



LEGAL

MARKET & SALARY GUIDE

**MARKS
SATTIN**

Gi Group Holding



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 15th edition of our Market Insight & Salary Guide, where we share our expertise on key trends within finance, tech, transformation, legal and specialist markets for 2025.

This year our research is based upon a robust sample size of 1,823 respondents, and is referred to by 100k+ professionals across our nine offices in the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

The recruitment landscape continues to evolve, shaped by economic, political & geopolitical challenges, rising operational costs, fast paced technological advancements, and an uneven market recovery. While these hurdles persist, businesses are demonstrating greater strategic agility. In particular, the finance and tech sectors are leading the way, adapting to new realities with renewed focus and determination.

There is a clear shift in sentiment: organisations are no longer merely reacting to change; they are preparing for it. The rapid pace of technological advancement and shifting workforce expectations have ushered in a new era where it's no longer '*business as usual*' - it's '*transformation as usual*' and traditional approaches to hiring and workforce planning are being replaced with more agile, skills-focused strategies.

In this context, investing in people is more critical than ever. Skills, rather than experience, are emerging as the primary currency for hiring managers. The pace of change has never been faster, and employers are seeking professionals who can adapt, innovate, and thrive. As one industry leader put it: "Your performance tells me what you've done in the past, your skills tell me what you can do in the future."

Age inclusion is also rising up the talent agenda. With 47% of the UK workforce projected to be over 50 by 2030, businesses are increasingly recognising the need to value experience alongside innovation. Age diversity is no longer a 'nice to have' - it's a strategic imperative. Organisations that harness the full breadth of workforce demographics will be better positioned to meet evolving market demands and foster sustainable growth.

Another prevalent trend is the growing influence of AI across sectors. Businesses are making significant investments in advanced technologies to maintain a competitive edge and spur innovation. However, adopting these technologies alone is not sufficient, it is crucial for organisations to ensure their workforce possess the necessary skills to fully leverage these tools. Without the right expertise, even the most sophisticated technologies may not deliver the desired outcomes. To achieve sustained growth and stay ahead of the curve, businesses must prioritise the integration of skilled talent capable of effectively utilising these innovations to drive change and maximise value. This shift places greater emphasis on upskilling and digital readiness as key elements of workforce strategy.

In our fast-moving environment, competition for talent is intense. Companies are offering more attractive salary packages, enhanced benefits, and flexible working models in a bid to secure top professionals. Beyond pay, professionals are increasingly prioritising wellbeing, autonomy, and alignment with company values when considering new roles. These factors are becoming critical differentiators in today's market.

This annual report explores these developments in detail. From emerging hiring trends to salary benchmarks and workforce expectations, we provide comprehensive insight to support both employers and jobseekers. Whether you're refining your talent strategy or planning your next career move, our goal is to equip you with the knowledge needed to navigate a complex and competitive market with confidence.

A sincere thank you to the 1,823 professionals who gave their valuable time to participate in our survey. We have partnered with Ecologi again this year to plant a tree for each survey response we received!

MATTHEW WILCOX

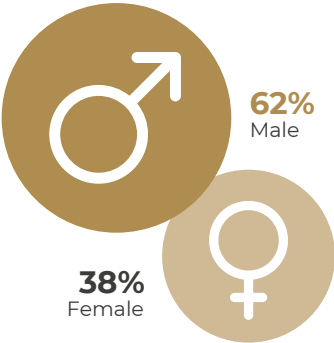
Managing Director

matthew.wilcox@markssattin.com

DEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

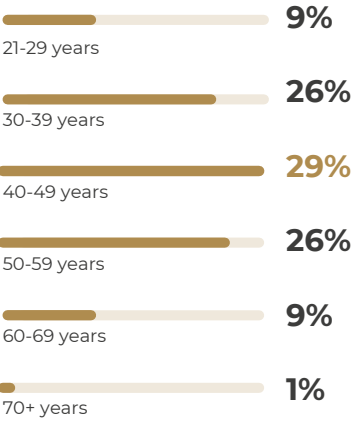
Here we outline the demographics of our survey respondents. Please note this is not a representation of our candidate and client community, rather a demographic overview of our research participants this year.

GENDER

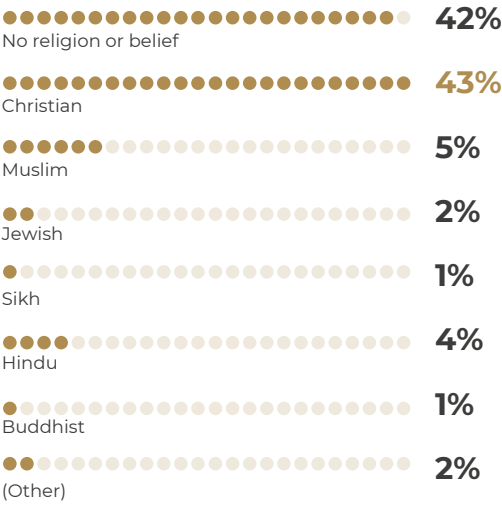


11 respondents chose non-binary

AGE



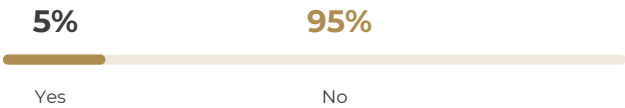
RELIGION OR BELIEF



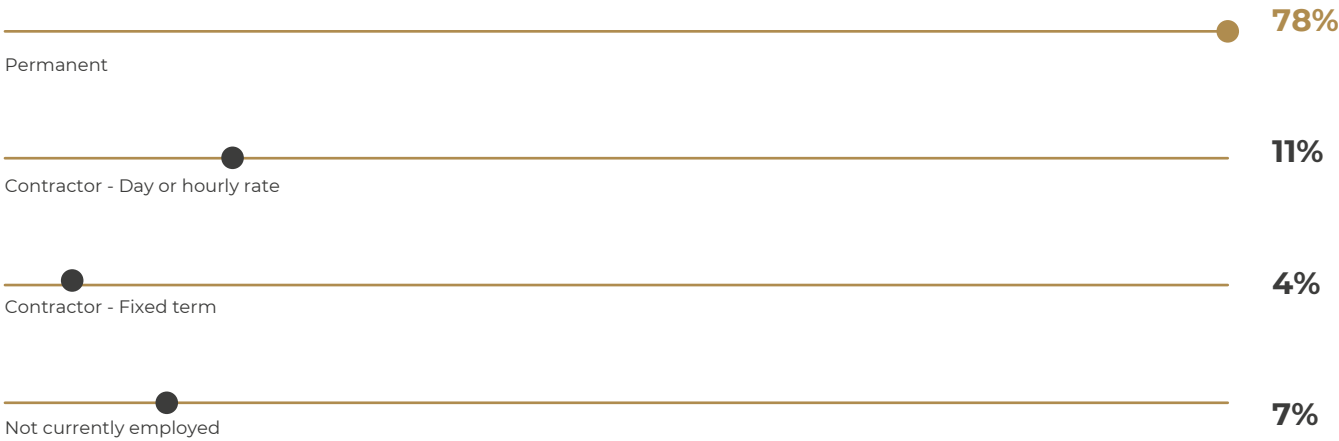
DO YOU HAVE A DISABILITY UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?

In the Act, a person has a disability if:

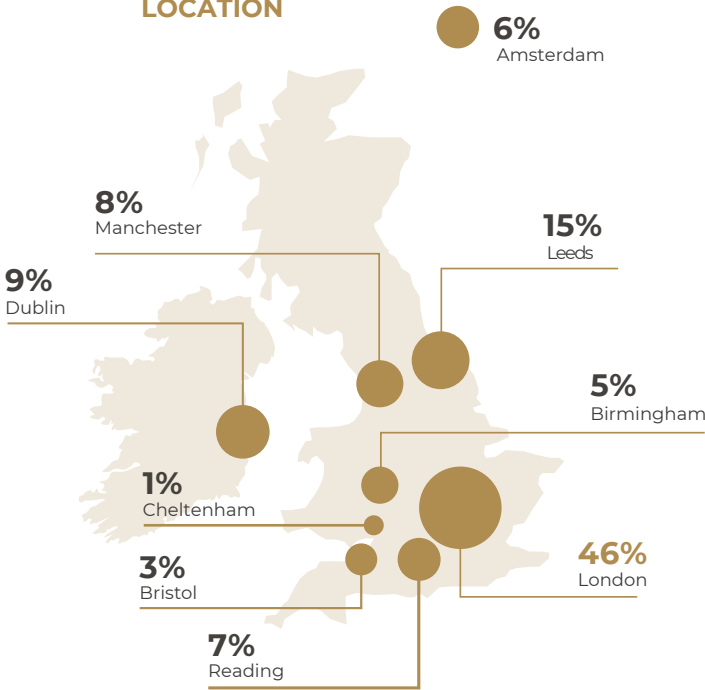
- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.



CONTRACT TYPE



LOCATION



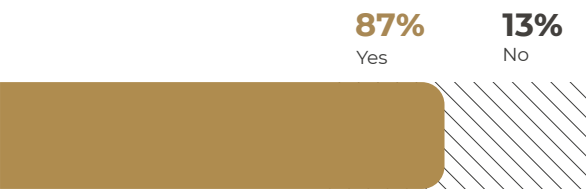
FUTURE OF WORK

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

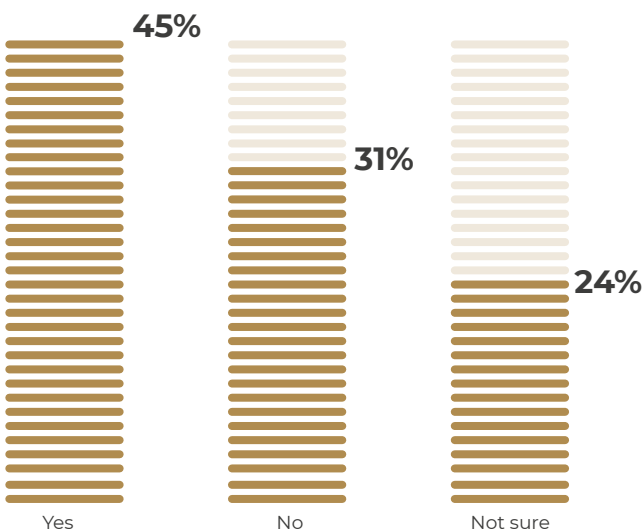
Do you think your leadership team is sufficiently diverse?



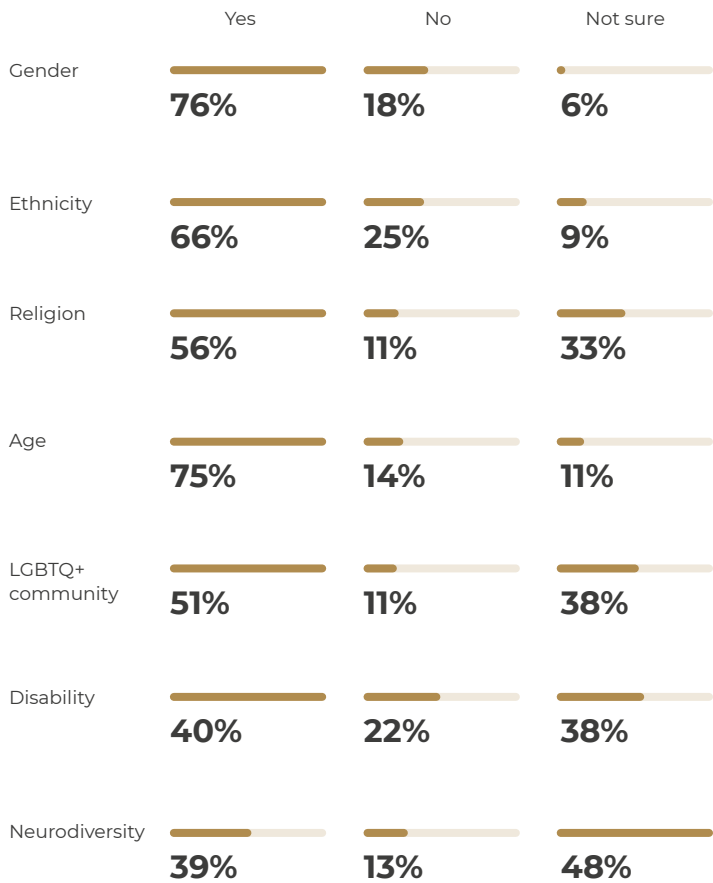
Do you feel your (or most recent) organisation, supports and encourages diversity in the workplace?



Does your company publish information on their gender pay gap?



In your opinion, do you believe your organisation is sufficiently diverse in the following areas?



OUR DIVERSITY PROMISE

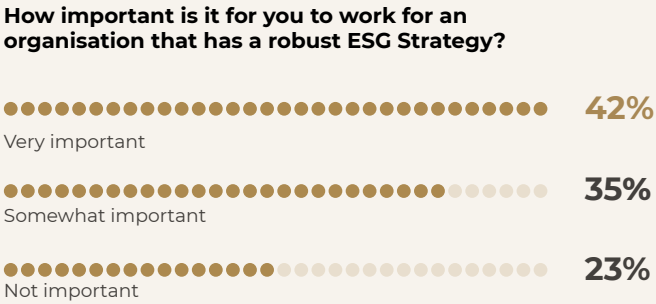
As a talent consultancy, we have an unwavering responsibility to represent everyone in our network in a fair and ethical manner. We commit to providing the same high level service to every professional we work with regardless of their age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and ethnicity.

We recognise and advocate that a diverse workforce contributes positively to a company's success and growth. It's not just about the service we provide, true appreciation for diversity, equality, and inclusion needs to be at our core. We pledge to keep embedding these values in our culture, so that as advisors, we feel empowered to afford the same opportunities we receive, to the professionals we represent.

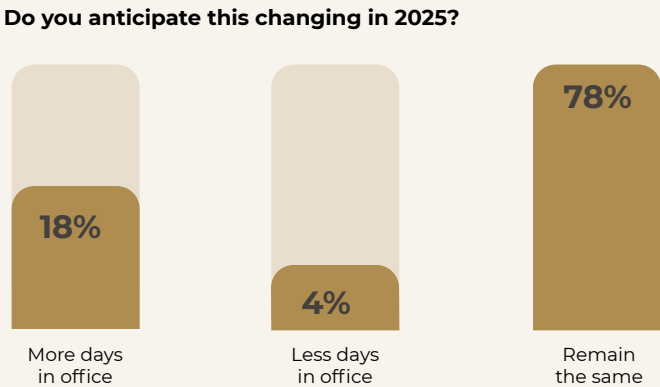


Visit our dedicated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion hub:
www.markssattin.co.uk/diversity-and-inclusion

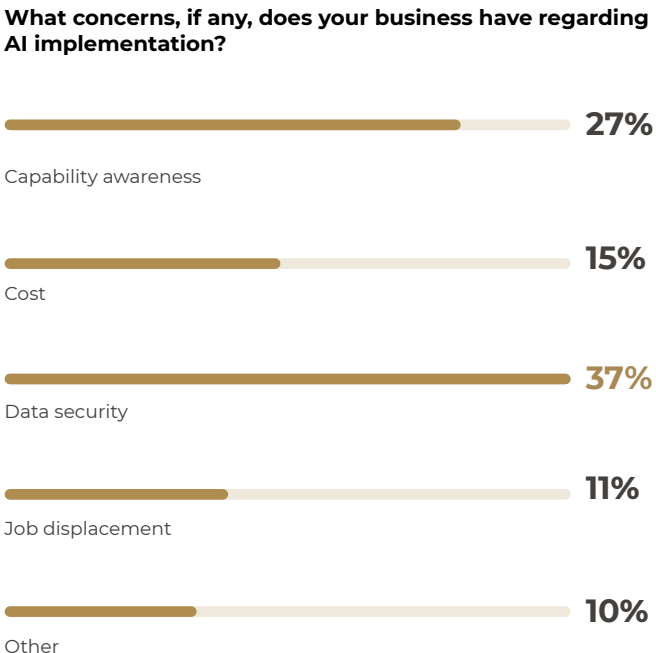
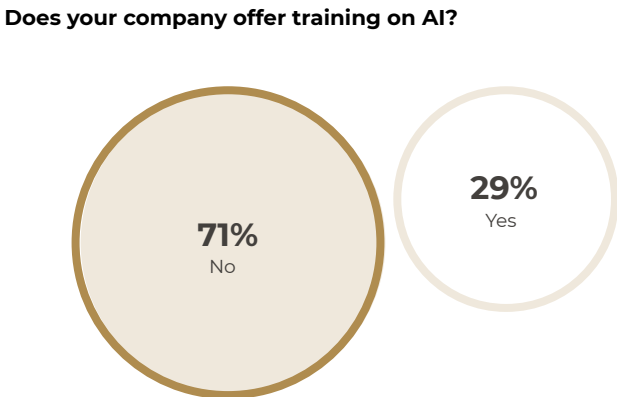
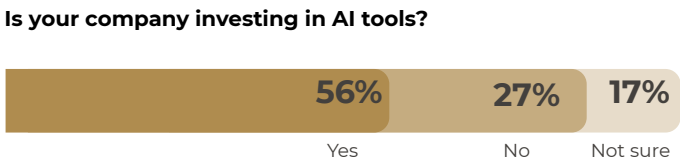
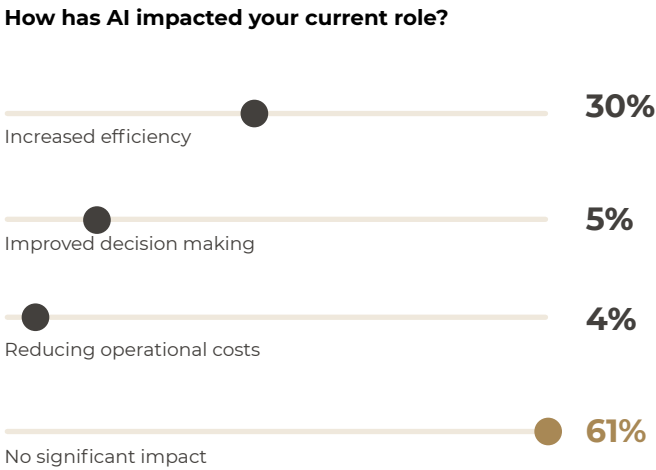
ESG



WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY



AI



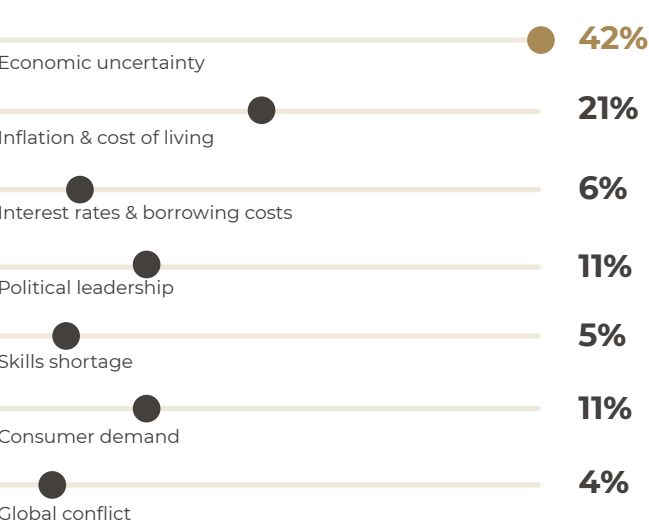
BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

To gain a deeper understanding of how economic conditions are affecting recruitment and talent strategy, we incorporated market confidence questions in this year's survey. With over 1,800 respondents sharing their perspectives, here are some valuable insights into hiring outlooks and market sentiment for the remainder of the year.

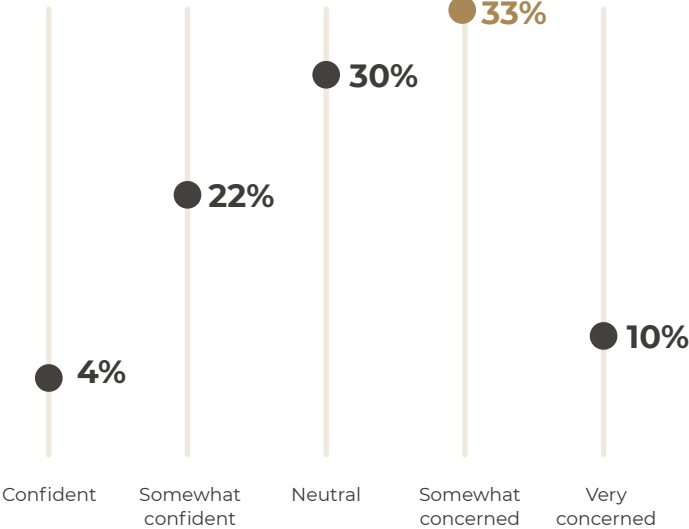
The results of our 2025 Business Confidence Survey highlight that companies are taking a measured approach to recruitment, focusing on selective hiring and investing in strategic areas like digital transformation, technology, and regulatory compliance. Businesses are adapting to the changing economic climate by prioritising resilience, innovation, and cost control. While some

are embarking on major transformation initiatives, others are maintaining stability and carefully navigating uncertainty. This strategic focus on transformation is expected to drive demand for specialised talent, particularly in technology and legal sectors. Overall, while there are concerns about the long-term impact of economic conditions, businesses are staying agile, leveraging opportunities for growth in high-demand sectors. The trend toward stability, coupled with a clear preference for flexible work and cautious relocation decisions, reflects the broader sentiment of managing risk in an unpredictable environment. As we move forward through 2025, the outlook remains one of adaptability and strategic investment in the face of ongoing change.

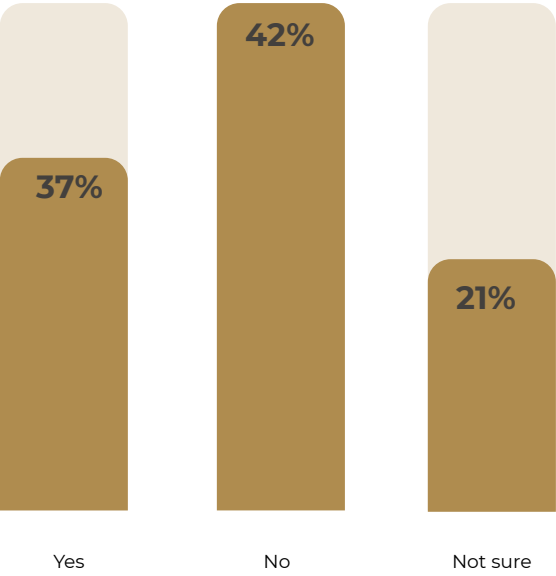
What factors are currently impacting your business confidence the most?



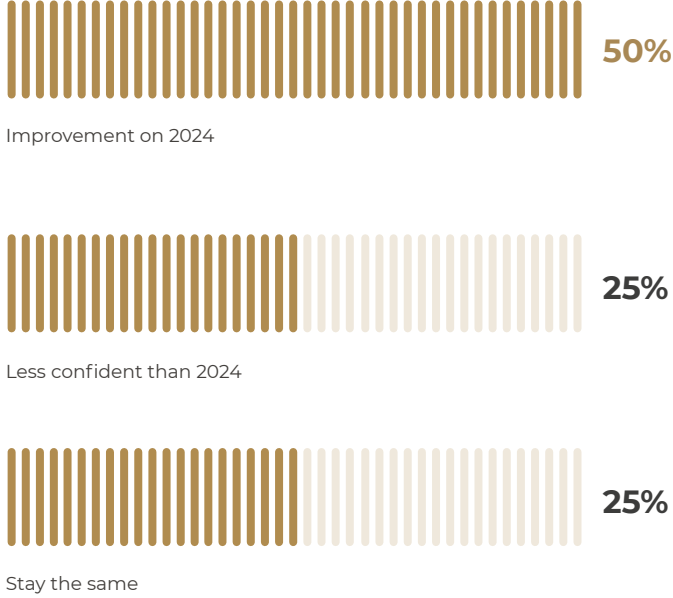
How optimistic are you regarding the UK & Ireland's economy?



Is your current (or recent) business embarking on any significant Change Programmes in 2025?



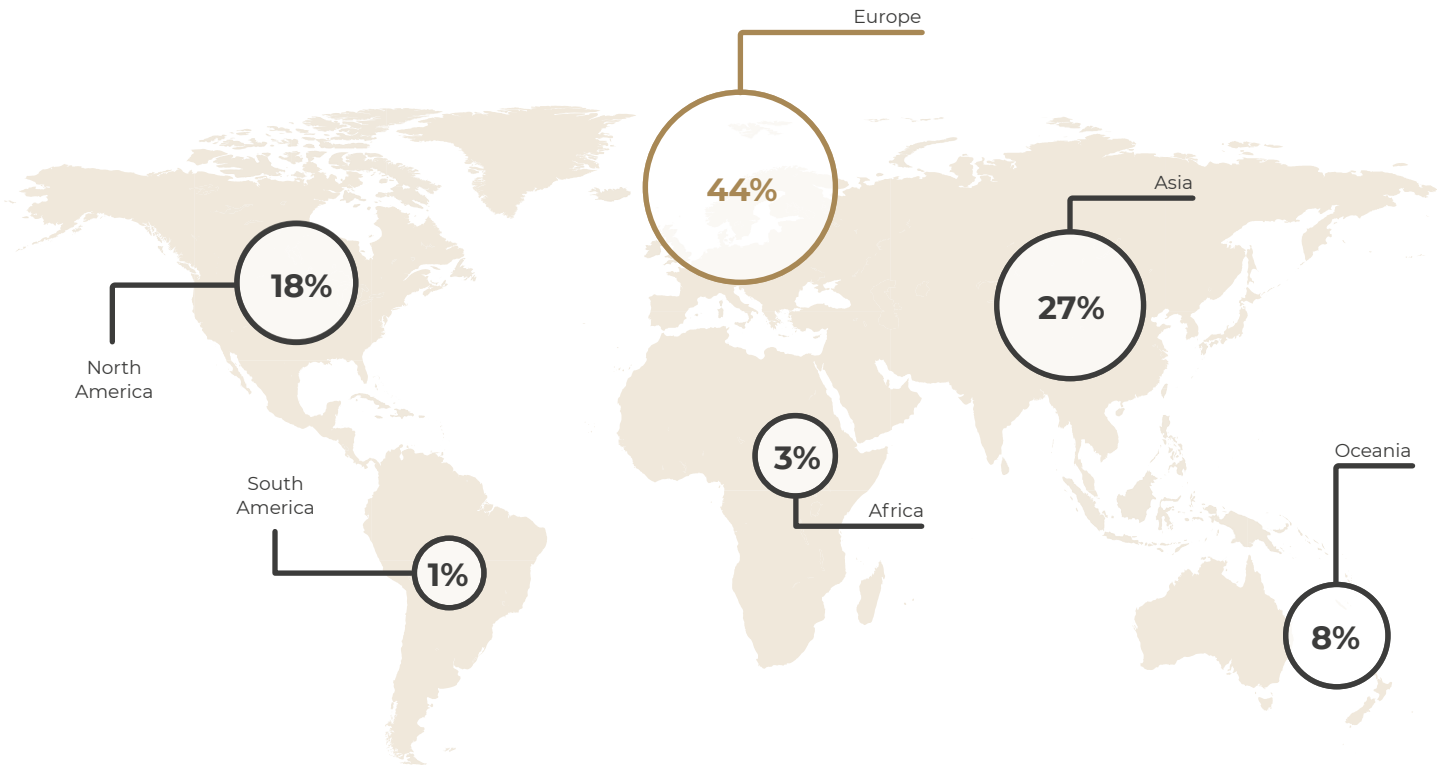
How do you expect your current (or recent) company to perform over the next 12 months?



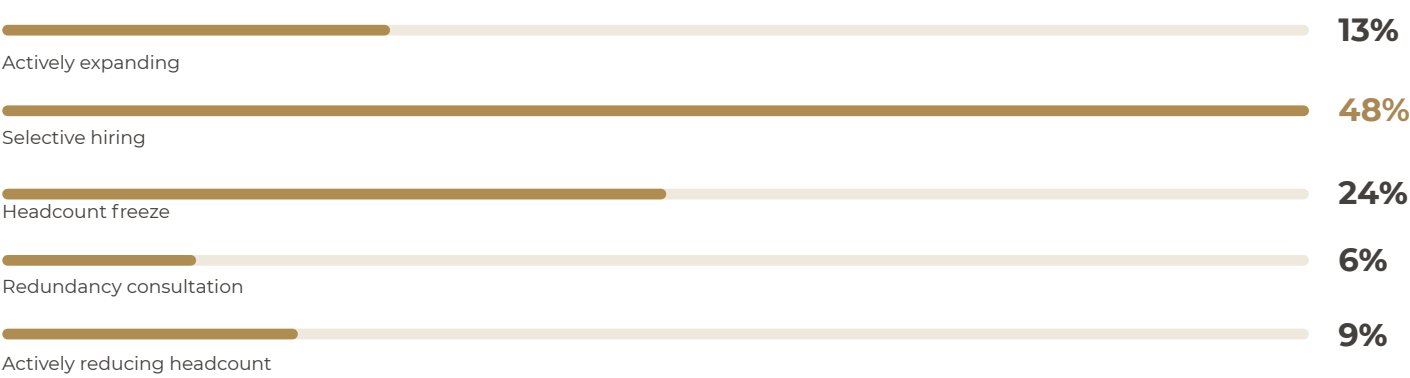
Would you relocate in the next 12 months?



Which international location would you relocate to?



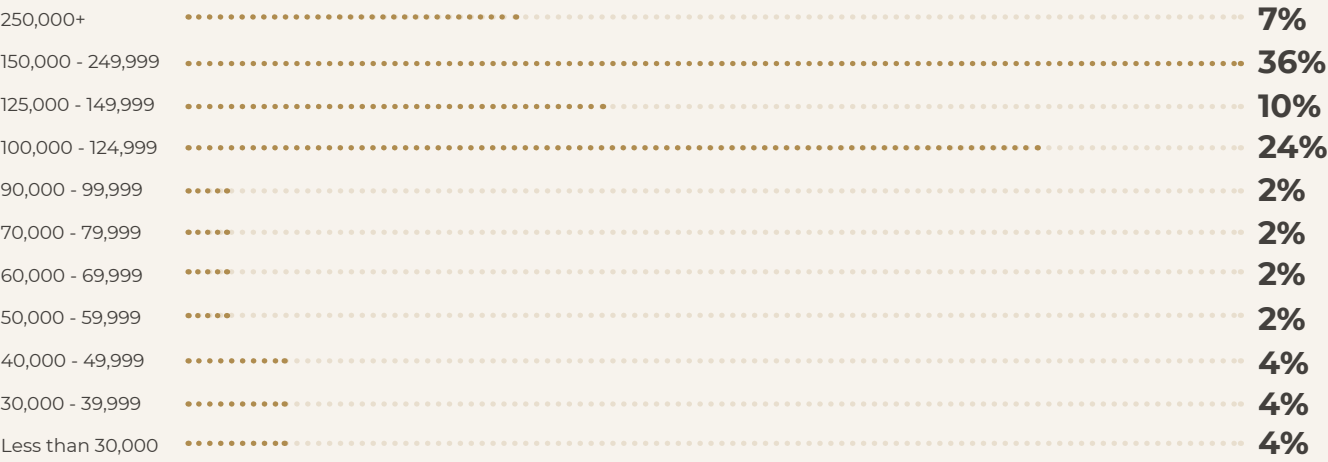
What is your business's current hiring outlook?



KEY FINDINGS

What is your current (or most recent) basic salary?

PERMANENT / FTC



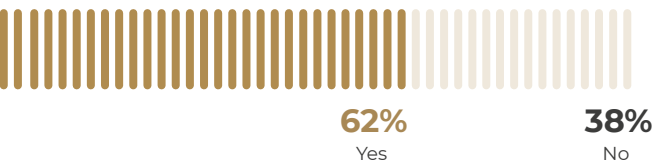
Are you satisfied with your current pay?



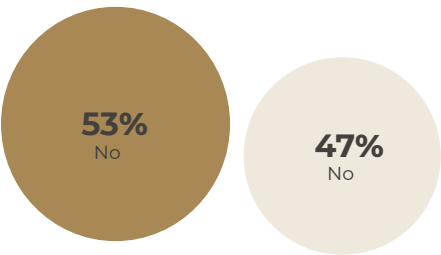
Top 3 reasons for leaving last role



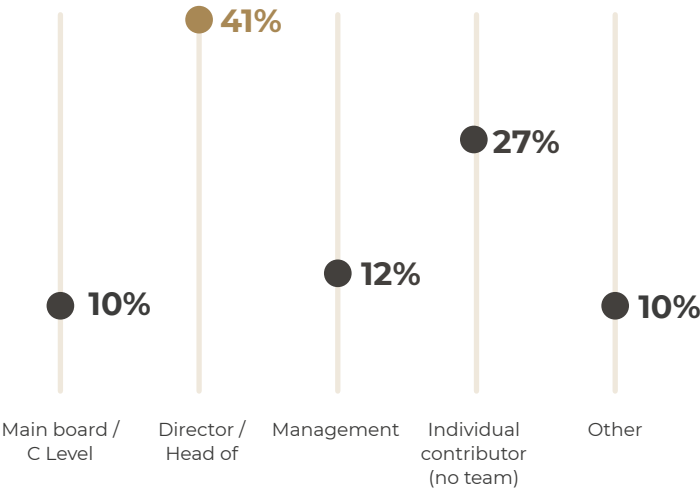
Are you satisfied in your current role?



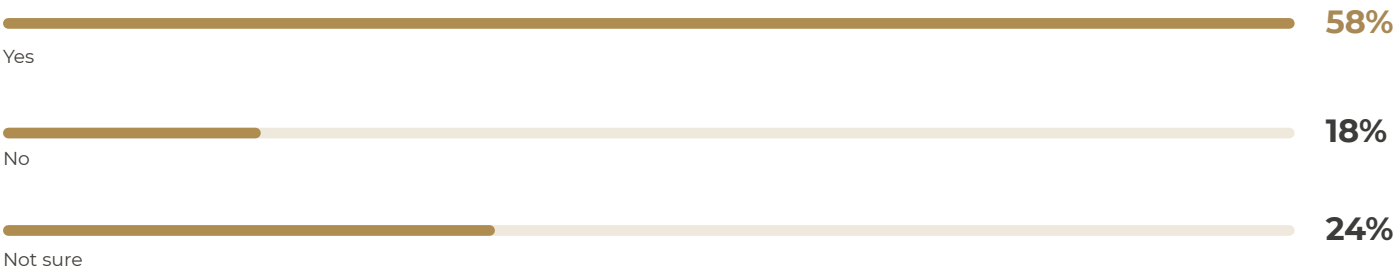
Do you envisage changing jobs in the next 12 months?



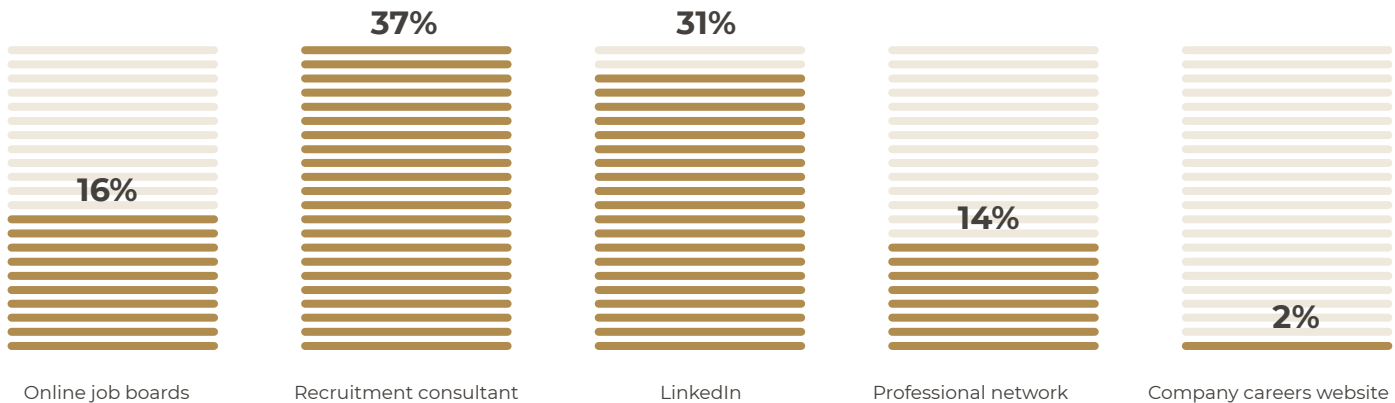
What level is your current (or most recent) position?



Do you feel your job is secure in 2025?



When looking for a role, which of the below would you use?



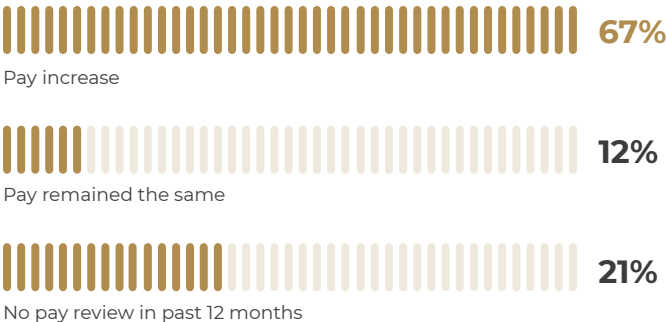
Top 5 benefits



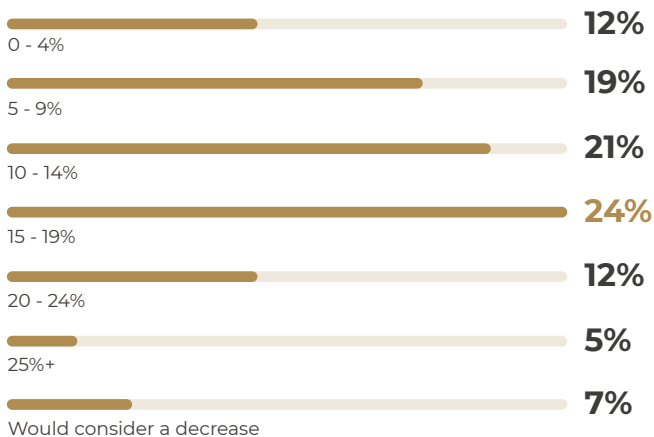
Are you happy with your current benefits?



What was the outcome of your last pay review?



When looking for a new position, what salary increase would you target?



MARKET INSIGHT

Our Marks Sattin legal team specialise in placing legal professionals of all seniority levels within the financial services and commerce & industry sectors. Each of these industries differs in the challenges and market trends that affect the way in which their legal teams operate. As a result, we want to cover the different in-house legal trends we have seen across both industries, and our predictions for the remainder of 2025 and beyond!

IN-HOUSE LEGAL: FINANCIAL SERVICES

Within the financial services industry, legal hiring has thankfully started its resurgence in 2025, particularly within the banking (where there had been hiring freezes), insurers, fintechs, and investment managers space. We are seeing a shift in legal counsel becoming more embedded as a strategic partner to other business functions, specifically supporting compliance, risk management, and providing more advice to enhance innovation (from the product and regulatory perspective) which is nice to see!

We have recently seen more demand for candidates with:

- **Regulatory compliance expertise (FCA/Prudential regimes)**
- **Fintech and payments law experience**
- **Crypto and digital asset regulation understanding**
- **A Corporate trained background and commercial contracts experience**

In relation to salaries within financial services, general counsel salaries have been reporting steady improvement (to be more competitive with private practice), with mid-senior lawyers possessing more niche experience and skillsets becoming even more in demand. With the growth of investment within the digital assets & crypto space, it would not be surprising if these sectors start to soar and as a result the need for an in-house lawyer with these expertise starts to intensify (especially when these sectors become more regulated!). It is clear that hybrid working remains a key priority for candidates, and companies that are able to offer a great culture along with flexibility are becoming more attractive than roles offering a slightly higher salary with no flexibility. We are definitely still feeling the effects of Covid working, which is not necessarily such a bad thing!

IN-HOUSE LEGAL: COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

The in-house legal market within commerce & industry (C&I) spanning sectors such as retail, tech, media & entertainment, pharma, energy and manufacturing, presents a more complex landscape. Although many companies are still steering tight margins that make it hard to match private practice salaries, the importance of in-house legal teams has never been clearer. Today's in-house lawyers are expected to do far more than just provide legal advice, they're becoming trusted advisors at the heart of business decision-making. Whether it's guiding the business through complex regulatory changes, supporting commercial growth, or helping shape operational strategy, legal teams are playing a much more strategic and influential role across organisations. We've noticed a clear trend in the C&I space: companies are increasingly looking for lawyers who come from a solid corporate transactional background but are also comfortable stepping into broader commercial roles. These individuals are especially valued for their ability to add meaningful input on M&A and governance matters, areas that are key for growing or scaling businesses. It's this blend of technical expertise and commercial mindset that allows them to make a real impact, supporting leadership teams through change and helping drive the business forward. This shift is reshaping the profile of the modern in-house lawyer, this includes approach, cross-functional collaboration, and the ability to balance legal risk with commercial agility.

When it comes to remuneration, the commerce & industry sector continues to face some challenges in keeping pace with private practice salaries, particularly at the junior to mid-level. However, we're seeing a growing willingness from businesses - especially if companies are PE backed or those in high-growth sectors like tech, energy, and media, they tend to offer more competitive packages to attract and retain top legal talent.

We have recently seen more demand for candidates with:

- **Corporate transactional background with a view to taking on a broader commercial role**
- **ESG-focused legal hires, particularly in manufacturing and renewable energy**
- **Legal operations roles, reflecting the move toward efficiency and technology AI integration**
- **IP lawyers across retail and media and entertainment**

SECTOR INSIGHTS

Media & Entertainment: Growing demand for in-house lawyers with IP, licensing, and digital content expertise, especially in AI and streaming.

Retail: Legal roles focused on contract risk, compliance and IP, with copyright licensing laws.

Tech: Strong demand for strategic legal hires in data protection, SaaS agreements, and AI governance, especially in PE-backed growth firms.

Energy: The energy sector's shift toward net zero, renewables, legal teams are critical to supporting the energy transition, with demand focused on regulatory, ESG, and project finance expertise, especially in renewables and cross-border infrastructure deals.

Pharma: In-house legal hiring is centred on corporate governance, regulatory compliance, and market access, as companies navigate global oversight and invest in digital health and AI-driven innovation.

Manufacturing: Legal functions are focused on contract risk, supply chain resilience, trade regulation, and ESG compliance.

LOOKING AHEAD: PREDICTIONS FOR LATE 2025 AND BEYOND!

As we move further into 2025, the UK legal hiring market is expected to continue to pick up, with several key themes emerging:

- In-house companies will continue to keep and win candidates through providing a fantastic culture with hybrid working, and career development at the forefront.
- In-house employers will continue to become more innovative, offering equity, enhanced flexibility, and bespoke benefits to keep attracting talent.
- Financial services hiring will likely start to intensify within the digital assets & crypto space, with continued hiring in the investment management space.
- Commerce & industry will continue to evolve beyond traditional advisory work, with growing demand for commercially-minded lawyers who can support ESG, tech innovation, legal operations, and cross-functional decision-making, particularly in scale-up companies.

However, the most important trend and prediction to note is that a “tug of war” between private practice and in-house legal for candidates is expected to intensify. While there is no doubt that salaries within private practice firms will be higher, lawyers are increasingly seeking to see the impact of their work first-hand and be a part of a business. They very much desire greater flexibility within a company with a fantastic culture that truly supports their long-term personal and professional growth at the forefront. Therefore, we will see some interesting moves, all dependent on motivations!

CONCLUSION

Legal hiring across both financial services and commerce & industry reflects the evolving role of in-house counsel, from technical advisor to strategic business partner. Financial services is currently enjoying a more robust recovery with a sharp focus on regulatory expertise and innovation alignment, while C&I presents a more varied and commercially complex environment where cross-functional and sector-specific expertise is critical. Candidates seeking structured regulatory roles may lean toward FS, while those looking for commercial breadth and impact across industries may find C&I more appealing.



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SALARY GUIDE

PRIVATE PRACTICE BACKGROUND

| | PQE | US/WHITE SHOE | MAGIC CIRCLE | SILVER CIRCLE | TOP 50 |
|---|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| C&I (CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL) | | | | | |
| Legal Counsel | NQ | £90,000 - £100,000 | £80,000 - £100,000 | £80,000 - £90,000 | £60,000 - £70,000 |
| Legal Counsel | 1 - 3 years | £100,000 - £120,000 | £90,000 - £110,000 | £80,000 - £100,000 | £80,000 - £90,000 |
| Legal Counsel | 4 - 6 years | £130,000 - £150,000 | £120,000 - £140,000 | £110,000 - £130,000 | £100,000 - £120,000 |
| Senior Legal Counsel | 6+ years | £140,000 - £170,000 | £140,000 - £160,000 | £130,000 - £150,000 | £120,000 - £140,000 |
| Head of Legal | 10+ years | £220,000+ | £190,000+ | £170,000+ | £150,000+ |
| General Counsel & CLO | N/A | £270,000+ | £240,000+ | £210,000+ | £180,000+ |

PRIVATE PRACTICE BACKGROUND

| | PQE | US/WHITE SHOE | MAGIC CIRCLE | SILVER CIRCLE | TOP 50 |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| SPECIAL COUNSEL (C&I) | | | | | |
| IP Legal Counsel | 1 - 6 years | £100,000 - £150,000 | £90,000 - £140,000 | £80,000 - £130,000 | £60,000 - £120,000 |
| IP Senior Legal Counsel | 6+ years | £140,000 - £170,000 | £140,000 - £160,000 | £130,000 - £150,000 | £120,000 - £140,000 |

PRIVATE PRACTICE BACKGROUND

| | PQE | US/WHITE SHOE | MAGIC CIRCLE | SILVER CIRCLE | TOP 50 |
|--|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| FS (CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL) | | | | | |
| Legal Counsel | NQ | £90,000 - £120,000 | £90,000 - £110,000 | £80,000 - £100,000 | £70,000 - £90,000 |
| Legal Counsel | 1 - 3 years | £110,000 - £150,000 | £100,000 - £140,000 | £90,000 - £120,000 | £80,000 - £100,000 |
| Legal Counsel | 4 - 6 years | £130,000 - £160,000 | £120,000 - £150,000 | £110,000 - £140,000 | £100,000 - £130,000 |
| Senior Legal Counsel | 6+ years | £150,000 - £180,000 | £140,000 - £170,000 | £130,000 - £160,000 | £120,000 - £150,000 |
| Head of Legal | 10+ years | £240,000+ | £200,000+ | £180,000+ | £160,000+ |
| General Counsel & CLO | N/A | £280,000+ | £250,000+ | £220,000+ | £190,000+ |

PRIVATE PRACTICE BACKGROUND

| | PQE | US/WHITE SHOE | MAGIC CIRCLE | SILVER CIRCLE | TOP 50 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| SPECIAL COUNSEL (FS) | | | | | |
| Regulatory Legal Counsel | 1 - 6 years | £120,000 - £150,000 | £100,000 - £130,000 | £90,000 - £110,000 | £70,000 - £90,000 |
| Regulatory Senior Legal Counsel | 6+ years | £140,000 - £180,000 | £130,000 - £150,000 | £120,000 - £140,000 | £110,000 - £130,000 |

PRIVATE PRACTICE BACKGROUND

| | PQE | US/WHITE SHOE | MAGIC CIRCLE | SILVER CIRCLE | TOP 50 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| PP JOB TITLE (CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL) | | | | | |
| Newly Qualified Associate | NQ | £160,000 - £180,000 | £150,000 | £110,000 - £120,000 | £80,000 - £100,000 |
| Associate | 1 - 3 years | £170,000 - £220,000 | £160,000 - £190,000 | £120,000 - £140,000 | £90,000 - £120,000 |
| Senior Associate | 4 - 6 years | £200,000 - £270,000 | £180,000 - £240,000 | £130,000 - £170,000 | £100,000 - £150,000 |
| Counsel | 6+ years | £290,000+ | £260,000+ | £190,000+ | £170,000+ |
| Partner | 10+ years | £350,000+ | £300,000+ | £250,000+ | £210,000+ |

SALARY RANGE

| SUPPORT | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Company Secretarial Assistant | £65,000 - £75,000 |
| Assistant Company Secretary | £75,000 - £100,000 |
| Company Secretary | £100,000 - £150,000 |
| Corporate Services Assistant Co-Sec | £45,000 - £55,000 |
| Corporate Services Co-Sec | £55,000+ |
| Paralegal (Pre TC) | £30,000 - £50,000 |
| Career Paralegal (-5 years exp) | £60,000+ |
| Career Paralegal (5+ years exp) | £75,000+ |

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MARKS SATTIN

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