PREPARED FOR BURLEY LAW · BY ESSENCE DESIGN

SEO & GEO Visibility Benchmark

MONTH 4 REVIEW · 2 NOVEMBER 2026 · MEASURED AGAINST MONTH 3

Four months in, October is the month the work started to show up as visitors. Clicks from Google nearly doubled, from 109 to 209. Organic search sessions rose by 60% and UK visitors by 33%. The two mental health guides published in September went from nothing to around 2,400 Google impressions in their first full month, and one of them now sits on page one for the question it answers. On the AI side, Microsoft Copilot cited the site 188 times, three times September's figure, and the firm was named for the first time on a technology contracts question.

00 INDEX

Contents

01 Month-four 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 three showed the rankings moving. Month four shows people arriving because of them. Google sent 209 clicks in October against 109 in September, from 21,600 appearances in search against 15,900. Two tracked terms now average a page-one position, against one last month, and a third, untracked question about long-term sick leave reached page one on a page published six weeks ago.

CLICKS FROM GOOGLE	APPEARANCES IN GOOGLE	TRACKED TERMS ON PAGE ONE	ORGANIC SEARCH SESSIONS	UK VISITORS
209	21.6K	2	309	226
▲ FROM 109 · 92%	▲ FROM 15.9K · 36%	▲ FROM 1	▲ FROM 193 · 60%	▲ FROM 170 · 33%

ON-PAGE SEO SCORE	SEO ISSUES OPEN	BACKLINKS	AI BRAND VISIBILITY
84	64	104	10%
▲ FROM 80	▲ FROM 72	▲ FROM 99	▲ FROM 6.7% · 2ND OF 67 BRANDS

THE RESULT

The September guides are working. **"Can you dismiss an employee on long-term sick leave with a mental health condition?"** recorded 1,591 Google appearances and 15 clicks in its first full month, and averages **4.4 for the search "how long can you be on sick leave before dismissal uk mental health"**. Its companion, *Is an employer liable for an employee's mental health problems?*, added 855 appearances and 10 clicks. They are now the fourth and seventh most-viewed pages on the site. The IP guide held page one: **"business ip meaning" averaged 3.3** and "what is ip in business" 4.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Two things need care this month. The rank tracker used for months one to three was disrupted in October by a change at Google, so the rankings in section 03 are taken from Google Search Console, Google's own record of where the site appeared. And the newly rebuilt Birmingham employment page settled lower after an early trial by Google; section 03 explains why, and what has already been done about it.

How to read this review

This report tracks two kinds of visibility. Traditional Google search, measured by where the site appears for the terms buyers type. And AI search, measured by how often assistants name the firm when a buyer asks them who to use.

One change to the measurement this month, outside the firm's control.

Rankings come from Google this month. In October, Google changed the results it serves to third-party SEO tools, and the rank tracker behind months one to three began reporting some terms as "not ranked" when they were ranking. "Business ip meaning", for example, was reported as dropping out of the top 100 while a live search showed the guide second on the page. Rather than report movement that did not happen, section 03 uses **Google Search Console**, which records the average position of every appearance the site made in October against September. It is a more reliable source, and it reads slightly differently: an average across a month rather than a weekly snapshot.

The AI field is now counted in full. The fifteen buyer questions ran as usual. This month the monitoring named 67 distinct brands across them, down from 181 in September, so percentages move partly because the field changes size. As before, the stable measure is how many of the fifteen questions return the firm.

ON THE FIGURES

Search figures come from Google Search Console for 30 September to 31 October 2026, compared with 30 August to 29 September. Google Analytics figures cover 1 to 31 October. The site audit was re-run on 2 November after the fixes below; backlink, competitor and AI figures were captured on 28 October 2026 for the United Kingdom, desktop. Copilot citations and Bing figures come from Bing Webmaster Tools, and the second link count and AI Overview figures from Ahrefs, both read on 2 November. They are used for relative month-on-month tracking, not as exact counts.

What moved in Google

Of the tracked terms that appeared often enough in both months to give a reliable average (ten or more appearances each month), **six improved or held and one slipped**. The gains are on the two subjects with new or strengthened pages, intellectual property and mental health.

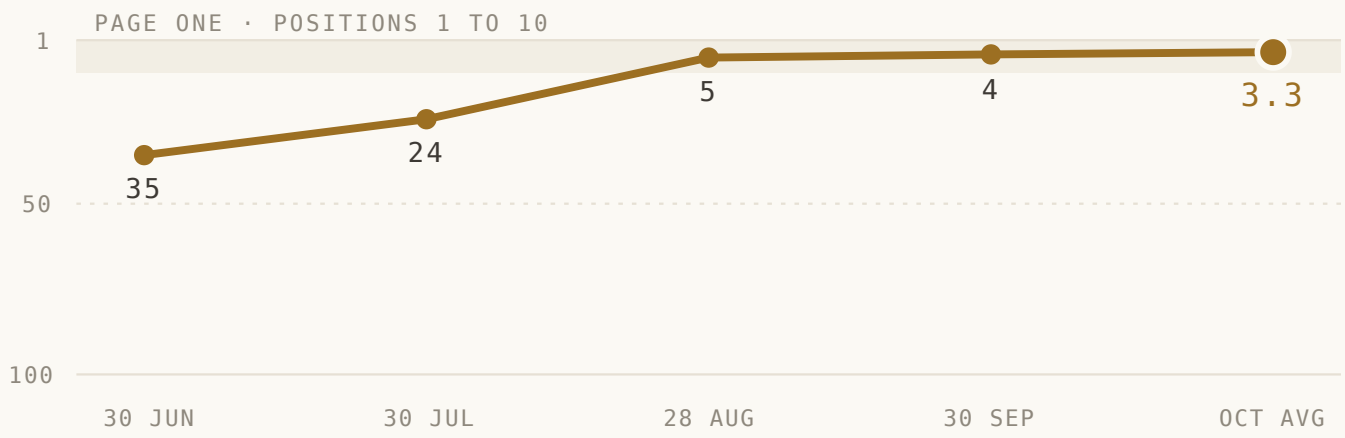
BEST NON-BRAND POSITION
3.3
▲ BUSINESS IP MEANING

SEARCHES AVERAGING PAGE ONE
403
▲ FROM 390 · ALL TERMS

SEARCHES THE SITE APPEARED FOR
1,068
▲ FROM 1,029

The second and third figures cover every search the site appeared for, not only the tracked list. Most are low-volume variations, but the count rising in both directions at once, more searches and more of them on page one, is the shape of a site gaining ground.

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



480 searches a month. Three months on page one. The guide behind it recorded 7,232 Google appearances in October, up from 5,855, across dozens of ways of asking what IP means in business, and most of those variations also average page one.

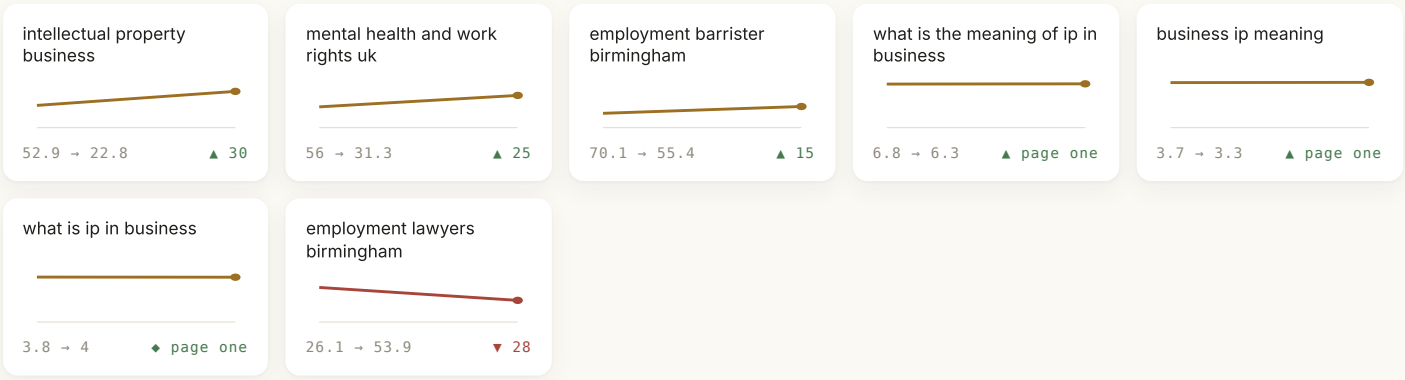
On Bing, which is small for this site, clicks were 5 in October against 10 in September, from 253 appearances against 414. Most Bing searches for the site are for the firm by name.

The two September guides, first full month

GUIDE	APPEARANCES	CLICKS	AVG POSITION
Can you dismiss an employee on long-term sick leave with a mental health condition? published mid-September	1,591	15	11.5
Is an employer liable for an employee's mental health problems? published mid-September	855	10	10.4
Understanding Business IP published 5 August, for comparison	7,232	8	6.6

Both guides average just outside page one across all their searches six weeks after publication, and the sick leave guide is already on page one for its main question. Positions usually take four to eight weeks to settle, so both have further to move.

TRACKED TERMS WITH 10+ APPEARANCES IN BOTH MONTHS · AVERAGE POSITION, SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER · SAME 1 TO 100 SCALE



Improved or held · ▲ Slipped · ▼

Why the threshold: Search Console's position is an average across the month's appearances. On a term that appeared only a handful of times, one or two searches can move that average by thirty or forty places in either direction. The remaining tracked terms are listed in the appendix with their appearance counts.

THE RESULT

The IP guide is doing what it was built to do: **"business ip meaning" averaged 3.3 and "what is ip in business" 4**, both on page one for a third month, and "intellectual property business" improved from 53 to 23. On the mental health side, "mental health and work rights uk" improved from 56 to 31 as the September guides were picked up.

IN PERSPECTIVE

The one slip worth explaining is "employment lawyers birmingham", from 26 to 54. The HR for business page was rebuilt around Birmingham employment searches on 15 September, and Google trialled it near the top of page two before settling it lower in early October. That is a common pattern for a newly rebuilt page: Google tests it high, then weighs it against firms with years of links, reviews and directory listings behind them. Search Console shows no penalty or security issue, and the rest of the site rose over the same weeks. The page had only one link pointing to it from elsewhere on the site; that was corrected on 2 November, and the listings work in the plan adds support from outside the site.

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 each month compares against the same names. **Shared keywords** counts the search terms where both sites appear in Google. All ten firms reported this month, including Harper James and Spencer Shaw, which were missing in September.

FIRM	SHARED KEYWORDS · OCT	SEP	MOVE
harperjames.co.uk IP and commercial	65	51 Aug	▲ 14
freeths.co.uk IP and commercial	2	3	▼ 1
spencershaw.co.uk Employment	2	2 Aug	◆ held
wilkes.co.uk Employment	1	3	▼ 2
mfgsolicitors.com Employment	1	1	◆ held
schofieldandassociates.co.uk Employment	none	1	▼ 1
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	◆
burleylaw.co.uk (you)	159 ranking terms	115	▲ 44

Harper James is the firm the site now meets most often, 65 shared terms against 51 in August, almost all of them IP and business-law questions. That is the IP guide competing on Harper James's ground. The overlap with the employment firms stays small. Their sites are built around the "solicitor in Birmingham" searches, and the Birmingham employment page here is six weeks old and still building the support theirs have.

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



A second index, Ahrefs, counts 673 websites linking to the site, 95 of them with links that pass authority, and a Domain Rating of 7 out of 100. The two tools count links differently, so each is tracked against itself month to month rather than against the other.

THE RESULT

The site's own ranking terms grew from **115 to 159**, the largest monthly rise since measurement began, and backlinks rose for a second month, from 99 to 104. Both are measures under the firm's own influence, and both moved up.

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 gap is not closing quickly. What has changed is that the site is now meeting the largest of them, Harper James, on its own subject and holding a better position on the terms that matter to Burley Law.

Who the AI assistants recommend

Fifteen buyer questions went to ChatGPT and Gemini this cycle. **The firm was named on two of the fifteen, and named first both times.** The count is the same as September, but the mix changed: for the first time an assistant named Burley Law in answer to *"Which law firm handles tech contracts for small software businesses in Birmingham?"*, while the Birmingham mental health question, where the firm was named fourth in September, did not name it this cycle. Every mention was positive in tone.

BRAND VISIBILITY
10%
▲ FROM 6.7% · OF ALL ANSWERS

RANK AMONG ALL BRANDS NAMED
2nd
OF 67 · JOINT, BEHIND PINSENT MASONS

POSITION WHEN NAMED
1.00
▲ NAMED FIRST · WAS 1.43

QUESTIONS NAMING YOU
2
◆ OF 15 · HELD

The firm against the whole field

Across all fifteen questions the assistants named 67 brands, from national firms to Acas and online legal services. **Only Pinsent Masons was named more often.** Burley Law shares second place with Clayden Law and Acas, ahead of Harper James, EM Law, Shakespeare Martineau and LawBite. Share of voice across the whole field rose from 2.0% to 3%.

BRAND VISIBILITY · SHARE OF ANSWERS NAMING EACH BRAND · ALL FIFTEEN QUESTIONS · 28 OCTOBER



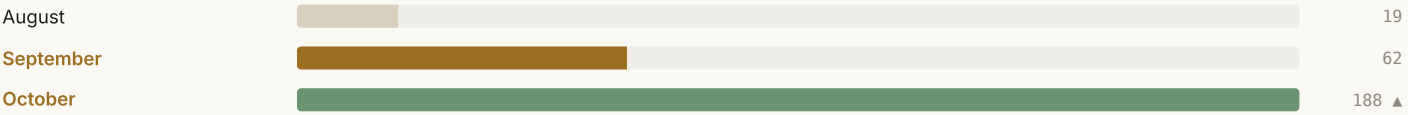
A new measure: who the assistants cite

The monitoring now records which websites the assistants draw on when they answer, not only which firms they name. Across the thirty answers this cycle, **Burley Law accounted for 10% of citations**, second among the ten firms you track, behind Harper James at 13.3% and ahead of Landau Law, Codified and Freeths. The assistants cited two of the firm's own pages, the home page and the About page, and **sixteen pages on eight other websites that mention the firm**. Nine in ten citations across these questions come from third-party sites, which is why listings and directories feature in the plan.

Beyond the tracked questions: where AI already uses the site

Two further sources were added this month to show how assistants use the site outside the tracked questions. **Microsoft's Copilot cited burleylaw.co.uk 188 times in October**, up from 62 in September and 19 in August, according to Bing Webmaster Tools. The questions behind those citations are almost all versions of "what does IP mean in business", the subject of the IP guide. On Google, Ahrefs records the site being cited in **19 AI Overview answers** and 5 AI Mode answers.

CITATIONS IN MICROSOFT COPILOT ANSWERS · BING WEBMASTER TOOLS



A threefold rise in a month. These citations are the site being used as a source for an answer, which is the step before a firm is recommended by name.

Who owns each topic

TOPIC	QUESTIONS	RETURNING YOU	COVERAGE	YOUR RANK
Protecting IP for a small business	4	1	25%	1.00 · first
Commercial & tech contracts for software businesses	3	1	17% · new	1.00 · first
Collective redundancy consultation · Birmingham	4	0	none yet	·
Workplace mental health & duty of care · Birmingham	4	0	was 17%	·

THE RESULT

The technology contracts mention is the first time the firm has been recommended outside its IP stronghold, and it came on a Birmingham-specific question. When the firm is named, it is named first, and across the whole field of 67 brands only one is named more often.

IN PERSPECTIVE

The mental health mention from September did not repeat, so the count of questions held at two rather than rising to three. Collective redundancy is the clearest gap: competing firms are named and Burley Law is not. The updated collective redundancies guide, now with Liz for review, is aimed directly at it, and the two mental health guides, already on or near page one in Google, are the route back on the mental health questions.

The fifteen questions, and who answers them

Every cycle, these fifteen buyer questions go to ChatGPT and Gemini. 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 · both platforms
Which law firm handles tech contracts for small software businesses in Birmingham?	Tech contracts	1st · new
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
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
Which law firm advises employers on mental health duty of care in Birmingham?	Mental health	not this cycle · 4th in Sep
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 the questions the site now answers directly, whether an employer is liable for an employee's mental health and whether someone on long-term sick leave can be dismissed, are covered by the September guides, which already sit on or near page one in Google. They remain the most winnable questions on the board.

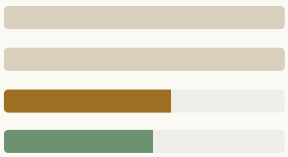
IN PERSPECTIVE

Assistants tend to pick up a page some time after search engines do, and they lean on sources that other sites already reference, so the Google movement is the leading sign to watch here. The questions beginning "which law firm" or "best solicitors" are decided more by off-site reputation, which is the listings and reviews work in the plan.

Foundations

The on-page score rose from 80 to **84** and open issues fell from 72 to **64**. Of 189 pages crawled, **none are broken and none return an error**. Mobile page speed improved from around 70 to 89 during the month, and the desktop home page now draws its main content in 0.8 seconds.

OPEN ISSUES · FOUR MONTHS



WHAT REMAINS OPEN

ITEM	PAGES	IMPACT
Thin / low word count	21	High
Titles too short	33	Medium
Titles too long	5	Medium
No main heading	2	Medium
Poorly formatted address	3	Medium

CRAWL AND PERFORMANCE	NOW	WAS
Pages crawled	189	190
Returned cleanly	145	153
Redirected	22	14
Broken or erroring	0	0
Blocked from search	22	23
Mobile speed score	89	~70
Desktop main content loaded	0.8s	1.09s

THE RESULT

The eight extra redirects are deliberate: eight old HR service pages that duplicated the main HR pages now point to them, so visitors and search engines land on the fuller page. The tribunal costs page was rebuilt from the 2026 fees, and the fees PDF was corrected so Google no longer reads the old 2022 rates inside it. Every page template now carries a single main heading, and on 2 November the home page and five other pages that still had several were corrected to one.

ONE TO KEEP

Thin pages now count 21. A further nine short pages exist only to feed lists and accordions on other pages, and are marked as intended rather than counted. The 21 that remain are fixed by writing, which is the service-page work starting with settlement agreements. The two pages without a main heading are a small fix and are in the November plan.

Who visited, and the autumn curve

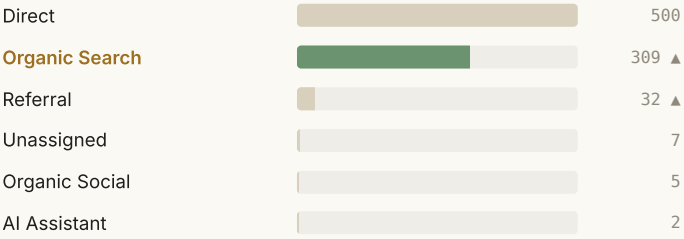
The second month in a row that the visitor figures move with the rankings, and the stronger of the two. **UK visitors rose to 226 from 170**, organic search sessions to **309 from 193**, and search visitors spent longer on the site: **38 seconds a session against 27** in September, with half of all search sessions counting as engaged.

UK VISITORS, FIVE MONTHS · GOOGLE ANALYTICS

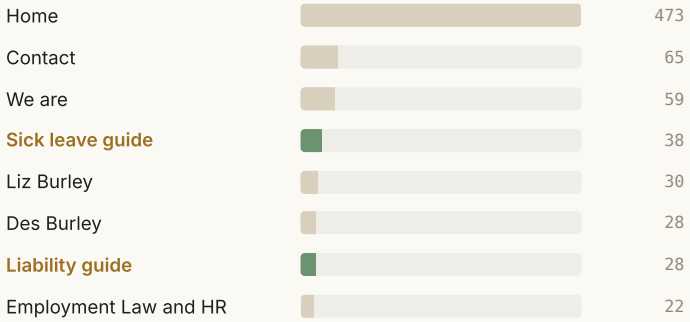


UK visitors engaged on 55% of visits and spent 51 seconds on the site on average, against 37 seconds in September.

SESSIONS BY CHANNEL · 1 TO 31 OCTOBER



MOST-VIEWED PAGES · 1 TO 31 OCTOBER



THE RESULT

Search visitors read. They stayed 38 seconds against 6 for direct traffic, with a 50% engagement rate against 18%. The two mental health guides reached the site's top ten pages in their first full month, and clicks through to the Contact page from Google rose from 3 to 15, alongside rises on the Liz and Des profile pages.

FILTER THE NOISE

Headline users are still inflated by automated traffic, mainly from Singapore (192 users, near-zero engagement), the United States and China. The reliable figure for the month is the **226 UK visitors**. AI assistant sessions fell from 5 to 2, too small a number to read either way.

What this means for the next quarter

November and December are the strongest stretch of demand in this market. Work published and indexed now earns from it; work published late in December earns from the spring. The two mental health guides are the proof of the timing: published in mid-September, they were on page one for their main question within six weeks.

The numbers, month by month

METRIC	BASELINE · 30 JUN	MONTH 1 · 30 JUL	MONTH 2 · 28 AUG	MONTH 3 · 30 SEP	MONTH 4 · OCT	MOVE
Best non-brand position	14	18	5	4	3.3 GSC	▲
Average position (ranking terms)	45.9	51.8	52.5	44.3	·	see 02
Tracked terms on page one (non-brand)	0	0	1	1	2	▲
Tracked terms improved / slipped	·	·	10 / 11	14 / 6	6 / 1 10+ appearances	▲
Clicks from Google	·	·	·	109	209	▲
Appearances in Google	·	·	·	15.9K	21.6K	▲
AI questions naming the firm	1 of 15	1 of 15	2 of 15	2 of 15	2 of 15	◆ held
Average position when named in AI	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.43	1.0	▲
Sentiment of AI mentions	·	·	·	100% positive	100% positive	◆ held
Citations in Microsoft Copilot	·	·	19 Aug	62	188	▲
Clicks from Bing	·	·	4 Aug	10	5	◆ small
AI brand visibility	6.7%	9%	10%	6.7%	10%	▲
Brands in the AI field	·	·	~100	181	67	·
AI citation share	·	·	·	·	10% · 2nd	new
On-page SEO score	~77	80	80	80	84	▲
SEO issues open	133	121	121	72	64	▲
Pages with titles too short	·	·	88	34	33	▲
Thin pages	·	·	28	29	21 +9 intended	see 07
Broken pages	·	·	0	0	0	◆ none
Est. organic traffic	~163	146	157	161	232	▲
Organic keywords	·	·	107	115	159	▲
Backlinks	89	89	89	99	104	▲
UK visitors (Google Analytics)	145	126	125	170	226	▲

Organic search sessions	·	192	187	193	309	▲
Organic engagement time	·	31s	27s	27s	38s	▲
UK engagement rate	·	·	·	55%	55%	◆ held
Sessions from AI assistants	·	·	1	5	2	◆ small
Desktop load time	1.49s	0.64s	1.09s	1.09s	0.8s	▲

Tracked terms with fewer than ten appearances in a month

Shown for completeness. Averages on this few appearances swing widely and are not read as movement.

TERM	SEP	OCT	APPEARANCES SEP / OCT
intellectual property in business	65.4	26.0	8 / 12
mental health and employment	63.0	27.7	1 / 3
employer negligence duty of care mental health	80.4	50.8	8 / 9
why is the tax year april to april	71.3	57.5	6 / 6
why does tax year start in april	64.5	53.5	8 / 11
employment law in birmingham	53.3	45.3	7 / 6
employers and mental health	69.7	64.9	13 / 8
employment solicitor birmingham	21.8	50.7	6 / 15
mental health employment law uk	44.6	58.6	10 / 9
mental health employment law	52.4	61.6	8 / 10
collective redundancies	51.5	55.8	11 / 5
collective redundancy consultation	54.8	57.3	9 / 8
tribunal costs	17.7	66.5	30 / 8

EARLIER REVIEWS · MONTH ONE BASELINE · 30 JUNE 2026 · MONTH 2 · 28 AUGUST 2026 · MONTH 3 · 1 OCTOBER 2026 · MONTH 4 · 2 NOVEMBER 2026