

Research Report

HM Courts and Tribunals Service Stakeholder Audit

Prepared for: HMCTS

Prepared by: BMG Research

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) reform programme will see £1 billion invested to modernise the courts and tribunals system, and aims to improve both its accessibility and efficiency. It covers all legal jurisdictions and is comprised of over 50 individual projects, covering not only technological improvements but also the ways people work, the processes followed and how buildings are used.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential part to the work of HMCTS, and even more so now, as it implements its reform programme.

Recent reports by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the National Audit Office (NAO) reflected the need for HMCTS to improve this engagement. In response to the PAC report, HMCTS set out five areas of planned improvement, one of which was to develop a greater understanding of stakeholders' perceptions and needs.

In line with this commitment, HMCTS commissioned BMG Research to conduct a multi-phase stakeholder audit. The main objectives of the research were:

- To establish an evidence base regarding stakeholders' perceptions of HMCTS, including their levels of trust.
- To develop an understanding of how stakeholders currently engage with HMCTS and how this differs between stakeholder groups.
- To inform improvements to HMCTS' communications strategy, engagement strategy and events strategy through a greater understanding of stakeholders' needs and their desired interaction with HMCTS.

The information within this report, which also tests the response of stakeholders to a recent increase in HMCTS engagement activity, constitutes an integral part of its commitment to the PAC.

1.2 Methodology

The quantitative element of the research was conducted using an online methodology. An open survey link was distributed by HMCTS through GovDelivery, the HMCTS website (GOV.UK), its social media channels, and via partner organisations such as the Law Society and the Bar Council. The survey was open from the 23 April 2019 until 15 May 2019 and a total of 1,062 responses were submitted. After reviewing the responses, it became clear that 158 of these were submitted by members of the wider public, rather than HMCTS stakeholders who are the focus of the research, and as such have

been excluded from the final analysis. Consequentially, the total number of quantitative interviews analysed in this report is 904. However, the results from members of the wider public will be used to inform broader HMCTS communications, engagement and operational improvement plans.

Following completion of the quantitative element, a series of qualitative depth interviews were conducted with HMCTS stakeholders. A total of 30 depth interviews were carried out with a mix of legal professionals (16) and public user group representatives (14) between 21 May 2019 and 28 June 2019.

1.3 Notes on this report

- Sub-groups with a sample size of less than 30 have not been tested for statistical significance as they are too small. Therefore, results for such sub-groups should be interpreted as indicative only.
- Unless stated otherwise, all differences noted in this report are statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval. This means we can be 95% confident that observed differences are real rather than due to chance.
- In charts, * denotes a percentage that is less than 0.5% but greater than 0%.
- Where results do not sum to 100%, this is due to rounding. All percentages are shown rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Perceptions of HMCTS

- Knowledge of HMCTS is high, as 84% of stakeholders say that they know a fair or great deal about HMCTS at an overall level.
- This does not necessarily translate into an understanding of HMCTS' role and aims as only 67% say that they understand this well.
- Half of stakeholders value the contribution that HMCTS makes towards the justice system (50%) while just over one in five do not (22%).
- A similar percentage of stakeholders agree (33%) as those who disagree (35%) that they 'feel positively towards HMCTS'.
- More stakeholders disagree (45%) than agree (26%) that 'HMCTS has a good reputation'.
- Overall, opinion is very split towards HMCTS: 34% view it favourably, 36% unfavourably and 28% are neutral.
- Legal professionals (26%) are significantly less likely to have a favourable opinion of HMCTS than average (34%). For some, this is driven by negative feelings towards reform and difficulties experienced during their interactions with the justice system.

2.2 Trust in HMCTS

- 41% of stakeholders feel that they can trust HMCTS while 29% do not.
- Legal professionals are less likely to trust HMCTS than average (32% vs. 41% average), and this is somewhat driven by a perception that corporate HMCTS is out of touch with the realities of the justice system.
- Stakeholders with a favourable view of the reform programme are five times more likely to trust HMCTS overall than those with an unfavourable opinion (74% favourable vs. 14% unfavourable).
- Trust in HMCTS is formed through good relationships with HMCTS staff and their authority as a government agency.
- More than half agree that they can trust HMCTS' communications (53%) compared to one in five who disagree (20%).

2.3 Current engagement

- Stakeholders most commonly engage with HMCTS via the GOV.UK web page (60%) or through monthly e-bulletins (50%).
- Higher level engagement such as participating in HMCTS workshops (12%) or engagement groups (11%) is less common.
- Most who attend HMCTS events feel that they were useful (82% webinar, 76% public user event November '18, 70% in-person reform event).
- 44% say that they have engaged with HMCTS via social media in the past year, and this is most commonly through Twitter (32%), LinkedIn (15%) or Facebook (13%).
- The majority of stakeholders say that they engage with HMCTS on at least a monthly basis (66%).
- Most stakeholders engage with HMCTS during their working day (79%), but members of the judiciary are most likely to engage with HMCTS during their spare time (73%).
- More stakeholders disagree than agree with the statements 'HMCTS listens to my views' (45% disagree vs. 12% agree) and 'HMCTS are easy to communicate with' (45% disagree vs. 22% agree).
- Satisfaction with HMCTS' communication is mixed. 37% report that they are satisfied, 21% are neutral and 40% are dissatisfied.

2.4 Ideal engagement

2.4.1 Improvements

- More timely contact from HMCTS, including greater advanced notice of requests for engagement and for announcements.
- Ensure that stakeholders know the best ways to contact HMCTS, and ensure communications are open and transparent.
- Better explanation of the reform programme to quell scepticism that its primary aim is to cut costs.
- Improved updates from HMCTS on progress and changes to the reform programme, particularly to those stakeholders who it directly affects.
- Enhanced feedback processes to ensure stakeholder time is used more efficiently and at the point where their feedback can be most influential.
- Provide detailed updates to stakeholders regarding how their feedback is used and any changes made as a result.

2.4.2 Preferences

- The majority of stakeholders either want more communication from HMCTS (49%) or feel that their current level of engagement is fine (34%).
- Those who are dissatisfied with HMCTS' communications are particularly more likely to want increased communications from HMCTS (64%).
- Generally, stakeholders want at least quarterly updates from HMCTS with ad-hoc engagement in the interim as required.
- The clear majority of stakeholders would prefer to contact HMCTS via email (82%). Although, other communication types such as the GOV.UK website (36%) and in-person contact (34%) are valued by some stakeholders.
- The monthly e-bulletin is the form of HMCTS engagement that stakeholders are most interested in (54%), followed by information on the HMCTS GOV.UK web page (46%).
- There is a desire for HMCTS to reach a wider range of stakeholders and also engage members of the public in its communications.
- 80% of stakeholders want to know more about the reform programme and are particularly interested in finding out how it will affect them / their work (82%) and what the reform programme will achieve (77%).

3 Perceptions of HMCTS

The first section of the report covers stakeholders' perceptions of HMCTS. It will explore knowledge of and sentiments towards HMCTS, as well as stakeholders' overall opinion of HMCTS.

Overall knowledge of HMCTS is fairly high, with 84% of stakeholders asserting that they know a fair or great deal about HMCTS, while the remaining 16% say that they know just a little about HMCTS or have heard of it but know nothing about it.

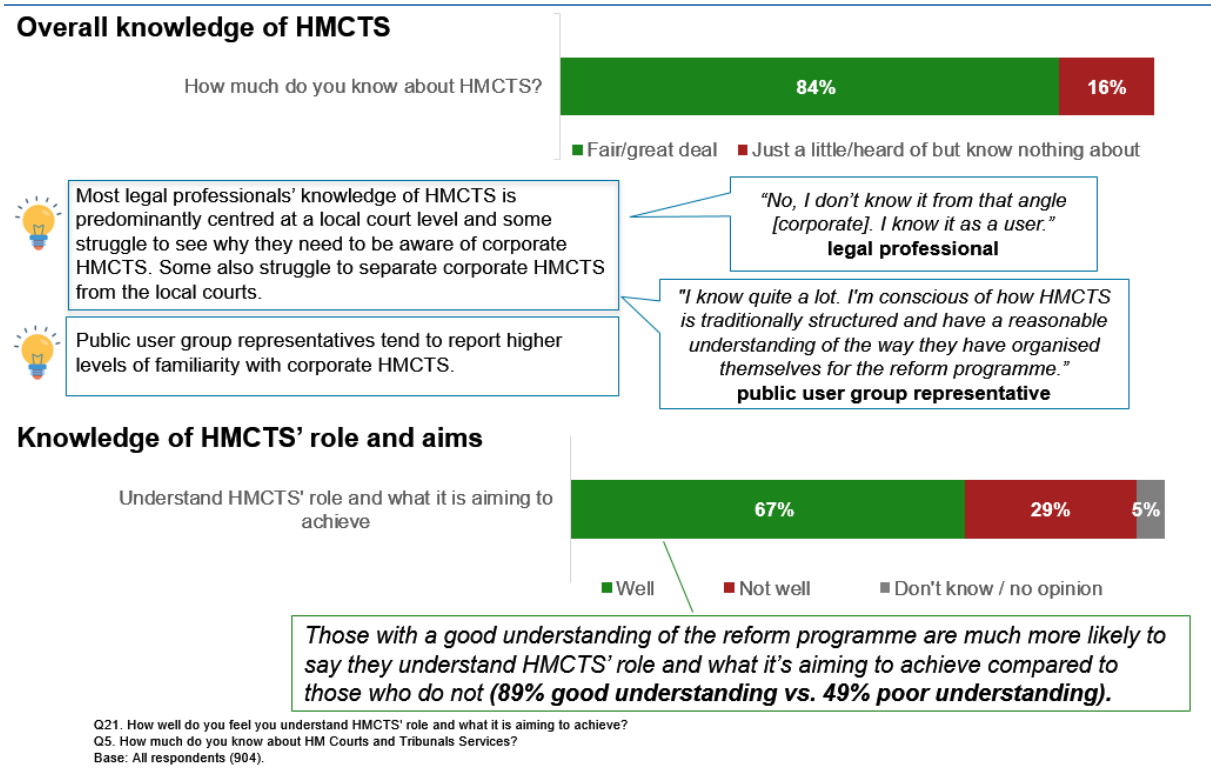
Legal professionals are the only stakeholder type that is more likely than average to report knowing a fair/great deal about HMCTS (93% vs. 84% average).

Meanwhile, stakeholder knowledge of HMCTS' role and aims is less well established. 67% report understanding this well while 29% say that they do not. Interestingly, understanding in this area is not affected by the amount of experience stakeholders have in the justice sector.

In this area, legal professionals (60%) are less likely than average (67%) to report a good level of knowledge while professionals in the wider justice system are more likely to (81%).

Understanding of the reform programme also seems to have an influence. 89% of those with a good understanding of the programme state that they understand HMCTS' role and aims well, compared to 49% of those with a poor understanding.

Figure 1: Knowledge of HMCTS



Moving onto stakeholder sentiment towards HMCTS, figure 2 demonstrates that the contribution that HMCTS makes to the justice system is valued by half of stakeholders (50% agree), but this does not necessarily translate into feeling positively towards HMCTS or thinking that they have a good reputation. Only a third (33%) of stakeholders agree that they feel positively towards HMCTS (35% disagree) and only a quarter (26%) believe HMCTS has a good reputation (45% disagree).

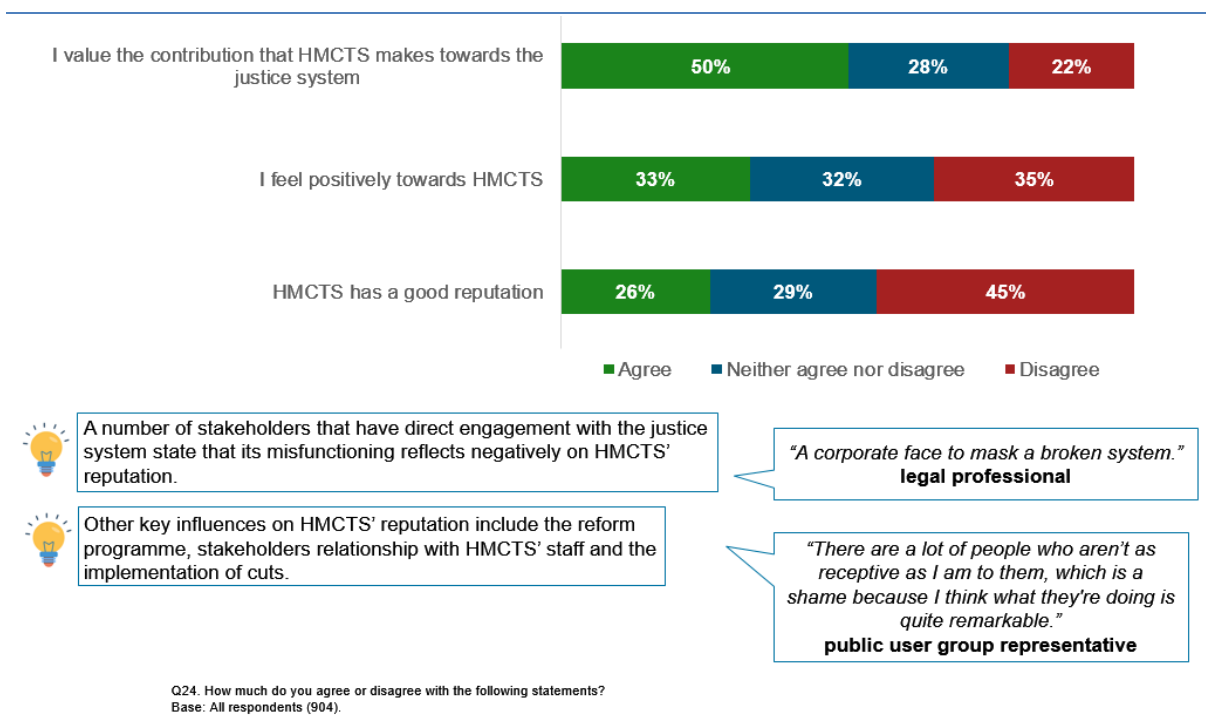
It is worth noting that legal professionals are more likely than average to disagree with each of these statements: 28% of this group do not value the contribution that HMCTS makes to the justice system (22% average); 46% do not feel positively towards HMCTS (35% average); and 56% disagree that HMCTS has a good reputation (45% average). Some of this heightened dissatisfaction may be a result of legal professionals' direct interactions with the justice system. Numerous legal professionals say that they are frustrated with how the courts are functioning, citing problems with IT systems, court buildings being in a state of disrepair and a lack of adequate resourcing.

Sentiments towards HMCTS also differ by legal jurisdiction. Those with an interest in tribunals are more likely than average to agree with each of the statements while those involved in the family legal jurisdiction are more likely to disagree than average.

As well as this, those with less than 2 years' experience in the justice system are more likely than average to agree that HMCTS has a good reputation (46%

vs. 26% average) and that they feel positively towards HMCTS (51% vs. 33% average).

Figure 2: Sentiments towards HMCTS

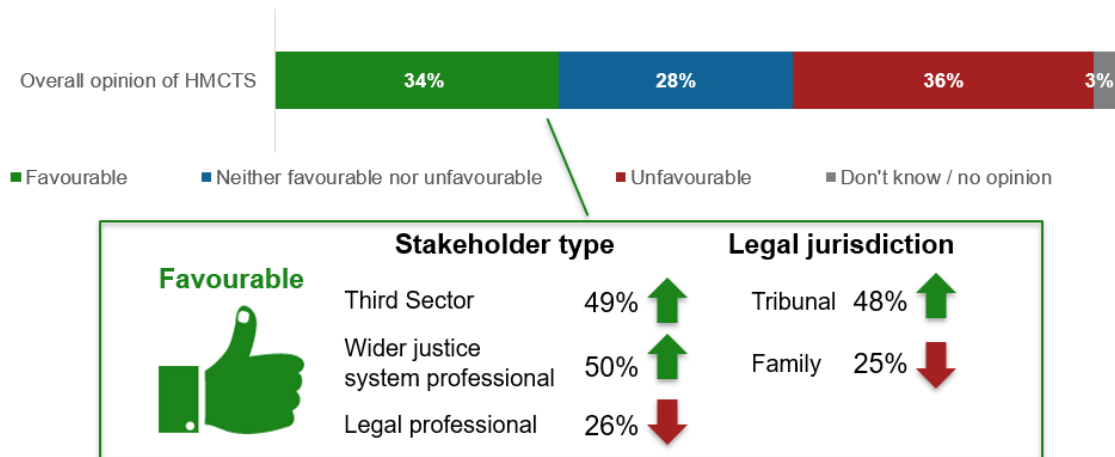


Overall opinion of HMCTS is very mixed, with slightly more stakeholders having an unfavourable opinion (36%) than favourable (34%). Although, it should be noted that a sizeable percentage of stakeholders are neutral in their opinion towards HMCTS (28%).

Stakeholders that work in the third sector (49%) or as a professional in the wider justice system (50%) are more likely to hold a favourable view of HMCTS than average (34%) while legal professionals are less likely to (26%). It is evident from the qualitative interviews that legal professionals' opinions of HMCTS can be heavily influenced by reform and difficulties experienced in their day-to-day interactions with the justice system.

Breaking the results down by legal jurisdiction, 48% of stakeholders with an interest in tribunals have a favourable opinion of HMCTS compared to just 25% of those involved in family law.

Figure 3: Overall opinion of HMCTS



Many legal professionals' thoughts towards HMCTS are influenced heavily by reform and difficulties experienced at a local level.

"Its corporate identity is trying to represent a technological revolution while appearing to care less about the underlying justice"
legal professional

"It's probably not the easiest job to do, but sometimes they make a hash of it." **legal professional**

"A shockingly run organisation where people don't have value" **legal professional**

Q22. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of HMCTS? Please consider HMCTS as an organisation, rather than at an individual court or tribunal level.
Base: All respondents (904), Third Sector (96), Wider justice system professional (52), Legal professional (317), Tribunal (281), Family (359).

4 Trust in HMCTS

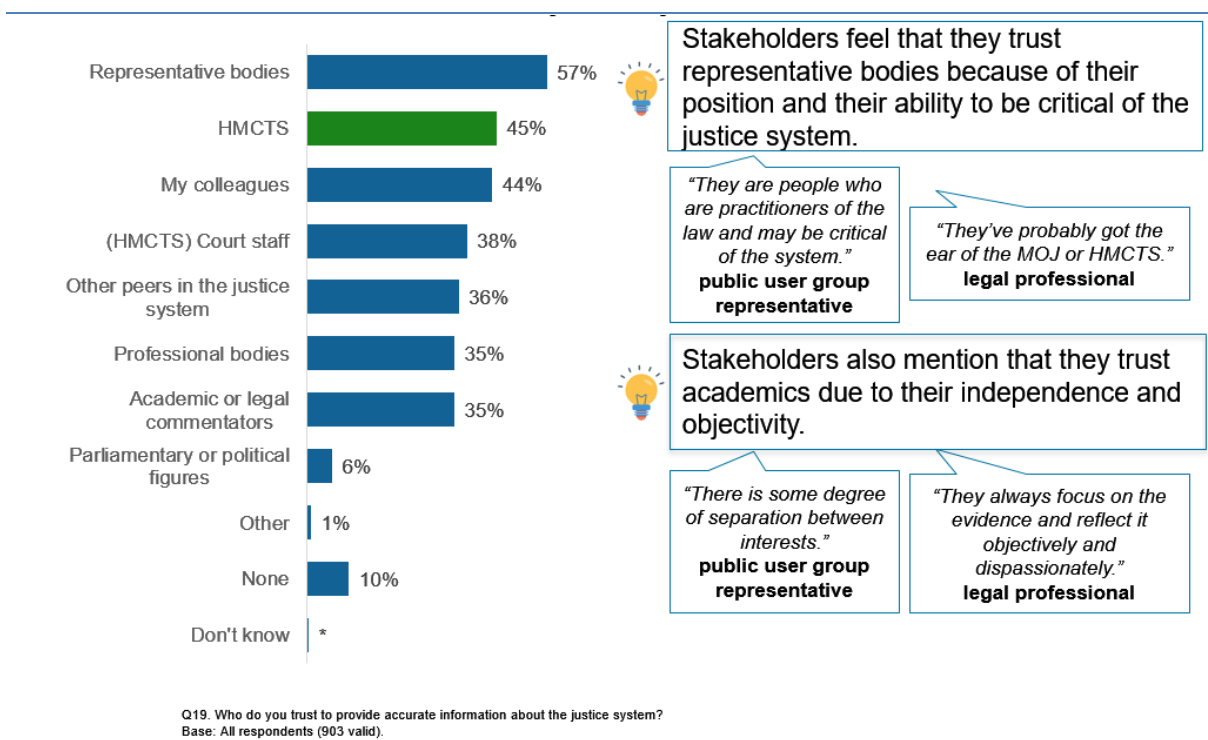
This chapter will focus on stakeholders’ trust in HMCTS. To begin with, HMCTS will be considered in the context of the levels of trust for other providers of justice system information before moving on to discuss trust in HMCTS in further depth.

Firstly, stakeholders were asked to select from a list which sources they trust to provide them with accurate information about the justice system. Here, HMCTS are the second most selected source of information (45%) behind representative bodies (57%).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, legal professionals are particularly likely to say that they trust representative bodies (81% vs. 57% average).

The reasons given for trusting representative bodies vary, with stakeholders citing their level of expertise, access to the relevant government departments/agencies and their ability to be critical of the justice system. Having said this, some stakeholders do acknowledge that representative bodies will have their own position in mind and the information they provide should be considered in this context.

Figure 4: Trusted sources to provide accurate information about the justice system



Looking at HMCTS in isolation, around two in five stakeholders feel that they trust HMCTS at an overall level (41%) and around half of stakeholders trust HMCTS' communications (53%). Some of those who do trust HMCTS say that this is a result of having strong relationships with HMCTS staff while others cite HMCTS' authority as a government agency.

Conversely, nearly three in ten (29%) report that they do not trust HMCTS at an overall level and one in five (20%) say that they do not trust HMCTS' communications. A small number of stakeholders indicate that the lack of trust is due to a perception that HMCTS can sometimes add an element of spin to communications and are limited in their ability to be self-critical. They believe that HMCTS paint an overly positive picture and do not acknowledge faults in an open or honest way. For instance, one stakeholder cites an instance of HMCTS taking a small piece of research on video hearings and drawing sweeping, positive conclusions from it, despite the sample size being small and not fully representative of the users who will ultimately use the system.

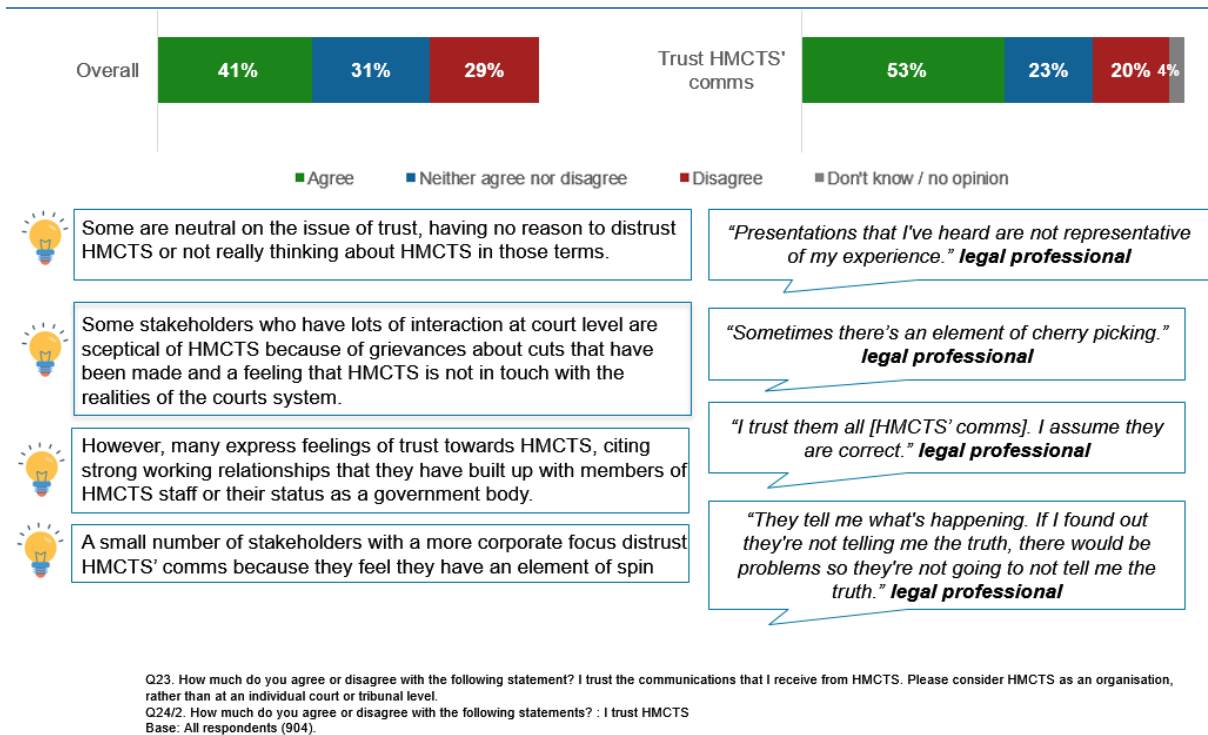
Legal professionals are significantly less likely than average to say that they trust HMCTS overall (32% vs. 41% average) while professionals within the wider justice system are significantly more likely to (62% vs. 41% average). From discussions with legal professionals, it is clear that for some this distrust stems from feeling that corporate HMCTS is out of touch with the day-to-day reality of the justice system. There are, however, no significant differences by stakeholder type in terms of trust in HMCTS communications.

Stakeholders with an interest in tribunals are significantly more likely to trust both HMCTS overall (54% vs. 41% average) and HMCTS communications (62% vs. 53% average) while the reverse is true for those with an interest in family law (34% and 46% respectively).

Length of time spent in the justice sector also impacts trust, as those with less than two years' experience are more likely than average to trust HMCTS' communications (68% vs. 53%) and trust HMCTS overall (63% vs. 41%).

Finally, stakeholders with a favourable view of the reform programme are more than five times as likely to trust HMCTS overall than those with an unfavourable view of it (74% favourable vs. 14% unfavourable), and they are also more likely to trust HMCTS communications (88% favourable vs. 28% unfavourable). Understanding of the reform programme, meanwhile, has a more limited effect. Those with a good understanding are only slightly more likely to trust HMCTS communications compared to those who do not (59% good understanding vs. 50% poor understanding), and there is no significant difference between the two groups when overall trust is considered.

Figure 5: Trust in HMCTS and their communications



5 Current engagement

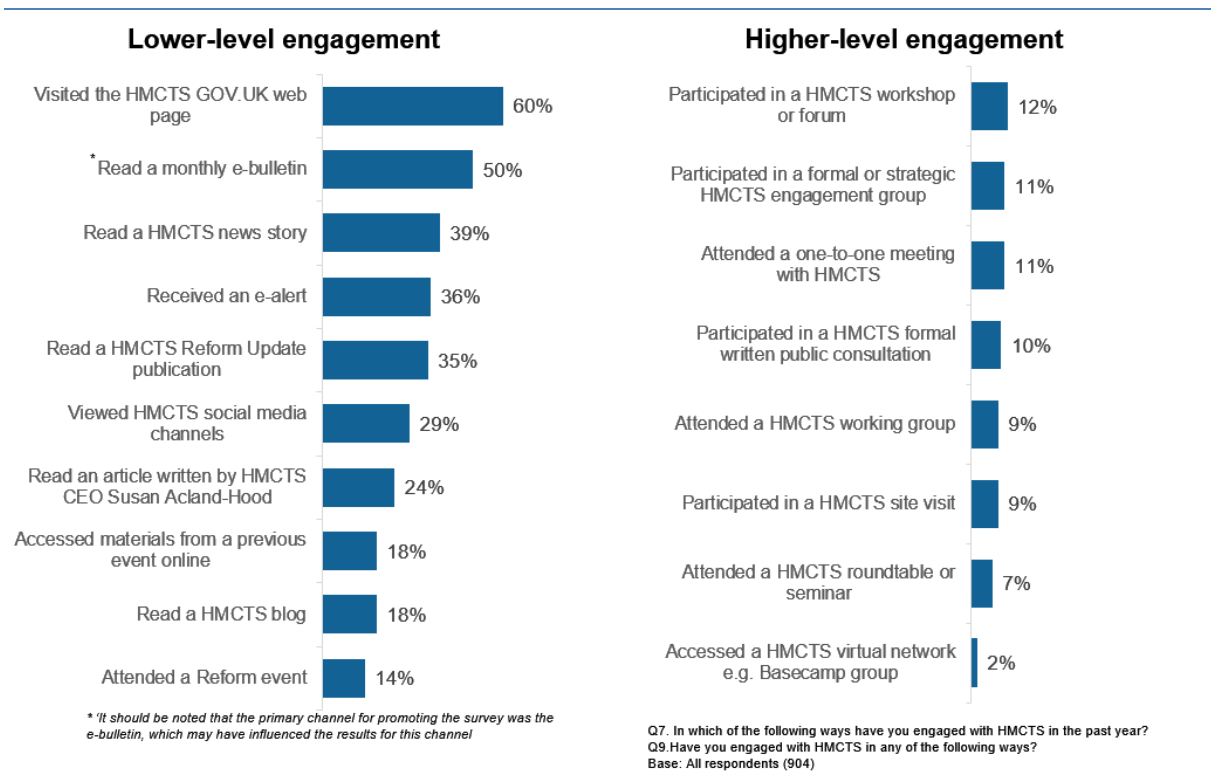
This section will explore how stakeholders currently engage with HMCTS, exploring the channels used, the frequency of contact, and how satisfied stakeholders are with the different types of communication they receive from HMCTS.

The most common way stakeholders report engaging with HMCTS is through visiting the HMCTS GOV.UK website (60%) followed by reading the monthly e-bulletin (50%). Other popular methods of engagement include reading a HMCTS news story (39%), receiving e-alerts (36%) or reading a HMCTS Reform Update publication (35%).

Breaking this down by stakeholder type, legal professionals are significantly more likely to have participated in an HMCTS webinar than average (21% vs. 13% average) but are less likely to have experienced different forms of engagement such as the monthly e-bulletin (44% vs. 50% average) and the HMCTS Reform Update publication (26% vs. 35% average).

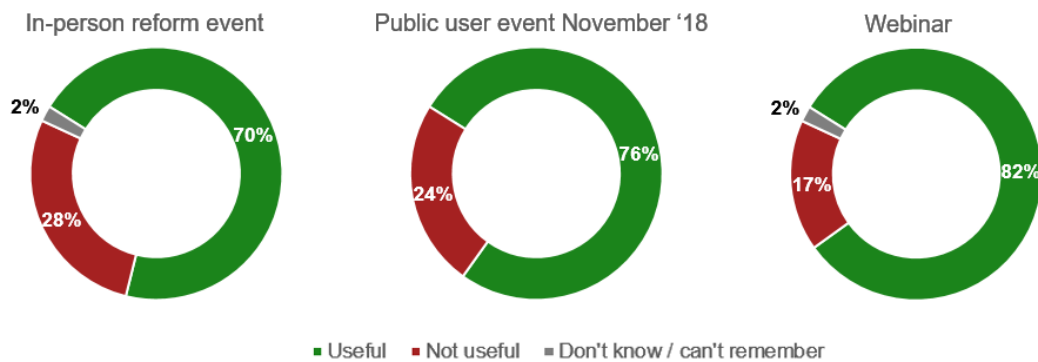
A smaller proportion of stakeholders say that they have experienced some form of higher-level engagement with HMCTS. In this area, the most common form of engagement is through participation in an HMCTS workshop or forum (12%) followed by participation in a formal or strategic HMCTS engagement group and one-to-one meetings with HMCTS (both 11%).

Figure 6: Ways of engaging with HMCTS in the past year



Those who attended an online or in-person HMCTS event were asked how useful it was. Stakeholders are most positive regarding webinars, with 82% deeming that this was useful compared to just 17% who did not. Most stakeholders are also positive about the public user event November '18 (76% useful vs. 24% not useful) and the in-person reform events (70% useful vs. 28% not useful).

Figure 7: Usefulness of HMCTS events



Q8A. You said that you attended a HMCTS event in person. How useful did you find this event? Base: reform event (130), Public User event (45). Q8b. You said that you participated in a webinar. How useful did you find this event? Base: 115

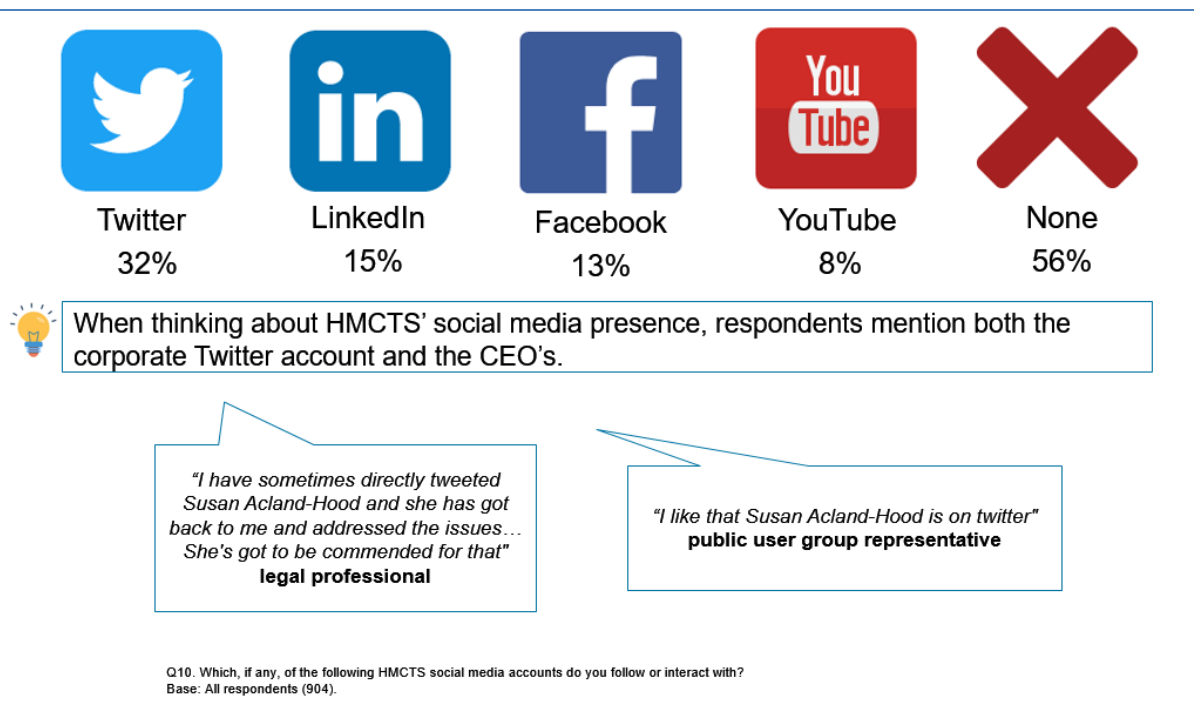
Twitter (32%) is by far the most common social media platform which stakeholders use to engage with HMCTS; it is more than twice as popular as LinkedIn, the next most commonly used platform (15%). Meanwhile, around 1 in 8 stakeholders engage through Facebook (13%) and 1 in 12 through YouTube (8%). More than half of stakeholders (56%) do not have any engagement with any of HMCTS' social media channels.

Looking at the results by stakeholder type, academics are more likely than average to engage with HMCTS via any social media platform (66% vs. 44% average) but are particularly likely to use Facebook for this purpose (29% vs. 13% average).

Meanwhile, stakeholders with an interest in criminal (52%) or family (50%) jurisdictions are both more likely to engage with HMCTS via social media than average (44%).

Interestingly, more stakeholders inside of London (51%) report engaging with HMCTS via social media compared to those outside of London (41%).

Figure 8: Social media engagement with HMCTS



Stakeholders were then asked how frequently they have engaged with HMCTS in the past year. Most commonly, stakeholders report that they engage with HMCTS on a monthly basis (24%). Indeed, the majority of stakeholders have contact with HMCTS monthly or more frequently (66%).

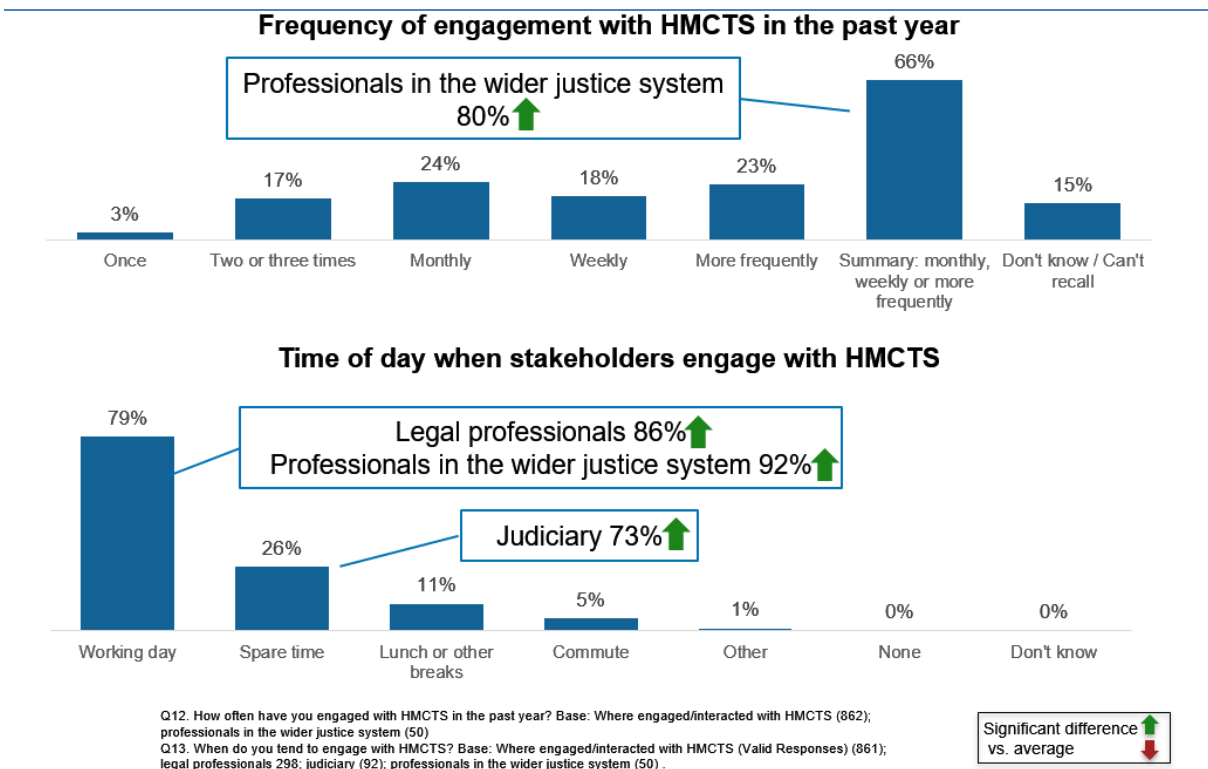
Professionals in the wider justice system is the group most likely to have monthly or more frequent contact with HMCTS (80%), and all other stakeholder types do not differ significantly from the average (66%).

In addition to this, those that have worked in the justice system for less than two years are less likely than average to say that they engage with HMCTS on a monthly basis (52% vs. 66% average).

Moving on from this, stakeholders were also asked at which times of the day they engage with HMCTS. The most popular time by far is during the working day (79%), followed distantly by in their spare time (26%). Lunch or break times is the next most common (11%) followed by during commutes (5%).

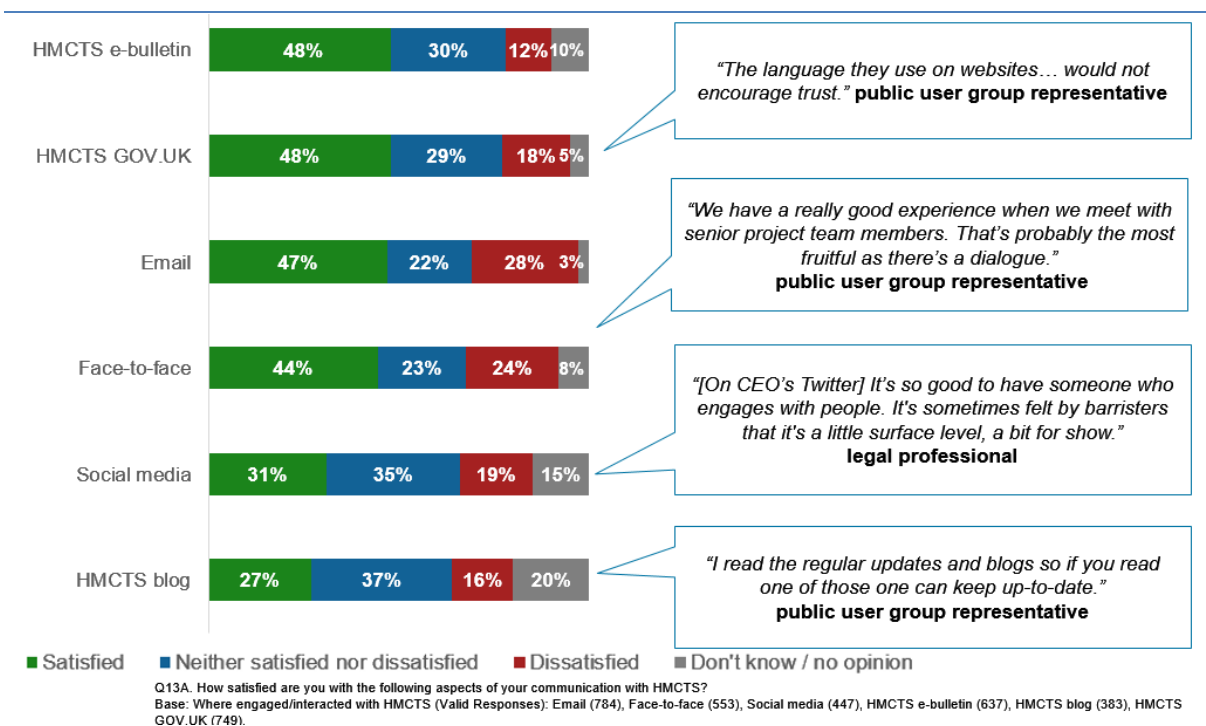
It should be noted that there are substantial differences in this area by stakeholder type. Professionals within the wider justice system (92%) and legal professionals (86%) are both more likely than average (79%) to say that they engage with HMCTS during the working day, while members of the judiciary are less likely to (48%). Instead, members of the judiciary are substantially more likely to engage with HMCTS during their spare time (73% vs. 26% average).

Figure 9: Frequency and time of engagement with HMCTS



In order to gauge satisfaction with HMCTS' communications, stakeholders were asked to rate each type of communication they had experienced. More stakeholders are satisfied than dissatisfied for each of the channels, but the percentage satisfied never exceeds 50% due to the amount who are neutral or who don't know / have no opinion. The HMCTS e-bulletin and HMCTS GOV.UK website boast the highest satisfaction ratings (48%), followed closely by email communication (47%). However, email communication also has the highest proportion of stakeholders who say they are dissatisfied (28%). Higher levels of dissatisfaction are also reported with face-to-face contact (24%).

Figure 10: Satisfaction with communication channels

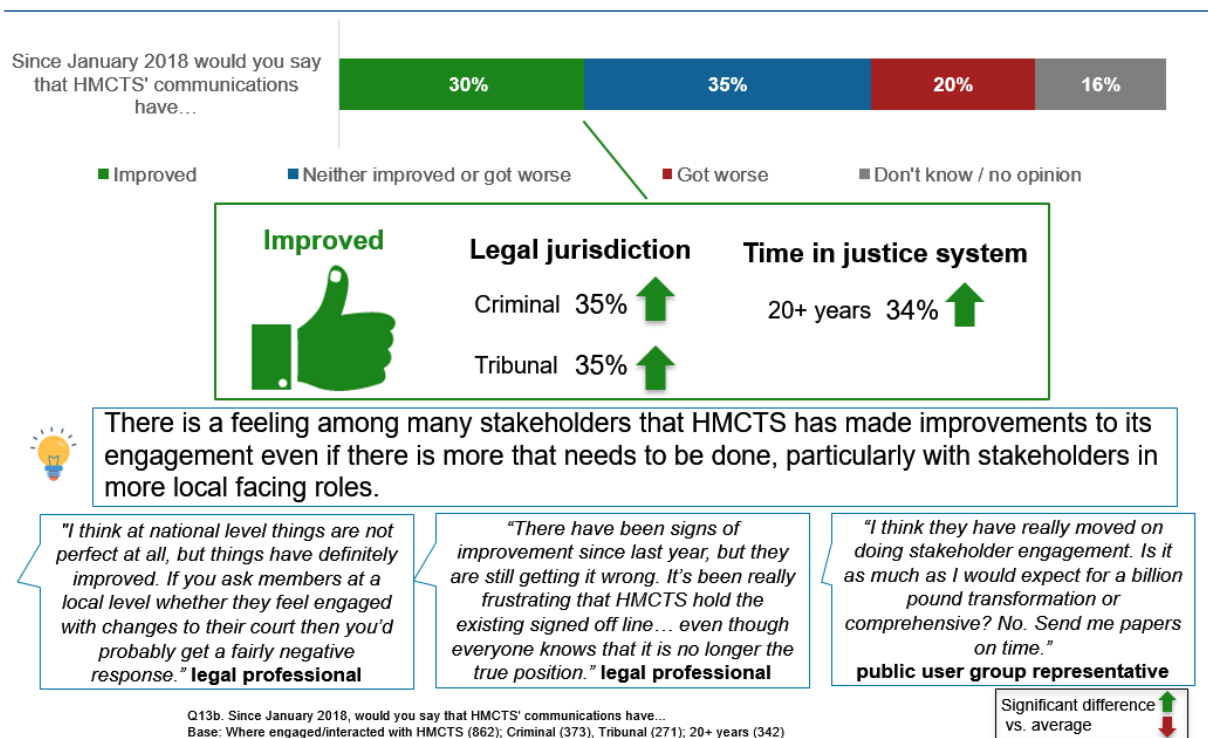


Stakeholders are split on whether there has been an improvement in HMCTS' communications since January 2018. 30% of stakeholders feel that communications have improved while 35% are neutral and 20% believe they have gotten worse.

Those with an interest in the criminal and tribunal legal jurisdictions are more likely than average to feel that HMCTS' communications have improved (both 35% vs. 30% average) along with those who have 20+ years' experience (34% vs. 30% average).

It should be acknowledged that stakeholders who participated in the qualitative interviews feel that, despite the improvements that HMCTS has made in its communications, there is still room for improvement. In particular, there is a desire to see HMCTS improve its engagement with those who work at a local level as there is concern that these individuals are disengaged.

Figure 11: Perceptions of improvement in HMCTS' communications since January 2018



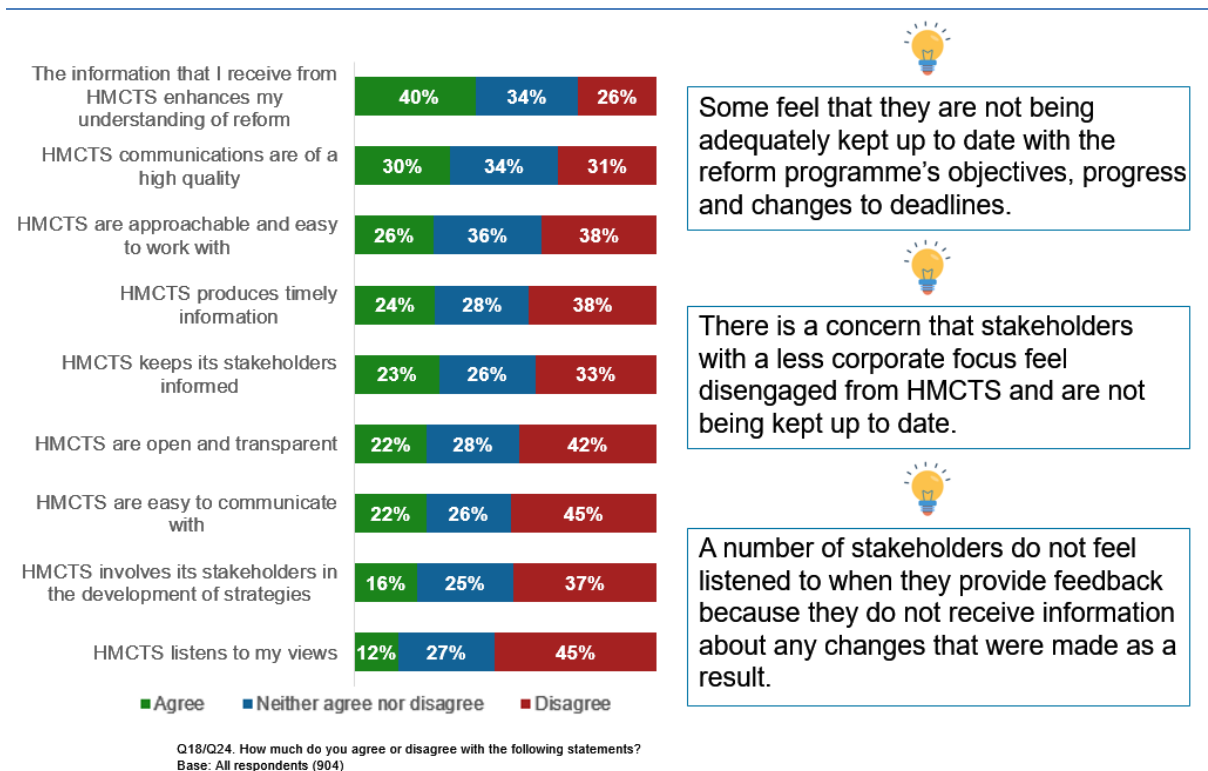
Stakeholders were then asked to what extent they agree or disagree with a variety of statements to fully understand their sentiments towards HMCTS' communications. For all but one of the statements, more stakeholders disagree than agree, and the disparity is particularly stark for 'HMCTS listens to my views' (12% agree vs. 45% disagree) and 'HMCTS are easy to communicate with' (22% agree vs. 45% disagree). Similar sentiments were also expressed in the qualitative research, with numerous stakeholders feeling that the feedback they give HMCTS is not listened to and is a formality.

Additionally, more stakeholders disagree (33%) than agree (23%) that 'HMCTS keeps its stakeholders informed'. This is reinforced through the qualitative findings, with stakeholders expressing that they do not feel like they are being kept up to date with the reform programme. These stakeholders want HMCTS to keep them informed of the reform programme's objectives, the progress made and any changes to timescales or deadlines.

The only statement where stakeholders are more likely to agree than disagree is 'the information that I receive from HMCTS enhances my understanding of reform' (40% agree vs. 26% disagree). It should be noted, however, that a sizeable proportion of stakeholders are neutral or don't know / have no opinion for many of the statements.

Interestingly, legal professionals are particularly negative in their sentiments towards HMCTS' communications and are more likely than average to disagree with nearly all of the statements. In contrast, those with less than 2 years' experience in the justice system are more likely to agree with nearly all the statements than average.

Figure 12: Sentiments towards HMCTS' communications



Overall satisfaction with HMCTS' communications is mixed, with slightly more stakeholders reporting that they are dissatisfied (40%) with HMCTS' communications than are satisfied (37%). As well as this, one in five stakeholders are neutral (21%) while the remaining 2% don't know / have no opinion.

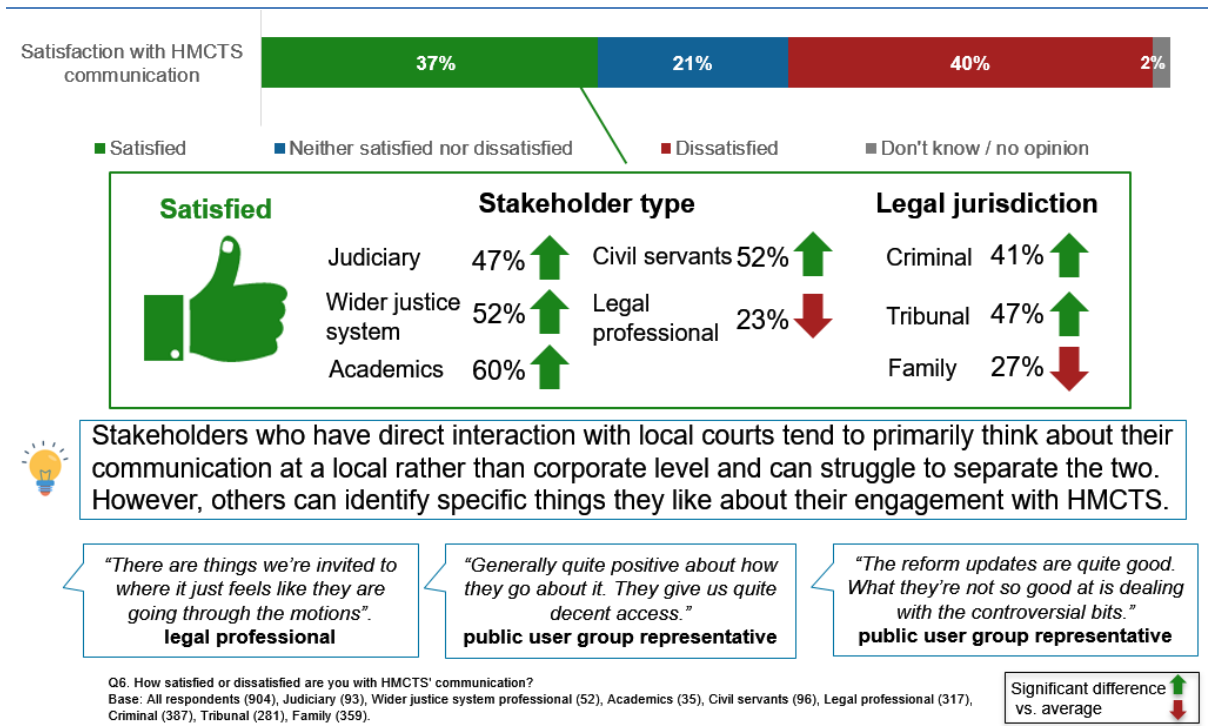
A number of stakeholder types are more likely than average (37%) to report that they are satisfied with the HMCTS' communications, including academics (60%), civil servants and professionals in the wider justice system (both 52%), along with those with an interest in the tribunal (47%) or criminal (41%) legal jurisdictions.

Less positively, legal professionals are 14 percentage points less likely than average to be satisfied (23% vs. 37% average) while stakeholders with an interest in family law are 10 percentage points less likely (27% vs. 37% average).

Despite asking to consider communications from corporate HMCTS only, it is likely that, in some cases, stakeholder satisfaction is influenced by the communication experienced at the level of local courts and tribunals. As became apparent during the qualitative interviews, many stakeholders who have direct interaction with the justice system struggle to distinguish between communications with different levels of HMCTS.

Reflecting the quantitative findings, stakeholders interviewed as part of the qualitative depths vary in their satisfaction of HMCTS' communications. While some are positive and believe that HMCTS give a good level of access and try to engage, others feel that there is room for improvement and that HMCTS struggles to communicate about controversial topics.

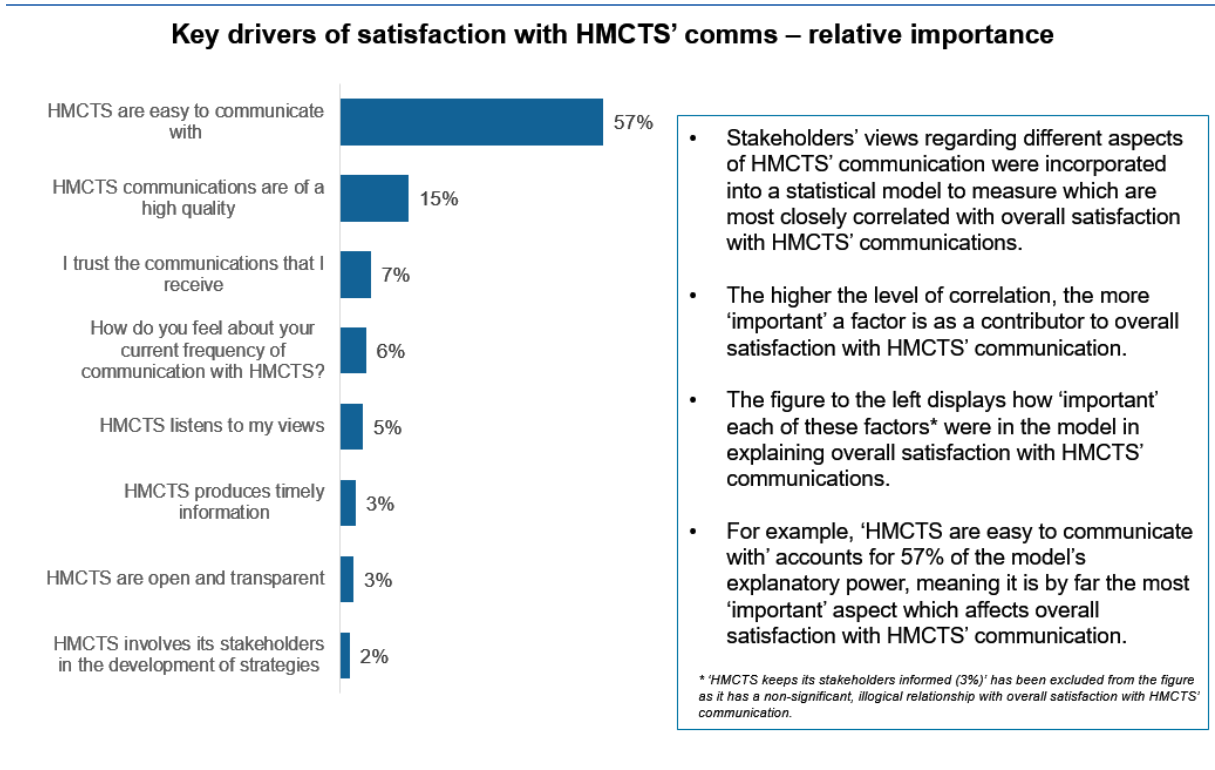
Figure 13: Satisfaction with HMCTS' communications



To gain a further understanding of the factors which influence overall satisfaction with HMCTS' communications, a key driver analysis (KDA) was carried out. This allows for an assessment of which aspects of HMCTS' communications are most closely correlated with satisfaction. Those with a high level of correlation are 'important' contributors while those with low correlation are less 'important'.

Figure 14 displays a range of factors and their relative level of importance to stakeholders' overall satisfaction level with HMCTS' communications. Clearly, the most important aspect is HMCTS being easy to communicate with (57%), and this is more than three times as important as the second most important factor, the quality of HMCTS' communications (15%).

Figure 14: KDA Analysis



6 Ideal engagement

This section explores what stakeholders' ideal engagement with HMCTS looks like. To begin with, suggested improvements given by stakeholders based on their current interaction will be explored. Then the discussion will look at how stakeholders would prefer to engage with HMCTS in terms of frequency, channels and content.

Following a discussion of how they currently engage with HMCTS, stakeholders in the qualitative component were asked what could be improved about their interaction with HMCTS. This feedback can be summarised into 6 key points outlined in figure 15.

Firstly, stakeholders would appreciate it if HMCTS' communications were more timely as they currently feel that they are not always given adequate notice of events, announcements or requests for feedback. For instance, one stakeholder reports that their organisation is often asked to gather practitioner input at short notice which is detrimental to the quality of engagement and places strain on busy organisations that are volunteering their resource to assist HMCTS. Similarly, some stakeholders who regularly attend meetings with HMCTS say that they often receive materials for meetings at short notice which inhibits their ability to prepare properly and participate effectively.

Furthermore, there is some confusion as to the best methods of contacting HMCTS among stakeholders. This leads to a frustrating experience for stakeholders and a feeling that HMCTS is hard to communicate with. As such, HMCTS should commit to clarifying the best methods of contacting HMCTS regarding different types of queries and ensure that its communications are transparent and grounded.

In addition to this, stakeholders would like clearer explanation of the benefits of the reform programme. At present, some do not feel that this has been adequately communicated which has left some treating reform with suspicion and seeing it primarily as a cost cutting exercise.

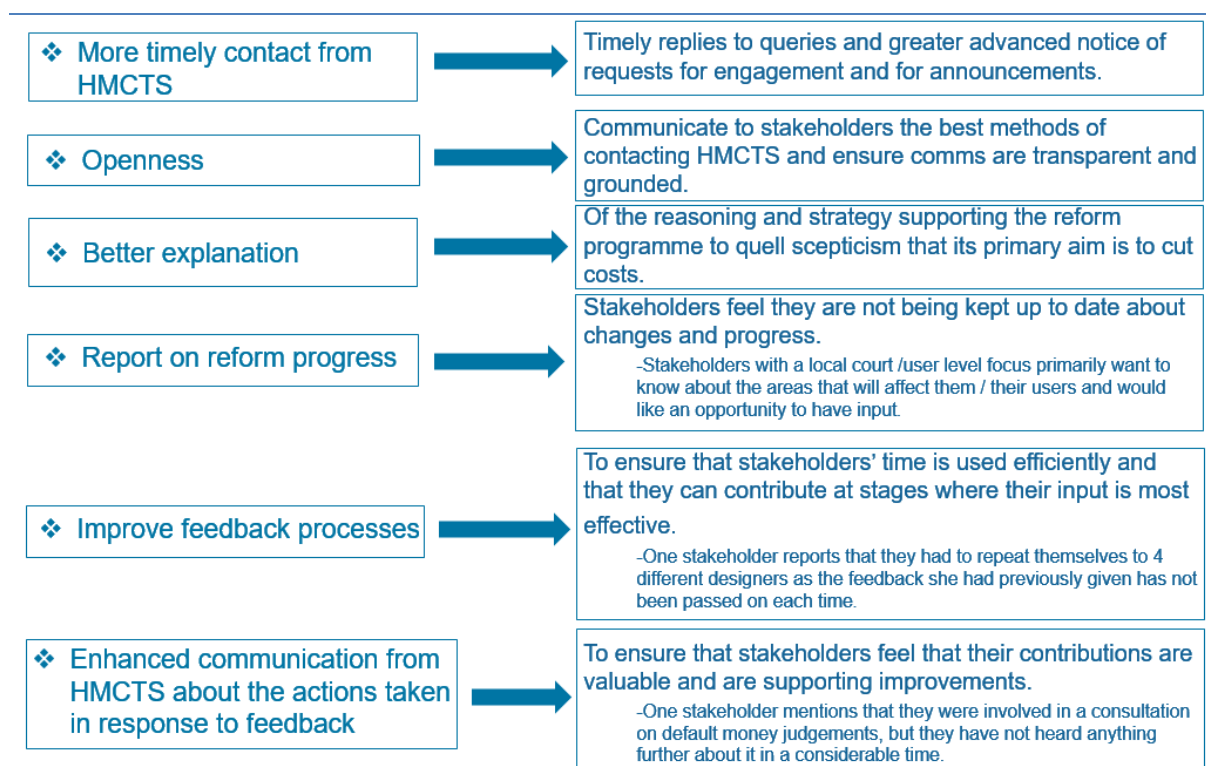
There is also a clear desire among stakeholders for better updates regarding the reform programme's progress and developments. At present, some stakeholders feel that they are not being adequately informed about this which can lead to mistrust of HMCTS and the reform programme. To address this, one stakeholder suggests that HMCTS should create a table which is accessible to stakeholders, outlining each of the individual reform projects, including their stated objectives, major milestones and timescales. In addition to this, stakeholders who directly engage with the justice system, including both public user group representatives and legal professionals, particularly want to

know about how the reform programme affects their work and would like an opportunity to feedback to HMCTS.

This leads onto a desire to see the stakeholder feedback process to be improved. At present, there is a feeling that the process is inefficient and, as such, stakeholders' time is not being used effectively. Given this, stakeholders would like to be involved earlier in the process to ensure that they can shape projects where they can have the most influence. They feel that only being involved at a later stage can be detrimental because the scope to affect change is limited due to prior decisions. As well as this, some stakeholders feel that the current processes can be cumbersome which results in stakeholder time being wasted.

Finally, many stakeholders would like to see HMCTS clearly communicate to stakeholders the actions they have taken in response to stakeholder feedback. At present, there is a feeling that the feedback they give is not listened to and that HMCTS can be 'defensive' when receiving criticism. Illustrating this, stakeholders give examples of feeding back on projects and hearing nothing further about changes that have been made or, in some cases, there being no further mention of a project for a considerable time.

Figure 15: Visual representation of suggested improvements to communication and engagement



Following on from this, stakeholders in both the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews were asked a range of questions to find out how they would ideally like HMCTS to engage with them.

Starting with frequency, nearly half of stakeholders express a desire to have more communication with HMCTS (49%), while a third (34%) feel satisfied with their current level. Only 1 in 20 stakeholders want less communication (5%) while just over 1 in 10 (12%) are unsure or have no opinion.

Interestingly, those dissatisfied with HMCTS' communications are twice as likely to say that they would like more communication than those who are satisfied (64% satisfied vs. 32% dissatisfied).

By legal jurisdiction, those with an interest in family law (55%) are more likely to want additional communication than average (49%).

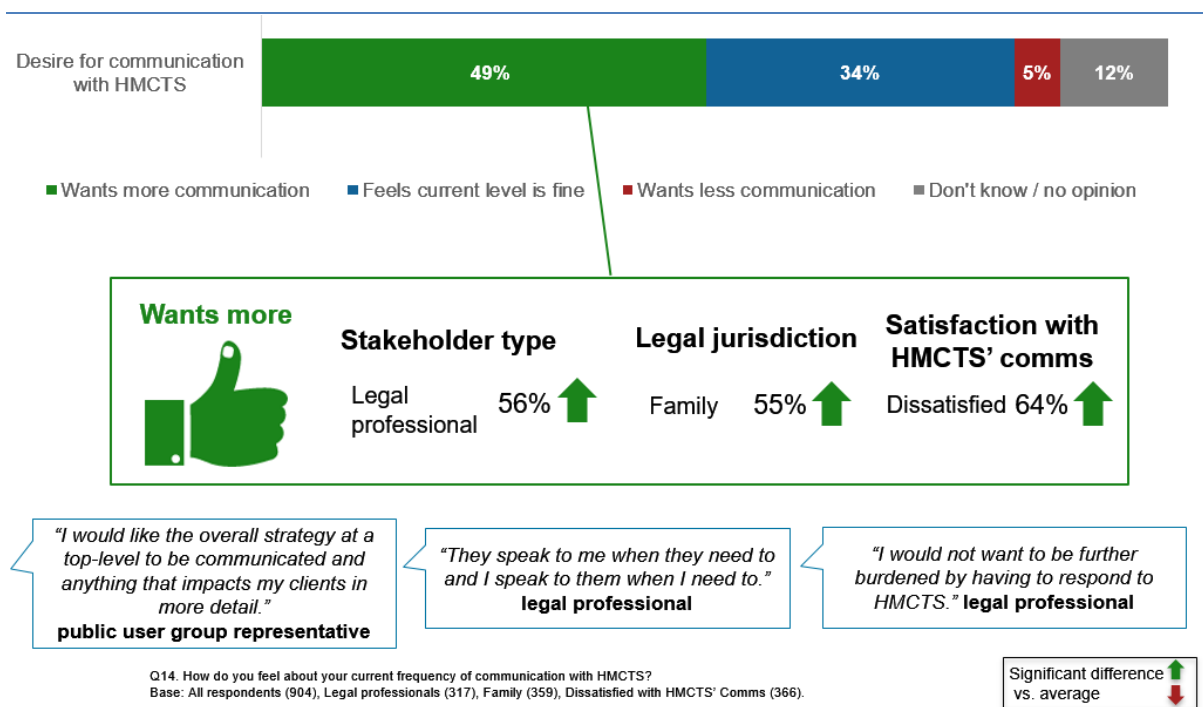
Looking at this by stakeholder type, legal professionals express a desire to have more communication with HMCTS (56% vs. 49% average). Contrastingly, members of the judiciary (10%) and civil servants (13%) are more likely to want less communication with HMCTS than average (5%).

Adding to this, stakeholders who participated in the qualitative element of the research were asked for further details about the ideal frequency of engagement with HMCTS. They express that they would like to receive at least quarterly updates from HMCTS along with ad-hoc communication to convey anything time sensitive.

Furthermore, some stakeholders have specific feedback regarding the timeliness of contact from HMCTS:

- Events should be communicated to stakeholders with at least 2 weeks' notice. This should then be followed up by subsequent reminder emails.
- Greater notice of requests for input from stakeholders should be given.
- HMCTS should reply to enquires within 10 working days for standard requests and within 24 hours for anything more urgent.

Figure 16: Desired level of communication with HMCTS



Stakeholders were then asked for their preferred ways of getting in touch with HMCTS. Email is by far the most popular method of communication (82%), followed by the GOV.UK website (36%).

Academics (57%) and civil servants (54%) are around 20 percentage points more likely than average to express a preference for the GOV.UK website and some stakeholders express that they prefer to self-serve information where possible.

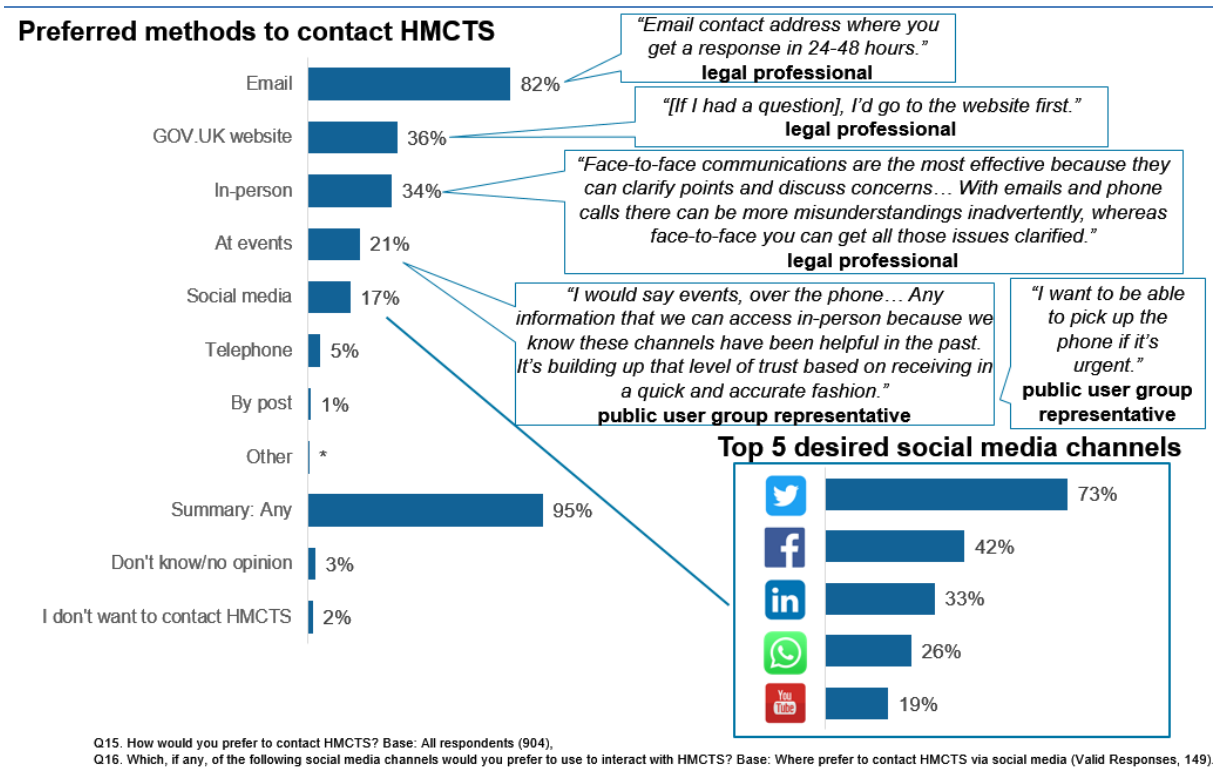
The next most popular forms of engagement are in-person contact (34%) and stakeholders from third sector organisations are 16 percentage points more likely to want this type of communication. Many of those interviewed in the qualitative element value this form of communication, feeling that it is productive and helps build positive relationships with HMCTS staff. Indeed, stakeholders with high levels of access to HMCTS indicate that they highly value the ability to contact members of HMCTS staff and arrange meetings as required. These stakeholders feel that it is important that they can have open and frank discussions with HMCTS in this way. However, while stakeholders do value having access to named contacts within HMCTS, there is a risk that it may make getting in touch difficult if there are staffing changes or if their contact is away on leave.

Meanwhile, less than 1 in 5 say that they want to get in touch with HMCTS via social media (17%). For these stakeholders that do, the most preferred social media channel is Twitter (73%) and then Facebook (42%).

Only a limited percentage of stakeholders (5%) report that they prefer to engage with HMCTS via telephone. However, stakeholders who have had previous experience of communicating with HMCTS in this way report encountering difficulties, such as long hold times.

In addition to these, a small number of legal professionals in the qualitative element explicitly prefer to feedback to HMCTS through surveys. These individuals value the speed and convenience of this method of engagement.

Figure 17: Preferred methods of contacting HMCTS



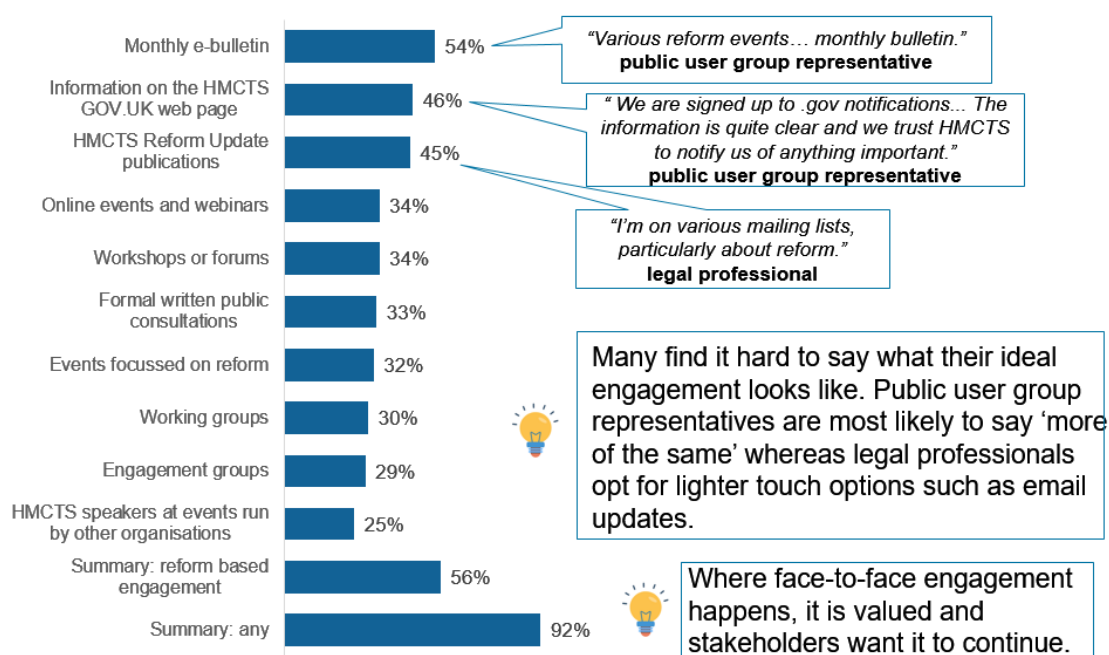
Following from this, stakeholders were asked which forms of engagement they are interested in. The monthly e-bulletin comes out on top (54%) and this is echoed in the qualitative findings, with many of those interviewed seeing email as an ideal way of keeping up-to-date with news, developments and upcoming events from HMCTS.

Other popular forms of engagement include the GOV.UK webpage (46%), HMCTS Reform Update publications (45%) and online events and webinars (34%).

Different forms of engagement are preferred by different stakeholders. Academics are likely to be more interested than average in many of these forms of engagement, particularly formal written public consultations (63% vs. 33% average). Legal professionals, meanwhile, are more interested in online events and webinars (43% vs. 34% average), and stakeholders from third sector organisations are more interested than average in engagement groups (47% vs 29% average).

Related to this, some stakeholders express that they feel it is important for HMCTS to reach a wider audience with its communications. At present, there is a concern that HMCTS struggles to reach out effectively to stakeholders at a local level which leads to discontent. Moreover, some express a desire for HMCTS to reach out beyond the sector and to engage the public more in its communications.

Figure 18: Forms of engagement stakeholders are interested in



'Summary: reform based engagement' includes respondents who selected either HMCTS reform update publications or events focussed on reform.
'Summary: any' includes all respondents who selected at least one of the engagement options given

Q17. Which, if any, of the following are you interested in from HMCTS?
Base: All respondents (904)

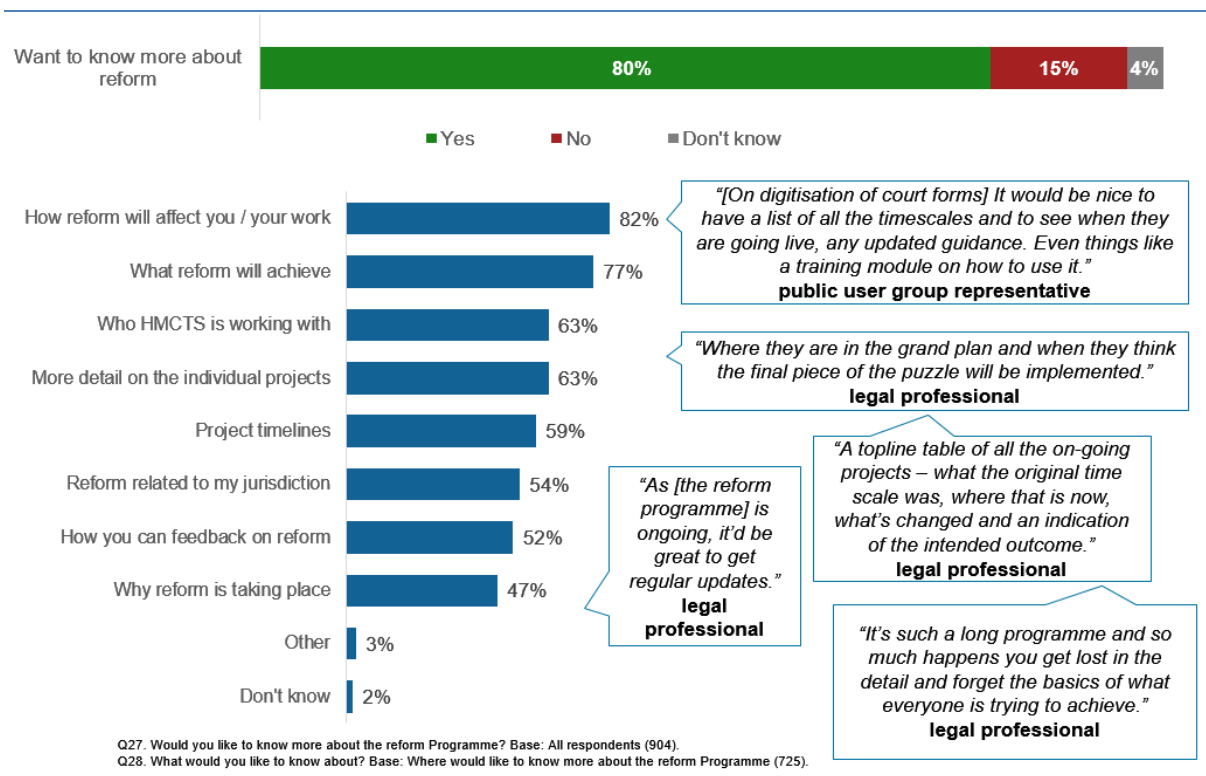
Looking at the topics that stakeholders want their engagement to cover, it is clear that there is an appetite among stakeholders for greater information about the reform programme. 80% say they are interested in finding out more about this while just 15% are not.

Most commonly, stakeholders want to know the effect that reform will have on them and their work (82%). The qualitative feedback echoes this as some stakeholders express a preference for communications that are tailored to their relevant professional interests / legal jurisdiction.

Stakeholders also want to know what reform will achieve (77%). This is somewhat linked to the scepticism of reform expressed by some in the qualitative research, with these individuals viewing it primarily as a cost cutting exercise rather than being about improving access to justice.

As well at this, stakeholders also wish to know who HMCTS is working with on the reform programme and more detail about individual reform projects (both 63%). Similar themes emerge from the qualitative component of the research, where stakeholders say they want detailed project timelines and progress updates, as well as clearer communications regarding how stakeholder feedback is used.

Figure 19: Interest in knowing more about the reform programme



7 Recommendations

7.1 Corporate communications

7.1.1 General recommendations

- To combat the perception of some stakeholders that HMCTS is not always transparent, HMCTS should consider greater use of expert advocates to emphasise its commitment to using evidence to inform its decisions. This will help increase the credibility and impact of reform messaging.
- The research also shows that there is a lack of consensus regarding the best ways to contact HMCTS in different situations. Communications which focus on clarifying how stakeholders can get in touch with HMCTS about different types of queries could help to deal with this issue.
- There is a feeling that HMCTS' communications should reach a wider range of stakeholders, including members of the public. Thus, HMCTS should expand the reach of corporate communications while ensuring that information is accessible and relevant.
- HMCTS should keep hosting regular stakeholder events since many consider them as an important part of their engagement.
- Meetings and face-to-face engagement are generally valued by stakeholders. Thus, HMCTS should keep this element for important stakeholders so it can take on board advice and expertise while increasing the visibility of its impact.

7.1.2 Reform recommendations

- When asked about their ideal engagement, most stakeholders say they would like to know more about the reform programme. To keep them engaged, HMCTS should ensure that regular updates are communicated to stakeholders regarding reform programme progress and changes. This could be achieved through monthly / quarterly email updates, supplemented by annual / biannual reform focussed events to increase active engagement.
- Some legal professionals say that they lack knowledge about reform programme progress and other HMCTS activities which prevents them from giving feedback, while public user group representatives would like to be able to direct their members to information that affects them directly. Therefore, greater personalisation of communications to user interests could be helpful. This could include regular, timely and transparent updates on the benefits of reform by jurisdiction.

- Some stakeholders express scepticism about the reform programme as they believe that its primary aim is to cut costs. To counterbalance this, HMCTS could expound the benefits and the need for the reform programme to lessen the feeling among stakeholders that it is primarily a cost-cutting exercise. Signposting stakeholders to points of contact with knowledge of the reform programme could help increase the reach and understanding of the latest reform information.

7.2 Project Communications

- A number of stakeholders would like to have more advanced notice of where and when practitioner input is required so that they can make sure they and/or their colleagues have the time to assist. HMCTS could, therefore, review engagement processes to ensure that stakeholders are involved at the times where their feedback can be most effective, particularly at project inception.
- Some stakeholders who have contact with HMCTS through meetings say that they often get materials at short notice which does not allow them to prepare well. More timely communication of meeting materials would allow stakeholders to engage more effectively.
- Several stakeholders involved in user groups or reform projects say that they do not know whether their feedback has been taken on board. Improved communication to stakeholders regarding how their feedback has been used (or not used) and any changes that have been made would make stakeholders feel more valued for their contributions.
- Most public user group representatives value having a named contact at HMCTS whom they can approach if they have queries. However, when the named contact is away or leaves, they can find it hard to get in touch. Shared team emails could be used so stakeholders are less reliant on individual members of HMCTS' staff and have a point of contact if someone leaves.

Appendix 1: Technical report

This technical report gives further detail on the methodology and fieldwork process used in this research.

7.3 Methodology

7.3.1 Quantitative

Fieldwork date: 23 April 2019 – 15 May 2019

On 23 April 2019 a set of open links were distributed via multiple channels inviting HMCTS stakeholders to take part in the web survey. The link for each channel was unique, allowing for the response rate to be monitored by channel. Each link was periodically redistributed throughout the fieldwork period in order to maximise the response rate. The final number of responses generated through each channel can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: Number of responses by channel

Channel	Count	%
GovDelivery subscribers	839	79%
HMCTS' GOV.UK webpage	113	11%
HMCTS' social media	62	6%
Partner organisations	48	5%
Total	1062	100%

At the beginning of the survey, each respondent was asked to identify which stakeholder type they belonged to. To ensure that all stakeholders who wanted to share their views could participate, no quotas were set for defined types of stakeholders. Stakeholders could either select their stakeholder type from a list (see below) or type in and specify their own type.

- Member of the judiciary (including a magistrate)
- Legal professional, including barrister, solicitor and chartered legal executive
- Professional within the wider justice system (e.g. Crown Prosecution Service, police forces, Legal Aid Agency, HM Prison and Probation Service or other organisations with civil jurisdiction responsibilities)
- Work for an organisation representing public users of the justice system
- Work for a third sector organisation
- Academic with an interest in justice issues

- Journalist or legal commentator
- Parliamentary or political figure with an interest in the justice system
- Digital supplier or potential supplier of services to the legal sector
- Civil servant

After the survey was closed, a back-coding exercise was conducted in order to ensure that, where possible, 'other' responses were correctly categorised into the existing stakeholder types, as well as allowing for the creation of new types as necessary. This exercise revealed that the survey had been completed by 158 members of the public. As the research's intended focus is professional stakeholders, the decision was taken to remove this group from the analysis. This left 904 interviews from professional stakeholders which are discussed in this report.

Table 2: Number of responses by stakeholder type

Stakeholder type	Count
Legal professional	317
3 rd Sector	96
Civil Servant	96
Member of the Judiciary	93
Public user group representatives	67
Professional in the wider justice system	52
Academic	35
Journalist / legal commentator	22
Digital supplier	8
Other	118
Member of the public	158
Total	1062

7.3.2 Qualitative

Fieldwork date: 21st May 2019 – 28th June 2019

HMCTS supplied BMG with a database containing a list of potential contacts for the qualitative depths. This included a mixture of legal professionals and public user group representatives. A total of 30 telephone depths were completed (16 legal professionals and 14 public user group representatives).

7.4 Statistical significance testing

Z-tests were carried out on subgroup or 'column' percentages and t-tests were carried out on means to test for statistically significant differences, with a confidence level of 95%. The tests predict the likelihood that the observed change or difference is not just 'chance' (an unusual finding only reflecting the

sample) but a 'real' change or difference (reflecting the wider population). This means that a difference is considered to be significant if 95 times out of 100 we would find the same result in any sample.

Appendix 2: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

