

2020

A Year in Review

A message from the Director



We started last year, much like everyone else, with a significant plan for 2020 - a plan that was soon to go out of the proverbial window when Covid-19 wreaked havoc around the world.

If I cast my mind back to the start of the year, there was a discussion point on how a no deal Brexit would affect jobs within the industry, but it wasn't expected to be catastrophic. Recruitment in the legal sector, at least for the last decade, has remained fairly consistent.

Along came a global pandemic and the industry was plunged into new territory. Multiple law firms put a temporary freeze on recruitment, many were furloughed and others were made redundant as employers desperately tried to navigate new terrain.

Those who continued working had to adapt to new working from home practices very quickly. In an industry renowned for face to face business, a new remote way of working was a big change for the industry.

As a side note, one positive to come out of the pandemic is the acceptance of working from home. A report from Culture Shift found that 52% of employees across the UK law sector say working from home has improved their work-life balance.

Fortunately, the recruitment freeze only lasted for a few months but this period of down time gave us a golden opportunity to sit back and

“52% of employees across the UK law sector say working from home has improved their work-life balance.”



assess how we could develop Simply Law Jobs to provide an even better product.

We knew we couldn't just sit around waiting for the storm to pass. We're big believers in 'control the controllables' so while we couldn't change the impact Covid-19, we could control the hard work and determination we put in to see us through these unprecedented times.

Between March and August, we contacted thousands of jobseekers and clients to discover the features which they would love to see. Using this feedback, we came up with a plan to make their experience of Simply Law Jobs quicker, more efficient and intuitive.

Since August, we've been working unbelievably hard behind the scenes to bring those ideas to life. More information about our exciting relaunch can be found on page 14-16, but phase 1 is set to launch in January 2021 with even more significant features to be released throughout the year.

While it has been one of the more challenging periods in Simply Law Jobs history, we're extremely proud of the work we've done and we can't wait for everyone to see it. We know you're going to love it!

Dave Capper

Director of Simply Law Jobs

About Us

Simply Law Jobs was launched in 2003 to connect employers and jobseekers in the legal industry. Over the past 18 years, we've grown to become the UK's leading destination for discovering extraordinary career opportunities and for finding and recruiting top talent.

Our Motivation

Our sole purpose is to connect employers with skilled professionals for specialist roles. By doing this, we provide jobseekers with the opportunity to flourish in a career they love and we help businesses thrive by recruiting talented individuals.



How Covid-19 Impacted Jobs in the Legal Industry

The legal industry faced one of its biggest challenges when a global pandemic forced the UK into a national lockdown. After an initial recruitment freeze for the majority of the industry, there was some disparity in how law firms operated in the months that followed.



The economic stress and uncertainty inflicted by the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented amount of disruption within the legal industry.

Since the recession in 2008, there has been a skills shortage in the legal sector which has left some employees with the knowledge they are not easily replaceable. However, a global pandemic has begun to shake up a seemingly calm legal recruitment marketplace.

When Boris Johnson ordered us all to work from home on March 23rd, the uncertainty of the situation prompted a recruitment freeze in most law firms. As time wore on, there was some disparity in how businesses decided to operate during lockdown.

Some law firms 'battened down the hatches,' possibly due to not having a strong enough or established enough foothold in their markets. Many top law firms announced furloughs and job cuts including Irwin Mitchell, Reed Smith, Squire Patton Boggs and BLM.

A report by Realm Recruit found that 27% of employers in the legal sector were 'likely' to make redundancies as a result of the current climate. 13% claimed to have stopped all recruitment activity and won't recruit at all in 2020.

However, the majority of businesses preferred to observe the ever changing landscape before committing to big decisions. Some law firms

were criticised in the wake of the 2008 financial crash for sacking junior lawyers too quickly and deferring training contracts.

The Realm Recruit report also found that 60% of legal employers had only paused their recruitment activity, but would regularly review it to ensure they had the resources to continue growing their business.

At the other end of the scale, other law firms held firm and continued operations as usual, albeit remotely. Some areas of law even witnessed a huge surge in activity as a result of Covid-19.

After being closed for months, law firms with conveyancing departments experienced a huge growth in workloads when the housing market re-opened in May.

When the full lockdown was lifted, family law experienced an eruption of divorce enquiries as the strain of spending weeks together, along with financial pressures became too much.

After a year of huge change in the job market, employment and restructuring lawyers saw a massive surge in enquiries from clients looking to navigate the crisis through cutting jobs or practising safety measures.

Tony Williams, principal of legal consultancy, Jomati said, "The message I've been getting from firms – certainly from the top-50 – is very much that things have not been as bad as anticipated."



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This viewpoint was echoed in the number of jobs live on Simply Law Jobs throughout 2020. After numbers tumbled in April, they have subsequently grown each month.

Michael McGaw, Director at Nelson Chambers, said, "We need to be able to draw positives from even the worst situations, the rainbow we see after the storm. We need to recognise how adaptable most of us have been and at very short notice. How so many firms developed work from home procedures which protected jobs, protecting incomes, and protected companies for the best people."

He continued, "The adoption of technology has meant that we can continue to collaborate with customers and colleagues. So, whilst face to face interviews can and should resume where possible, we can speed processes up by conducting early stages using video conferences and alike."

* The statistics and quotes displayed are taken from todaysconveyancer.co.uk and armstrongwatson.co.uk

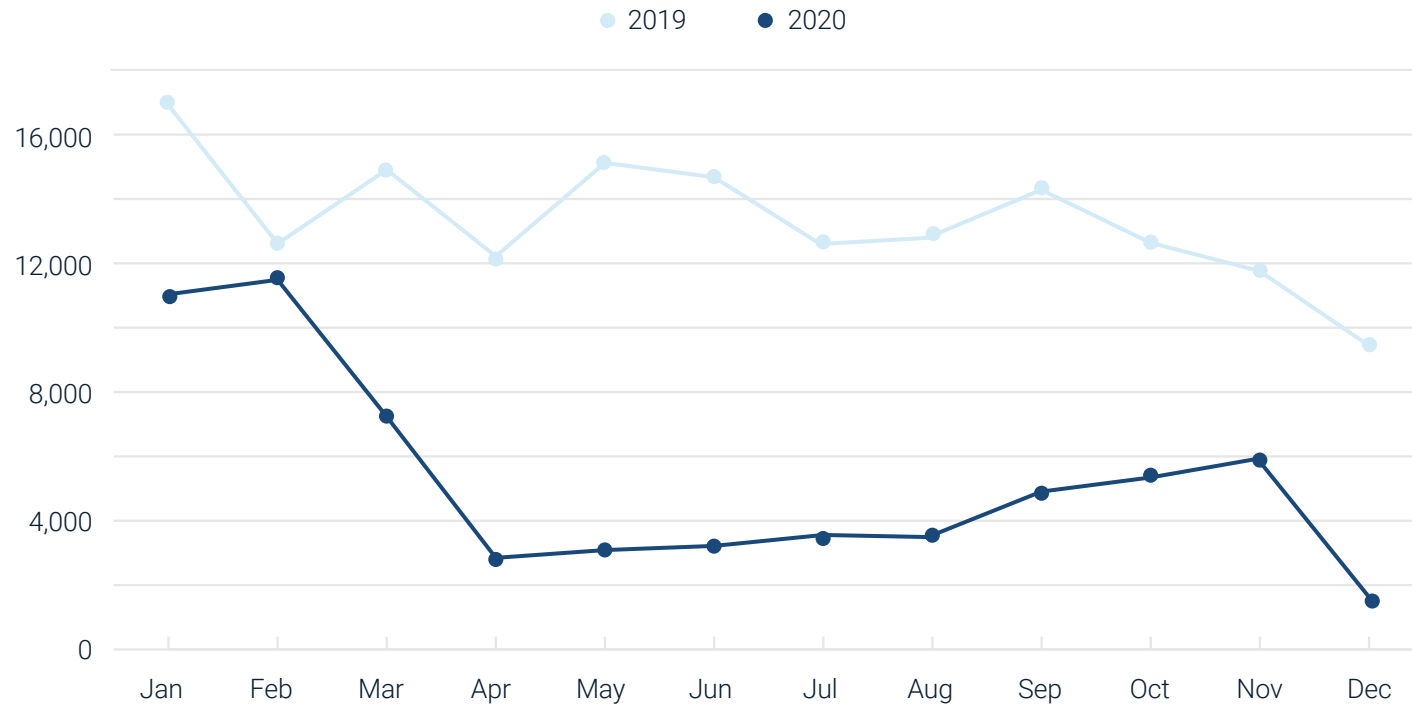
How Covid-19 impacted Simply Law Jobs

As expected, the year started like any other with a spike in traffic and applications. When the national lockdown was announced, a short recruitment freeze resulted in a drop in activity which subsequently recovered as the months continued.

Despite furlough schemes supporting employment, traffic levels remained fairly consistent throughout the year which suggests candidates were either keeping their options open or preparing for any changes to their current employment.



Jobs Posted to Simply Law Jobs per Month



The average number of jobs posted every month was 5,328, a **decrease of 60%** from 2019.



The average number of applications every month was **3,059**



Employers were predominantly searching for **Solicitors, Associates** and **Lawyers**.



The most applied to jobs were for **Paralegals, Solicitors** and **Graduate** vacancies.



Our CV database **grew by 4.13%**



Applications per job **increased by 53%** between March and December.



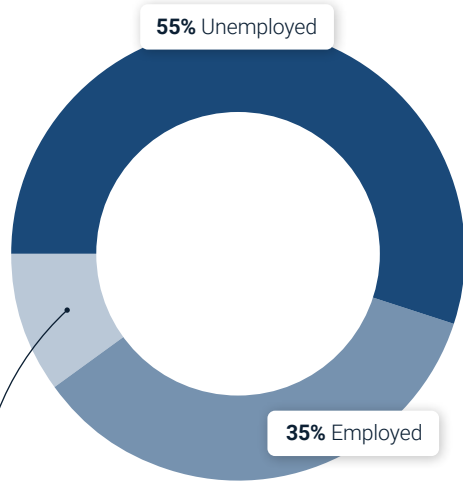
On average, over **37,000 jobseekers** visited Simply Law Jobs every month.

How Covid-19 Impacted our Jobseekers

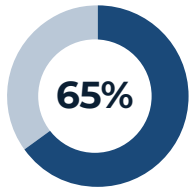
Since March, we regularly interviewed our jobseekers to understand how Covid-19 was affecting their lives and careers. We were also keen to discover their feelings about how the government and their most recent employer handled the pandemic.



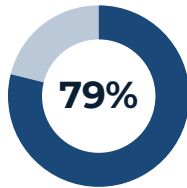
What is your employment status?



10% Furloughed/Part Furloughed

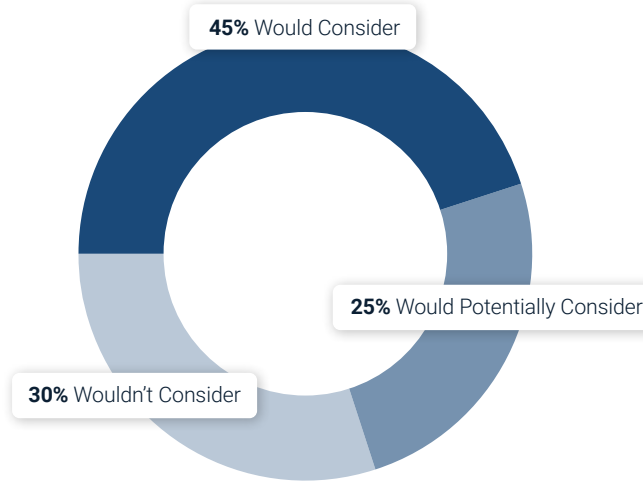


65% are worried about their future in the legal industry.



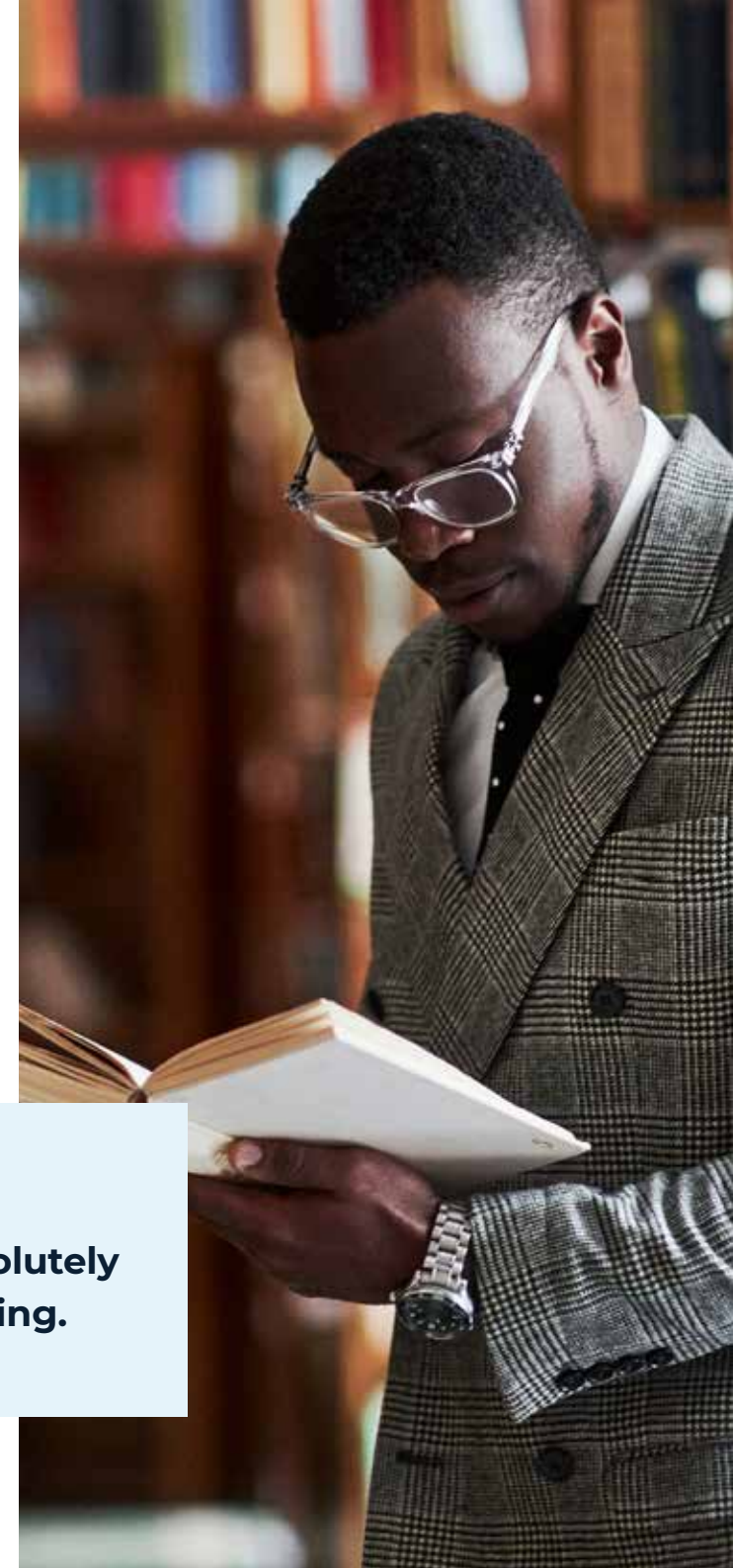
79% believe the UK government could be doing more to help the legal industry get back on its feet.

Would you consider reskilling in order to take another job?

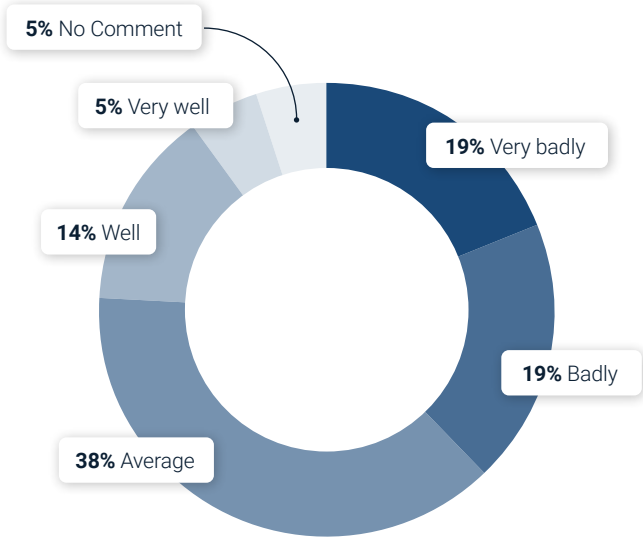


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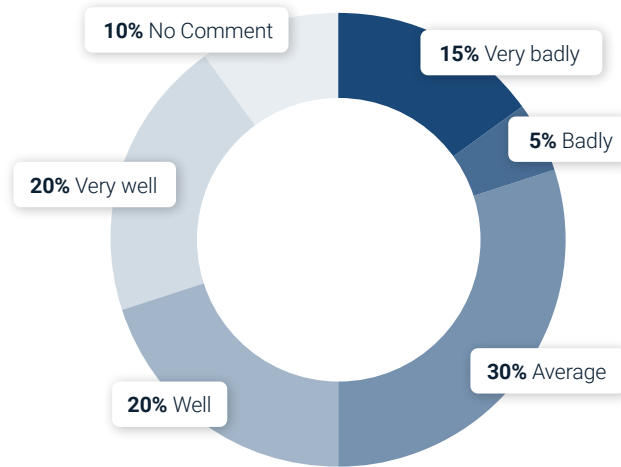
The rules keep changing, nothing makes sense, absolutely ridiculous and very confusing.



How do you feel the UK government has handled the pandemic overall so far?



How do you feel your most recent employer has handled the pandemic in relation to their employees?



“Lots of loss of jobs in many industries. Too many u-turns. Lawyers can’t advise clients if they don’t know what the law is.”

“They’ve been very proactive with regards to cleaning etc and spacing of personnel. Clients are seen outside the office should they insist on coming to the office.”

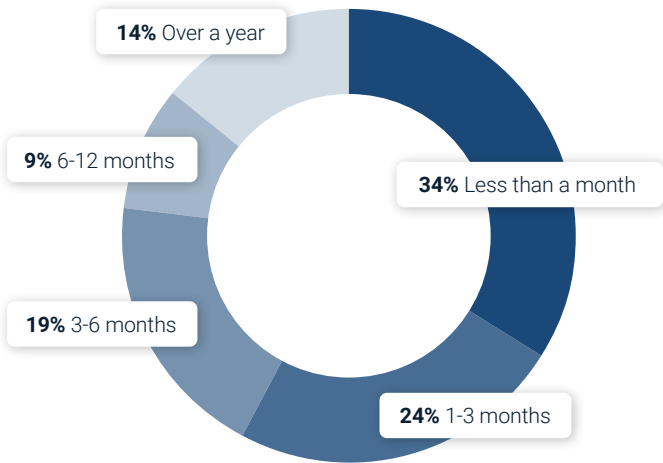


How Covid-19 Impacted Searching for Jobs

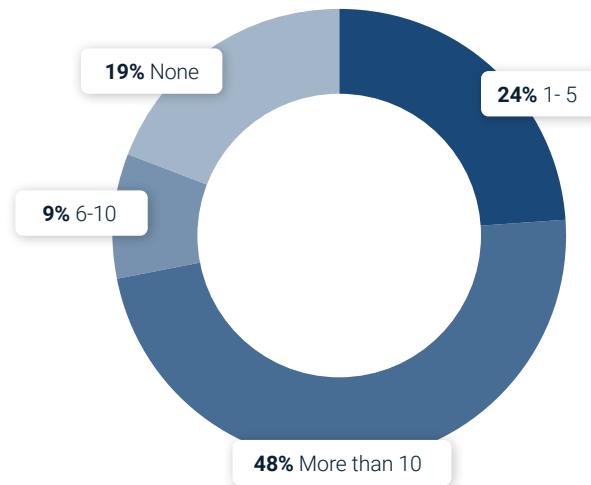
We were also keen to understand how job searches and priorities had changed as a result of this year's events. The results were fascinating and paint a powerful picture of the current legal job market.



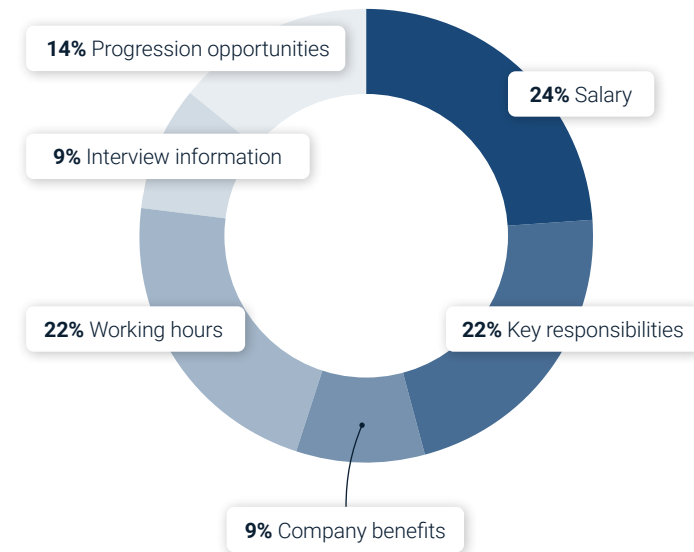
How long have you been job hunting?



How many jobs have you applied for during your current job search?

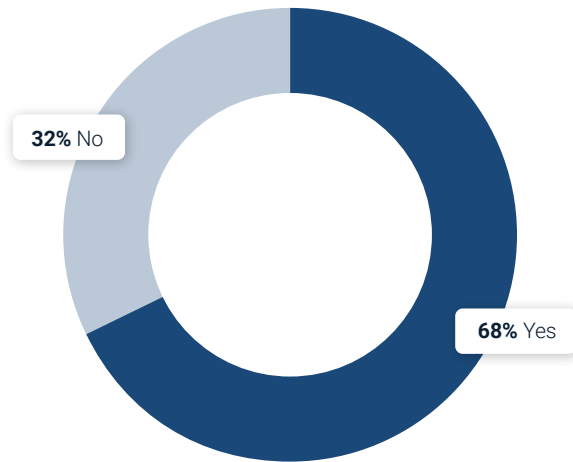


What information is most important for you to see in a job advert?

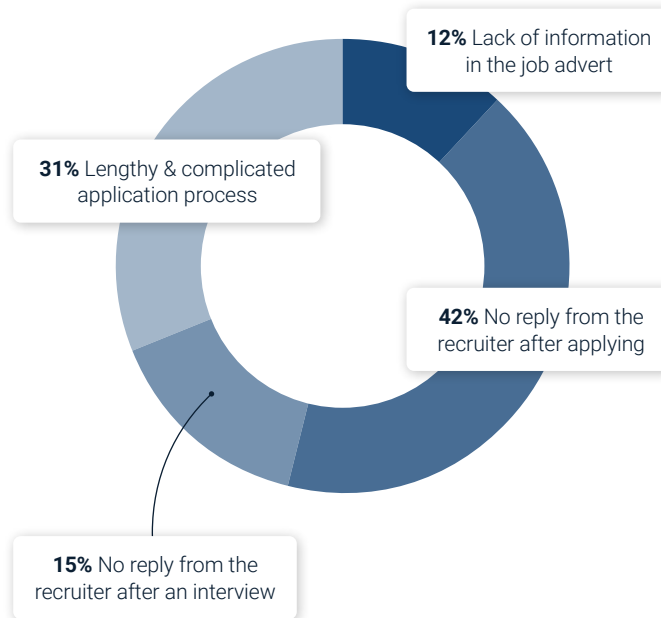


“ I never understand why salaries are missed off job descriptions. I wouldn't take the time to apply for a job which might not match what I am looking for. ”

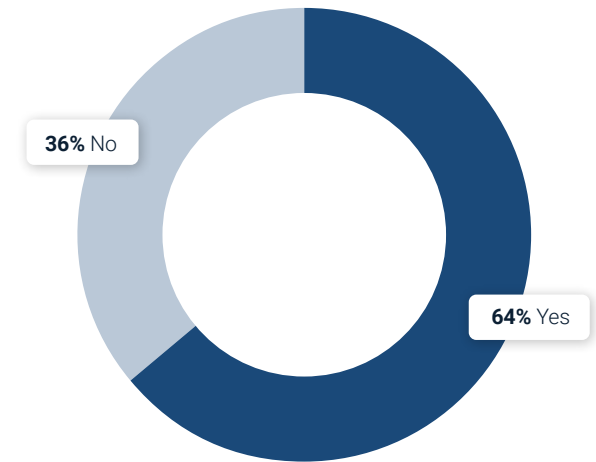
Do you feel most job adverts provide the information you are looking for?



What do you find most frustrating about job hunting?



Have your career priorities changed as a result of this year's events?



What information do you find is often missing?

1. Salary
2. Career progression opportunities
3. Working hours

What information do you want to know about an employer?

1. Diversity & inclusion
2. Company culture
3. Information on what skills and experience they're looking for

Time is valuable and not knowing why the application is rejected would help with future searches.

If yes, in what way have your priorities changed?

1. Searching for a better work/home balance e.g. working closer to home
2. Salary expectations are lower
3. Willingness to branch out into other sectors to secure employment

Our Response to Covid-19

In the short period of down time, we took the opportunity to strategically review the fundamentals of Simply Law Jobs and search for ways in which to cultivate. As Sir Winston Churchill said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste," meaning that in times of trouble, great things can occur if the opportunity is seized.



We started by interviewing thousands of jobseekers and clients to establish the features they would like to see enhanced or added. In August, we compiled huge amounts of data into a comprehensive plan to revamp the site. Once equipped with our plan and goals, we set about working hard behind the scenes to bring those concepts to life.

For our jobseekers, the new features will simplify the application process, offer more detailed job descriptions and improve the job search functionality. Enhanced search functionality means that jobseekers can discover relevant career opportunities quicker and easier than ever before.

We can also exclusively reveal that for the first time ever on our platform, jobseekers will be able to apply for jobs using their Simply Law Jobs profile instead of their CV. This will allow jobseekers to showcase their talent, skills and experience beyond the CV, which means a better chance of reaching the interview stage and landing their dream job.

For our clients, it will be easier to post jobs and view detailed insights into the performance of their jobs. Clients will also be able to compare how they are performing against other employers on Simply Law Jobs.

The screenshot shows the user profile page for Mr. Charles Ottoman, a Solicitor. The page is divided into several sections:

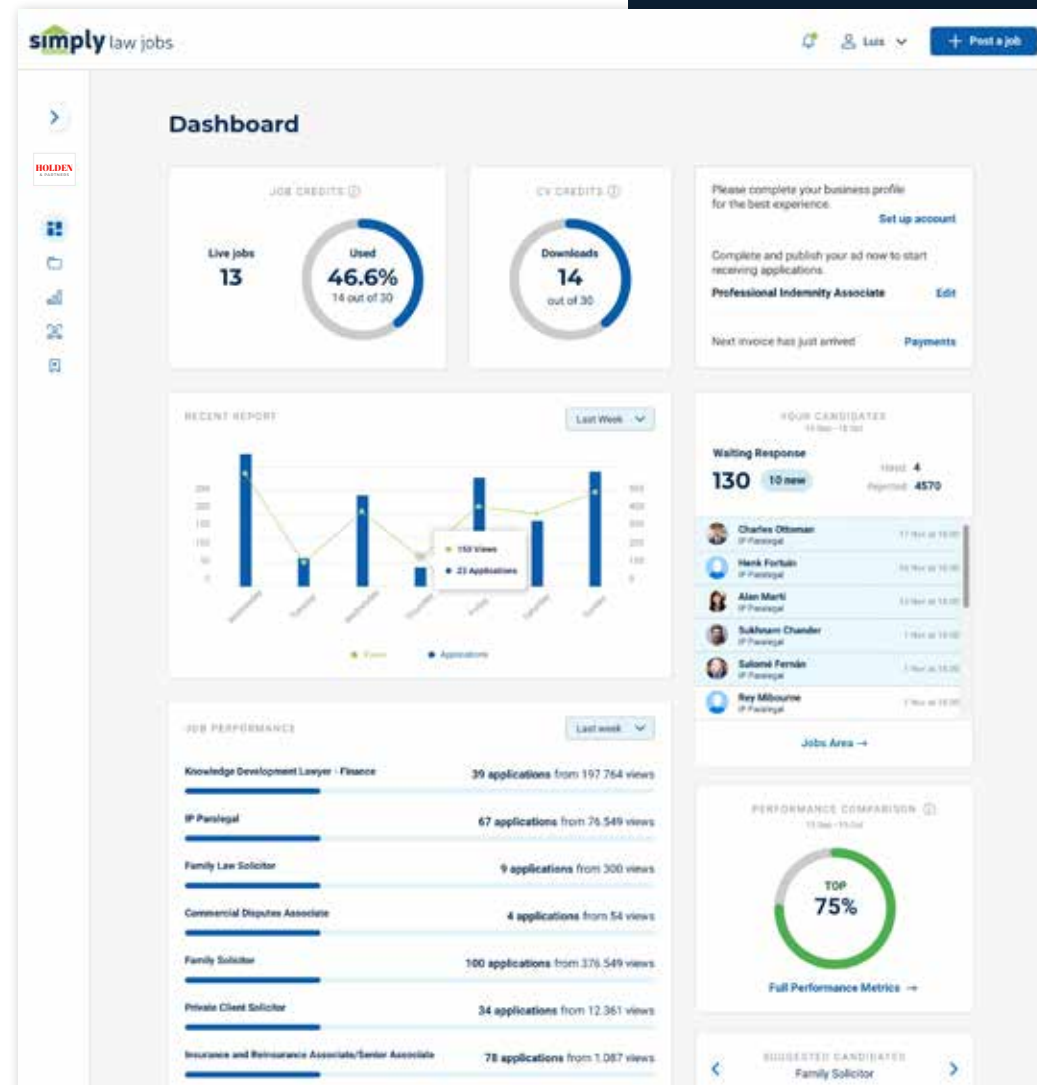
- Profile Summary:** A sidebar menu with sections for Details (Personal Details, Skills, Upcoming Position), Experience (Executive Summary, Professional Experience), Education (Academic Qualifications, Certifications, Professional Credentials), and Extra Curricular (Languages, Hobbies & Interests, Personal Projects, Awards & Honours). Buttons for 'Upload CV' and 'Download Profile' are visible.
- Education Progress:** A progress bar showing 60% completion with the message 'Education is an important part of your profile' and a button to 'Add Academics'.
- Profile Card:** Includes a profile picture, name 'Mr. Charles Ottoman', title 'Solicitor', email 'charles-ottoman@gmail.com', phone '561-333-2373', location 'London, United Kingdom', and nationality 'British'.
- Current Salary:** £80,000. **Desired Contract:** Permanent.
- Desired Location:** Heathrow Airport, Gatwick Airport, Stansted Airport, Luton, London City Airport, Southend Airport.
- Activity:** 'Active looking', 'Work remotely', 'Willing to relocate', '3 years experience'.
- Skills:** Commercial awareness, Teamwork, Communication, Attention to detail, Information analysis and research.
- Executive Summary:** A section with a progress bar.
- Professional Experience:** Lists roles such as 'Solicitor in Up to Law Firm - London, UK (Jan 2007 to Present)' and 'Solicitor in Next Answer - London, UK (Jan 2007 to Present)'. Includes a note: 'Achievements: Take home more than 459 soldiers'. A button to 'Add Professional experience' is present.
- Education:** A section with a progress bar and a button to 'Add Academic Qualification'.

Jobseekers will be able to apply for jobs using their Simply Law Jobs profile instead of their CV

We'll also be providing enhancement indicators on live job posts. For example, if the salary offered is below the industry average, we'll flag it to ensure job posts achieve their maximum potential.

We're also proud to announce that our CV database will be the smartest version to date and jam packed with more comprehensive data. We'll even suggest candidates which could be relevant to you based on recent search data.

These features are just the first phase of the revamp which will launch in January 2021. Selected individuals will be exclusively invited to try out the platform and offer their feedback. From February, the updates will be available for everyone to use and benefit from.



For our clients, it will be easier to post jobs and view detailed insights into the performance of their jobs.


2021 and Beyond

From our extensive research, we discovered that jobseekers were searching for more than just career opportunities from Simply Law Jobs which is why phase 2 and 3 of the relaunch will focus on career development support and creating a community in which professionals can connect.



Exciting Developments Coming in the Next 18 Months

2021 2022



Salary and take home calculators

Upskilling opportunities

A day in the life features

Recommended entry points for specific career paths

CV and interview tips



Mentorship guidance

Expanded professional profiles

Enhance your professional reputation by posting achievements, articles and day in the life features

Community Q & A board



Assessments

Revamped courses platform

End to end career guidance

Career case studies

Events integration



A Final Word from Dave Capper

I'd like to give a special mention and thank the Simply Law Jobs team for all their hard work in unusual circumstances. I'd also like to thank our clients who 'kept calm and carried on recruiting' in the last few months. Your support, as ever, is much appreciated.

 **simply** law jobs

Search for jobs at
[simplylawjobs.com](https://www.simplylawjobs.com)

Recruit at
recruiting.simplylawjobs.com