



# THE LEGAL SECTOR & COVID-19

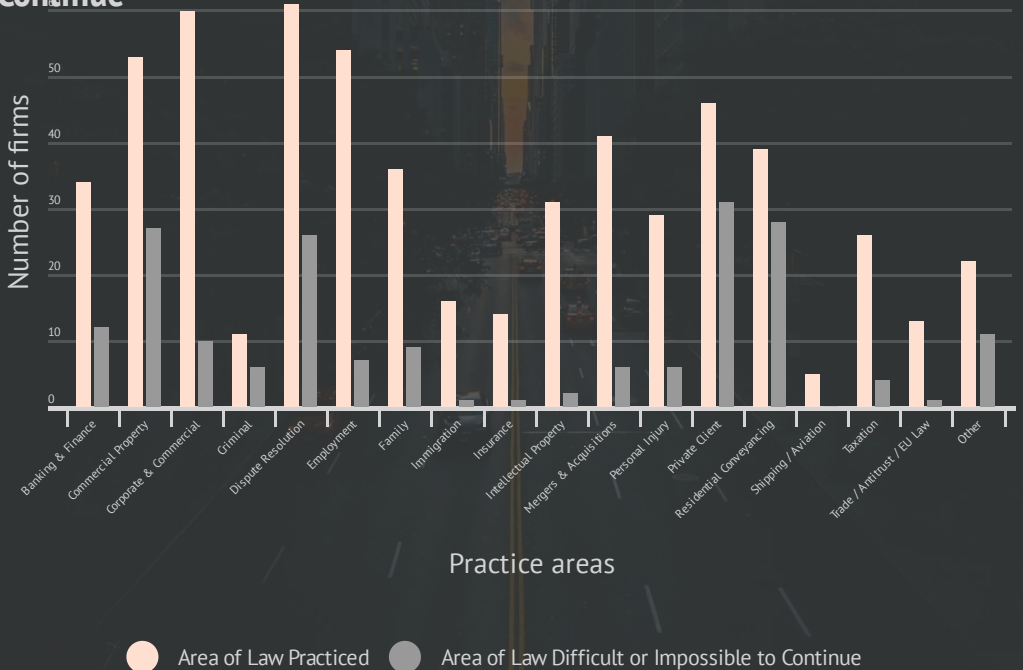
A short summary on how I think the legal sector will adapt to life after COVID-19.

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# Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact upon the vast majority of individuals and businesses across the globe. Largely, governments have responded by implementing lockdowns with some businesses having to cease operations altogether, causing colossal impact on entire markets and industries. Specifically in the legal sector, these changing circumstances have generated a large amount of over-due change, propelling law into the digital age and thereby reshaping the legal landscape.

## Firms' Main Areas of Work & Practice Areas Proving Difficult to Continue



Source: The Law Society, Larger Law Firms COVID-19 Survey, May 2020

# Remote Working

Although remote working is not a new phenomenon, the restrictions of the pandemic have obligated a large majority of employees to adapt to a new working environment. Thus far, research suggests that law firms have been largely successful in this change and have been able to continue a vast majority of their work from home. Furthermore, the ever-growing capabilities of technology presents a number of advantages to remote working for the three key stakeholders of the legal industry: firms, lawyers and their clients.

## **Firms:**

Remote working can boost employee productivity and offers a wider range of interactions with clients which may help to build more personal connections.

## **Lawyers:**

Flexible working policies can eliminate long commutes and provides greater degree of control over working environment and hours.

## **Clients:**

Ability to access sources of legal knowledge remotely, without having to travel into offices or attend meetings in person, and access at any time.

Considering this, in order to remain successful and attractive to clients after COVID-19, firms might adapt by downsizing many of their office spaces and prioritise these for key client meetings. Making their working environments fit for this purpose would not only save costs in rent and maintenance but could also improve employee mental health and productivity.



**61% of legal staff would prefer to work from home  
more often post-COVID**

*Study undertaken by Hitachi Capital UK*

# Digital Transformation

Digital transformation has been a priority amongst businesses for years. However, due to the conservatism and risk-averse nature of lawyers, the legal sector has largely neglected this change until recently. Although little time was given to prepare for this shift, the industry has demonstrated that it can, when coerced, alter entrenched methods of delivering legal services.

For many legal professionals, working remotely 100% of the time and relying on digital technology to continue tasks and work on deals resulted in many new challenges. Fortunately for legal departments, there are a myriad of collaborative tools that are readily accessible and easy to operate, even for the most old-fashioned lawyers. Although there has been a steep learning curve across all levels of the industry – as the new digital standard challenges working habits, collaboration practices and methods of completing tasks which traditionally require pen, paper and physical presence – the pandemic will no doubt continue to influence many firms' approach to working after lockdown. Whilst some practice areas have felt the impact of COVID-19 more directly, the industry would do well to recognise its proven capability to adapt to changing environments and client needs. Further investment into legal tech and digital collaboration tools would help firms secure long-term success and align them with the growing digital market.

## Investments in Legal Tech



Source: Legal Tech Sector Landscape Report by Tracxn