



**NIXONWILLIAMS**  
Contractor Accountants

**CONTRACTOR  
SURVEY 2015**

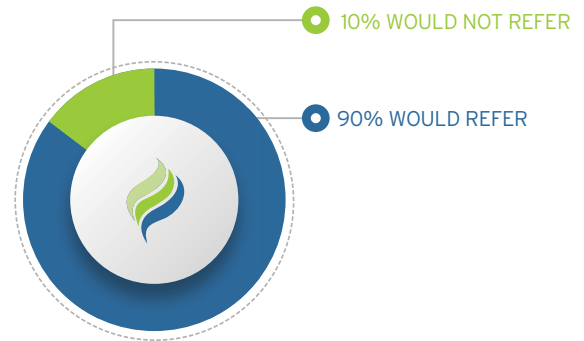
**Nixon Williams Contractor Survey 2015** provides a detailed overview of the contracting market. It's the first annual survey of this type to be completed by Nixon Williams and intended to identify, compare, monitor and analyse the progression of key trends.

The survey asked 1050 Nixon Williams contractor clients working across a range of sectors for their views on work, lifestyle and earnings.

### ONE CONTRACTOR SAID:

"If you've got the skills businesses want, then I would definitely recommend becoming a contractor. You'll be better paid and have more control over when and how you work."

### Q1. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BEING A CONTRACTOR TO A FRIEND?



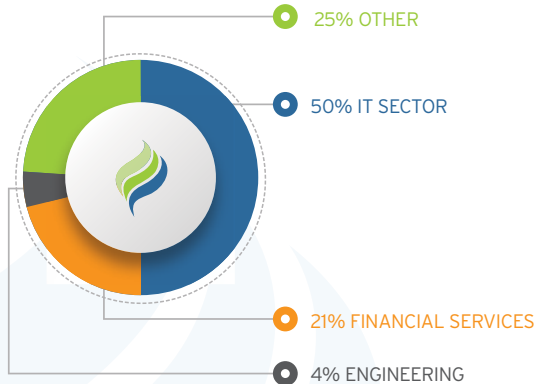
Nine out of every 10 contractors said that they would refer the lifestyle to a friend, reflecting a market buoyancy that has seen self-employment in the UK at its highest level for 40 years at 4.6 million (according to a latest study from the Office of National Statistics). Our survey discovered that there are high satisfaction levels across a range of measures to make it a lifestyle to recommend.

## IT SECTOR DOMINATES

### Q2. WHAT INDUSTRY DO YOU WORK IN?

50% of the survey respondents work in the IT sector with 21% in financial services and 4% in engineering. The remaining 25% was split across a diverse variety of sectors including healthcare, pharmaceuticals, media, architecture, construction, energy, education, telecoms, manufacturing, retail and government.

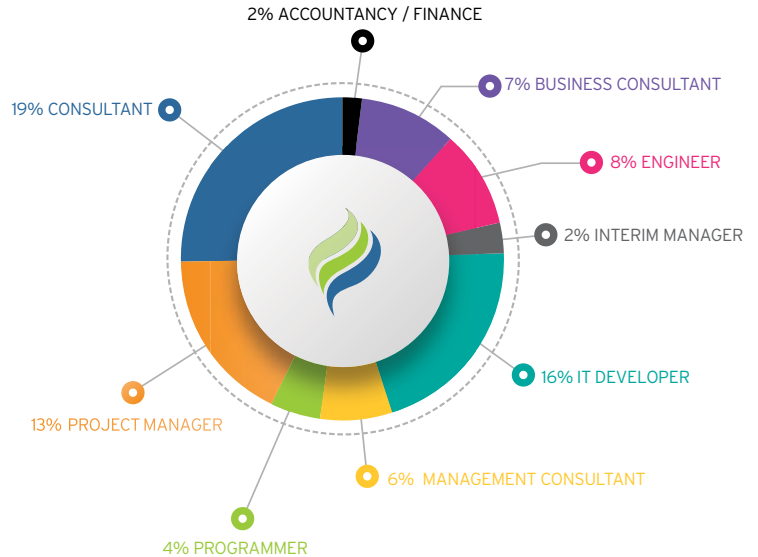
The IT market dominance in this research sample reflects growth in the IT contractor sector. Demand for IT contractors hit its highest level in 15 years at the back end of last year and looks likely to continue with demand for online retail support and traditional specialist developer roles vibrant. The majority of IT contractors responding to this survey told us they were in developer, technical and analyst roles providing project expertise on demand.



### Q3. WHAT IS YOUR JOB TITLE?

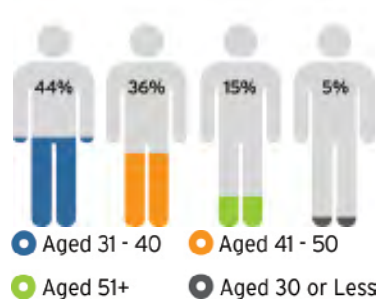
While 32% of job titles are given the traditional external consultancy badge, 43% of titles are defined by skill set and expertise and don't refer to contractor status.

Only 2% used interim manager. The focus on skills in job titles like engineer and programmer helps companies define specific roles in a team or on a project.



## CONTRACTORS 30+ AND MORE WOMEN OPTING IN

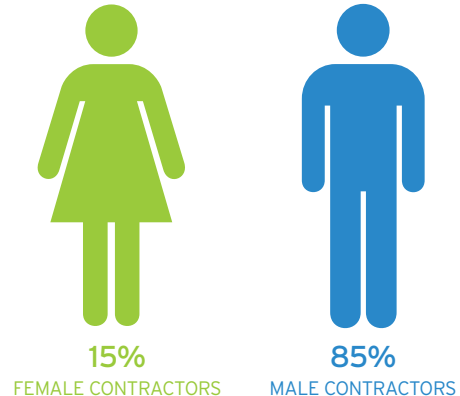
## Q4. WHAT IS YOUR AGE?



Almost half (44%) of those surveyed are aged between 31 and 40, and 36% are between 41 and 50. People across these age brackets told us that after establishing themselves in their field of expertise they felt they had hit a glass ceiling in terms of progression, scope of work and earning potential and needed to break out of conventional PAYE structures.

Those aged over 51 made up a significant 15% of contractors reflecting the ONS 2014 stats which reported that the number of over 65s who are self-employed has more than doubled in the past 5 years to reach nearly half a million. Only 5% of contractors are aged 30 or younger reflecting the trend to learn a skill set and establish a reputation before going out to the market under your own steam.

## Q5. ARE YOU MALE OR FEMALE?



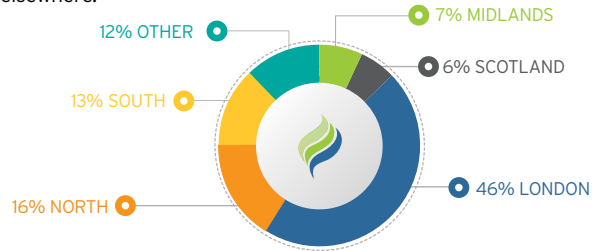
The 85%/15% male female split is in keeping with the male dominated nature of the contractor sector, especially with its weighting towards IT, but the female interest in being self-employed is growing at a faster rate than men so we expect the gap between the sexes to close in future years.

Our female contractors also mostly work in IT and financial services roles.

## DAILY RATES STRONG AND LONDON DOMINATING

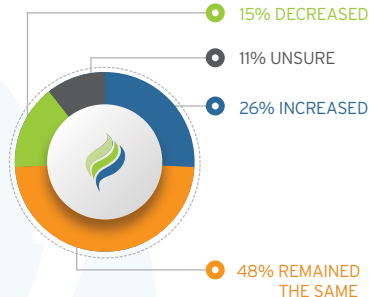
### Q6. WHERE IS YOUR CONTRACT LOCATED?

London is the most popular contract location with almost half of all respondents in the survey servicing contracts (46%) based in the capital. A significant proportion however are based in the North (16%) and elsewhere.

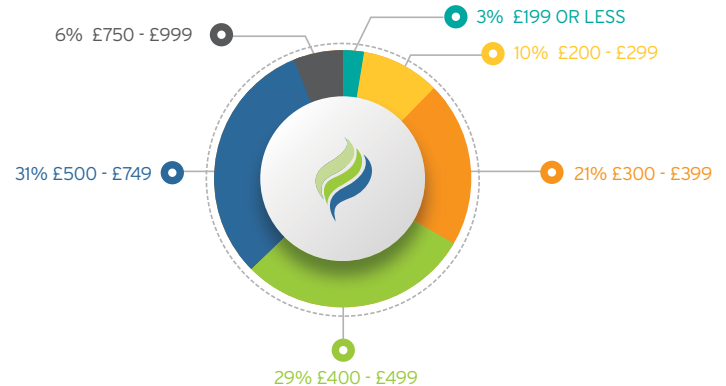


### Q7. ON AVERAGE, HAVE YOU SEEN DAILY RATES CHANGE OVER THE PAST YEAR?

74% of respondents told us that rates of pay for contractors are strong and mostly stable and daily rates have either stayed the same or increased during the past 12 months.



### Q8. WHAT IS THE DAILY RATE OF YOUR CURRENT CONTRACT?



33% of respondents quote daily rates for current contracts of between £500 and £749 on average with 26% getting rates of between £400 and £499. A small minority of contractors (1.3%) broke through the £1,000 per day barrier and two people reported earning over £2,500 per day. Similarly very few (2.6%) earn less than £199 a day.

## NO OFFICE POLITICS AND MORE MONEY

### Q9. WHAT IS A TYPICAL CONTRACT LENGTH?

Contractors told us that they usually negotiate a range of contract lengths. 33% of them agree contracts of between four and six months, with 28% opting for longer periods of between seven and 12 months. At either end of the spectrum, 11% of contracts last less than three months, and only 6% have run for up to three years.

The four to six month contract is the most popular and widespread, consistent across all demographics, job type and regions.



- 11% 3 MONTHS OR LESS
- 33% 4 - 6 MONTHS
- 28% 7 - 12 MONTHS
- 16% 13 - 24 MONTHS
- 6% 25 - 36 MONTHS
- 6% 37 MONTHS AND MORE

An IT contractor said:

“Six-month contracts are pretty usual, and I’ve not found it too difficult to secure the next one. If you’re good, you are usually recommended.”

### Q10. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING A CONTRACTOR?

Six out of 10 contractors told us that not getting involved with office politics was a big benefit, but higher rates of pay made contracting most enjoyable for most (79%) of those surveyed.

Flexibility (61%), freedom (55%) and a better work-life balance (50%) also featured and for a few work security (2%) was key. 47% of people said that they enjoyed the variety of work on offer as a contractor and 31% felt that they had only been truly recognised as an industry expert once they had moved onto the contractor side.

19% said that the chance and drive to develop skills had been greater as a contractor and there was more energy behind skilling up in certain areas to enhance market value and opportunity.



- 50% BETTER WORK / LIFE BALANCE
- 55% FREEDOM
- 62% FLEXIBILITY
- 79% HIGHER RATES OF PAY
- 61% NO OFFICE POLITICS
- 19% SKILL DEVELOPMENT
- 47% VARIETY OF WORK
- 31% VIEWED AS AN INDUSTRY EXPERT
- 2% WORK SECURITY

Discussing work-life balance, a business consultant explained:

“Working as a contractor has meant that I can fund my son through university and take time out for family holidays. The time between contracts means I can enjoy the lifestyle a better income can provide.”



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