

Global Recruitment

Guide to Birmingham

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Introduction to Birmingham

Birmingham is the second most populated city in the UK after London, and has the third biggest UK office market. Having seen much renovation within the last decade, the city has boomed, and continues to gain strength as an international commercial centre.

The Legal Market

Birmingham has evolved considerably in recent years, both its business district and its infrastructure and leisure facilities. Home to some top firms, both Private Practice and In-house, legal professionals will find even more choice and career growth opportunities in the city.

Top 50

Birmingham is home to many Top 50 firms. International firm DLA Piper have an office in the city, and are trusted by some of the biggest corporate clients in the world. Other leading firms include Wragge Lawrence Graham and Co, Eversheds, Shoosmiths, Pinsent Masons and DWF.

Regional Firms

The established Birmingham regional firms have seen significant growth in recent years. Success stories include Higgs and Sons, Wright Hassall, FBC and George Green.

New Entrants

New entrants to the local legal market include Hogan Lovells and Trower and Hamlin, both of which have thrived in the region.

In-house Opportunities

Birmingham is home to some very large In-house law teams, as well as many SME's. Some of the most renowned teams in the region include RBS, Iron Mountain and Tarmac Lafarge.

There are many other firms to consider, but this list should give you an idea of what levels of practice are available. The industry is wide and continues to grow making competition fierce and the demand for quality high.

Lifestyle

Birmingham has transformed in recent years, with 2015 seeing two large retail centres open. The development of the city centre gives Birmingham a larger shopping district than ever before, offering almost anything that you could want or need.

Shopping

Bull Ring: With a history dating back to the 1200's, the bullring has transformed from a small market into an award winning centre with over 160 shops, cafes and restaurants. Conveniently in the centre of the city, this shopping centre is great for a day of shopping.

Jewellery Quarter: Home to over 100 specialist jewellery retailers, designers and craftspeople, this is a fantastic area of Birmingham to explore. Many of the retailers have their own workshops so unique items can be commissioned. In addition, there is a buzzing arts scene with galleries, wedding shops, gift shops and fashion boutiques.

The Mailbox: Undergoing retail launches throughout summer 2015, the Mailbox is a hotly anticipated retail mall new to the centre of Birmingham. Hosting shops, bars, restaurants and a cinema, this area is a welcome addition to the city.

Grand Central: Due to open in 2015, Grand Central is a brand new complex with shops, bars and restaurants. The architecture is adding a unique style to Birmingham, and is set to be a stunning centre piece to the city's growth.

Leisure & Local Attractions

There's plenty to do in Birmingham, with 2015 seeing a large amount of growth in the city. To travel further afield, Birmingham's fantastic transport network can take you to many other cities in the UK – you can even get to London in under an hour and a half!

Birmingham Science Museum: With four floors of exhibits and collections showcasing science and technology; from robots to chocolate wrapping machines, a day at the Birmingham Science Museum is a fantastic day out – and you'll probably learn a few things too!

Cadbury World: We don't need to give this the hard sell. What more do you need to know? You can enjoy a tour, play in the adventure playground, learn about how the chocolate is made, and you get free chocolate. Grab your coat let's go!

NEC: One of the UK's top venue's, the NEC hosts large events all year round. From the BBC Good Food Show to the Colour Run, there's hundreds of events to take your fancy.

The Custard Factory: Known as Birmingham's Creative Quarter, the Custard Factory is a sought after location for creative and digital businesses, independent shops and alternative culture. Hosting events, bazaars and fayre's every month, this thriving area is buzzing with great things to see and do.

Food & Drink

The second largest city in the UK, Birmingham has an endless list of places to eat and drink. Here are some places (based on the personal experiences of our team here at Douglas Scott) that we think are worth a visit!

Food

Brindley Place: Brindley Place is a great area in Birmingham to find an array of café's, bars and restaurants, ranging from award winning fine dining restaurants to relaxed family friendly eateries. With restaurants offering an array of different cuisines, you can find whatever takes your fancy all in one place.

Purnells: Set up by Michelin starred Birmingham chef Glynn Purnell, this fine dining restaurant offers a chic and contemporary gastronomic experience. Choose from their tasting menu, or their famously named 'Brummie Tapas' and enjoy the bold and innovative cuisine.

Bodega: Do you like South American food, a laid back atmosphere and some of the best beer, wine and cocktails that you can get? Then Bodega is a must visit restaurant! With a brilliant array of dishes from across the continent, you can enjoy a delicious meal here.

Byzantium: With Spanish tapas, and dishes inspired from across the Mediterranean, this eatery is the perfect atmosphere to share some dishes with friends or family and enjoy a fantastic dining experience.

Drink

The Jekyll and Hyde: Visit Dr Jekyll's gin bar and choose from over 90 different gins, or check out Mr Hyde's main bar for retro and quirky cocktails. Whatever takes your fancy, you'll find a wide variety of drinks to choose from in a brilliant atmosphere.

Island Bar: Voted one of the Top 50 bars in the UK by the Independent on Sunday, and with one of the largest collections of rum in the West Midlands (over 70 at last count), Island Bar is an amazing venue for music and cocktail lovers alike.

The Lost & Found: A botanical hideaway in the heart of Birmingham with an eclectic list of cocktails, wine, beer and ale, this bar is a great retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city.

There are many more areas and bars in Birmingham that are worth checking out, but these are just a few that our team recommend. With new bars popping up on a weekly basis we're sure you'll find plenty of places to have a drink and dance – or whatever takes your fancy!

Quality of Life & Costs

Birmingham isn't nearly as expensive as London, however being a large city some items can be fairly pricey. To give you an idea of the relative cost, we've compared the basics to some other large cities in the UK. (This data is approximate, collected from an online source).

Item	London	Manchester	Birmingham	Bristol	Nottingham	Newcastle
Loaf of Bread	£1.05	£0.88	£1.02	£0.97	£0.89	£1.05
Eggs (12)	£2.32	£2.01	£2.05	£2.31	£2.00	£1.98
Capuccino	£2.54	£2.38	£2.19	£2.10	£2.24	£2.13
Rice	£1.73	£1.30	£1.20	£0.98	£0.77	£1.11
3 course meal - mid range (2 people)	£50.00	£50.00	£32.50	£40.00	£45.00	£33.50
Pint of lager	£4.00	£3.00	£3.00	£3.35	£2.90	£2.70
Cinema ticket	£12.00	£7.50	£7.75	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00
Gym membership	£49.94	£26.48	£23.33	£39.67	£32.00	£29.33
1 bed apartment	£1586	£638	£683	£692	£495	£520
Internet	£20.00	£15.56	£18.10	£20.03	£16.67	£21.60
Standard monthly bills	£148.28	£126.95	£105.11	£148.40	£110.00	£145.00
Monthly transport pass	£130.00	£49.00	£57.00	£68.00	£46.00	£50.00

Some of these differences are minimal, but as we all know it's the small costs that add up so it's good to be able to save as much as possible. With these lower living costs, it's important to be aware that rarely do salaries match those offered in London, where it is much more expensive to live.

Education

Education, much like most of the country, is a mixture of public and private funded options. Birmingham has many different schools and colleges to choose from, and is home to six universities, including the University of Law.

Safety

Birmingham is a fairly safe city, with incidents of crime usually relating to anti-social behaviour or theft. While incidents of violence or other such crimes is low, we do recommended that you take precautions at night. You will find that some areas are safer than others, still do be mindful of your surroundings at all times and you shouldn't have issues.

The Little Things

With so much to consider it is easy to forget the little things. These are far too many to list so do be thorough in your research! This guide is a great starting point and if you do choose to work with Douglas Scott, we'll make sure that you've got all your bases covered. Otherwise, we wish you luck on this new and exciting journey!



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