



ANNUAL
REVIEW
2020/21

PUBLISHERS'
LICENSING
SERVICES

PLS is owned and directed by:





FROM THE CHAIR

ROSIE GLAZEBROOK

After just nine months as Chair, PLS, the world changed and my hopes of meeting with more of you, the publishers signed up to PLS, evaporated. We found ourselves holding our first virtual PLS Board meeting, mercifully free of technical glitches, just as the country was going into lockdown and into uncertainty on every level.

I dedicated myself to steering PLS and, in my capacity as Co-Chair, Copyright Licensing Agency, through an exceptionally challenging year. I am pleased that the enormous effort put in by the staff to achieve a positive outcome has paid off. PLS has managed, remarkably, to distribute £36.4m to publishers in 2020/2021, which is on par with the previous year, and also to keep all its other services going, if not growing. The Board held its nerve and has been immensely supportive and understanding throughout. PLS was fortunate to have both a Board and staff that were well established and this has undoubtedly helped us to deal with the turbulence of the world around us.

There are some recent changes to the Board and new appointments. We said goodbye in May 2021 to Owen Meredith, a veritable champion for his magazine publisher members at the PPA, as he left to take on the cause of newspaper publishers. In June, we said goodbye to Timothy Wright following his retirement from Edinburgh University Press. We thank them both enormously for their contribution over the past years to PLS. The PLS Board is delighted to welcome Sarah Fricker of IOP Publishing who joined the Board on 1st July 2021.

We now look forward to celebrating our 40th Anniversary in September 2021, and continuing our work supporting over 4,000 publishers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Glazebrook". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chair



THE YEAR IN BRIEF

SARAH FAULDER

I am relieved to be able to report that, as I write, PLS is emerging relatively unscathed from the most extraordinary and unpredictable year in its 40-year history. And yet at the start of the year under review our prospects of being able to continue to deliver revenues to publishers, let alone at the levels they have come to expect, were looking very bleak. The Covid-19 pandemic has been an unwelcome intrusion on all our lives and a threat to our world order but we are doing our best not to be defeated by it. I am proud that PLS has been able to play its part in these testing times by continuing to contribute to the economic health of the publishing industry and by keeping our staff busily engaged in delivering our services to publishers.

There has arguably never been a time in living memory when more has been expected of us all. The publishers signed up to PLS agreed to accommodate the needs of the education sector through temporary extensions of the licensing limits, all at a time when they themselves were facing unprecedented challenges in their own businesses as well as countless other demands for easy access to their content. The sector appreciated this. These extensions usefully demonstrated how licensing can ensure that copyright need not be a barrier to accessing content, as is so often alleged. Meanwhile we have risen to the challenge - overnight - of working remotely in every sense of the word, so disproving the notion that people, in our type of work at least, can only work productively when together in an office.

After bracing ourselves for an unpredictable year we have nevertheless been able to maintain distributions in line with last year. Both our licensing agents, Copyright Licensing Agency and NLA Media Access, deserve full credit for collecting in the money from their licensees in such a tough environment and I extend our deep gratitude to them on behalf of the publishers signed up to PLS. As you will read later in this review, our other services, PLSclear (formerly PLS Permissions) and rights management support, have been well used. In the case of Access to Research, publishers supported library users using click and collect services in order to avail themselves of the service during periods of library closure.

Copyright developments have been largely paused as a result of the UK's departure from the EU and our Government's related decision not to implement the EU Copyright Directive that many of us had worked hard on over several years. I suspect this is only a temporary lull and that the UK won't be able to stand still for long.

Whilst business has continued as usual we have missed the vibrancy of the publishing industry that we normally enjoy, whether at conferences, book fairs or other social events. And we have also lost out on opportunities to develop and innovate that come from meeting with publishers and colleagues. We are planning, subject to government guidance, for PLS staff to trial hybrid working later in the year, which will see teams working together in the office on at least two days a week. And we look forward to seeing publishers once again as the more usual calendar of events resumes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Faulder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chief Executive

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2020/21

	2021 (£)	2020 (£)
COPYRIGHT FEES RECEIVED	40,982,150	40,991,145
Distributable to rightsholders	(38,530,554)	(38,632,518)
Administrative expenses	(2,338,138)	(2,236,483)
OPERATING SURPLUS	113,458	122,144
Interest receivable	19,129	72,354
SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION	132,587	194,498
Taxation	(28,452)	(39,625)
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	104,135	154,873
RETAINED EARNINGS BROUGHT FORWARD	714,620	559,747
RETAINED EARNINGS CARRIED FORWARD	818,755	714,620

BALANCE SHEET

	2021 (£)	2020 (£)
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	44,791	60,732
Intangible assets	159,063	108,137
Investment in Joint Venture	5	5
	203,859	168,874
Current assets		
Debtors	1,418,364	1,429,146
Short term bank deposits	4,268,694	4,268,694
Cash at bank and in hand	4,684,136	4,596,611
	10,371,194	10,294,451
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(9,728,219)	(9,730,129)
Net current assets	642,975	564,322
Provisions for Liabilities	(28,079)	(18,576)
TOTAL NET ASSETS	818,755	714,620
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Profit and Loss Account	818,755	714,620

Commentary: The financial information on this and the previous page does not constitute statutory accounts as defined in Section 434 of the Companies Act 2006. The income and expenditure account and the balance sheet have been extracted from the audited statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021. These accounts have been delivered to the Registrar of Companies and carry an audit report, which was unqualified and did not contain a statement under Section 495(4) of the Companies Act 2006.

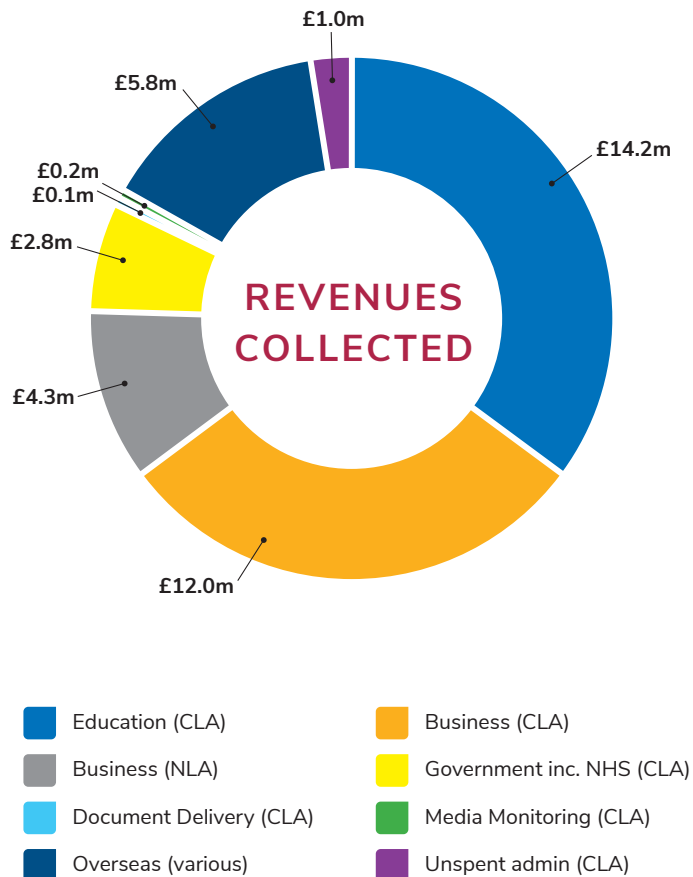
COLLECTIVE LICENSING: REVENUE AND DISTRIBUTIONS 2020/21



- £36.4m was paid out to publishers in 2020/21.
- Over 98% of distributable revenues* were paid out within 21 days of receipt.
- More than 15,000 individual payments.
- More than 3,500 signed up publishers received revenues.
- Revenue straight to bottom line.

All figures in the chart are gross revenue before PLS admin fees. The NLA figure includes the shares payable to authors and visual artists. In accordance with the decision in the Rights Valuation, effective 1 January 2016, and as reflected in the Distribution Charter, PLS paid the shares due to authors (17.5%) and visual artists (10%) to ALCS and to DACS and PICSEL respectively for onward distribution prior to distributing NLA revenues to publishers.

*Net of PLS 6% admin fee.



OTHER SERVICES

Rights & Licensing Hub

The shift to remote working over the past year and a half has served to highlight the need for good rights management across the industry. PLS worked hard to encourage best practice and provide further resources to publishers undertaking efforts to improve their rights management and contracts storage this year.

The launch of The Rights and Licensing Hub (rightsandlicensing.co.uk) last year provided a home for the PLS Rights Group to share their knowledge and expertise with others working in the industry. Throughout the year Group members contributed articles, case studies, and participated in online workshops to help create content for the site.

PLS also worked with Rights2 Consultants Ruth Tellis and Clare Hodder to develop the Rights Management Essentials Courses. The courses are designed to introduce the importance of rights management to all areas of publishing (not just rights teams) and encourage best practice. The Rights Management Essentials courses are broken down into three modules: Introduction to Rights Management, Acquiring Rights, and Licensing Rights to Others. The courses are entirely free and each module takes roughly 45 minutes to an hour to complete with certificates issued upon successful completion of each module. Register for the courses at pls.thinkific.com.



We launched PLSclear with the aim of providing a service that would streamline the permissions process for all publishers regardless of the size or sector of the company. The service is now a firmly established part of the permissions landscape and PLSclear has become a global market for requesting permissions for publishers' content.

While we were worried initially about the impact of the pandemic on the use of PLSclear, the number of requests coming through the platform increased and we saw a huge amount of interest from publishers looking for more online solutions to help their staff manage their workloads from home. The online nature of our service made it an easy solution for publishers to manage their permissions more efficiently in a time when at home distractions made saving time and resources absolutely essential.

There are now over 200 publishers using PLSclear to manage permissions requests. They are drawn from a broad range of publishing sectors with increasing numbers of overseas publishers. When we surveyed participating publishers on their experience of using PLSclear, 98% of publishers said they believe PLSclear is good value for money and 88% of publishers said they would recommend the service to others. 68% of publishers surveyed also stated that PLSclear has reduced their permissions processing times, aligning with many anecdotal stories we've heard from publishers since we launched PLSclear.

We also continued to deliver updates to the PLSclear platform to further improve the service for both publishers and requestors. Improvements to PLSclear are led by feedback we've received from publishers and requestors.

PLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

as at 31 March 2021



Rosie Glazebrook
Chair
PLS



Sarah Faulder
Chief Executive
PLS

ALPSP

Wayne Sime
Chief Executive
ALPSP

Deborah Dixon
Editorial Director
Oxford University Press

Timothy Wright
Chief Executive
Edinburgh University Press

IPG

Bridget Shine
Chief Executive
IPG

Oliver Gadsby
Director
Rowman & Littlefield International

Tim Williams
Managing Director
Edward Elgar Publishing

PA

Stephen Lotinga
Chief Executive
PA

Mark Majurey
Commercial Director & VP
Taylor & Francis Group

Lis Tribe
Group Managing Director
Hodder Education

PPA

Owen Meredith
Chief Executive
PPA

Andrew Yeates
Intellectual Property Advisor
PPA

Nick Service
Chairman
Hemming Group

PLS STAFF

as at 31 March 2021



Sarah Faulder
Chief Executive



Tom West
Chief Operating Officer



Marjon Esfandiary
Head of Legal & Policy



Danielle Williams
Executive Assistant



Mohammed Anisuzzaman
Head of IT



Richard Guest
Distributions Manager



Clare Zubkowska
Publisher Relations Manager



Amy Ellis
Rights & Licensing Manager



Rachel Hunt
Product Manager



Katherine Wyatt
Account Services Supervisor



Martin Dixon
Project Manager



Polina Sengupta
Events Coordinator



Helen Jennings
Rights & Licensing Executive



Natalia Kornioukhova
Rights & Licensing Executive



Francesca Wallis
Monies In Trust Officer



Jamie Allerton
Monies In Trust Officer



Andy Martin
HR Director



Nicola Stalley
HR Administrator



Sarosh Daruwala
Finance Director



Claire Rogers
Finance Manager



Davide Alves
Management Accountant



Josh Woodward
Finance Assistant




Samehra Khan
Credit Controller



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