

BCL Technology Price Increase FAQ

Why have technology prices increased?

It is important to note that BCL has not increased technology prices since 2018 (except for increases in Microsoft and Zoom charges). BCL has passed on only a portion of the increased costs incurred in providing these services. BCL decided not to pass on the full cost of the service, principally to soften the financial effect of the pandemic on barristers. However, with the cost of providing technology services increasing, BCL has concluded that it must charge an amount that better reflects the actual cost of providing such services.

How are the Technology costs calculated? Who is covering the costs?

The Technology costs charged to the Bar are less than the cost incurred by BCL to provide these services.

In calculating the technology charges, we include:

- The cost of the product (base) licence cost, such as an email license, Office 365 E1 or E3 license from Microsoft, or a Zoom license; and
- The BCL Technology Infrastructure, services and support costs which includes the cost of cyber security measures, email spam filtering and firewalls, disaster recovery controls to ensure reliability, a dedicated Technology team that provides support to those in BCL chambers that have responded to some 10,000 calls and service requests in FY24 and our external expert vendors.

These costs had previously been absorbed by BCL. With the increase in the number of services we provide, the introduction of new security measures and the increase in the cost of providing these services we have revised these charges to better reflect their actual cost. Many of these charges have not increased since 2018.

What would happen if the technology prices were not increased?

If the technology prices had not been increased, the costs of providing the services would have continued to have been absorbed by BCL. This would require BCL to either increase rents or reduce technology service standards and/or the level of cyber security it provides to its customers. Given the importance of secure technology services in modern practice, a decision has been taken to maintain the service standards and cyber security measures BCL employs.

Why have email charges increased from \$79 per year to \$215 per year?

In setting the \$79 fee, BCL had only been charging the email licence fee it pays to Microsoft for each email address. The increase to \$215 recovers some of the additional costs of providing a secure email network to barristers together with technical support. These additional costs are incurred so that BCL can provide prompt high standard technical support, including a technology team for email queries, the Mimecast email filtering service, cloud back-ups services, additional cyber security measures, and on shore third party support to ensure email system reliability and monitoring of cyber security threats and service issues. The increase in the E1 and E3 also reflect these additional costs. Users should appreciate that BCL provides far more than just an email address to its customers.

Why have network services and support charges increased from \$66 per month to \$99 per month?

BCL had previously charged only for part of the costs of providing internet connectivity to each of the buildings. The increase to \$99 per month covers some of the additional costs in connection with a reliable internet connection and technical support. These additional costs include vendor support from various third-party experts, such as CISCO, DXC, Vocus, Palo Alto, and technical support from BCL's inhouse network team.

Why have all the technology prices increased?

Technology costs to barrister users have not increased since 2018. In six years, that have followed, BCL has introduced numerous cyber security and network reliability measures, increased the number of services provided, and greatly increased the level of technical support it provides. The technology price increases reflect the cost of these improvements and protections for barristers.

Is the increase in technology costs related to the recent purchase of 200 Queen Street?

No. These price increases recover some of the costs of providing the technology services. The acquisition of 200 Queen Street is being funded solely by the rents charged to the barristers and external tenants in 200 Queen Street. As previously explained to members, the costs of owning the building are significantly less than the cost to BCL of being a tenant of the same building.