

Salary & Benefits

Benchmarker 2024



Salary and Benefits Benchmarker 2024

Understanding the legal recruitment landscape

We manage over **35,000** applications every year

We acted on over **6,000** job instructions in 2023

We have a **1 in 4** CV to interview ratio

We see an average time to hire of **14 days**

1 in 3 CV to interview offer

About Us

Douglas Scott Legal Recruitment are the market leading legal sector recruitment specialists, with 20 years of heritage and legal sector know across national and international legal sectors. From offices in the UK's major cities, US and UAE, we enable, and create momentum, at all stages in legal careers and drive growth in turnover and capability across regional and Private Practice, Commercial, and International law firms, and Commerce and Industry's In-house legal departments. Plain English, we pair great candidates with great companies, are bloody good at what we do and the benchmark for quality in the legal sector recruitment marketplace.

The Salary and Benefits Benchmarker

In 2013 we had the foresight to ask why and we were pleasantly surprised to discover that legal busy legal professionals were prepared to give up their time to tell us their stories through data. Since then, tens of thousands of lawyers have had their say and helped us deliver the Salary and Benefits Benchmarker series, which is by far the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in the UK.

A big thanks once again to the 4,000 survey respondents, 3,500 new candidate registrations and hirers who have provided us with the numbers and insight to help bring the 2024 Salary and Benefits Benchmarker to life.

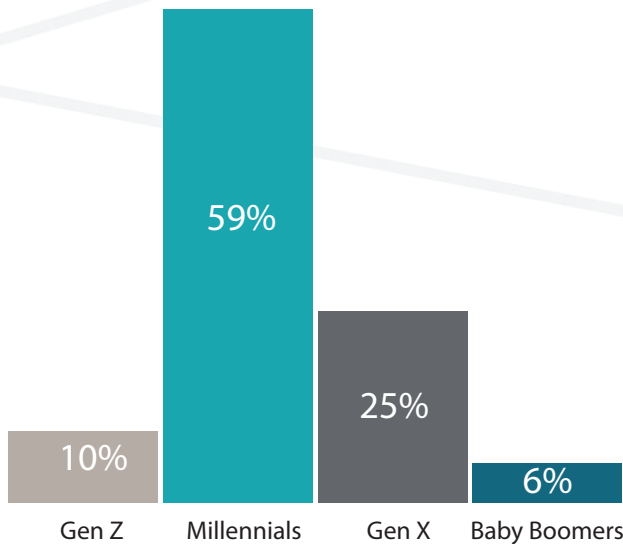
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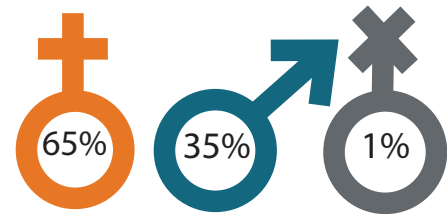
Demographics of Respondents

Generation Millennial dominated this year's salary survey, with 59% of respondents coming from this age group. For the first time ever, we have had people identifying outside the gender binary of previous years, with 1% ticking neither male or female. We attracted Private Practice and In-house respondents from law firms, commerce and industry, public sector and not for profit, all shapes and sizes across the England and Wales jurisdiction. 34% of those surveyed spoke at least one other language.

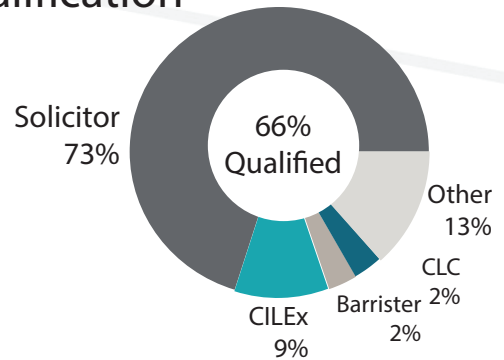
Age Range by Generation



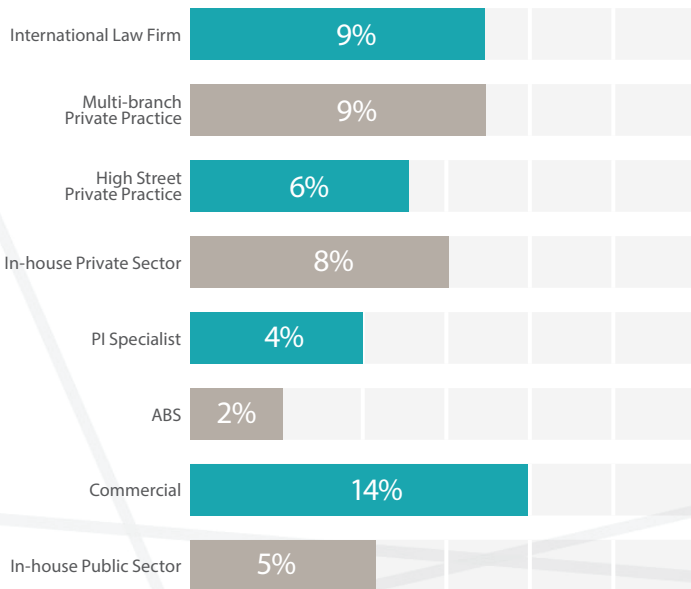
Identity



Qualification



In-house vs. Private Practice



In-house respondents to our survey make up 13% of this year's sample. The Commercial sector makes up 14%, while Private Practice makes up 24% - the largest share of legal firms.

Languages



At a Glance



£55,360

Average Salary



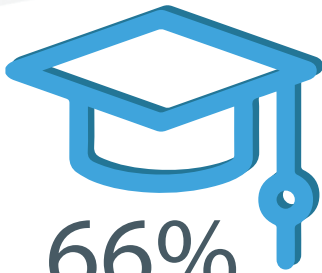
31%

Received a
Bonus



£6860

Average bonus



66%

of Respondents
were Qualified



4 Years, 1
Month

Average time
in a legal job



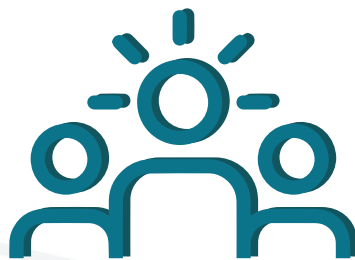
58%

of Respondents
are Happy at Work



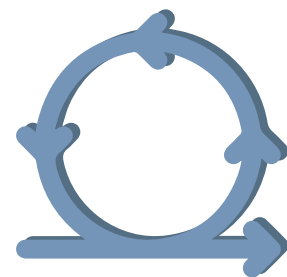
34%

of Respondents
speak a different
Language



62%

of Respondents have
Leadership Aspirations

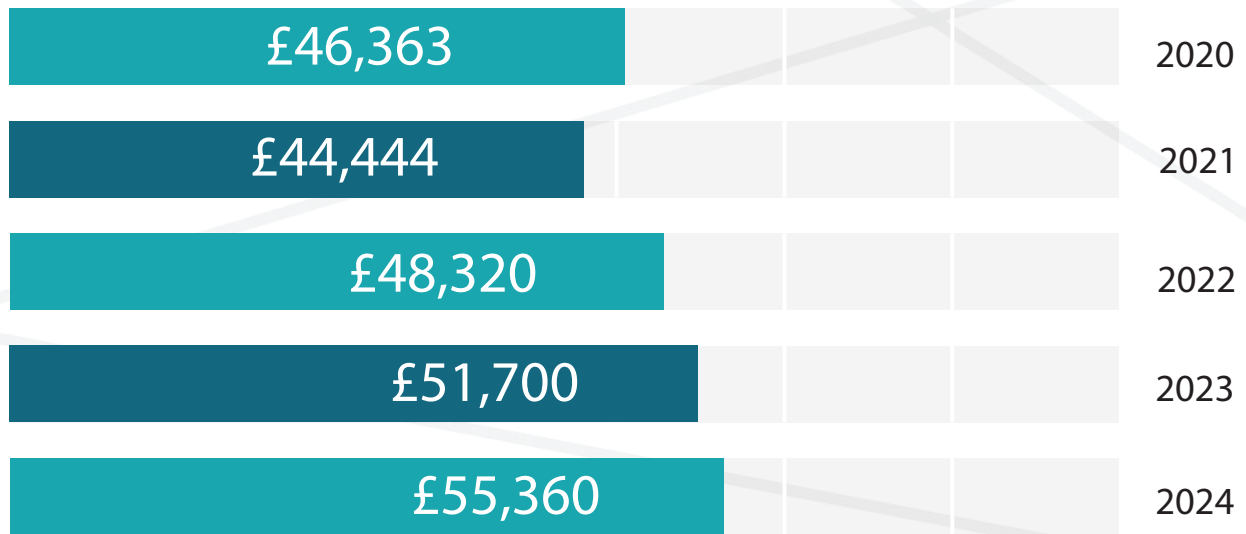


Agile
Working

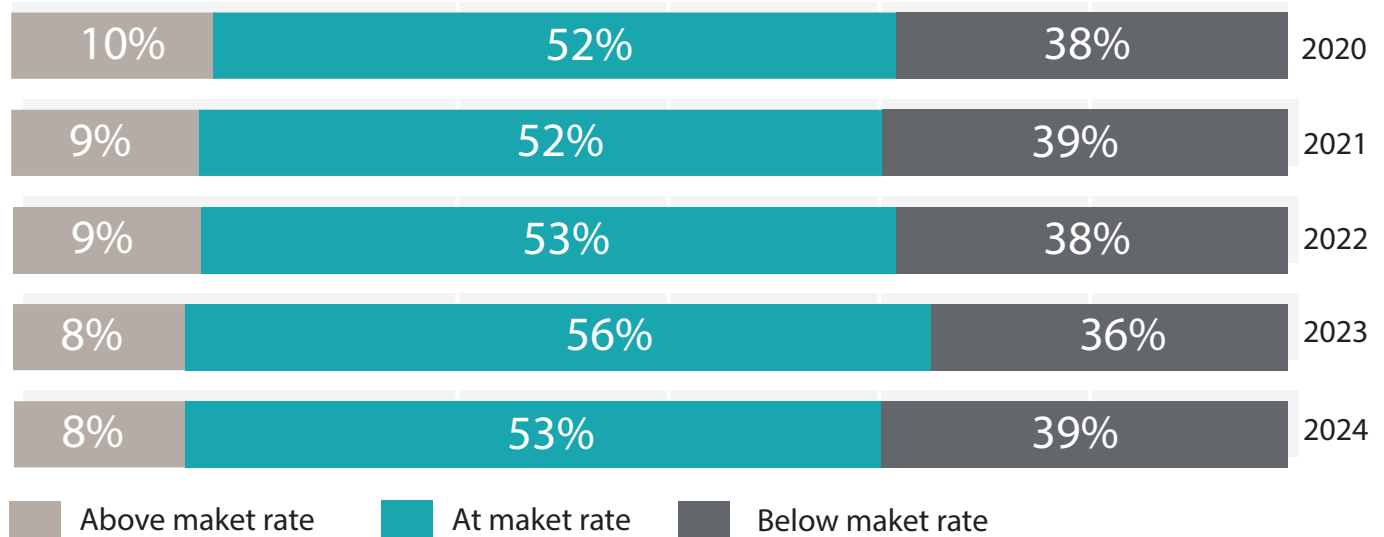
Emerged as
Most Valued Benefit

At a Glance – Money

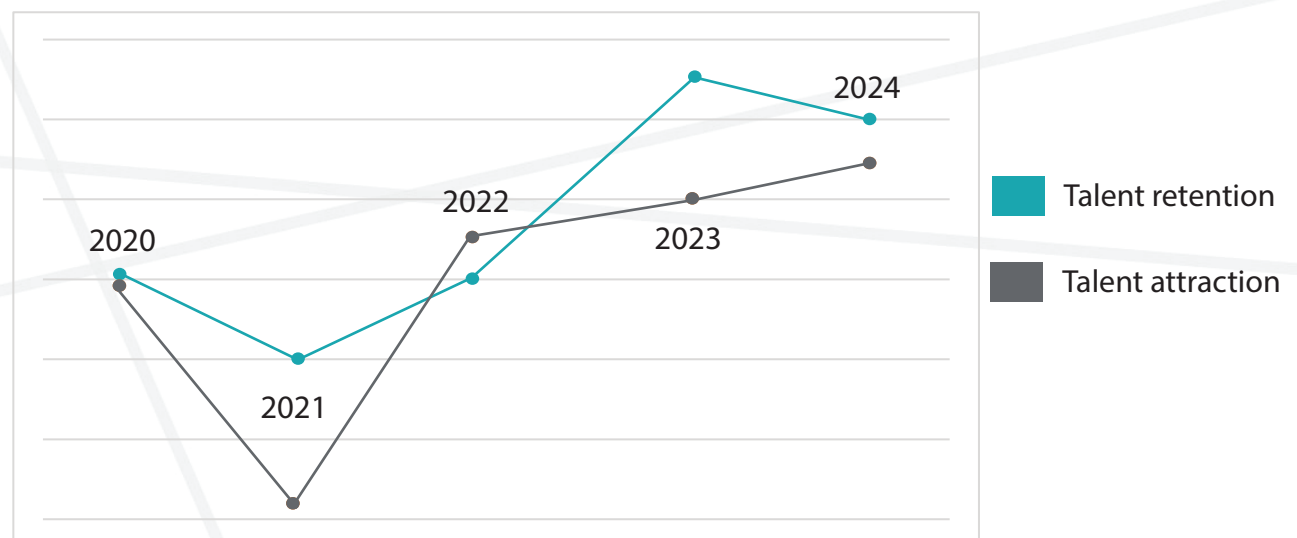
5 Year Average Salary of Cohort



5 Year Salary Sentiment



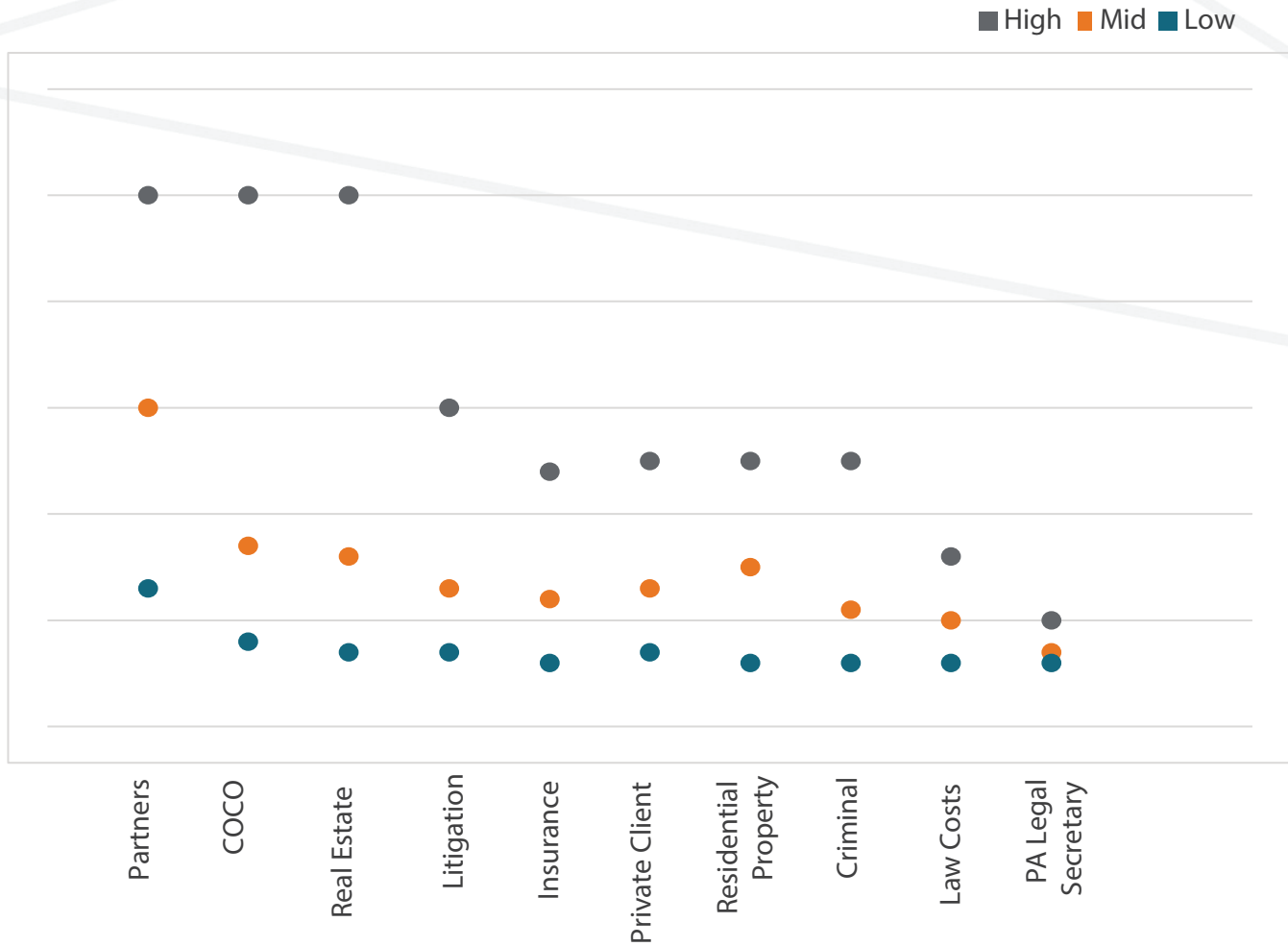
5 Year Legal Sector Wage Inflation Index



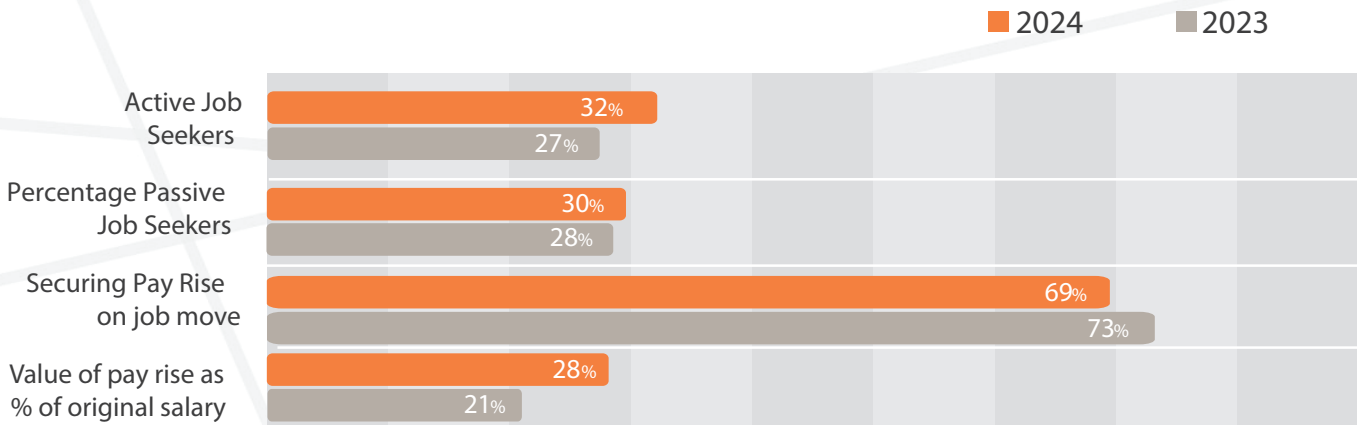
London

The ultra-dynamic London legal sector recruitment market is expected to bounce back following a sharp contraction in 2023. Nearly a third of all legal professionals are actively looking to change jobs this year and that is supported by a healthy passive element of the talent pool. Legal professionals are securing an average 28% increase in salary when they change jobs, a figure super-charged in the main by newly qualified moves and particularly, lawyers who relocate to the capital from firms in the regions. NQ lawyers are picking up an average 66% pay rise when they take a new job in the capital.

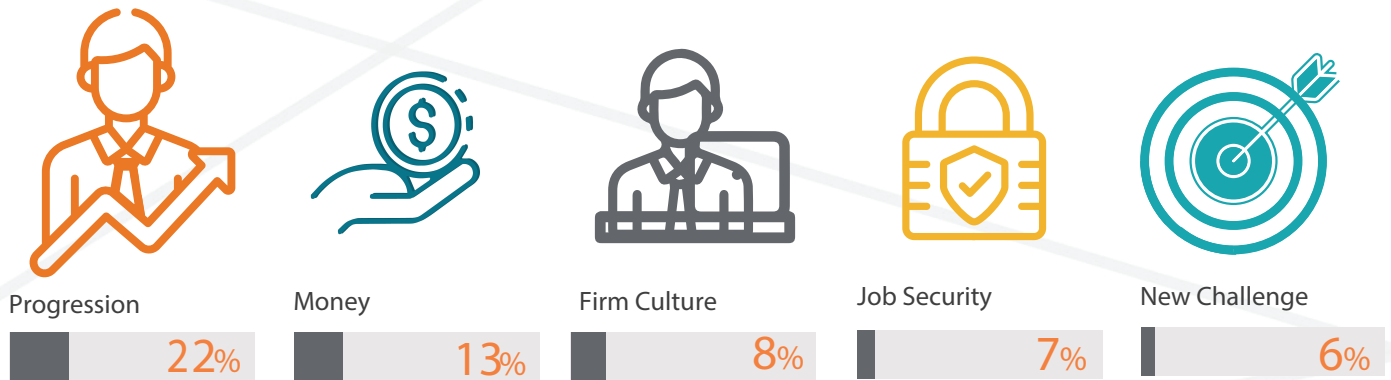
Salaries



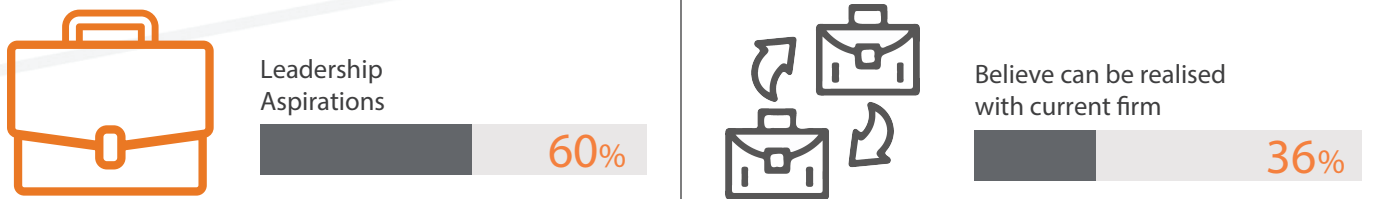
Talent Pool



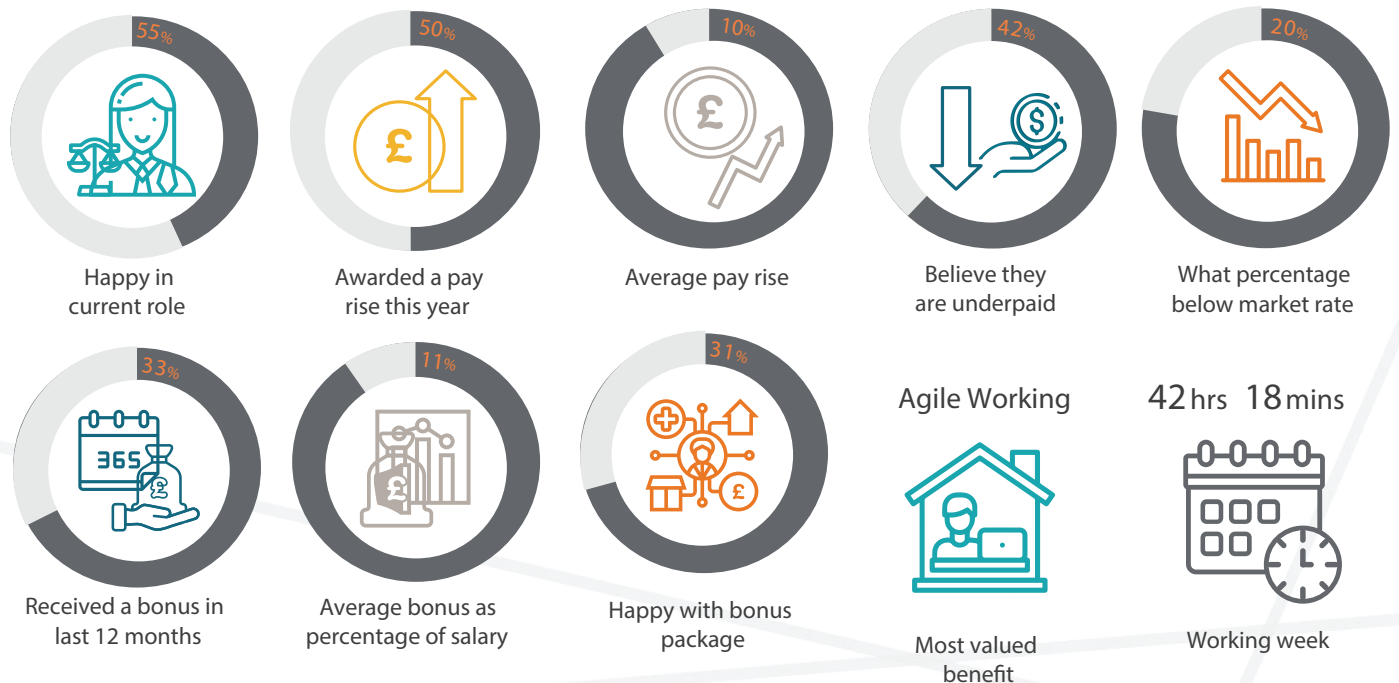
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



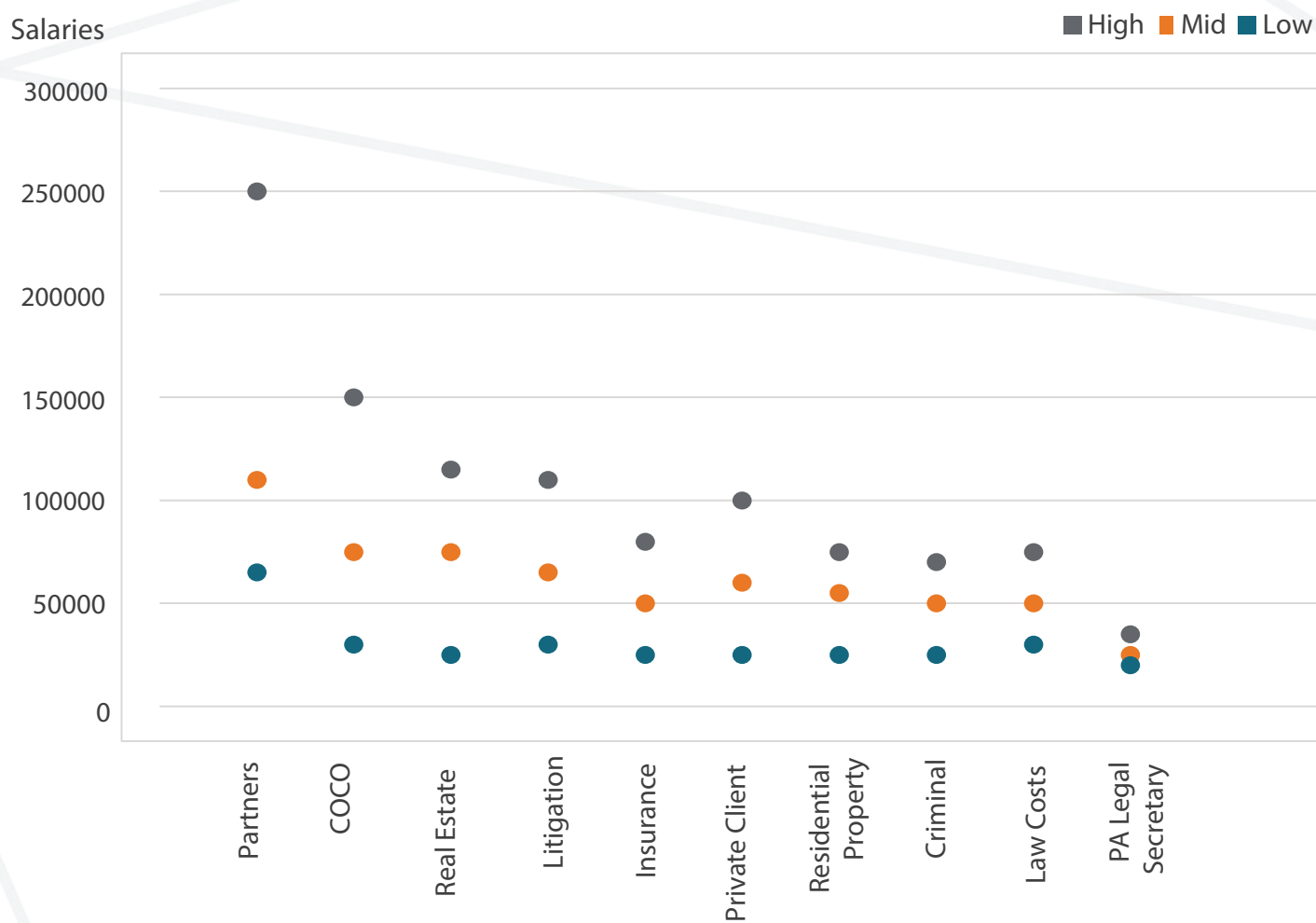
And finally

London will never lose its allure, the money is good, there's so much opportunity, it's an international city with a global footprint that the regions cannot compete with. All that glitters, you have the longest working week in the country, and the lengthiest commute.

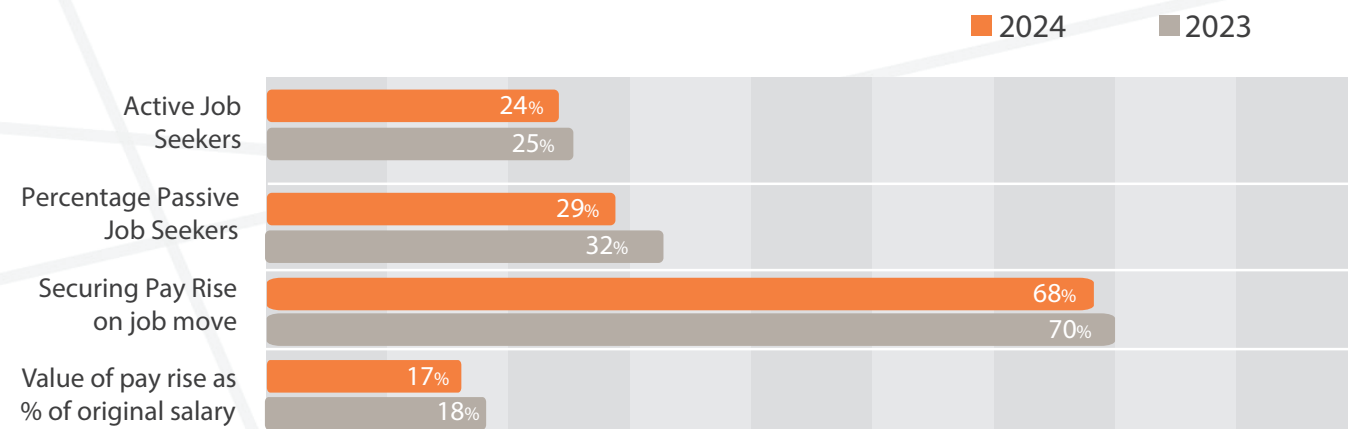
South East

We are expecting a more settled South East legal sector recruitment market this year, more aligned with the country as a whole. Progression is back on top of the list of career motivators, last year it was all about the money being dangled in front of what was then the largest passive talent pool in the country. Roll back to 2022 for the reasons behind that, when law firms couldn't hire for love nor money, the active talent pool was the smallest in the country, with just 19% of legal professionals in the region proactively looking to switch jobs.

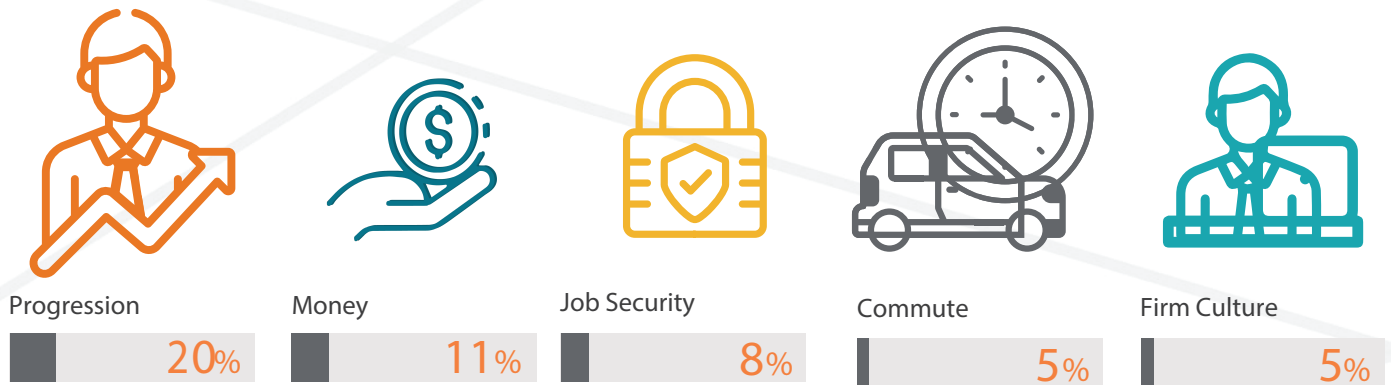
Salaries



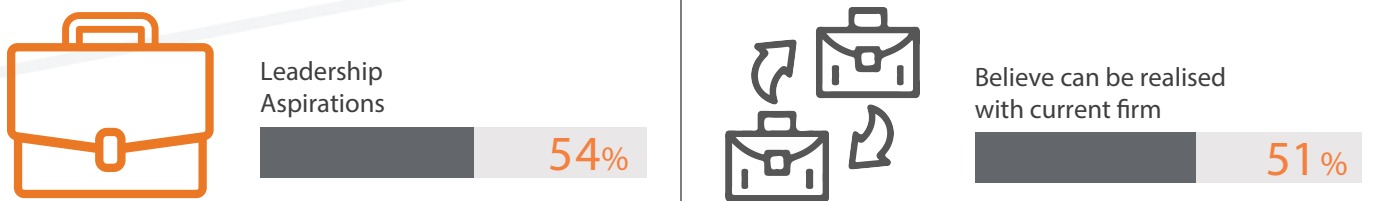
Talent Pool



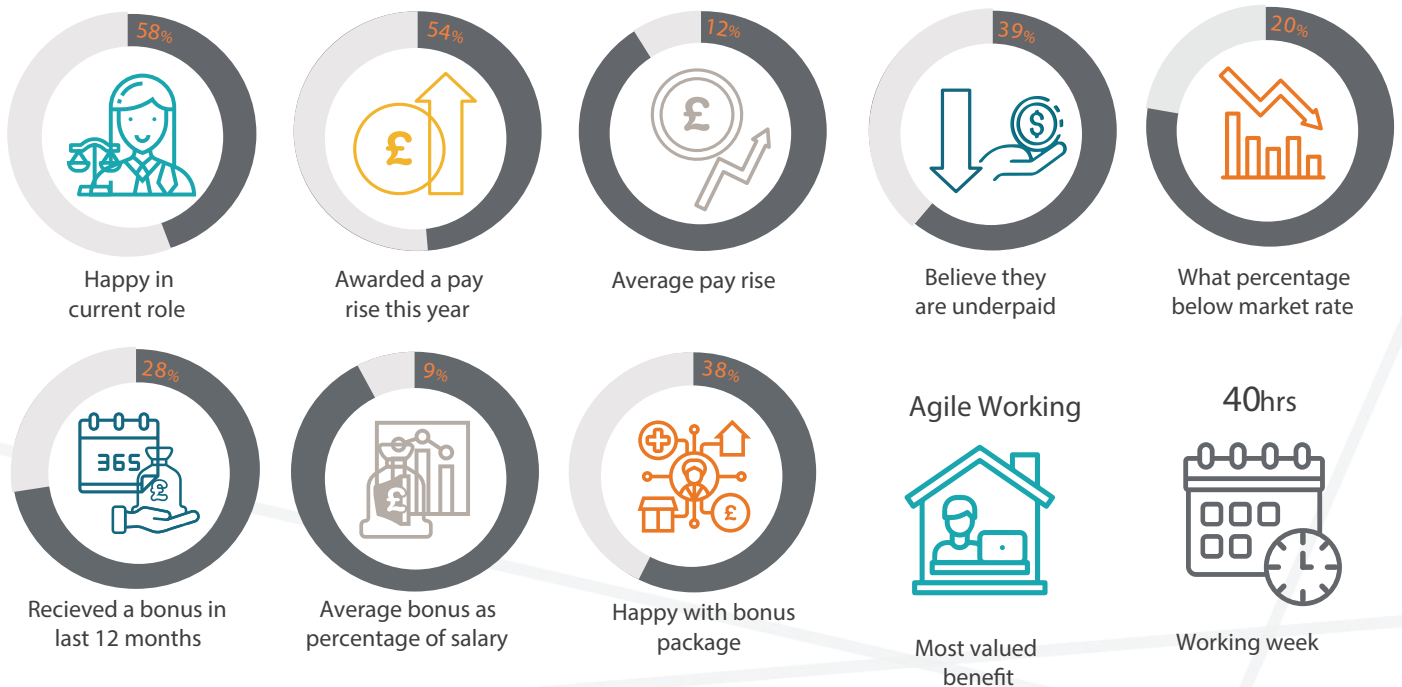
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



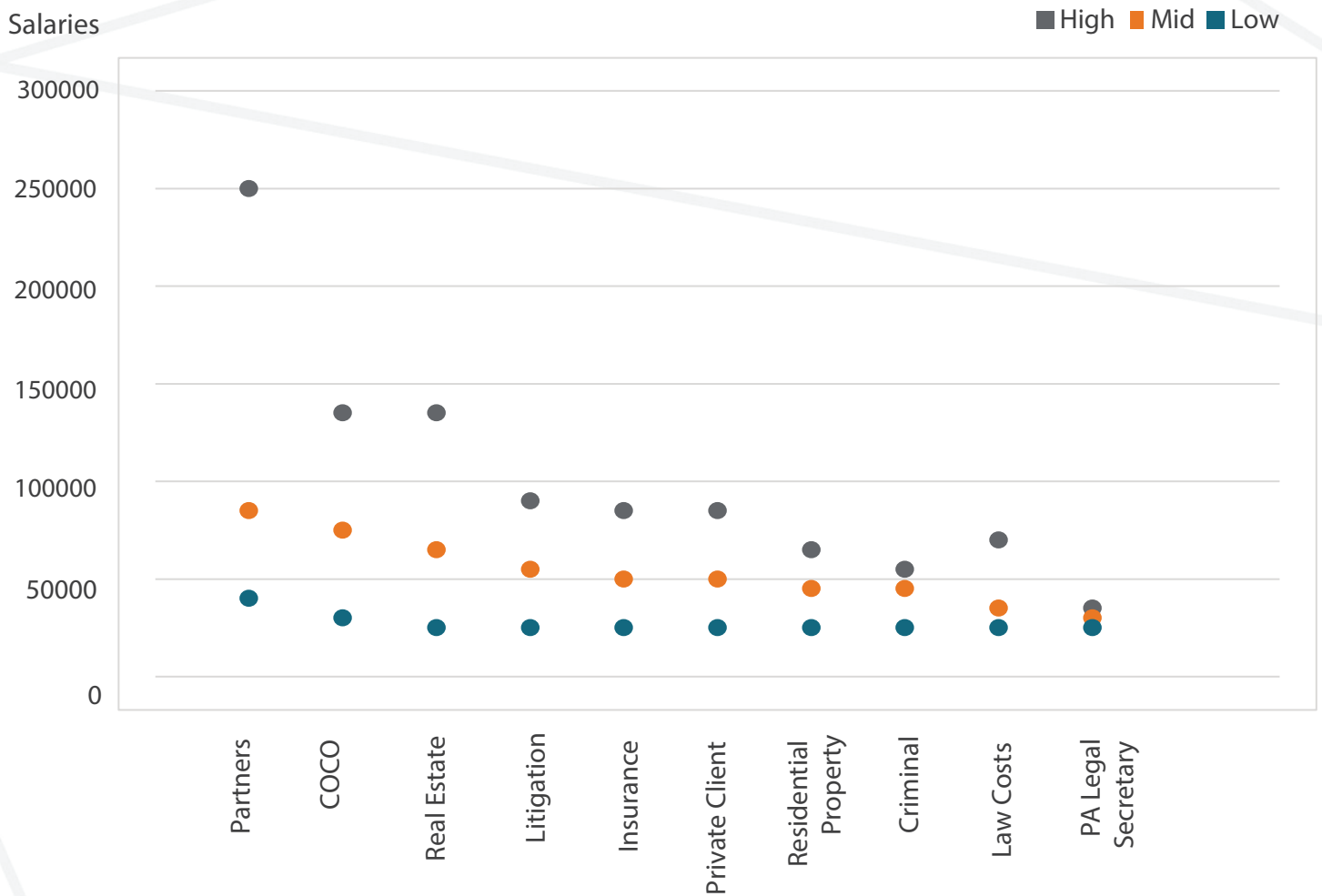
And finally

The sunniest county in the United Kingdom is in the South East of England. Pure coincidence then, now the storm has passed that South East law firms are top ranked for blue skies by legal professionals. 51% believe that Partnership ambitions can be realised with their current employer, compared to a sector low 40% in 2023.

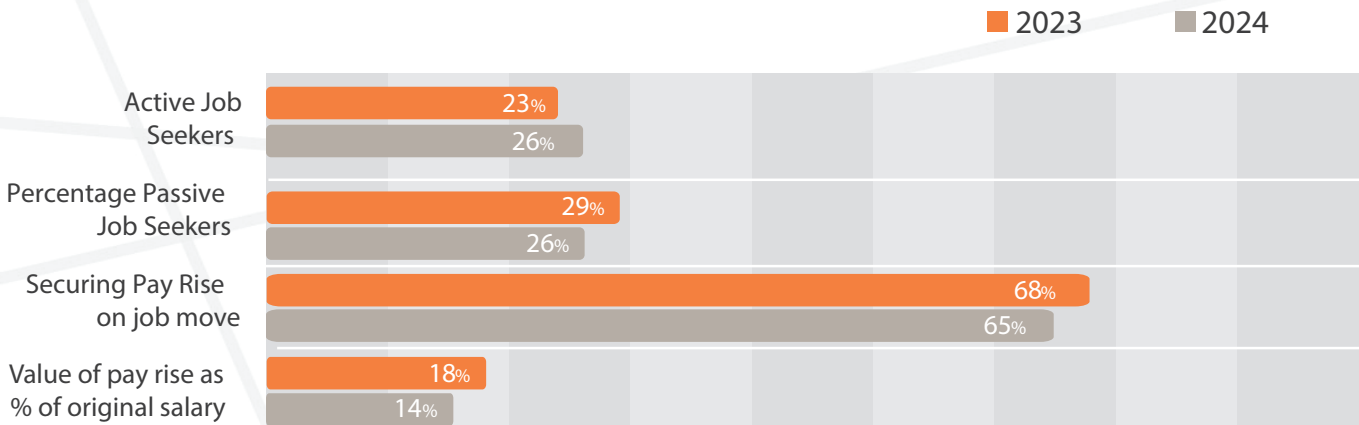
Midlands and Eastern

A healthy enough 2024 outlook for the Midlands and Eastern England legal sector recruitment market, the drop in legal professionals actively looking to change jobs mitigated by a similar level of increase in passive talent who are open to a move if enough boxes are ticked. Money is likely to feature high in the weightings with lawyers who are sat on the fence, more Midlands and Eastern England based legal professionals cite salary as their main career motivator than any other region outside of London. Numbers securing a pay rise on a move and the value of that pay rise, are also ticking up.

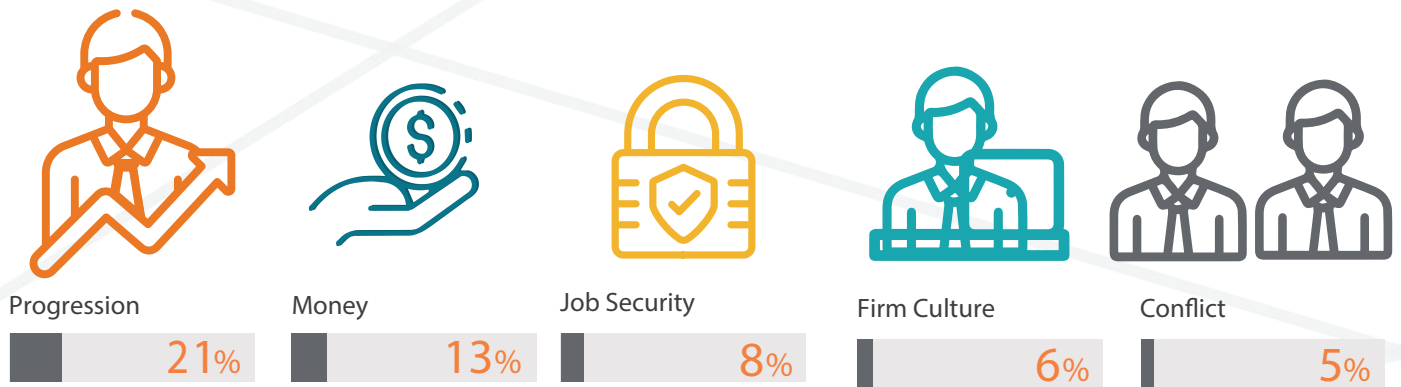
Salaries



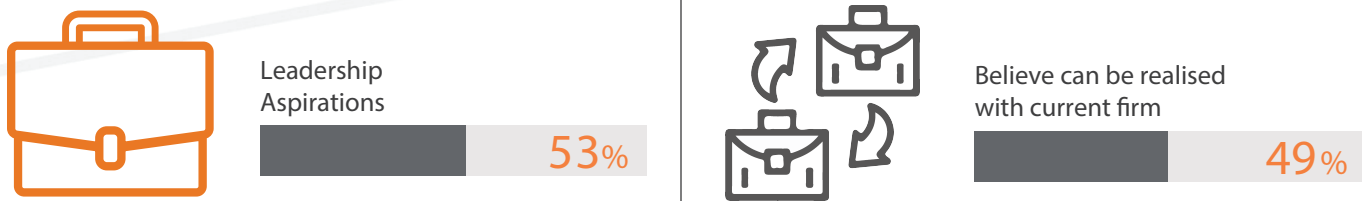
Talent Pool



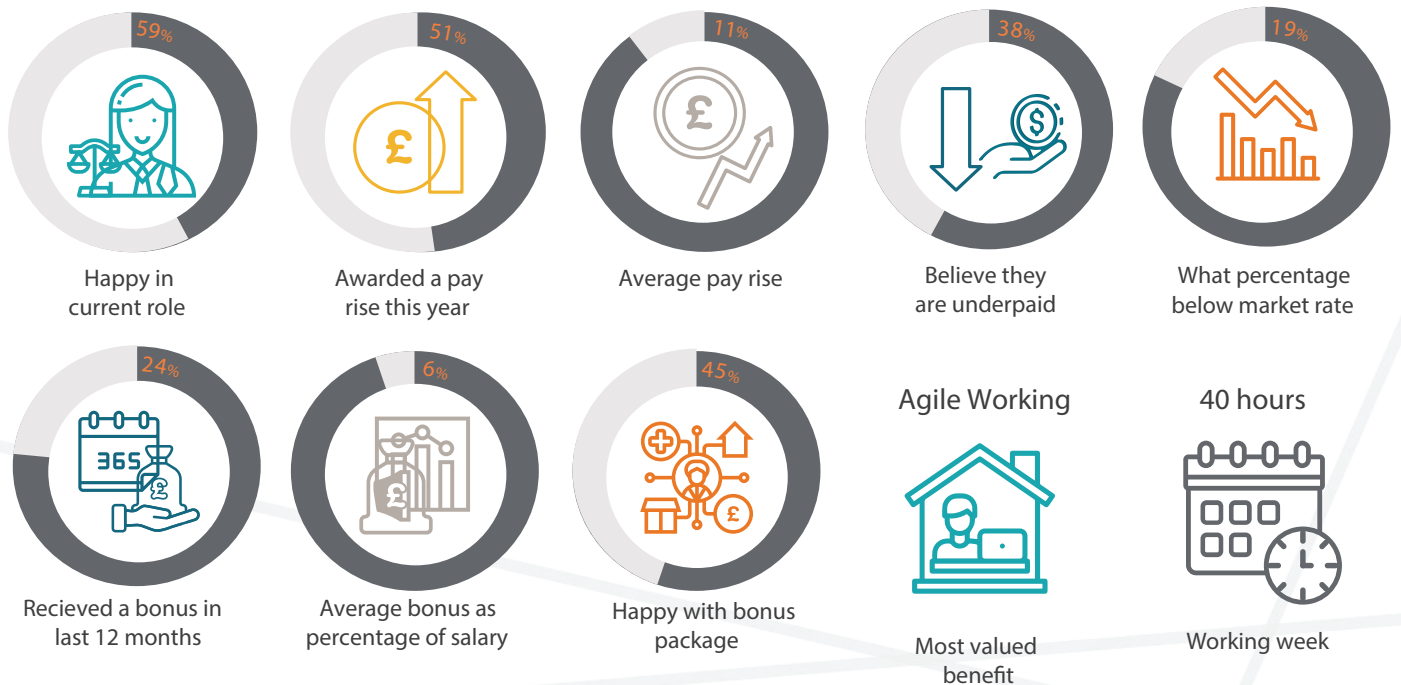
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



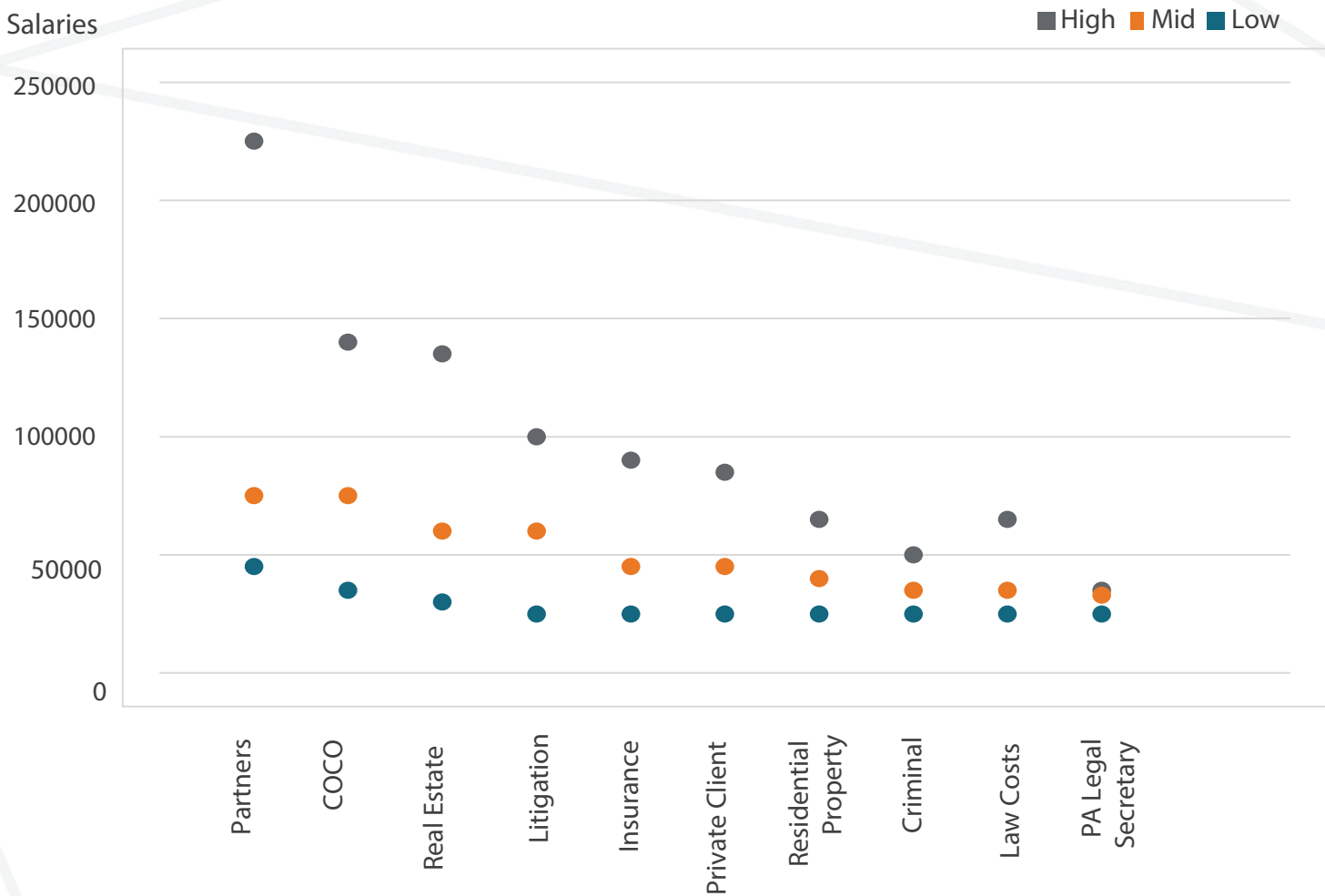
And finally

What's going on with bonuses for Midlands and Eastern England based legal professionals? Nationally, the numbers making bonus has dropped from 38% to 31% in the last 12 months, Midlands and Eastern based lawyers are at the foot of the table for regions achieving bonus and also the value of the same, as percentage of salary.

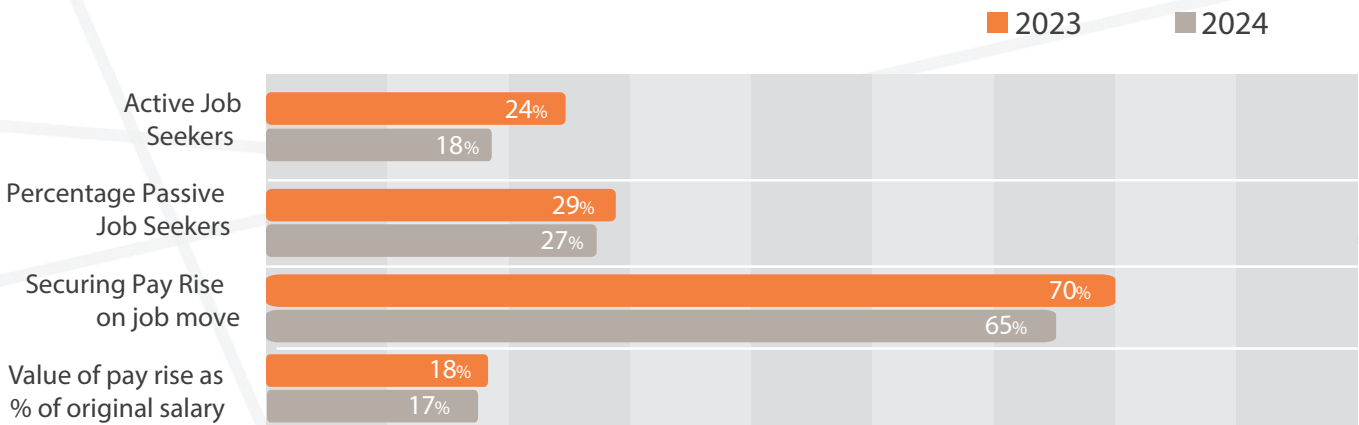
South West and Wales

A sharp drop in the availability of talent is going to create problems this year in the South West and Wales legal sector. Just 18% of legal professionals will be actively looking to change jobs in 2024, down from 24% in 2023. The passive talent pool has also shrunk a couple of points meaning South West law firms are working with the smallest group of potential hires of all the regions. Challenging times ahead for firms with growth plans and also for candidates looking to progress their careers. Maybe driving the fact that nearly 1 in 5 South West lawyers would consider relocating for their next job.

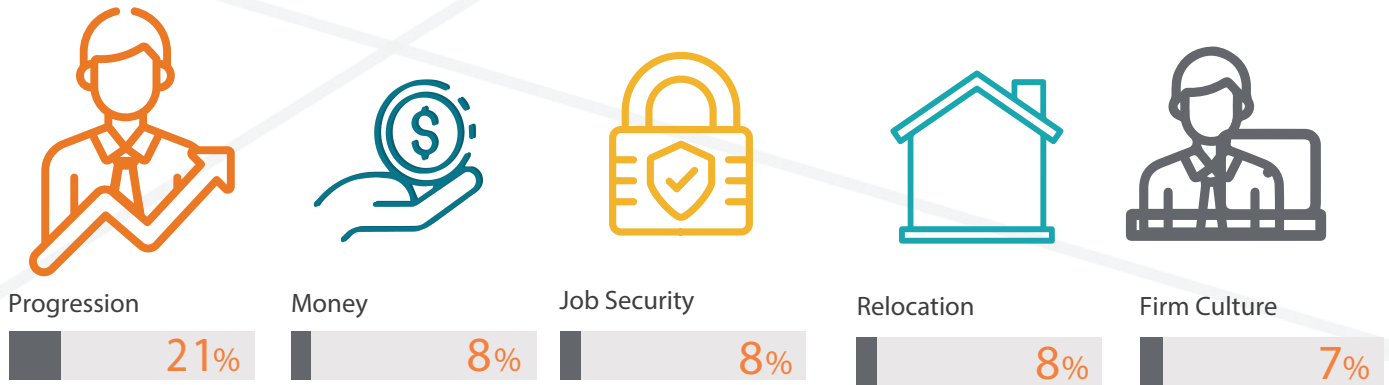
Salaries



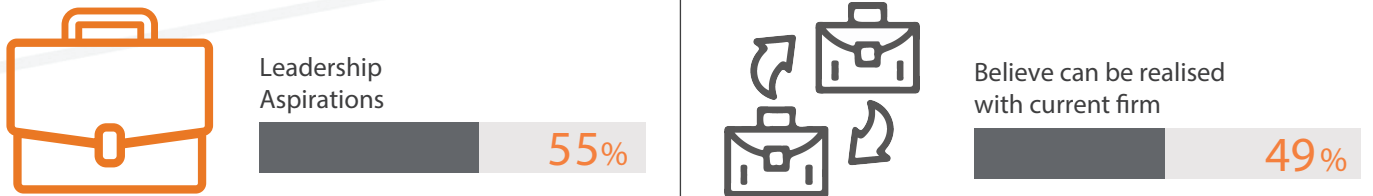
Talent Pool



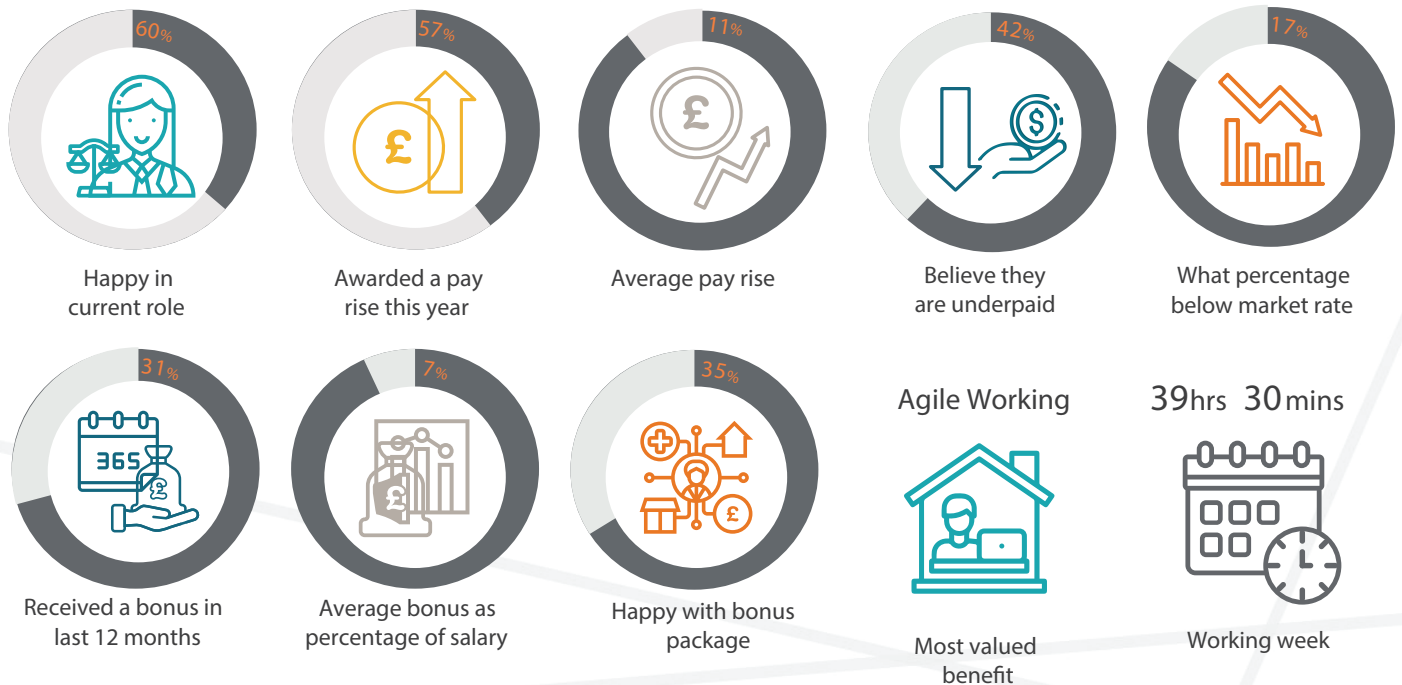
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

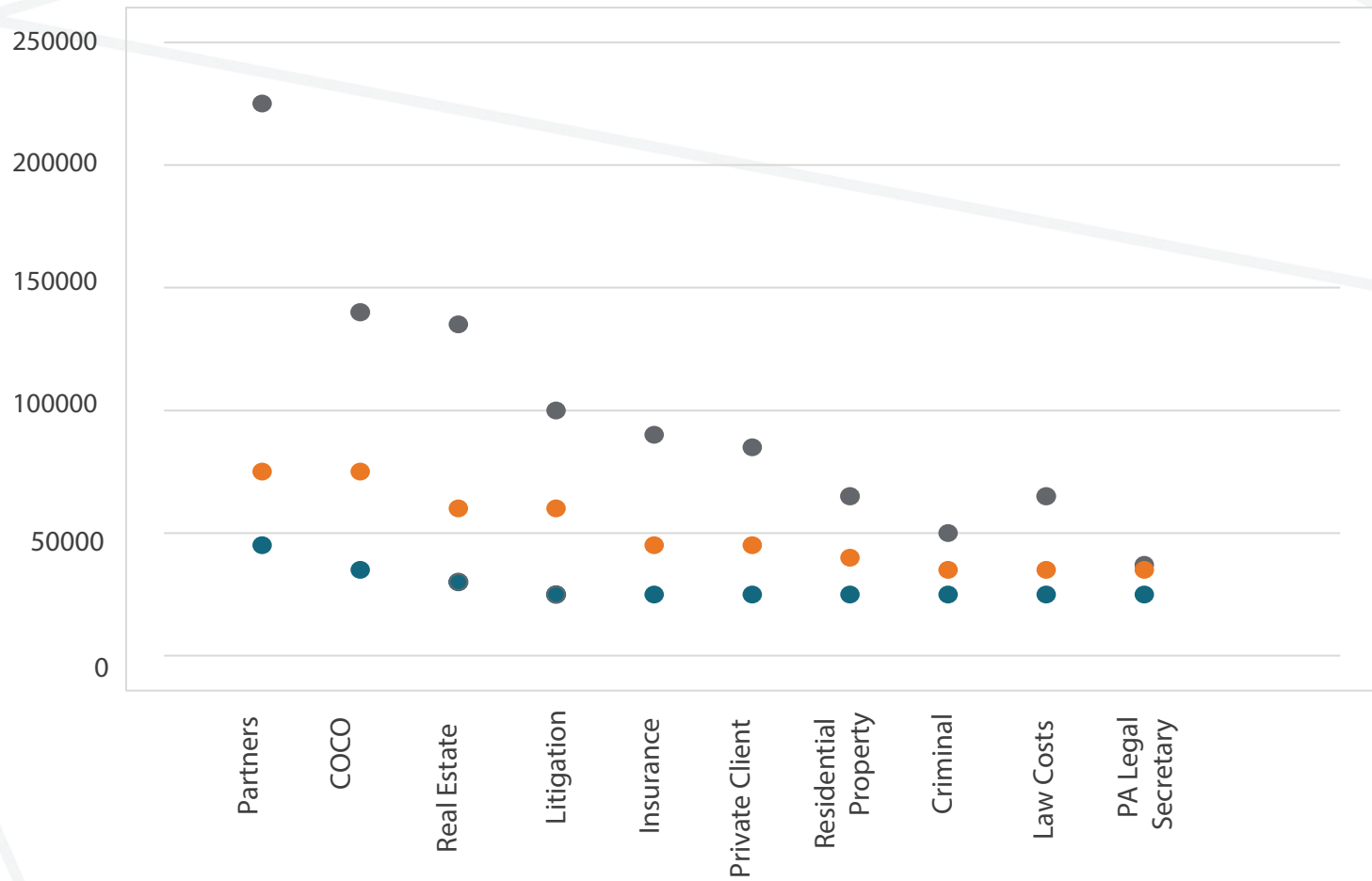
Lawyers living in the South West and Wales consistently top the work-life balance charts, and in 2024 it is no different. They benefit from having the shortest commutes in the country, it's an average 29 minutes from the front door to office and work less hours than their colleagues in other regions.

North West

Wrestling the crown off Yorkshire and the North East, the 2024 North West legal sector recruitment market is the most dynamic outside of London. Helped in large part by a weighty 36% of legal professionals who sit in the passive talent pool, happy with their lot but with one eye on a move that will enable a step up the ladder and put some more money in their pocket. We are starting to see the value in regions that boast big passive talent pools, especially when complementing healthy active ones. Not least the positive ripple effect across the numbers securing pay rises on a move and the value of those increases in salary.

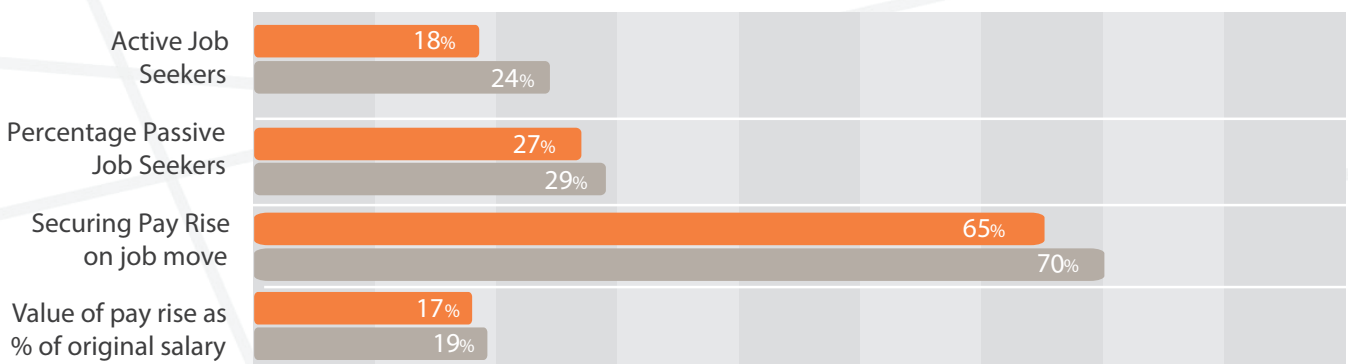
Salaries

■ High ■ Mid ■ Low



Talent Pool

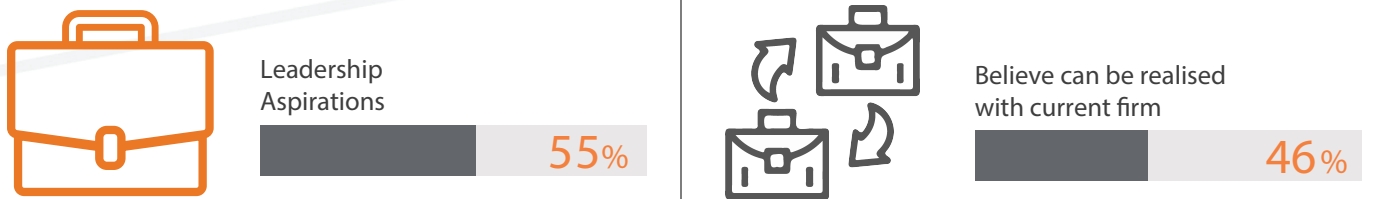
■ 2024 ■ 2023



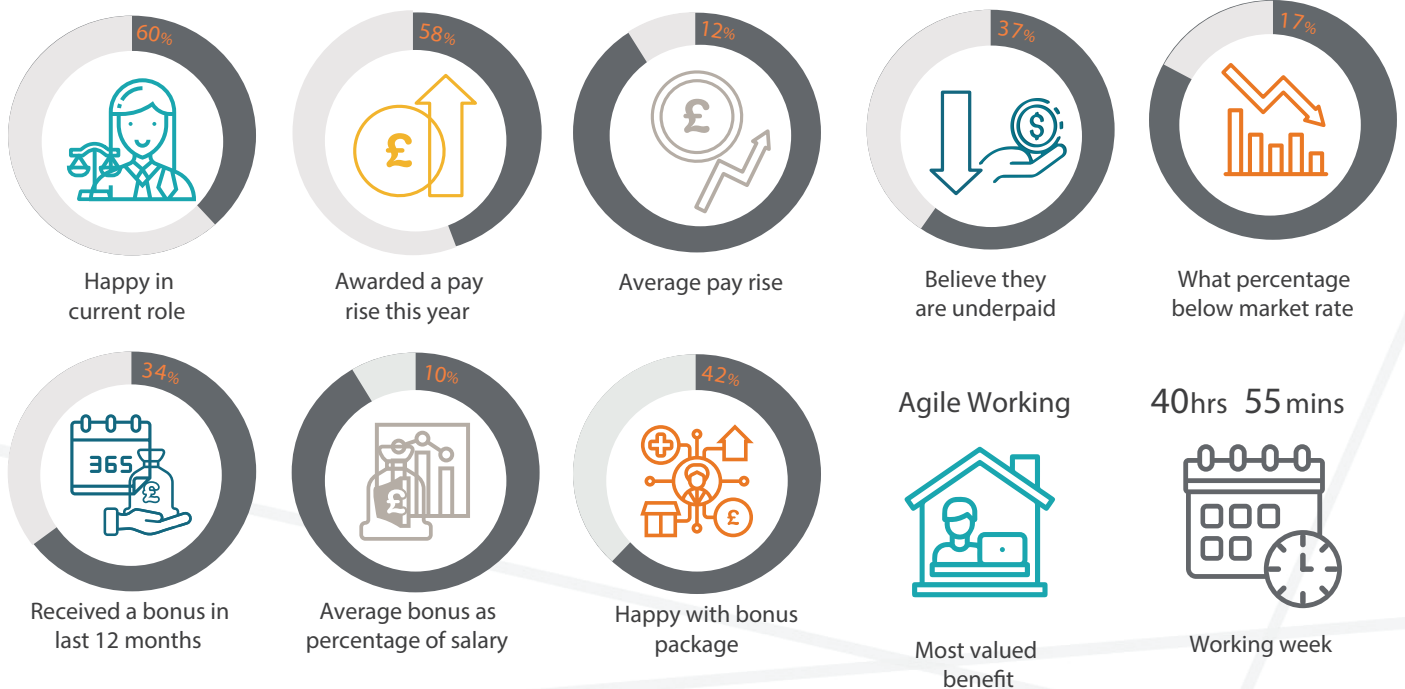
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



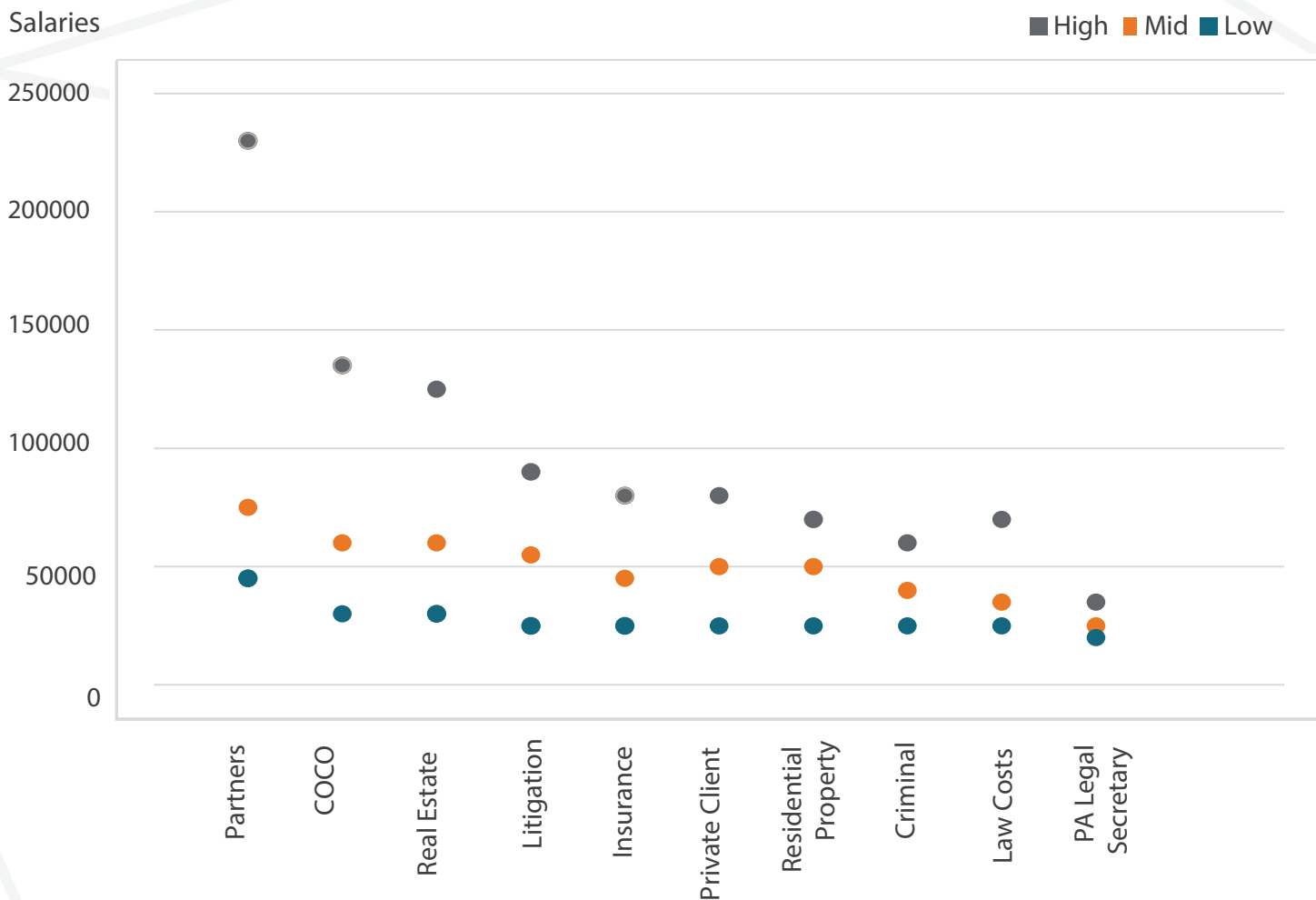
And finally

North West law firms are working hard to retain their talent, being in or around top spot when it comes to awarding their current employees pay increases and bonuses. Payback? The regions lawyers are the least likely to feel they are being paid under market rate and are amongst the most satisfied with their bonus.

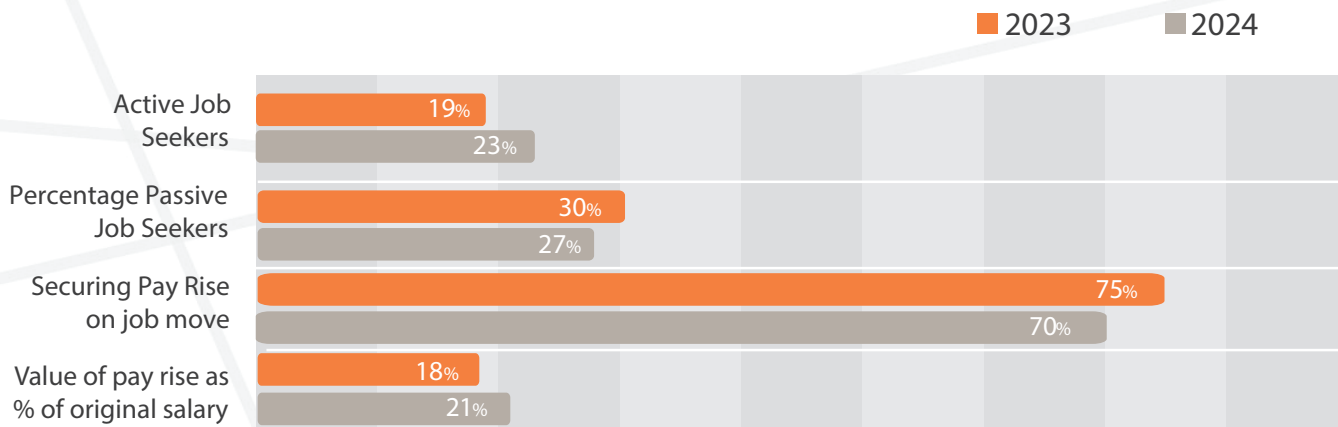
Yorkshire and North East

Following a bit of a spike last year the 2024 legal sector recruitment market in Yorkshire and the North East is tipped to become a bit more sedate. A significant drop in the numbers actively seeking out a new role, a rise in the passive element who will move if someone makes them an offer they cannot refuse. Hirers will be working harder to secure talent, the current trend has seen more of the region's legal professionals secure increases in pay on a move, than anywhere else in the country. The average working week has also contracted some, from 41 hours in 2023 to 40 hours and 10 minutes in 2024.

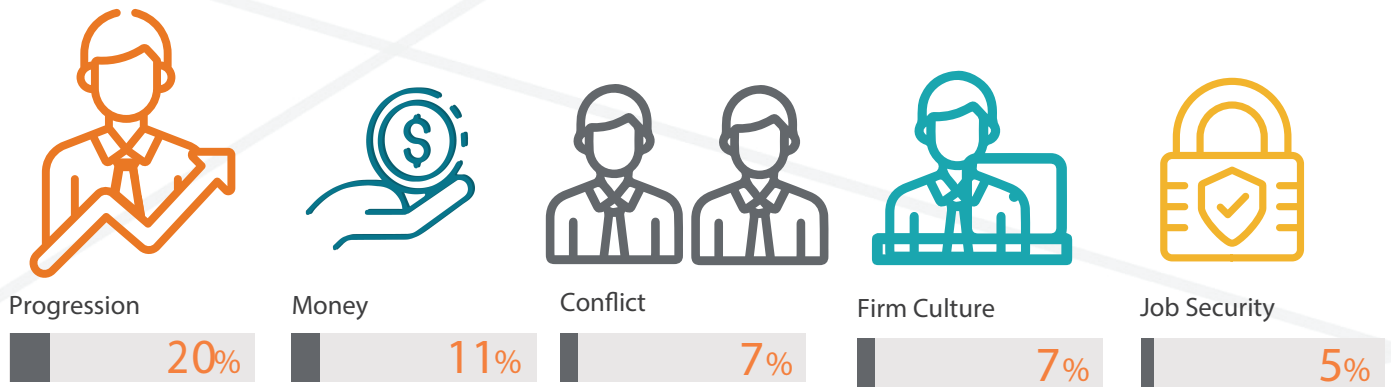
Salaries



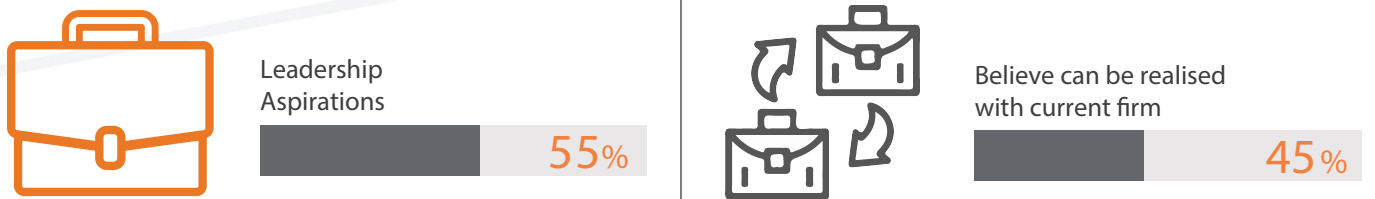
Talent Pool



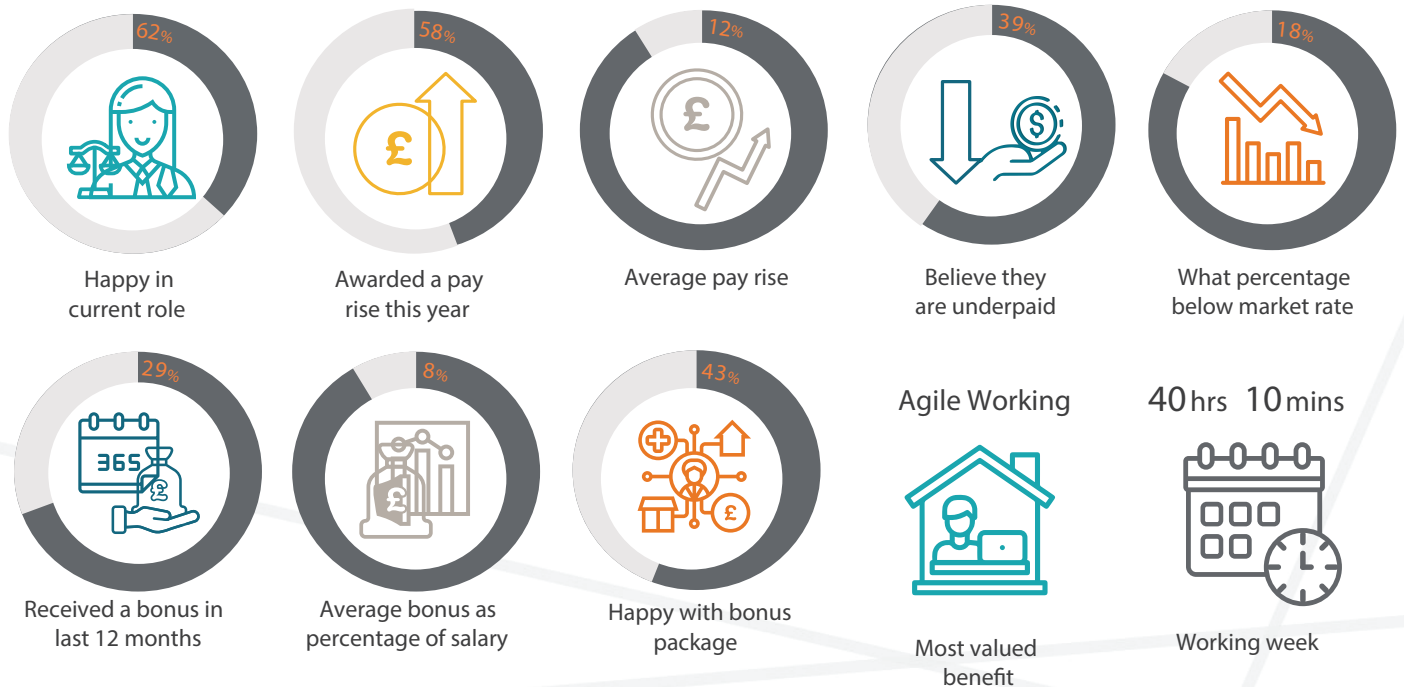
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



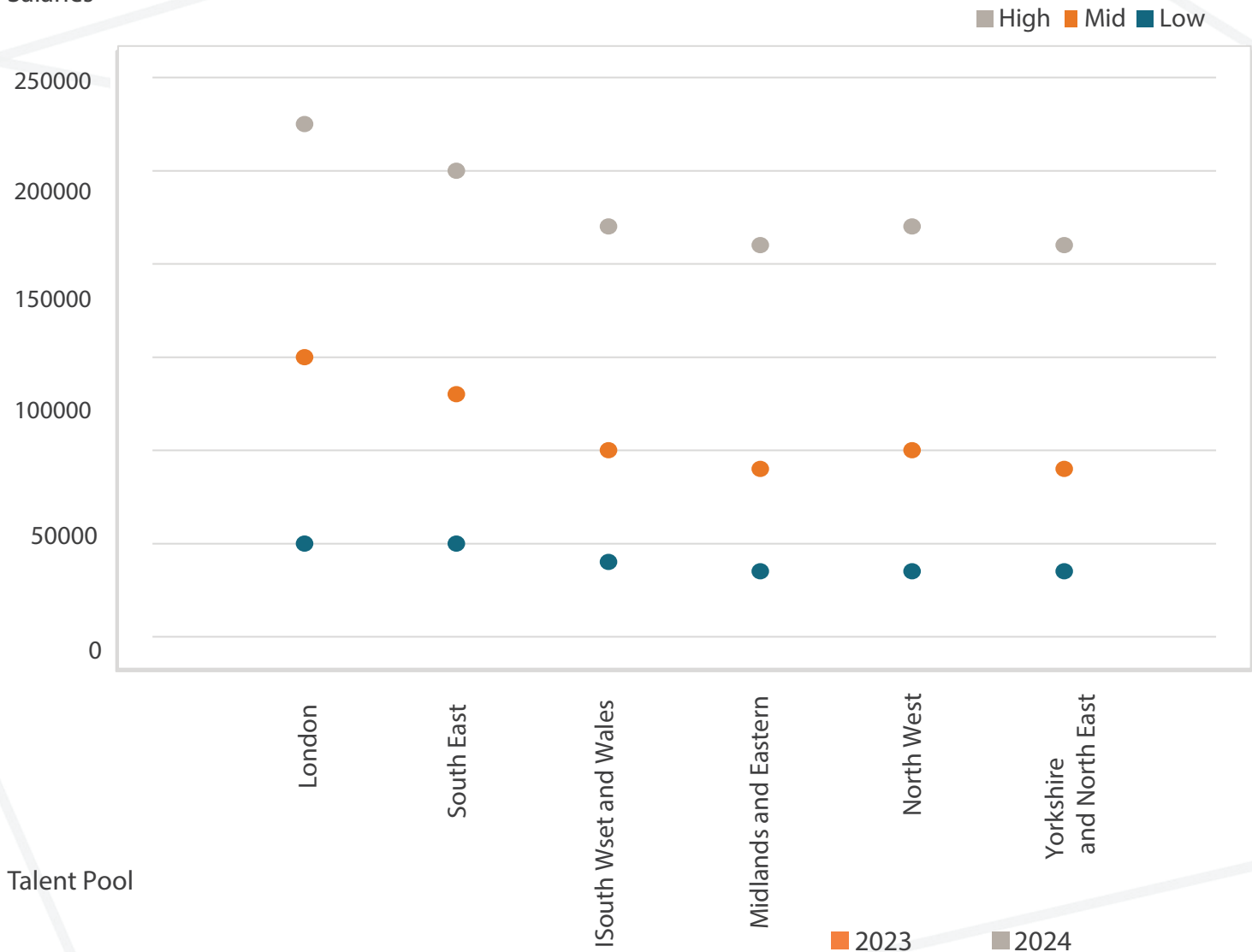
And finally

Yorkshire and the North East is home to the Happiest People in Legal, 62% of legal professionals surveyed were happy in their jobs, compared to the national average 58%.

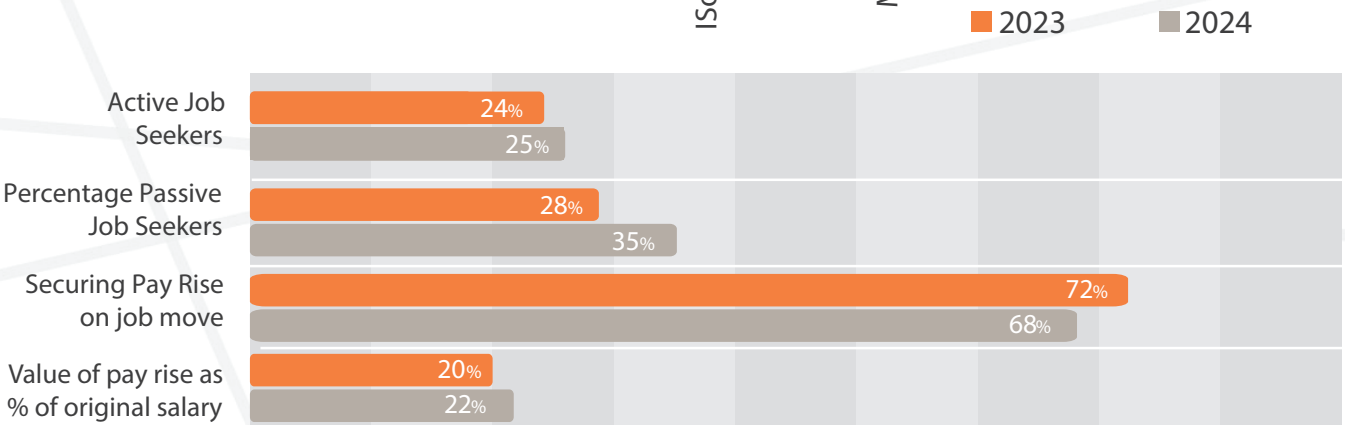
In House

The 2024 In House legal sector recruitment market has a feeling of déjà vu about it. Consistently over the years we have seen around 1 in 4 In House lawyers actively looking to change jobs, but in 2023 experienced a big bump in the numbers of passive candidates, up to 35% from 27% in 2022. The number of passive candidates has dropped this year to 28% helping to create an almost mirror image of how the market was in 2022. Lawyers securing a pay increase on a move, the value of those increases, as near as damn it.

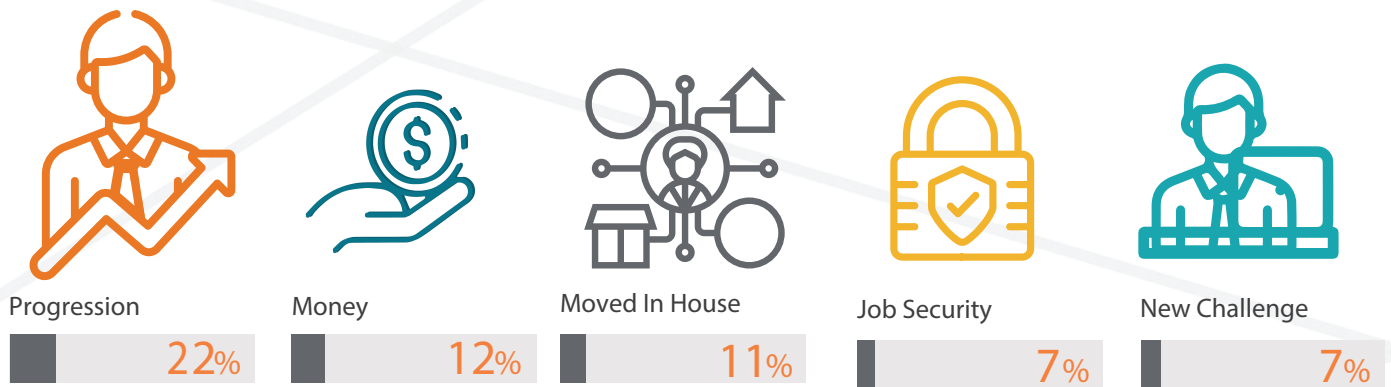
Salaries



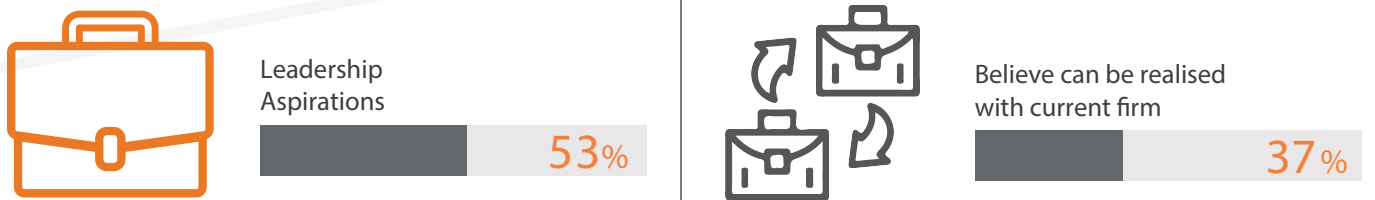
Talent Pool



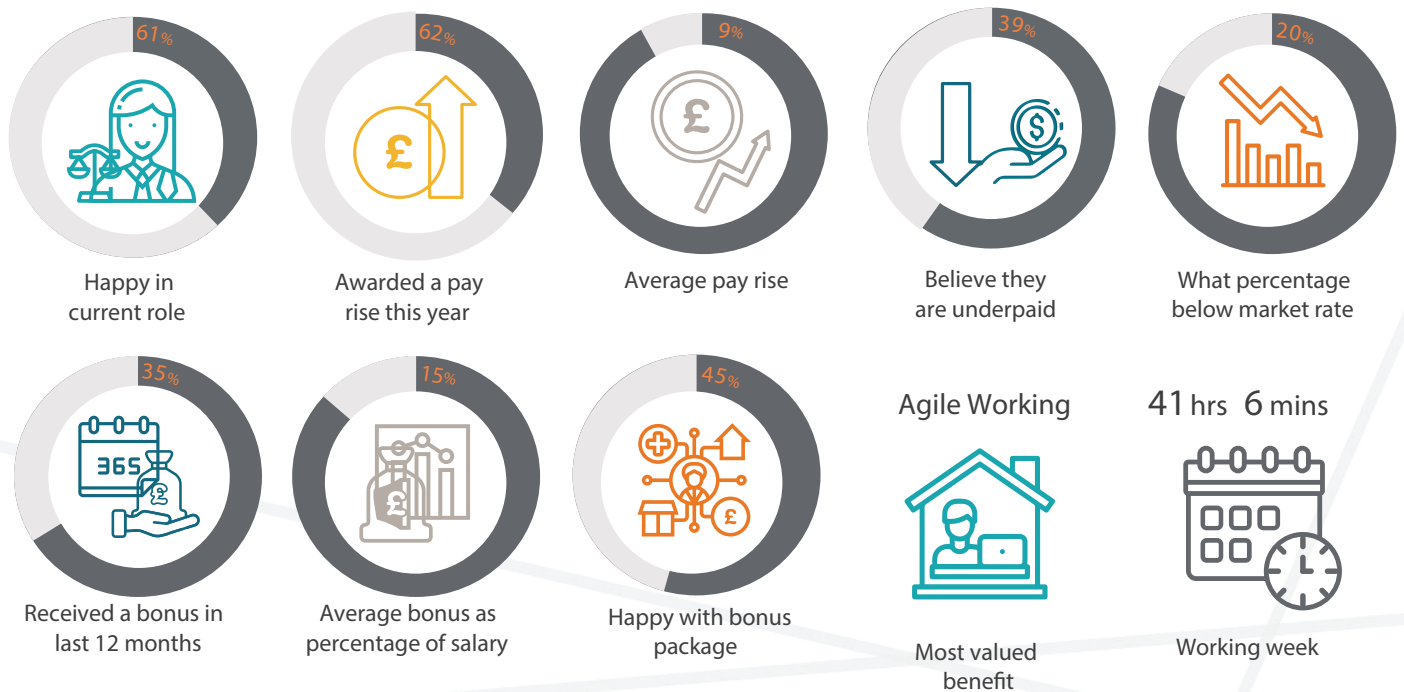
Career motivators



Aspirations



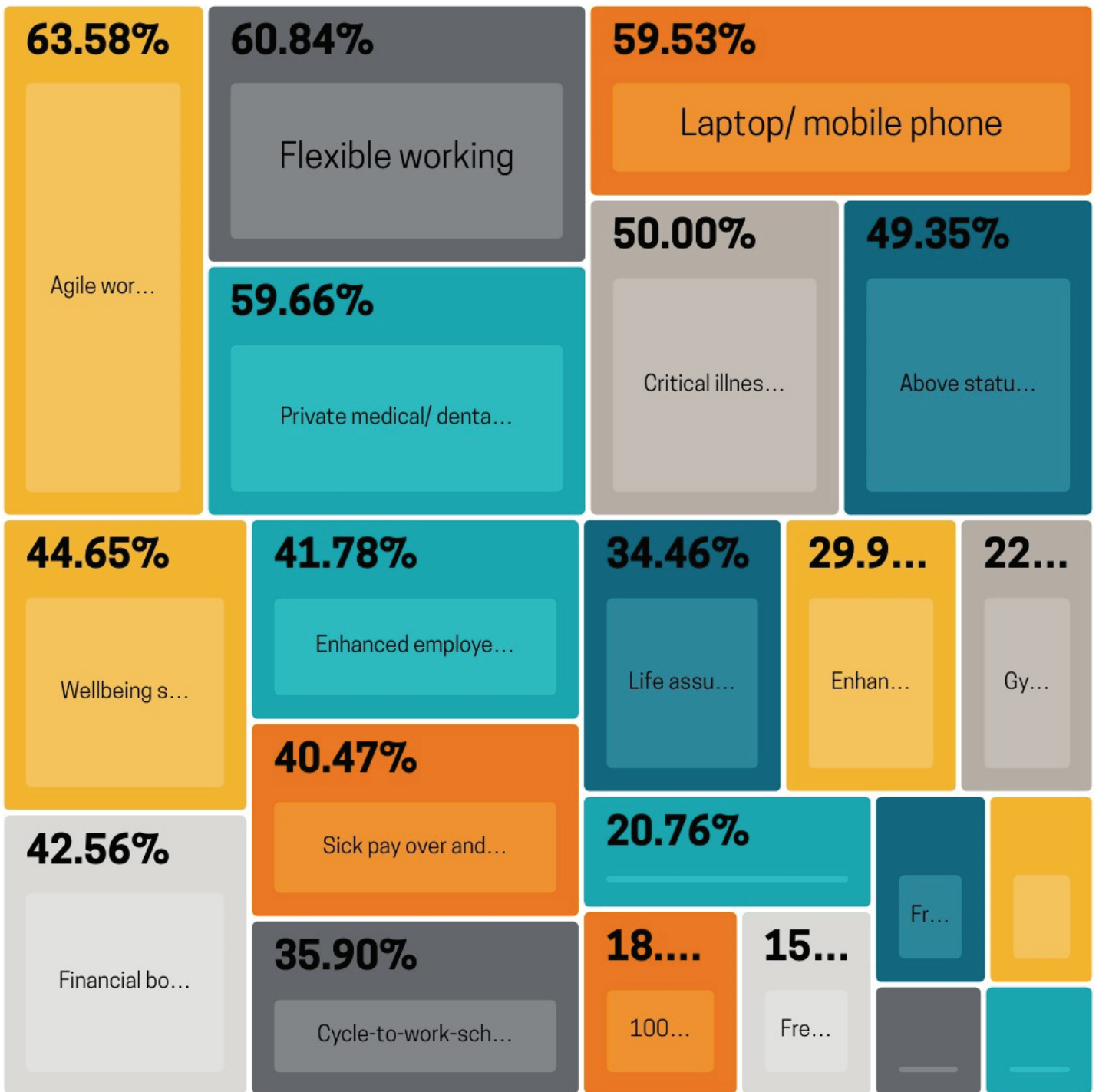
Sentiment



And finally

A sign of the times maybe? 61% of this year's In House respondents were awarded a pay rise by their current employers in the last 12 months, compared to 70% in 2023 and 47% in 2022. Which generally comes in around the 10% mark. 35% earned bonus compare to 51% of the 2023 cohort and in 2022 it was 40%.

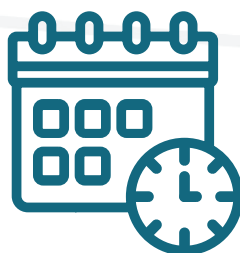
Benefits Packages – Big Law



Most Valued Benefits in Big Law:



Agile Working
31%

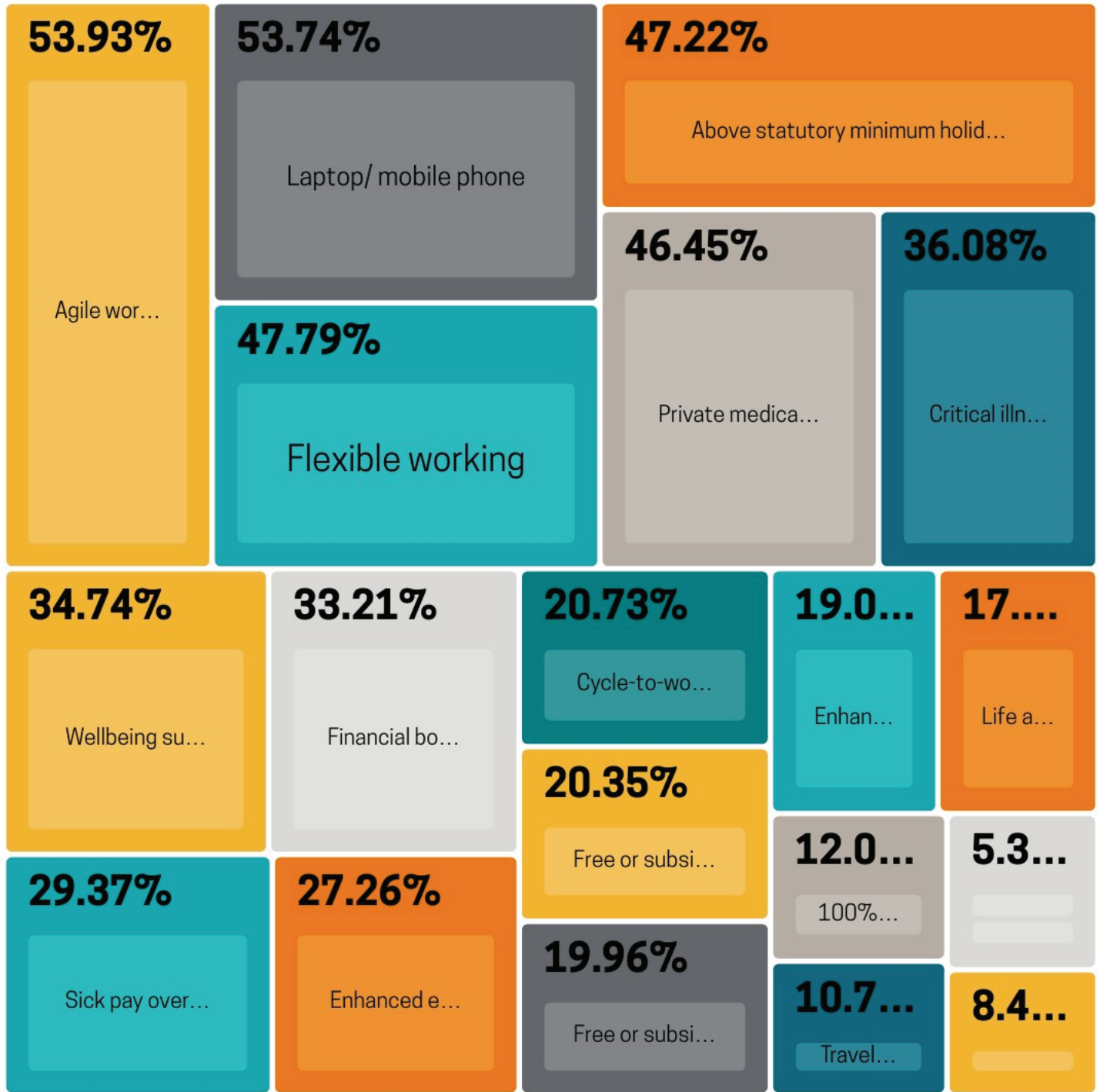


Flexible Working
16%



Financial Bonus
13%

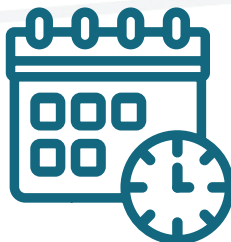
Benefits Packages – Regional and Independents



Most Valued Benefits in Regional/Independent Law:



Agile Working
27%

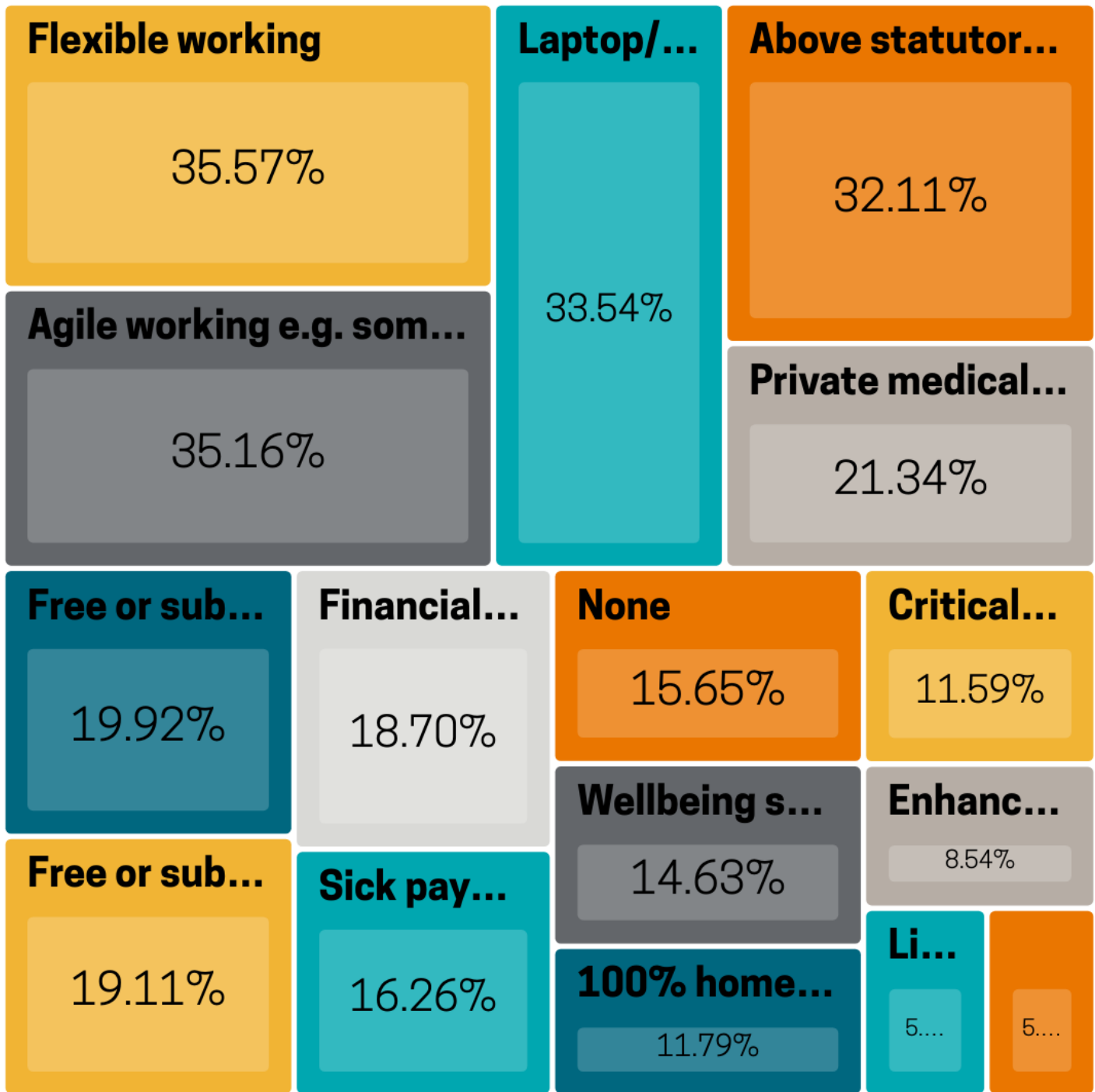


Flexible Working
16%



Above statutory holidays
12%

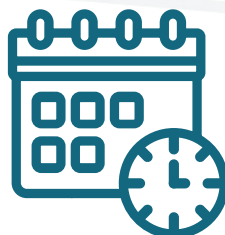
Benefits Packages – High Street and Market Town



Most Valued Benefits in High Street/Market Town Law:



Agile Working
25%

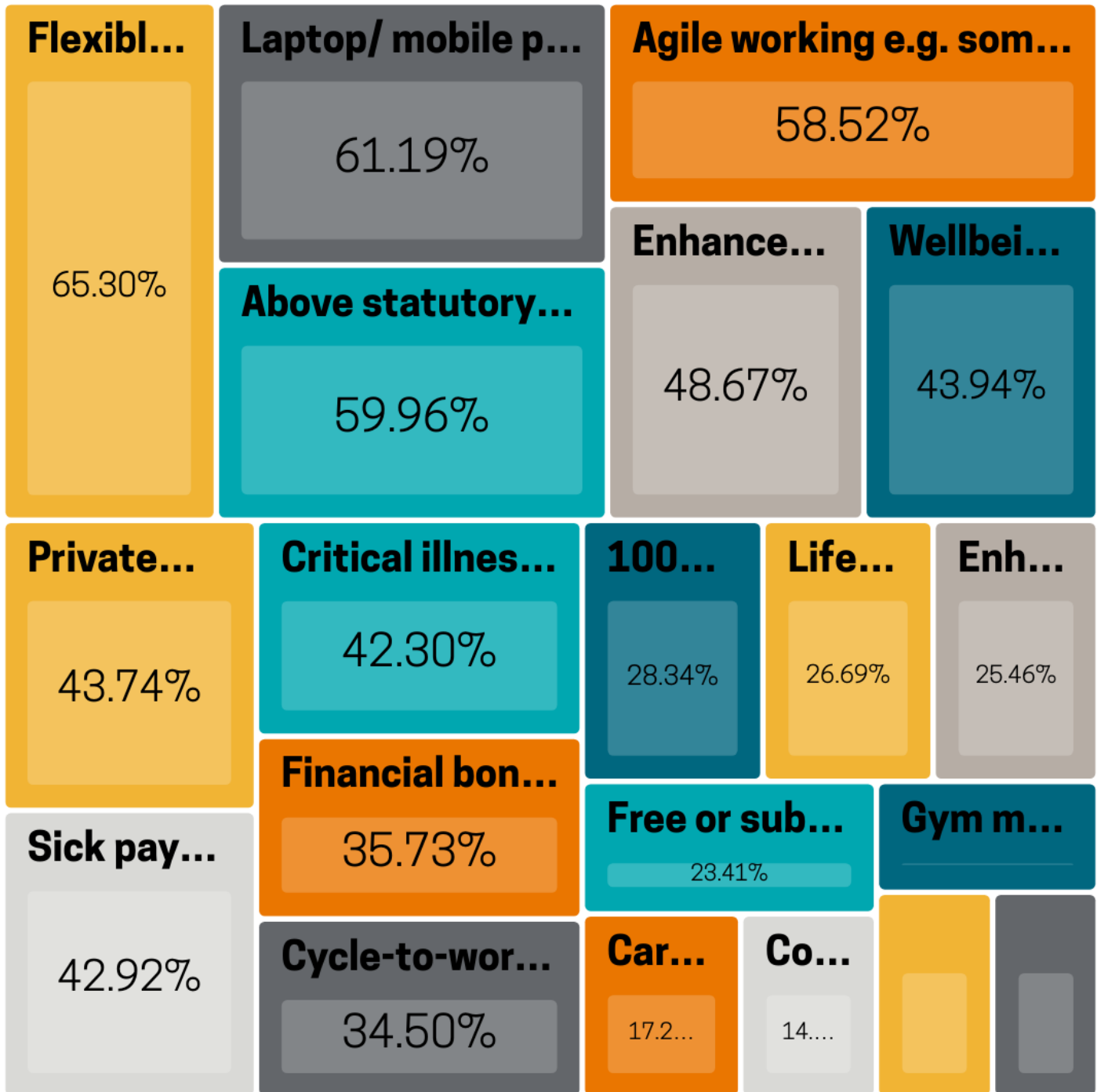


Flexible Working
18%



Above statutory holidays
17%

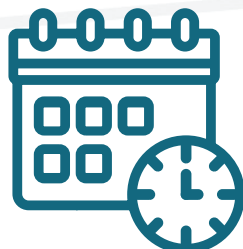
Benefits Packages – In House



Most Valued Benefits in In-House Law:



Agile Working
23%



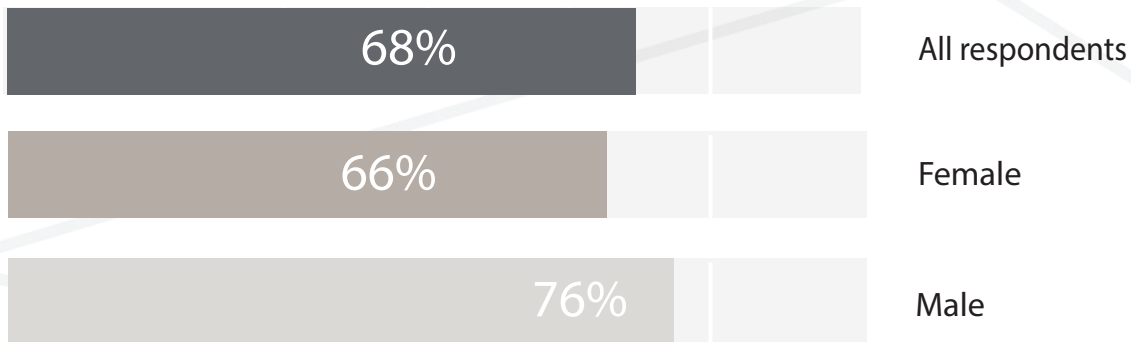
Flexible Working
19%



Above statutory holidays
12%

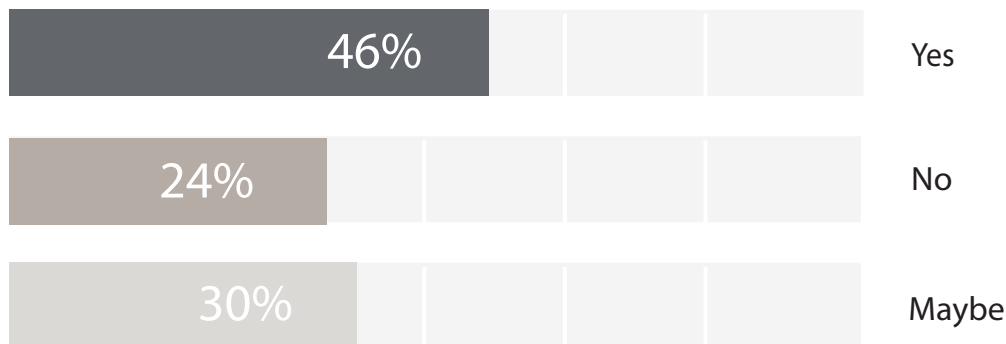
Succession - Young Lawyers on Partnership

Young Lawyers with Partner or Leadership aspirations



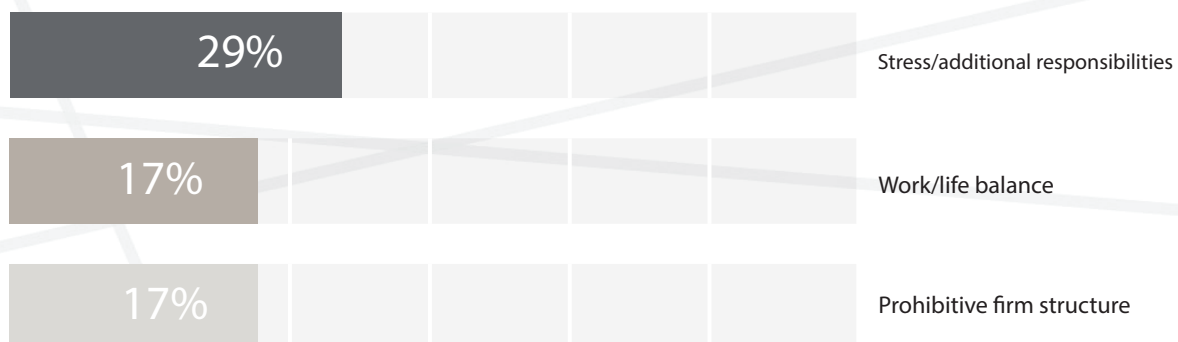
There is a 3 year downward trend in Young Lawyers aspiring to a Partner or Leadership role in the legal sector. 68% of Young Lawyers, Gen Z and Millennials aspire to a Partnership or Leadership position - down 5% year on year and from 74% in 2022.

Believe ambition can be realised in current firm.



Young Male lawyers are most likely to move firms to achieve ambitions. 44% of believe they can achieve their ambitions in their current firm compared to 47% of Young Female Lawyers.

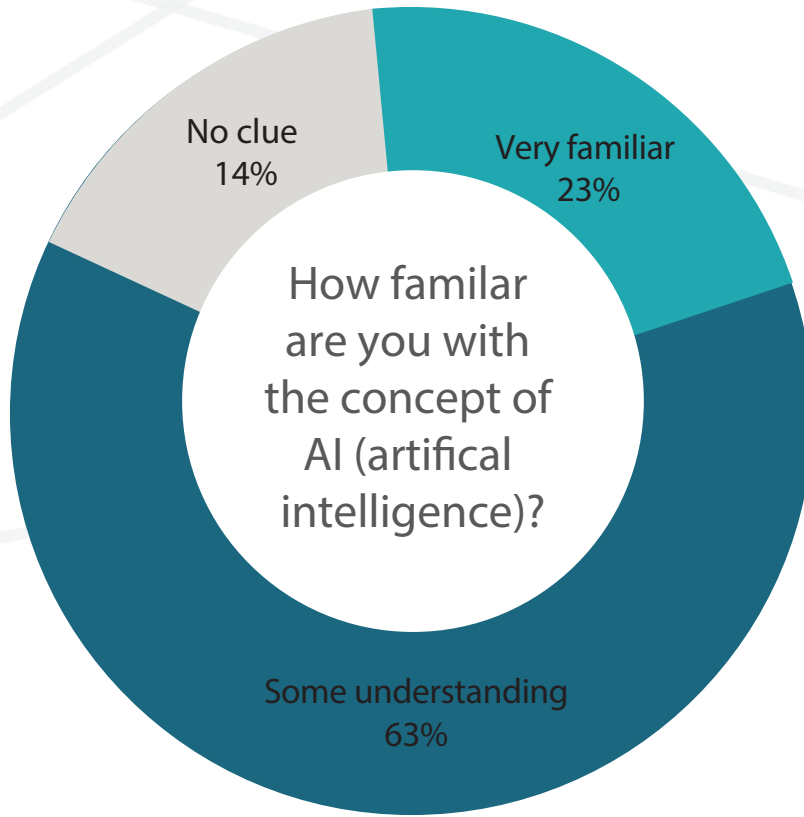
Top 3 Partnership Turn Offs



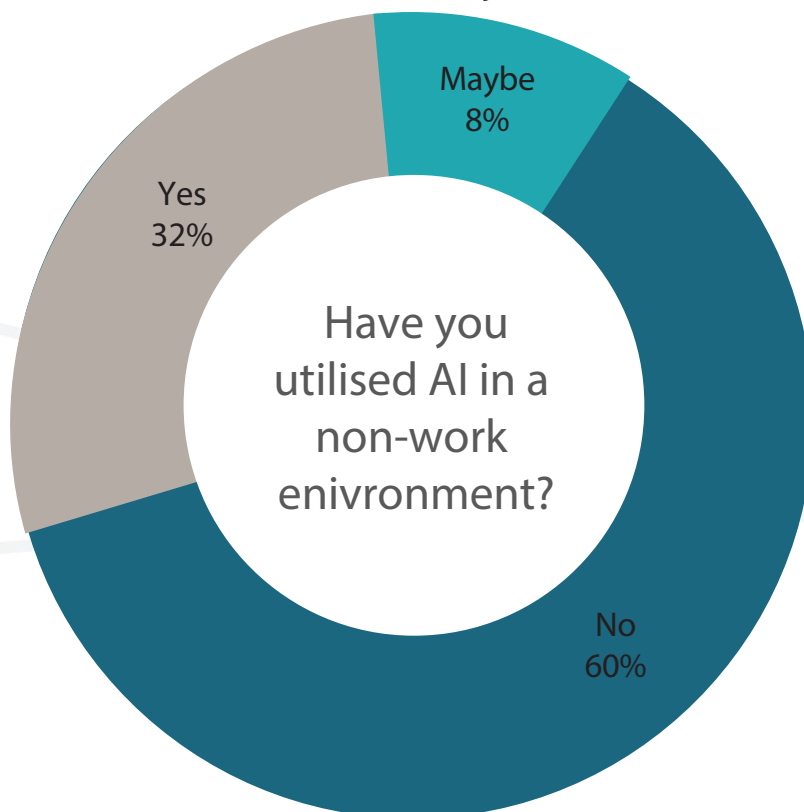
Post Covid, Stress has become the clear, number one Partnership turn of for Young Lawyers. Back in 2020, Work Life Balance was the primary Partnership turn off. In the last 5 years the story has changed dramatically.

Talking Points – AI and the Legal Sector

Knowledge and Understanding

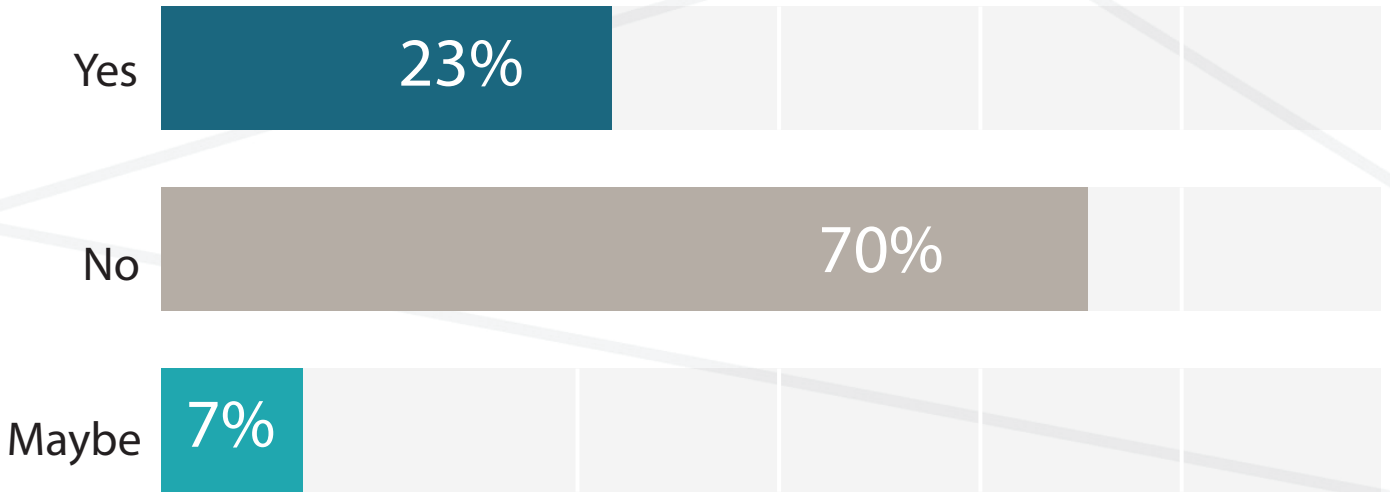


There might be a fear of the unknown. Although 14% of legal professionals stated they had no understanding of the concept of AI, 31% of that cohort still believed their jobs were at risk.



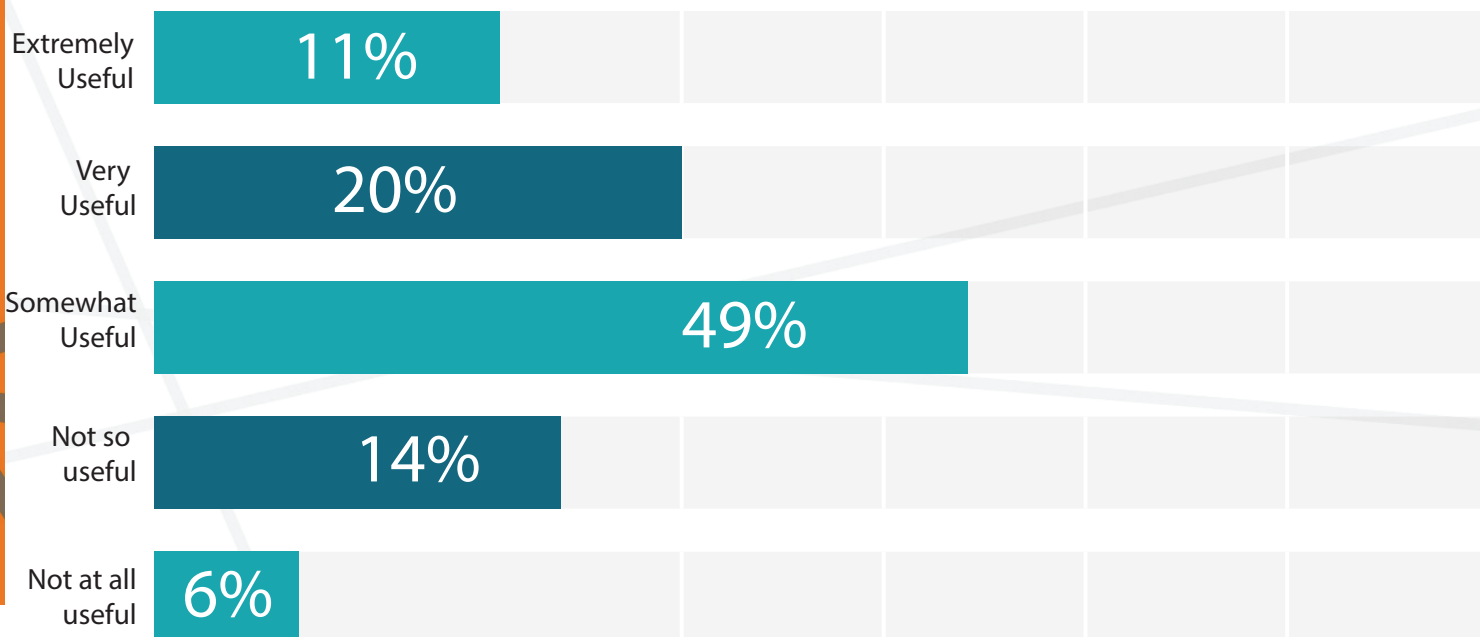
Talking Points – AI and the Legal Sector

Have you utilised AI in a work environment?



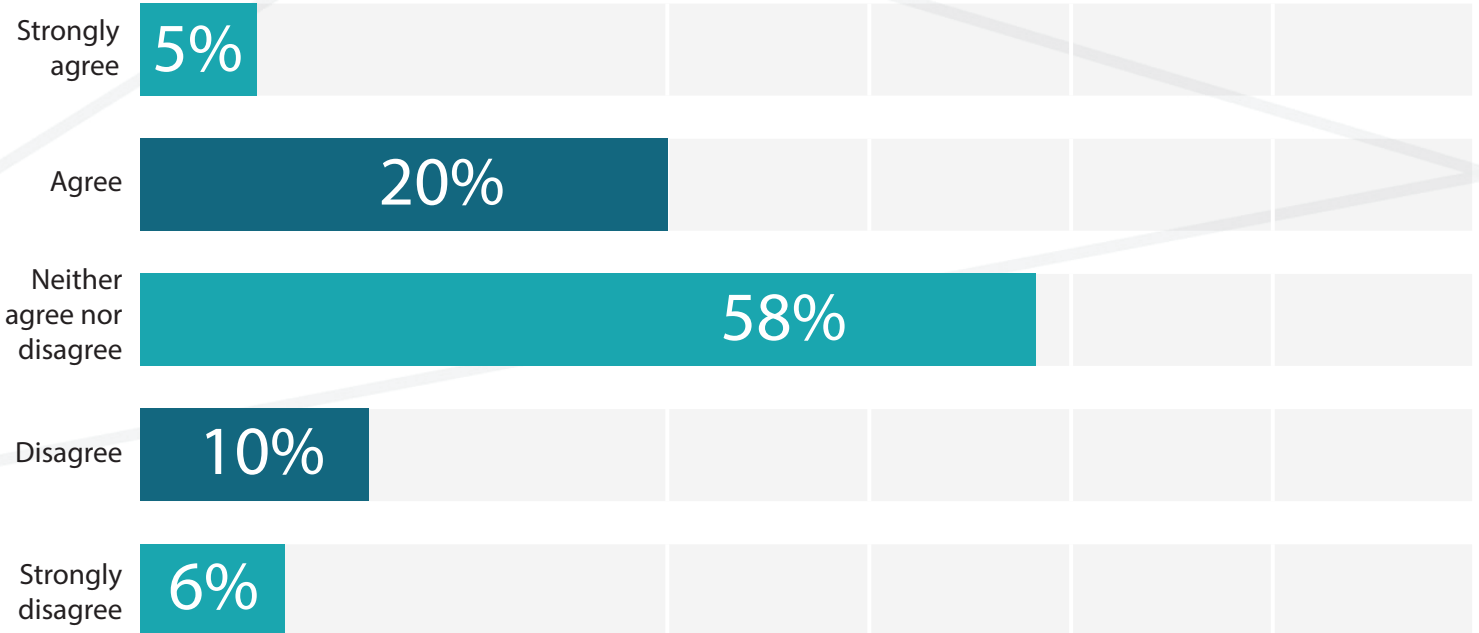
Is the legal profession staying cool on the potential benefits of AI? Although 80% of respondents believe that AI is useful or would be useful in their working environment, with 31% stating Very or Extremely Useful, just 26% of legal professionals believe that AI is making them or would make them better at their jobs.

How useful do you think AI is or will be in your work environment?



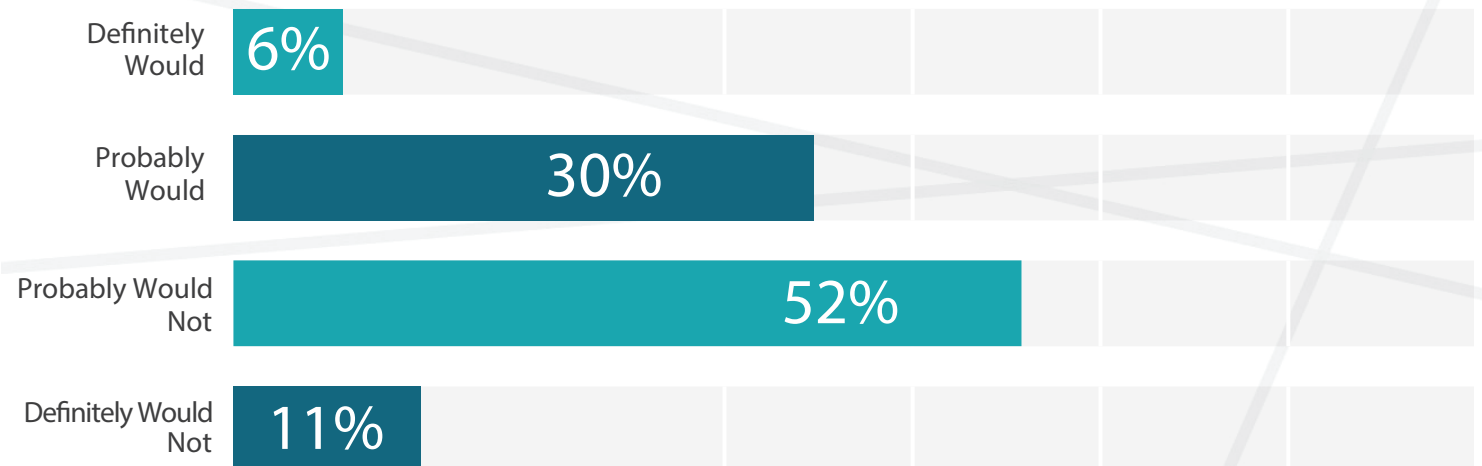
Talking Points – AI and the Legal Sector

Would or has the introduction of AI made or has made you better at your job?



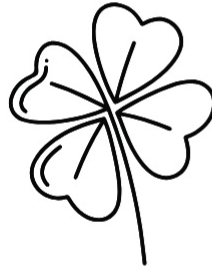
Over a third of all legal professionals believe their current job role would be at risk from further advances in AI. There is no significant variation across firm profiles save in volume property and volume litigation where 42% fear their job would be at risk. The concern is amplified in Young Lawyers with 47% of Gen Z legal professionals sharing the sentiment.

Would your current job role be at risk from further advances in AI?

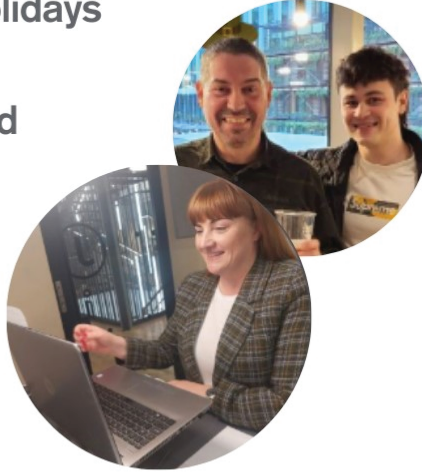


Our year in 2023:

JANUARY



- Launched US desk with Dalton joining us
- Gifted out 52 holidays to the team for performance and attendance



- Emily B is promoted to Associate Recruitment Consultant
- Aimee R turns 40
- We celebrate St Patricks Day with a Guinness
- Kathryn R hosts the APSCO Legal Network meeting to discuss the implications of AI
- Bound Creative visit us hosting a CPD accredited DE&I workshop
- International Women's Day Breakfast at 20 Stories

MARCH



- Rio R promoted to Team Leader
- Gareth H turns the big 30
- First 2023 Superbillers lunch at Dishoom



THREE PROMOTIONS



- Georgia A promoted to Associate Recruitment Consultant
- Q1 business update
- Mike Ode leadership training programme
- We had our Investors in People review and maintained Platinum status



FEBRUARY

THREE NEW STARTERS

- We hosted a coffee morning in support of Mental Health Awareness Week
- Our top earners celebrated a successful 2022 with a trip to St Tropez



MAY



JUNE



- We were joined by a representative from Roo Dunbar, Community and Corporate Outreach Officer at AKT, and John Ryan, presenter at Gaydio, to celebrate pride month
- We celebrate National Take Your Dog to Work Day by bringing in all of our furry friends
- We hosted a bake sale to celebrate Pride Month



JULY

- Charity football tournament
- Danielle W has her first baby
- We join 'Networking with Women in Manchester', hosted by Boodles and Harvey Nichols
- Our new hirers - Aqsa S and Isobel S, join us on our International and Marketing desks



- Gareth H and Sam G promoted to Associate Recruitment Consultant
- Abigail M joins our team as a new starter on our Commercial desk
- We moved office as we were quickly expanding
- We take part in our 1/2 AGM by taking part in a sports day followed by brunch at The Lawn Club



AUGUST

SEPTEMBER



- Leah E promoted to Associate Recruitment Consultant
- Nick B's big 40
- Ben M joins our team onto the Resourcer desk
- Roundtable event
- We celebrate our office move DS-style with a buffet

ELEVEN DS-HOSTED EVENTS



NOVEMBER

- We host a coffee morning to raise money in support of Mental Health Awareness



- To celebrate our Q3 successes we go on a hike to Lyme Park
- We launch our Legal Padel League
- Danielle W introduces her baby to the new team!
- Aaron D and Fran T attend the ACL London Annual Costs conference
- We celebrate our top earners through our Q3 Superbiller lunch
- Ryan M, JP and Jon N attend a charity ball hosted by Maguire Family Law



- Kath R and Emily B visit 'Stories in The Sky' at 20 Stories in Manchester
- We celebrate our office dog, Ruby, birthday
- We get in the spirit and host a halloween party



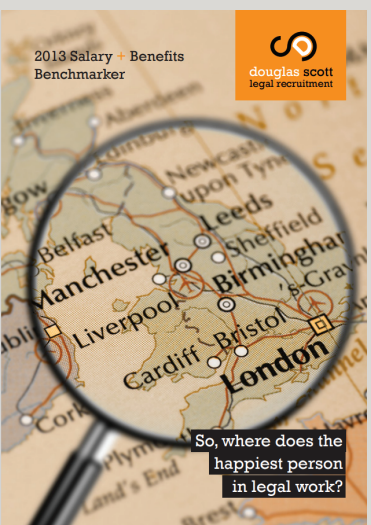
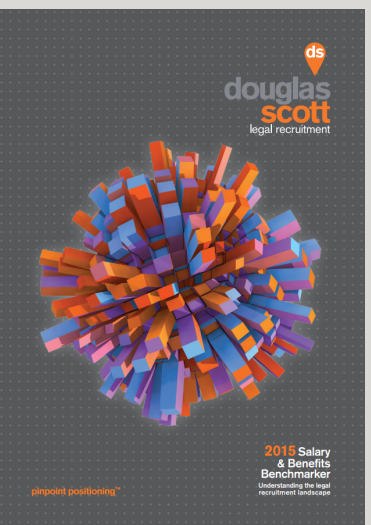
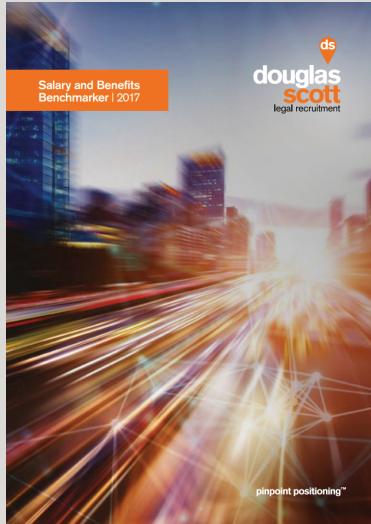
OCTOBER



DECEMBER

- We host our own Christmas Jumper day to raise money for Save The Children
- Ben M was promoted to our Midlands and South West team
- We celebrate our achievements by hosting a Christmas party

Our previous salary surveys - 12 years of comparable data



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So, where does the happiest person in legal work?

