



Salary & benefits benchmarker 2025

The go-to legal hiring insight report

Understanding the legal *recruitment* landscape

About Us

Douglas Scott Legal Recruitment are the market leading legal sector recruitment specialists, with 20 years of heritage and legal sector know how 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. We drive growth in turnover and capability across regional Private Practice, Commercial, International law firms, 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 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 all our survey respondents, existing talent pool, and legal sector hirers who have provided us with the numbers and insight to help bring the 2025 Salary and Benefits Benchmarker to life.

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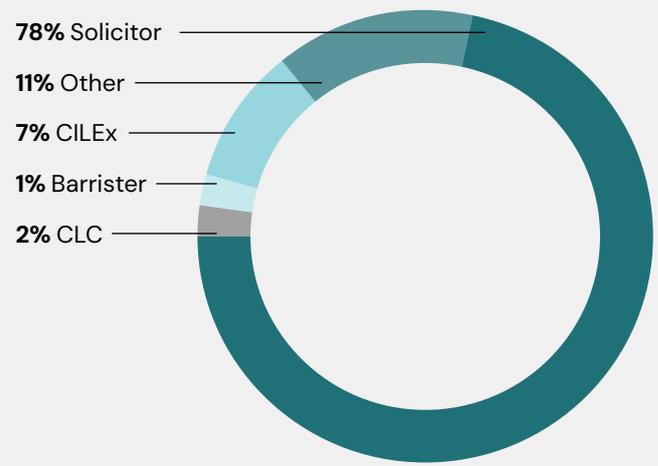
Demographics of respondents

As always, we had a diverse demographic of responses, with data and insight drawn from our survey respondents and existing talent pool.

Female lawyers made up the majority of the 2025 cohort, and for the second year, we have had people identifying outside the gender binary, with 1% ticking neither male or female.

35% of our survey respondents spoke a 2nd language, showcasing the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our participants.

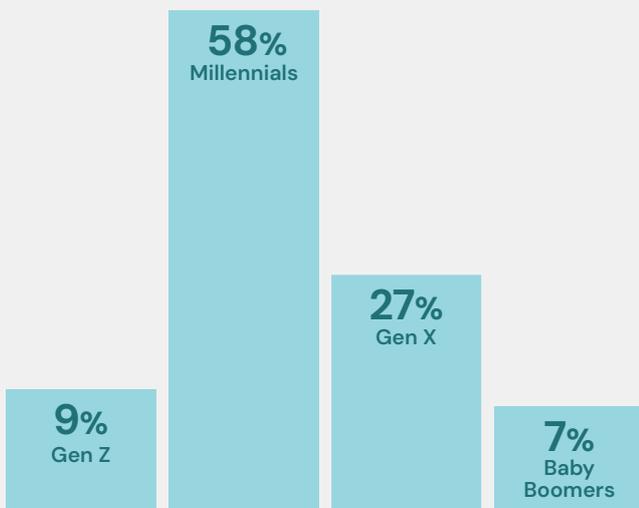
Qualification



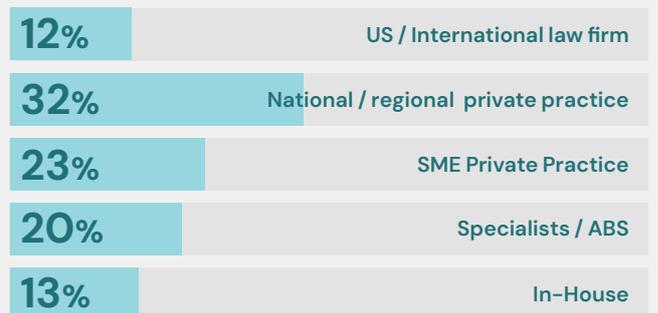
Identity



Age range by generation



In-House vs private practice



87% of our 2025 Salary and Benefits Benchmarker come from Private Practice law firms, with 13% of respondents coming from the In-House sector. The vast majority of respondents were qualified solicitors.

Demographics of respondents *(continued)*



**Dominating this year's
salary survey, 67%
of respondents
identified as female.**



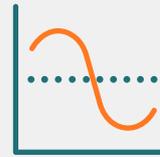
At a glance



£63,527
average salary



33%
received a bonus



£11,113
average bonus



73% of respondents
were qualified



4 Years, 2 months average
time in a legal job



57% of respondents
are happy at work



35% of respondents
speak a different language



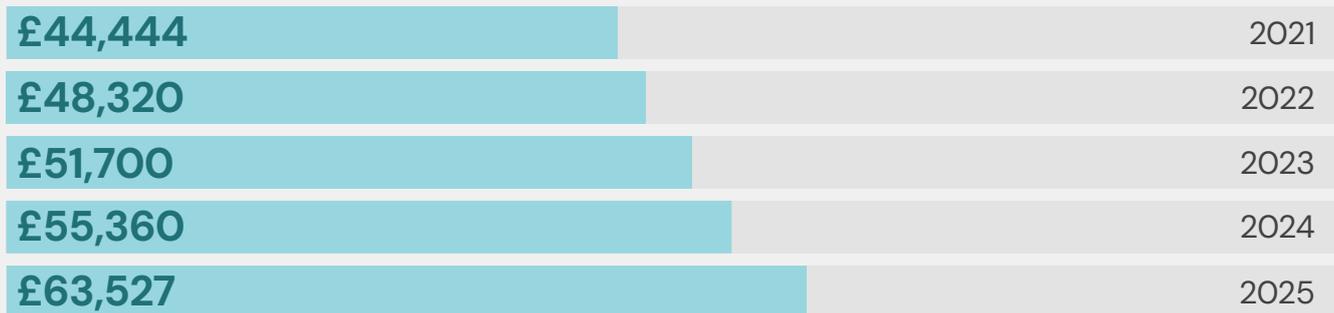
57% of respondents have
leadership aspirations



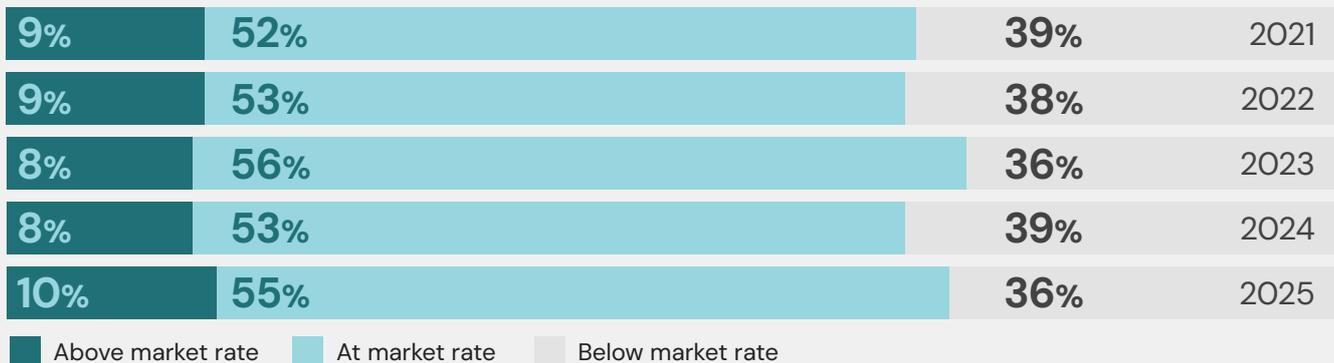
Agile working emerged
as most valued benefit

At a glance – money

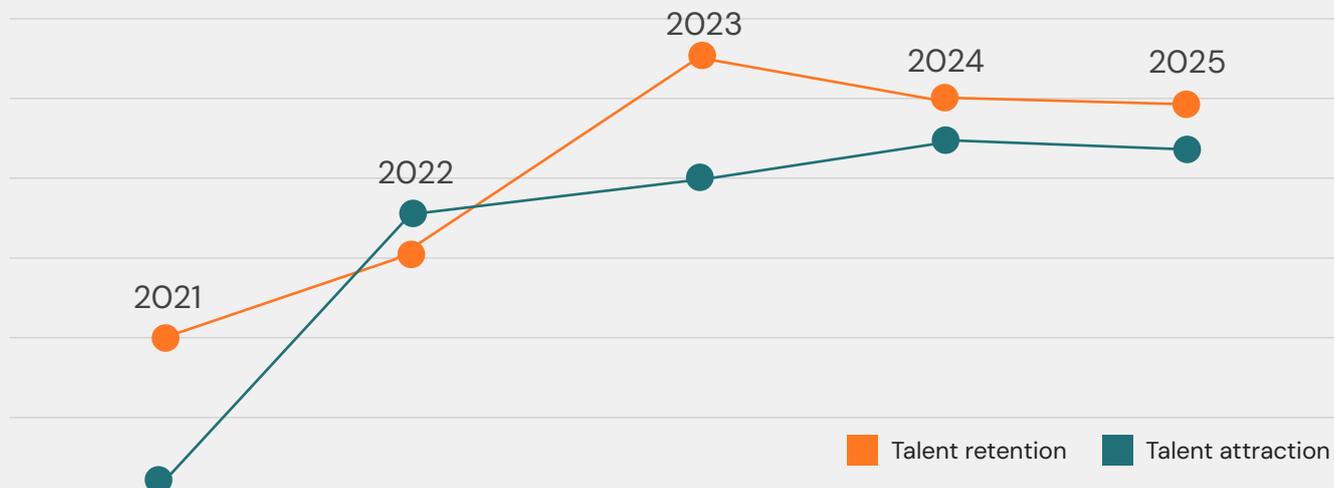
5 Year average salary of cohort



5 Year salary sentiment



5 Year legal sector wage inflation index

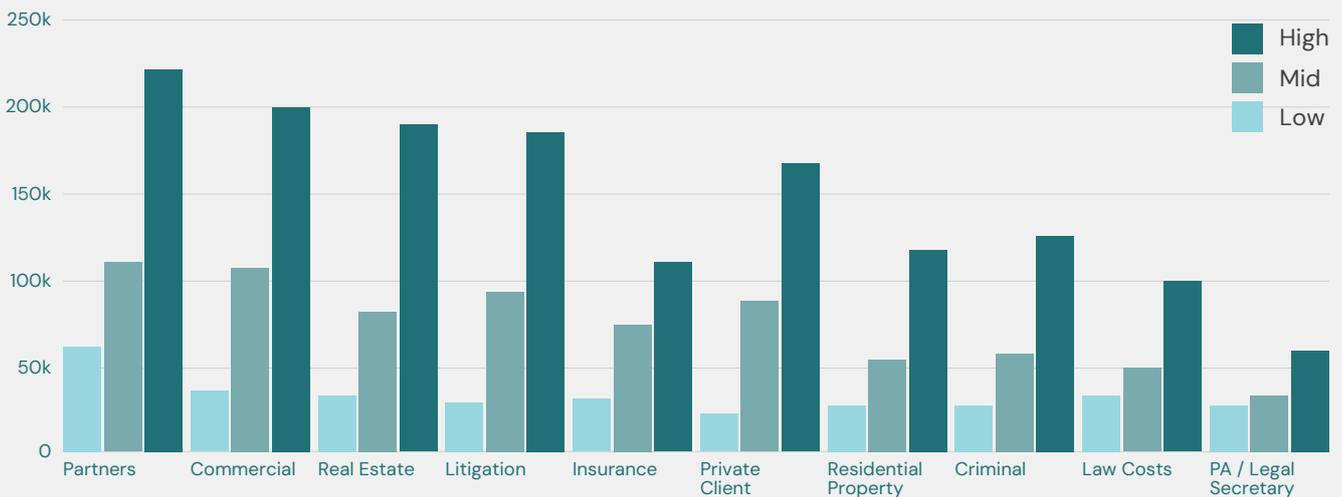


London

There's a significant jump in the number of lawyers looking to change jobs in 2025. The heat is on, with career progression and money the main motivation for London's legal professionals seeking to change jobs. Real Estate appears to be on a steady upwards trajectory and certainly in a much better place than 12 months ago,

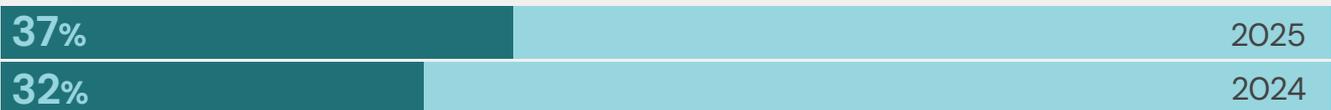
although some vacancies are still proving hard to fill. Perhaps this is some indication that there is still a bit of work to on candidate confidence. Across all practice areas, law firms are no longer being drawn into overpaying for talent, with the steady influx of relocates into London helping to strike the balance in supply and demand.

Salaries

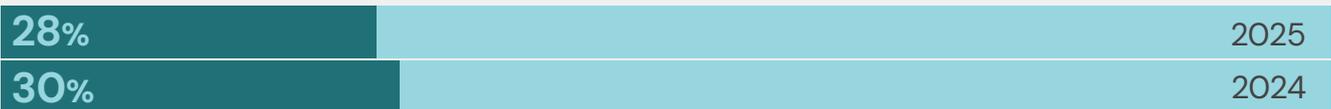


Talent pool

Active job seekers



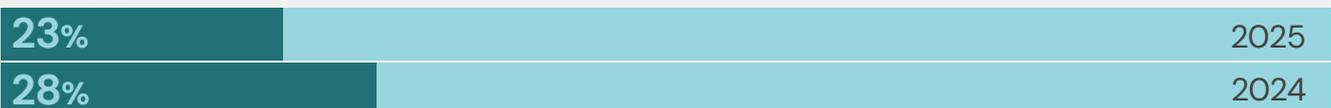
Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move

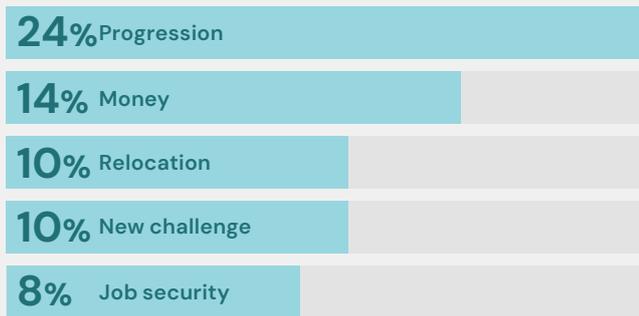


Value of pay rise as % of original salary



London – career motivators

Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

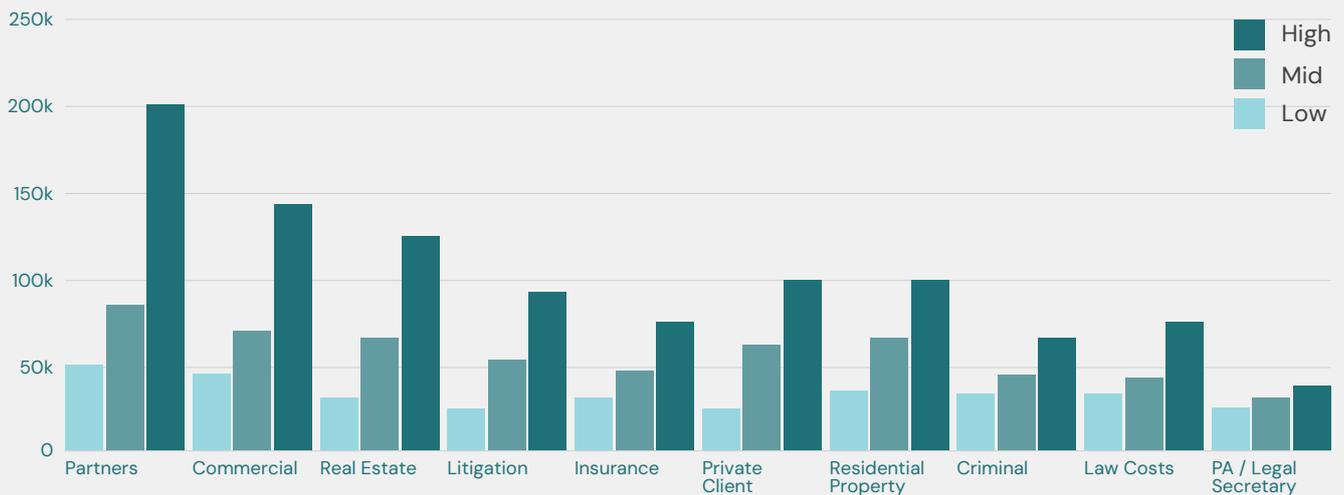
London is the jewel in the crown of the UK legal market, and is the most attractive of cities to relocate to. The trade off, of course, is a longer commute and a longer working week, but we don't think anybody jumps in without knowing the depth and strength of the current of this dynamic and pacey market.

South East

The last 4 years has seen the South East come to the boil and really start to bubble, having lived in London's shadow for many years. In 2022, just 19% of the legal professional talent pool was actively considering changing jobs, but 12 months later that had jumped to 25%. 2024 saw a collective breather when there was a marginal

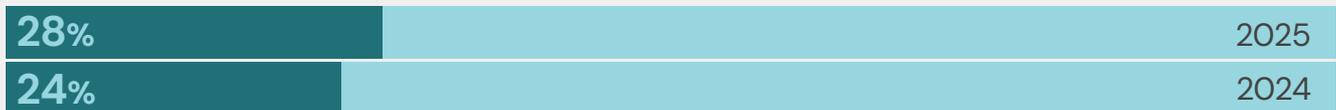
contraction in the active talent pool, but this year the rate has boomed to 28%, mostly driven by lawyers jumping off the fence and becoming more aggressive in their job search.

Salaries

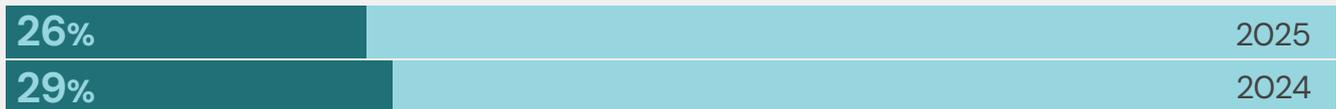


Talent pool

Active job seekers



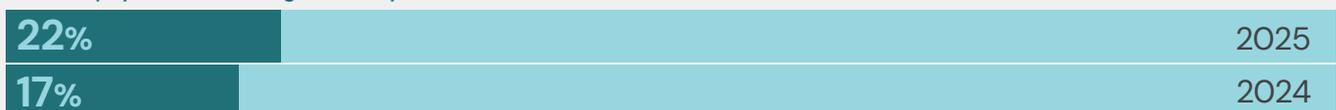
Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move



Value of pay rise as % of original salary



South East – career motivators

Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

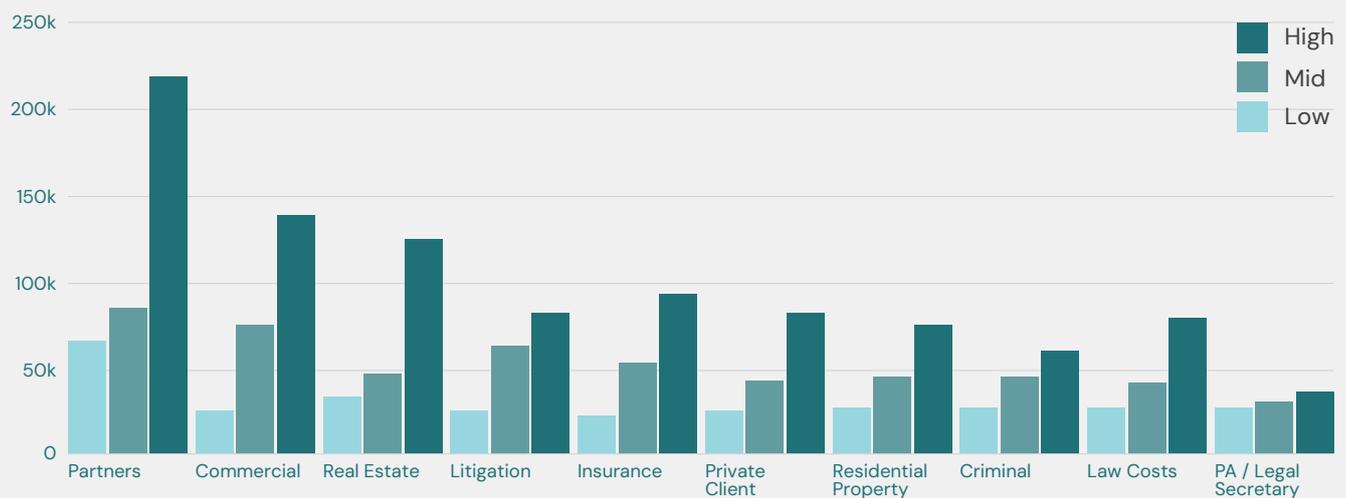
A perfect storm is playing out in this market – there are above average numbers of South East legal professionals who believe they are paid below market, there has been an uptick in numbers motivated to change jobs for money reasons, and firms are paying a 5% higher premium to secure talent as a result. For those looking to hire, offering a financial incentive is what will help secure that deal here.

Midlands & Eastern

In 2024, for the Midlands region, it seemed to be all about the money. Now, however, that looks like a situation that seems to have been addressed, with a below average number of the region’s lawyers citing salary as their main motivator when looking to change jobs. For them, the offer of greater promotion prospects and a

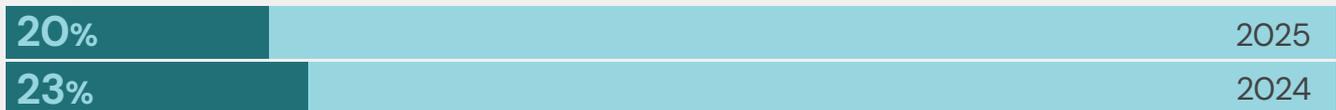
chance to jump up to the next level of their careers is offering a greater incentive, although those pay rises can still be found in this market.

Salaries

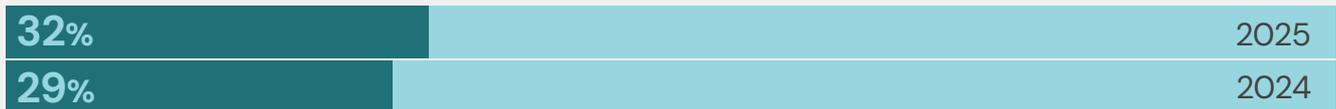


Talent pool

Active job seekers



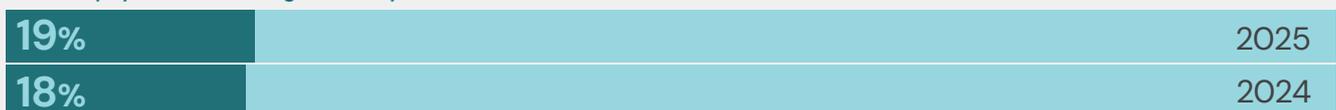
Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move



Value of pay rise as % of original salary



Midlands & Eastern – career motivators

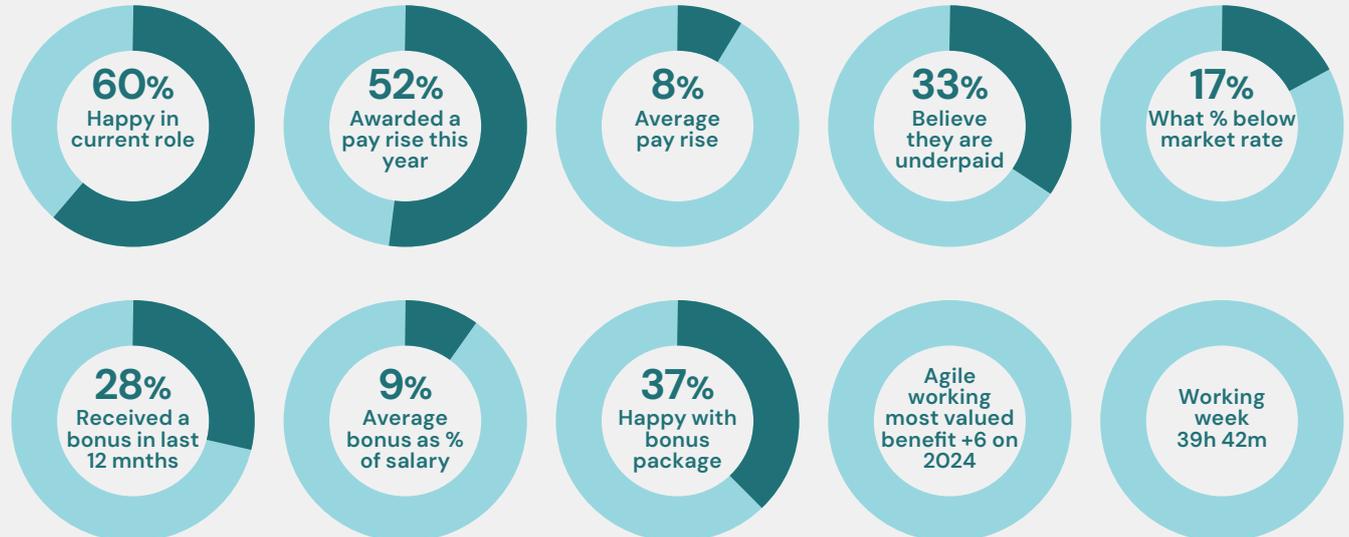
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

Hold on to your hats, however – although the active talent pool has contracted, the passive pool has grown at its expense. We’ve found Midlands and Eastern based legal professionals are some of the most ambitious in the land, with 28% citing progression as their main career motivator – above even the high of London.

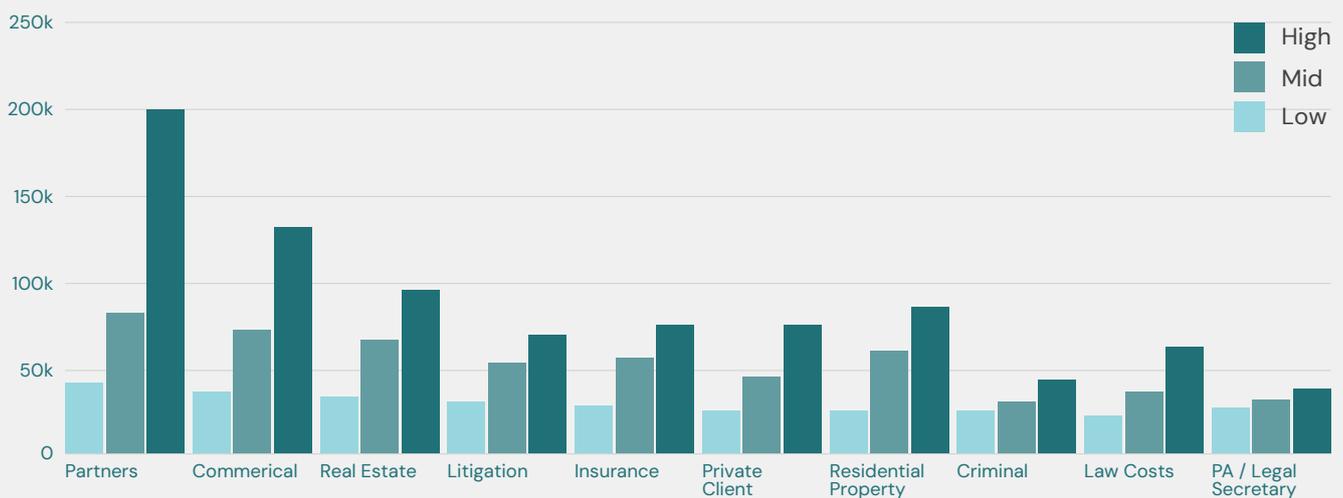
South West & Wales

"I'm happy where I am but am open to a move if everything stacks up. Well, I will think about it anyway."

This is the message we get year on year from the South West and Wales regions. There's a healthy passive talent pool, which is checked by the

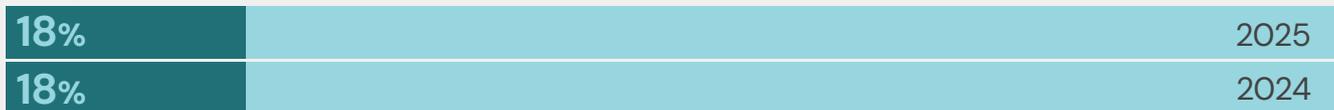
lowest active one of all regions of the UK. Indeed, this year has seen no change at all from last years active talent pool - the only region in the UK to have seen static movement year-on-year in the numbers of active job seekers.

Salaries

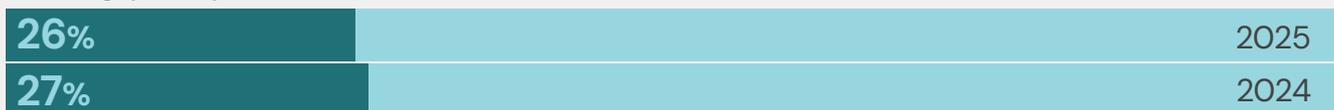


Talent pool

Active job seekers



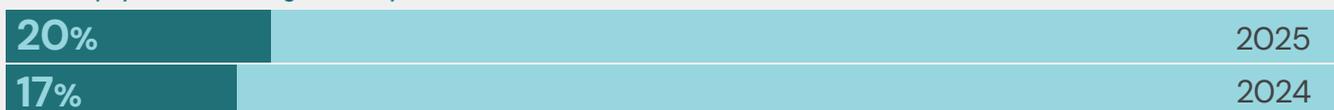
Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move

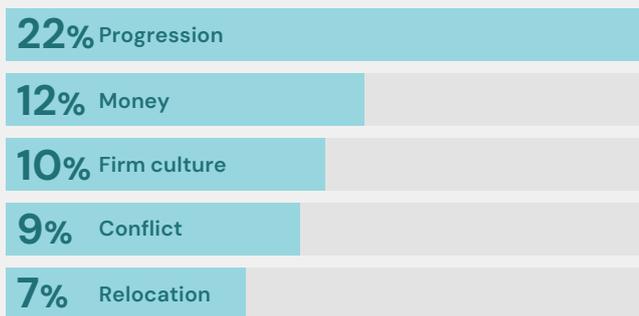


Value of pay rise as % of original salary



South West & Wales – career motivators

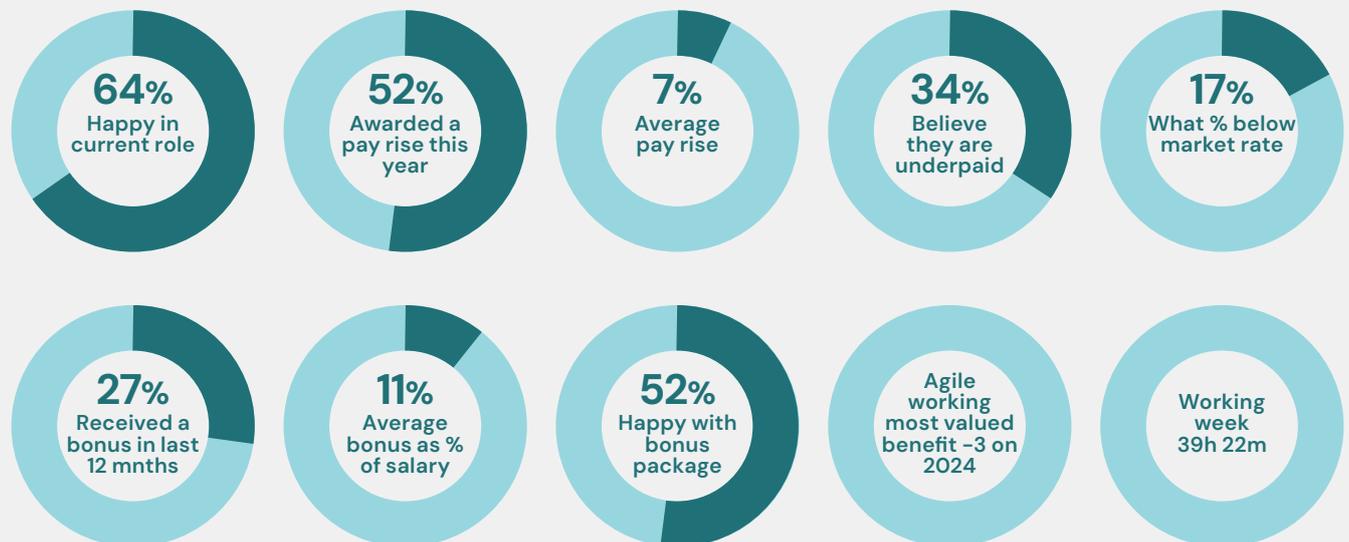
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

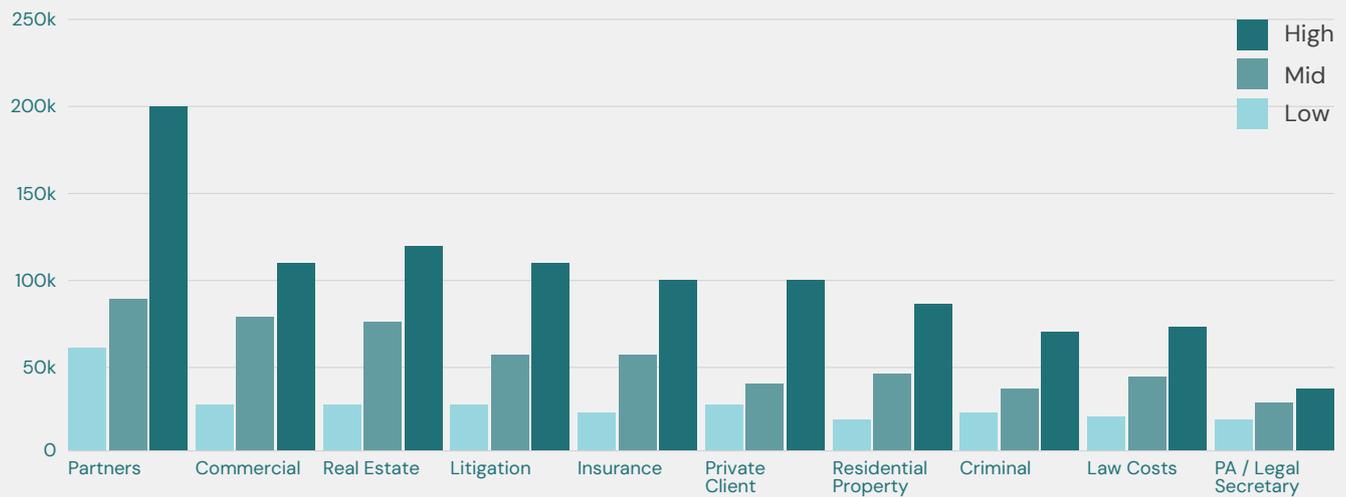
There are two strong reasons why this region might be the most static – legal professionals living and working in the area are the happiest in their jobs we’ve found, and they are also seeing more opportunities for progression within their current firm than their counterparts in other regions might be.

North West

Like last year, the North West is continuing to grow rapidly as a market, backed up by a steady increase in the number of people actively looking for roles. Nearly a quarter of respondents for this region are in active circulation, while the numbers of passive job seekers has remained the same, and are still up on 2023 levels. The

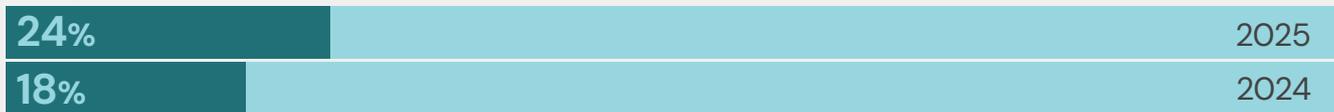
increase of pay on moving, and the value of that pay rise, also continues to climb, indicating a healthy market with a good degree of competition for the best talent among firms looking to hire.

Salaries

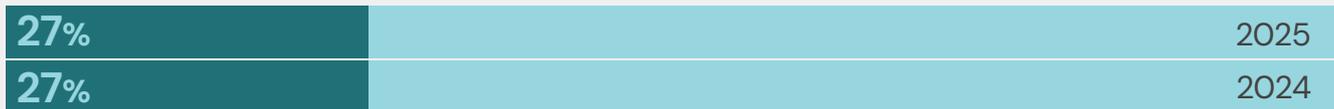


Talent pool

Active job seekers



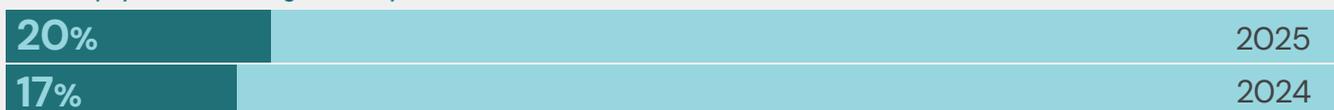
Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move

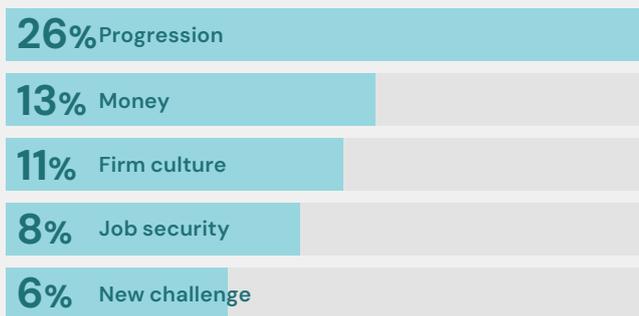


Value of pay rise as % of original salary



North West – career motivators

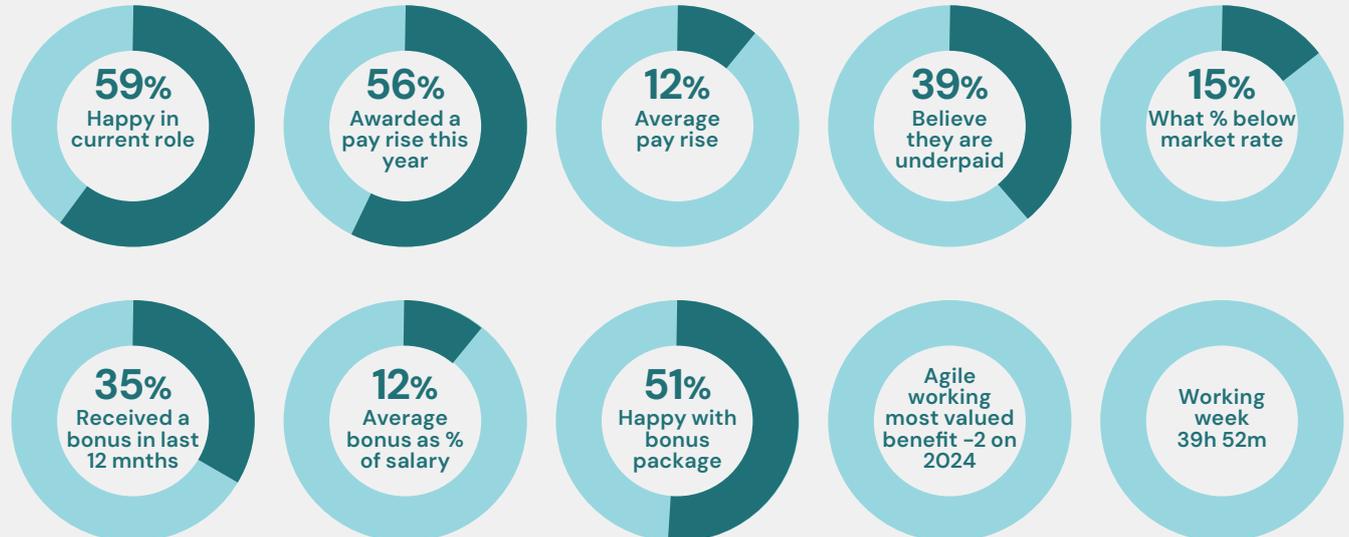
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

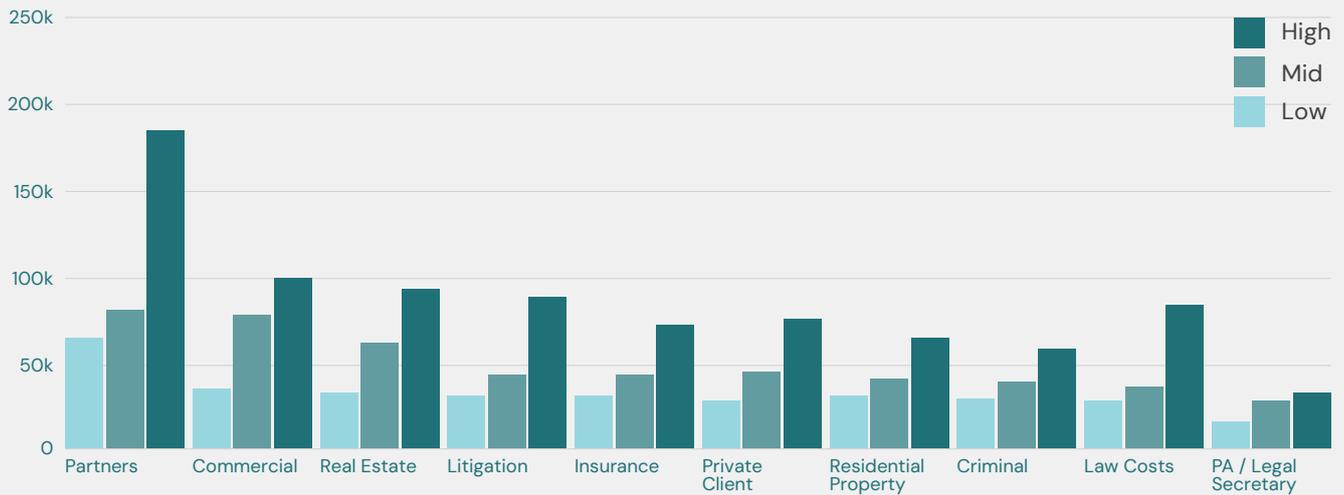
What a difference a year can make. In 2024 we noted that the North West’s legal professionals were the least likely to be feeling as though they were underpaid when compared with their peers in other regions. In 2025 it is all change – the North West is now tied with the South East for the highest numbers of people who believe they are underpaid. It will be interesting to see if this influences movement in the market across the year.

Yorkshire & North East

The war for talent in Yorkshire & the North East has erupted following a brief retreat in 2024. The number of Yorkshire and North East based legal professionals actively seeking a change of jobs has jumped to 35% from 19% last year, with progression and firm culture the being the primary drivers of that change in tempo. Some

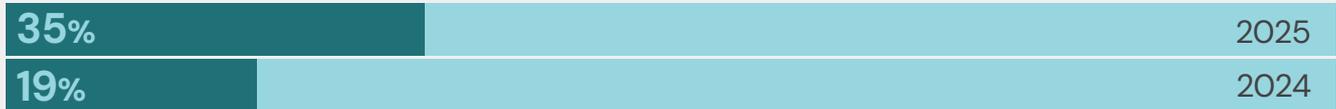
recognition maybe needed of the fact that the excesses of the great resignation are well and truly behind us, underlined by the substantial drop in numbers who secured a pay rise when moving jobs.

Salaries

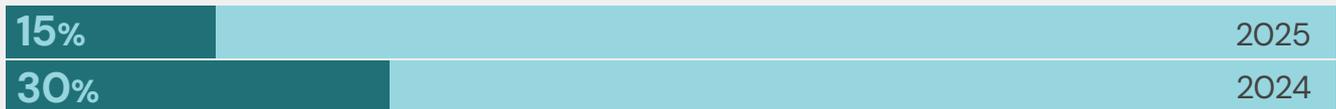


Talent pool

Active job seekers



Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move

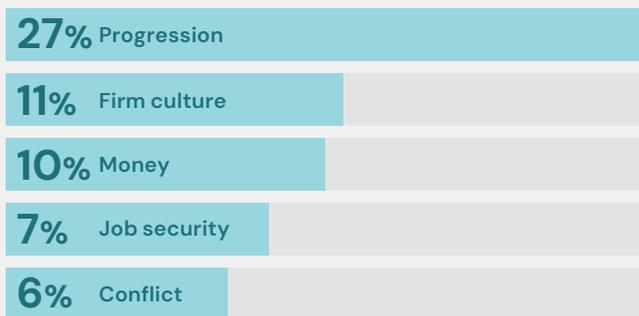


Value of pay rise as % of original salary



Yorkshire & North East – career motivators

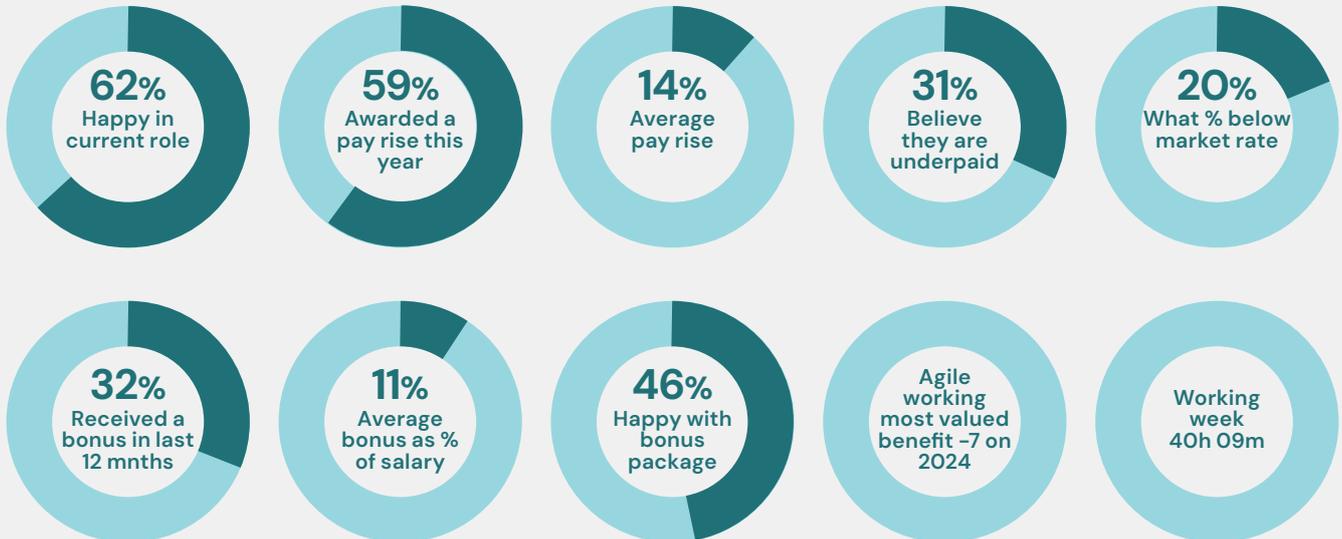
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



And finally

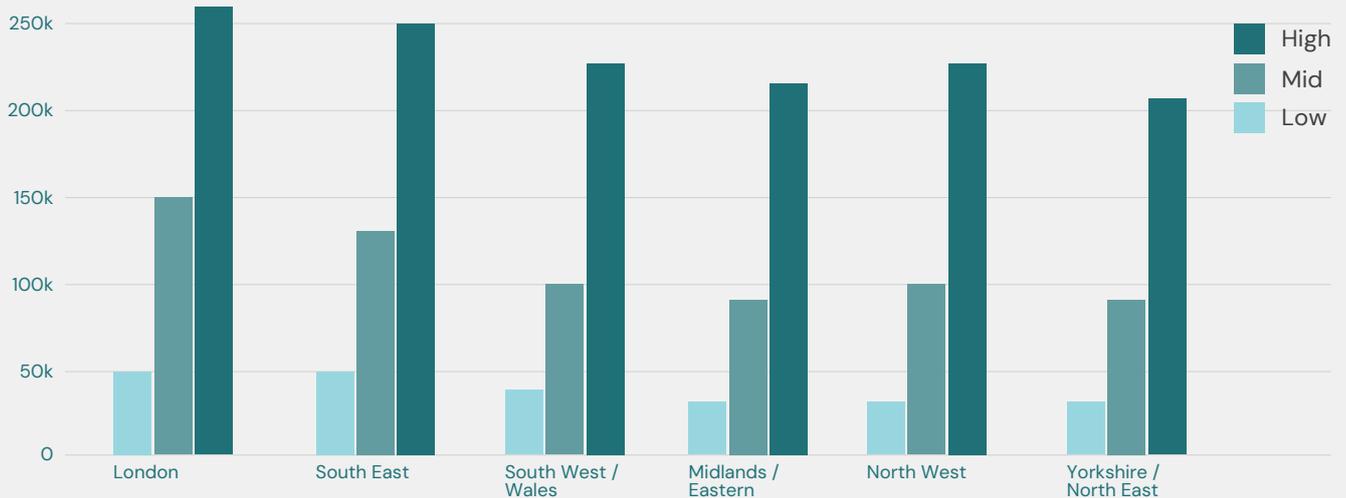
Was this region maybe resting on its laurels? Yorkshire and the North East maintained its levels of job satisfaction on last year, but were knocked off their perch in 2025 as the happiest region in the England and Wales jurisdiction. The large disparity between those with leadership aspirations and those who believe they can get there with their current firm may have something to do with it.

In-House

This year, there is some indication that In-House lawyers are getting restless. There's been a significant jump in active job seekers, meaning that nearly a third of all In-House lawyers are actively seeking to change jobs, and, unlike in Private Practice, that has not been at the expense of the passive talent pool. Those that

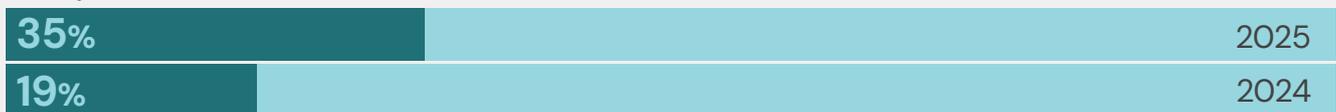
are looking to move, though, may be disappointed to find that there are less opportunities to secure a salary boost, with the numbers receiving a rise in a new role down from 75% in 2024 to 64% in 2025.

Salaries

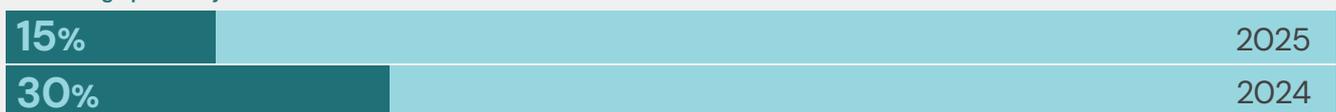


Talent pool

Active job seekers



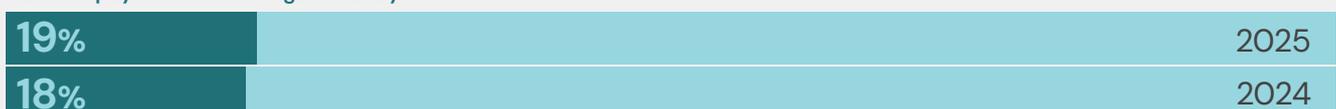
Percentage passive job seekers



Securing pay-rise on job move

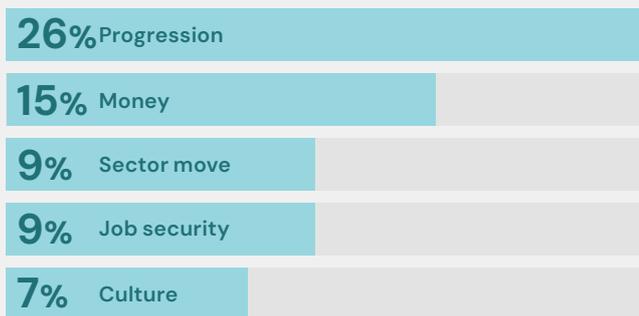


Value of pay rise as % of original salary



In-House – career motivators

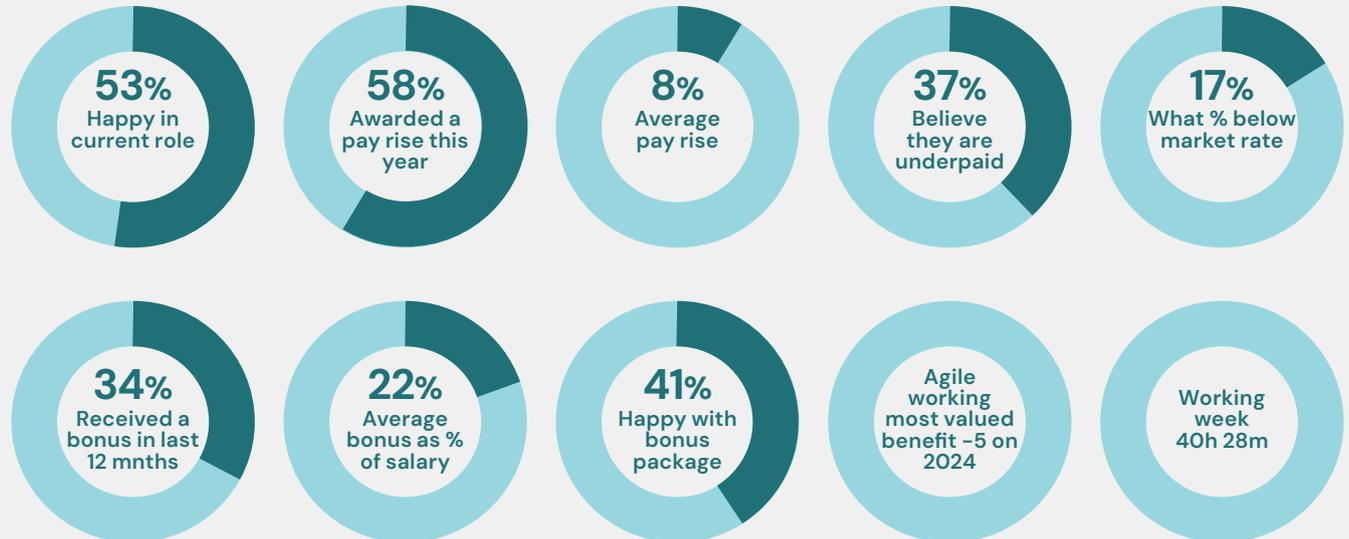
Career motivators



Aspirations



Sentiment



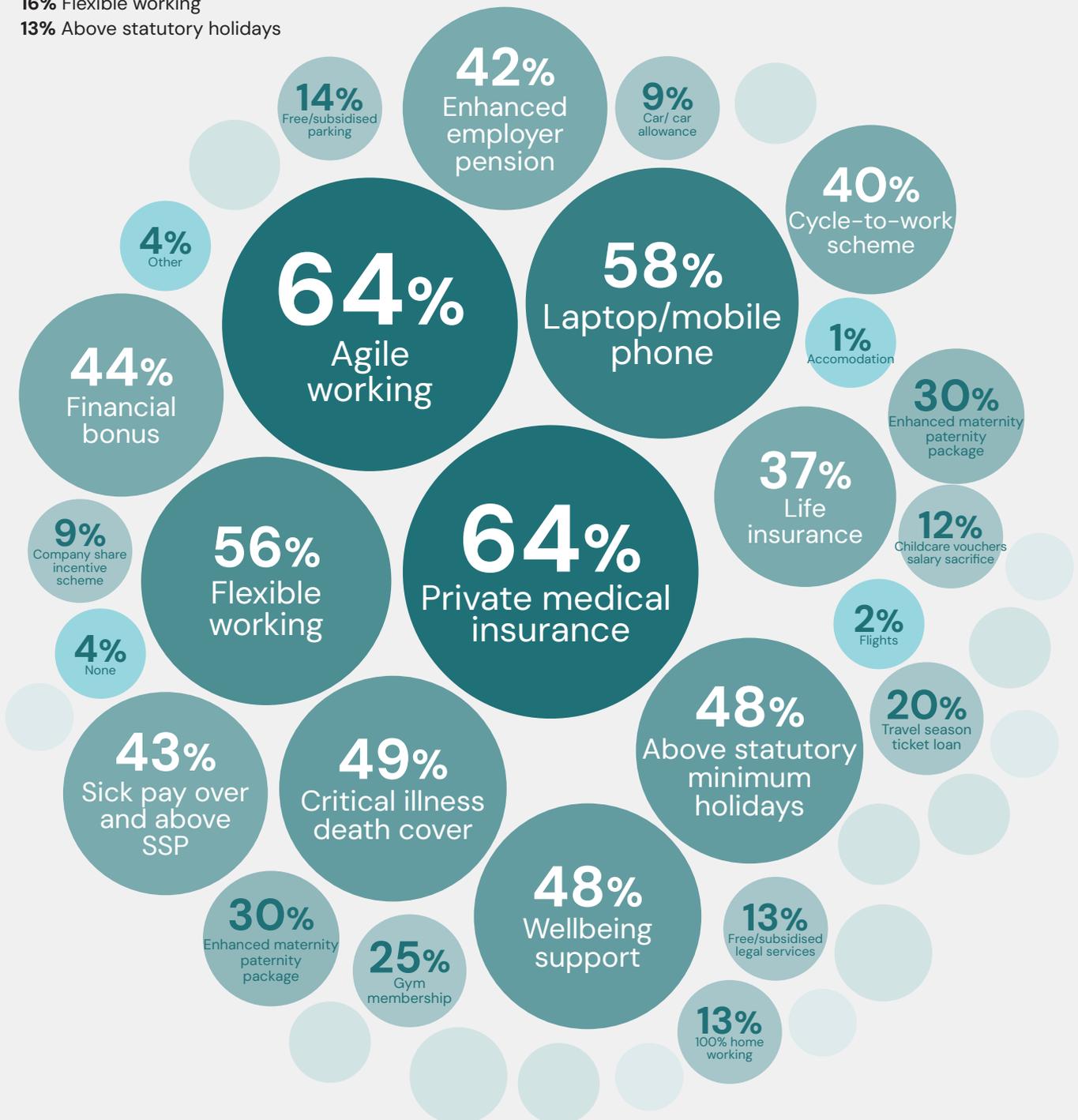
And finally

So, what are the dynamics in play? The last 2 years has seen employers tighten their belts, so the opportunities for internal pay hikes have dried up, and the value of annual pay rewards have declined. On the flip side, although there has been a contraction, 2/3 of competitors in their sector are still prepared to offer a 20% increase in salary to attract talent.

Benefits packages Big law

Most valued benefits

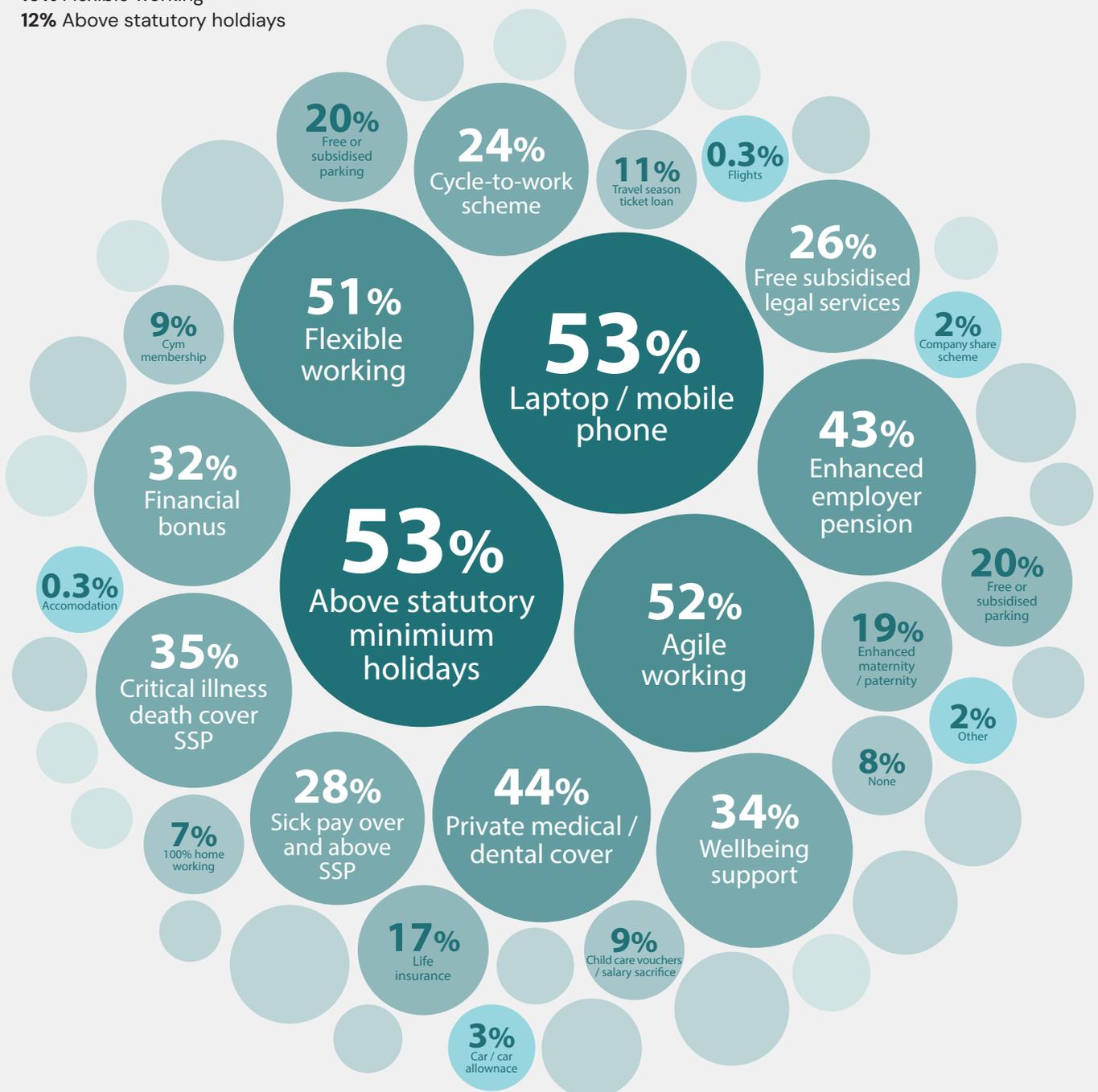
- 26% Agile working
- 16% Flexible working
- 13% Above statutory holidays



Benefits packages Regional and independents

Most valued benefits

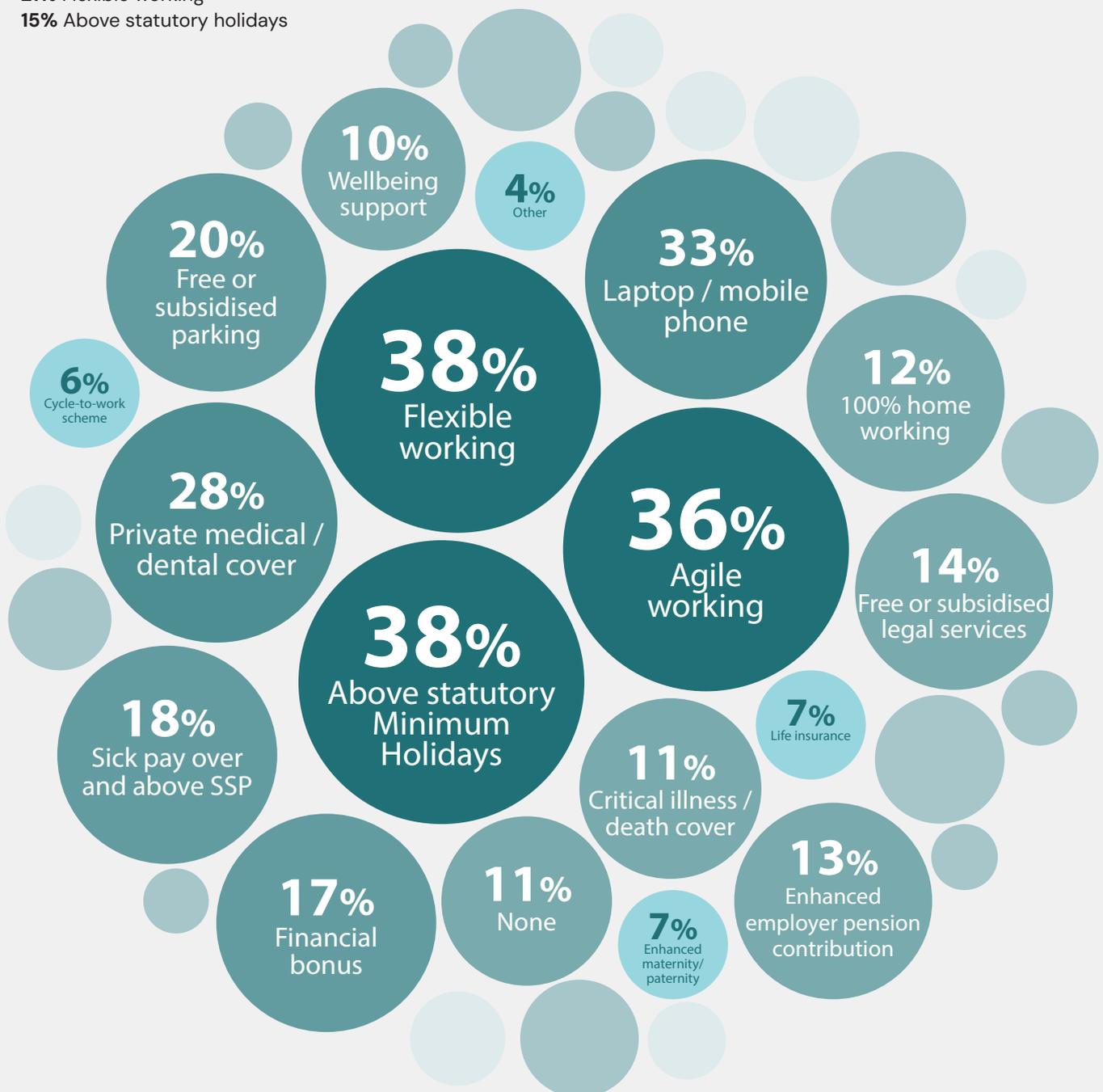
- 25% Agile working
- 16% Flexible working
- 12% Above statutory holidays



Benefits packages High street and market town

Most valued benefits

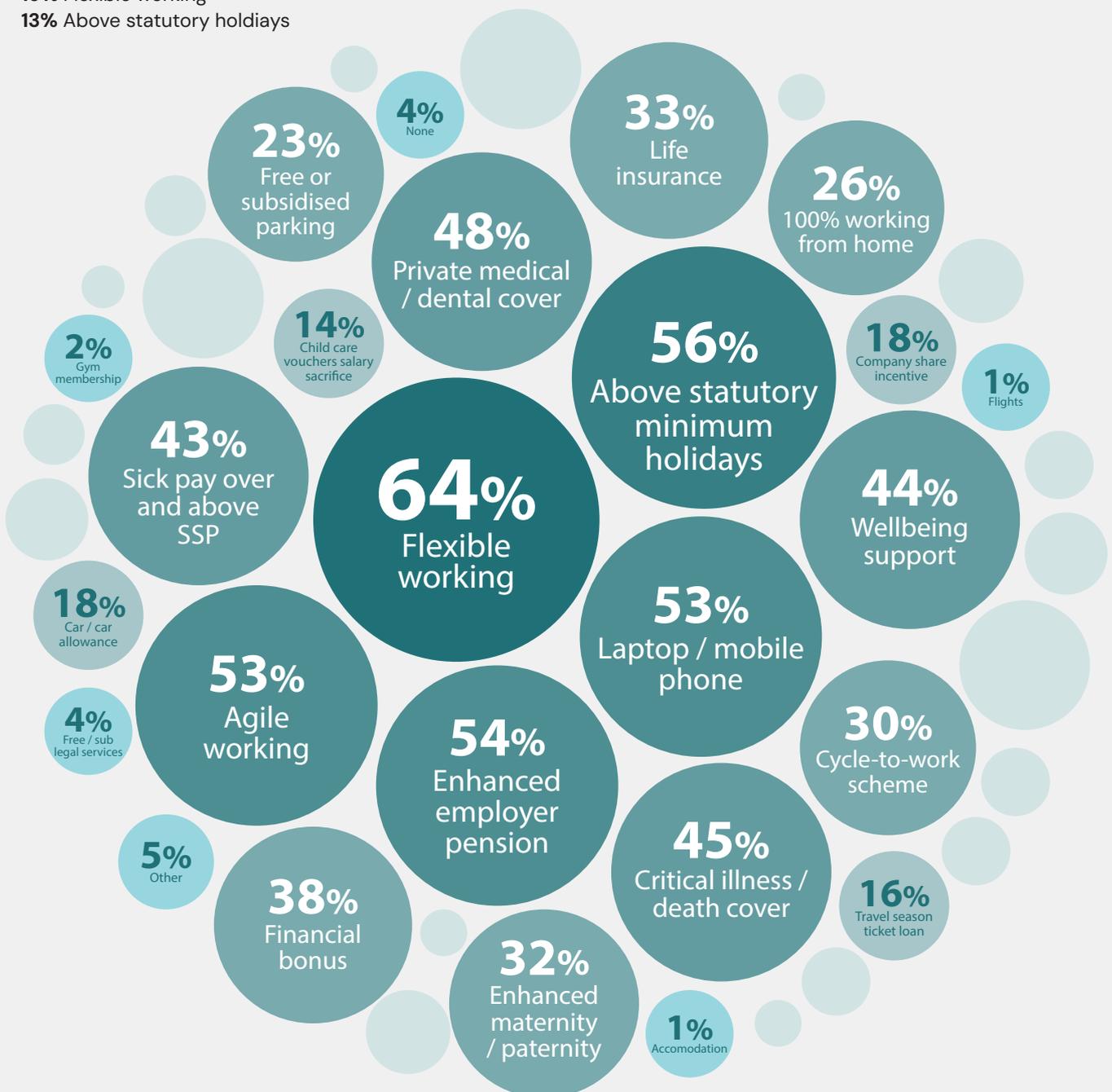
- 22% Agile working
- 21% Flexible working
- 15% Above statutory holidays



Benefits packages In-House

Most valued benefits

- 22% Agile working
- 19% Flexible working
- 13% Above statutory holidays

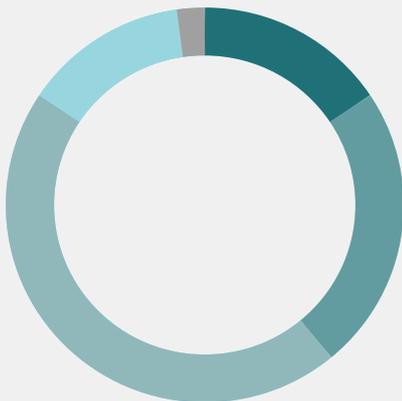


**Only 13% of respondents
work 100% of their time
*in the office.***



Talking points – hybrid working

For most respondents, a blend of hybrid working is now commonplace. However, some recent statements from high-profile business leaders have indicated that its days might be coming to an end.



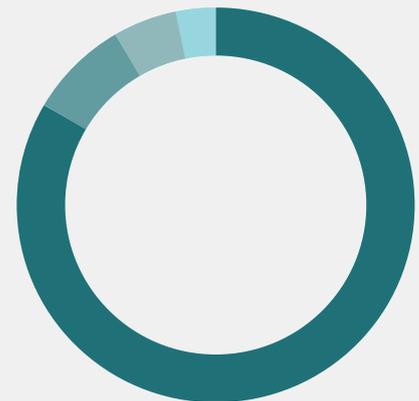
How much hybrid working do you do?

- 13% 100% in office
- 24% Office / WFH (fixed days)
- 46% Office / WFH (flexible days)
- 13% 100% WFH
- 4% Other



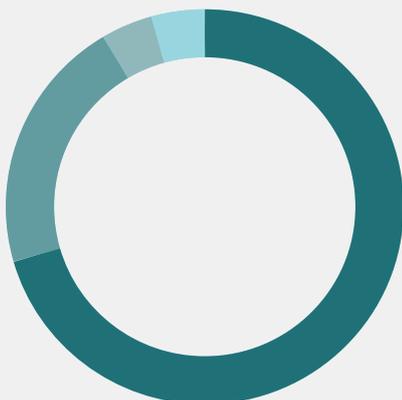
Does this differ from what your firm offers as standard?

- 24% Yes
- 24% No
- 13% Don't know



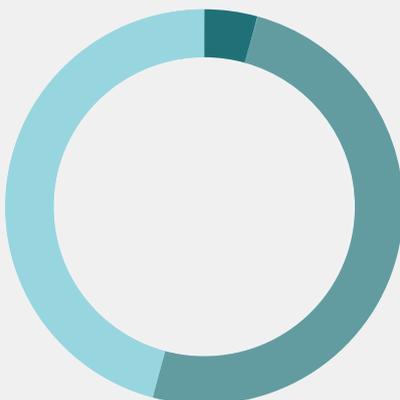
Does hybrid working benefit your lifestyle?

- 85% Beneficial
- 9% Neither beneficial / detrimental
- 2% Detrimental
- 4% Don't know



Does hybrid working increase productivity?

- 69% Increases
- 17% Same level
- 7% Decreases
- 7% Don't know



Is your firm altering its hybrid working policy next year?

- 5% Yes
- 48% No
- 48% Don't know



Would an alteration of your hybrid working make you change roles?

- 36% Definitely
- 30% Probably
- 13% Probably not
- 6% Definitely not
- 15% Unsure

Legal professionals are holding on firmly to what they have got, and that hybrid working was a win-win. 85% believe hybrid working benefits their lifestyle, and 69% believe they are more productive as a consequence. Two thirds of respondents indicated any changes in their firms' hybrid working policy would encourage them to look for a new position.

Our year in 2024

January

We started the year off with our Q4 AGM.

Then we partook in some networking in our Legal Padel League (a lot of fun can we add) 🎾!



February

We celebrated Pancake day and Valentine's day as a team with some sweet treats 🥞.

As well as a special visit from Gareth's little one.



March

We hosted our In-House Roundtable event at Mercedes Benz.

Followed by a team celebration at Black Cat to play some darts 🎯.

Then a hike around Lyme park with the team.

Finally (and a big finally!), launching our Dubai office with 3 employees moving there.



April

Lois celebrates 5 years at DS 🎉.

And JP celebrates his birthday with a lunch at The Ivy 🍰.



Our year in 2024

May

Lorraine returns to the London Team.

We, in light of Mental Health Awareness week, took part in Wear it Green day with the whole team dressed in green 🌱.

JP then celebrated his 15th year anniversary at DS.

And the superbillers lunch takes place at Fenix 🍴.



June

With the Euros being the main event of summer '24, we had a watch party at the Oast House to support the Lions 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿.

Then we created a football team of our own with Business Fives where businesses compete for the winning title ⚽.



July

We welcomed 2 new starters; Apprentice Gabrielle joining the Marketing team, and Senior Recruitment Consultant, Ali, joining the Commercial team.

We also enjoyed some happy hour drinks in the sun at 21 stories with the whole team ☀️.



August

We welcomed another 2 new starters; Senior Recruitment Consultant, Abbie, joining our National Insurance team, and Recruitment Consultant, Huw, joining the In-House team.

The football continues as our guys partake in a charity football match for Young Minds.



Our year in 2024

September

Douglas Scott turns 20!

Not only was it our anniversary, we also attained IIP Platinum. 🏆

Then we celebrated both our apprentices Joe and Isobel on passing apprenticeship (with a distinction by the way!).

Finally, we took part in a 10k running for our chosen charity, Wood Street Mission. As well as launching our own DS run club 🏃.



October

We started the month with the superbillers lunch at SexyFish.

Nick was promoted to Head of In-House.

We took part in some (gruesome) Halloween games in the office 🎃.

Francesca got engaged. 💍

Emily Blackmore completes half marathon in Macclesfield.



November

Recruitment Consultants, Heather and Anelize join us ❤️.

Emily Flewitt celebrates her big 30th in the office.

Then Isobel is promoted to Brand and Marketing Executive, and Ben is promoted to Associate Recruitment Consultant.

Callum completed a half marathon in Milan.



December

We had our amazing superbillers Dubai trip.

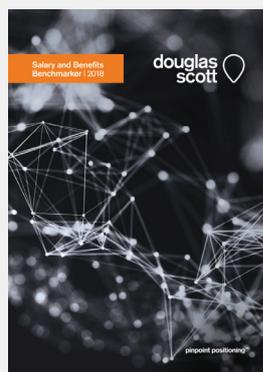
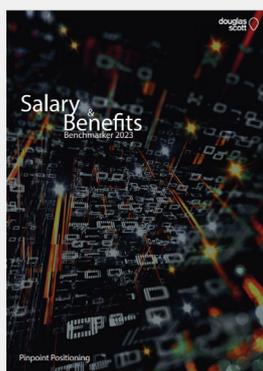
We hosted our annual Wood Street Mission Christmas toys appeal. Followed by Christmas jumper day in the office with some Christmas treats.

To top it off, we had our Christmas do celebration at the Oast House. 🎅

Finally, Stacey and Huw both spend the Christmas holidays over in Australia with loved ones.



13 years of comparable data – our previous salary surveys



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