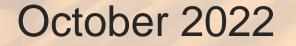
CLC Stakeholder Perceptions 2022: Research Report







Introduction



Methodology



Mirroring the approach adopted in previous waves, the research conducted in 2022 comprised of the following strands.



An online survey of the regulated community

- A total of 181 online surveys were completed between 6/6/2022 and 6/7/2022.
- CLC provided a starting sample of 1,595 (which gives a response rate of 11%).
- The survey script largely replicated that used in 2020.



Qualitative interviews with key stakeholders

- A total of 16 interviews were conducted between 13/6/2022 and 15/7/2022.
- Participants were drawn from a sample of 36 provided by the CLC.
- Interviews were conducted by Microsoft Teams or telephone and each lasted around 30 minutes.



Participant profile: the regulated community

<u>Demographics</u>	All	Licensed conveyancer	Licensed conveyancer manager	Other
Male	46	23	20	3
	(25%)	(21%)	(33%)	(33%)
Female	127	85	36	6
	(70%)	(76%)	(60%)	(67%)
44 and under	92	68	22	2
	(51%)	(61%)	(37%)	(22%)
45 and over	87	44	36	7
	(48%)	(39%)	(60%)	(78%)

CLC regulation

	All
CLC regulated	109 (60%)
Non-CLC regulated	72 (40%)

This is broadly in line with the profile of those who completed the online survey in 2020.

Length of time			
regulated by CLC	CLC regulated		
Less than three years	24 (13%)		
More than 3 years but less than 10 years	31 (17%)		
Over 10 years	54 (30%)		





Stakeholder type	Interviews achieved		
Regulator (all in legal sector)	5		
Representative body	5		
Government	2		
Representative of panel	2		
Representative of publication	1		
Representative of software providers	1		
Total	16		





- Presents key findings from the research conducted in 2022 comparisons are made with 2020 and 2016, where possible.
- Combines feedback from both strands of the research. Slides containing feedback from the survey are identified by the size icon and those containing feedback from the stakeholder interviews are identified by the icon.
- Significant differences are measured using T-testing and are significant at a 95% confidence level:
 - Shows where the score is lower than the previous year.
 - **1** Shows where the score is higher than the previous year.
- We are happy to take questions throughout the session.



Awareness and understanding

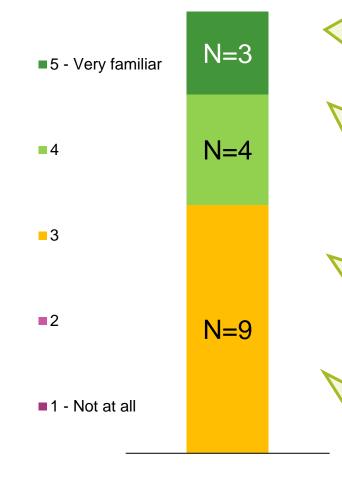


Stakeholders generally felt they had a good understanding of the overall role of the CLC...



All stakeholders understood the **basic role** of the CLC as a regulator of **conveyancers** for the **benefit of the consumer**.

As was the case in 2020, fewer spontaneously mentioned their regulation of probate practitioners when they were asked to state what the role of the CLC was using their own words.



How well do you feel you

know the CLC?

Base: Stakeholders who participated in the 2022 research (2022: 16) – caution low base "They are the licensing authority and guidance organisation for conveyancers who choose to be regulated by them. Conveyancers, and also probate lawyers who choose to be regulated by them, rather than by the Law Society." **Representative of software providers**

"Its' main function is to regulate licensed conveyancers or probate practitioners and it also has a quasi-public perception role as well, to make sure the public are aware of licensed conveyancers, which makes it very different from the SRA." Representative body

"The CLC is a progressive regulator of conveyancers undertaking property related conveyancing, and the various administration support activities that sit off the back the that." **Representative of panel**

"I know who they are and I know what they do. They are our sister regulator in the sector. I would not say we are particularly close though, we live in parallel universes shall we say." Regulator



...but they had a mixed understanding of some specific aspects of the CLC's role...



		Agree	Disagree	Don't know		
	The CLC regulates licensed conveyancers	16	-	-		S S
"With a lot of these, I know there are set up to do this, but do they actually do it or not? I just don't know." Regulator	The CLC sets the standards of conduct and discipline for licensed conveyancers	16	-	-		Stron
	The CLC licenses individuals qualified to practise conveyancing	15	-	1		b D
	The CLC licenses recognised firms and ABSs to practise conveyancing	13		3		<u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u><u></u></u>
	The CLC is overseen by the Law Society	13		3		Iser
	The CLC puts the needs of the consumer first	13	1	1		IS
	The CLC investigates allegations of misconduct	13		2		SUS
	The CLC regulates probate work	10	5	1		
	The CLC promotes competition in the legal profession	10		5		<
	The CLC promotes innovation in the legal sector	9	3	3		Weak
	The CLC sets education and training standards for entry into the profession	9		6		0
	Any solicitor can elect to be regulated by the CLC	8	4	3		ns
	Any practice or ABS can elect to be regulated by the CLC	7	4	4	1	onsens
	The CLC is the representative body for licensed conveyancers	4	10	1]	ISI
	The CLC provides education and training for the profession	4	7	4		SUS

"That one is difficult to answer. Any solicitor can elect to be regulated by the CLC, but only if they do conveyancing or probate work." Regulator

Base: Stakeholders who participated in the 2022 research (2022: 16) - caution low base



...and they were less likely to have a detailed knowledge of the CLC's strategic priorities



"I don't have much insight into the CLC's day-to-day work, so it is quite difficult to say what their priorities are. However, their main priority is to look after the consumer." Representative body

"Despite interaction with the CLC I'm not so clued up about their priorities and day-to-day work. I'm only informed on specific meetings which I engage them with. Whether that's my fault or their fault... it could be a bit of both." Government "I don't know. I have not read their business plan or their corporate strategy recently. So, I don't speak with any degree of knowledge on that. I know their statutory framework. They are there to protect the public by regulating licensed conveyancers and their firms, but that is as much as I can say really." Regulator





CLC communication



Stakeholders generally felt their level of contact with the CLC is proportionate



How did stakeholders view their contact with the CLC?

Stakeholders almost unanimously agreed that the level of communication they received was about right for their role and circumstances.

For most of the stakeholders, communication is ad hoc via phone or email. They tended to say that their use of these channels was appropriate, and the preferred channel depended on the type of issue at hand.

They were generally confident CLC staff would be available if needed

A few stakeholders said they would ideally like more engagement with the CLC, but acknowledged this has been difficult for both sides in the past few years. "The level of engagement is about right. We engage when we have to and when we have joint interests. In our day-to-day there are some overlaps and we talk about that if and when we need to, so I think it is about right." **Regulator**

"If I need them for something then they actively engage, and vice versa. If they approach myself or my team, then we engage, but there isn't a natural contact through the course of a given month, or something like that, it's usually event-led. We do feel we have the right level of contact." **Representative of panel**

"What channel to use all depends on the issue, and they all work in their own way at the time, but I think face-to-face is the best for that human touch and relationship development, which you don't get through email and Teams." **Regulator**

"Yes, I think it is fine, but I would encourage them to be more proactive with me. That view is still influenced by how the relationship used to be." Regulator





However, results suggest the CLC could improve how it engages with the regulated community

"I think the CLC could be more pro-active with its members. Over the past two to three years, I have felt that they are quite detached from the firms they regulate. Whilst I appreciate they are a regulator and this has to be their priority, I feel that if they were more approachable and understanding of the challenges faced, they would be in a position to provide better guidance as to how firms might meet regulatory standards. Unfortunately, with so many varying sizes and types of conveyancing firms the requirements cannot be met on a "one size fits all" basis and I feel that the CLC have lost that approachability that I always felt it had in offering advice."

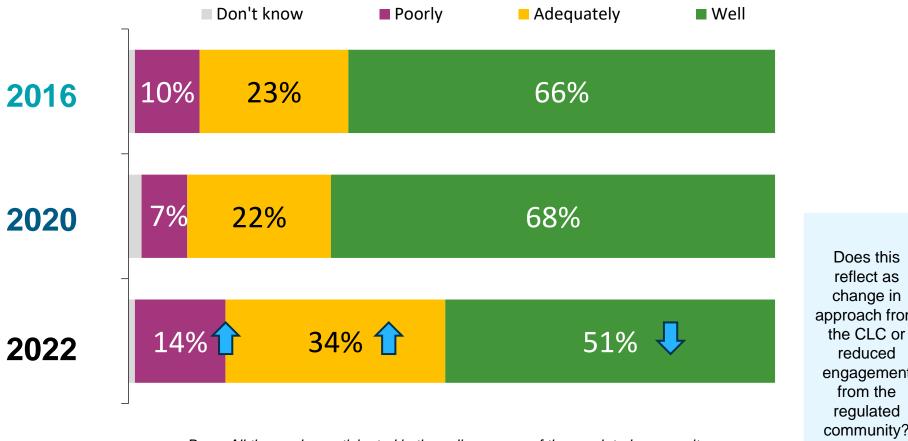
"Overall, I hear very little from the CLC other than when it is licence renewal time. Their newsletters, training webinars, and CPD events are not circulated well." Member of regulated community Ŀ.

"More individual communication would help support me better, perhaps." Member of regulated community



The regulated community was less likely to feel that the CLC keeps them up to date in 2022

Overall, how well do you feel the CLC keeps you up to date with what's expected of you as a regulated individual / business?



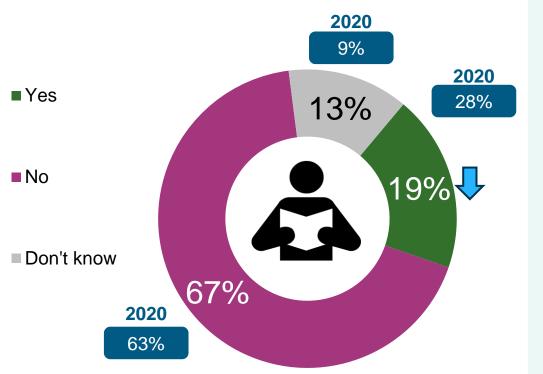
Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)

approach from engagement community?



They were also less likely to recall seeing or [hearing any CLC-authored media content in 2022]

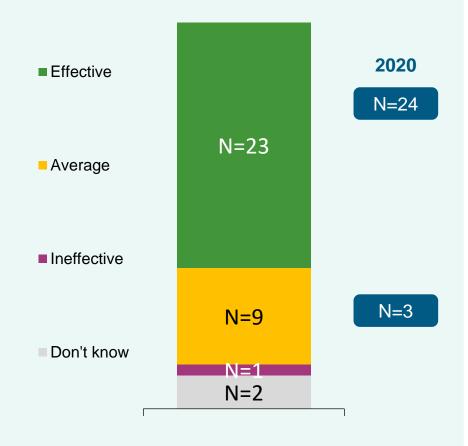
Have you read, saw, or heard, any CLC-authored trade media content within the past 18 months?



Licensed conveyancer managers were more likely to recall seeing or hearing CLC-authored content than employed licensed conveyancers (28% vs. 14% respectively).

Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98)

How effective do you think this was in getting across the CLC's message as the regulator of property and probate lawyers?



Base: All who are aware of CLC authored trade media content (2022: 35; 2020: 27) – caution low base



The proportion of regulated community reading the CLC's e-newsletters also fell in 2022

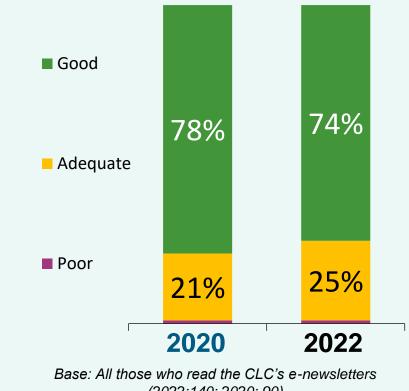


Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98)

Readership of the CLC's e-newsletter rose to 88% of licensed conveyancer managers and 91% of those aged 45 or over.

87% of that thought the CLC does 'well' at keeping them up to date read the e-newsletter vs. 70% of those that said the CLC perform 'adequately' in this sense.

How would you rate the CLC's e-newsletters overall?



(2022:140; 2020: 90)

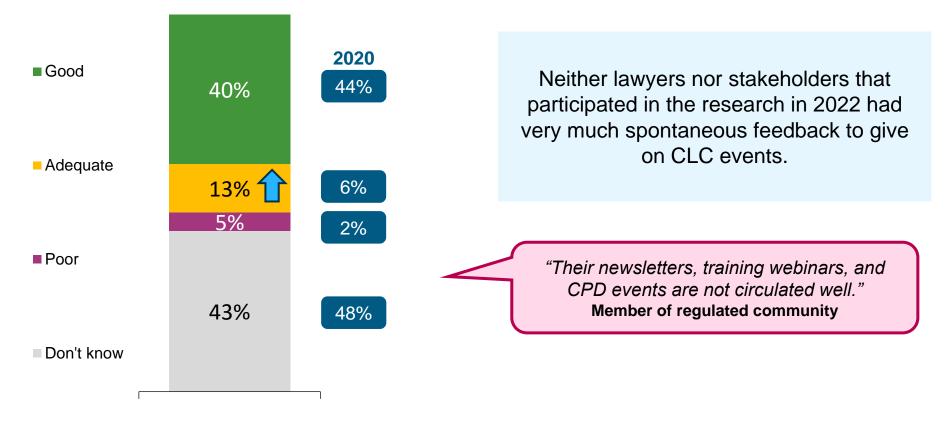
Although less like to report reading it, those aged 44 or under were more likely to rate the e-newsletter 'good' than those agreed 45 or over (85% vs. 65% respectively).



And results suggest that a sizeable minority still do not engage with CLC events



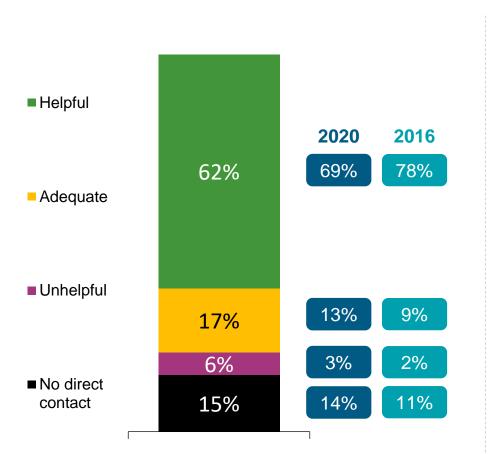
How would you rate the CLC's events overall (e.g. Roadshows, Annual Conference)?



Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)



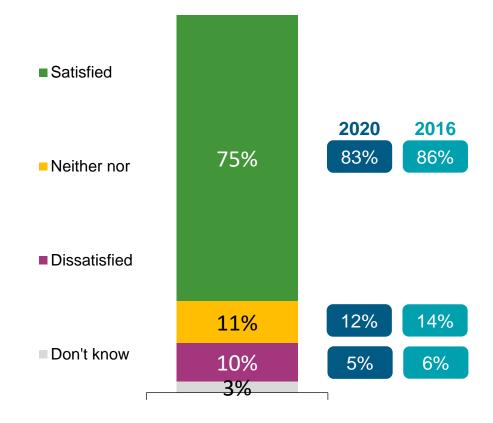
However, the regulated community tends to be positive about their direct contact with the CLC



How helpful do you find the CLC's staff?

Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)

Thinking about the last time you had direct contact* with CLC staff, how satisfied were you with the information or support that you received?



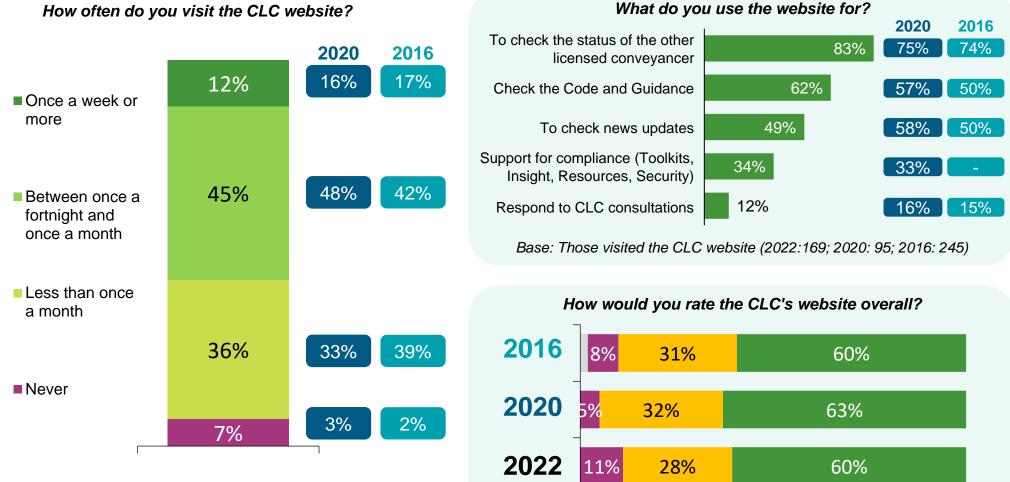
*This includes contact via e-mail, phone, or in person

Base: All who have had direct contact with the CLC (2022:154; 2020: 84; 2016: XXX)



...and the regulated community also tends to be positive about the CLC's website





Don't know

Poor

Base: Those visited the CLC website (2022:169; 2020: 95; 2016: 245)

Adequate

Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)

IFF Research

Good

General perceptions of the CLC



Stakeholders generally described the CLC in positive terms



How do stakeholders generally perceive the CLC?

Stakeholders were asked which three words they would use to describe the CLC.

Although a wide range of words were used, almost all were positive, those most commonly cited were:

- Progressive
- Trusted
- Consistent
- Competent
- Focused

Negative terms, which were infrequently cited, included: slow and soft.





"I think they have been a more progressive regulator than some of their peers. I have seen stuff that has been far more progressive in terms of public protection and on things like consolidation in the legal services marketplace." **Regulator**

"The CLC is available. They are a consultative organisation. They have been seen to act when needed. That builds trust in the community they serve." **Representative of panel**

"Are the CLC trusted? I'd say yes. I've not heard anything to the contrary; and believe me, people would ring up and tell us if they thought that they weren't." **Representative of publication**



Stakeholders continue to think the CLC has a good reputation in the world of conveyancing



How did stakeholders describe the CLC's reputation?

Stakeholders were generally positive about the CLC's reputation. They generally articulated this by saying they had heard nothing that suggested otherwise.

Those that personally had more engagement with the CLC were especially likely to be positive about their reputation.

However, several perceived that the CLC continue to be relatively unknown outside of the world of conveyancing. "I think it's very highly regarded by the regulator community, well respected by regulators, beyond that I wouldn't know. I don't know the perception outside of my sector." **Regulator**

"I'd say it is good. It is difficult to know what other professionals think about the CLC. The licensed conveyancing profession has moved a long way in the last 10-15 years from being a sort of poor cousin to solicitors that do conveyancing to actually now being recognised as being fit for purpose - as a specialist profession, with a specialist regulator. In some cases, even more so than the general solicitor set up. So, in summary I think the CLC is generally seen to be appropriate, progressive, and generally fit for purpose." Regulator

"That is quite a difficult question actually. I don't think that they have got a bad reputation, let's put it that way. I don't hear people saying that the CLC are rubbish or anything like that. It depends on who you were asking. Individuals who are regulated by them will probably have a view and members of Parliament or other influencers, as it were, probably don't really know who the CLC is. So, is that a good thing or a bad thing? Well, that depends on your perspective. I don't think they have got a particularly bad reputation as far as I am aware, but I think that is as much as I can say really." **Regulator**





Some stakeholders reported they consider the CLC to be more progressive than other regulators

How do stakeholders think the CLC compares with other regulators?

Many reported that they felt that the CLC compared favourably with other regulators.

In particular, several felt that the CLC is more open, helpful, and progressive when compared with the SRA or the Law Society.

However, some felt that other regulators are better at communicating than the CLC – they felt this was a natural consequence of them being bigger and having more resource at their disposal.

Some stakeholders felt that the CLC is performing well in relation to its size and a few thought that it 'punches above its weight'. "The CLC is open, works with all stakeholders within the industry, not just regulated firms or regulated individuals, and is available when the likes of my business want to consult on something. They are very active in terms of industry groups, and because of that they have a really good feel for what is going on, and that then helps them shape their regulation, that enables their firms to operate in a very tough, commercial environment. The CLC is night and day compared to the SRA and the Law Society. We have to work really hard to find out information from them, but we don't from the CLC." **Representative of panel**

"Our interactions with the CLC are proactive and helpful. We find them to be an open and honest organisation in their dealings with us. The CLC is very open with what it's doing and consults when it makes changes, unlike the SRA, and the CLC listens to our feedback too." **Representative of panel**

"It is smaller and less well-known organisation so the CLC's voice isn't as strong, and it may not get its message across to the public as strongly as it could. But I like their willingness to innovate, and they have a genuine priority to the consumer interest, perhaps more so than some other regulators."



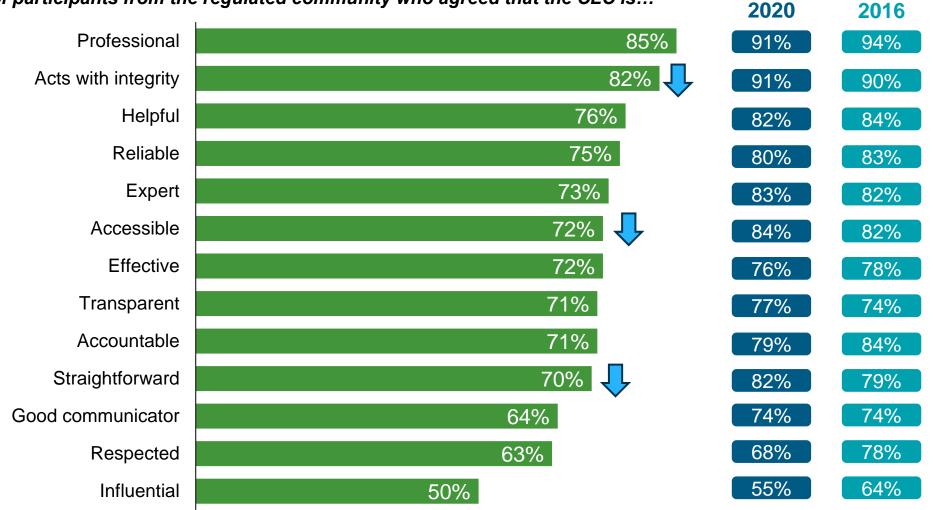




Though most lawyers were positive, a lower proportion agreed the CLC acts with integrity, is accessible, and straightforward



% of participants from the regulated community who agreed that the CLC is...



Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)



Views on the CLC as a regulator



Stakeholders generally feel the CLC sets high enough standards for its regulated community



There was a general consensus among stakeholders that the CLC, on the whole, sets high enough standards for its regulated community.

Though one mentioned that they would like the CLC to continue to improve rigour going forward. "It is difficult to know what others professionals think about the CLC. The licensed conveyancing profession has moved a long way in the last 10-15 years from being a sort of poor cousin to solicitors that do conveyancing to actually now being recognised as being fit for purpose - as a specialist profession, with a specialist regulator. In some cases, even more so than the general solicitor set up. So, in summary I think the CLC is generally seen to be appropriate, progressive, and generally fit for purpose." **Representative body**

"The role of the CLC is quite difficult and amongst different sized regulators they have punched above their weight. They have marked out quite a clear role, with a drive and commitment to raising standards. They speak the truth, which is not always easy listening, but they are well regarded." Government

"Yes. The CLC audits to their high standards, so this makes a huge difference. The licensed conveyancers are aware of those standards and know that they'll be picked up on them, so they work much harder to comply with them and we don't see an out of kilter set of claims come through." Representative body

"On the whole, I'd say yes. But I think they could be more rigorous in imposing standards of transparency going forward." Representative of panel





However, a few expressed concerns about how standards now are being applied by the CLC



However, a few participants did suggest they had some concerns about the direction of travel in terms of the CLC's approach to ensuring that its high-standards were being applied.

These participants perceived that the CLC were becoming increasingly aggressive in their approach.

One representative body felt this was unnecessary. They felt this could be down to individual personalities at the CLC and requested for a more consistent approach going forward based on assisted-compliance, which has historically been the case. "There is a difference between the standards themselves and how they are actually applied. Things have generally been less cordial and more tense between the relationship managers and many of the members. It just feels like there has been a change in culture. We are not trying to stir this up. It is members coming to us. We don't understand what might have not been working in the past because CLC failures and consumer detriment have been de minimis for years. So, some of the stuff just feels unnecessary. If this were to happen a lot more often then it might influence the extent to which we would recommend to solicitor firms that they switch to the CLC. One of the features of switching to the CLC is that you get regular inspections which are of an assisted compliance nature. If these inspections become more and more a case of Mr Nasty coming to visit you then that is one of the factors a firm might consider important if they are thinking about changing regulator." **Representative body**



"During the pandemic the CLC instigated aggressively unnecessary practice inspections, without proper engagement or consultation or taking on board any interview responses, refusing to look at evidence that would undoubtedly had led to the position that exists now. We were expected to deal with third parties and comply with unreasonable deadlines all whilst the country was in lockdown, all under the constant threats of adjudication referral." Member of the regulated community

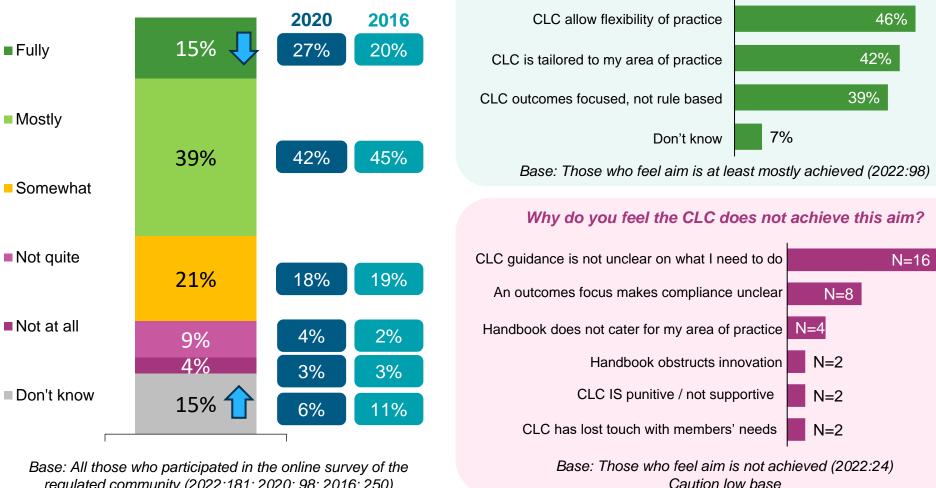


Lawyers were less likely to feel the CLC is fully meeting its aim of promoting innovation and growth

Guidance enables me to see how to

achieve what I want to achieve

To what degree do you feel that the regulatory standards set by the CLC achieve their aim of promoting innovation and growth of legal business while also protecting the consumer?



regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)

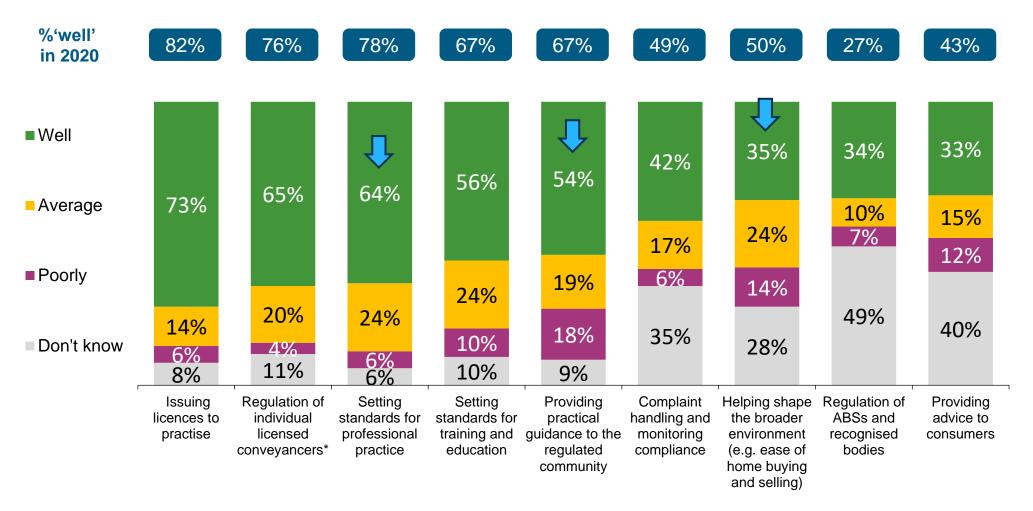
Why do you feel the CLC at least mostly achieves this aim?



56%

Lawyers were also less likely to report that the CLC is performing well in some of its functions

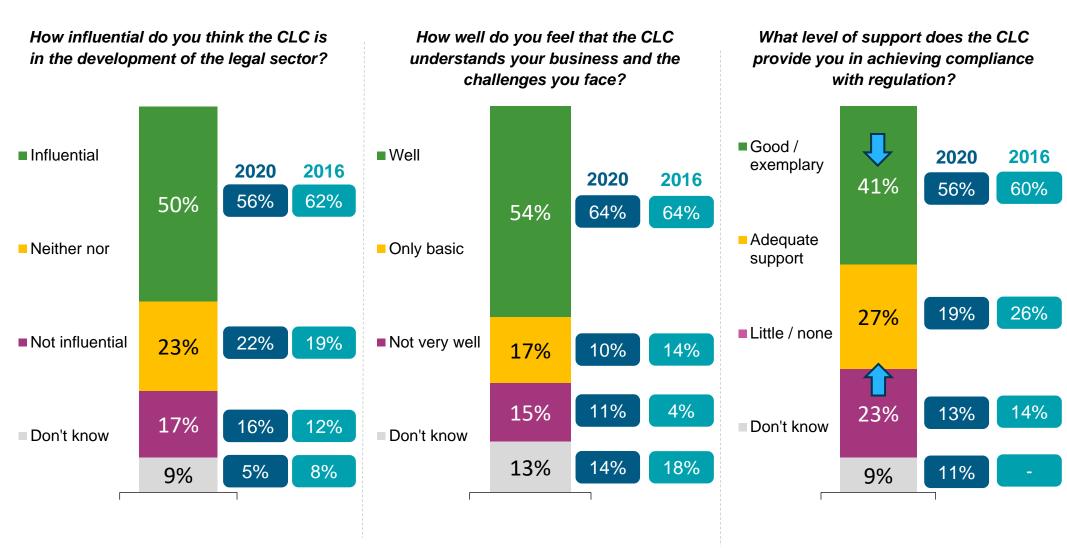
How well do you feel the CLC performs at these functions?



Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98) *All CLC- licensed conveyancer and licensed conveyancer managers of CLC-regulated bodies (2022: 172; 2020 93)



The proportion of lawyers that reported the CLC provides little to no support increased in 2022

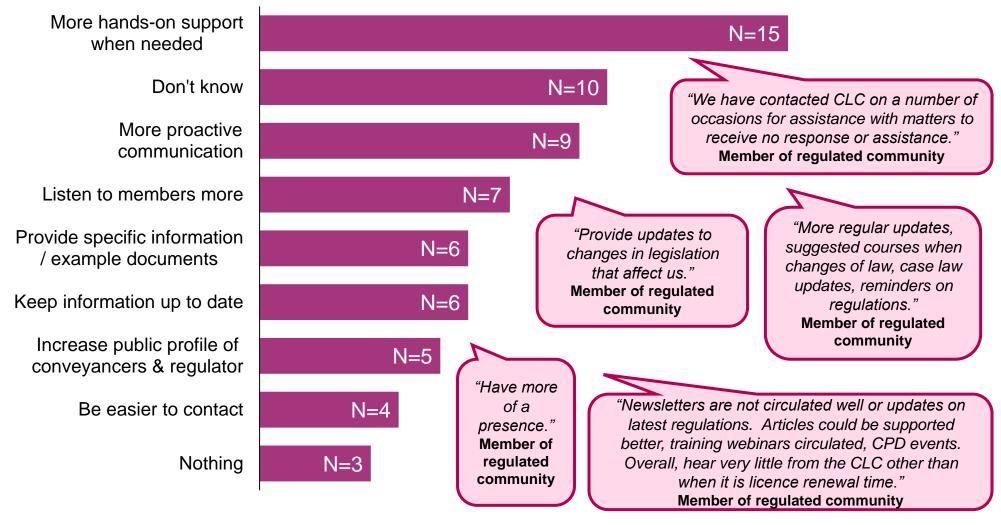


Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)



These lawyers said they wanted the CLC to more proactively engage with them going forward

What could the CLC do to support you better? (UNPROMPTED RESPONSES)



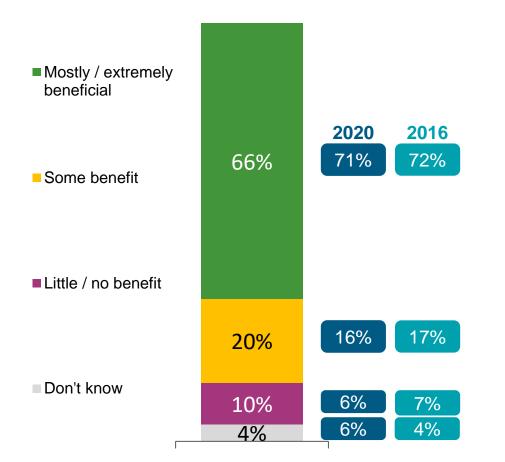
Caution low base

Base: Members of the regulated community who feel the CLC does not provide enough support (2022:40)



Most continue to feel that being regulated by the CLC is beneficial to them or their business

Overall, how beneficial do you feel that being regulated by the CLC is to you/your business?



Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)

Why do you feel it is beneficial?

- 72% said CLC regulation is a mark of quality recognised by lenders
- 62% said the CLC's specialist regulation is tailored to my practice needs
- **45%** said CLC regulation is a mark of quality recognised by consumers

Base: All who feel CLC regulation is beneficial (2022:119)

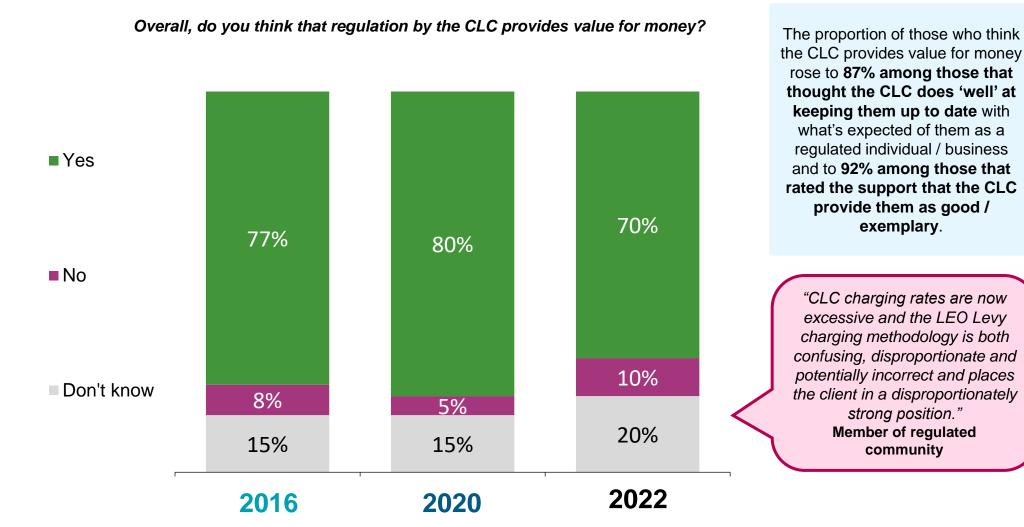
Why do you feel it is not beneficial? TOP 3 SHOWN

- N=10 spontaneously said consumers do not recognise the Licensed Conveyancer brand
- N=4 said they received a sub-par service when they contacted the CLC
- N=3 said they have had difficulty accessing lender panels because I am CLC regulated

Base: All who feel CLC regulation is not beneficial (2022:18) Caution low base



Seven in ten lawyers reported that they think that the CLC provides value for money



Base: All those who participated in the online survey of the regulated community (2022:181; 2020: 98; 2016: 250)

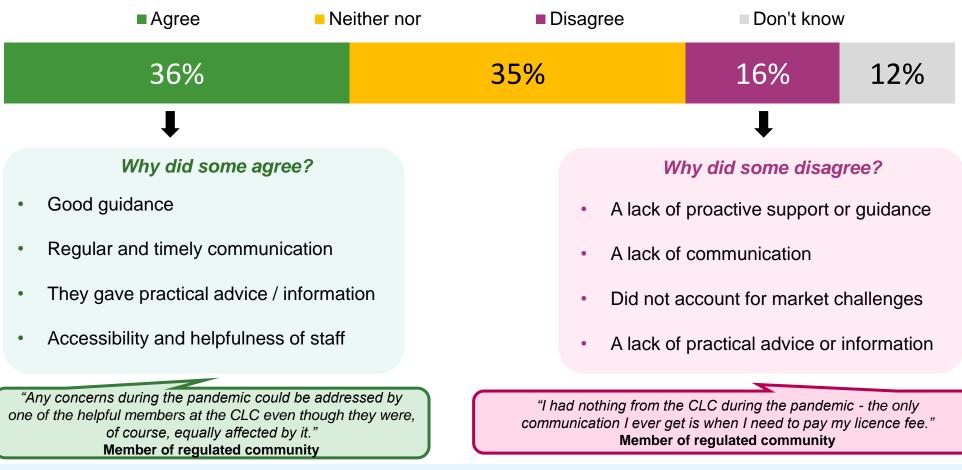


Support provided during COVID-19



Lawyers expressed mixed views on the support provided by the CLC during the COVID pandemic

Extent to which the regulated community agreed that the CLC provided the general support they needed during the COVID-19 pandemic and why



The proportion that *disagreed* with this statement rose to 39% among those that felt the CLC is not influential in the development of the legal sector and 39% of those that rated the CLC as poor in terms of the support they provide in terms of ensuring compliance with regulation. N=24 of the N=29 that *disagreed* with this statement had not seen any CLC authored content in the last 18 months.



Suggestions for improvements



Suggestions for improvement centred on the CLC being more proactive in their engagement with the legal sector



"They're respected... they engage with other regulators, but sometimes they could contribute more - in some discussions they're quite quiet on their opinions on things... because they are the primary conveyancer regulator... they could perhaps use their experience and knowledge to inform wider discussions." Regulator "Engagement. Being present, engaging with people and startups companies and people who are licensed by you. That is the most important thing. This could be for any firm. It could be through seminars, newsletters or conferences." Government

"They appear to be trying to regulate through unnecessarily aggressive tactics, when dealing with a compliant and forward thinking audience. Be empathetic to the most turbulent time in conveyancing history and start providing good solutions not unnecessary punishments for minor infractions that do not work in the public interest." Member of the regulated community



"Just keep me in the loop. Share more information with me, so I can share it with my members. Also share more with the legal press. They may do that already, I wouldn't know." Representative body

"Further consultation. If you're a regulator and you're not engaged in what's actually happening in the industry, and how technology is changing the way the industry works, I would argue that it's very difficult for the regulation of those organisations to keep pace with the changes that are happening and probably there's been more changes in this industry in the last three years than there has been for the previous twenty. So, it's imperative that the regulators understand the amount of tech, and tech companies, that are involved now in the delivery of legal services, and conveyancing in particular." **Representative of panel**



Summary and points to consider



Summary



Stakeholders generally feel that their contact with the CLC is proportionate.

However, results suggest that the regulated community is less engaged with CLC communication. Between 2020 and 2022 there has been significant decreases in:

- the proportion saying the CLC does 'well' at keeping them up to date (from 68% to 51%);
- the proportion recalling seeing or hearing CLC-authored content (from 28% to 19%); and
- the proportion reading newsletters (from 92% to 77%).



Stakeholders continue to be positive about the CLC – describing it as progressive and trusted.

Similarly, most of the regulated community that participated in the online survey agreed that the CLC is professional, helpful, reliable, expert, and that it acts with integrity.

However, even though the majority agreed the CLC acts with integrity, the proportion that agreed with the statement fell between 2020 and 2022, as did the proportion that agreed the CLC is accessible and the proportion that agreed the CLC is straightforward to deal with.



Almost all stakeholders felt that the CLC sets high enough standards for its regulated community in the round – though one said they would like the CLC to continue to improve rigour in this area going forward. One stakeholder suggested that the CLC could improve on how it implements these standards because they feel the CLC has adopted an increasingly aggressive stance to this recently.

CLC as a regulator

The regulated community were less likely to feel that the CLC 'fully' achieves their aim of promoting innovation and growth of legal businesses in 2022 than they were in 2020.

Participants (both stakeholders and members of the regulated community) felt the CLC could support them better going forward by being more proactive in their engagement with the sector.



Any further questions?



Thank you



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