

PR end of year report 2022



Three pages

Executive summary

This report has been compiled by Black Letter Communications (BLC) for the Association of Costs Lawyers (ACL) and provides an overview of all PR activity during 2022. It includes an overview of coverage achieved, the most popular news stories and a review of *Costs Lawyer*.

2022 PR summary

In total, 94 pieces of coverage were been achieved during 2022, up 13% on the previous year where 83 pieces of coverage were achieved.

Council have been particularly responsive this year, meaning we have been able to increase the number of press releases and quick-fire comments sent – we have drafted and distributed six press releases and seven comments. This compares with five press releases and four comments during 2021.

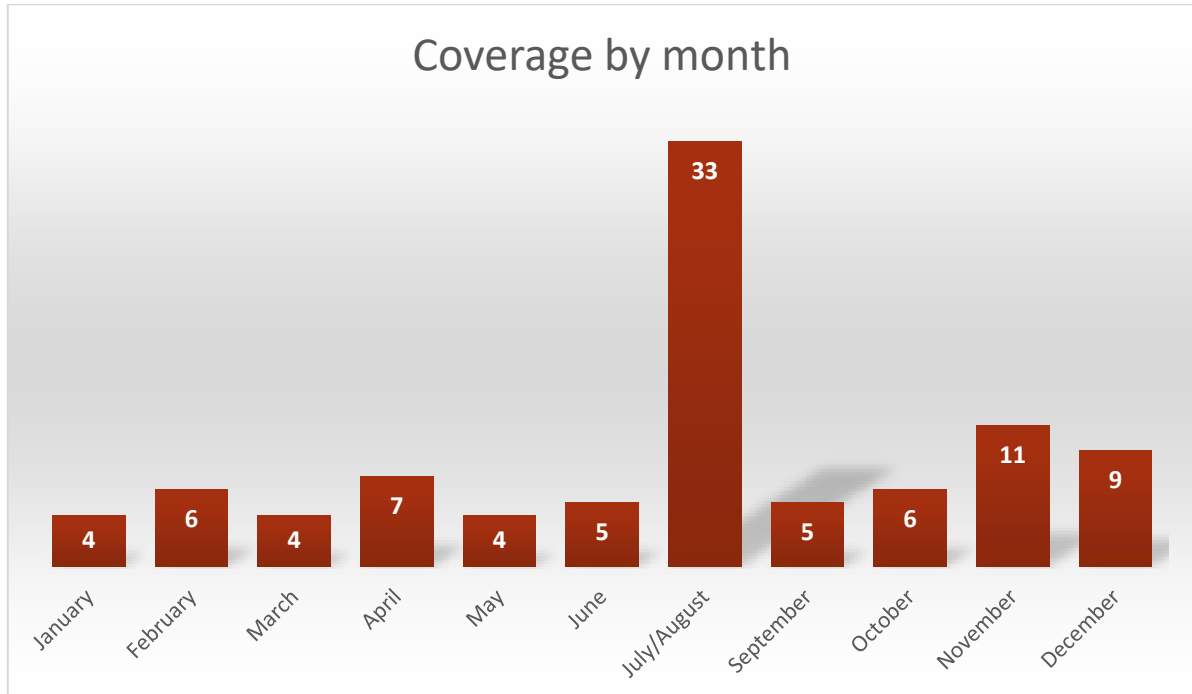
The stand-out story of the year came from Jack Ridgway's comments explaining the process around legal costs that would follow the libel trial between Colleen Rooney and Rebekah Vardy. In an ACL first, Jack was quoted in *OK! Magazine*, as well as in *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, *The Times* and a further 19 other titles.

The annual conference in London also generated strong coverage this year after it was attended by journalists from *Thomson Reuters* and *Law Society Gazette*. Unfortunately, we had a disappointing response to the annual survey we carried out at the conference, with just 43 respondents. Typically, previous conference surveys exceed over 100 respondents, which is a statistically viable number for releasing the survey to media, and have always attracted media coverage. Nonetheless, by glossing over the response rate, we were still able to achieve some coverage. The data will also be useful for future articles.

We continued to supply copy with the assistance of Council to fulfil the regular article slots we have with *Thomson Reuters Dispute Resolution Blog*, *Litigation Funding*, *New Law Journal* and the *Association of District Judges Newsletter*. Ad hoc articles were also drafted for *PI Focus*, *Law Society Gazette*, and *The Times – Law*. The latter appeared with a very positive headline, namely: *Costs lawyers are needed from the start of litigation*, in response to the CLSB's Hook Tangaza research.

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Other areas of comment which yielded coverage included: the Court of Appeal ruling in *AKC v Barking*, the CJC's costs consultation, *Belsner* and the fixed recoverable costs delay.



Costs Lawyer

In the spring, we moved from the turning pages version of the magazine to the Costs Lawyer Journal hub on the website. This went pretty smoothly from a technical point of view, although as we have flagged up previously, the content management system used by Senior is, in our view, wildly over-engineered. On the positive side, we have found them easier to deal with since a change in account manager.

The change has saved the ACL a considerable amount of money and also allowed us to publish more content. We publish at least one opinion or feature article a week online, and quite often more, whereas previously we would have six or seven in the magazine every two months. We have also on occasion published four news stories in a week, rather than three as before.

Being online has allowed us to be much more current and responsive – for example, in the wake of *Belsner*, we quickly published an article by Robin Dunne, who acted for the claimant, about the implications. We are pleased with how the content is building up online and think it has proven a very positive move for the Association.

As part of the switch to online we also took over your LinkedIn and Twitter channels, posting regular content, increasing followers and driving engagement.

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Planning 2023

Looking ahead to 2023, we will, of course, continue with our regular article contributions, as well as seeking ad hoc article and comment opportunities.

We have also proposed an ACL roundtable event commemorating 10 years of costs budgeting and hope to begin planning work for that in the New Year.

Online activity will continue through the website and we'll be looking to drive more followers and engagement through LinkedIn and Twitter.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our evaluation and future plans with Council.

Kerry Jack, Neil Rose

Black Letter Communications

January 2023