

# LSO PANDEMIC UPDATE

## CEO Report

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020



**Law Society**  
of Ontario

**Barreau**  
de l'Ontario

# Message from CEO

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This interim operational report to Convocation provides insight into the breadth of activities, action items, productivity benchmarks, and operational outcomes completed from the declaration of the pandemic emergency state in mid-March until end August.

Highlights of key pandemic strategies, operational changes and responses, and ongoing work are set out for areas across the organization.

This is only a snapshot of the organization's work during this period. Where available, comparative results from 2019 during the same period (mid-March to end August) are provided to understand the impact of COVID-19 on our business processes and people.

The information outlines key developments and “pivots” taken to be responsive to this challenging situation, and the regulatory and program activity that continued to progress the work of the LSO.

The results to date show that our employees are united in their purpose to maintain our corporate legacy of excellence and responsiveness and do so with compassion for those with whom we interact, support and regulate.

# Operations Snapshot

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Included in this snapshot:

- Operational results for the pandemic period to date
  - Mid-March to end August, 2020 – as compared to the same period in 2019
  - Key indicators for corporate, competence and conduct activities
  
- Indicia and Measures
  - Ongoing workflow – benchmarking activity and productivity
  - Pandemic workflow / products / projects
  - Examples of managing pandemic challenges and pivoting activities
  - Highlights of achievements addressing pandemic impacts on business continuity while still supporting regular workflow

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# Corporate Response to Pandemic

**An emergency state is  
declared – what next?**

# Corporate Pandemic Actions

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## Organization Actions

- Pandemic Emergency Response – immediate move to work at home and implementation of work at home strategies to sustain workflow
- Pandemic Preparedness and Planning – ongoing supports and protocols for continuation of workflow
- Return to Office Planning – reintegration into physical space, implementation of enhanced health and safety requirements

## Corporate Interaction, Outreach and Support Actions

- Justice Sector Partners Check-ins and Planning – provide support, assistance and communications addressing evolving practice issues
- National Law Society CEO Check-ins and Planning – continuity, consistency and information exchange
- Ontario Regulatory Agency CEO Check-ins and Planning – benchmarking, impact discussions and supports

# Corporate Pandemic Actions

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## Operational Sustainability and Change Management

- Recommendations for Strategic Change Development - consideration and implementation focused on modernization and proportionate regulatory impact for licensees and internal processes
- Treasurer Transition – planning, supports, engagement, outreach
- Treasurer and CEO Board Interaction – updates and communications
- CEO Communications to Team – weekly updates, maintaining morale and focus
- Employee lay-offs and terminations necessitated by the closure/inability to support certain business lines
- Executive management and Board member pay/remuneration reduction recognizing pandemic impacts on people and clients.

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# Corporate Outcomes

Mid-March to end August 2019  
Mid-March to end August 2020



**Client and People Services**



**Finance and Facilities**



**Office of General Counsel**



**Policy and Equity Initiatives**



**External Relations and  
Communications**



# Remote Operations

Facilitating remote work – Information Technology and Human Resources immediately moved to ensure smooth transitions while still maintaining day-to-day operational oversight.

**IT and HR**, supported by all other divisions, completed significant work to transition all employees to work at home arrangements beginning March 16, 2020

**IT** managed the rapid transition to work from home by:

- Managing technological needs, supplying/sending laptops and other IT equipment
- Providing user support
- Monitoring cybersecurity threats
- Maintaining infrastructure support
- Increasing the LSO's VPN and remote working infrastructure capacity
- Training employees on remote access protocols and security measures

**HR** responded quickly to help employees with their transition to work from home, including:

- Providing best practices and guides for remote working
- Ensuring employees know how to access the Employee Assistance Program and are aware of the services they offer
- Offering support for managers who are learning to manage remote teams
- Creation of policies and FAQs to reflect the current work environment

# Return to Office (RTO) Planning

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Creation of the RTO Committee with responsibility for health and safety, facilities and internal communications

- Central coordination, leadership and decision making
- Development of COVID-19 and Return to Office pages on the HUB intranet site to provide employees with relevant information
- Creation of interim COVID-19 policies, including an Employee Wellness Policy and an Engineering, Administrative and PPE Protocol Policy
- Providing training resources for donning and doffing PPE
- Development of comprehensive FAQs relating to COVID-19 precautions, policies and planning for return to office
- Providing guidance to each LSO division to plan for the safe return of employees to the office and resumption of their pre-COVID-19 activities, including hazard assessments and space allocation checks
- Development and analysis of RTO Pulse Survey to gauge employee reactions to/comfort with policies, procedures and next steps
- Conducted health and safety compliance review and gap analysis
- Restructured the Health & Safety Committee, including the creation of distinct committees for both LSO buildings
- Creation of a Work Refusal Policy
- Revise Health and Safety Policy.



# Human Resources

Pandemic realities have led to the development of new electronic processes in Human Resources. This has included:

- Use of digital files for payroll processing
- Virtual training for Benefit and Pension Enrolment, New Hire Orientation, and other key people processes
- Use of digital signatures for invoices.

## Sustainability and Managing Workforce Change due to Pandemic

- Ongoing employee retention with focus on communications
- Transitions for employees moving to work at home, including accommodations and supports
- Engage with employees directly and via intranet to ensure ongoing mental and physical well-being and promote use of Employee Assistance Plan
- Prepare for and support employee lay-off and termination decisions
- Ongoing engagement with all employees impacted by changes and those remaining who are also impacted by workforce decisions

# Client Service Centre

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Pandemic realities have led to the development of new electronic processes in Client Service Centre. CSC has worked to transform their paper-heavy processes to electronic processes to ensure their internal and external clients are not inconvenienced with the transition to remote working. This has included:

- Implemented ability to produce, approve and sign Certificates of Standing electronically
- Electronic transfer of files between Complaints & Compliance, Professional Regulation and Licensing (instead of daily paper deliveries)
- Acceptance of all documents electronically (complaints-related, applications, Certificates of Standing, transcripts, etc.)
- Preparation of Clearance Requests using digital signatures
- Discontinued the creation of paper files, with all documents being stored electronically.

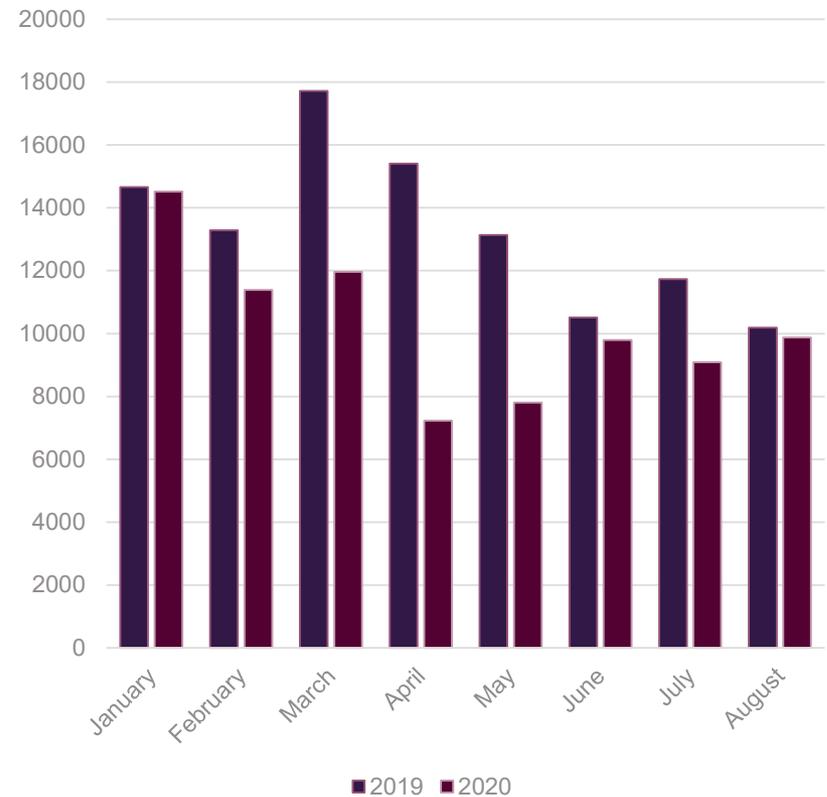
# Client Service Centre

## Call Centre

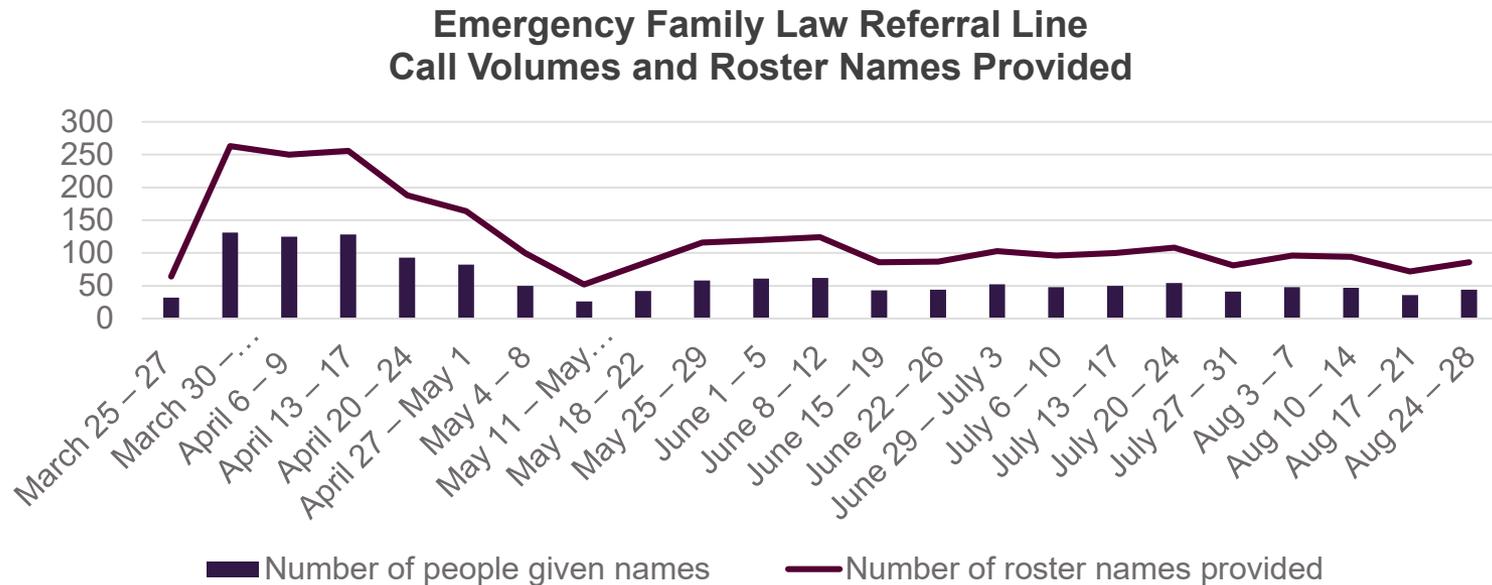
As a result of COVID-19, the Call Centre experienced a decrease in call volumes in March and April, but volumes began to return to regular levels from June to August. Since transitioning to Work at Home, the Call Centre's answer rate remained steady at approximately 98.7%.

There has also been a marked increase in the Call Centre's productivity rate, made apparent by the increase in call-answer time due to a decrease in interruptions in workflow. In 2019, the average time spent 'off the que' per agent was approximately 6.9%. After beginning to work from home, the average has decreased to 3.8%, meaning Call Centre agents are spending more time assisting callers. From mid-March to end August, the Call Centre managed over 49,000 calls from the public and licensees.

Call Centre Call Volumes (2019 vs 2020)



# Client Service Centre



During this time, the Call Centre has also been supporting the new Emergency Family Law Referral Line, connecting self-represented litigants with family lawyers who will provide 30 minutes of legal advice specific to determining whether their family court matter is urgent and referrals to other available legal services. Launched on March 25 (9 days following the declaration of emergency), call volumes peaked within the first month but have remained relatively steady since May with an average of 47 calls per week. Over 1400 interactions to date.

# Client Service Centre

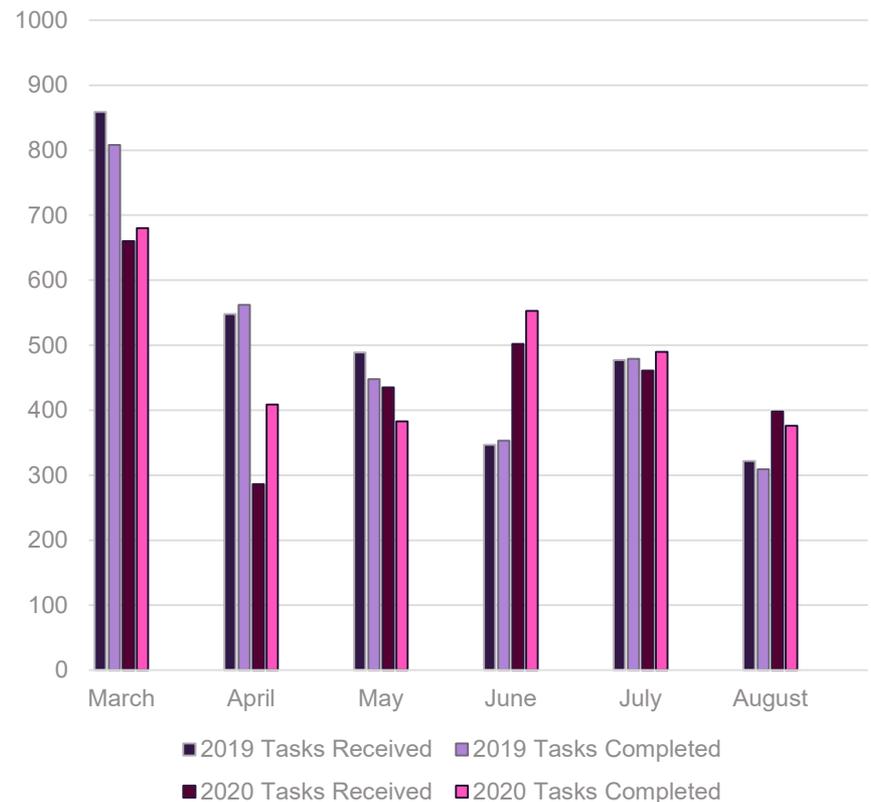
## By-Law Administration Services (BAS)

Since moving to work from home, BAS has transitioned most of their processes completely online, thus eliminating the need for submission of paper documents by licensees and for employees to create and maintain paper files.

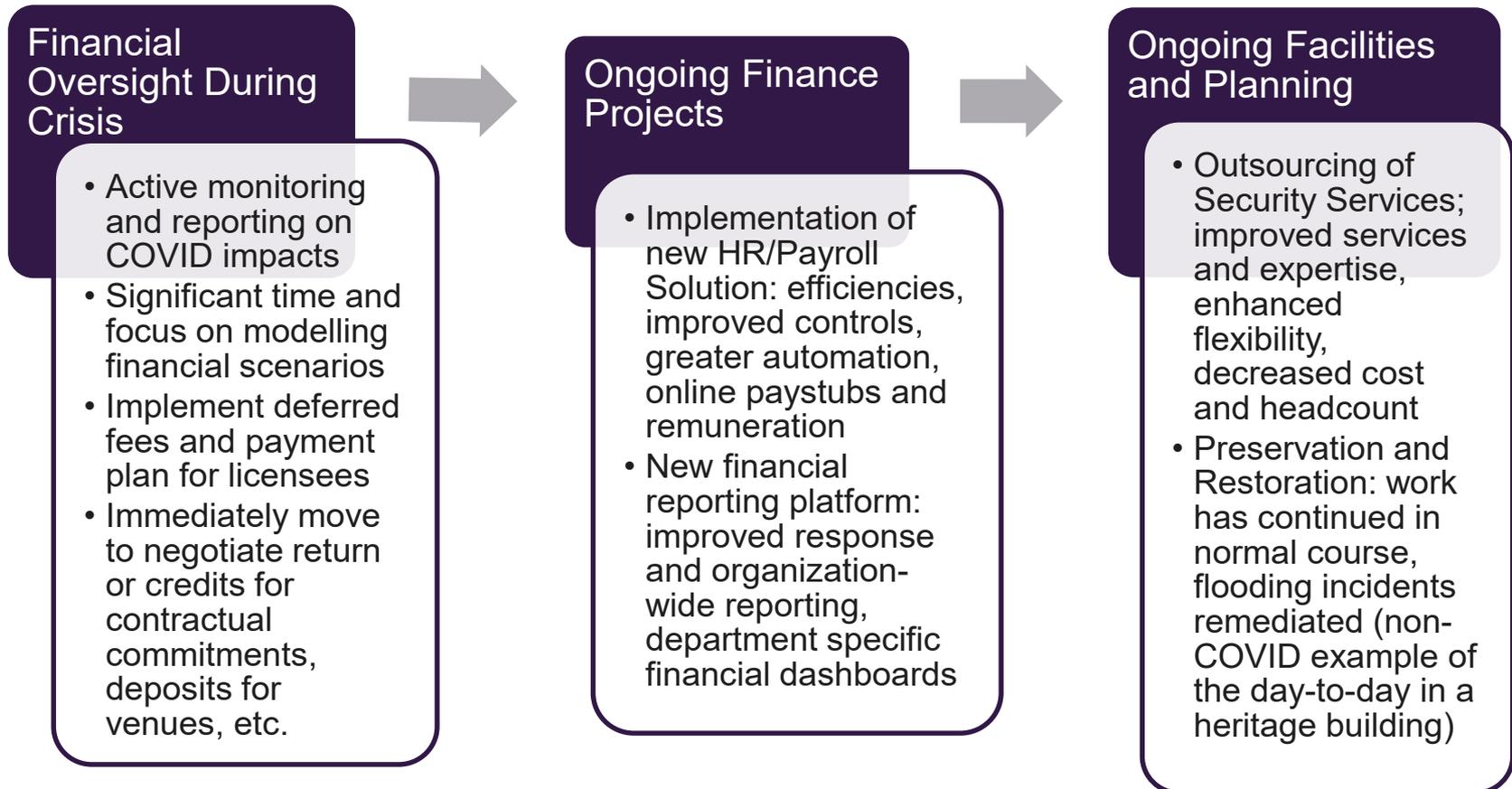
The transition to electronic files has allowed BAS to continue to provide timely service for licensees seeking license surrender, exemption from paying annual fees or the annual report, approval of professional corporations, processing of by-law mandated forms, and responding to licensee inquiries.

While there was a decrease in requests received in March and April, volumes have increased steadily since May and have surpassed 2019 volumes in June through August.

**BAS Requests Received and Completed (2019 vs 2020)**



# Finance and Facilities



# Policy and Equity Initiatives

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## Pandemic Initiatives

- Remote Commissioning/Notarizing: develop and amend licensee guidance resources in collaboration with PD&C; consultation meetings; consultation submissions
- MAG consultation on POA Amendments; submission
- MAG consultation on Estates Law Reform; submission
- Develop COVID-19 FAQs in collaboration with PD&C, OGC and others
- Federal and Provincial support programs: monitoring program developments; outlining programs for communication to licensees; advocacy related to program enhancements to support lawyers and paralegals specifically
- Licensee Check-In Project re: impact of COVID series of meetings
- Research Community of Practice; organize and conduct launch meetings; support subcommittee work
- Participation in LAO consultation re: impact of COVID

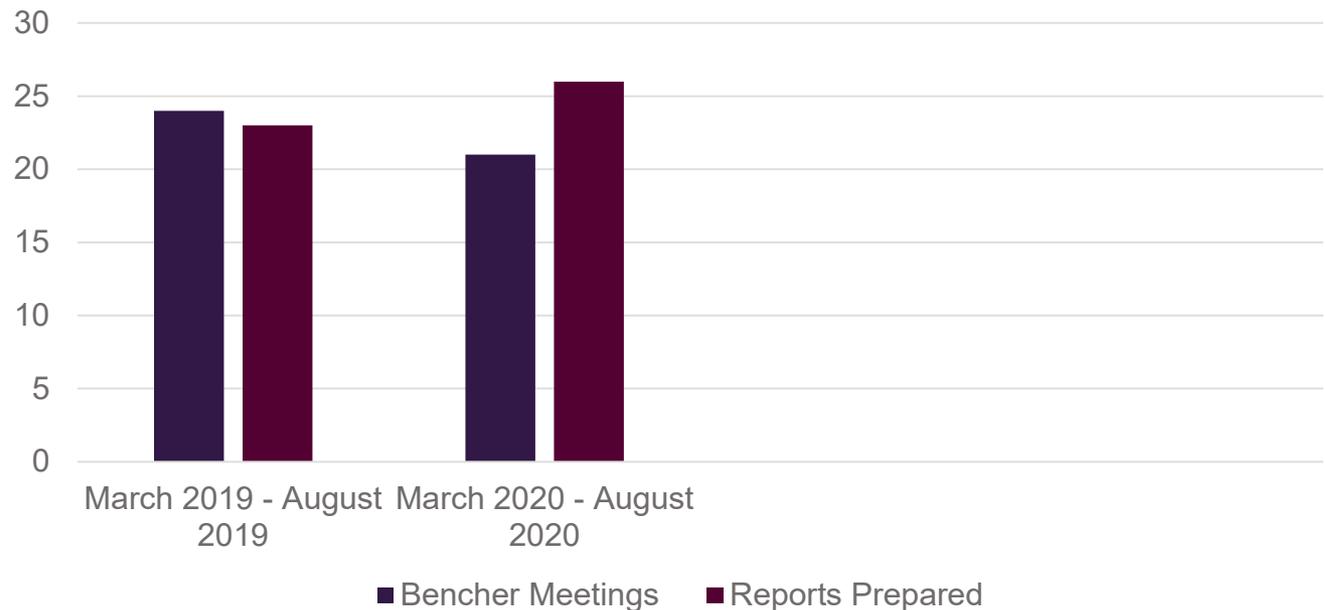
# Policy and Equity Initiatives

## Ongoing Initiatives

- MAG consultation on Defamation Law Reform submission
- ICCRC Immigration Consultant Licence meetings and reporting
- Review of Equity Initiatives website and updating
- Organization of French Language CPD
- Organization of Law Societies of Canada Equity Network virtual conference
- Attend: AJEFO Board and AGM; French language justice services subgroup
- Ontario Courts Accessibility Advisory Committee participation
- Inclusion Index: analysis; managing ongoing communications; developing work products
- Report on implementation of Indigenous initiatives and supporting work of external Indigenous counsel
- Respond to New Zealand consultation on rule changes related to discrimination and harassment as part of international law society regulatory information exchange

# Board and Committee Interactions

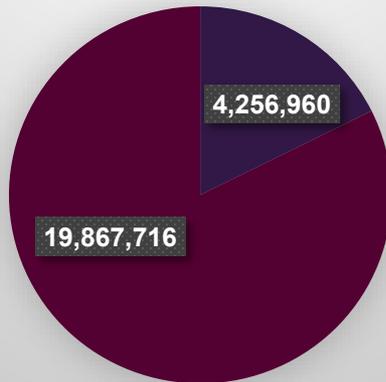
The pandemic required that Board and Management engage in ongoing policy development through virtual interactions. A quick pivot to Zoom technology permitted decision making to continue with the focus on shifting to pandemic-specific policies, proportionate regulation and modernization opportunities.



# Communications

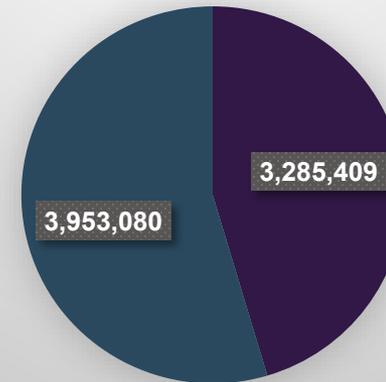
Sitewide pageviews from  
March to August 2019 and 2020

■ March 16 to August 31, 2019 ■ March 16 to August 31, 2020



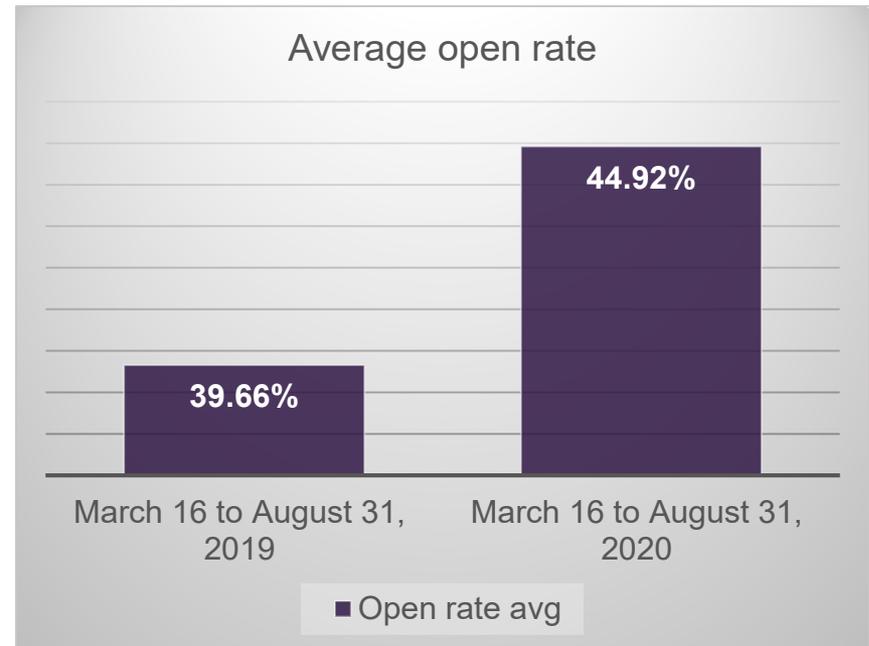
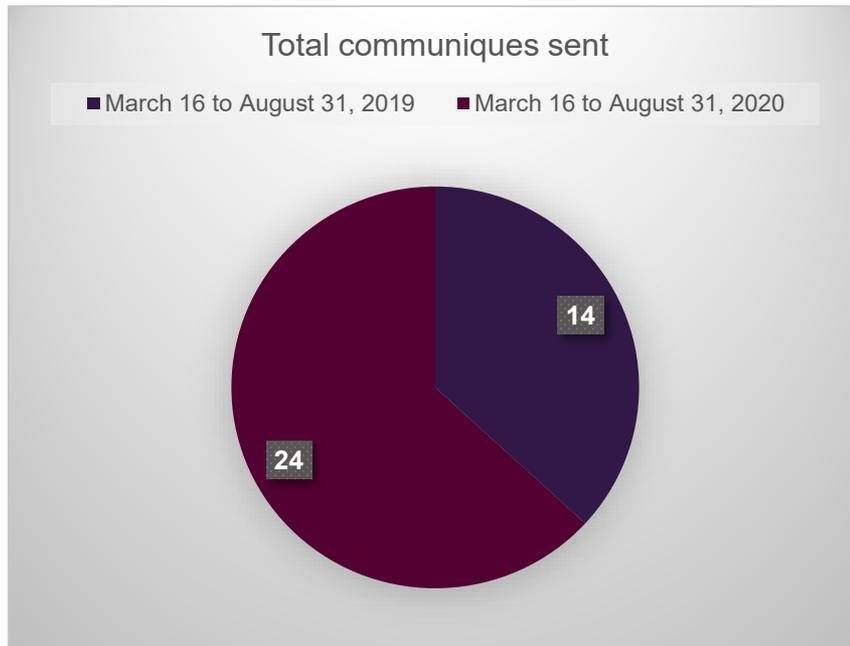
Sitewide unique views from  
March to August 2019 and 2020

■ March 16 to August 31, 2019 ■ March 16 to August 31, 2020



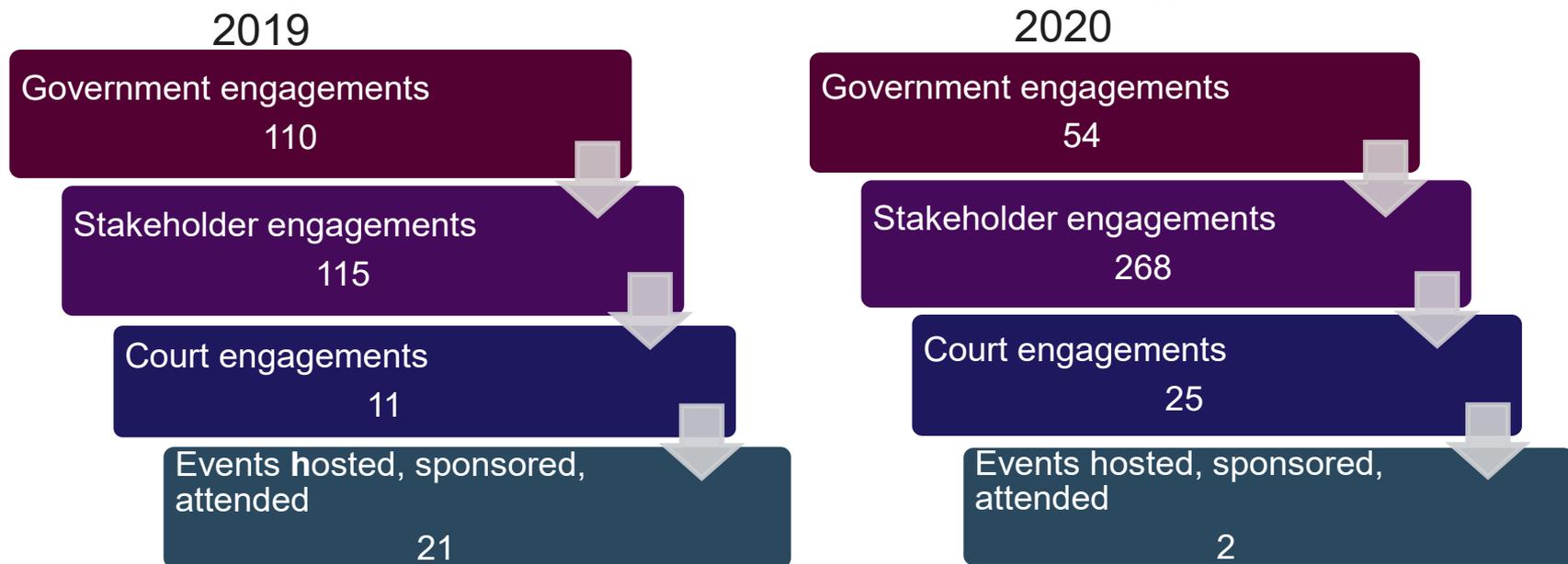
COVID-19 pages have seen over 1M pageviews since March 16, 2020. These pages were designed to offer a significantly improved layout resulting in better navigation for visitors. Content is easy to share and offers direct links to individual FAQs. Website metrics are up dramatically for both sitewide visits and unique page views for the same period in 2020 as a result of the crisis and improvements to the website.

# Licensee Updates



From March 16 to July 16, 2020 licensees were sent weekly updates to keep them apprised of important COVID-19 information. *Licensee Updates* are now being sent monthly or on an as-needed basis. Open rates for licensee communicues increased an additional 5% despite sending updates more frequently. Interest in the *Licensee Updates* is strong, particularly during the pandemic timeframe.

# External Relations and Engagements



The importance of stakeholder engagements during the 2020 pandemic period is reflected in the significant increase in the number of engagements -- more than double the number when compared to 2019. The increase in court engagements in 2020 over 2019, reflects the importance of coordination throughout the justice sector and legal community during the COVID-19 response. The decrease in government engagements is reflective of a shift in the government's focus from planned or 'regular' business to a COVID-19 response. The significant reduction in events is also a result of the pandemic. Of note, LSO events are scheduled to resume using remote technology or a hybrid approach of in-person panels and remote audience participation leveraging technological solutions.

# Office of General Counsel

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- At onset of pandemic, immediate slowdown on open litigation files
- Reduction in amount of new litigation being commenced or threatened; returning to usual levels by end of August
- Volume of information requests, production orders, subpoenas and summonses reduced

Pandemic increased activity and action items in the following areas:

## **Legislative Monitoring**

- Scope broadened to include monitoring government activities specific to the pandemic
- Additional analysis and work undertaken to support the provision of information to licensees
- Increased workflow to support LSO in responding to the pandemic as an employer, owner of certain businesses (Osgoode Restaurant) and services provider

## **Legal Advice**

- Specific to activities occurring in response to the pandemic, the office provided increased and issue-specific advice and counsel quickly
- LSO modifications: deferring annual general meeting, shifting election of Treasurer from in person poll to online poll, deferring annual fee payments, shifting audits and reviews from in person to virtual activities
- All modifications required an understanding of legislative contexts in which the practices occurred and changes in those legislative contexts

# Office of General Counsel

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## **Employment Law Work**

- LSO's response to pandemic included taking certain steps in respect of its workforce, including layoffs, terminations and salary reductions
- To mitigate risks inherent in these actions, the office was called on to provide comprehensive advice quickly
- In addition, with respect to certain actions, for example, layoffs, which are subject to legislative requirements and processes, there were continual legislative developments to be monitored and policies and processes adjusted

## **Health and Safety of People and Organization**

- Participation in activities centered around workplace health and safety and the pandemic
- Included participation in the development of workplace policies specifically related to the pandemic and participation in the Return to Office Committee

## **Contract Obligations and Implementation**

- Short timeline contract review and advice on terminating/renegotiating/amending contracts
- Examples include the contract work involved in moving to online licensing examinations, reviewing lease agreements and space rental agreements.

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# Competence Outcomes

Mid-March to end August 2019

Mid-March to end August 2020

- **Licensing**
- **Practice Audits**
- **Practice Supports and Resources**
- **Continuing Professional Development**
- **Great Library and Legal Information**

# Licensing by the Numbers

<b>COVID-19 Response Action (Key deliverable or alternative workflow)</b>	<b>Mid-March to end August 2019</b>	<b>Mid- March to end August 2020</b>
Number of paralegals licensed	<b>259</b>	<b>235</b>
Number of lawyers licensed	<b>1,777</b>	<b>1,881</b>
Number of lawyers licensed via ceremonial calls	<b>1,714</b>	<b>0</b>
Number of lawyers licensing via administrative calls	<b>63</b>	<b>1,881</b>
Number of candidates who filed clerkship with a start date in this date range	<b>1,638</b>	<b>710</b>
Number of candidates who received an abridgment of articles	<b>100</b>	<b>131</b>
Number of candidates who have enrolled in upcoming LPP/PPD (2020/2021)	<b>14 – PPD 200 – LPP</b>	<b>16 – PPD 317 – LPP</b>
Number of exams written	<b>4, 872</b>	<b>5,362</b>
Number of Examination Accommodations	<b>293</b>	<b>398</b>

# Licensing: Pandemic Changes

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Since March 16, 2020 the following COVID remediation steps were achieved by the Licensing Process Team related to **licensing process administration** following quick and proactive deliberation and approval by Committee and Convocation

- Implementation of Administrative call to the bar process with rolling call dates and removal of Roll Signing
- Lowering fees for call to bar
- Absorbing shipping costs for licensing materials
- Absorbing cost for monthly payment plan administration fees
- Creating two new monthly payment plans for lawyer candidates that commence later in licensing year
- Delaying payment and transcript deadlines for candidates
- Candidates who defer after deadline only charged late fee - not forfeiting entire exam fee
- E-filing documents and virtual commissioning
- Temporarily discontinuing issuance of candidate ID cards
- E-transfer, wire transfer payments from firms
- Professional Conduct and Practice in Ontario program fee reduction
- Supported Finance with the remediation of deposits and contracts for call to the bar venues and suppliers

# Licensing

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## **Licensing Process Administration** changes continued:

- Implemented a reduction in Articling Term from 10 months to 8 months
- Implemented Remote Articling placements
- Revised and implemented Professional Conduct and Practice in Ontario program for online delivery
- Revised Articling Recruitment Procedures
- Revised Experiential Training Plan forms and documents to support online administration
- Implemented Abridgement policy for Articling, Integrated Practice Curriculum and Law Practice Program/Programme de pratique du droit.

# Licensing

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Since March 16, 2020 the following COVID remediation steps were achieved by the Licensing Process Team related to **licensing examination administration** following quick and proactive deliberation and approval by Committee and Convocation:

- Sourced vendors to deliver online live-proctored examinations
- Transformed examination protocols to build multiple versions for online examinations
- Restructured licensing examinations from a 7-hour delivery format to a 4-hour delivery format.
- Built new processes, procedures, rules and protocols for online examination administration (e.g. standard and accommodated examination delivery)
- Implemented online, live proctored examinations
- Implemented communications strategies and responded to stakeholder and media inquiries
- Implemented remote advisory group activities
- Implemented new candidate complaints resolution mechanisms
- Worked with Finance to recover venue expenses resulting from cancellation of in-person examinations.

# Licensing

## Paralegal Education Delivery

Since March 16, 2020 paralegal education programs moved to remote delivery. In addition to approving remote delivery for all colleges, the LSO has reviewed and approved the following:

- 1 program abeyance (Algonquin College suspended its Spring 2020 semester (May 19, 2020, to August 15, 2020) and intends to resume the program in September 2020)
- 2 reductions to course instructional hours, including field placement hours, though not below minimums required by the Paralegal Education Program Accreditation Policy (Algonquin College and Centennial College)
- 3 reductions to semester length (Algonquin College, Centennial College, Georgian College)
- 3 adjustments to sequencing of courses and course elements (CDI College, CIMT, Sheridan College)
- 8 adjustments to program intake dates (Centennial College, Sheridan College, CIMT College, Fanshawe College, Georgian College, Seneca College (diploma and certificate), St. Clair College)

Paralegal Education Program audit processes were also revised to include and provide:

- 7 COVID-19 guidance notices delivered
- All colleges' Major Change Forms for COVID-19 changes reviewed / approved
- Simulated field placement requirements distributed
- College tip sheet distributed
- Modification of student recruitment procedures and deadlines developed and posted.

# Practice Audits

COVID-19 Response Action (Key deliverable or alternative workflow)	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
Number of spot audits	653	15 (279 Jan – Mar)
Number of practice reviews	213	0 (104 Jan – Mar)
Number of practice audits (paralegal)	104	0 (32 Jan – Mar)
Completion of inventory: Spot Audit	N/A	85
Completion of inventory: Practice Reviews	N/A	93

Practice Audits – including lawyer spot audits, lawyer practice reviews, and paralegal audits – was significantly impacted by the emergency state and inability to engage directly at the places of business of licensees. The team focused on clearing file inventories and then moved quickly to develop plans, criteria and protocols for conducting fully remote audits and reviews.

# Practice Audits

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## Remote Spot Audit Program and Enhancements

- Remote audit program was created using videoconferencing and document sharing technology
- Initial implementation will be a limited scope engagement focused on financial areas that have been identified as higher risk to the public
- This proportionate risk-based approach will help to reduce regulatory burdens on law firms during the COVID crisis
- A limited scope remote audit conducts about 75% of the steps that a full scope audit covers and addresses 4 months of books and records compared to 12 months of books and records
- Depending on the evolving situation the scope of the remote audit program may be expanded (i.e., if the pandemic situation continues at length)
- Enhancements to audit efficiencies while maintaining the program's effectiveness.

## Projected number of remote spot audit engagements to commence by end of 2020:

Lawyer spot audits	200 – 250
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# Practice Audits

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## Remote Lawyer Practice Review and Paralegal Audit Programs

- Created a process for conducting remote reviews during the COVID-19 pandemic using existing technology (i.e., Zoom and Sharefile)
- Newly created process provides tools to continue to conduct comprehensive quality assurance reviews and assess licensee competence during the pandemic
- New process continues philosophy of balancing proportionate regulation with a risk-based approach.

## Projected number of remote review engagements to commence by end of 2020:

Lawyer practice reviews	90 – 110
Paralegal practice audits	36 – 44

# Practice Audits

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The Practice Audits team has used the opportunity of pandemic changes to focus on supporting licensees and other departments of the LSO through the development of guidance on critical practice issues and areas of practice risk.

## **Providing educational guidance/materials to Licensees**

- Financial management educational resource materials are being expanded to include additional resources and tips for licensees in higher risk areas
  - Books and Records section
  - Private Mortgages section
  - Estates and POA section

## **Licensee Annual Report financial high-risk indicators**

- Develop a financial indicators assessment protocol
- Specific financial indicators to determine if a full audit is warranted

## **Data Analysis to identify anomalies**

- Continued work on utilizing data analytics software to enhance the effectiveness of risk assessment and execution of the spot audit program



# Practice Audits

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## **Guidelines, Resources and Checklists Project**

- Substantive practice area guidelines (for example, real estate, family law, wills and estates) and associated checklists for use by Reviewers
- For all Reviewers, these documents provide an updated measurable standard and consistent protocol for the approach to reviewing each substantive area of law

## **Resource List Project**

- Reviewed existing Lawyer and Paralegal Resource Lists to ensure the resources are current, relevant and useful for licensees
- Updated and enhanced lists will be an excellent set of resources for all licensees, not just those taking part in the Practice Review Program

## **Report Template and Scope of PMR/PA Review**

- Conducted assessment of the scope of reviews, processes and report templates based on objectives of proactive, risk-based and proportionate regulation conducted in an efficient and effective manner.

# Practice Supports and Resources

COVID-19 Response Action (Key deliverable or alternative workflow)	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-Mar to end August 2020
Number of calls to Practice Management Helpline	<b>Total Inquiries – 3,993</b> Lawyer – 3,274 (82%) Paralegal – 532 (13%) Non-Licensee – 187 (5%)	<b>Total Inquiries – 4,444</b> Lawyer – 3,625 (82%) Paralegal – 484 (11%) Non-Licensee – 335 (7%)
Number of <b>COVID-related</b> resources developed	<b>N/A</b>	43 COVID-19 FAQs covering 14 practice management topics; 10 banking technology-related FAQs; 1 best practice guide; 1 checklist  24 resources updated with COVID-19 FAQ redirects or additional information  9 resources updated as a result of remote commissioning and notarizing amendments

# Practice Supports and Resources

COVID-19 Response Action (Key deliverable or alternative workflow)	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
Number of Page Views for <b>COVID-related</b> resources	N/A	133,199
Number of Unique Views for <b>COVID-related</b> resources	N/A	30,033
Number of calls about Commissioning and Notarization	58	263
Number of calls about Client ID and Verification	88	119
CAN Engagements in total	258	290
CAN Advisor Engagements	187	237
CAN Coach Engagements	71	53
CPD Accreditation Applications for Programs	418	337
CPD Accreditation for Programs	369	333



# Practice Supports and Resources

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Practice Supports and Resources introduced the following **new resources** and regularly updated them in response to COVID-19

- Practice Management COVID-19 FAQ
  - Licensee Supports
  - Office Management
  - Practice Interruptions
  - Virtual Meetings
  - Client Identification and Verification
  - Commissioning and Notarization
  - Signing Documents
  - Cybersecurity
  - Litigation
  - Real Estate
  - Wills and Power of Attorney
- Trust Accounting and Bookkeeping COVID-19 FAQ
- Remote Deposit Capture FAQ
- Best Practices for Virtual Commissioning during COVID-19 (later renamed Best Practices for Remote Commissioning)
- Virtual Commissioning Checklist (later renamed Remote Commissioning Checklist).

# Continuing Professional Development

COVID-19 Response Action (Key deliverable or alternative workflow)	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
Number of <b>paid</b> LSO programs offered (Include live and on demand)	281	180
Total number of registrants for <b>paid</b> LSO programs	14,705	5,532
Number of <b>free</b> COVID-related programs offered	N/A	17
Number of registrants for <b>free</b> COVID-related programs	N/A	27,623
Number of <b>free</b> programs offered as part of Summer Event	N/A	143
Number of purchases of Summer Event programs	N/A	16,987

Fast, significant pivot for CPD Program operations. First day of LSO work restrictions on March 16 (entire CPD team working at home, no access to Learning Centre equipment). Yet, first (free COVID) program **offered to membership 11 days later** on March 27.

Some previously scheduled programs moved to Fall (or 2021), but many captured through fully remote and/or recorded means to complete Winter/Spring CPD season by August 21. Creative work-arounds included producing brand new CPD content options through podcast.

# Great Library and Legal Information

<b>COVID-19 Response Action (Key deliverable or alternative workflow)</b>	<b>Mid-March to end August 2019</b>	<b>Mid-March to end August 2020</b>
Number of legal research questions answered	<b>11,444</b>	<b>2,399</b>
Number of searches on Great Library mobile app	<b>5, 656</b>	<b>3,371</b>
Number of electronic pages sent to licensees	<b>16,251</b>	<b>22,667</b>
Number of electronic pages sent to law associations	<b>1,072</b>	<b>488</b>
Number of visits of AccessCLE	<b>63,275</b>	<b>56,191</b>

The Great Library team pivoted to provide news gathering and research support for Law Society teams, including monitoring developments on COVID-19 issues at other regulators, and reviewing legal professional sources of practice information to supplement the provisions of supports and resources. The team also activated a Twitter account as a supplemental news channel, which is now followed by 660.

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# Professional Conduct Outcomes

Mid-March to end August 2019  
Mid-March to end August 2020

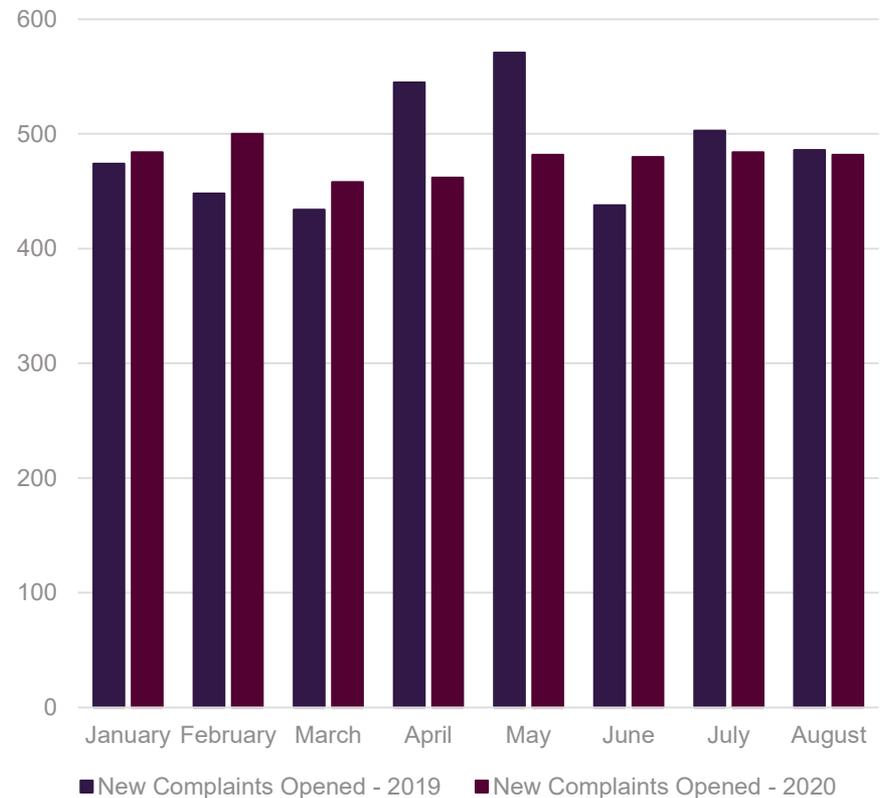
- **Complaints & Compliance**
- **Intake & Resolution**
- **Investigation**
- **Discipline**
- **Compensation Fund**
- **Trustee Services**

# Complaints and Compliance

Levels of complaints received have remained steady from March to end August.

Complaints & Compliance modified processes to ensure they did not experience a disruption in service resulting from the transition to working at home. Key process changes include moving to a paperless transfer system with Profession Regulation, processing Licensing Candidates' Good Character files remotely, and accepting most documents electronically.

**New Complaints Files Opened  
(2019 vs 2020)**



# Intake and Resolution

	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
<b>New Cases</b>	<b>2,153</b>	<b>1,782</b>
Closed cases	1,342	1,536
Transferred cases	566	363
<b>Total Output</b>	<b>1,908</b>	<b>1,899</b>
<b>Inventory of cases mid-March</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>1,072</b>
<b>Inventory of cases August 31</b>	<b>1,269</b>	<b>954</b>

Compared to the same period last year, the volume of complaints received in Professional Regulation Division is down. There was significantly decreased input mid-March to May, but in June, July and August, input has increased and now approximates 2019 volumes. In response, the team increased focus on completion of inventory, closing more cases.



# Investigation

	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
<b>New Cases</b> (new and reactivated)	<b>589</b>	<b>380</b>
Closed cases	352	355
Transferred cases	146	113
<b>Total Output</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>468</b>
<b>Inventory of cases mid-March</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>1,505</b>
<b>Inventory of cases August 31</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>1,414</b>

In response to the challenges of the pandemic, Investigations created electronic files and procedures where possible. It also created procedures and protocols for a remote working environment, including remote interviews with the ability to record and share documents, using Sharefile for electronic transfers of large files from complainants, and to and from licensees. Investigations is now considering circumstances for resumption of in-person meetings. Remote interviews are often not well suited to cases with voluminous documents or licensees who are not technically capable.



# Discipline

	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
<b>New Cases</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>112</b>
Closed matters	<b>83</b> (involving 79 licensees/applicants)	<b>76</b> (involving 75 licensees/applicants)
Originating notices	<b>71</b> Summary Hearing – 20 (28%) Conduct – 33 (47%) Capacity – 5 (7%) Interlock – 7 (10%) Other – 6 (8%)	<b>78</b> Summary Hearing – 18 (23%) Conduct – 45 (58%) Capacity – 3 (4%) Interlock – 4 (5%) Other – 8 (10%)
Proceedings completed	<b>56</b> Summary Hearing – 14 (25%) Conduct – 25 (5%) Capacity – 5 (9%) Interlock – 5 (9%) Other – 7 (12%)	<b>56</b> Summary Hearing – 29 (52%) Conduct – 12 (21%) Capacity – 1 (2%) Interlock – 5 (9%) Other – 9 (16%)
Inventory pre-PAC and pre-filing matters	Mid-Mar: 55 August 31: 48	Mid-Mar: 52 August 31: 51

# Discipline

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Since mid-March 2020, Discipline's input reflects the processing of less complex matters, including summary hearing cases.

Discipline was able to effectively process files through the Proceedings Authorization Committee and to file originating notices with the Law Society Tribunal. These files are not noticeably different in profile, including complexity, from those filed with the Tribunal in 2019, suggesting that processing was, in part, files received from Investigation before mid-Mar 2020.

Proceedings completed before the Tribunal since mid-Mar 2020 tend to be less complex matters, including summary hearings, reflecting what the Tribunal was able to process, at least during the early months while it moved to establish virtual protocols.

In response to the challenges of the pandemic, Discipline worked with Investigation to receive electronic files where possible. It is using Sharefile for electronic transfers of disclosure to licensees. It has pivoted to electronic processes to participate in the Tribunal virtual processes.

# Compensation Fund

	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
Inquiries Received	113	121
Claims Received	54	52
Inquiries Completed	22	109
Claims Completed	230	109
Inventory of Claims mid-March	593	303
Inventory of Claims August 31	414	246

Declining inventory of claims reflects the focus that the department put on reducing age of inventory since restructuring in early 2019, work that has continued despite the pandemic circumstances.



# Trustee Services

	Mid-March to end August 2019	Mid-March to end August 2020
Active practice wind-up to licensees or their families: new cases	46	108
Court ordered trusteeship cases	6	4
Active practice wind-up assistance to licensees or their families: completed	22	34
Court ordered trusteeship cases completed	1	4
Inventory: Active Practice wind-up assistance to licensees or their families: ongoing administration – mid-March	74	96
Inventory: Active Practice wind-up assistance to licensees or their families: ongoing administration – August 31	76	120
Inventory Court Ordered Trusteeships – mid-March	27	34
Inventory Court Ordered Trusteeships – August 31	31	34
Responses to requests from public/licensees looking for files, wills, and funds relating to active and closed trusteeships or for practice disposition information	1,261	1,282
Unclaimed Trust Funds – applications completed	285	88
Inventory Unclaimed Trust Funds – applications August 31	73	212

# Trustee Services

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Sharp increase in the active practice assistance requests is likely due in part to the pandemic and associated challenges for practitioners.

The pandemic has also negatively impacted Trustee Services' ability to provide active practice wind up assistance and to move forward with formal trusteeships. Trustee Services has faced challenges attending offsite locations, including licensees' offices and/or homes and storage facilities to obtain, review, shred and/or bring on site for indexing and storage, client materials. As a result, there is a significant backlog of materials, which continues to grow.

Trustee Services has worked with landlords, storage facilities, successor counsel, and others, to ensure that client interests and property are protected while these practices transition toward closure.

# CEO's Office

## Supporting our Mandate and Values in a Pandemic

- ❑ Corporate Values continue to guide the team in the completion of their work
- ❑ Engagement and productivity remains high despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 and LSO team lay-offs and terminations
- ❑ Where normal workflow was impeded, teams pivoted to address inventory, design new work processes, and reassign work to create necessary (pandemic) and new resources to evolve internal and external administrative, regulatory and risk practices
- ❑ Team effort has been tremendous – continuing our legacy of commitment to the organization's public interest mandate and support of licensees.

**Excellence**  
We act with integrity to be the regulatory gold standard.

**United in Purpose**  
We are one team that works together to achieve our shared goals.

**Compassion**  
We are genuinely interested in the needs of one another, and the public.

**Legacy**  
We are proud of the work we do and the meaningful role we play in support of the public interest.

**Responsiveness**  
We adapt quickly to the evolving needs of the public and legal professions.