

In 2016, there was a net increase in the number of law firms delivering legal services and the number of people employed in the legal sector grew again. It has been a crazy 12 months though: the year Britain had enough of experts. And pollsters.

In December, an Ipsos MORI report ranked lawyers in the top half of trusted professions. 52% of the 1,019 adults surveyed trusted lawyers to tell the truth, but - at 68% - it seemed were more inclined to believe hairdressers.

Nurses, doctors, teachers and judges occupied the Champions' League spots. Politicians, government ministers, journalists and estate agents were the quartet of pantomime villains.

After a bit of head scratching, it struck me that I couldn't remember the last time I suspected a hairdresser was hiding the truth from me but come on, what is Nicky Clarke doing to boost public confidence, that the CILEx Code of Conduct or its Solicitors Regulation Authority equivalent cannot achieve?

Talking of surveys, we recently published our 2017 *Salary and Benefits Benchmark*, the fifth year we have been collecting and analysing numbers and sentiment in the legal profession. This year we crunched through £186m of salary data, with help from the 5,205 candidates who registered with us over the last 12 months and the 3,000 lawyers who responded to our end-of-year survey.

One of the questions we asked concerns ambition, with 69% of all respondents aspiring to partnership or business leadership within the legal sector. 74% of Chartered Legal Executives surveyed had such aspirations, which compared favourably to 77% of all Solicitors and 46% of Licensed Conveyancers. Great to see CILEx being endorsed as a vehicle to achieve ambitions.

## PERSONAL INJURY

Now they know the extent of the reforms, firms can only hope that is that, so they can start to put some medium-and long-term business plans in place. The uncertain climate has made it difficult for hirers to plan too far in advance, but pipelines are healthy and there is the natural churn of human resources adding to the mix. 32% of the Personal Injury talent pool is currently active in the job market compared to 30% of all legal professionals. Progression is the main career motivator amongst Personal Injury lawyers with, 31% citing this as the reason for changing jobs. A sign of the times however, nearly 1 in 5 stated job security was their main motivator, which is twice the average and the standout figure across all practice areas. 60% of all Personal Injury lawyers received a pay rise last year, and that averaged 9%. Only 3% of Personal Injury lawyers cited working conditions as the main reason they changed employers, compared to 12% last year. **2017 Outlook** – Road Traffic Accident will be busy in the run up to the roll-out of the latest reforms. Fewer legal professionals are

choosing to take the Personal Injury road, and even though job losses are likely some areas will be impacted by an undersupply of talent.

## DEBT RECOVERY

A significant drop in the number of County Court Judgements being obtained against businesses in 2016 was taken by some as a sign that creditors, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises were being priced out of debt recovery by higher court fees. Worth remembering that 2015 saw a post-recession high. 30% of all Debt Recovery lawyers are currently active in the job market, with 36% citing progression as the main motivator to change jobs. 70% of Debt Recovery lawyers got a pay rise in their current roles, and that averaged 10.5%. Despite this, salary perception is less rosy: in 2017 44% of Debt Recovery lawyers believe they are paid below market rate compared to 38% in 2016. The average time spent in a job is 3 years 9 months, and 63% are happy at work. 30% received a bonus in the last 12 months, which averaged 7% of salary. Work life balance has taken a hit on 2017 as Debt Recovery lawyers' average working week has crept up to 43.5 hours. In 2015 the average working week in Debt Recovery was 45.5 hours and last year that dropped to 42 hours. **2017 Outlook** – Confidence in the economy fuels commerce and consumerism, so oil, Brexit, the economy and global politics will all influence the health of the sector.

## PROPERTY

According to the Council of Mortgage Lenders, first-time buyers borrowed £53.6bn in 2016, which was a 13.5% increase on 2015. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors reported a fall in the volume of transactions in December, and was less optimistic about demand in Q1 of 2017. There is a widespread belief that vendors need to be a bit more realistic on pricing if 2016 levels of activity are to be maintained. Property Lawyers' salary expectations have appreciated slightly, with 37% believing they are being paid below market rate compared to 35% in 2016 and 45% in 2015. There has been no change in the length of the working week: Property Lawyers are spending an average 40.5 hours at work. 30% of the Property Law talent pool is actively looking to change jobs, with 33% motivated to do so to progress their careers and 6% for an increase in salary. 62% of Property Lawyers got a pay rise from an existing employer and that averaged 10.5%. Whatever the motivation, 68% of Property Lawyers secured an increase in salary when they found a new role. The average rise in salary in these cases was 30%.

**2017 Outlook** – Another strong year for Residential Conveyancing and Property Law recruitment. Fee earners are finding progression routes blocked and salary expectations are beginning to creep up.

## EMPLOYMENT

Before I go any further, I must declare a conflict of interest: emboldened by the recent successful challenges to the gig economy

employment model, I have submitted a back pay and holiday entitlement request to Tesco in lieu of time spent in the self-checkout line. I can see this one going all the way to the Supreme Court too, but an offer of 1,000 clubcard points will be a strong test of my resolve. 29% of Employment Lawyers are actively seeking new opportunities, which is a 10% year-on-year jump. 25% of Employment Lawyers changing jobs cited progression as the main motivator, 11.5% are doing it for money and a similar percentage are on the market because of job security concerns. 75% of Employment Lawyers are happy in their jobs, which is 12 percentage points above the UK legal sector average. 69% of Employment Lawyers received a pay rise in the last 12 months, which averaged 8%. 25% received a bonus, and that averaged 5% of salary. 77% of Employment Lawyers aspire to a partnership or leadership position, and 32% of those believe they will achieve that with their current firm. Working weeks average 42 hours, and Employment Lawyers typically spend 3 years 3 months with an employer before moving on. **2017 Outlook** – The new rock ‘n’ roll. Brexit, high heels, expansion of the gig economy. Big jump in the number of Employment Lawyers looking to switch employers.

## PRIVATE CLIENT

In the not-so-distant past, Family Law was on the ropes. The withdrawal of public funding hit hard, and it took a while for firms to reset the compass. However, Family Law has well and truly bounced back, there’s plenty of news about ambitious expansion plans and one specialist has even attracted private equity investment. High-profile contentious probate matters have not done Private Client lawyers any harm, and according to Google trends, on average, three times as many people were searching ‘how to make a will’ in 2016 than ‘how to get a divorce’. Only 19% of the Private Client talent pool is active in the job market, in 2017, compared to 28% in 2016. 22% are motivated to change jobs to progress, and 5% are on the move because of conflict in the workplace, which is 2.5 times the figure across all practice areas. 74% of Private Client lawyers are happy in their role, but 42% believe they are being paid a salary below market rate. 79% of Private Client lawyers were awarded a pay rise in their current roles, which averaged 11%. 60% secured an increase in salary when they last changed jobs, which averaged 21%. 63% of Private Practice lawyers aspire to partnership or a business leadership position, which is only a couple of points down from last year. 42% believe they will attain this with their current employer compared to 37% last year. **2017 Outlook** – No reason to think it won’t be a good year in Private Client. No obvious legislative challenges, and cannot see Brexit having a massive impact. Shortage in supply and increase in demand for talent, which is why legal recruitment experts will always be in demand.

## REGIONAL

Student	Low	High
Personal Injury	£13,500	£19,000
Debt Recovery	£13,500	£19,000
Family	£13,500	£16,500
Wills and Probate	£13,500	£19,500
Property	£13,500	£21,500
Employment	£13,500	£22,000

Member	Low	High
Personal Injury	£17,500	£25,000
Debt Recovery	£17,000	£25,000
Family	£16,500	£21,500
Wills and Probate	£19,000	£26,000
Property	£21,000	£29,500
Employment	£17,000	£26,000

Fellow	Low	High
Personal Injury	£24,000	£36,000
Debt Recovery	£24,500	£46,000
Family	£21,000	£45,000
Wills and Probate	£25,000	£45,000
Property	£26,500	£45,000
Employment	£24,000	£42,500

## GREATER LONDON

Student	Low	High
Personal Injury	£15,000	£20,500
Debt Recovery	£15,000	£20,500
Family	£15,500	£21,000
Wills and Probate	£15,000	£21,000
Property	£15,000	£23,500
Employment	£15,000	£22,000

Member	Low	High
Personal Injury	£20,000	£27,000
Debt Recovery	£19,000	£27,000
Family	£19,000	£25,000
Wills and Probate	£20,500	£27,000
Property	£23,000	£33,000
Employment	£18,000	£27,000

Fellow	Low	High
Personal Injury	£26,500	£42,000
Debt Recovery	£26,500	£48,000
Family	£25,000	£50,000
Wills and Probate	£27,000	£50,000
Property	£28,000	£51,000
Employment	£25,000	£46,000