Board Paper
for Open session

Subject: **Performance Monitoring Update**

To receive an update on the performance data for Q1 of 2025.

Board meeting:

21 May 2025

Agenda item:

13.i

Action:

- For noting ☒
- For discussion ☐
- For decision ☐

Purpose
To provide the Board with an overview of operational performance for Q1 of 2025.

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

Annexes
Annexe A: Q1 Performance Monitoring Report.

Author/Key Contact
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1. Open Session

1.1. This item will be noted in the open session of the Board meeting.

2. Background and key points

Operations

Professional Standards

<u>Case Load</u>

2.1.   While initial complaints remain steady after an expected spike during the retention fee period, the number of cases being referred to the Investigations Panel and Professional Conduct Committee have increased for the fourth consecutive quarter. While those numbers remain manageable, we will continue to monitor workload – particularly because of the impact these cases have on the budget.

<u>KPI Performance</u>

2.2.   Performance against our timescale KPIs continue to improve as a result of targeted work to dispose of older cases.

Registration and Accreditation

2.3.   The Register has increased from 38,981 architects immediately after the resignation and removal for non-payment process on 15 January 2025, to 40,159 currently.

2.4.   As expected, a high number of those removed for non-payment (including those who had historic direct debits cancelled due to non-completion of the professional declaration required). Of the 2468 removed for non-payment, 1823 remain unregistered, meaning over a quarter of those removed for non-payment have now returned to the Register.

2.5.   The age profile of the Register remains within expectations, with 6% being under 30 years of age, and a further 7% at the UK retirement age, or older.

2.6.   We continue to focus registration and CPD-based communications with tailored messages that speak to the historical engagement with CPD or retention fee compliance. We are specifically contacting those who have direct debits, to remind them of the need to use MyARB to record their CPD activities throughout the year, to minimise non-compliance during the retention fee period, and to gain insights into those who may decide to cease registration in this year. This will assist with budget and fee-setting processes.

2.7.   The pattern of resignations is typically low in Q1 and Q2 of each year. So far, in 2025 we have had 21 resignations, some of which are post-dated to 31 December. The majority (62%) relate to retirement. We will continue to monitor this throughout the year.

2.8.   Assessment of applications made against the expected budget/income assumptions is as expected. The major driver of new joiners is the Part 3 graduation dates, which – this year – are slightly later due to a later Easter.

2.9.   Rejoins, by contrast to first time joins, are driven by the removal process, and are nearing 90% of those planned for the year. We continue to monitor whether those removed for non-payment may rejoin. Historic data shows a second spike of rejoins in Q2, once the annual retention fee pro-rata effect of reducing by 25% (which offsets some of the administration and prescribed fees due) takes place.

2.10. The rates of EU applications that are ineligible due to not being included on the EU Frozen Annex, or providing correct documentation remains high, at 30% of all EU route applications received.

2.11. We anticipate higher rates of certificate and MRA applications with the advent of the Canada MRA, and the anticipated next wave of Hong Kong applications. The number of UK Adaptation Assessment remains low, with only 4 sat in quarter 1. Prescribed Exam activity remains as expected and planned, with a 73% immediate pass rate in Q1, with a further 11% just missing the pass mark (and invited to make a further submission to the Lead Examiner).

2.12. KPI performance continues to surpass the requirements, with 99% of those joining the register for the first time, doing so in an average of 6 working days, compared to the 15 day target. Those undergoing assessment by the Competency Standards Group (either away from the Register for more than 2 years, or having taken Part 3 more than 2 years ago) all exceeded the requirements, with 100% of them being (re)registered in less than the 45 days allowed. The mean time was 22 days.

2.13. Only 4 of the 735 rejoin applications fell outside of the 5 working day KPI, with 83% of them being processed in less than 2 working days. This compares favourably with the 67% of those rejoining within 2 days in the whole of 2024, as we leverage efficiencies from the use of CRM.

2.14. There is no change in the numbers of accredited qualifications, or providers. The Accreditation Committee have made a minded to decision on the first qualifications received under the new IET framework. These are out to public consultation, and are planned to commence in Q3 of this year, being integrated qualifications across architecture and engineering.

2.15. The Accreditation team have completed 5 of the scheduled 2025 accreditation Visits (with external Visitors). These cover the regular reviews, but also assess progress with compliance of the second set of Standards for Providers (those relating to Governance and Leadership, and Student Support).

2.16. We have completed a baseline of student engagement, using CitizenSpace software. Focusing on those Providers with Part 2 and Part 3 qualifications, we had 269 individual responses, covering 42 of the 57 Providers.

2.17. Results were encouraging, with majorities of respondents expressing awareness of Provider policies on bullying and harassment, or EDI matters. Similarly, clear majorities reported sufficient resources were allocated to the qualification, and those who had cause to complain about issues were satisfied with the Provider's engagement and resolution.

2.18. The purpose of the student engagement is to assist the Visit Team to frame questions, and triangulate against submitted data. The Visit Team will also seek direct responses from current students during future visits, and we are exploring how we further triangulate with recent graduates (where there are cohorts who have been awarded the accredited qualification).

2.19. As part of our proportionate quality assurance process, there will be a mixture of in person and online visits to Providers. Factors used to decide whether to visit in person include:

geographical location and ease/cost/time related to the visit; whether there are ongoing special conditions or compliance matters; if there is a new qualification or radical change to an existing qualification; time since we last visited. We are planning around 60% of visits to be in person in 2025, in order to ensure compliance with the new Standards for Providers, and to ensure we will have visited all Providers at least every three years. These costs are already factored into the 2025 budget.

External

Communications

2.20. Stakeholder meetings were higher this quarter because of our visit to New York and preparation for our visit to Canada, which included meetings with civil servants across various departments. The 'other' category includes several regulator events and wider sector discussions that ARB attended. We gave six talks to student groups during this period after putting more resources into our student engagement programme, and the PPE Commission held stakeholder meetings as it finalised its recommendations. Our events include a reception in New York attended by over 60 architects and additional government and professional body representatives. We did not track attendee satisfaction at any events this quarter, due to the nature of those events.

2.21. We saw a high number of media articles at the start of the year. A lot of the neutral stories in this quarter referenced ARB tangentially – there were stories related to the government's response to Grenfell, for example, which mentioned ARB. The increase in negative media articles was related to Accreditation Rule 4.2 (and RIBA reaction). The Workplace Culture report published at the end of 2024 continued to receive coverage, including from wider construction media.

2.22. The Workplace Culture report also drove our higher social media engagements, with the recording of the launch webinar (published December 2024) viewed 18,000 times, with the majority of those views coming in Q1 2025. This doesn't necessarily mean our target audiences are watching the video; having reviewed the data, we believe an algorithm has picked up certain language in the video and driven views.

2.23. The most visited pages on the website this quarter have been the MyARB landing page, the CPD landing page and the prescribed examinations landing page. Visits to the public information pages are down at the moment, although we do still see a high number of direct links due to our placement on the Planning Portal. Following a change to our security settings last year, our engagement rates on website pages are not tracking properly due to the way we now ask permission from website users to collect their data. We are investigating solutions.

Internal

Human Resources

2.24. The reporting of HR data is in transition as we move from the SMB HR system to the new Sage HR system. The headcount data shows that we currently have 59 staff in Q1 (including agency and fixed term) with a gender split of 55:44 female to male. The % of male employees has increased since 2024. The data around headcount and resourcing costs shows savings in Q1 which originate from reforecasting based on updated headcount and our financial modelling.

2.25. Staff turnover for Q1 is at 3% which is marginally lower than the same period in 2024 but continues to be a healthy figure. Absence levels for Q1 2025 are lower in comparison to the same period in 2024 and Q4 2024 which is a positive trend. We continue to keep an eye on all absence through return-to-work meetings where we can identify any support that is required.

2.26. Future analysis will look to include complete equality and diversity data and analysis around our age profile in terms of impact on length of service and how the profile of age maps against management roles and turnover.

Finance

Financial Performance & outlook

2.27. Payment of invoices within 30 days continues to incrementally improve and we hope to see this trend continue as the new PO system becomes further embedded throughout the organisation.

2.28. March Management Accounts which include March YTD Actuals, and the full year reforecast have been prepared. Key points are given below:

March 2025 YTD actuals:

Revenue Performance:

- 90% of the years reforecast revenue has now been collected.

Expenditure Performance:

- Employee costs, which constitutes 45% of operating expenditure, are in line with the projected burn rate.
- Professional Conduct, Title Misuse & Regulation is tracking slightly above the burn rate due to timing of legal fee invoices.
- Other cost categories are either on track or below budget due to timing factors.

Project Costs:

- As of the end of March, the only Project Invoices received related to the PPE commission.

2025 Full Year Reforecast:

- Forecast operating revenue for the full year is projected to be down 4% against budget due to a decline in Registrations. This has increased favourably by 1% against the February reforecast predominantly due to higher than anticipated entry/re-entry to the Register in Q1. Income is down 5% overall due to negative movements in reforecast investment income.
- Forecast operating expenditure has increased 1% (£94k) against budget, with an additional £175k of costs being forecast since February.
- Please refer to the march Management accounts & Full Year reforecast for further details.

3. Risk Implications

3.1 There are no risk implications specifically relating to this paper, although organisational performance directly relates to the delivery of our corporate strategy and our Business Plan.

4. Equality and diversity implications

4.1 There are no EDI implications specifically relating to this paper.

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

Architects Registration Board

Performance Monitoring Report: 2025, Quarter 1

Contents

1. Balanced scorecard
   a) Operations: Professional Standards, Registration and Accreditation
   b) External: Communications
   c) Internal: Human Resources
   d) Finance: Financial performance and outlook

Architects Registration Board

1. Balanced scorecard

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a. Operations

Professional Standards

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Professional Standards: New case volumes

We saw a spike in new cases during Q4 of 2024. This was due to the registration renewal period which required architects to declare notifiable incidents, such as criminal convictions. New complaint numbers returned to normal levels during Q1 this year.

Referrals to the PCC have been rising, following a steady decrease in early 2024. Alongside increased conviction notifications, this will start to grow the PCC caseload. We are looking at what this means for budgeting and hearing numbers for the second half of 2025. Our second firm of solicitors are now taking cases, and we will monitor timeliness and costs across both firms, to ensure efficiency and best value for money.

New Case Volumes

Architects Registration Board
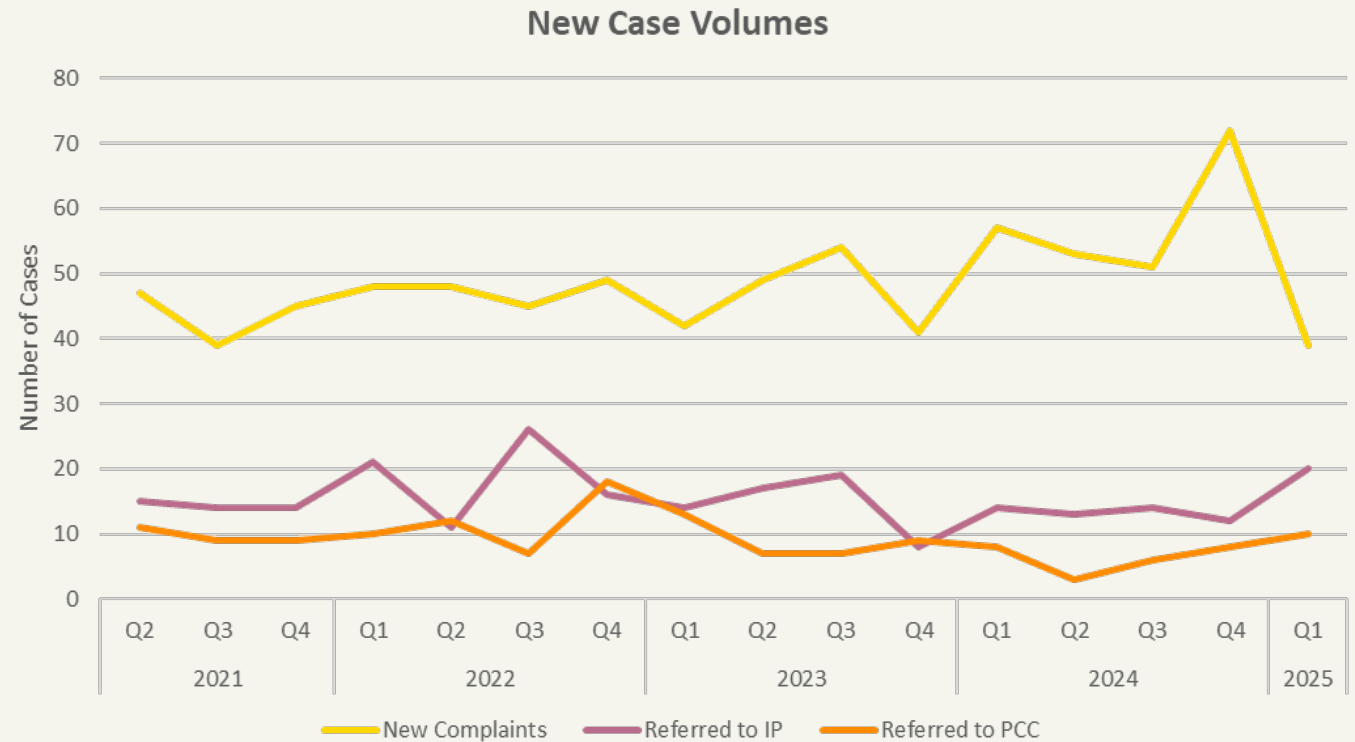
Professional Standards: KPI compliance

The cumulative KPI currently sits at **67%**, up 10% on the last quarter.
We have been undertaking targeted work to improve timeliness of case management, following our deep dive last year. We have set up monthly monitoring of our oldest complaints and begun reporting screening closures against a more transparent and challenging target.

The new CRM system enables us to record and report on conviction cases, which we have not done in the past. Joinder cases continue to present a challenge with 25% of cases at the IP being linked to other cases.

KPI compliance

Legend: Investigations, IP, PCC, Cumulative

Screening and Investigations:
•Complaint received to screening closure: 12 weeks
•Acceptance criteria met to IP or Registrar: 12 weeks
IP and PCC preparation:
•Case closures: 12 weeks (case to IP to closure)
•PCC referrals: 28 weeks (standard case) 34 weeks (Complex case) (date sent to IP, to agreement of solicitor's report.)
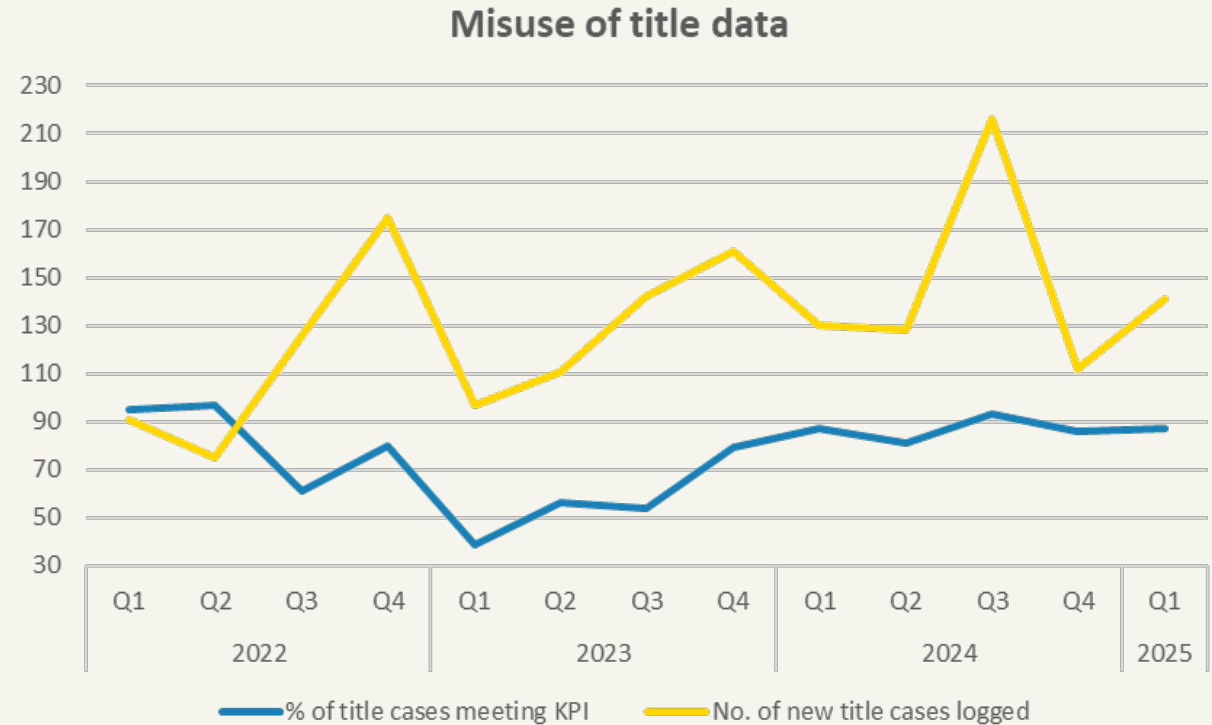**PCC listing and closure:**
•18 weeks (Approval of PCC report to last day of hearing)

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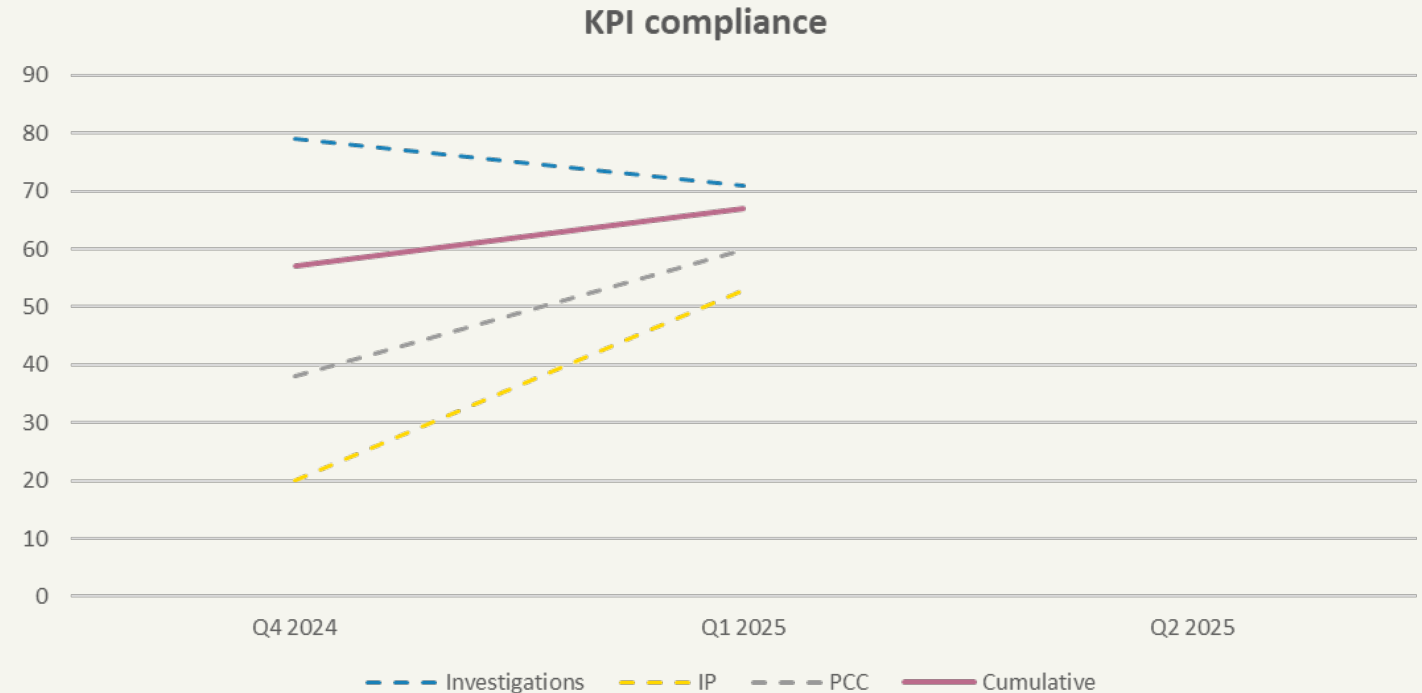
Professional Standards: Misuse of title

Title investigations have returned to normal levels following the 2024 strike-off audit and KPI compliance remains above 80%.

Misuse of title data

KPI: From receipt to closure or referral to solicitor: 14 weeks
Closure means that the case has been concluded to our satisfaction, either by way of a warning letter or declaration by the offender, depending on the severity of the breach
No cases have required court action in the reportable period

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a. Operations

Registration and Accreditation

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Operations delivery: The Register

- In Q1, 683 architects have been reinstated to the Register, following removal for non-payment

- The Register is currently 40,159, up from 38,981 after the removal process on 15 January

- 495 joins and re-joins under 2 years have also been added to the Register since 1 January 2025

- The age profile of the Register within expectations, with 6% being under 30 years old, and 7% being UK retirement age or older

Number of architects on Register
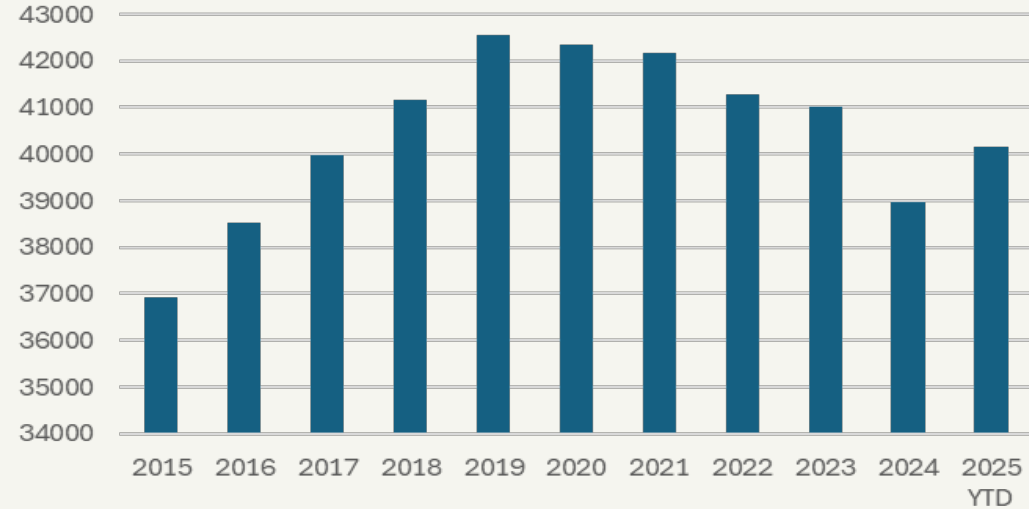
Age of those on the Register on 1 April 2025

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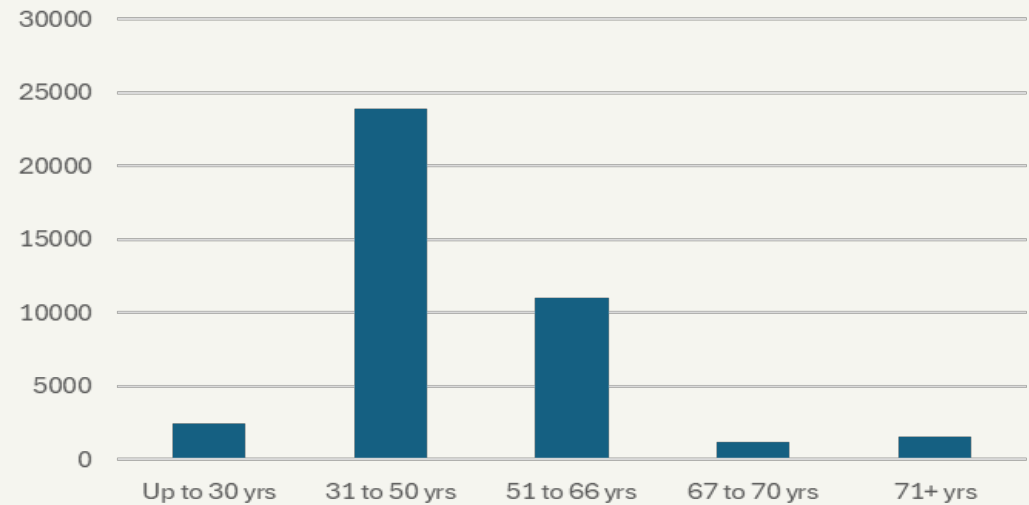
Reasons for resignations YTD

- Only 21 architects have resigned in 2025 year to date

- The mean and median ages are 64 and 67 years respectively

- 62% of those resigning cite resignation

Reason for resignation	Age group				
Row Labels	31 to 50 yrs	51 to 66 yrs	67 to 70 yrs	71+ yrs	Grand Total
I'm taking a career break		1			1
I'm taking maternity/paternity leave	1				1
I'm no longer using the title in business or practice			1	1	2
I'm practising abroad	2				2
I'm resigning due to ill health		1			1
I've been retired for some time and no longer wish to be on the Register				1	1
I've recently retired		5	6	1	12
I'm resigning for other reasons				1	1
Grand Total	**3**	**7**	**7**	**4**	**21**

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Operations delivery: applications & budget

- Received and completed applications are broadly on target to meet budget expectations for the year, when phasing is taken into consideration

- The level of cancelled EU applications (due to not being eligible) remains the highest of all routes, with 26 of the 87 applications (30%) closed.

- We continue to see low uptake of UK Adaptation Assessment, with only 4 completed (1 pass)


Applications versus projected volumes at year to date
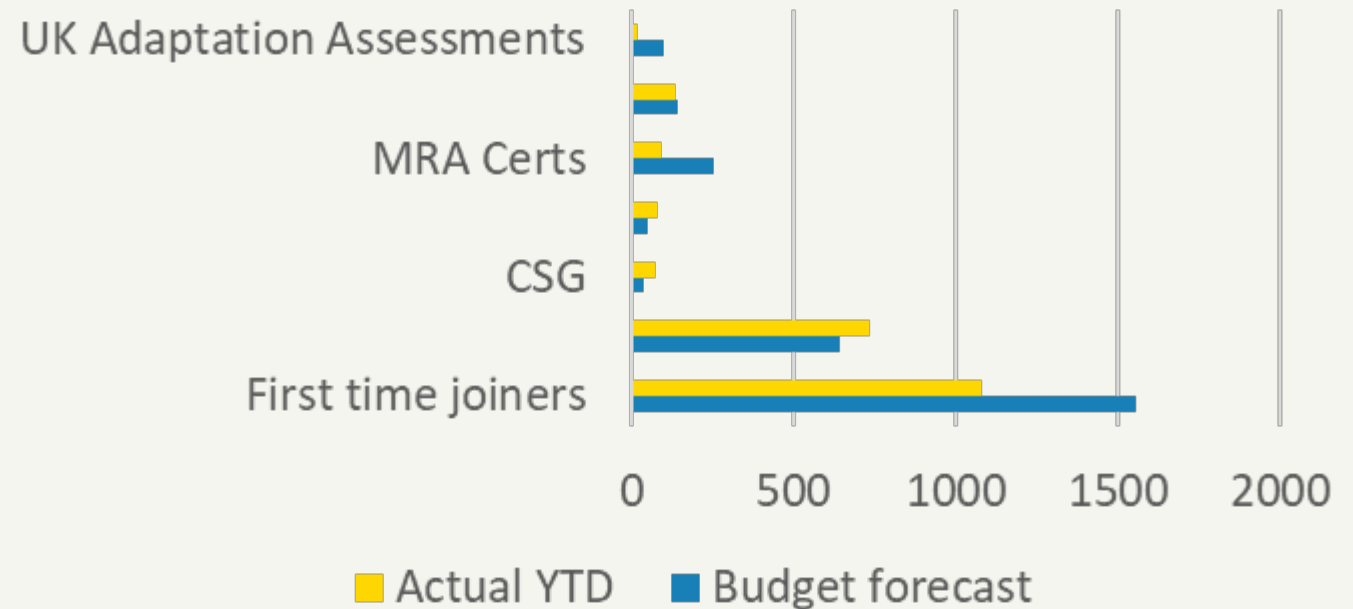
Operations Delivery: Time to join the Register

The 95% first time join within 15 working days continues to be delivered, with 99% of those applications processed in KPI. The mean and median processing times is 6 and 5 working days, respectively

It is a similar situation for those following the CSG route. Of the 9 applications processed, 100% were delivered within KPI, with a mean and median processing time of 22 and 19 days respectively
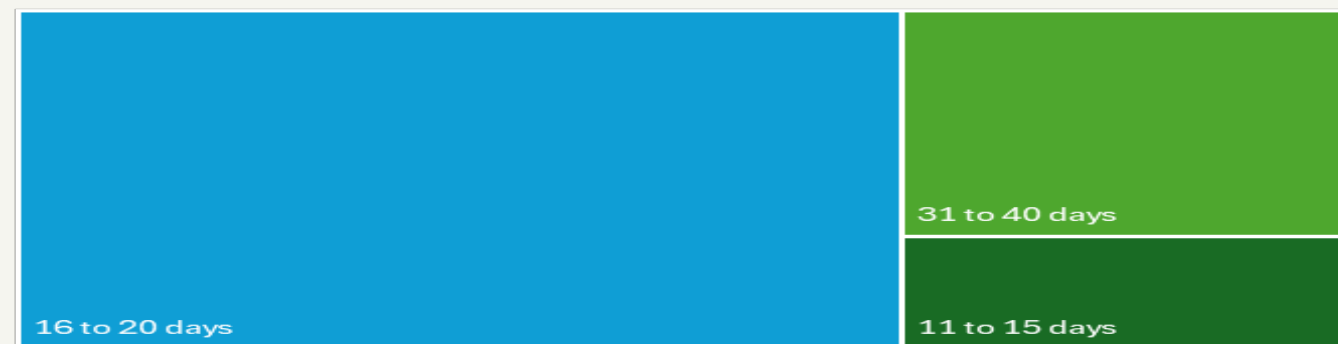
First time joiners (15 day KPI)

- Up to 2 days
- 3 to 5 days
- 6 to 10 days
- 11 to 15 days
- Over KPI

Up to 2 days | 3 to 5 days | 6 to 10 days | 11 to 15 days | Over KPI
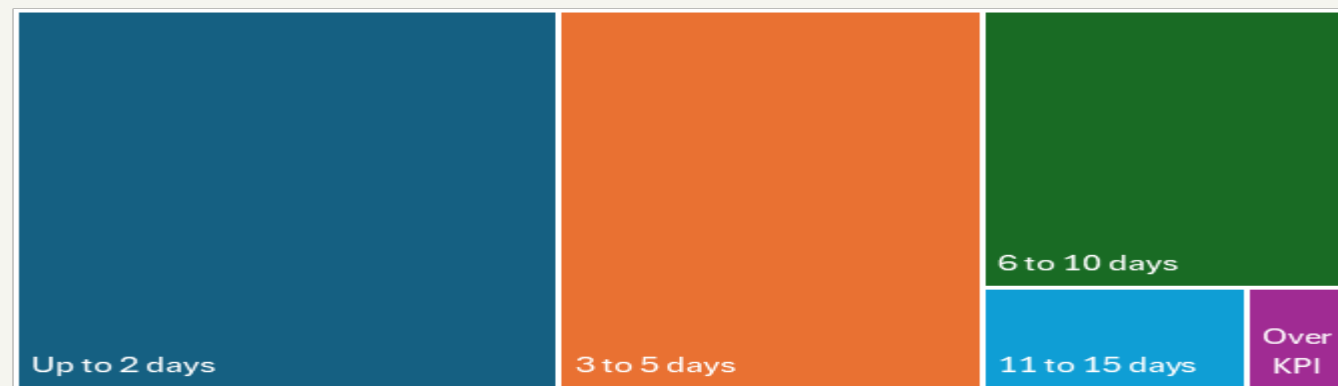
Competency Standards Group (45 day KPI)

- Up to 5 days
- 6 to 10 days
- 11 to 15 days
- 16 to 20 days
- 21 to 30 days
- 31 to 40 days
- 41 to 45 days
- Over KPI

16 to 20 days | 31 to 40 days | 11 to 15 days

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Operations Delivery: Time to Re-join the Register

Those returning to the Register (after being away for less than two years) continue to be processed, using CRM, quickly. 611 of the 735 applications (83%) were processed in less than 2 working days
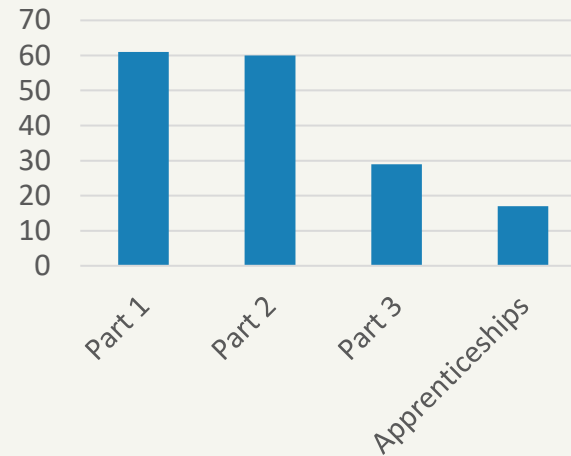
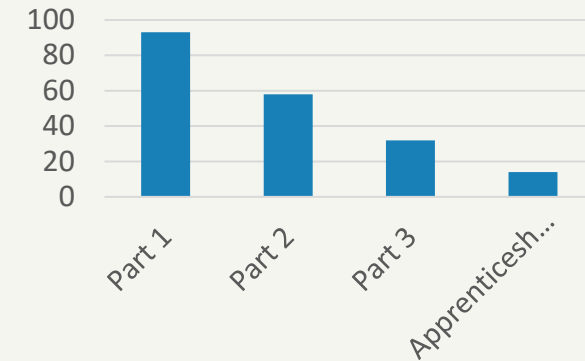The comparative time for the 839 rejoins in 2024, was 67% within 2 days

Readmissions (5 day KPI)

■ Up to 1 day   ■ 1 to 2 days   ■ 3 to 5 days   ■ Over KPI

Up to 1 day | 1 to 2 days | 3 to 5 days

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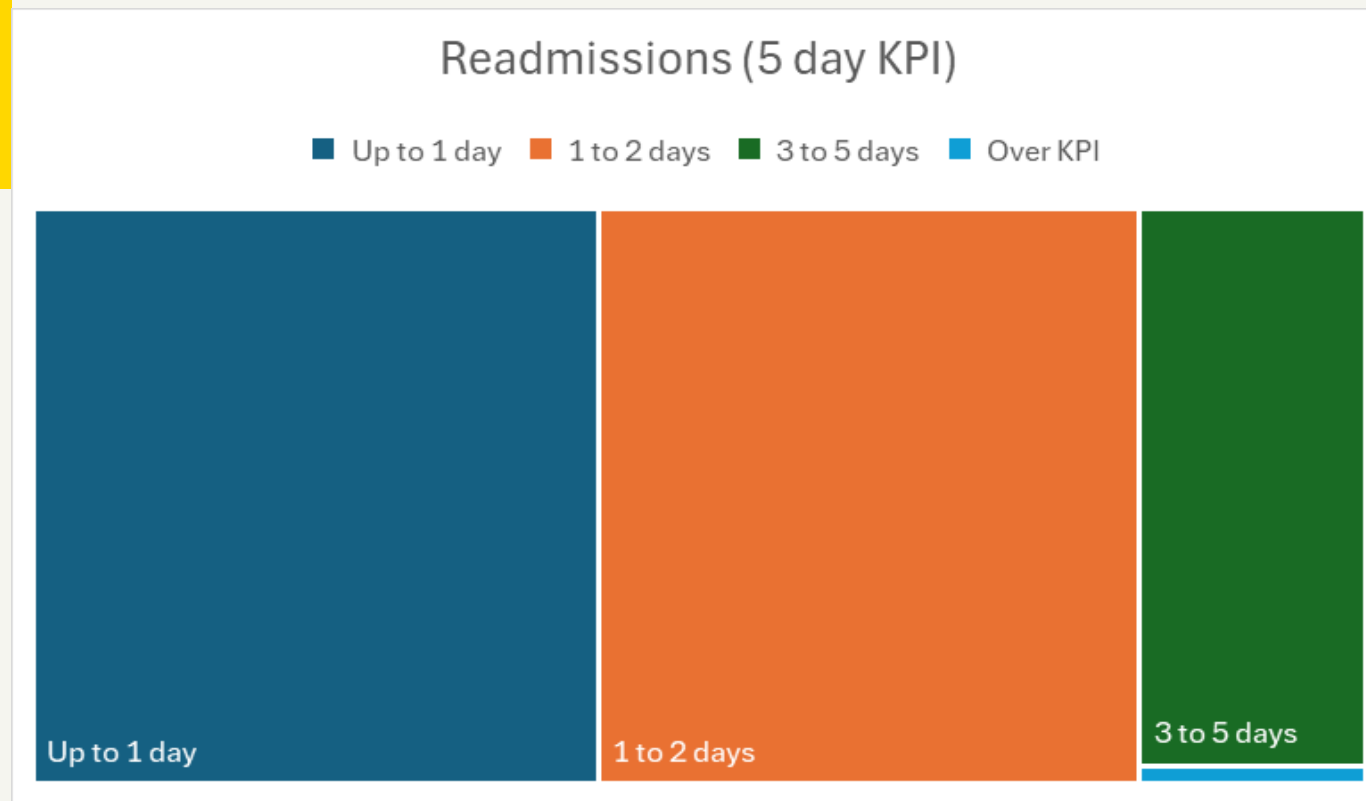
Accreditation

- The number of existing prescribed qualifications or Providers has not changed since the last update.
- We have now received applications from 15 Providers for new framework qualifications. They are:-
    - 9 integrated masters (P1 and P2)
    - 8 masters level academic outcomes
    - 1 combined academic and practice outcomes
- Some qualifications are innovative (eg 1 year Masters)
- 2 of the Providers are new to ARB
- Consultations for the first accredited qualification under new framework is taking place
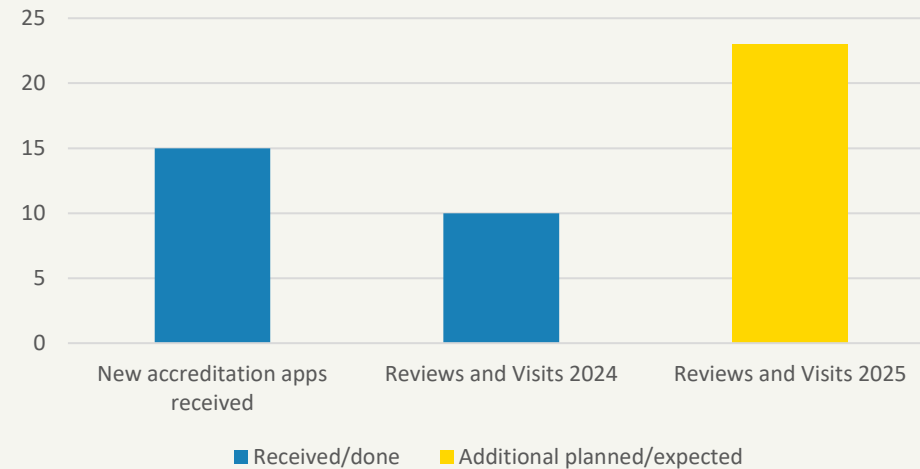- We have conducted 5 of the planned 24 visits in Q1

Number of Providers

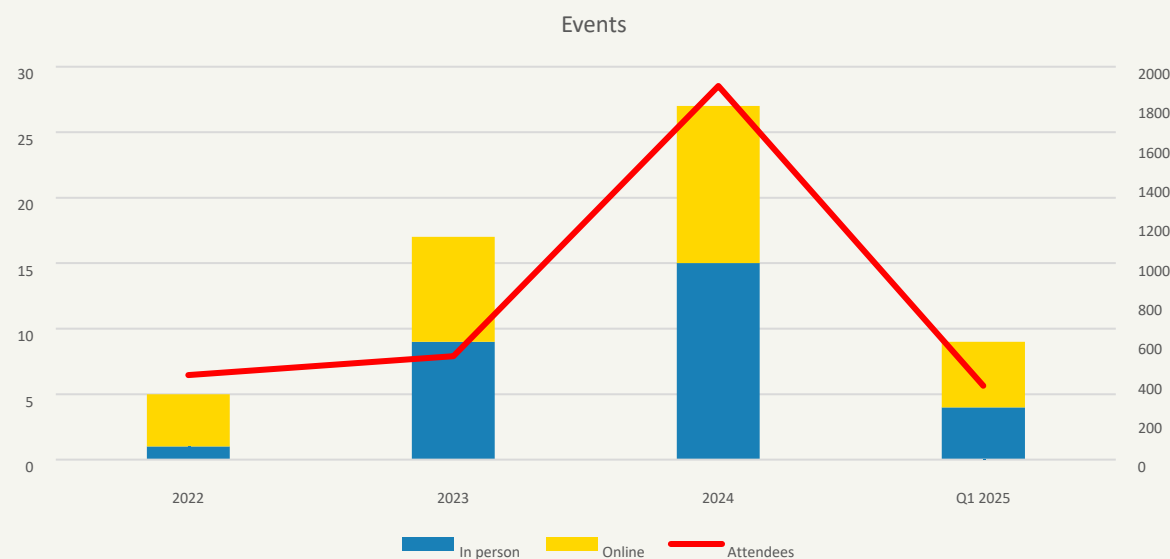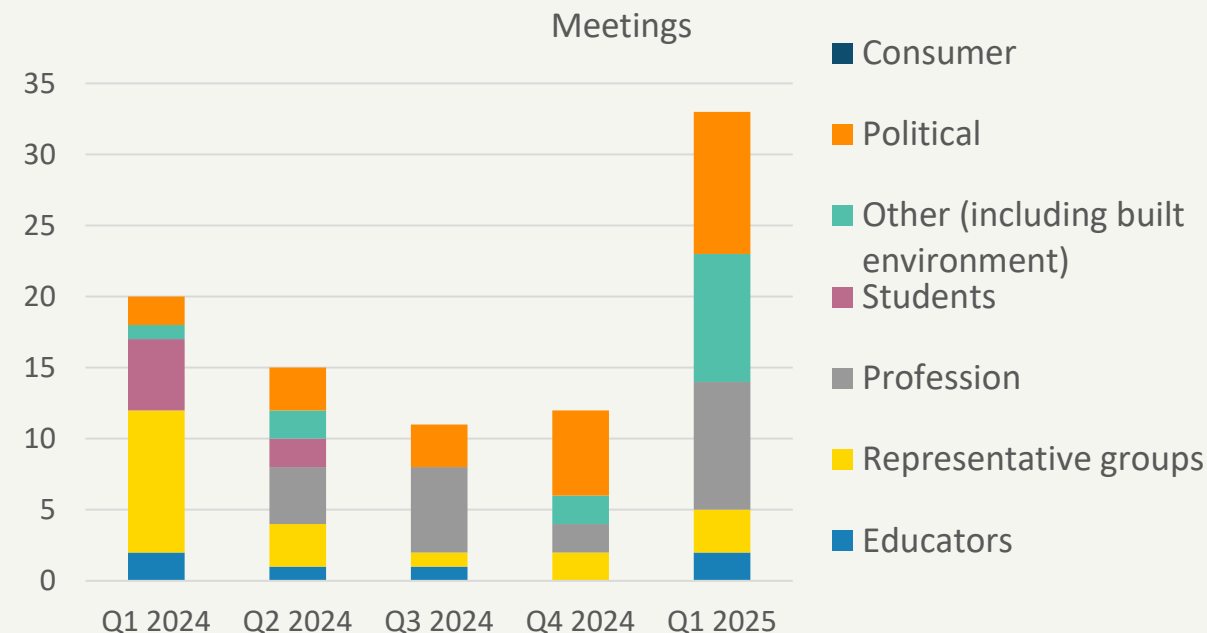Number of qualifications

Accreditation activity 2024 and into 2025

- Received/done
- Additional planned/expected

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b. External

Communications
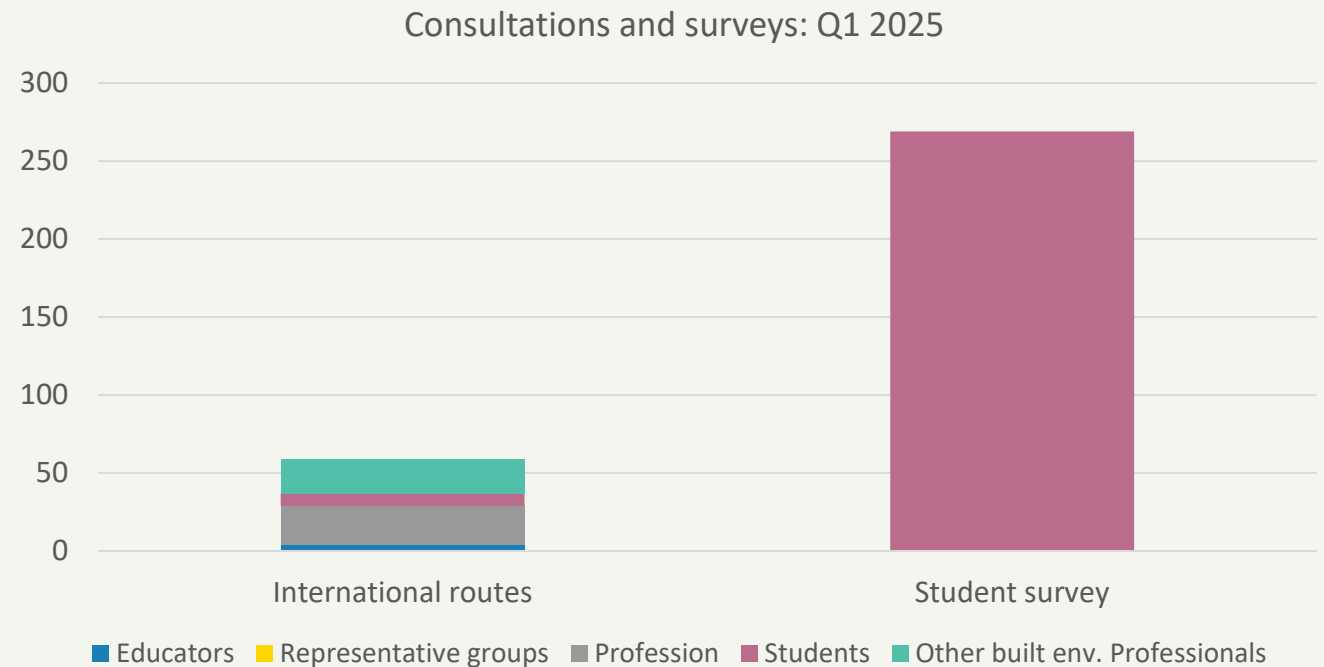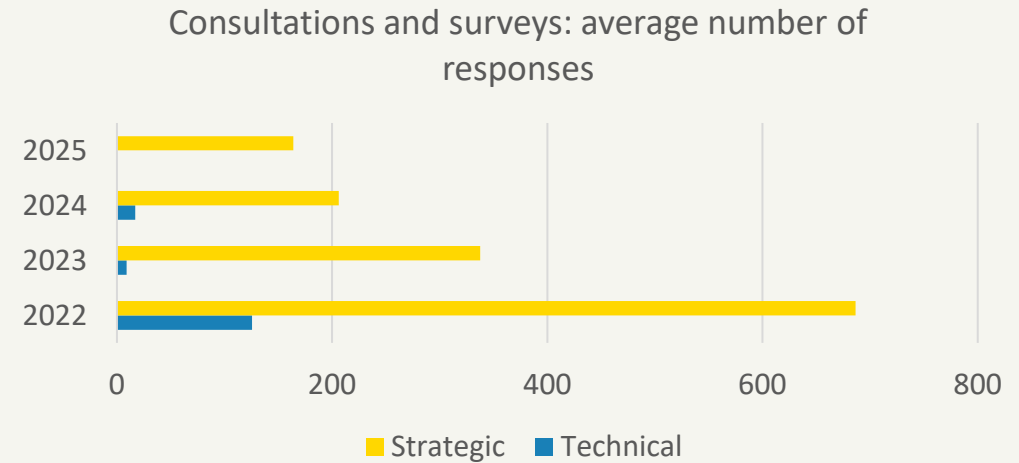
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Engagement: meetings and events

- Our brand identity is that we want stakeholders to experience ARB as expert, purposeful and engaging. Our strategic aims guiding our communications efforts are that stakeholders understand our role and their responsibilities, and that we have valuable engagement. Valuable engagement means two way conversations in which stakeholders feel heard and ARB gathers useful insights to shape our regulatory approach.

- We evaluate our meetings and events by the number we held (as these particular communications activities are two-way conversations), the range of stakeholders reached and, where appropriate, whether the attendees found the event useful. On the Events graph, attendee satisfaction is shown at the top of each column (an average across the events in that period) but we do not poll attendees at every event.

- In Q1, stakeholder meetings were higher because of our visit to New York and preparation for our visit to Canada. 'Other' includes several regulator events and wider sector discussions that ARB attended. We gave six talks to student groups during this period after putting more resources into these, shown in the events chart.

Meetings

Legend: Consumer, Political, Other (including built environment), Students, Profession, Representative groups, Educators

Events

Legend: In person, Online, Attendees

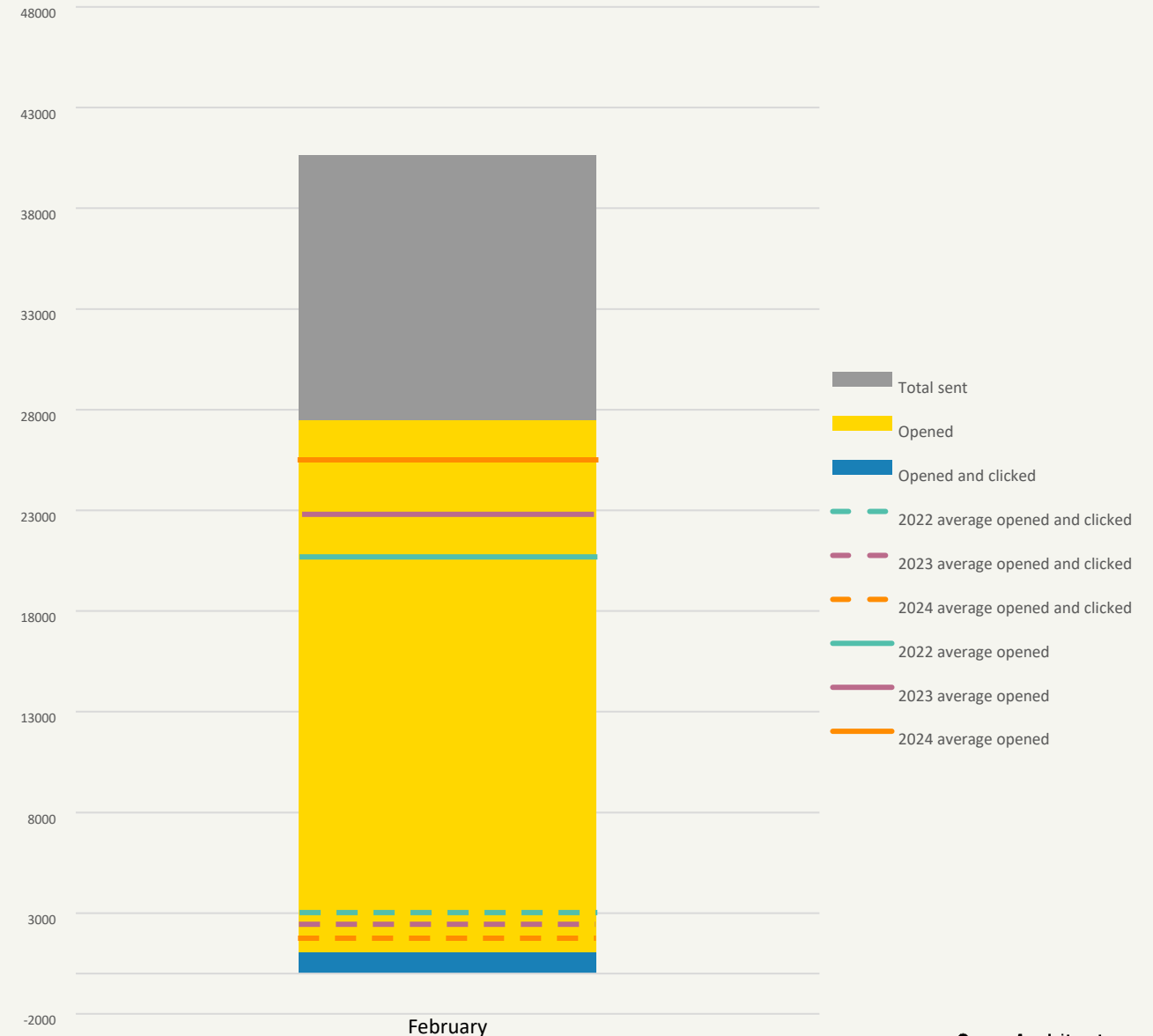Architects Registration Board

Engagement: surveys and consultations

- In light of our brand identity and strategic communications aims, we evaluate our consultations and surveys by the response rate (as this indicates how many stakeholders we hear from), the range of stakeholders reached, and whether we gathered useful insights that led to changes or developments in our proposals.

- The first graph shows the average number of responses annually across all our consultations and surveys, split between technical (which have a limited scope of interest and/or audiences) and strategic.

- The consultation on changes to our international routes to registration closed in January. It received 59 responses. An accreditation survey to gather insight from students on their learning providers received 269 responses.

- Responses in 2022 were high due to our CPD scheme consultation, the first major change to registration conditions.

Consultations and surveys: average number of responses

Legend: Strategic, Technical

Consultations and surveys: Q1 2025

Legend: Educators, Representative groups, Profession, Students, Other built env. Professionals

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Engagement: ARB Insight

- In light of our brand identity and strategic communications aims, we evaluate the success of ARB Insight by whether registrants are opening (reading) the email and whether they click on links to access more information. These measures are a proxy for evaluating whether stakeholders understand our role and their responsibilities.

- ARB Insight is sent out after each Board meeting. The most popular links in February included an article on workplace culture, a link to a video about the Architects Code, and the results of the Code consultation.

- We had a high open rate for Q1. Conversely, we had a lower amount of click-throughs than normal.

- The new format launched in 2024 reduced the number of articles in the email, to gain more value from the increased open rates. As a result, there are fewer stories to 'click' open, and more to read in the body of the email.
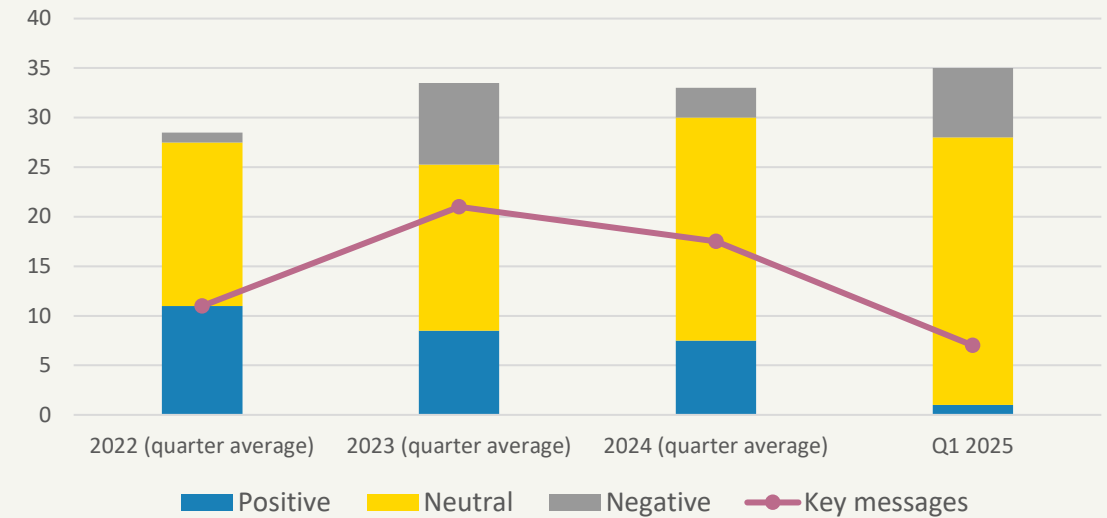

Legend:
- Total sent
- Opened
- Opened and clicked
- 2022 average opened and clicked
- 2023 average opened and clicked
- 2024 average opened and clicked
- 2022 average opened
- 2023 average opened
- 2024 average opened

X-axis: February

Y-axis: -2000, 3000, 8000, 13000, 18000, 23000, 28000, 33000, 38000, 43000, 48000

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Media and social media

Media stories and Sentiment

- In light of our brand identity and strategic communications aims, we evaluate our media coverage by the number of stories that include our key messages (as a proxy for stakeholders reading about and understanding our role) and their sentiment (as a proxy for understanding stakeholder perceptions of whether we are expert and purposeful). We evaluate social media by the number of people choosing to stay informed about our work.

- We track the number of stories and their sentiment (average for earlier years, real for in-year quarter). The sentiment is tracked manually; a monitoring service alerts us to mentions, but we read each story mentioning ARB and record the sentiment in it.

- Social media shows total number of followers and number of impressions across all channels together. Followers carry over year on year, but 'impressions' are tracked on an annual basis and will cumulate as we post over the year. These are tracked on the *left* axis. We also track 'engagements' (reactions, shares, clicks and views). Engagements are tracked against the *right* vertical axis.


All social media channels

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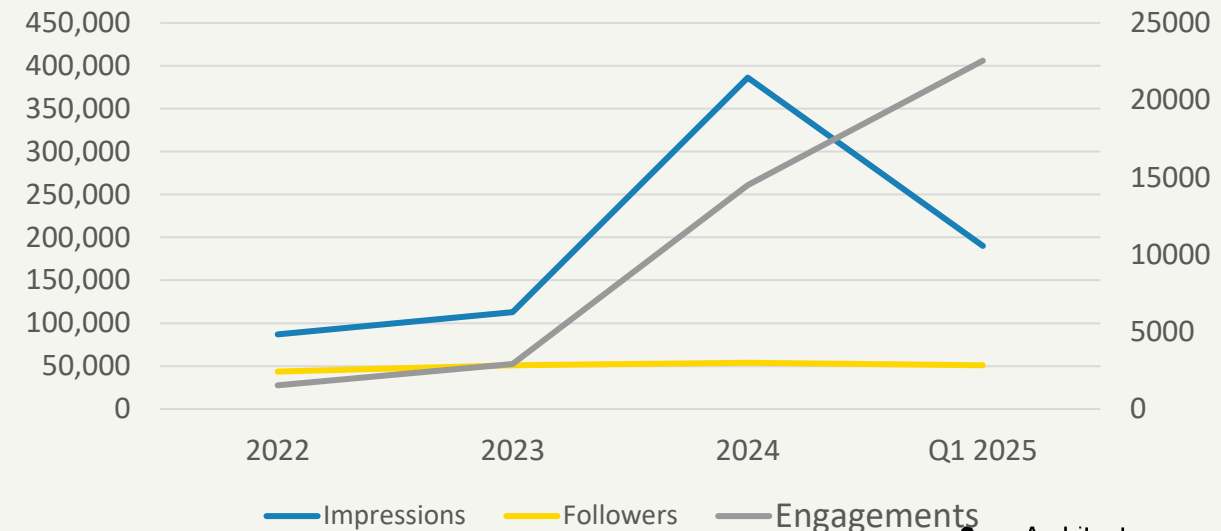
Website

- In light of our brand identity and strategic communications aims, we evaluate the success of our website by whether stakeholders are visiting our sites to access information, which will give them an understanding of our role and their responsibilities.

- We also want to know how long people spent on the pages (as a proxy for the information they consumed and therefore their understanding) and other engagements, but recent changes to our privacy policy mean we need to update our plug ins to be able to do that effectively. Annual figures are quarter averages.

- Visits to the public information pages have increased since we have taken dedicated space on the Planning Portal. This quarter, overall visits are lower but direct visits from the Portal are still high.

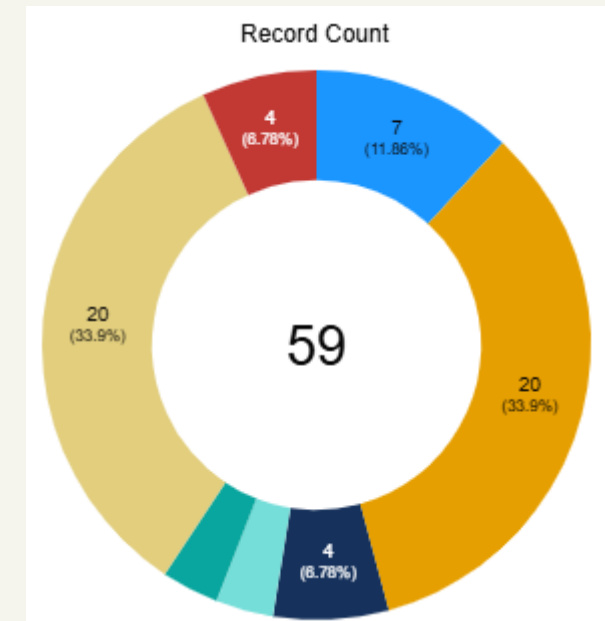- Visits to the Register have decreased since we launched the MyARB self-service portal for registrants.

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Register

Public information pages

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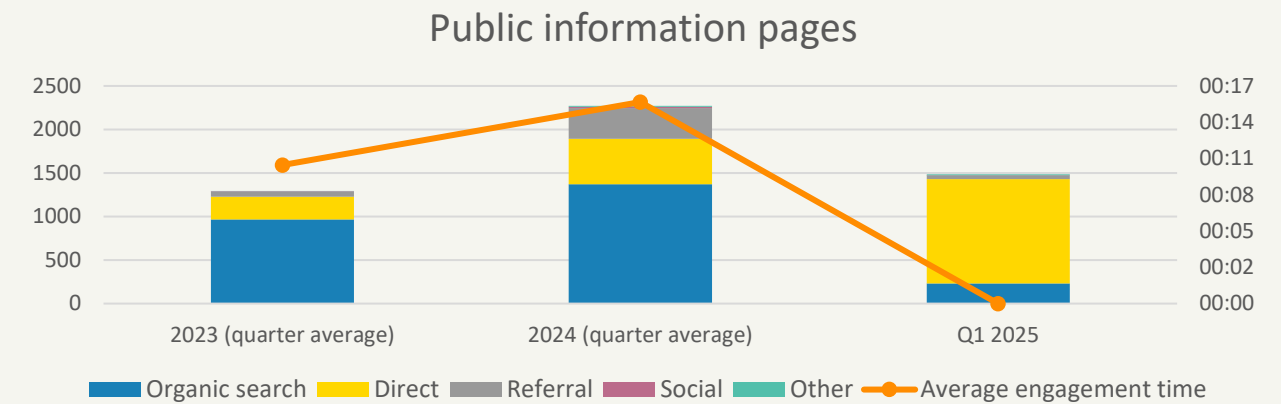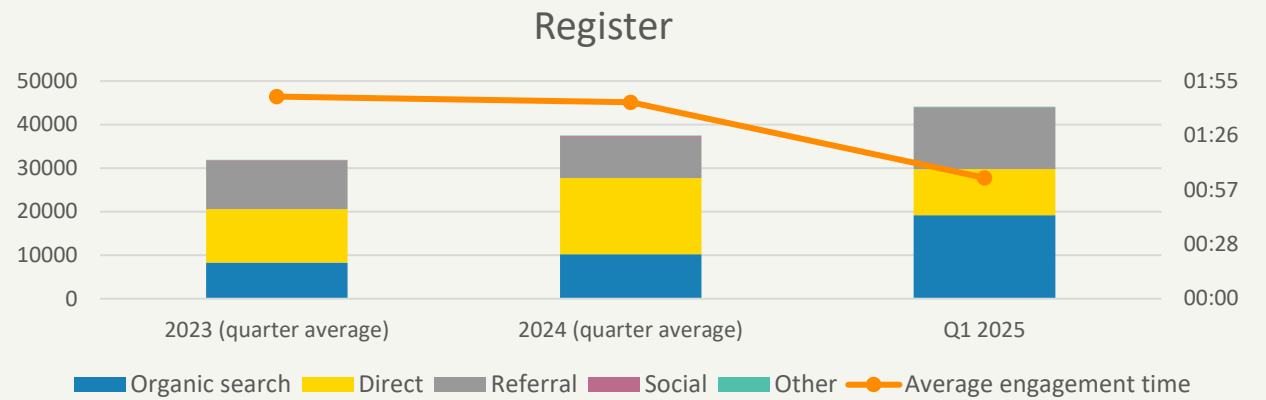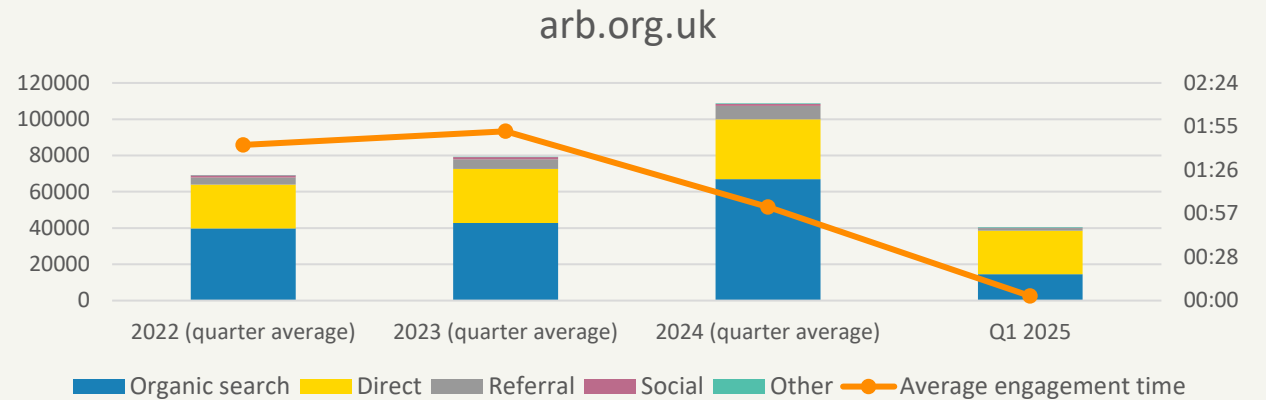
c. Internal

Human Resources

Headcount by Gender and Ethnicity

Gender	Permanent	Fixed Term	Secondment	Agency Temps	End of Q1 Total
Female	29	3	0	1	33
Male	24	2	0	0	26
Non- Binary	0	0	0	0	0
Prefer Not to say	0	0	0	0	0
Total	53	5	0	1	**59**

- The budgeted headcount for 2025 is 66, with current headcount in Q1 at 59.
- The % headcount split is 55:44 female to male, where the % of male employees has increased since 2024.
- On the ethnicity data collection, 20 staff have selected the "prefer not to say" option and we will do further work to bring this figure down.
- Those that have not completed the information are recorded as undisclosed.

Ethnicity	Number of staff	Colour Indicator
White British	20	
Irish	2	
Chinese	1	
Any other Asian Background	4	
Black or Black British	1	
African	1	
Carribbean	2	
Mixed	1	
Prefer not to say	20	
Undisclosed	7	
Total	59	

Record Count

4 (6.78%)
7 (11.86%)
20 (33.9%)
59
20 (33.9%)
4 (6.78%)

Architects Registration Board

Age Profile for current Staff

Age Profile	Number of Staff	Colour Indicator
18-26	3	
27-34	17	
35 -43	17	
44 -52	14	
53 -61	8	
Total	59	

Record Count

- The age profile has changed slightly from 2024 where the number of staff aged 18 to 34 was 27, compared to 20 in 2025. Further analysis will take place to determine if this was due to recruitment or staff moving age brackets.
- Important to note that there is an increase in the number of staff in our older age bracket.
- As we embed the new reporting approach, we will consider further analysis on the impact of age profile on for example length of service etc.

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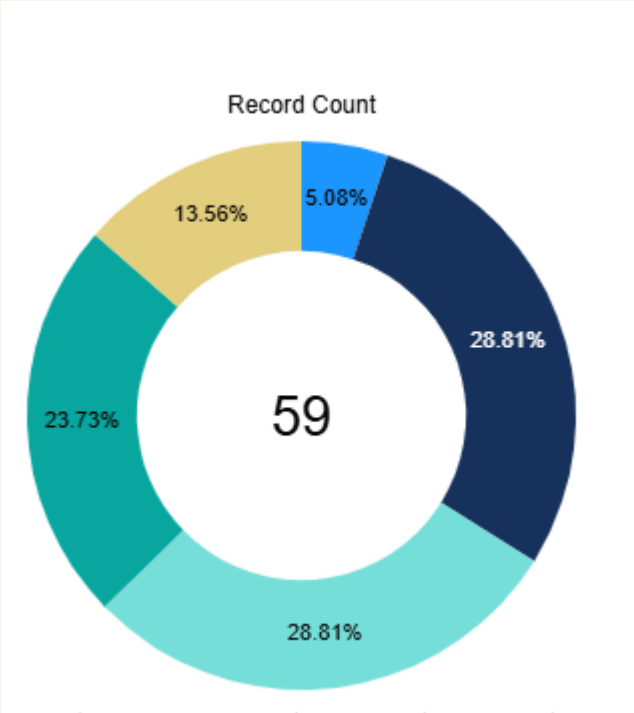
Headcount and resourcing costs

- As previously reported, headcount is increasing incrementally although for Q1 2025, two employees left which reflects the reduced headcount.
- The annualised budget pro-rated over one quarter would be equivalent to £1,165,000 v actual spend for the quarter of £1,071,000.
- This saving is predominantly due to savings upon reforecasting based on updated headcount data.

Establishment v actual headcount at the end of the period


Total employee costs
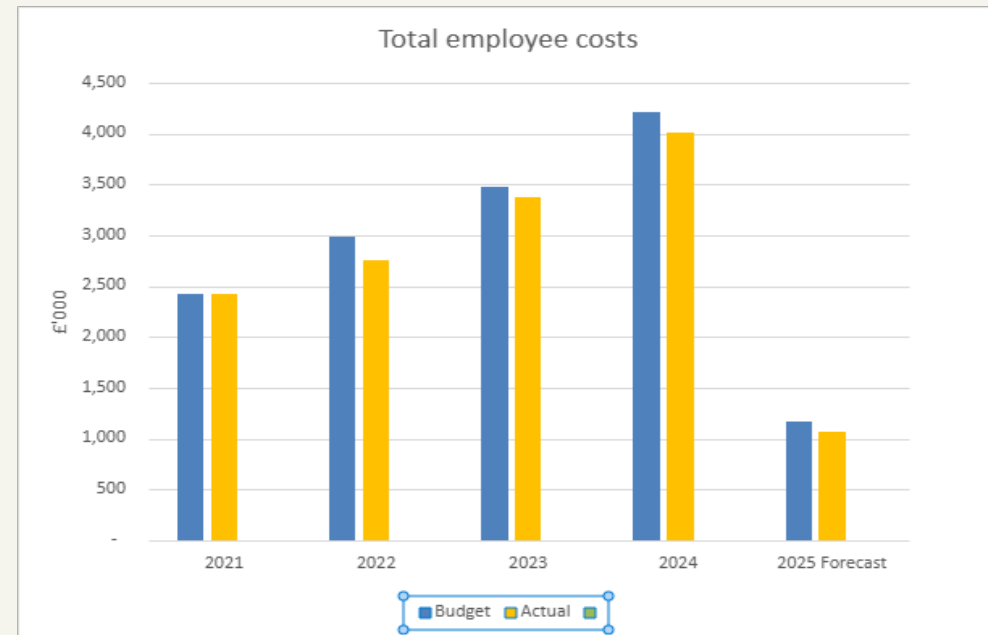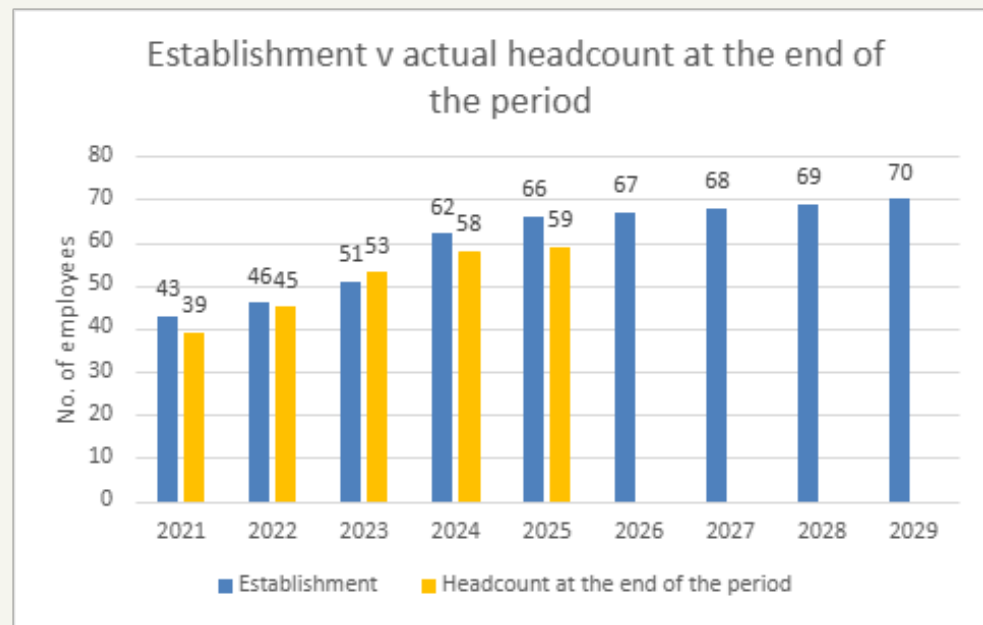
Staff turnover

- As previously reported, we were slightly above the public sector staff turnover statistic of 15% for 2024.
- For Q1, our turnover has started as we have had two leavers over this period.
- The data shows that the turnover is lower than it was for 2024 but higher than 2023.
- We will continue to complete exit interviews to gather intelligence and information on the reasons that staff leave.
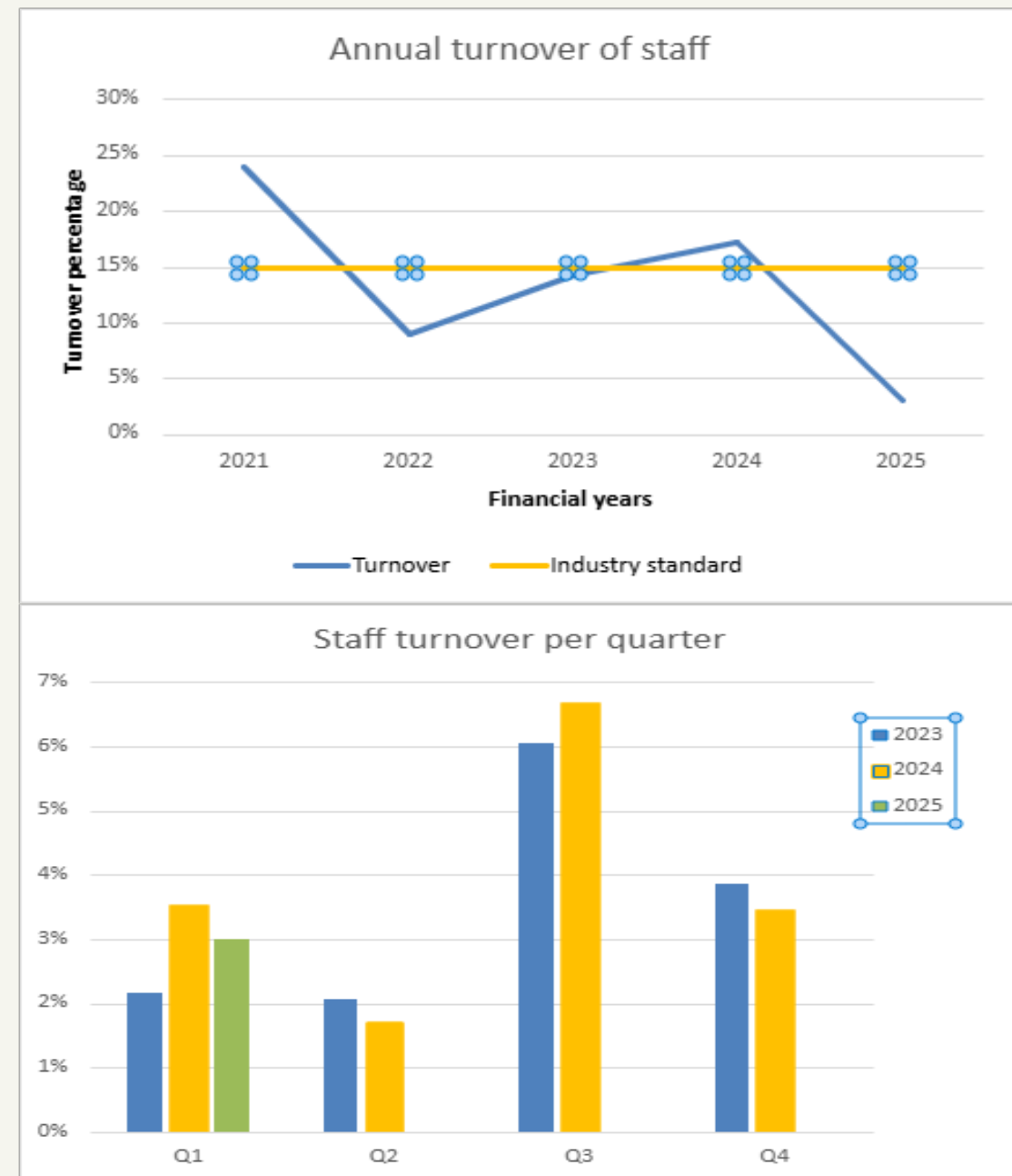
Absence levels

- As previously reported, overall absence levels for 2024 were 10% higher than they were for 2023. This can be attributed to an increase in headcount.
- Absence levels for Q1 2025 are at a relatively low rate compared to previous years and indeed Q4 2024. This is a positive shift.
- The number of staff on sickness absence are low – the data is linked to a couple of long-term sickness absences.
- For these cases, support continues through the employee assistance programme with manager guidance and advice from HR to manage the more difficult cases. These are linked to mental health which impacts performance outcomes.
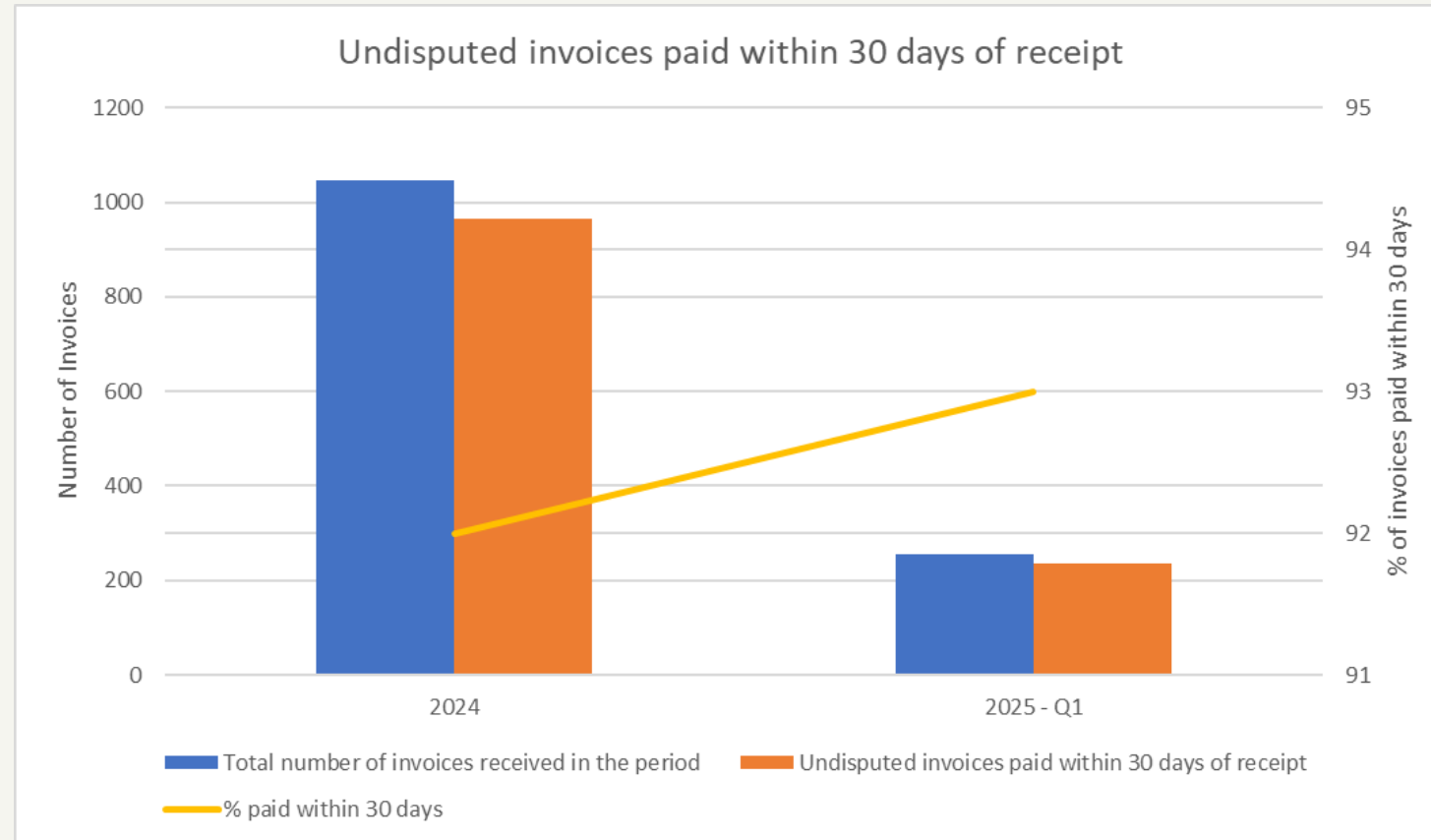
d. Finance

Financial performance and outlook

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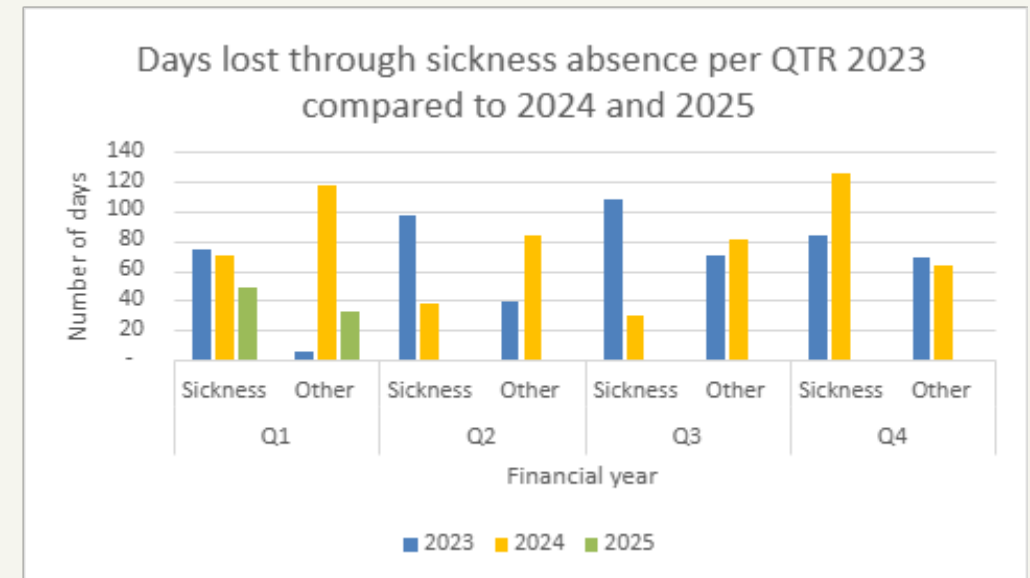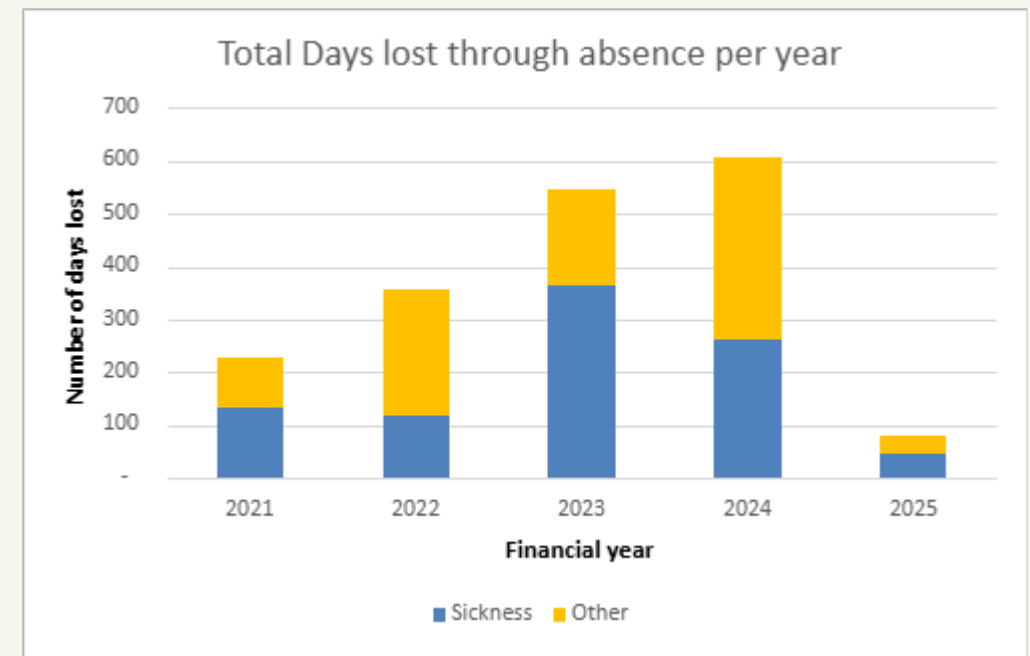
Invoice payments

KPI performance in Q1 2025 was at 93% against an average of 92% in 2024.

This is notable given that the new purchase order (PO) system was implemented during this period—a change that could have introduced disruptions or delays in invoice processing. However, the consistency in performance indicates that the transition was effectively managed. Strong planning, clear communication, and adequate training around the new system played key roles in maintaining operational continuity and minimizing any potential impact on payment timelines.

Undisputed invoices paid within 30 days of receipt

Legend:
- Total number of invoices received in the period
- Undisputed invoices paid within 30 days of receipt
- % paid within 30 days

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