Law Society of Scotland

COVID-19

# Economic impact on the Private Practice Sector of the Scottish Solicitor profession

## Analysis of Research

## Second Report

December 2020

## Introduction

The Law Society of Scotland is the professional body for over 12,000 Scottish solicitors. With our overarching objective of leading legal excellence, we strive to excel and to be a world-class professional body, understanding and serving the needs of our members and the public. We set and uphold standards to ensure the provision of excellent legal services and ensure the public can have confidence in Scotland's solicitor profession.

We have a statutory duty to work in the public interest, a duty which we are strongly committed to achieving through our work to promote a strong, varied and effective solicitor profession working in the interests of the public and protecting and promoting the rule of law. We seek to influence the creation of a fairer and more just society through our active engagement with the Scottish and United Kingdom Governments, Parliaments, wider stakeholders and our membership.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to affect each and every one of us. We have all over the last eight months had to adapt our daily lives in order to minimise the spread of infection and save lives. It appears at present that we will have to continue to adapt our daily lives for the foreseeable future.

This research undertaken in October 2020 in respect of the private practice sector of the Scottish solicitor profession is the latest of a number of Covid-19 related reports published by the Society since the outbreak of the pandemic which include the following:

1. The **first report on the financial impact of coronavirus on the private practice sector** of the Scottish solicitor profession. This research was undertaken by way of a telephone survey of 158 cash room partners and was published in May 2020. It disclosed that the vast majority of the private practice sector at that time had been adversely affected by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

2. The **impact of Covid-19 on the in-house sector of the Scottish solicitor profession**. This research was also undertaken by way of a telephone survey of 56 in-house Heads of Legal/General Counsel and published in June 2020. Its findings disclosed that the value of in-house legal teams was being felt as they had turned to the specialist in-house counsel to provide advice, with a particular focus on employment law and how to meet their statutory obligations.

3. An **online survey of all in-house solicitors undertaken in June 2020**.The Society's In-House Lawyers Committee co-conveners Sheekha Saha and Vlad Valiente sent this survey by email to all in-house solicitors on 5th June 2020 and invited them to complete and return the survey by 26th June 2020.468 responses were received. The report was published in July 2020. It complemented the report at 2 above. Its findings in relation to the effect that Covid-19 had on in-house solicitors were broadly in line with that report. This survey also asked questions relating to support the Society may consider, wellbeing and preferred training the Society could make available to the in-house community.

4. An **online survey on the experiences of Scottish solicitors with virtual custody courts**. This on-line survey was open between 30th June 2020 and 9th July 2020. 215 responses were received. The report, published in July 2020, focused on the 144 responses from criminal court practitioners, both crown and defence, who indicated that they had been involved in one or more virtual custody

court hearing at the date of survey response. The report highlighted both the practical problems experiences arising from virtual courts as well as the potential advantages of holding virtual custody courts during the pandemic.

As the professional body for Scottish solicitors we have continued to actively represent the voice of the profession during the pandemic. We have sought clarity on the options made available through government business support funding and joined together with other leading business sectors in Scotland to make the case for additional targeted support for those in the profession who are not benefiting from any of the business packages put in place. We have also worked to influence legislation and policies which directly impact on our members, trying to ensure that legal business can continue in a way which is in keeping with public health guidance and allows Scottish solicitors to work and generate income.

To effectively represent the real impact the current situation is having on our members, it is vital that we have an evidence-based understanding.

This report specifically follows the report outlined at 1 above by continuing to provide that evidence base.

## Summary of Report

This report follows the publication of the Society's report on the economic impact of Covid-19 on the Private Practice Sector of the Scottish Solicitor Profession published in May 2020.

Out of the 158 private practice firms contacted in April/May 2020, we were able to contact 128 of those firms again within the required timeframe.

**Turnover and new business**
This new research indicates that the pandemic is having less of an impact on firms' business at present than members perceived it would when the initial survey was undertaken six months ago. While most firms surveyed are still indicating a reduction in turnover, this has dropped from 90% of firms in April/May to 70% in October. There has also been a sharper drop in the percentage of firms who are now indicating that a fall in the introduction of new business has had an impact. This has dropped from around 90% in April/May to around 53% in October.

Interestingly, some 20% of firms surveyed now are indicating no impact on business, compared with approximately 3% indicating no impact six months ago. Far fewer firms cite "other impact" now (between 8% and 9%) than the 50% who did in April/May, when both court closures and the closure of the Land Register were impacting on firms' business.

**Staffing and business strategies**
In terms of staffing strategies, there had again been a marked decrease in strategies in place at present compared with six months ago. Of particular relevance is that fewer firms had strategies such as reduced staff salaries and reduced partner drawings. While around 24% advised that they had reduced hours (compared with just over 50% in the first survey) many respondents indicated that their firms were working many more hours now than six months ago.

Respondents were also asked about other strategies such as the new UK Government business interruption loan scheme, redundancies, business restructure and whether they had taken advantage of amendments to legal aid regulations which now allow for advance and interim payments. A 10% response in terms of the extended interruption loan scheme was noted against a 5% uptake 6 months ago. However, while almost 35% of those surveyed mentioned the new legal aid regulations and just over 15% mentioned a business restructure, of some concern is that around 14% of those surveyed had made some posts at their firms redundant.

On the likelihood of take up of the new job support scheme on 31st October, the vast majority of respondents (around 85%) stated that they were either very unlikely (67%) or unlikely (18%) to take advantage of this scheme in respect of solicitor staff and around 55% of respondents were either very unlikely (36%) or unlikely (19%) to take advantage of the scheme in respect of non-solicitor staff. The telephone survey concluded just before HM Treasury's announcement on 5th November 2020 that the furlough (job retention) scheme is now to be extended until the end of March 2021 and these figures should therefore be considered against that background.

Respondents were asked to compare staffing levels now as compared to April 2020. Almost 80% reported that they had the same number of solicitors at the firm as they did in April and nearly 60% reported the same number of non-solicitor staff now as compared with April.

In response to whether Covid-19 had caused firms to change plans for trainee solicitor recruitment over the next 12 months, over 60% of respondents stated that it hadn't, although around 12% reported that it had caused them to defer any decision to recruit trainees.

**Current and future workload and turnover**
A double question on workload was asked. Respondents were requested to compare current workload with workload at April 2020 and provide a separate comparison of current workload with October 2019, before the pandemic. The majority of respondents (62%) reported either a significant increase (30%) or an increase (32%) in workload since April 2020, although half of the respondents (50%) had reported either a decrease (33%) or a significant decrease (17%) in workload since October 2019.

The next question was in relation to a current forecast for firm workload and turnover expectation in the next 12 months compared to firm workload and turnover now. 28% anticipated an increase in turnover next year, 44% a decrease, with the remainder expecting things to stay the same.

**Adapting to change and staff wellbeing**
Almost all respondents (approximately 95%) advised that they had adapted either very well (53%) or satisfactorily (42%) to the necessary change in working practice such as working from home, online registration of title and virtual courts.

On staff wellbeing, respondents were invited to answer any one or more than one of the answer options on the questionnaire. Almost 60% of firms surveyed indicated that more one to one conversations regarding staff wellbeing were being held and just over 40% indicated that regular communications were taking place. Just under 10% of firms indicated that they had a formal wellbeing strategy in place. While just over 30% indicated that there was nothing in place, this has to be set against the number of firms surveyed who were sole practitioners with no staff.

The next question was on new strategies that firms had to adopt to attract new clients and allowed for multiple responses. There was a fairly even spread of responses to the answer options of social media (34%), videoconference (48%), socially distanced meetings with clients (58%), and referrals from existing clients (43%). In terms of other strategies (40%) some respondents reported that there had been an increase in referrals from other agents or had simply indicated that they had no difficulties at present in attracting new clients.

The final question related to how Covid-19 had affected client satisfaction levels. Around 70% of respondents advised that clients were now just as satisfied or more satisfied (23% said clients were more satisfied and about 47% indicated that there had been no change in client satisfaction levels) and approximately 28% advised that clients were now less satisfied. A number of respondents cited their firm's ability to adapt to a changing situation as being the reason why clients were more satisfied as well as clients appreciating that the solicitor was "going the extra mile" despite the ongoing pandemic. Some of those respondents who advised that clients were now less satisfied cited issues with delays in the courts, clients' inability to meet solicitors face to face, and the difficulties solicitors had in taking their instructions in virtual courts.

The Society will use this updated information obtained from this second survey to inform discussions with key stakeholders such as Scottish Government, the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) and the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission (SLCC).

By providing more up to date and relevant evidence of the effect the Covid-19 has had on the Scottish solicitor profession we can continue to advocate on behalf of our members and consider what further steps may be required to minimise its impact.

We would like to thank all of the firms contacted who took the time to respond to our questions. We are particularly grateful as these firms have now taken part in two surveys in a relatively short period of time.

## Methodology

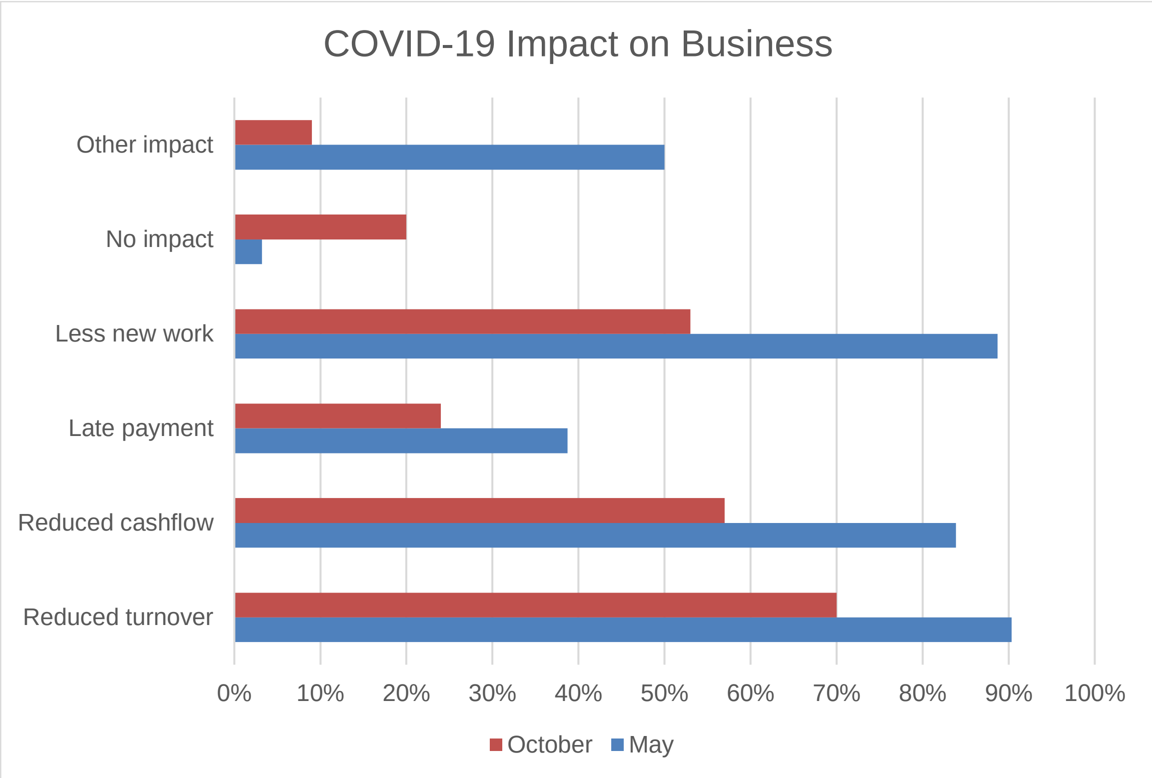
A telephone survey was carried out by the Society's Head of Research. Cashroom managers at 128 private practice firms were contacted. The sample was selected to provide a representative profile of private practice by rurality and size of firm. The sample was also selected from the same sample of 158 cashroom managers used in the first survey carried out between 20th April 2020 and 7th May 2020 in order to benchmark the first two questions of this survey as they related to factors impacting on firm business and strategies in place due to the pandemic.

Calls were made between 9th and 27th October 2020. A slightly extended time period was required in order to take into account that many respondents were not immediately available for telephone interview due to absences taken as a result of school holidays.

The full questionnaire used can be found in **Appendix 1**.

1. **Which of the following is at present impacting on your firm's business as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?**

**Choosing multiple options was permitted.**




Respondents were asked this question in the first survey and provided the same answer options.

Overall, there was a marked drop in the perceived economic impact that the pandemic is having on the private practice sector of the solicitor profession than it was when the first survey was undertaken.

In May, court closures and the closure of the Land Register were factors given as the main impacts on business (50%) under other impacts. While most firms surveyed are still indicating a reduction in turnover, this has dropped from 90% in May to 70% in October. Also, reduced cashflow, as being a factor having an impact of business, has dropped from 84% in May to approximately 57% in October.

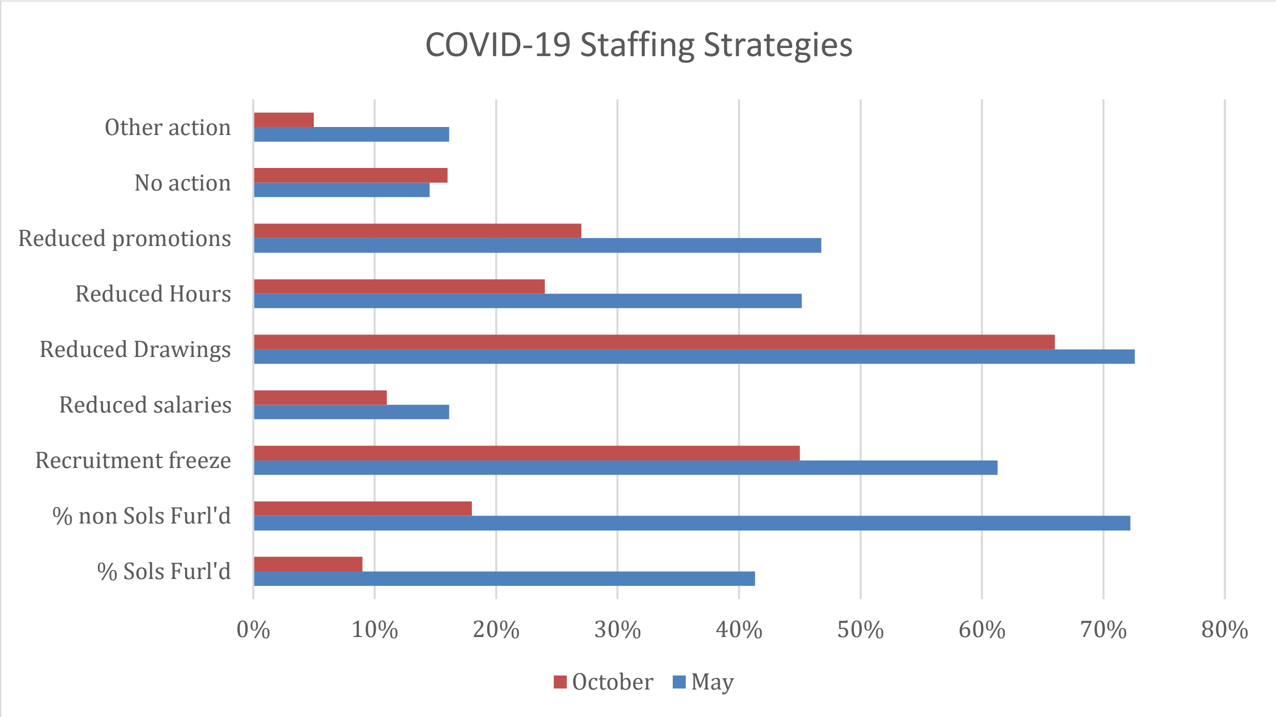
There has also been a sharper drop in the percentage of firms who are now indicating that a fall in the introduction of new business has had an impact. This has dropped from around 90% in May to around 53% in October.

It would appear at present that the economic impact of the pandemic has reduced for most firms, although this has to be considered against the timing of the first survey which was conducted very shortly after lockdown following which some 35% of solicitor staff and 41% of non-solicitor staff had been furloughed due to a sharp decline in business.

Also, it should be noted that uncertainty was a considerably greater factor in May 2020 than at present. In May, many of the firms surveyed would no doubt find it harder to anticipate the economic impact of Covid-19 whereas now some time has passed to allow them to gain a better understanding of it.

### 2. Which of the following does your firm have in place at present or plans to introduce/take advantage of due to the current crisis?

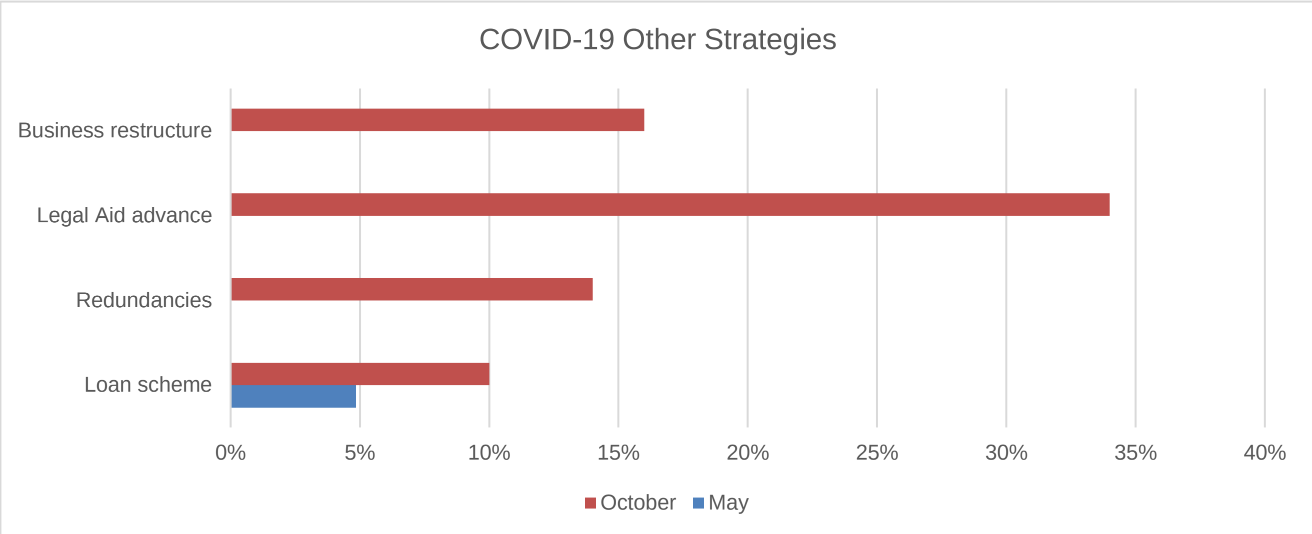
**Choosing multiple options was permitted.**




Again, respondents were asked this question in the first survey and provided the same answer options in the chart above. All firms to varying degrees reported a decline in the use of these strategies compared with the first survey. This suggests there has been a perceived reduction in Covid-19's economic impact for the time being.

While around 24% advised that they had reduced hours (compared with just over 50% in the first survey) many respondents indicated that their firms were working many more hours now than in May.

One consistency with the first survey is that reduced partner drawings (66% at present compared with 72%) is still the most cited strategy and far more used than staff salary reduction (11% at present compared with 16% in May). It appears that most firm partners are still prepared to draw less from the business rather than have to reduce salaries.




Firms were also asked about other strategies such as the new UK Government business interruption loan scheme, redundancies, business restructure and whether they had taken advantage of amendments to legal aid regulations which now allow for advance and interim payments. These were options which were not provided in the first survey and are provided in a separate graph above.

There is, however, a comparison to be made with take up of the initial UK Government Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and intention to take up now that the scheme has been extended to 31January 2021. Just under 5% of respondents indicated that they had taken up the Scheme in May, although an increased figure of 10% indicated either a take up or a plan to take up the scheme now.

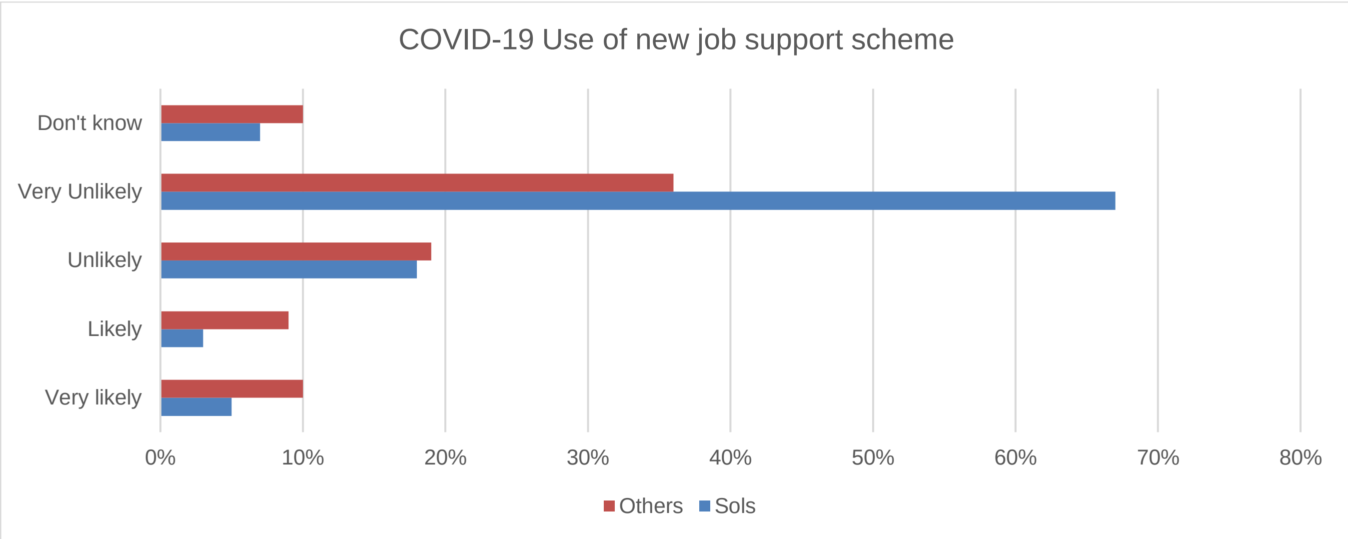
The highest take up in terms of new strategies was with regard to the Scottish Legal Aid Board's interim fee arrangements. While those responses would have been from firms undertaking legal aid, some who either hadn't taken advantage of interim fee payment or did not intend to do so, indicated that this was only an advance payment and that the work would require to be undertaken in any event.

We note that the Scottish Legal Aid Board has expressed some concern that, in its view, a substantial number of firms have not submitted any interim fees since April despite having active cases which could attract an interim payment. SLAB has been conducting research on the uptake of interim fees by contacting solicitors. We would welcome SLAB sharing the outcome of this research in due course.

Also, just over 15% mentioned that they had either undergone or were considering a business restructure due to the pandemic.

Finally, it is of some concern that around 14% of those firms surveyed had made some posts at their firms redundant as a result of coronavirus.

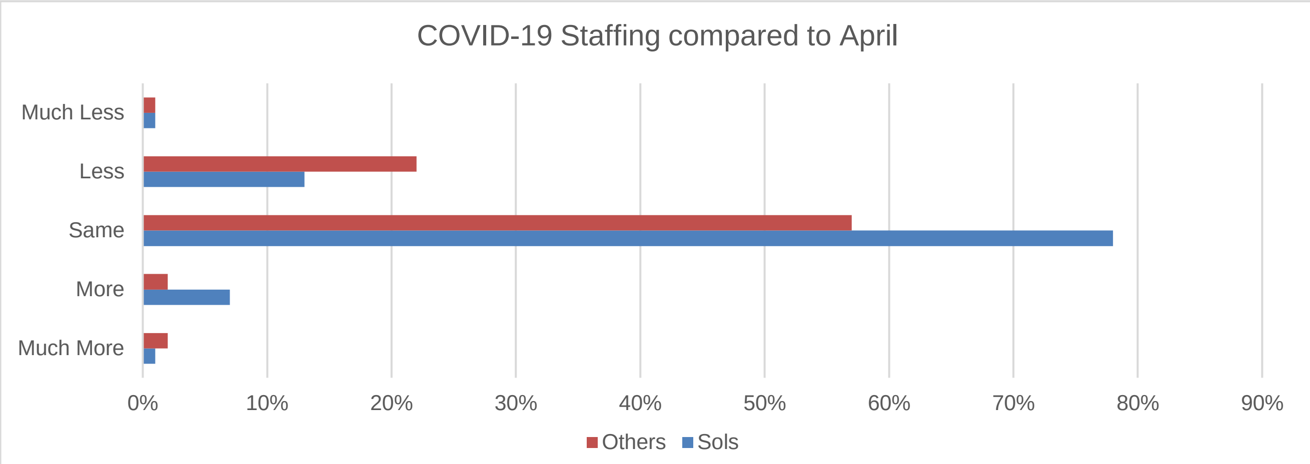
3. **When the furlough scheme ends on 31st October 2020, how likely is your firm to take advantage of the UK Government's job support scheme? In respect of solicitor staff? In respect of non-solicitor staff?**



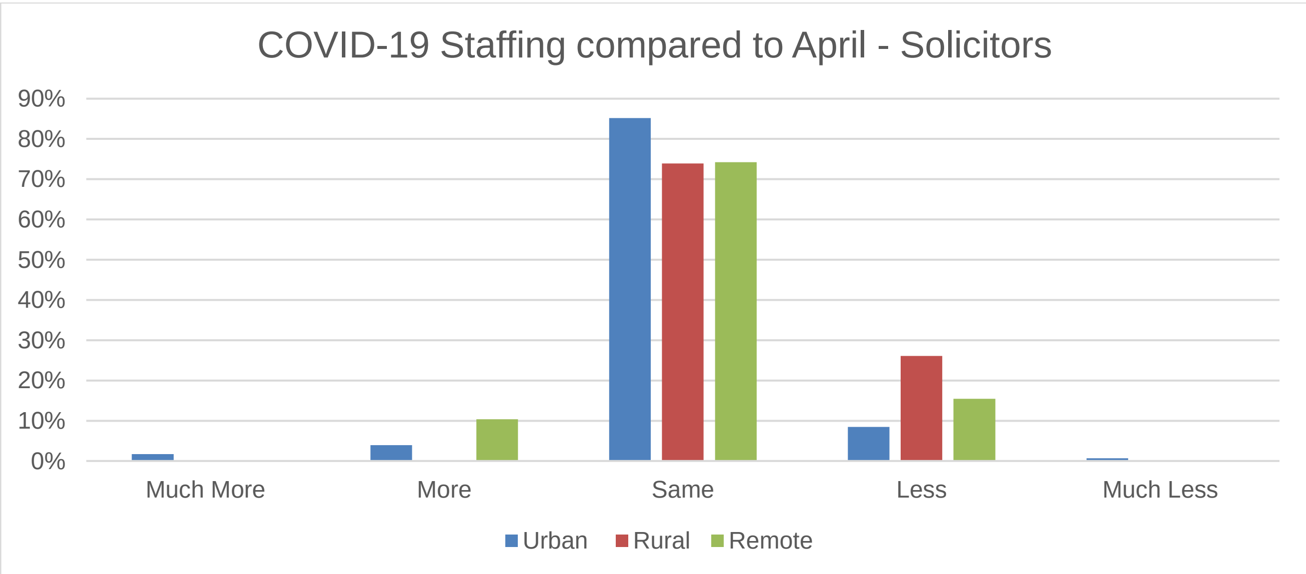

The vast majority of respondents (around 85%) stated that they were either very unlikely (67%) or unlikely (18%) to take advantage of this scheme in respect of solicitor staff and around 55% of respondents were either very unlikely (36%) or unlikely (19%) to take advantage of the scheme in respect of non-solicitor staff. The telephone survey concluded just before HM Treasury's announcement on 5th November 2020 that the furlough scheme is now to be extended until the end of March 2021 and these figures should therefore be considered against that background.

A large number of respondents who indicated that they would not be taking advantage of the job support scheme, stated that it wasn't as attractive an option as furlough (job retention scheme). The number of firms who now decide to furlough staff given the scheme's extension would be another indicator of the continuing impact of the pandemic.

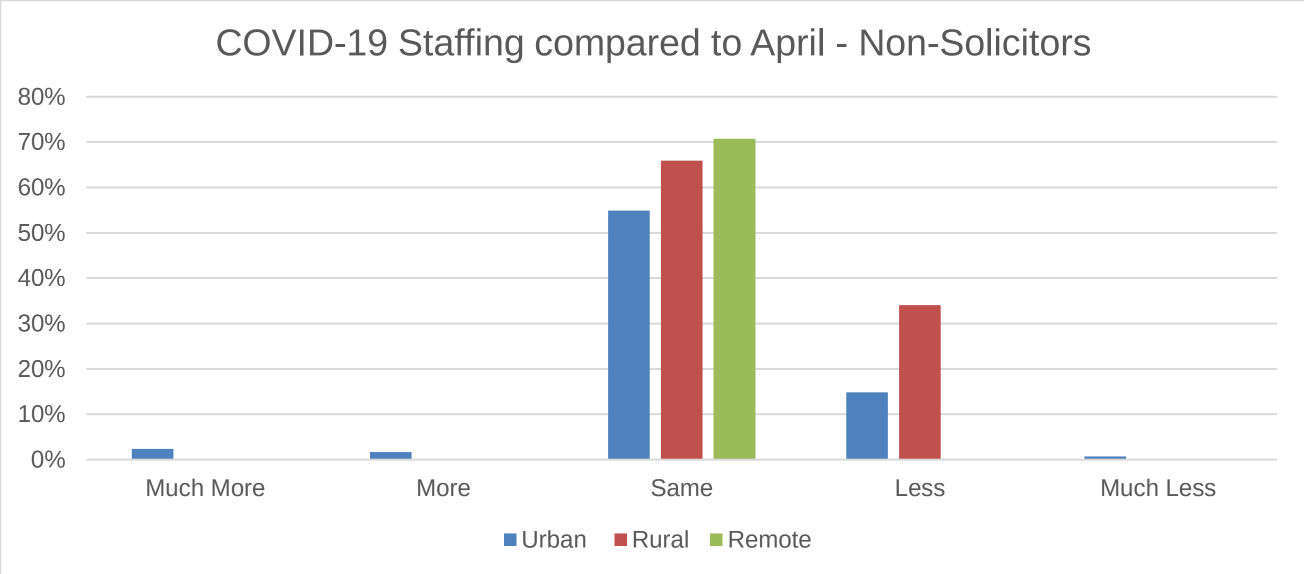
4. **How would you compare your firm's number of solicitor staff/ non-solicitor staff at present to April 2020?**




Respondents were asked to compare staffing levels now as compared to April 2020. Almost 80% reported that they had the same number of solicitors at the firm as they did in April and nearly 60% reported the same number of non- solicitor staff now as compared with April 2020.

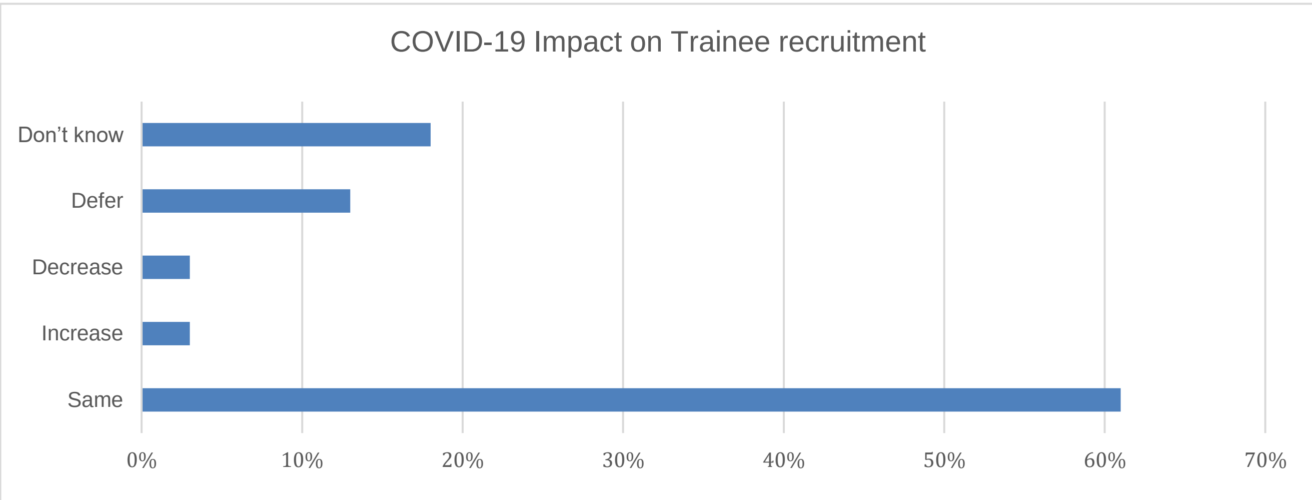



Some additional analysis by rurality would indicate that solicitor staff levels are the same as they were in April 2020, although of some note is that 10% of rural firms are employing more solicitors than they were at the start of the pandemic.




Likewise, levels of non-solicitor staff levels are constant by rurality, although around 14% of urban firms and one third of rural firms are employing fewer non-solicitor staff now than in April 2020.

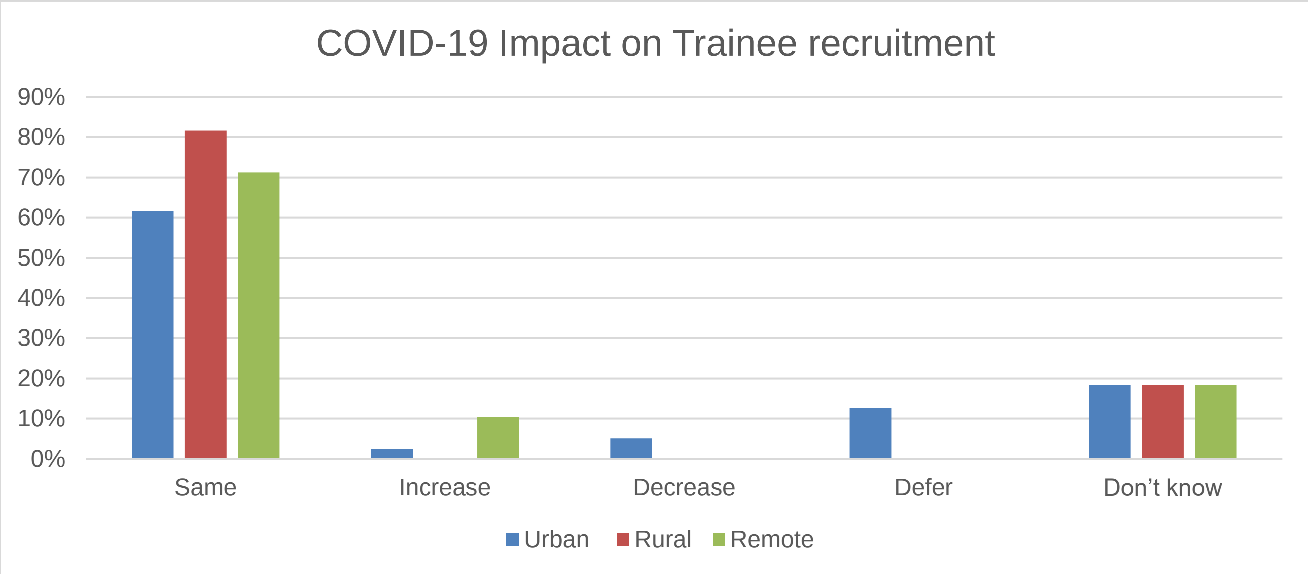
### 5. Has Covid-19 caused your firm to change its plans for recruiting trainees over the next 12 months?



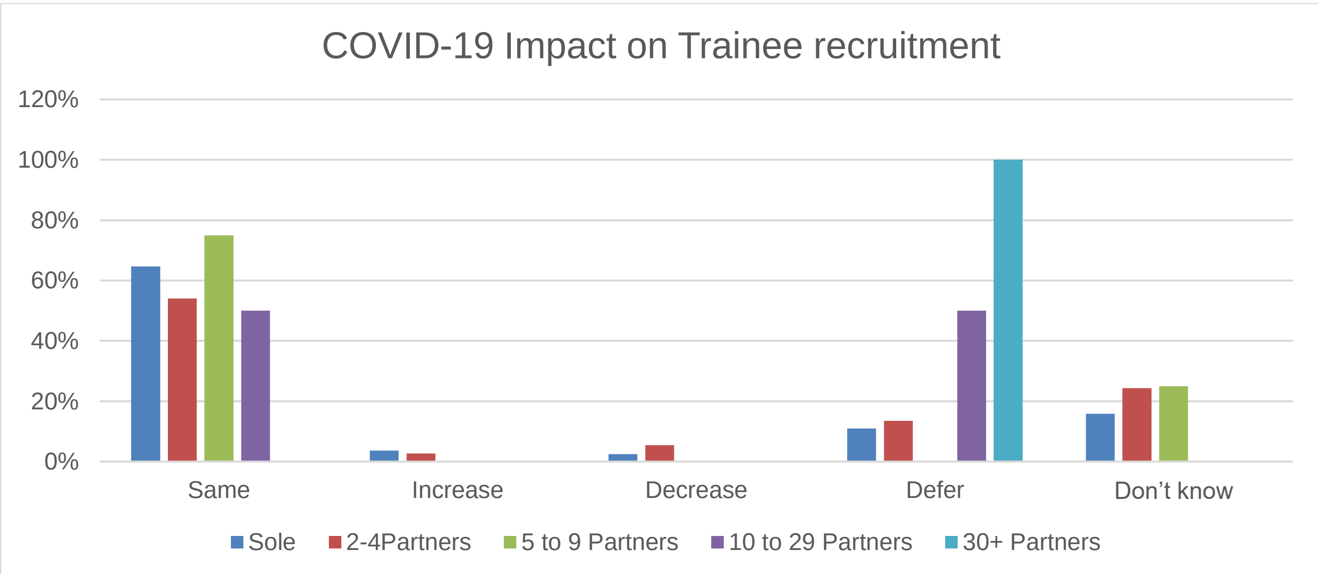

In response to whether Covid-19 had caused firms to change plans for trainee solicitor recruitment over the next 12 months, over 60% of respondents stated that it hadn't, although around 12% reported that it had caused them to defer any decision to recruit trainees.

Many of those firms who indicated that their plans for trainee solicitor recruitment hadn't changed due to the pandemic, indicated that they would not be in a position to recruit a trainee solicitor over the next 12 months in any event.

A number of firms confirmed that they rarely employ trainees even in normal times.

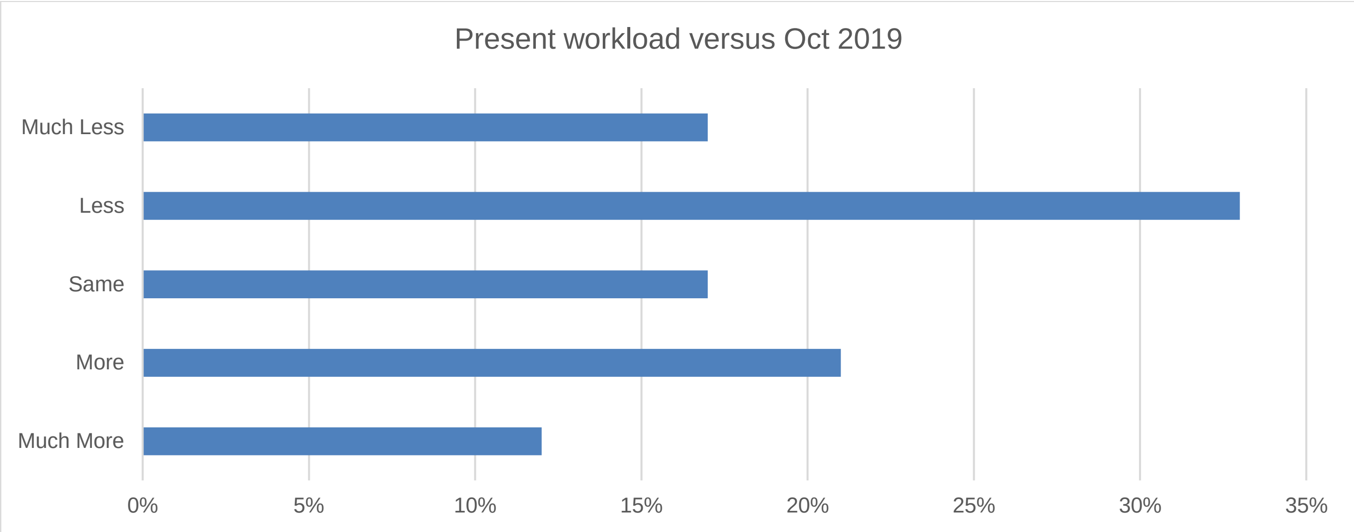



In considering some additional analysis by rurality, the position doesn’t alter radically. It is interesting to note, however, that some 10% of remote firms indicated that they would increase their number of trainees in the next 12 months and that just over 10% of urban firms surveyed had deferred this decision as a result of Covid-19.



In considering this question by size of firm, the position is relatively unchanged although larger firms are more likely to defer the question of trainee recruitment.

6. **How would you compare your firm's workload at present with your firm's workload in April 2020/in October 2019?**



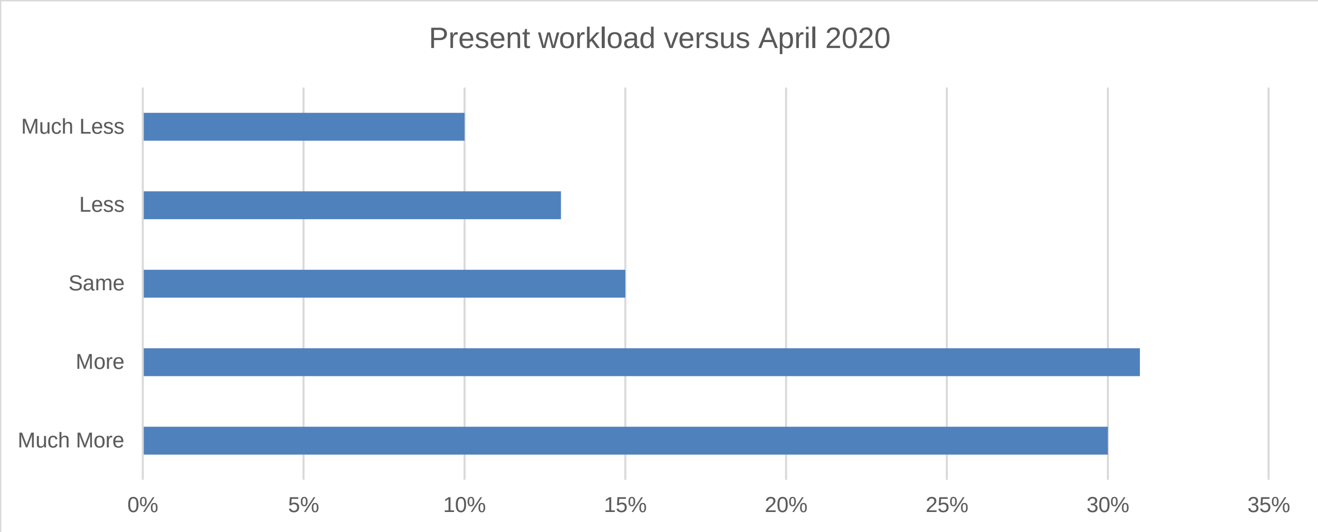

This question was followed up by asking which area or areas of work had increased, decreased or remained the same.

In comparing the position in October 2020 with the position in October 2019, half of the respondents (50%) had reported either a decrease (33%) or a significant decrease (17%) in workload since October 2019.

In terms of areas of work, either decrease or significant decrease had been reported across the board, particularly commercial property, but residential conveyancing, criminal defence and all aspects of civil litigation including family and immigration law together with wills trusts and executries.

Some respondents did, however, report an increase in those same areas.

In terms of the 12% of firms surveyed who reported a significant increase in work since October 2019, a number of those firms indicated employment law, family law and conveyancing.



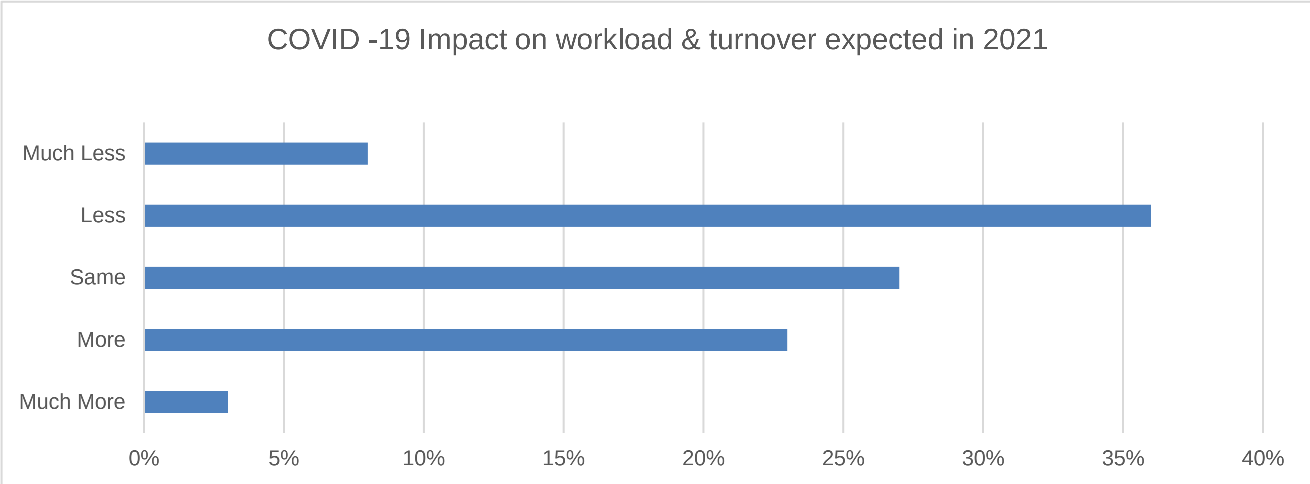

The majority of respondents ( 62%) reported either a significant increase (30%) or an increase (32%) in workload since April 2020, although almost a quarter of respondents indicated that they had experienced either a decrease (13%) or a significant decrease (10%) in workload since April 2020.

Having followed up this question in terms of areas of law, a significant number of respondents who had indicated either an increase or significant increase in workload referred to the recent boom in the residential property market and were accordingly very busy with house purchases and sales.

In terms of other areas of law which had increased or significantly increased firms' workload compared with April 2020, executries, and all aspects of family law including divorce and child contact. To a lesser extent, increases or significant increases were reported in corporate law, employment law and criminal defence. Among those firms who reported either a decrease or significant decrease in workload compared with April 2020, some specified criminal defence work. While it is noted as above that certain firms undertaking criminal defence work had indicated an increase in work, those criminal defence firms which indicated a decrease or significant decrease mentioned in particular problems around a backlog of cases to be disposed. The issue of appeals and solemn trials not taking place was also raised by those firms.

Others who reported either a decrease or significant decrease in workload compared with April 2020 referred to a lesser extent to commercial property, private client, family law and immigration law.

7. **What is your current forecast for your firm's workload and subsequent expectation for turnover in the next 12 months compared with your firm's workload and turnover at present? Follow up …in what area?**




This question related to a current forecast for firm workload and turnover expectation in the next 12 months compared to firm workload and turnover now.

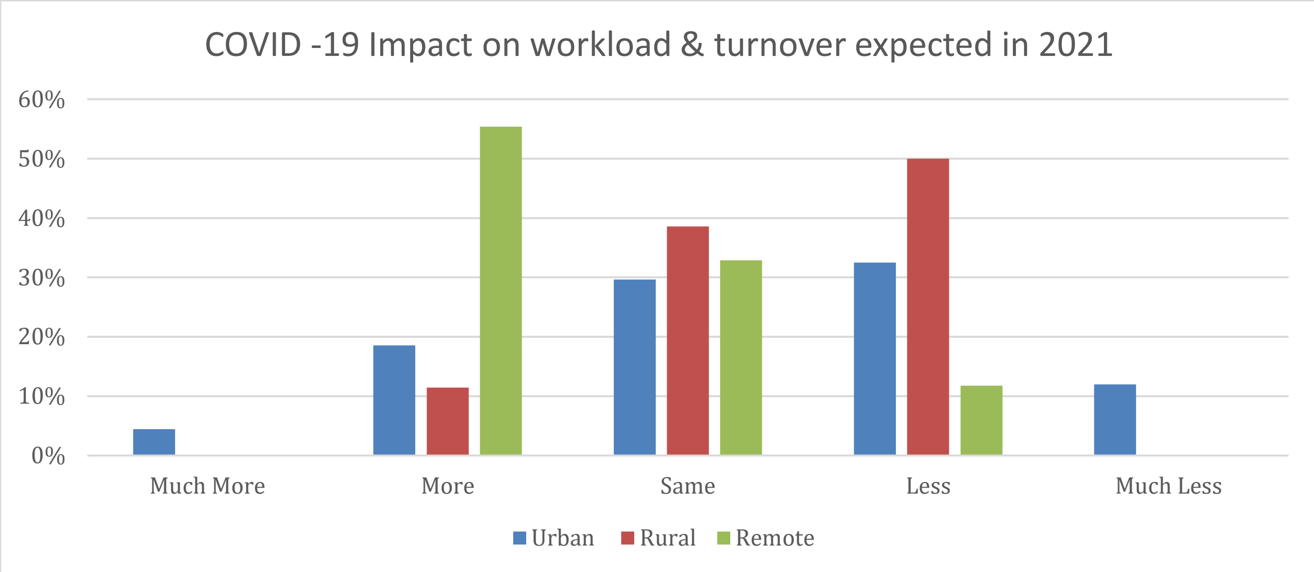
Around 27% of firms forecast the same workload and turnover in 2021 as compared with 2020.

44% of firms forecast either a decrease (36%) or a significant decrease (8%) in workload and turnover in 2021 compared with 2020. In terms of areas of work where firms forecast either a decrease or significant decrease, residential conveyancing was referred to in particular as those firms didn't think that the current high volume of house sales was sustainable.

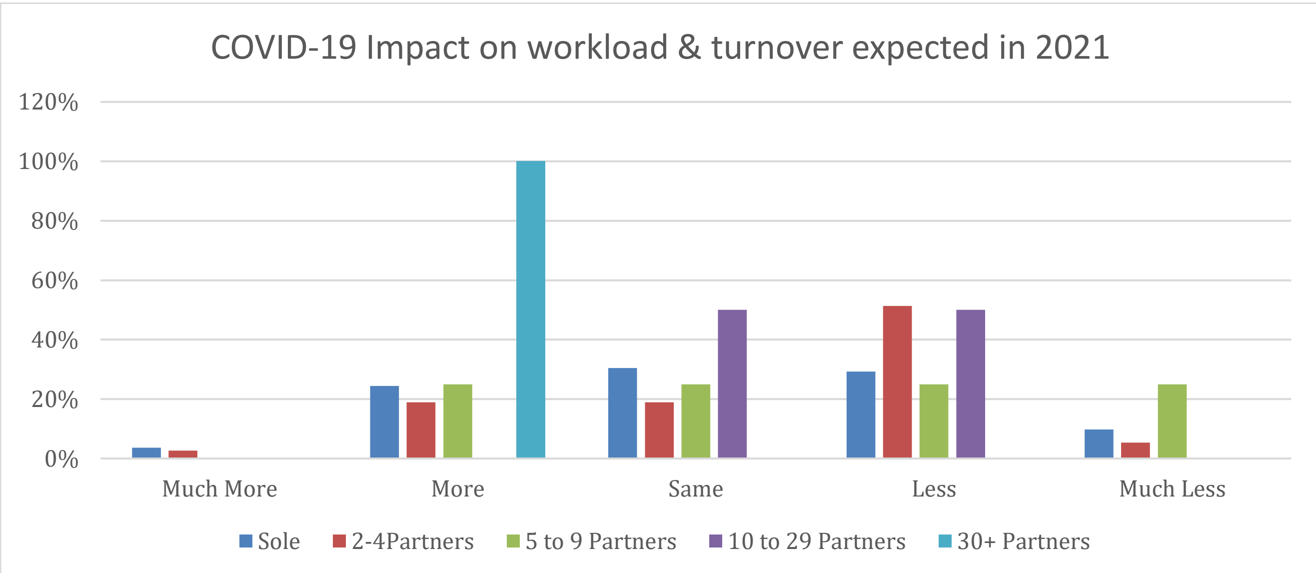
Other firms forecast a decrease or significant decrease in areas of work across the board, although some specified criminal and civil court work.

Approximately 28% of firms forecast either an increase (24%) or a significant increase (4%) in work and turnover in October 2021. Among those areas of work referred to were also criminal and civil court work, although some indicate all areas across the board. To a lesser extent, forecast increases or significant increases in areas such as employment law and private client work were reported.

A large number of firms did, however, highlight that this was a very difficult question to answer due to the continued uncertainty around the pandemic and its long-term impact on the Scottish solicitor profession.

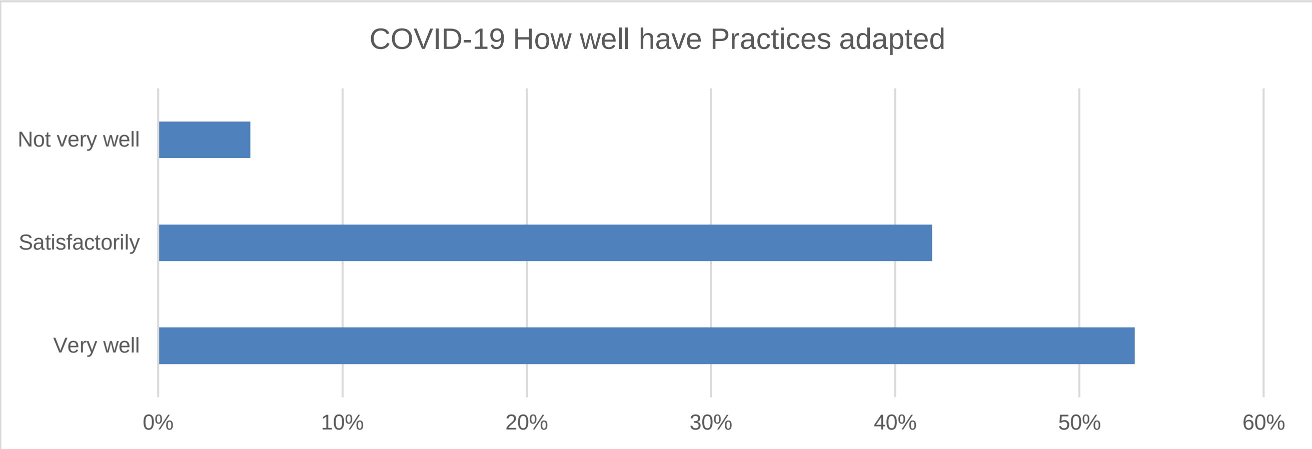



Some additional analysis on this question in respect of rurality was carried out. While this was overall a difficult question, it is noted that over half of remote firms forecast an increase in workload and turnover as compared with just under one fifth of urban firms. Also, exactly one half of rural firms forecast a decrease in workload and turnover.




On an analysis of this question by firm size, all the firms with over 30 partners surveyed forecast an increase in workload and turnover.

8. **How well has your firm adapted to the necessary change in working practices (e.g. working from home/online registration/virtual courts)?**

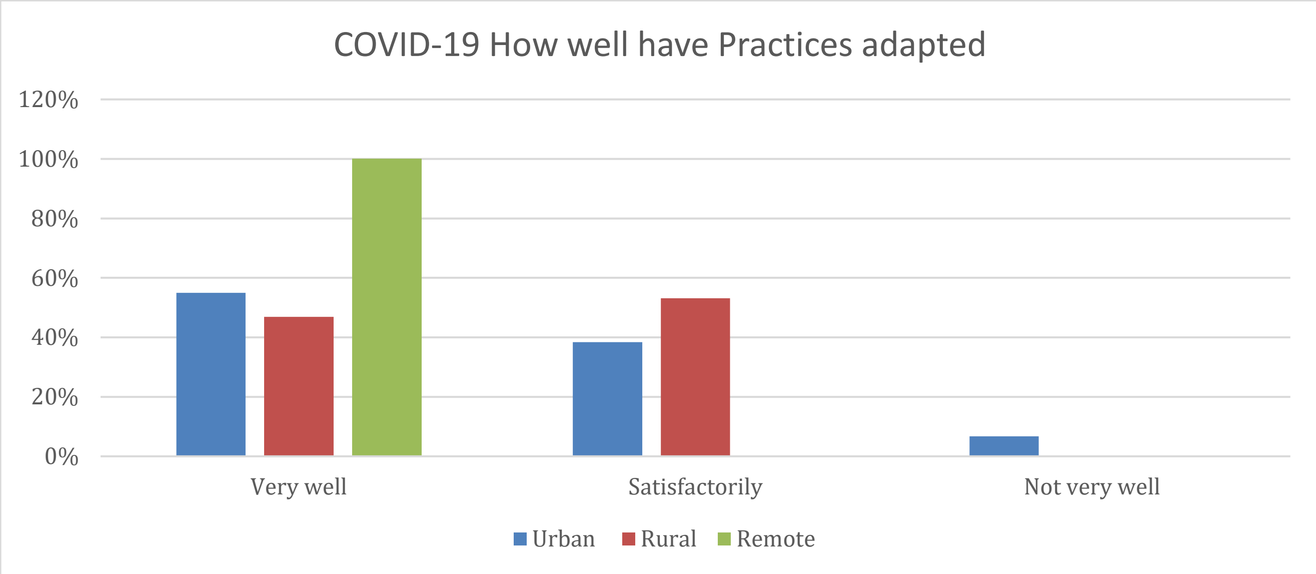



Almost all respondents (approximately 95%) advised that they had adapted either very well (53%) or satisfactorily (42%) to the necessary change in working practice such as working from home, online registration of title and virtual courts.

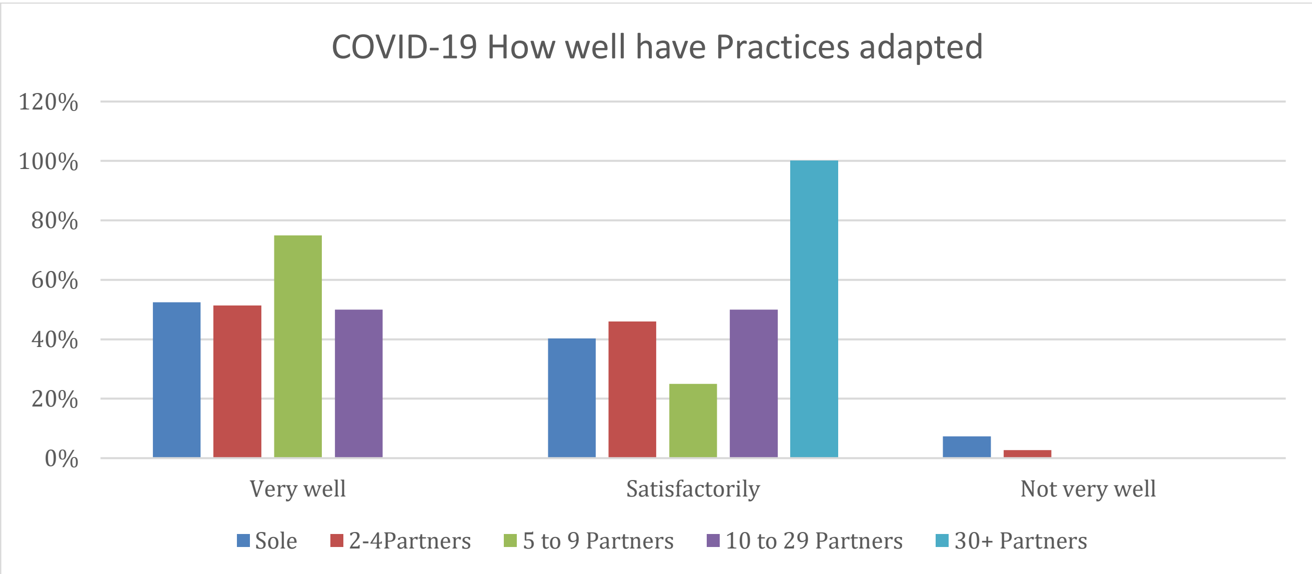
One respondent who had adapted very well stated that the firm had represented litigants in online proofs which had gone very well. This respondent also mentioned that the Registers of Scotland was now operating much better than before and that there had been an improvement in legal aid online payments.

There was a follow up question of “in what way?” to the very small number of respondents who had stated that their firms had not adapted very well. This drew a variety of responses which included difficulties in client consultations due to office closures, difficulties in the operation of virtual courts, inconsistencies in different courts’ approach to business and difficulties in working from home

One respondent mentioned that lack of technology meant that home working wasn’t feasible, and that office working was the only option.



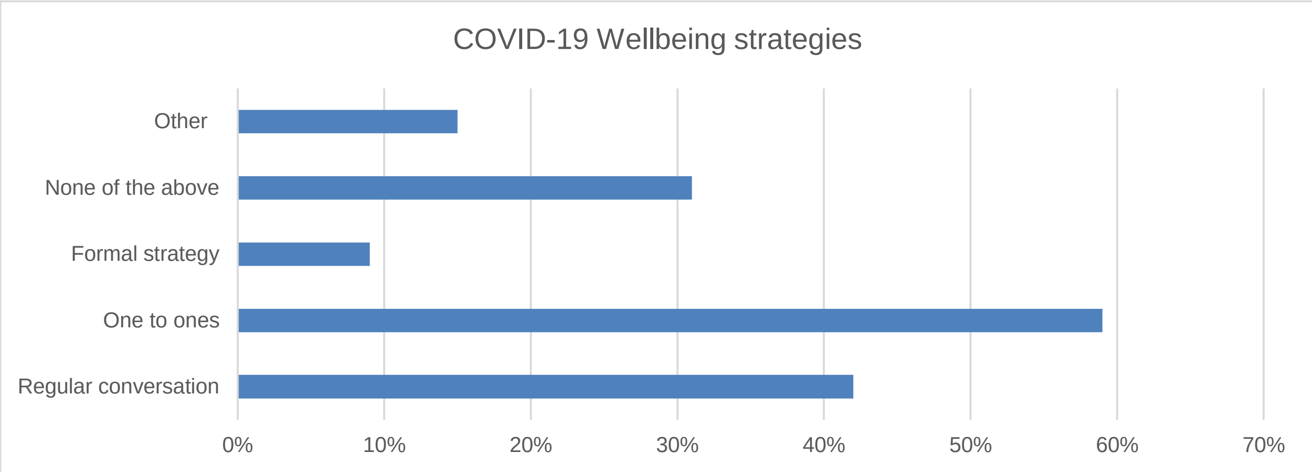

Some additional analysis by rurality indicates that over half of urban firms, almost half of rural firms and all remote firms had adapted very well to the necessary change in working practices.




When considering this question by firm size, there are no real differences other than the majority of the 5% of respondents who haven't adapted very well are sole practitioners and all the firms of 30 plus partners surveyed have adapted satisfactorily.

9. **Which of the following measures have you introduced to address the issue of staff wellbeing?**

   **Choosing multiple options was permitted.**



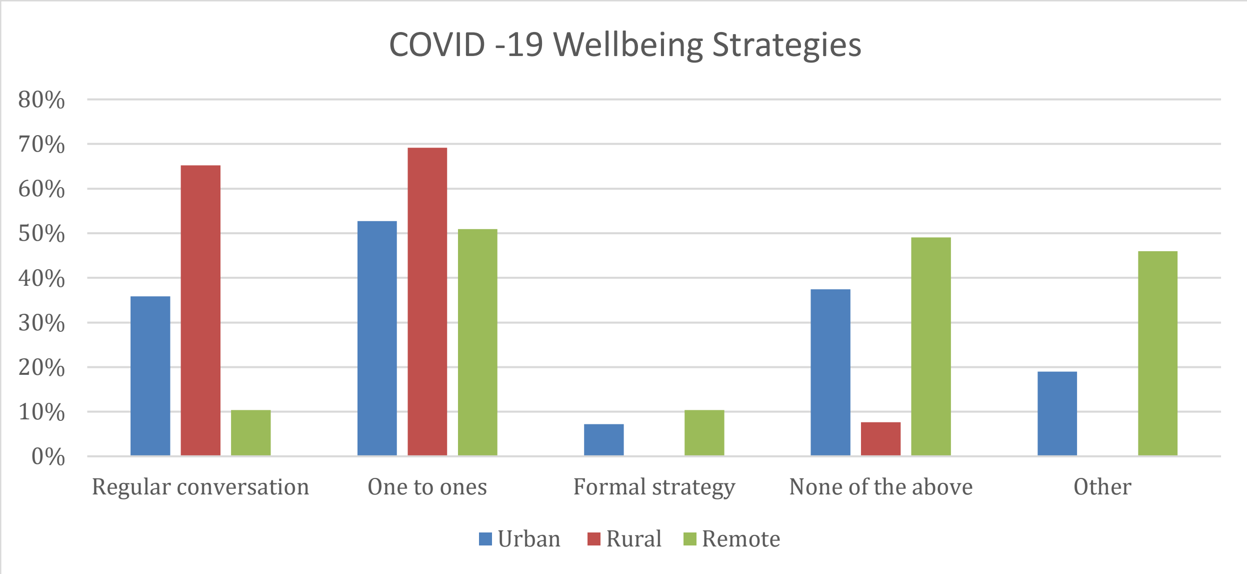

Almost 60% of firms surveyed indicated that more one to one conversations regarding staff wellbeing were being held and just over 40% indicated that regular communications were taking place.

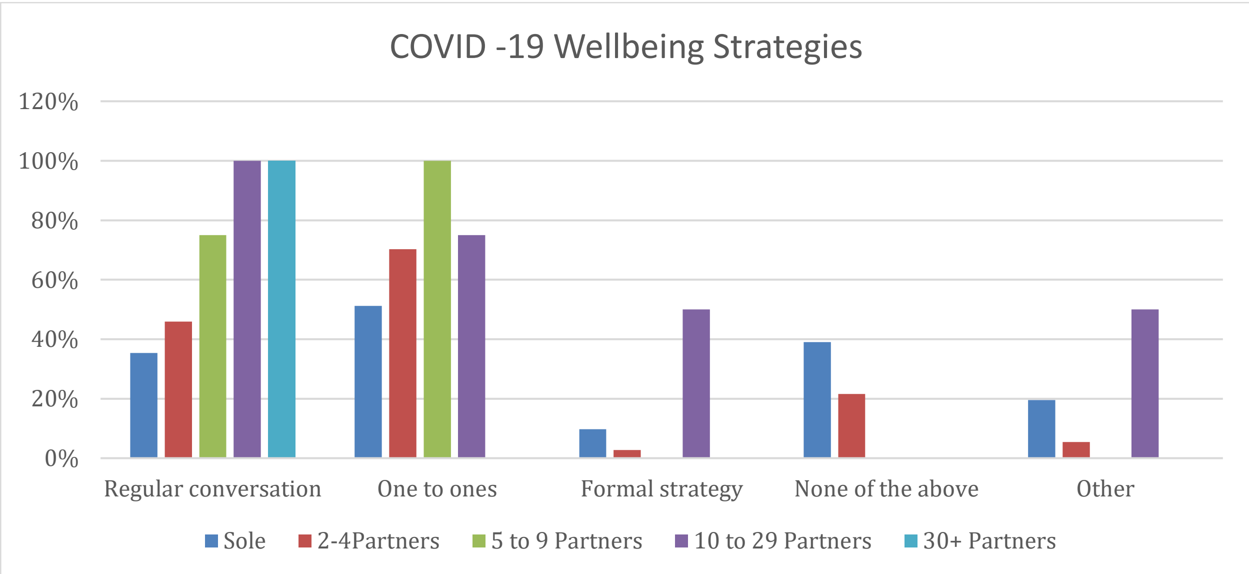
Just under 10% of firms indicated that they had a formal wellbeing strategy in place.

One respondent mentioned that an increase in flexible working and home working was a measure introduced to address the issue of staff wellbeing. Another respondent specifically mentioned now operating an open door policy. Another stated that staff were being encouraged to make sure they took all their annual leave entitlement. One firm reported that they were now ensuring there was specific contact with staff who lived alone. Another firm stated that what was in place at present had always been in place regardless of the pandemic and that they had always been aware of staff wellbeing as an issue.

While just over 30% indicated that there was nothing in place, this has to be set against the number of firms surveyed who were sole practitioners with no staff.

Some analysis by rurality suggests that remote firms are less likely to have anything in place and rural firms are more likely to be having regular staff communications. However, 10% of remote firms have a formal strategy in place as compared with approximately 6% of urban firms.




In considering this question by firm size, there is a rough correlation between the bigger the firm, the more likely to have strategies in place.

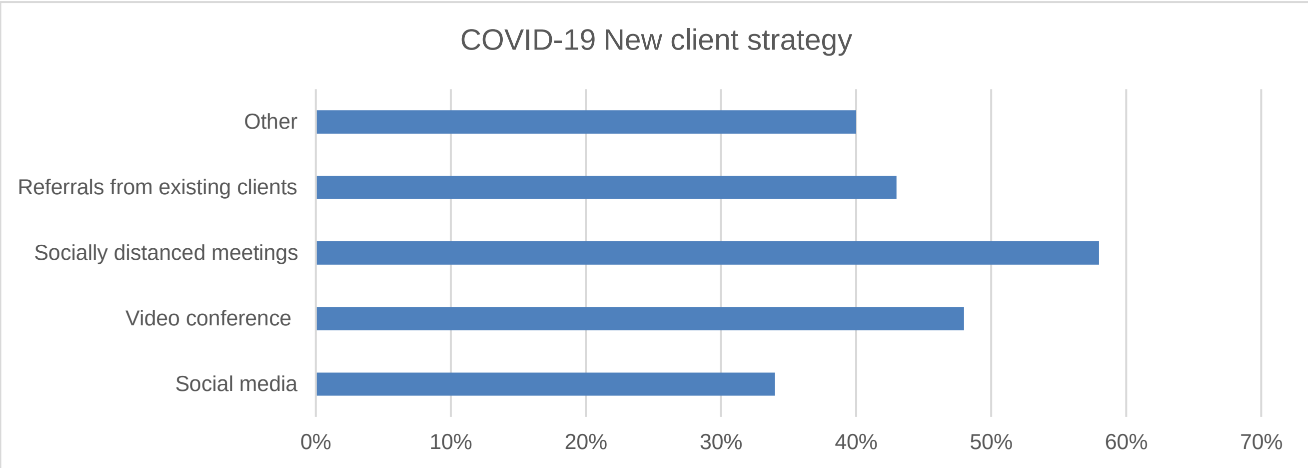
Approximately half of 10-29 partner firms have a formal strategy in place.

Almost 40% of sole practitioners and just over 20% of 2-4 partner firms have nothing in place.

Reference is again made to a large number of sole practitioners who indicated during interview that they had no staff at all. This is the main reason for some firms having nothing in place to address the issue of wellbeing.

### 10. Which new strategies has your firm had to adopt to attract new clients?

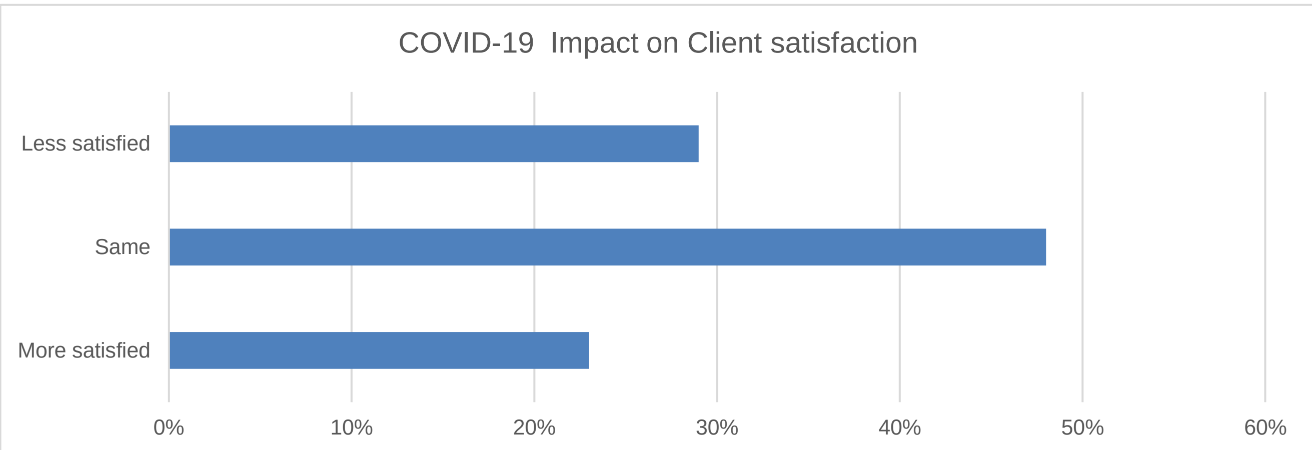
**Choosing multiple options was permitted.**




There was a fairly even spread of responses to the answer options of social media (34%), videoconference (48%), socially distanced meetings with clients (58%), and referrals from existing clients (43%). In terms of other strategies (40%) some respondents reported that there had been an increase in referrals from other agents or had simply indicated that they had no difficulties at present in attracting new clients.

One firm referred to a much improved social media strategy now being in place in order to attract new clients during the pandemic.

### 11. How has Covid-19 affected client satisfaction levels?



Around 28% of respondents advised that clients were now less satisfied, about 47% indicated that there had been no change in client satisfaction levels and approximately 23% advised that clients were now more satisfied.

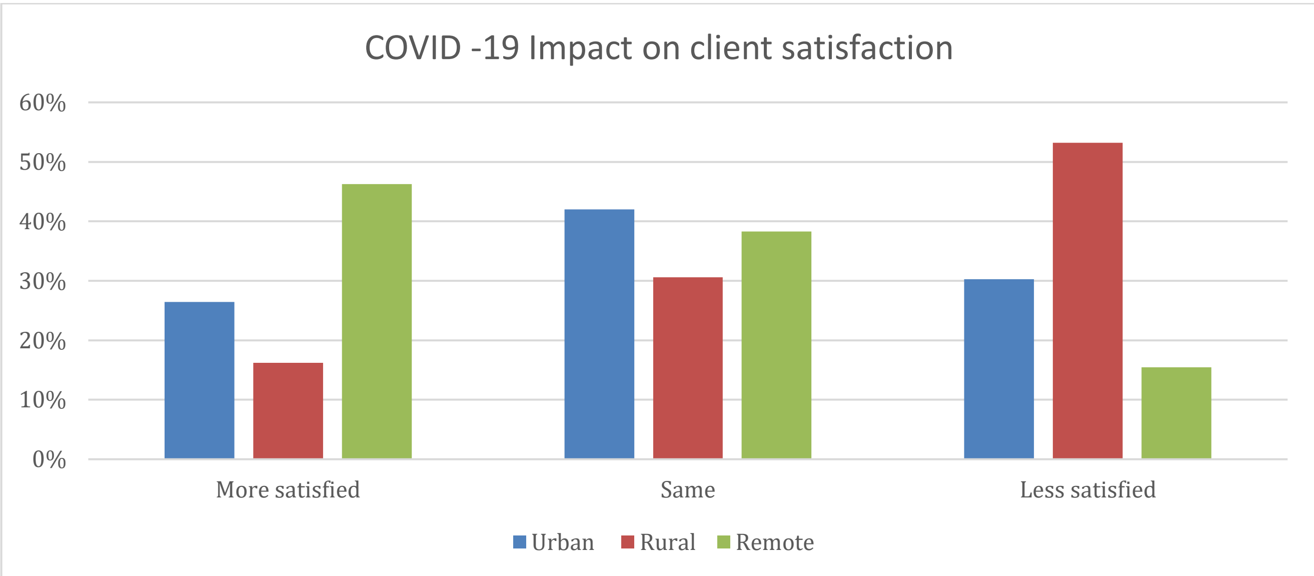
A number of respondents out of the 23% who advised their clients were now more satisfied cited their firm's ability to adapt to a changing situation as well as clients appreciating that the solicitor was "going the extra mile" despite the ongoing pandemic. One respondent who stated that its firm's clients were more satisfied stated that the firm's ability to be more creative during a difficult time was appreciated.

Some of those respondents out of the 28% who advised that clients were now less satisfied mentioned issues with delays in the courts, clients' inability to meet solicitors face to face, and the difficulties solicitors had in taking their instructions in virtual courts.

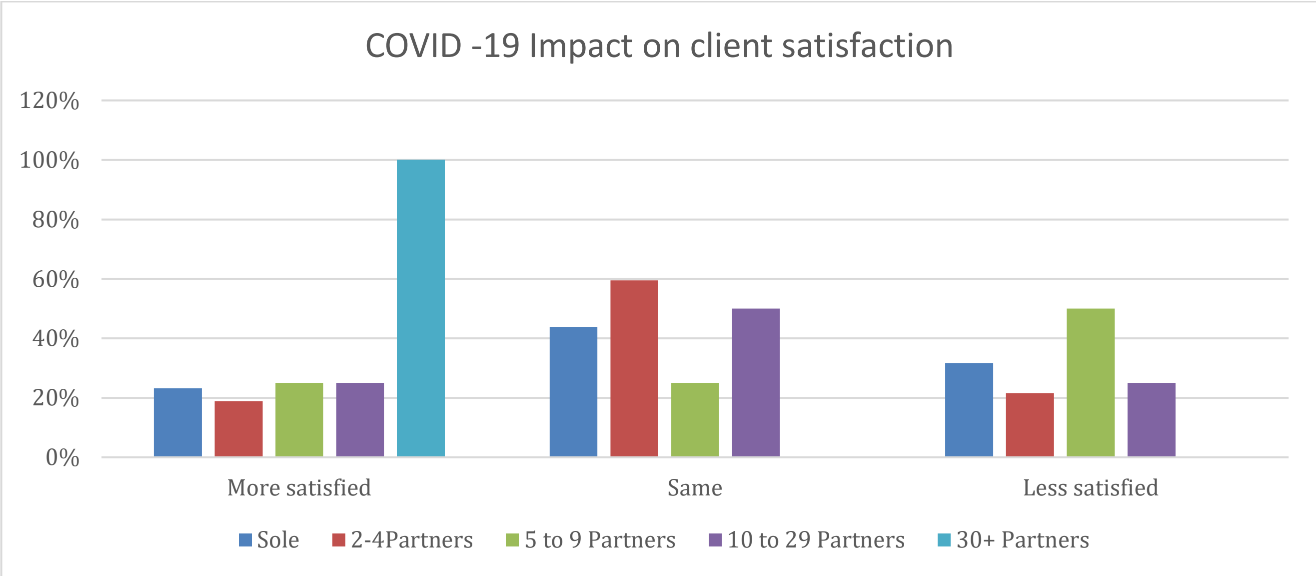
One respondent mentioned the increased period of time now having to be spent on remand in custody had inevitably led to client dissatisfaction.

Another firm which stated clients were now less satisfied specifically mentioned a lack of communication from both the courts and the Procurator Fiscal's office.

Another mentioned that clients were less satisfied as they were less understanding of Covid-19 related constraints which had led to delays in transaction settlements once the housing market had opened up.




Some analysis on rurality indicated that, out of those firms which expressed that clients were more satisfied, almost a quarter were urban firms and half were remote firms. There was a fairly even split of around 30%-40% on there being no change. However, while 30% of those who expressed that their clients were less satisfied were urban firms, over half were rural firms and about 15% were remote firms.




On firm size, there were no material differences to be highlighted other than that all firms of 30 plus partners had stated that their clients were more satisfied.

## APPENDIX 1

| | |
|---|---|
| Employer iMIS ID (from Call list) | |
| Employer Name (from Call list) | |
| Name of contact (from Call list) | |

| **1** | **Which of the following is at present impacting on your firm's business as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?** | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Reduction in turnover | |
| (ii) | Decreased cash flow | |
| (iii) | Late or non-payment of fees/ outlays by client | |
| (iv) | Fall in introduction of new business | |
| (v) | None of the above | |
| (vi) | Other- please specify | |

| **2** | **Which of the following does your firm have in place at present or plans to introduce/take advantage of due to the current crisis?** | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | A recruitment freeze | |
| (ii) | A staff salary reduction | |
| (iii) | A partner profit reduction | |
| (iv) | Hours reduction | |
| (v) | Promotion freeze | |
| (vi) | Redundancies | |
| (vii) | Take advantage of the UK Government Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme | |
| (viii) | Take advantage of amendments to existing legal aid regulations to allow for advance/interim payments | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (ix) | Business restructure | |
| (x) | None of the above | |
| (xi) | Other-please specify | |

| **3** | **When the furlough scheme ends on 31st October 2020, how likely is your firm to take advantage of the UK Government's job support scheme?**<br><br>**In respect of solicitor staff?**<br><br>**In respect of non-solicitor staff?** | **Insert X** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Very likely | S | NS |
| (ii) | Likely | S | NS |
| (iii) | Unlikely | S | NS |
| (iv) | Very unlikely | S | NS |
| (v) | Don't know | S | NS |

| **4** | **How would you compare your firm's number of solicitor staff/ non solicitor staff at present to April 2020?** | **Insert X** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Significantly more | S | NS |
| (ii) | More | S | NS |
| (iii) | The same | S | NS |
| (iv) | Fewer | S | NS |
| (v) | Significantly fewer | S | NS |

| **5** | **Has Covid-19 caused your firm to change its plans for recruiting trainees over the next 12 months?** | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Not at all | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (ii) | Increase our number of trainees | |
| (iii) | Decrease our number of trainees | |
| (iv) | Defer the recruitment of trainees | |
| (v) | Don't know | |

| 6 | How would you compare your firm's workload at present with your firm's workload in April 2020/in October 2019? |
|---|---|
| (i) | Significant increase. **Follow up: In what area?**<br><br>April 2020<br><br>Oct 2019 |
| (ii) | Some increase. **Follow up: In what area?**<br><br>April 2020<br><br>Oct 2019 |
| (iii) | Remained the same. **Follow up: In what area?**<br><br>April 2020<br><br>Oct 2019 |
| (iv) | Some decrease. **Follow up: In what area?**<br><br>April 2020<br><br>Oct 2019 |
| (v) | Significant decrease. **Follow up: In what area?**<br><br>April 2020<br><br>Oct 2019 |

| 7 | What is your current forecast for your firm's workload and subsequent expectation for turnover in the next 12 months compared with your firm's workload and turnover at present? Follow up …in what area? | Insert X |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Significant increase<br><br>**Follow up: In what area?** | |
| (ii) | Some increase<br><br>**Follow up: In what area?** | |
| (iii) | Will remain the same | |
| (iv) | Some decrease<br><br>**Follow up: In what area?** | |
| (v) | Significant decrease<br><br>**Follow up: In what area?** | |

| **8** | **How well has your firm adapted to the necessary change in working practices (e.g. working from home/online registration/virtual courts)?** | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Very well | |
| (ii) | Satisfactorily | |
| (iii) | Not very well….<br><br>**Follow up: In what area?** | |

| **9** | **Which of the following measures have you introduced to address the issue of staff wellbeing?** | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Regular staff communications regarding wellbeing | |
| (ii) | More one to one conversations regarding staff wellbeing | |
| (iii) | Introduction of a formal ‘wellbeing strategy’ | |
| (iv) | None of the above | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (v) | Other please specify | |

| 10 | **Which new strategies has your firm had to adopt to attract new clients?** | | | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Social media | | | |
| (ii) | Video conference | | | |
| (iii) | Socially distanced meetings with clients: | **In your office?** | **Elsewhere?** | |
| (iv) | Referrals from existing clients | | | |
| (v) | Other please specify | | | |

| 11 | **How has Covid-19 affected client satisfaction levels?** | **Insert X** |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | More satisfied | |
| (ii) | No change | |
| (iii) | Less satisfied | |

Law Society of Scotland

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