case conclusion time frames.

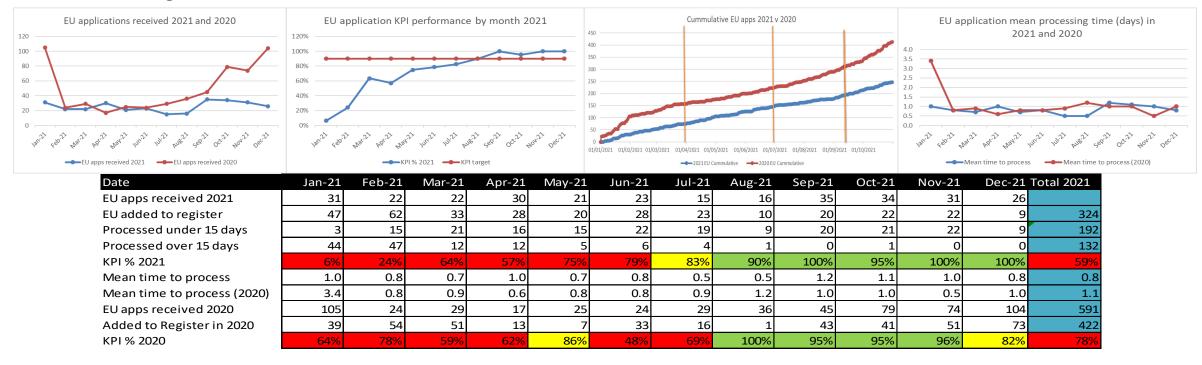
# **Registration Performance Update: February 2022**

## UK route to registration



- The KPI measure for processing UK applications is 15 working days from receipt. The YTD KPI was met in 2021, as it was in 2020. There are some fluctuations in performance. In Q1 of 2021, Registration team capacity was reduced due to reliance on temp staffing, and a high volume of postEU Exit applications.
- April and September 2021 performance were affected by applicants making applications without the full award from the school. This is partly an effect of covid-19 on institutions. We have amended guidance via our application routes, and reminded Schools of the need for documentation to complete an application.
- The phasing of applications has changed over the year, due to covid-19 and the readiness of applicants to apply. This has affected income, as Q1 shows a lower number of applications at £119. The volumes in Q2 and Q3 are the same as 2020, but the registration fee is lower, due to the pro-rata nature. Q4 shows a deviation in numbers, with applications delayed into 2022. These are incorporated into our budget planning.
- The time to process UK applications in 2021 compares favourably to those in 2020, due to changes in processing and escalation, and staff training.

# EU route to Registration



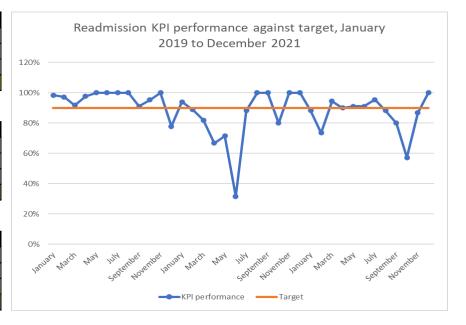
- The volumes of EU applications has changed significantly in 2021. The overall volume is down by almost half when compared to 2020. There is no indication that this is changing in 2022. We have factored this into current budgeting.
- The complexity of EU applications has also changed. Applicants made last minute applications at both the start and end of 2020 (as EU Exit and transition period was clarified). The quality of these applications was variable, with missing material, or slow responses from other competent authorities once the UK was a third country. This affected the KPI performance in the first half of the year. We have met and exceeded the KPI performance from August 2021, due to changes in processing, but the effect on the full year of this activity means the year end KPI is significant.
- Like UK applications, the income from new EU applications has changed since 2020, with fewer applications, later in the year (and at lower registration fee).
- We are maintaining acceptable mean processing times, due to revised guidance to applicants, changes to our escalation process, and trained/permanent registration staff.

# Re-joining the Register, 2019 to 2021

2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septembe	October	November	December	2021 total
Within 5 days	134	72	33	27	10	20	21	15	8	12	13	8	373
More than 5 days	18	26	2	3	1	2	1	2	2	9	2	0	68
Total processed	152	98	35	30	11	22	22	17	10	21	15	8	441
KPI %	88%	73%	94%	90%	91%	91%	95%	88%	80%	57%	87%	100%	85%

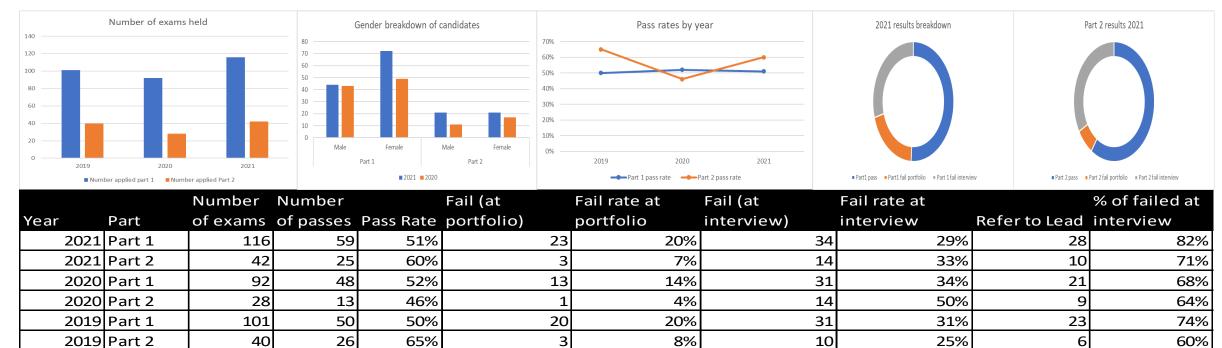
2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septembe	October	November	December	2021 total
Within 5 days	540	87	27	10	5	6	15	13	22	12	12	11	760
More than 5 days	35	11	6	5	2	13	2	0	0	3	0	0	77
Total processed	575	98	33	15	7	19	17	13	22	15	12	11	837
KPI %	94%	89%	82%	67%	71%	32%	88%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	91%

2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Septembe	October	November	December	2021 total
Within 5 days	468	67	44	40	30	16	15	16	10	20	16	7	749
More than 5 days	8	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	19
Total processed	476	69	48	41	30	16	15	16	11	21	16	9	768
KPI %	98%	97%	92%	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%	91%	95%	100%	78%	98%



- The number of re-joining architects is significantly lower in 2021, than in previous years (half the volumes of the previous two years). This is due to fewer architects being removed for non-payment in the 2021 retention fee campaign.
- The KPI (processed onto the Register within 5 working days) was slightly lower than in 2020. The highest volumes are in January (following retention fee removals). In 2021, performance was affected by high volumes of poor quality EU applications for both registration, and certificates validating qualifications. This coincided with staff shortages. We have restructured the team and recruited substantive posts, so we are not reliant on temps.
- In October 2021, we had an IT error with the online submission portal, which meant applications were delayed. This has been resolved and has informed the likely requirements for any replacement system as part of the transformation work. Nine applications were affected over the space of one week.

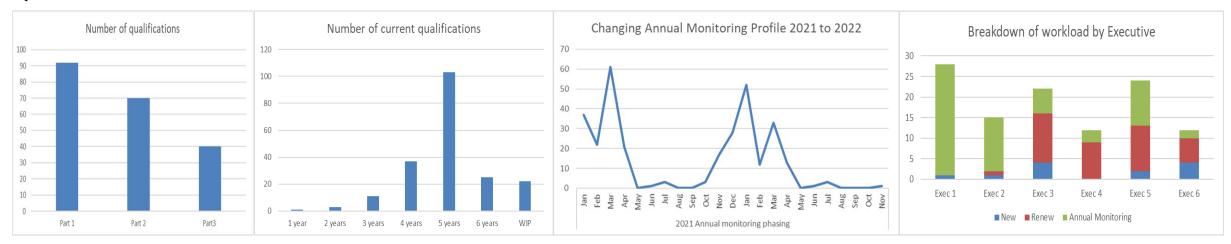
### Prescribed examinations



- The prescribed examination has three stages: pass, failure on portfolio assessment, or failure at interview. Those who fail at interview can be referred to a lead examiner to resubmit material on the area(s) of failure. The pass rates are stable, and set out in the table
- The pass rate at Part1 is consistent across 2019 to 2021. The pass rate at Part 2 has returned to 2019 levels after a dip in 2020, due to poor quality applications, and re-examinations of candidates from previous years
- The number of exam applications has increased by a quarter since last year, due to interest from Hong Kong, India, Brazil in particular.
- Pass rates are generally higher at Part 2 due to architectural experience, and familiarity with the ARB process.
- There is an increase in those that fail at interview being sufficiently near to passing, to get a referral to the lead examiner. We will look at whether we can improve this with additional guidance to candidates as part of the planned review of the examination process.
- The majority of candidates are female, in both Part 1 and Part 2

# **Accreditation Performance Update: February 2022**

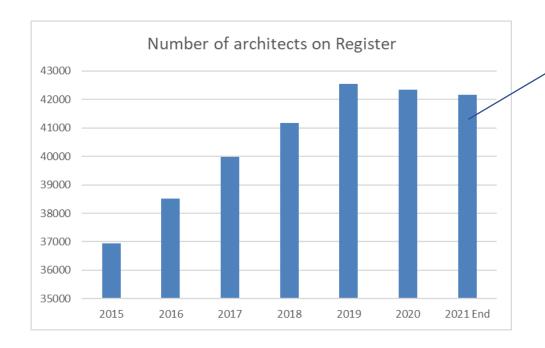
### Qualifications



- Just under half of the prescribed qualifications are at part 1, with a number of institutions having several part 1 courses. The number of institutions has increased by 5 in the last 12 months.
- 54 qualifications had a Board consideration of the annual monitoring submission in 2021. The mean time from submission of the material from the institution, through consideration by the Executive, then the Prescription Committee and then the Board was 161 calendar days. We have made changes to the annual monitoring process, asking institutions to nominate one of three months for submission, to allow us to "smooth" the volumes across the year, and make both Committee and Board sessions more manageable, leaving space for new and renewal applications.
- 12 qualifications were prescribed (or renewed) by the Board in 2021. The average time from notification to Board approval was 336 calendar days. This has been affected by covid-19 delays in institutions, 3 new staff members (from a team of six) being inducted, and Committee and Board availability. All team members are now managing all aspects of Qualifications work.

# **Retention Fee 2022: Board Update**

## The Register after the retention fee collection period ended



At the end of 2021, the Register was smaller (by 170) than at end of 2020

Factors that we have considered in our analysis:

- Covid-19 impact on institutions, employers and individuals joining the Register for the first time
- Economic impact in the UK, and internationally
- EU exit outcomes
- ARB making explicit changes in strategy (IET and CPD)
  - The number of those who were removed for nonpayment increased compared to 2020
  - We had budgeted for more than in 2020, but the actual number exceeded our assumptions
  - The number of resignations also increased
  - Over 300 of those who were removed for non=payment have re-joined since.

	2020	2021	2021 budget
Removed for non-payment	881	1331	1000
Resignation	649	831	800
	1530	2162	1800

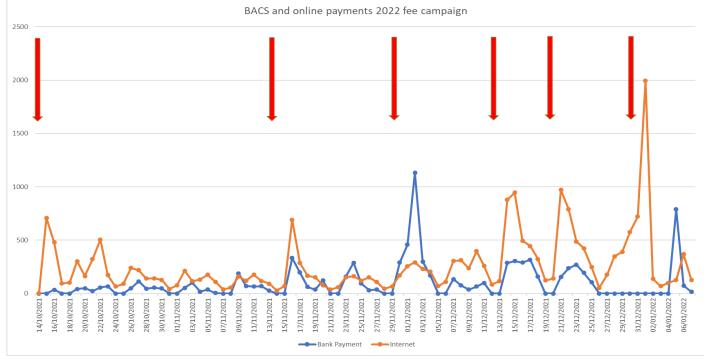
Register at end of year	42340	42170

# How architects paid their fee



We made six email and SMS text interventions (arrows). The response of payment was immediate, showing that architects respond to our electronic communications

- More than half of the Register already pay by online portal, making use of 24/7 operation and confirmation of continued registration.
- 20% of the Register pay by bank transfer which has circa £40k of processing costs for us



# Who was removed for non-payment?

Age group	<b>Female</b> Male	Grand Tota	al
Up to 30	41	40 8	31
31 to 40 years	229	296 52	25
41 to 50 years	95	178 27	'3
51 to 60 years	44	120 16	54
61 to 70 years	15	153 / 16	8
71 to 80 years	4	82 ( 8	86
81+ years	2	32 3	34
<b>Grand Total</b>	430	901 133	31

Those no longer working may have deliberately lapsed, rather than resign, so we don't have data for reasoning

Route to Registration Coun	t of Regi
MoE E UK Qual. over 2 y.	1
MoE E UK Qualified	850
MoE K EU Automatic	426
MoE N EU General System	1
MoE Q UK With Equivalence	26
MoE M Eminent Route	1
MoE J Qual. over 2 y.	1
MoE J Prescribed Exam	23
MoE I NCARB Agreement	2
Grand Total	1331

There were a surprising number of architects under 40 who were removed, and who had been on the register for a short time. Some of these have already re-joined, suggesting they forgot to pay, but other who have not may not be in the profession currently

Time on Register	Female Male	<b>Grand Total</b>
0 to 5 years	186	242 428
6 to 10 years	116	145 261
11 to 15 years	48	82 130
16 to 20 years	19	81 100
21 to 25 years	21	48 69
26 to 30 years	16	44 60
31 to 35 years	12	68 80
36 to 40 years	7	62 69
41+ years	5	129 134
Grand Total	430	901 1331

453 architects (34%) had an EU route to registration, supporting the fact they may no longer require UK registration

# Who resigned?

Immediate = within the year, 31 December is pre-warning that registration will elapse

By route to registration

	Number of	% of	Number of 31	% of	Total	% of all
Route	Immediate	group	December	group	resignations	resignations
EU K route	86	20%	7:	20%	165	20%
UK E route	349	79%	30-	78%	653	79%
International/exam	5	1%	•	3 2%	13	2%
	440		39	L	831	

EU architects make up less than 10% of register, but 20% of resignations

By age

There is evidence that younger architects are resigning, due to work opportunities and economy

	Number of	% of	Number of 31	% of	Total	% of all
Age group	Immediate	group	December	group	resignations	resignations
Under 30	11	1 3%	(	5 2%	17	2%
31 to 40	68	15%	68	3 17%	136	16%
41 to 50	34	4 8%	30	8%	64	8%
51 to 60	40	9%	35	5 9%	75	9%
61 to 70	173	1 39%	126	32%	297	36%
71 to 80	93	3 21%	103	3 26%	196	24%
81+	23	3 5%	23	3 6%	46	6%
	440	)	39:	1	831	

By time on register

	Number of	% of	Number of 31	% of	Total	% of all
Time on register	Immediate	group	December	group	resignations	resignations
0 to 5 yrs	68	15%	5	5 14%	123	15%
6 to 10	20	5%	3	5 9%	55	7%
11 to 15	22	5%	1	4 4%	36	4%
16 to 20	13	3%	1	4 4%	27	3%
21 to 25	16	4%		8 2%	24	3%
26 to 30	10	2%	1	6 4%	26	3%
31 to 35	64	15%	4	7 12%	111	13%
36 to 40	72	16%	5	4 14%	126	15%
41+	155	35%	14	8 38%	303	36%
	440	)	39	1	831	

Similar to non-payment, those at the end of career have resigned in larger numbers

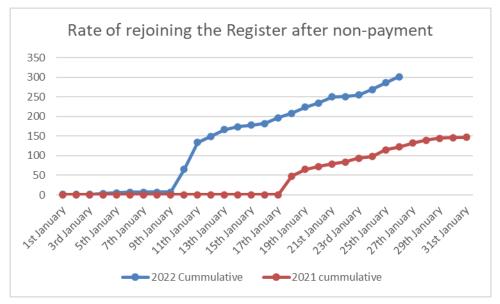
# Why did they resign?

	Number of	% of	Number of 31	% of	Total	% of all
Reason	Immediate	group	December	group	resignations	resignations
Career Break	24	5%	14	4%	38	5%
Covid impact	1	0%	2	1%	3	0%
Health	13	3%	9	2%	22	3%
Maternity Leave	0	0%	5	1%	5	1%
Not in architecture	52	12%	53	14%	105	13%
No reason given	39	9%	69	18%	108	13%
Not in UK	58	13%	49	13%	107	13%
PII cover	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Retention fee level	0	0%	12	3%	12	1%
Retired	244	55%	167	43%	411	49%
Unemployed	9	2%	10	3%	19	2%
	440		391		831	

These are the areas we gave explicit guidance this year

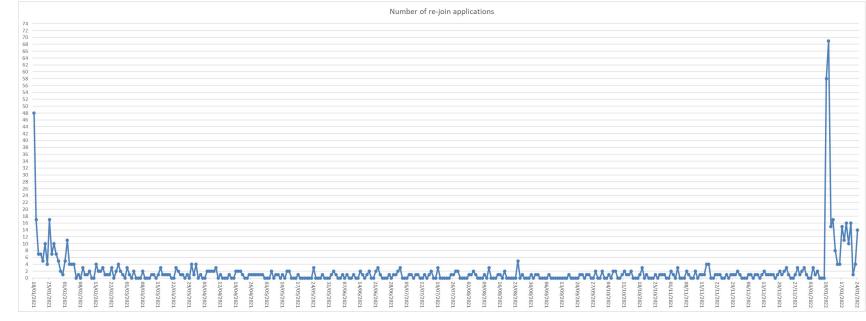
We have had direct feedback that CPD and economy has driven this figure

# Re-joining the Register after non-payment



The rate of re-joining this year is double last year. This suggests more people missed the deadline. However, not all of the re-joiners were immediate, a third of them are returning to the Register after a break

There are very low levels of rejoiners between retention fee periods, mean value is less than 1 per day



# Current demographics of the Register

# **Active registrants**

		Female	Male	Total
UK	England	10185	22687	32872
	Northern Ireland	280	844	1124
	Scotland	1035	2510	3545
	Wales	158	597	755
	Total	11658	26638	38296
Non UK	Non UK	1231	2992	4223
	Total	1231	2992	4223
Total		12889	29630	42519

There are 2,586 architects older than 70-6% of the Register. We are modelling the impact of them leaving the Register in the coming 2 to 5 years, and the expected first time architects joining

# **Registrants by Age**

Active registrants.

Age	Female	Male	Total
25 or under	11	13	24
26-30	1533	1720	3253
31-35	3068	3960	7028
36-40	2416	3882	6298
41-45	1878	3631	5509
46-50	1484	3703	5187
51-55	1016	3046	4062
56-60	699	2755	3454
61-65	419	2552	2971
66-70	216	1926	2142
71-75	83	1342	1425
76-80	38	686	724
81 or over	26	411	437
Not Known	2	3	5
Total	12889	29630	42519