

# Over 50% of legal firms feel talent pool has shrunk

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More than half of UK legal firms feel that the skilled talent pool within the sector has shrunk over the last year, according to Clayton Legal.

A study of over 2000 firms by the specialist legal recruitment consultancy found that 52% had found it more difficult to source skilled professionals over the past 12 months. Organisations reported severe shortages in conveyancing, property and clinical negligence, in particular, as well as a lack of relevantly skilled newly qualified solicitors.

Managing Director of Clayton Legal, Lynn Sedgwick comments:

“It’s not entirely surprising to see a fall in the number of skilled legal professionals in the market, we’ve seen skills shortages grow significantly worse over the past few years and the percentage of firms that report a lack of available talent highlights this. There are a number of reasons behind the fall, property experts, for example, left the sector in droves during the slump in 2008 and talent pipelines are still taking some time to recover. In addition, in conveyancing many solicitors tend to work on a locum basis, which has left firms that are looking to recruit permanent experts struggling.”

“More than anything, this suggests that legal firms need to take a long term approach to identifying and building talent pools and pipelines as it’s not an easy time to recruit legal specialists, as our data shows. This is one of the reasons why we’re partnering with training organisations, as it allows us to identify these pipelines early on as well as any areas that could potentially be impacted by shortages. However, with the growth of the paralegal role providing an alternative path into the sector, it’s likely that we should get a greater stream of skilled professionals entering the profession over the coming years, which could help to halt the problem in its tracks.”

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