



# **ARB Business Plan 2019**

## **Report on performance**

## Section A – Organisational Excellence

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
1	Integrating a newly appointed Board	Support the MHCLG in recruiting and appointing a newly appointed Chair and ten Board members in line with the revised Act	We completed this activity.
		Provide an effective induction for the newly appointed Chair and Board	We completed this activity, although subject specific briefing sessions will continue in alignment with the areas of work the Board are dealing with.
		Put in place a revised Board and committees structure without significant disruption to ARB's work	We completed this activity. We undertook a review of the Board's governance and committee structure in mid 2019 and a revised committee structure was established. All committees have new terms of reference, a revised membership and have been populated. The Board has agreed that recruitment to the new Policy Committee however, should take place in early 2020.
		Formulise a revised governance structure and relevant supporting documents including amended General Rules, templates, appraisal process and Board Handbook	This work did not commence until late Spring 2019 following delays to the appointment of the Board. A number of amendments have however been made to the General Rules in 2019. Reviews of templates, the Board's appraisal process and the Board Handbook commenced in late 2019 and will be completed by mid 2020.
		Carry out an annual engagement survey and set out a plan for dealing with any additional actions that arise from feedback	Given that the Board Members' appointments became effective from 1 March 2019, it was agreed that the first Board Effectiveness Review should take place in March 2020. The outcomes of the Review will be reported to the Board In May 2020 and appropriate actions taken forward following that meeting.
		Identify and manage risks surrounding the transition to the newly appointed Board	We undertook activity in identifying risks associated with inducting the new Board and ensuring that we can fulfil our statutory duties.

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	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
		Carry out an internal audit of the revised governance arrangements and manage all residual risks identified	Due to the delayed appointment of the Board having a knock-on effect on the revised governance arrangements, this audit has now been scheduled for 2020, once the revised governance structure has been established and embedded.
2	Delivering an IT strategy which will provide efficiencies both in cost and time	Develop digital systems which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reduce paper consumption by 15%</li> <li>- reduce average processing time for registration applications</li> <li>- improve accessibility</li> <li>- support the improved prescription process</li> <li>- improve data security</li> <li>- support the capture of Equality &amp; Diversity information</li> </ul>	<p>Paper consumption reduced by 36% to date.</p> <p>A new IT system for registration was been tendered for, and whilst processing times were not reduced, the Registration team managed an unprecedented surge in requests for services (applications and certificates) without impact on the performance against KPI.</p> <p>The business as usual reviews of the Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications was ceased in July 2019 and the Board instead decided to make operational/governance adjustments to its Procedures. The revised Procedures were approved in November 2019. Work is now being undertaken to implement digital systems to support the revised Procedures.</p> <p>Accessibility audits on ARB’s online services are planned to coincide with the new legal obligations coming into force by September 2020.</p> <p>We carried out significant improvements in data security, including replacement firewall and anti-malware systems, anti-phishing reviews (including staff testing), and new software to reduce vulnerabilities.</p> <p>We modernised our online HR system to facilitate the collection of E&amp;D information from those applying for roles working for or with ARB. This will allow us to interrogate the data</p>

## Section A – Organisational Excellence

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
			<p>and identify any barriers or inequalities within our recruitment processes.</p> <p>We began development of new case management systems for the Registration and Professional Standards department, and put the registration development project out to tender for delivery in 2020.</p>
		<p>Research and introduce digital systems to support the Board and committees, including the introduction of paperless Board packs and development of online complaints guidance</p>	<p>An on-line Board portal (Diligent) is now fully operational for all Board papers.</p> <p>An online expenses/ attendance claim system was also put in place.</p> <p>A suite of guidance in relation to the complaints process was published, and a new interactive guide to a PCC hearing was launched.</p>
		<p>Establish a cross-department working group to assess the ongoing technology needs of the organisation</p>	<p>We have established a cross-department IT group focussing on our document storage and retention policy. Work on this will continue in 2020.</p>
3	<p>Ensuring that ARB has a properly resourced, competent and motivated staff team</p>	<p>Recruit and induct any additional key personnel</p>	<p>We inducted ten new members to the team during 2019. This is 5 x permanent member of the team and 5 x fixed term contracts.</p> <p>One of the fixed term staff left after three months for a permanent position and was successfully replaced. One fixed term left two months earlier for personal reasons.</p> <p>The Board approved seven additional roles during 2019 which are currently being recruited to and at the end of the year; three roles had been recruited to.</p> <p>We have updated our staff induction process to ensure our values become embedded early in the three month induction process. Feedback will be sort early in 2020.</p>

**Section A – Organisational Excellence**

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
		Review and update succession plans to cover the loss of key personnel	Succession plans were reviewed and updated, particularly taking into account the seven additional members of staff being recruited at the start of 2020.
		Carry out annual staff survey which reports improved feedback from the 2018 survey	<p>The annual staff survey was carried out in January 2019.</p> <p>The overall results were very positive with a clear indication that ARB is a good place to work. The four areas identified for further improvement are: providing feedback, work/life balance, the induction process and personal development.</p>
		Provide specific staff training on safety at PCC hearings	Training was delivered in November 2019 for the Professional Standards staff involved in hearings. We also invited several other members of staff to attend who may come into conflict situations in their role.
		Deal with any internal HR issues arising from the UK's exit from the EU	<p>A review was carried out to assess if there were any access to work issues following departure from the EU. There were no workforce issues identified.</p> <p>A review was also undertaken of all of our advisors to assess if there could be any impact. This was based on their original right to work documentation. Six individuals were identified, but on further investigations they had appropriate visas or would qualify for settled status upon exit from the EU. Also the low level of numbers would not have caused ARB any operational risks in delivery of its statutory duties.</p>
		Ensure that pay levels remain appropriate by carrying out a benchmarking exercise	A full benchmarking report on staff salaries was undertaken in late 2017, with the next report due to be undertaken in 2020.

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	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
			<p>Due to the changes in the Board during 2019, the planned benchmarking review for ARB’s advisor/examiner roles was put on hold. However, a decision was made to amend the daily rate of the Independent members to the new committee structure to ensure we attracted the expertise required.</p>
		<p>Maintain a family-friendly working environment</p>	<p>To build on top of ARB’s existing policy, conversations took place across the organisation on how we can work more flexibly to support a family experience at ARB.</p> <p>This means that staff can work around carer needs, child care arrangements such as drop of and pick up etc. This is proving successful and is appreciated by staff.</p>
4	<p>Having in place a financial plan which allows for the delivery of ARB’s obligations without placing undue burdens on the profession.</p>	<p>Undertake a review of the organisation’s financial requirements in light of the requirements of Brexit and the Hackitt Working Group</p>	<p>In 2018 £200k was set aside to support the delivery of these areas of work. It is anticipated that an additional £50k-£60k will be required in the lead up to/post Brexit, this was factored in to the Budget strategy presented to the Board in July 2019.</p>
		<p>Implement the agreed investments strategy and recommendations of the broker arrangements review</p>	<p>A new contract was awarded in December 2019.</p>
5	<p>Revise our performance measuring systems to facilitate improved performance</p>	<p>Review the current performance / success measures, taking into account benchmarking information and the outcomes of the stakeholder research project</p>	<p>We commissioned research into how comparable organisations across different industries report on their impact.</p> <p>A cross-department staff working group was established to review what information we collect and how we report it.</p> <p>New KPIs have been recommended and will be reported to the Board from 2020.</p>

## Section A – Organisational Excellence

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
		Develop a new KPI reporting regime that accurately reflects ARB's performance using qualitative and quantitative data	<p>A review of existing KPIs has been carried out, which has resulted in recommendations for new KPIs in the short term, but also a recognition that we would do well to revisit our strategic approach to the data we gather and report on more generally.</p> <p>The new KPIs will be reported to the Board in 2020, and we have established a cross-team working group to review our methods of gathering intelligence, measuring performance and demonstrating impact in order to ensure our outputs align with our strategic objectives and statutory duties.</p>
		Put in place a policy and procedures for reviewing the impact of new initiatives	A procedure document with template business plan and impact assessment form has been developed and employed from January 2020.
		Commence with Customer Service Accreditation (first year of three)	<p>After a full exploration the resource and cost of accreditation was disproportionate to the size of the organisation.</p> <p>However, a working group was established to look at both our internal and external service standards. Changes have now been embedded within the organisation, and will be periodically reviewed.</p>
6	Ensuring that those who undertake work for us are competent, reflect our values, and provide value for money	Appoint and induct new PCC members and Inquiry Panel without significant impact on casework	Recruitment was postponed to allow for a governance review. Instead existing PCC members were appointed for a further 12 months. They continue to be provided with appropriate training.
		Review whether ARB should employ an in-house lawyer for general legal advice	Review carried out, and concluded that ARB would be better served by employing a range of external legal providers to provide specialist advice.

## Section A – Organisational Excellence

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
		Carry out legal services tenders for PCC and general legal services	<p>PCC legal tender carried out and concluded in November.</p> <p>General legal services tender was commenced, with appointment to be made in January 2020.</p>
		Put in place a 'universal' code of conduct for all of those acting on ARB's behalf	An overarching Code of Conduct for all service providers is in place from January 2020.



## Section B – Exit from the European Union

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Progress against objective (November 2019)
7	Ensure that ARB is able to operate effectively during any implementation period and post EU-exit	Maintain and respond to Risk Registers throughout the year	We continue to use and update our dedicated EU Exit Risk Register. We have engaged with our sponsoring Government Department on its contents and have consulted key team members to ensure significant risks are identified on an ongoing basis.
		Identify the key risks and opportunities arising from EU-exit	We have undertaken regular exercises to identify the risks and opportunities associated with EU exit and have maintained a dedicated EU Exit Risk Register. In line with Government direction we are exploring opportunities for future mutual recognition agreements which may arise further to the UK's exit from the EU.
		Implement contingency plans in respect of registration and qualifications if no deal is secured	We put plans in place in the event the UK leaves the EU without a deal and are ready to implement these should the need arise in early 2020.  We have been raising awareness of our no deal plans by communicating regularly with registrants, stakeholders and counterpart organisations across the EU.
		Enable the Board to take key policy decisions to ensure that ensure the organisation can continue to carry out its statutory functions	To date no key policy decisions have been needed.
		Ensure that any changes to legislation and policy position are reflected in procedural change at an operational level	We worked closely with our sponsoring Government Department to develop replacement legislation which will become effective in the event the UK leaves the EU without a deal. We also made preparations at an operational level which are ready to roll out in the event the no deal legislation is needed.  In the event a deal is agreed between the UK and the EU, we will advise and support the Department as discussions about the future economic partnership develop.

## Section B – Exit from the European Union

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Progress against objective (November 2019)
		<p>Provide clear guidance to our stakeholders on the impact of Brexit</p>	<p>Initial high level briefings on the UK's exit from the EU, the potential impacts of this and work on mutual recognition agreements were undertaken as part of our Board briefing sessions.</p> <p>We published dedicated EU Exit website pages which we maintained during 2019 and regularly communicated updates through the Board's eBulletin and our social media channels.</p> <p>We wrote to all registrants in March and September urging them to contact us should they have concerns about their status. We also contacted all Part 3 providers as well as kept a wide range of stakeholders up to date at regular intervals.</p> <p>We maintained positive working relationships with our counterparts in other European Member States and kept them up to date with developments, including presenting on EU exit and the possible scenarios at meetings in February and October.</p> <p>We attended a series of Government Department led roundtable events across the UK to engage with architects.</p>
		<p>Explore the establishment of mutual recognition agreements with other countries, and implement any agreements as legislation and government policy permits</p>	<p>We progressed our high level discussions with counterparts in Australia and New Zealand. We established a small working group to assist with the comparison of our respective prescription and registration requirements. We engaged regularly with relevant Government departments in order to keep them up to date on our discussions.</p>

## Section C – Fit for purpose Register of Architects

	Area of Work	2019 Actions	Progress against objective (November 2019)
8	Undertake a review of how individuals can gain access to the Register of Architects	Once the impact of the UK's exit from the EU and any initial mutual recognition agreements are understood, review whether current arrangements remain fit for purpose and reflect current best practice	Our review of our routes to registration remains on hold pending clarification regarding the nature of the UK's exit from the EU.  We established an internal working group collating views and information we receive about our current routes to the Register.
		Consider whether alternative routes to registration would be viable and would widen access to the Register whilst maintaining standards of competence	As above. This work was on hold in 2019.
		Engage with all stakeholders to ensure their input supports the process	As above. This work was on hold in 2019.
9	Carry out a review of how architects' ongoing competence should be regulated	Seek legal advice on ARB's current powers to monitor competence of applicants and registrants	Legal advice was sought over ARB's current powers under legislation to monitor competence, and discussions were had with MHCLG over the possibility of legislative change.
		Respond to the findings of the reviews into the competence of professionals that has arisen from the Hackitt Review	Further to the Board's decision to cease its business as usual review of the Criteria in mid 2019, two working groups were established to consider whether the current Criteria require improvements/additions in respect of life and fire safety and climate change. Both groups are due to complete their work in 2020.
		Support the Board to make a decision on the future regulation of the competence of architects	The Board received presentations from a number of architects representing diverse cross-sections of the profession, so as to aid its understanding of what competence means for the profession.  In addition to this the Board heard from experts in the fields of life-safety design and climate change, as well as regulatory experts from other professions.

## Section C - Maintaining the Standards of Conduct and Practice of Architects

	Area of Work	2019 Actions	Progress against objective (November 2019)
		Implement a plan for applying any procedural changes that follow from the Board's decision	This item was postponed pending any Board decision on how it would like to monitor competence.

## Section D – Strong Relationships

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
10	Devise and deliver a modified strategy to raise awareness of the Register of Architects	Review what activities are currently undertaken to achieve this aim, and how performance is currently recorded and monitored	A complete review of ARB's previous work in this area was carried out, which was able to support a new strategy.
		Develop a new, more proactive strategy to improve awareness of the Register and enhance the protection of potential users of architects	A new proactive strategy devised, based on improving the online capability of the Register, increased advocacy, improved content and stakeholder relations, targeted advertising, and dealing with erroneous online directories.
		Develop a new implementation plan to support the strategy	A 12 month implementation plan was devised, with additional time built in afterwards to allow for evaluation and performance reporting.
		Establish and implement methodology for assessing performance in this area	Key Performance Indicators were identified, so as to allow for accurate reporting as to the impact of the 12 month implementation plan
		Increase staff resource into title regulation	A Title Regulation Officer and Public Awareness Lead were recruited.
11	Identify the needs of our stakeholders, and measuring our success in meeting them	Conduct stakeholder research that provides insight, benchmarks for future performance and informs future strategy	Contact data gathering, question design and some fieldwork begun with first agency. Contract terminated in March.  Second agency was engaged in March. As of December 2019 all eight stakeholder surveys were complete and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders were underway. The final will be presented to the Board in March 2020.
		Review and revise our approach to gathering and utilising feedback	A cross-departmental feedback working group developed consistent feedback questions to be used across the organisation.

**Section D – Raising Public Awareness of the Register and Helping Users and Potential Users of Architects’ Services to Make Informed Choices**

	Area of Work	Actions for 2019	Performance against objective
		Review and revise our stakeholder engagement strategy	To be commenced once the results of the stakeholder research project are known.
		Establish a methodology for measuring the impact of future engagement	To be commenced once results of stakeholder research project are known.

## Section E – Key Performance Indicators

We have performance indicators for all areas of work, which are monitored by both the management team and the Board.

Traffic Light Benchmarks:
KPI met/exceeded
KPI met within 20%
KPI not met >20%

Performance Indicator	Target for 2019	2019 Performance	Notes
<b>Maintaining the quality of the Register:</b>			
<b>Processing of registration applications</b>			
Applications received through the UK route to registration processed within 15 working days.	90% of applications processed within 15 working days.	95%	The number received through the UK route during 2019 is the same with numbers received in 2018. There has been a slight decrease (2%) in numbers meeting the KPI due to impact of Brexit and the increase in certificate requests up by 228%
Applications received through the automatic European route to registration processed within 15 working days.	90% of applicants processed within 15 working days.	82%	A 14% increase in EU applicants, largely as a result of Brexit concerns. The majority of these applications were submitted under the pressure of the 29 March; 31 October and 31 January 2020 Brexit deadlines. Almost 60% of applications received were incomplete when submitted, subsequently causing delays.
Reinstatements & Readmissions.	90% reinstatements and readmissions processed within 5 working days.	97%	There has been a slight decrease (8%) in applications to re-join the Register in 2019 but an increase of 3% in applications meeting the KPI.
<b>Maintaining the qualifications of architects:</b>			
<b>Processing applications for the prescription of qualifications and listing of qualifications at EU level</b>			
Average no. of weeks to complete initial scrutiny of prescription applications.	95% in 2 weeks	100%	
Average no. of weeks taken between an application being received to it being considered by the Committee for the first time.	95% within 7 weeks	100%	

## Section E – Key Performance Indicators

Average no. of weeks taken for an Independent Adviser to respond to Committee's request	95% within 3 weeks	100%	
Average no. of weeks taken for an annual monitoring submission to be considered by the Committee for the first time.	95% within 6 weeks	77.5%	This KPI has not been met.  Throughout 2019, there has been overwhelming pressure on Prescription Committee agendas. Significant concerns across a number of institutions and the advent of apprenticeship applications dominated the Committee's focus, and meant that the Committee had to re-prioritise its work. Some Annual Monitoring submissions had to be postponed to later meetings as a result.
ARB to have processed responses to all queries regarding the UK's notifications to the European Commission within two weeks of receipt.	100%	33.3%	This KPI has not been met due to external circumstances. The delays have been due to delays from the notifying UK universities to respond to requests for further information. It is also a very small data pool with only three queries across two institutions.  We have continued to stress the importance of institutions responding to our requests for information in a timely way, particularly as the UK's EU Exit date draws closer, as well as the consequences of their qualifications not securing approval for listing in Europe.
ARB to have scrutinised and reviewed European notifications within the two-month consultation period set out in the European Commission's Notification Procedures.	100%	57%	This KPI has not been met however response timeframes have been reasonable in respect of the seven notifications. Two notifications missed the target by less than a week, and another by less than two weeks.  Our European notification meeting dates vary year on year; and occasionally, the timing is such that the two-month EU deadline cannot be met as a result. Where this occurs we



## Section E – Key Performance Indicators

			typically work online outside the meetings to undertake our scrutiny of EU notifications. Our missed targets in 2019 were due to changes in personnel within the Qualifications team.
Performance Indicator	Target for 2019	2019 Performance	Notes
<b>Maintaining the standards of conduct and practice of architects: Managing the complaints process</b>			
Complaints in office – No. of weeks from standard of acceptance met to Investigations Panel referral or closure.	80% within 12 weeks	92%	Compared to 89% in 2018. Average of 6.2 weeks to close a case or refer to IP down from 7 weeks in 2018, despite a 29% increase in cases.
Complaints with the Investigations Panel – No. of weeks from referral of case to issue of final decision.	80% within 12 weeks	85%	Compared to 76% in 2018. Average of 10.6 weeks to reach a decision down from 12 weeks in 2018, despite an 80% increase in cases.
PCC Hearing date – No. of weeks from case sent to ARB solicitor to production of a solicitor’s report.	80% within 12 weeks	59%	Compared to 64% in 2018. A tender was carried out at the end of the year to improve performance of service providers in this area. One service provider responsible for the delays has not been reappointed.
Professional Conduct Case Hearing date – No. of weeks from receipt of ARB’s solicitor's Report to first scheduled date of PCC hearing.	80% within 17 weeks*  * Cases closed under the previous PCC Rules (before 1 February 2019) were subject to a 16 week target	71%	14 cases scheduled.  Drop in compliance was unavoidable (last reported at 81%) is due to the absence of a PCC between January and April 2019 because of a change to the Architects Act. The PCC Rules require certain notice periods before hearings can be listed, which meant there could be no hearings from January until June.  From July onwards 90% of cases met this KPI.
End-to-end case completion – No. of	80% within 57	59%	17 concluded PCC cases in total.

## Section E – Key Performance Indicators

weeks from standard of acceptance met to PCC outcome.	weeks*  *Cases closed under the previous PCC Rules (before 1 February 2019) were subject to a 56 week target		Four cases relate to the same architect. Three of those cases were placed on hold pending the investigation of the fourth.  Some cases were again delayed due to the absence of the PCC as referenced above.
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Performance Indicator	Target for 2019	2019 Performance	Notes
<b>Raising public awareness of the Register and helping users and potential users of architects' services to make informed choices</b>			
Title complaints in office – No. of weeks from date of receipt to referral to ARB's solicitor or closure.	80% in 16 weeks	<b>98%</b>	62% increase in the number of cases (741 cases v 455 cases in 2018). This is due to a fixed-term extra staff resource being committed in this area.
Title complaints with ARB's solicitor to conclusion - No. of weeks from date of referral to non-prosecution conclusion/summons.	80% in 12 weeks	<b>71%</b>	14 cases in total. While the cases referred for prosecution are inevitably the most difficult to resolve, we are working with our solicitors to reduce this timescale.
Online Register availability 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	95% availability time	<b>100%</b>	

Performance Indicator	Target for 2019	2019 Performance	Notes
<b>Corporate functions</b>			
Publish Annual Report and Financial Statements.	Publish electronically within six months of the year-end.	Published on 28 June 2019 after being laid in Parliament on 27 June 2019.	
	To receive an unqualified audit opinion.	As outlined in the published financial statements ARB received an unqualified audit opinion.	
	Comply with the Financial Reporting Manual requirements and appropriate accounting standards.	The external auditors, as part of the year-end audit check compliance with the Financial Reporting Manual requirements and appropriate accounting standards. No areas of concerns have been raised.	

## Section E – Key Performance Indicators

Issue post-Board eBulletins.	Issue eBulletins within five working days of each Board meeting.	April, May and December eBulletins were all published within target timescale. Ebulletins for July and September were deliberately delayed to allow for the consequences of Board decisions to be formally communicated to relevant stakeholders in advance of general publication.	

### Glossary

KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
PCC	Professional Conduct Committee