

SEO & GEO Visibility Benchmark

MONTH 3 REVIEW • 1 OCTOBER 2026 • MEASURED AGAINST MONTH 2

Three months in. September is the month the Google side of the work started compounding: fourteen tracked terms improved against six that slipped, the average position of the ranking terms gained eight places, and open technical issues fell from 121 to 72. UK visitors rose by 36% at the same time. The AI side held its ground rather than gaining it, and section 05 explains precisely why.

00

INDEX

Contents

01 Month-three overview

02 How to read this review

03 Search rankings: what moved

04 Competitive landscape (Google)

05 AI search visibility & competitors

06 The AI questions we track

07 Technical health & performance

08 Visitors & search demand

09 The numbers, month by month

The month at a glance

Month two produced one page-one result. Month three is the month that result stopped looking like luck. Fourteen tracked terms improved, six slipped, and the average position across every term that ranks moved from 52.5 to 44.3, a gain of eight places in a single month. The technical foundation improved sharply as well: open issues almost halved and the link profile grew for the first time since the baseline.

BEST NON-BRAND POSITION

4

▲ FROM 5 · PAGE ONE

AVG POSITION · RANKING TERMS

44.3

▲ FROM 52.5 · 8 PLACES

TERMS THAT IMPROVED

14

▲ AGAINST 6 THAT SLIPPED

SEO ISSUES OPEN

72

▲ FROM 121

BACKLINKS

99

▲ FROM 89

UK VISITORS

170

▲ FROM 125 · 36%

KEYWORDS RANKING

19

◆ WAS 20

QUESTIONS NAMING YOU

2

◆ HELD · OF 15

AI SHARE OF VOICE

2.0%

◆ WAS 2.3% · SEE 05

THE RESULT

The guide *Understanding Business IP*, published on 5 August, did not slip back. "Business ip meaning" improved again, from 5 to 4, and the same page carried "what is ip in business" up to 19 from outside the ranking set, the single largest move of the month. Two further guides on employer duties around mental health went live in mid-September; they are indexed and being measured from this month onward, so their effect belongs to the next review rather than this one.

IN PERSPECTIVE

The AI figures held rather than rose: still two of the fifteen tracked questions, with the firm named first on one of them and fourth on the other. The reported percentage fell from 10% to 6.7%, and that is a change in the denominator rather than in the firm's standing. The measured field of brands grew from roughly one hundred to **181** over the month, so the same number of mentions is now divided across a larger pool. Section 05 sets out both numbers side by side.

How to read this review

This report tracks two kinds of visibility. Traditional Google search, measured by where the site ranks for the terms buyers type. And AI search, measured by how often assistants name the firm when a buyer asks them who to use. The second is measured across a set of fifteen buyer questions put to ChatGPT and Gemini every cycle, sixty answers in all this month.

Two things to hold in mind this month. First, **the AI measurement field is not fixed**. The number of brands being compared grew by roughly eighty over the month as the assistants named more firms, bodies and directories across the same fifteen questions. Any percentage calculated against that field will fall when the field grows, even with the firm's own mentions unchanged, so this review leads on **how many of the fifteen questions return the firm**, which is a stable count, and shows the percentage alongside it. Second, **the two guides published in mid-September are too new to judge**. Pages typically take four to eight weeks to settle into a position, so they are noted but not counted.

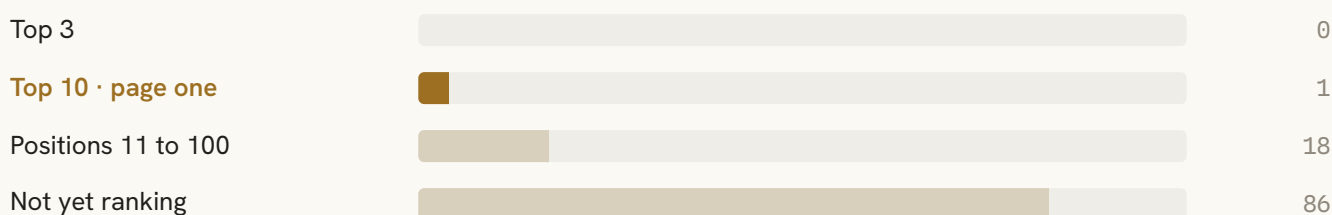
ON THE FIGURES

Rankings, traffic estimates and AI figures come from rank tracking, AI answer monitoring and a site audit, captured 31 August to 30 September 2026 for the United Kingdom, desktop. They are used for relative month-on-month tracking, not as exact counts. Google Analytics figures in section 08 cover the same window, 31 August to 30 September.

What moved in Google

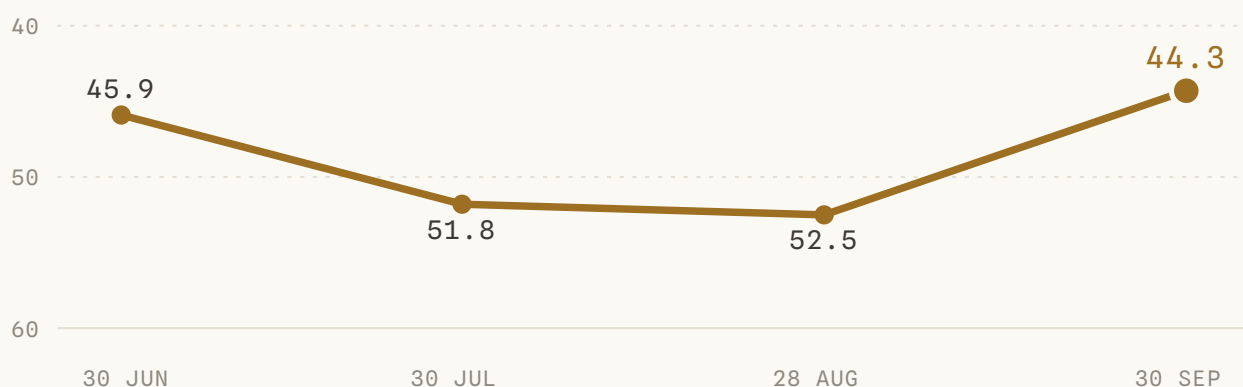
Of the 105 tracked keywords, **14 rose, 6 slipped and 85 held**. That ratio is the headline of the month: last month it was ten up against eleven down, which is noise. Better than two improvements for every decline is a trend. The average position across the terms that rank improved from **52.5 to 44.3**, and because that average is taken across a near-identical set of terms, the gain is movement rather than arithmetic.

WHERE THE 105 TRACKED KEYWORDS RANK · 30 SEPTEMBER



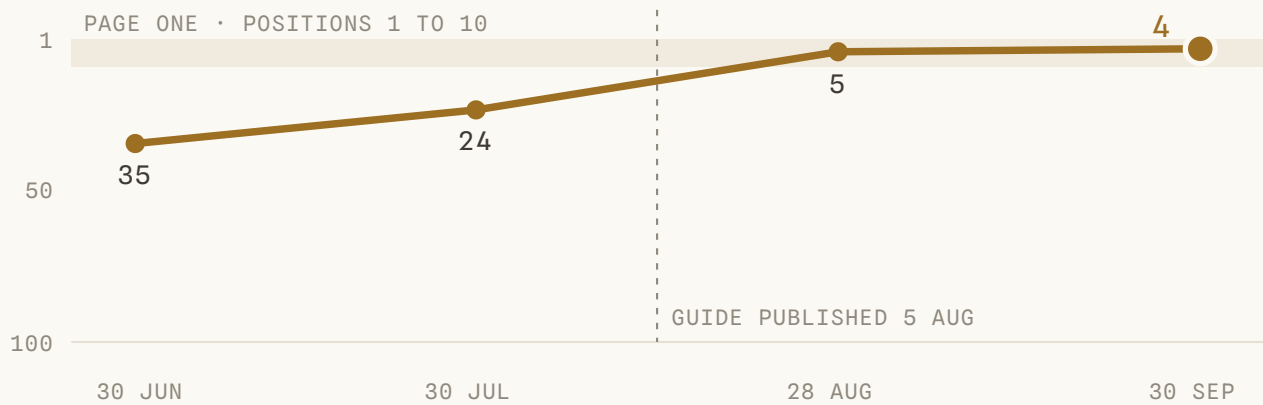
Nineteen terms hold a position, against twenty last month. One term, "employer negligence duty of care mental health", fell out of the measured range from 83. The count is effectively flat while the positions behind it improved, which is the preferable way round.

AVERAGE POSITION ACROSS THE RANKING TERMS · LOWER IS BETTER, HIGHER ON THE CHART IS BETTER



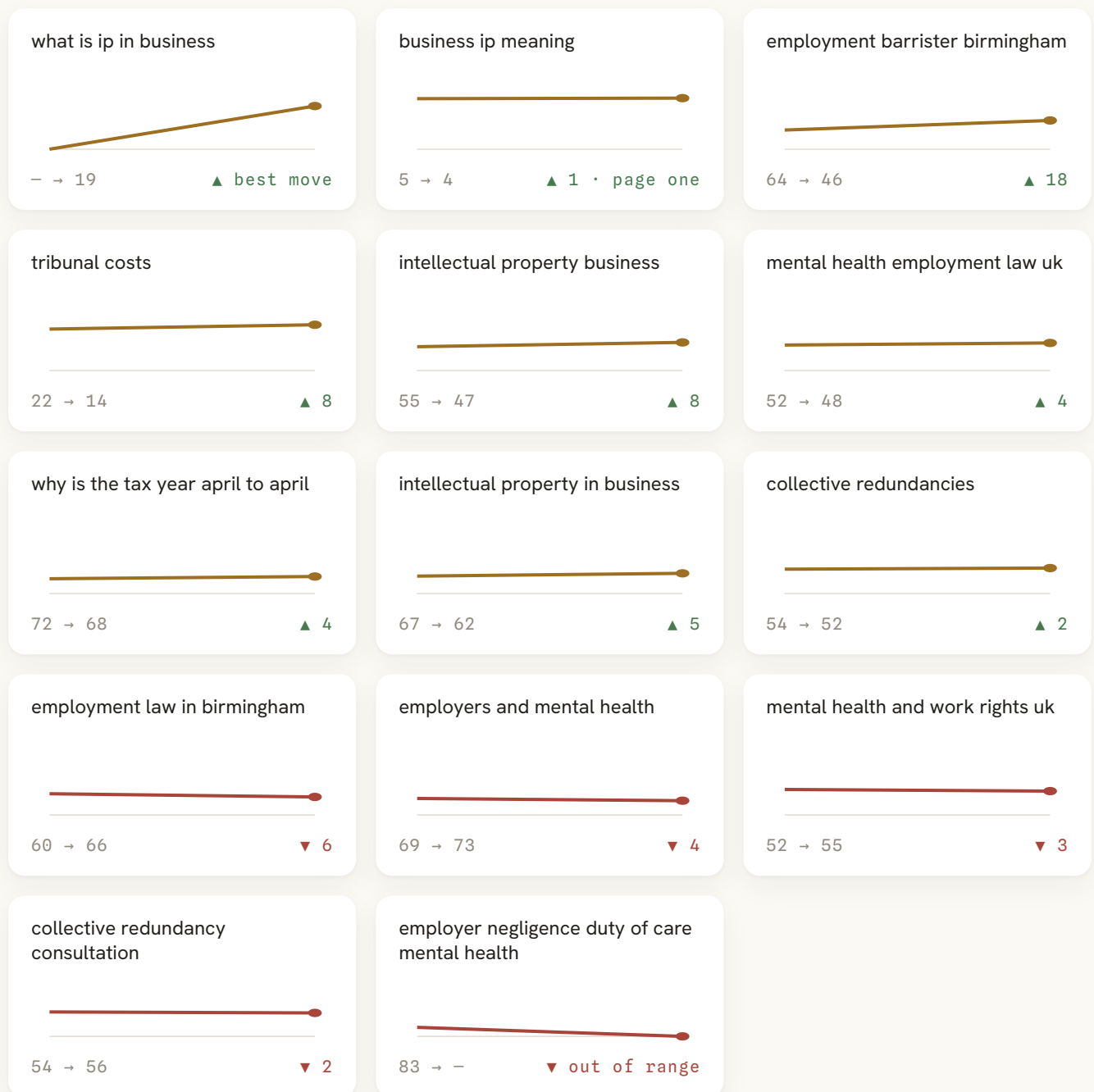
The best average position of the four months measured, and the first month in which it has improved.

THE PAGE-ONE TERM, FOUR MONTHS ON · POSITION OF "BUSINESS IP MEANING" · HIGHER ON THE CHART IS BETTER



480 searches a month. Holding page one through a second month matters more than reaching it: it is the point at which a position usually stops being provisional.

EVERY TRACKED TERM THAT MOVED • 28 AUGUST TO 30 SEPTEMBER • ALL ON THE SAME 1 TO 100 SCALE



THE RESULT

Two patterns are worth naming. First, **every intellectual-property term on the board improved**: the four tracked IP phrases all moved up, which is what a single well-built page does when it is given time rather than company. Second, the six declines are small and clustered on **mental health and collective redundancy**, the two subjects where the site has had the least depth. Those are precisely the two subjects the September guides address, so the next review is the test of that.

IN PERSPECTIVE

One page-one term is one page-one term. The eight-place gain in average position is real and it is the clearest signal the approach is working, but most of the improvement happened between positions 50 and 70, where no visitor sees a result. The value of that movement is that it is movement in the right direction on a page already pointed at the right subjects, not traffic. Traffic follows terms crossing into the top twenty, and there are now three of those.

Competitive landscape in Google

These are the firms you named, five on the employment side and five on intellectual property and commercial, fixed since August so that each month compares against the same names. **Shared keywords** counts the search terms where both sites appear in Google, and it is the measure to watch: it rising is ground being taken rather than ground being estimated.

Two points of housekeeping before the table. The comparison returned **eight of the ten firms this month**; Harper James and Spencer Shaw did not report, and both are being reinstated so the full set is back for Month 4. And the shared-keyword counts moved down on three of the eight while the site's own ranking terms moved up, from 107 to 115. That combination normally means the overlap has shifted rather than shrunk: as the site's terms become more specialist, fewer of them collide with a generalist firm's pages.

FIRM	SHARED KEYWORDS • SEP	AUG	MOVE
wilkes.co.uk Employment	3	7	▼ 4
freeths.co.uk IP and commercial	3	3	◆ held
mfgsolicitors.com Employment	1	3	▼ 2
schofieldandassociates.co.uk Employment	1	1	◆ held
hgf.com IP and commercial	none	none	◆
forresters-ip.com IP and commercial	none	none	◆
neateandpugh.com Employment	none	none	◆

codified.legal IP and commercial	none	none	◆
harperjames.co.uk IP and commercial · not reported this month	pending	51	◆ reinstating
spencershaw.co.uk Employment · not reported this month	pending	2	◆ reinstating
burleylaw.co.uk (you)	115 ranking terms	107	▲ 8

THE LINK PROFILE, FOUR MONTHS · THE SLOWEST-MOVING MEASURE ON THE BOARD

30 June · baseline		89
30 July		89
28 August		89
30 September		99 ▲

THE RESULT

The site's own ranking terms grew from 107 to 115, and **backlinks moved for the first time in three months, 89 to 99**. Links are the measure that moves last and matters longest: they are how both Google and the AI assistants judge whether a site is one that other people reference. Three flat months followed by a ten-link month is the beginning of a profile rather than a result in itself, and it is the measure that the autumn work is designed to keep moving.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Scale has not changed. The firms in this table rank for thousands of terms each and hold link profiles in the thousands. The reading of this table is not that the gap is closing quickly; it is that the gap is now being measured on a set of terms the firm has chosen, and that both of the numbers under the firm's own control, ranking terms and links, moved up in the same month.

Who the AI assistants recommend

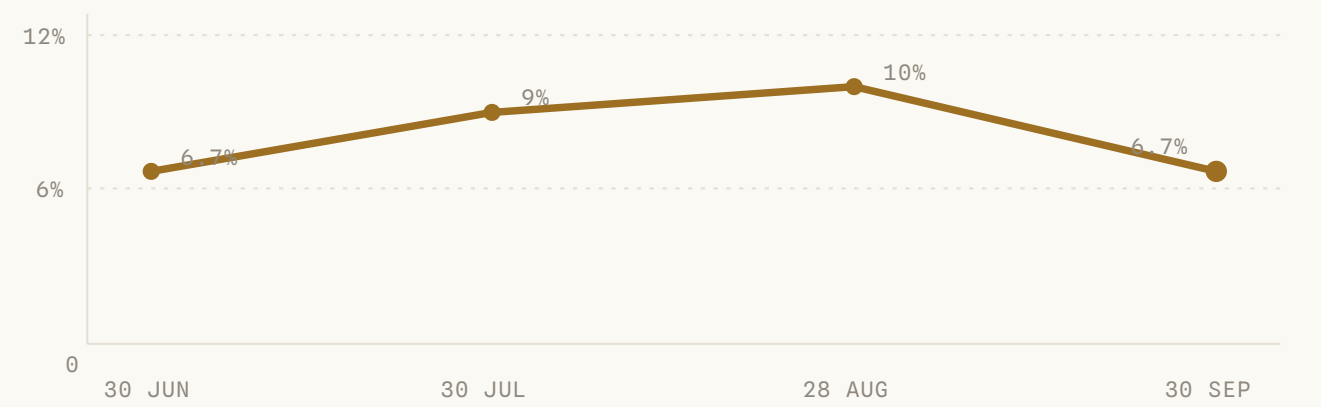
Fifteen buyer questions went to ChatGPT and Gemini through the month, producing sixty answers. **The firm is named on two of the fifteen questions, the same two as last month,** first on one and fourth on the other. Where it is named, it is named earlier in the answer than last month: average position improved from 1.60 to **1.43**. Every mention, in every answer, was positive in tone.

The number that fell, and why

The reported brand-visibility percentage fell from 10% to 6.7%. That figure is a share of a field, and the field grew. Over the month the assistants named **181 distinct brands** across the same fifteen questions, up from roughly a hundred. The firm's own mentions held; the denominator beneath them nearly doubled. This is why the stable measure in this report is the count of questions, not the percentage.

QUESTIONS NAMING THE FIRM • OF 15 • THE STABLE MEASURE			BRANDS IN THE MEASURED FIELD • THE DENOMINATOR		
30 June • baseline		1	28 August		~100
30 July		1	30 September		181
28 August		2	Eighty more brands competing for the same sixty answers. A constant number of mentions divided by a growing field produces a falling percentage without anything having got worse.		
30 September		2			
Held, not gained. No tracked question was lost and none was won.					

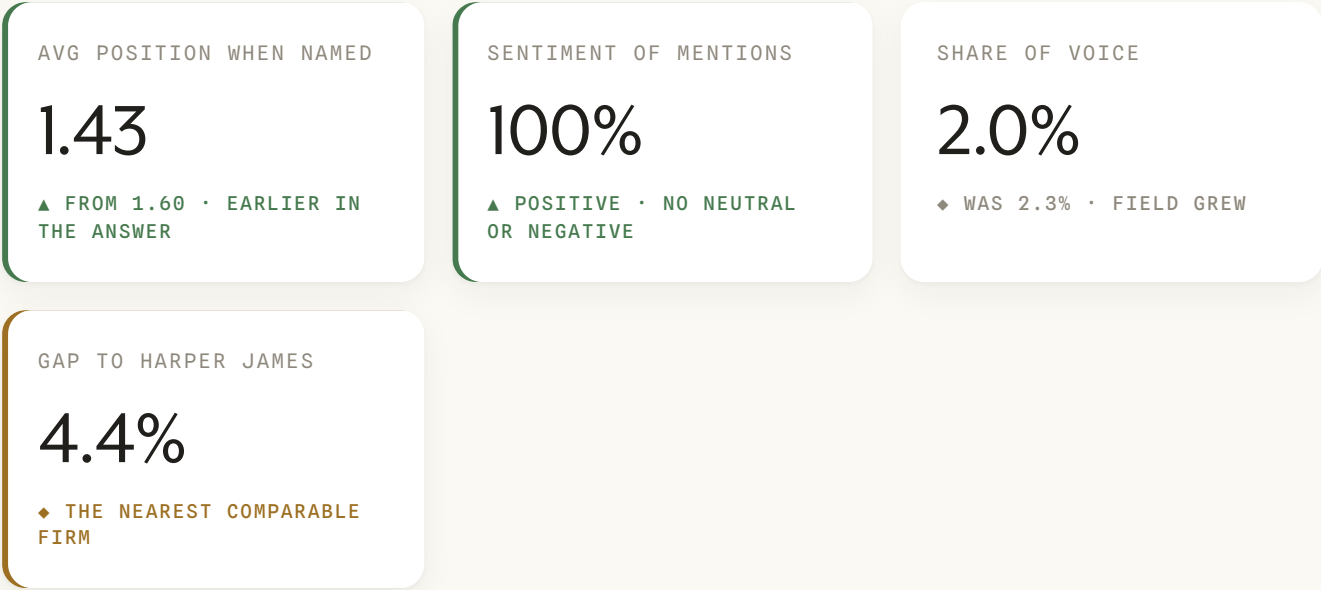
BRAND VISIBILITY AS REPORTED • WITH THE FIELD GROWING BENEATH IT



Read this chart alongside the two bar charts above it. The line returning to its June level describes the field, not the firm.

Position in the answer, and tone

Visibility counts how often a firm is named. Position counts where in the answer it appears, and it is the number that decides whether a reader acts on it.



Being named at 1.43 means that when an assistant does recommend the firm, it is almost always the first or second name given. That is the most valuable property the firm currently holds in AI search, and it is the one that improved this month.

Who owns each topic

The fifteen questions sit in four topics. This is the clearest view of where the firm stands, because it shows coverage and contest side by side rather than averaging them into one figure.

TOPIC	QUESTIONS	RETURNING YOU	COVERAGE	YOUR RANK
Protecting IP for a small business	4	1	100%	1.00 · named first
Workplace mental health & duty of care · Birmingham	4	1	17%	4.00
Commercial & tech contracts for software businesses	3	0	none yet	·

Collective redundancy
consultation · Birmingham

4

0

none yet

·

COVERAGE BY TOPIC · SHARE OF THE TOPIC'S ANSWERS NAMING THE FIRM



THE RESULT

Where the firm is established, it is established firmly. On the question it owns, **every answer names Burley Law and names it first**. That is as strong a position as this measurement can show, and it held through a month in which eighty new brands entered the field. The second topic held too, at fourth place. Nothing was lost.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Nothing was gained either, and that is the honest reading of the month on this side of the report. Two of the four topics still return no mention at all. Those questions are not answered from on-site content alone: assistants assembling a recommendation lean heavily on what sits *off* the site, in directories, professional indexes, reviews and third-party listings, and that is the part of the picture that has had no work yet. It is the subject of the October plan, and it is the reason to expect the shape of this section to change in Month 4 rather than its content to be rewritten.

The fifteen questions, and who answers them

Every cycle, these fifteen buyer questions go to ChatGPT and Gemini, four answers each. This is the full picture, including the questions where the firm does not yet appear, because that is where the next month's work is decided.

TRACKED QUESTION	TOPIC	YOU
Burley Law compared with other UK intellectual property law firms for small businesses	IP · SME	1st · every answer
Which law firm advises employers on mental health duty of care in Birmingham?	Mental health	4th
Best intellectual property protection services for small businesses in the UK	IP · SME	not yet
Which intellectual property lawyer should I hire for a small business?	IP · SME	not yet
Affordable IP protection options for small businesses near me	IP · SME	not yet
Which law firm handles tech contracts for small software businesses in Birmingham?	Tech contracts	not yet
Recommended solicitors for drafting SaaS terms and conditions in the UK	Tech contracts	not yet
Which UK law firm should a SaaS startup use for its commercial contracts?	Tech contracts	not yet
How long does collective redundancy consultation take, and do I need a solicitor?	Redundancy	not yet
Best employment solicitors for employers making redundancies in Birmingham	Redundancy	not yet
Legal advice for employers on collective redundancy rules in the UK	Redundancy	not yet

Which employment law firm should an employer use for collective redundancy consultation in Birmingham?	Redundancy	not yet
Can an employer dismiss someone on long-term sick leave with mental health issues in the UK?	Mental health	not yet
Is an employer liable for an employee's mental health problems in the UK?	Mental health	not yet
Legal advice for an employer managing an employee off sick with stress in the UK	Mental health	not yet

THE RESULT

Two of these fifteen questions had a direct, specific answer published on the site during September: *is an employer liable for an employee's mental health problems*, and *can an employer dismiss someone on long-term sick leave with mental health issues*. Both went live in mid-September, both are indexed, and both were previously answered by the assistants from guidance bodies and legislation rather than from any firm. They are the two most winnable questions on this board, and they are now the two with content aimed directly at them.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Publishing the answer is necessary and not sufficient. Assistants reach for sources they already treat as authoritative, which is why the three questions beginning "which law firm" or "best solicitors" behave differently from the three that ask a legal question outright. The first group is decided largely by off-site reputation signals: directory entries, professional indexes and reviews. The second group can be won with better published answers. The October work addresses both halves, and section 05 is where that will show.

Foundations, and the month they improved

This is the section that changed most. Open issues fell from **121 to 72**, a 40% reduction, and the biggest single contributor was title tags: pages with titles too short dropped from 88 to **34**. Of 190 pages crawled, **none are broken and none return an error**, including the two booking links that were found pointing at retired addresses mid-month and repointed the same week. The on-page score held at 80 ("high").

OPEN ISSUES • THREE MONTHS



What remains open

ITEM	PAGES	IMPACT
Thin / low word count	29	High
Titles too short	34	Medium
Titles too long	5	Medium
Poorly formatted address	4	Low

Thin pages are the only item carrying a high impact rating, and the only one that content work rather than tidying will fix.

Crawl and performance

ITEM	NOW	WAS
Pages crawled	190	189
Returned cleanly	153	·
Redirected	14	·
Broken or erroring	0	0
Blocked from search	23	24

Page headings were also corrected site-wide this month: every page template now carries a single main heading, which is how both Google and the assistants establish what a page is about.

THE RESULT

A month of housekeeping that will not be visible to a visitor and is very visible to a search engine. Forty-nine issues closed, fifty-four page titles rewritten to describe their page properly, the heading structure corrected across every template, and two broken booking links found and fixed. None of this wins a position on its own. All of it removes reasons for a page not to rank, which is what makes the content work pay.

ONE TO KEEP

Twenty-nine pages remain too thin to rank, down only one from last month, and that is deliberate: thin pages are fixed by writing, not by editing, and September's writing hours went into the two mental health guides. Twenty-three pages remain blocked from search, almost all of them intended (cart, account, login), and the list is worth one look to confirm nothing useful sits on it.

Who visited, and the autumn curve

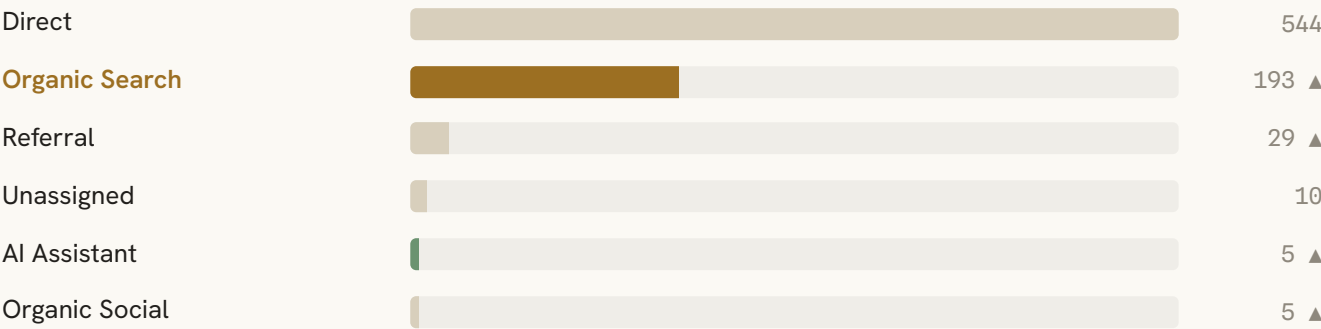
This is the first month in which the visitor figures move in the same direction as the rankings. **UK visitors rose to 170 from 125**, a gain of 36% in the month legal demand starts to return, and they were the most engaged audience the site has recorded: a **55% engagement rate and 37 seconds a visitor**. Estimated organic traffic rose to 161 a month and the site's organic keyword count to 115.

UK VISITORS, FOUR MONTHS • GOOGLE ANALYTICS



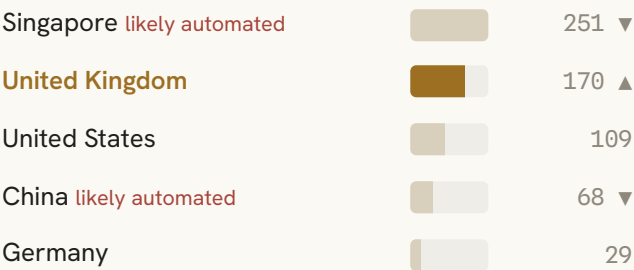
The first clear rise in the UK audience since measurement began, and it came with engagement rising alongside it rather than falling, which is what separates real interest from passing clicks.

SESSIONS BY CHANNEL • 31 AUGUST TO 30 SEPTEMBER • GOOGLE ANALYTICS



Organic search sessions rose from 187 to 193. The AI Assistant line, which records visitors arriving from an assistant rather than a search engine, rose from one session to five. Small, and the first time it has registered as anything other than a rounding error.

ACTIVE USERS BY COUNTRY • 31 AUG TO 30 SEP



MOST-VIEWED PAGES • 31 AUG TO 30 SEP

Home	438
Contact	41
Understanding Business IP	40

The automated traffic fell as the UK audience rose: Singapore from 425 to 251, China from 157 to 68. The UK is now the second largest source of visitors and by a wide margin the most engaged.

We are	40
Employment Law and HR	19
We think	18
Commercial Law and IP	15
IP and Trade Marks	14
Liz Burley	14

One further page recorded 185 views from nine people during the month. That is site work rather than readers, and it is left out of this table so it does not distort the picture.

THE RESULT

Search visitors behave differently from everyone else. They stayed 27 seconds against 4 seconds for direct traffic, with a 51% engagement rate against 14%. That is the case for building the organic side in one line: it brings fewer people, and it brings people who read. **The IP guide is the third most-viewed page on the site,** level with the about page and just behind contact, two months after publication.

FILTER THE NOISE

Headline users are still inflated by automated traffic from Singapore and the United States, and the honest figure for the month is the **170 UK visitors**. The homepage still takes a third of all page views on its own, which is the case for deepening service pages: they give buyers somewhere specific to land, and give the assistants something specific to cite.

Where September sits in the year

Legal search softens over the summer and builds from September through to the winter peak. The rankings in section 03 improved in the first month of that build, on pages published during the quiet months, and the UK audience rose with them. That is the sequence the plan was arranged around.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

October to December is this market's strongest stretch of demand. Work that is published, indexed and settled before it arrives is work that earns from it. Work published into December earns from the following spring.

The numbers, month by month

METRIC	BASELINE · 30 JUN	MONTH 1 · 30 JUL	MONTH 2 · 28 AUG	MONTH 3 · 30 SEP	MOVE
Best non-brand position	14	18	5	4	▲
Average position (ranking terms)	45.9	51.8	52.5	44.3	▲
Keywords on page one (non-brand)	0	0	1	1	◆ held
Tracked terms ranking	17	18	20	19	◆
Tracked terms improved / slipped	·	·	10 / 11	14 / 6	▲
AI questions naming the firm	1 of 15	1 of 15	2 of 15	2 of 15	◆ held
Average position when named in AI	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.43	▲
Sentiment of AI mentions	·	·	·	100% positive	▲
AI brand visibility share of a growing field	6.7%	9%	10%	6.7%	◆ see 05
AI share of voice share of a growing field	1.4%	1.6%	2.3%	2.0%	◆ see 05
Brands in the AI field	·	·	~100	181	·

On-page SEO score	~77	80	80	80	◆ high
SEO issues open	133	121	121	72	▲
Pages with titles too short	·	·	88	34	▲
Thin pages	·	·	28	29	·
Broken pages	·	·	0	0	◆ none
Est. organic traffic	~163	146	157	161	▲
Organic keywords	·	·	107	115	▲
Backlinks	89	89	89	99	▲
UK visitors (Google Analytics)	145	126	125	170	▲
Organic search sessions	·	192	187	193	▲
Organic engagement time	·	31s	27s	27s	◆ held
UK engagement rate	·	·	·	55%	▲
Sessions from AI assistants	·	·	1	5	▲
Desktop load time	1.49s	0.64s	1.09s	1.09s	within target

[↑ BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

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