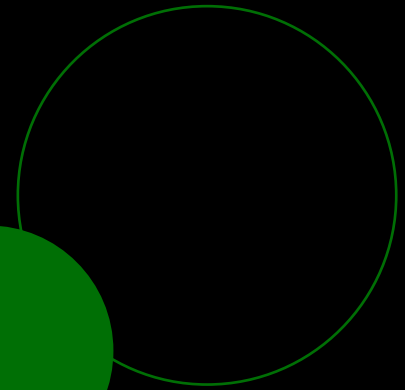
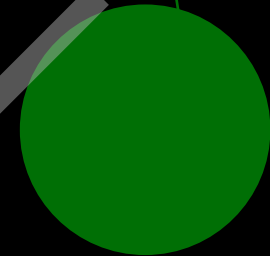
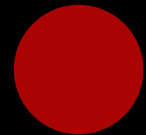
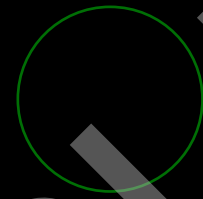
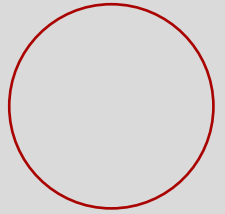


LEGALEASE RESEARCH SERVICES



**GLOBAL ELITE
UK MANAGING PARTNERS' CLIENT SATISFACTION REPORT 2021**

The Managing Partner's Client Satisfaction Report 2021

Welcome to the Managing Partner's Client Satisfaction Report for the UK, 2021.

In this comprehensive examination of client perception of law firm service across the UK, we have worked with Legalease Research Services to assess the strengths and weaknesses of law firms across a range of criteria, setting out clients' appraisal of the quality of the teams they work with, the value they believe they get from law firms, and their confidence in the industry knowledge their legal advisers bring to the work they do for UK companies.

With over 150,000 clients contacted in the UK every year providing scored data assessments of law firm service, we are uniquely able to define objective, benchmark scores by jurisdiction and practice area, making this report the most reliable evaluation of client satisfaction available on the market.

This report is exclusively available to legal500.com profiling firms, and represents the largest survey of its kind ever conducted.

All Managing Partner Client Satisfaction Reports are prepared to statistically valid standards, facilitated by the unparalleled access to the vast datasets generated in the course of our annual research. Those datasets allow us to build scientific indicators of relative law firm performance, measured against the entire market and within specific peer groups and practice areas.

This report focuses on law firm performance among the Global Elite. The tables on the following pages set out relative client satisfaction levels against the wider market, and report how clients in your part of the UK believe the services they provide stand up compared to national benchmark figures.

We're proud to be bringing objective assessments of client satisfaction to the UK legal market for the first time, part of legal500.com ongoing ambition to help law firms provide the very best service to their clients and fine tune the outstanding UK legal profession's engagement with the market.

All findings in this report are guaranteed accurate and correct (within the statistical parameters specified). This is objective data.◆

Georgina Stanley
Editor, The Legal 500 United Kingdom



The Managing Partner's Client Satisfaction Report 2021

Criteria and assessment

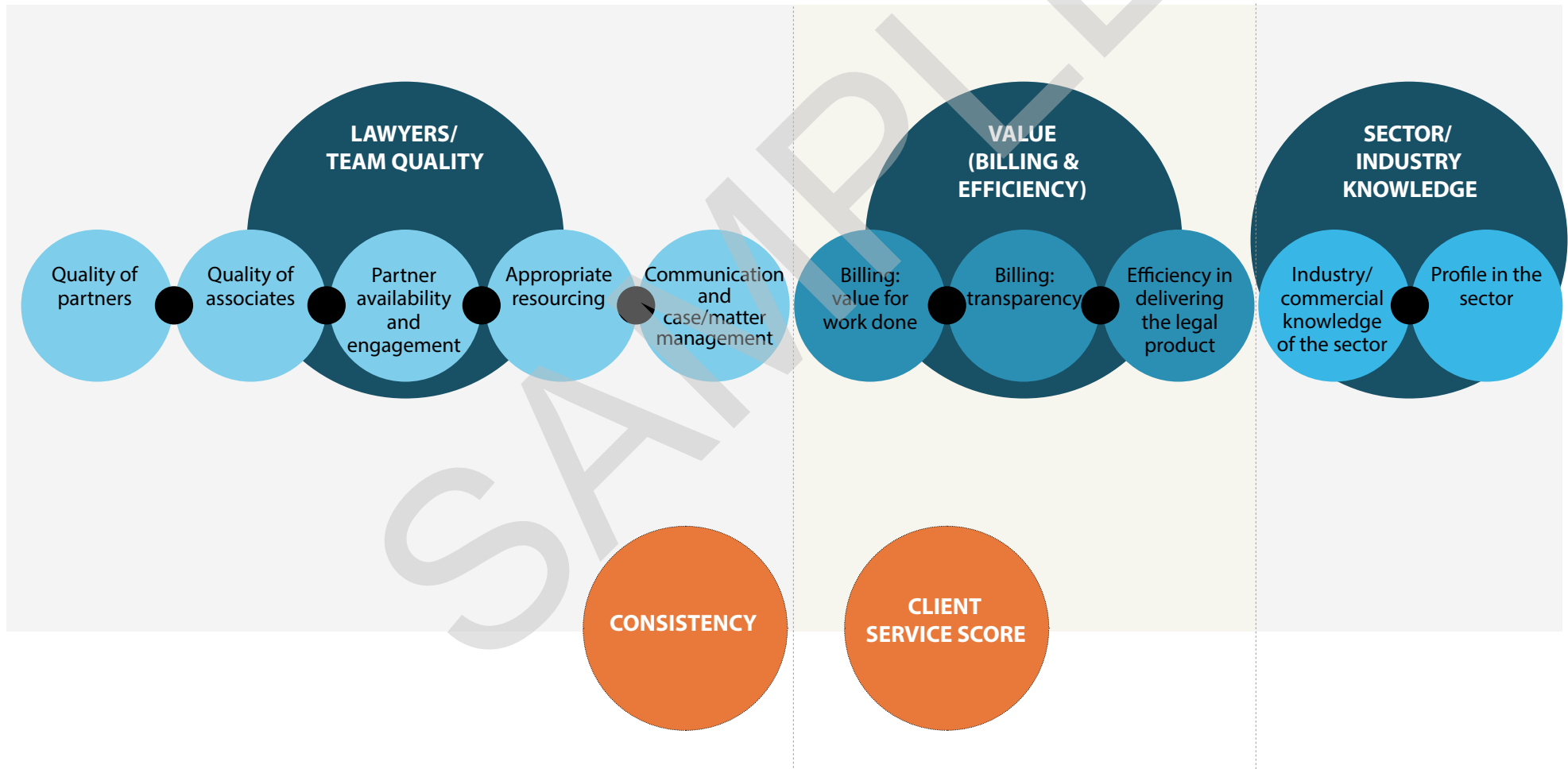
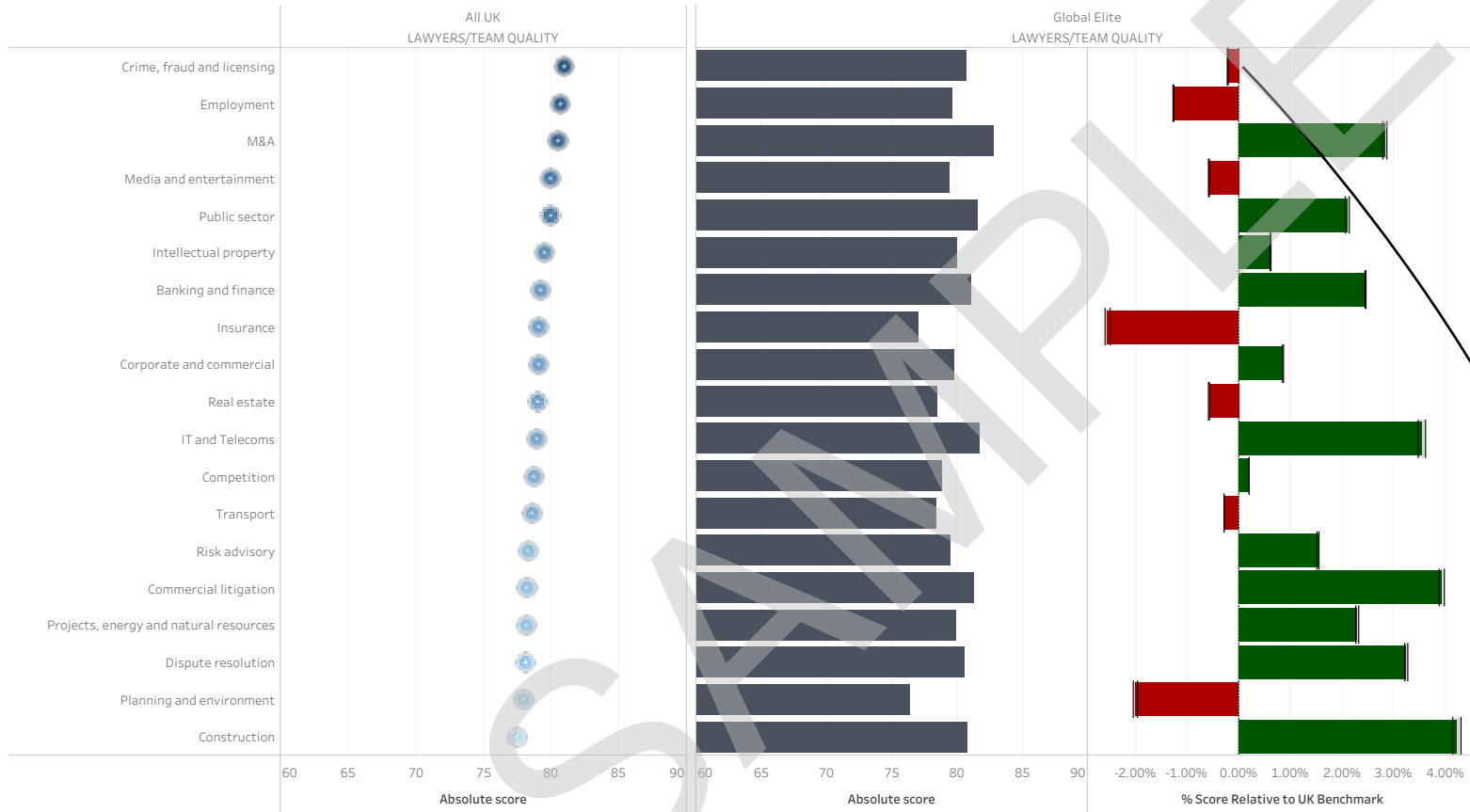


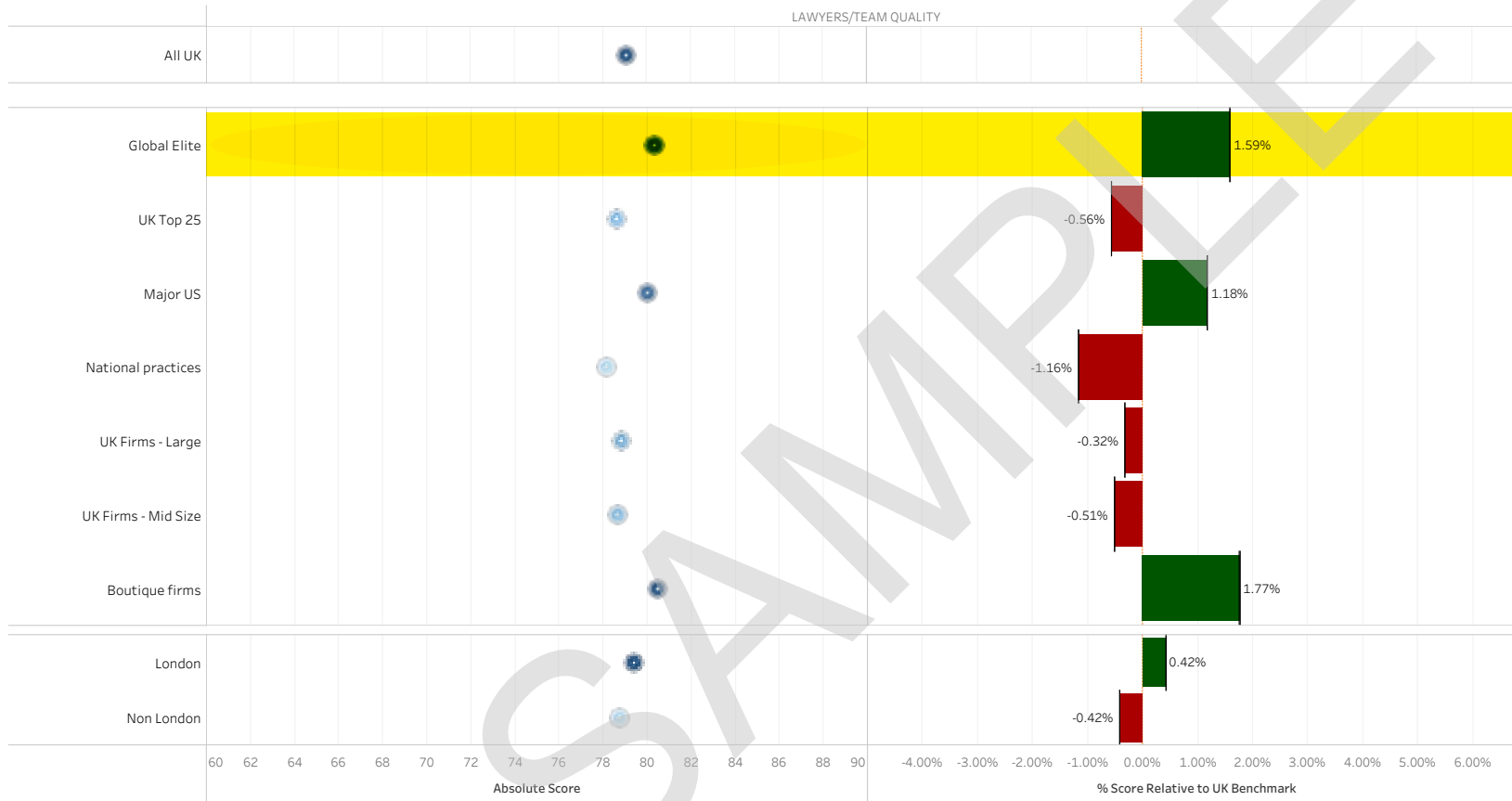
Fig 3.1 Client service by practice area compared to UK Benchmark | LAWYERS/TEAM QUALITY OVERALL



This series of charts breaks down performance by business practice area within the Global Elite peer group. The grey bar charts in the middle show the absolute scores, while the red and green bars to the right indicate more specifically how each of those scores relates to UK Benchmarks for each business practice area (illustrated by blue pin markers to the left). The first chart shows firms' performance for overall Lawyers/ Team Quality, with the strongest teams perceived to be found in the commercial litigation, IT and telecoms construction practice areas, and the least well-received teams found within insurance and planning law departments.

Note that while the Global Elite's absolute score for Crime, fraud and licensing in this criteria is fairly high, this score is marginally below the UK benchmark for this practice area, which nationwide is the best performing sector for team quality.

Fig 4.1 Client criteria scores compared to rest of UK | Lawyers/Team Quality overall



Part 4 measures UK law firms' performance across each client criteria against other peer groups, including those of firms outside London.

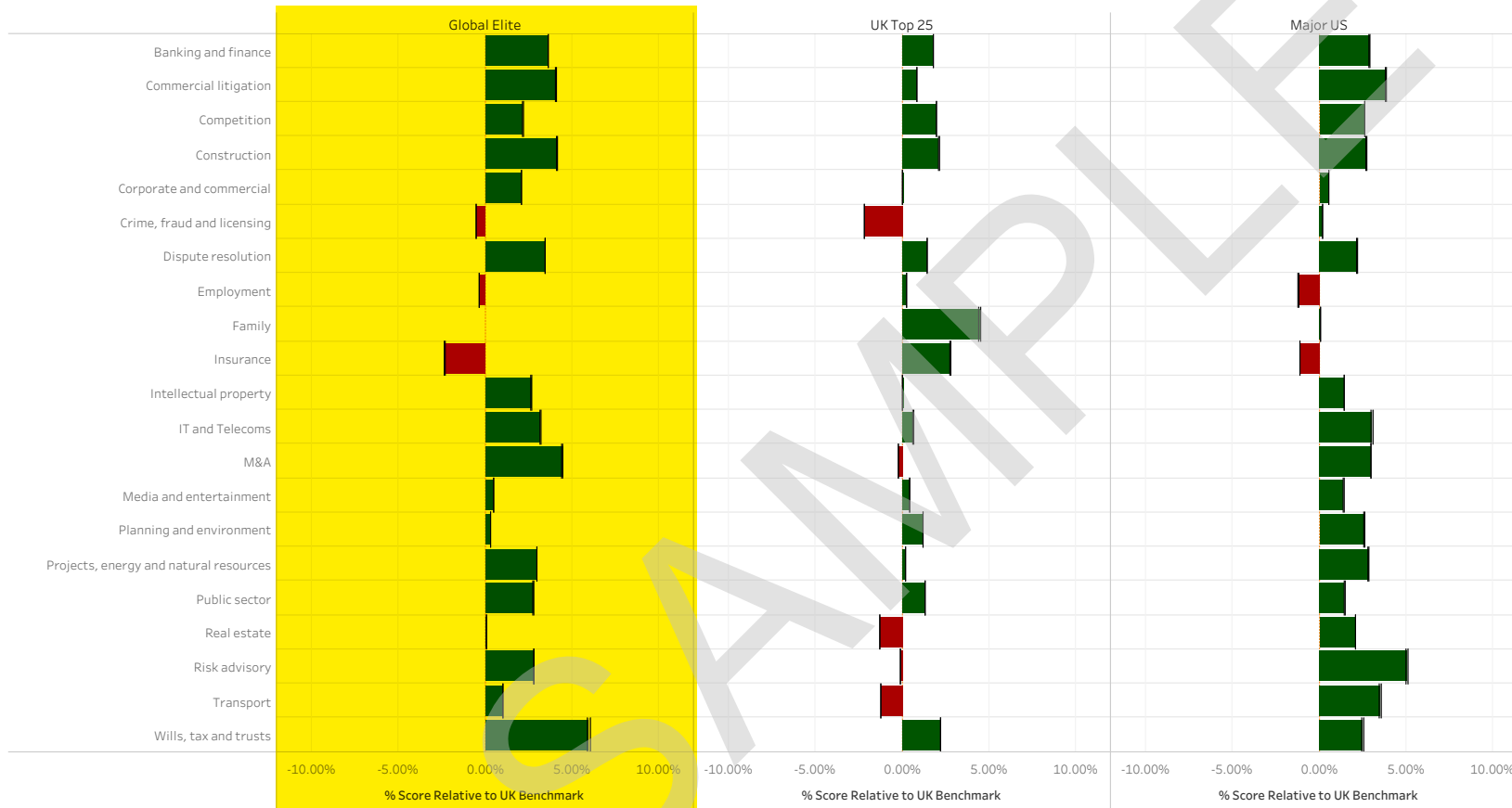
The pin markers to the left represent the absolute scores with the UK Benchmark at the top of the graph. The bars to the right indicate percentage scores relative to that benchmark.

Global Elite scores are highlighted in yellow on each chart. Here they indicate scores higher than UK Benchmark levels.

The data shows better quality teams are perceived to be found among Global Elite and Major US firms than among leading UK-focused firms. Specialist offerings at smaller boutique practices also score highly.

London firms perform better overall than their peers across the UK.

Fig 5.2 Client Service Score compared to UK Benchmark | All practice areas



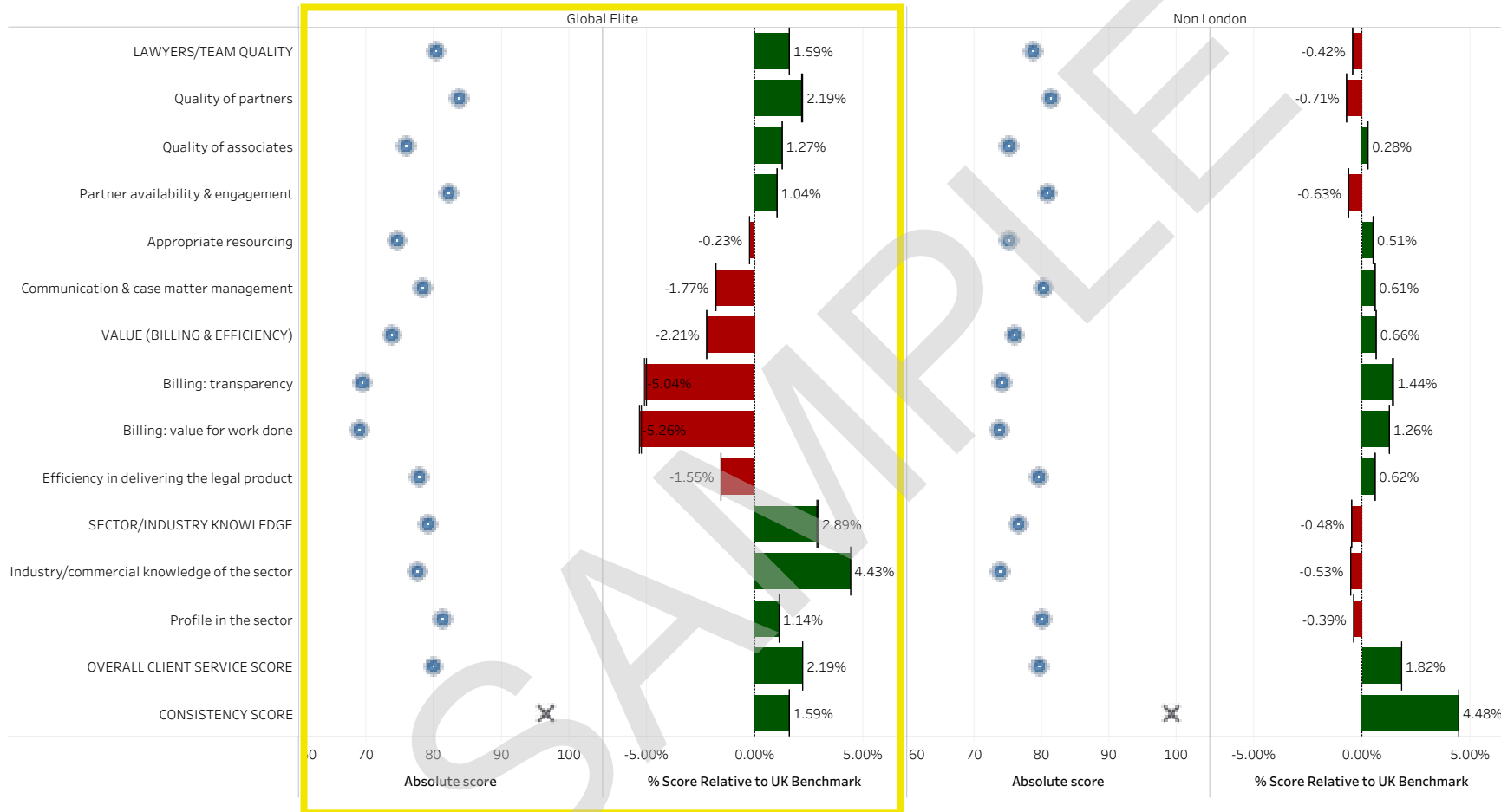
Across different peer groups, different practice areas stand out as specialisms even within areas that perform relatively poorly overall.

UK firms score better than Global Elite and Major US firms for insurance and employment; conversely the Global Elite and Major US firms generally score better for M&A and or risk advisory work.

Boutique and specialist firms record the highest scores across a range of practice areas, with client service levels perceived to be appreciably higher at boutique teams than they are at their international full-service competitors.

The Global Elite score above the UK Benchmark for 17 practice areas.

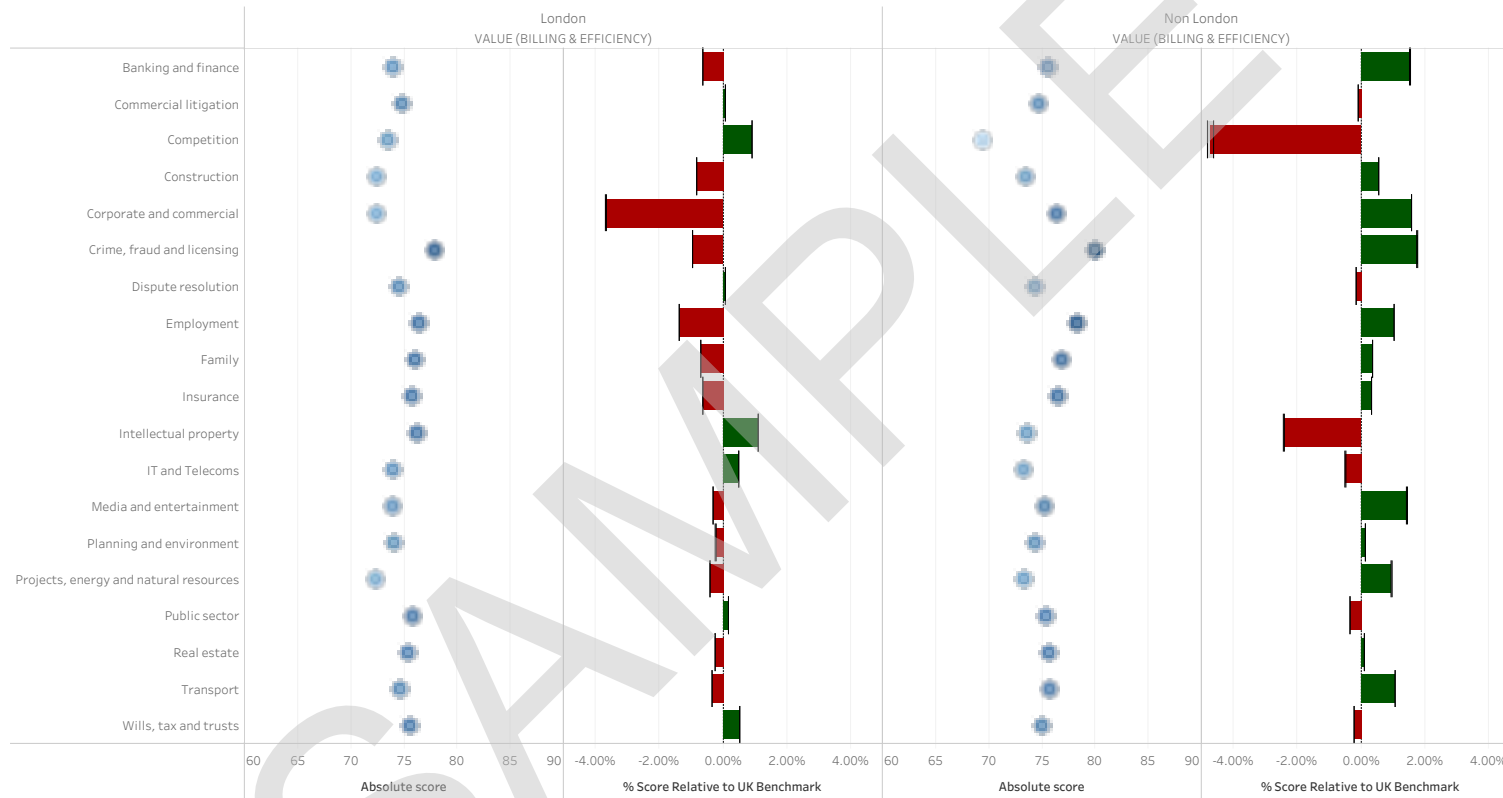
Fig 6.2 Global Elite v firms outside London | All client service criteria



While firms outside London score more highly in a number of criteria, their scores also tend more closely to the UK Benchmark levels, indicating that where partners are noted as higher quality at Global Elite and top international firms, they are markedly so (albeit markedly more expensive too). The more negative scores for billing and value at the larger firms in London are more dramatically divergent from Benchmark scores than are the

modest shortfalls in scoring amongst firms outside London for team quality and industry knowledge.

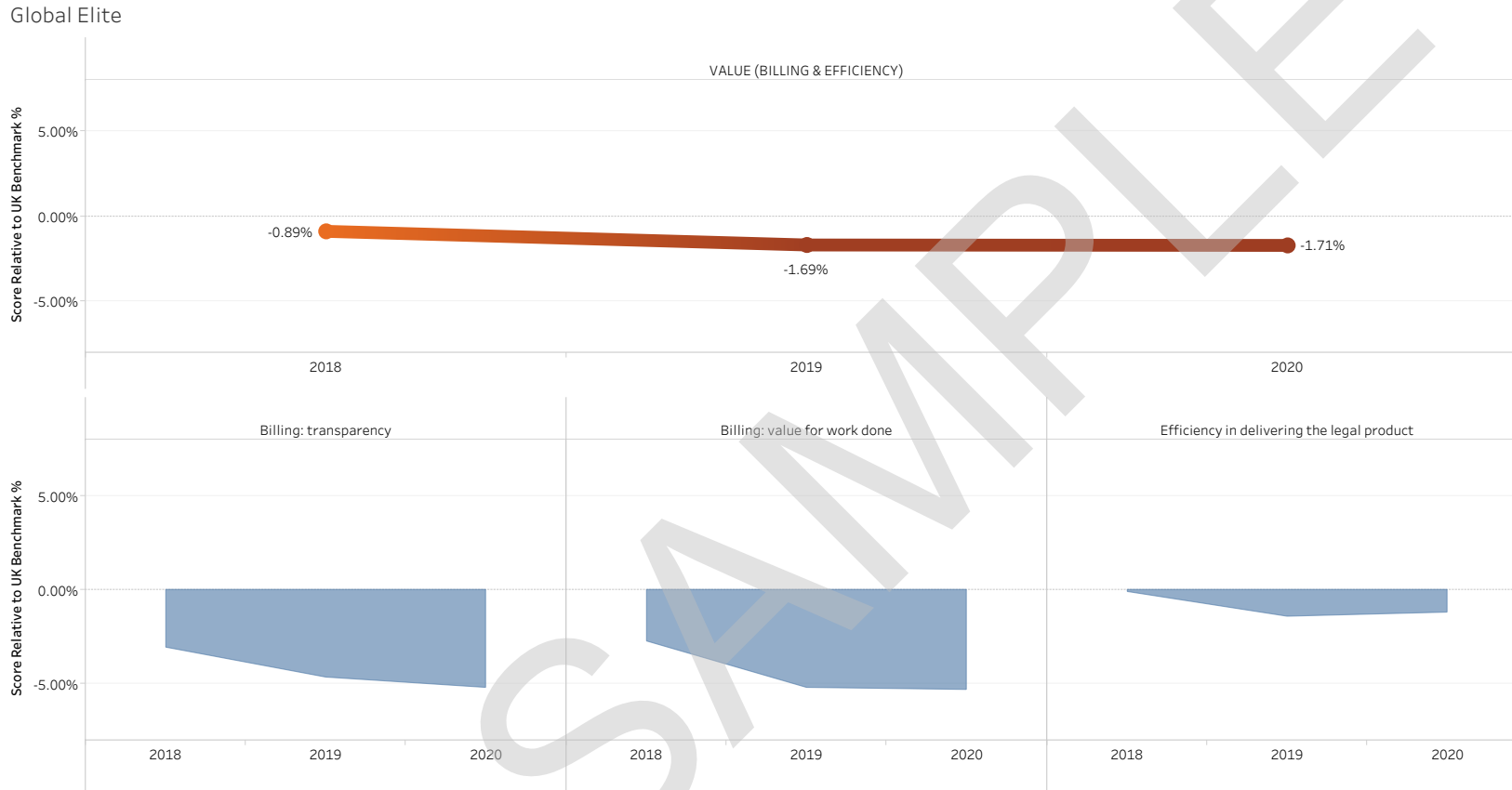
Fig 7.2 London firms v firms outside London | VALUE (BILLING & EFFICIENCY) OVERALL



Unsurprisingly, London firms on the whole are perceived to give less satisfactory levels of value for money than firms outside the capital, though for all but a small minority of practice areas the discrepancy is not hugely dramatic, and plenty of departments defy the odds, namely IP, IT and telecoms, wills, tax and trusts and competition teams (the latter scoring significantly lower scores outside London).

At a more granular level the low scores focus on billing transparency and value for work done, and less on efficiency, where London firms match or exceed UK Benchmark scores with a little more frequency, and most strikingly for competition, IP, IT and projects work.

Fig 8.2 Global elite client criteria scores Year on Year | VALUE (BILLING & EFFICIENCY) OVERALL



Global elite law firms score appreciably below UK Benchmark scores overall for Value for money, with a marked decrease in scores, albeit one which has slowed considerably since 2019. Scores for efficiency in delivering the legal product are marginally higher than they were 12 months previously.

Fig 9.1 Peer group comparative year on year client service scores 2019-20 | LAWYERS/TEAM QUALITY OVERALL

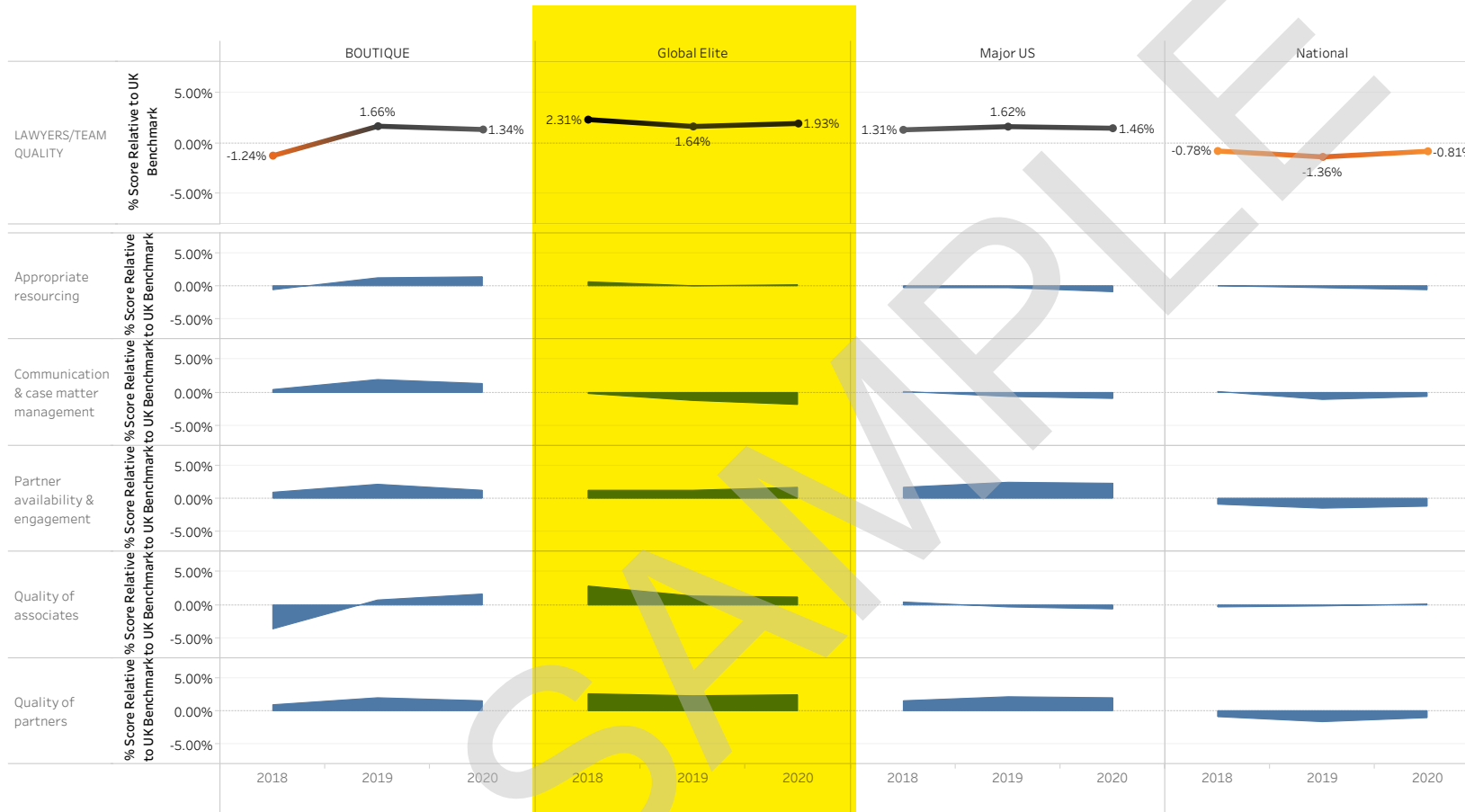
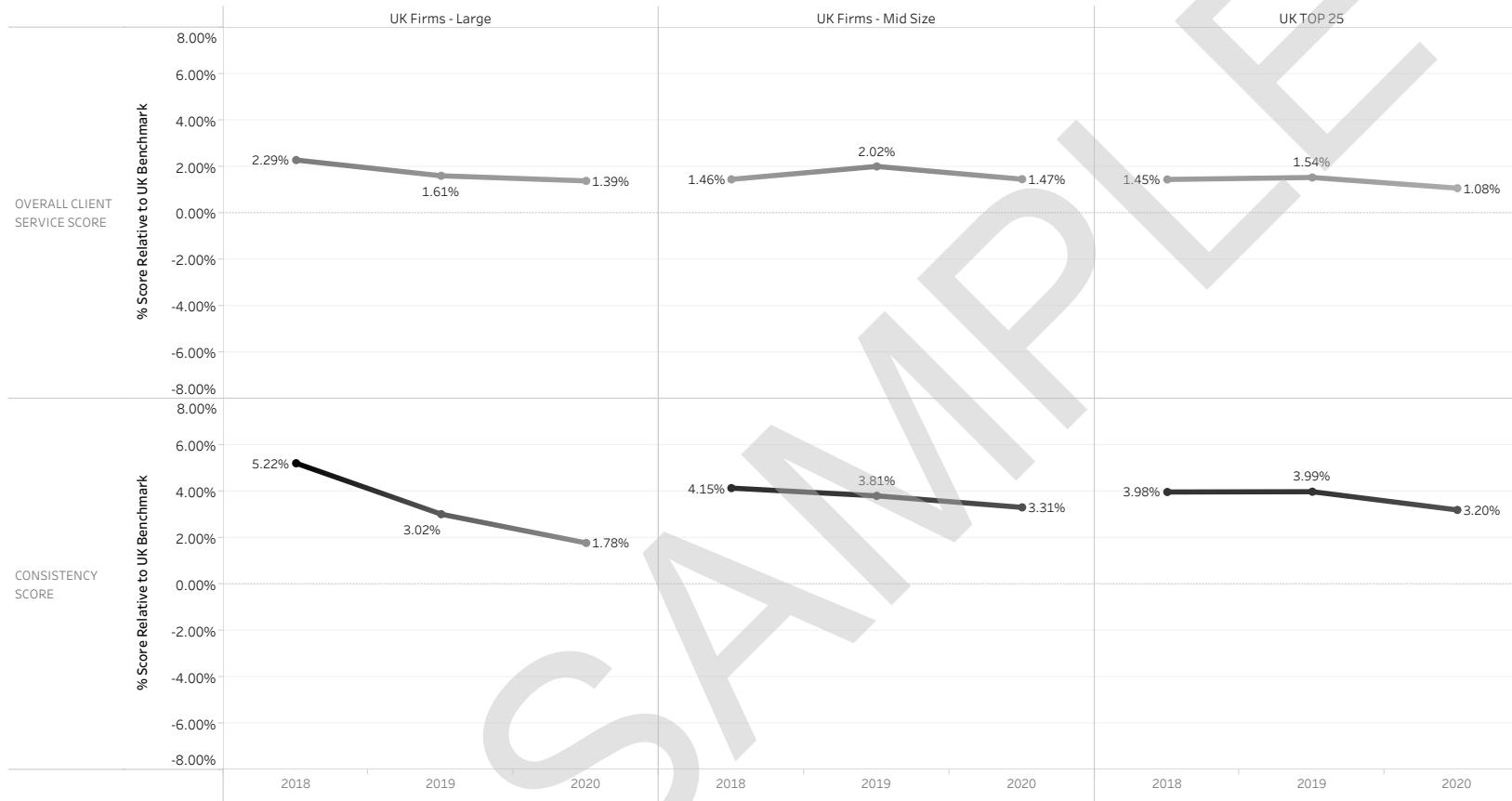


Fig 9.4 Peer group comparative year on year client service scores 2019-20 | CLIENT SERVICE SCORE

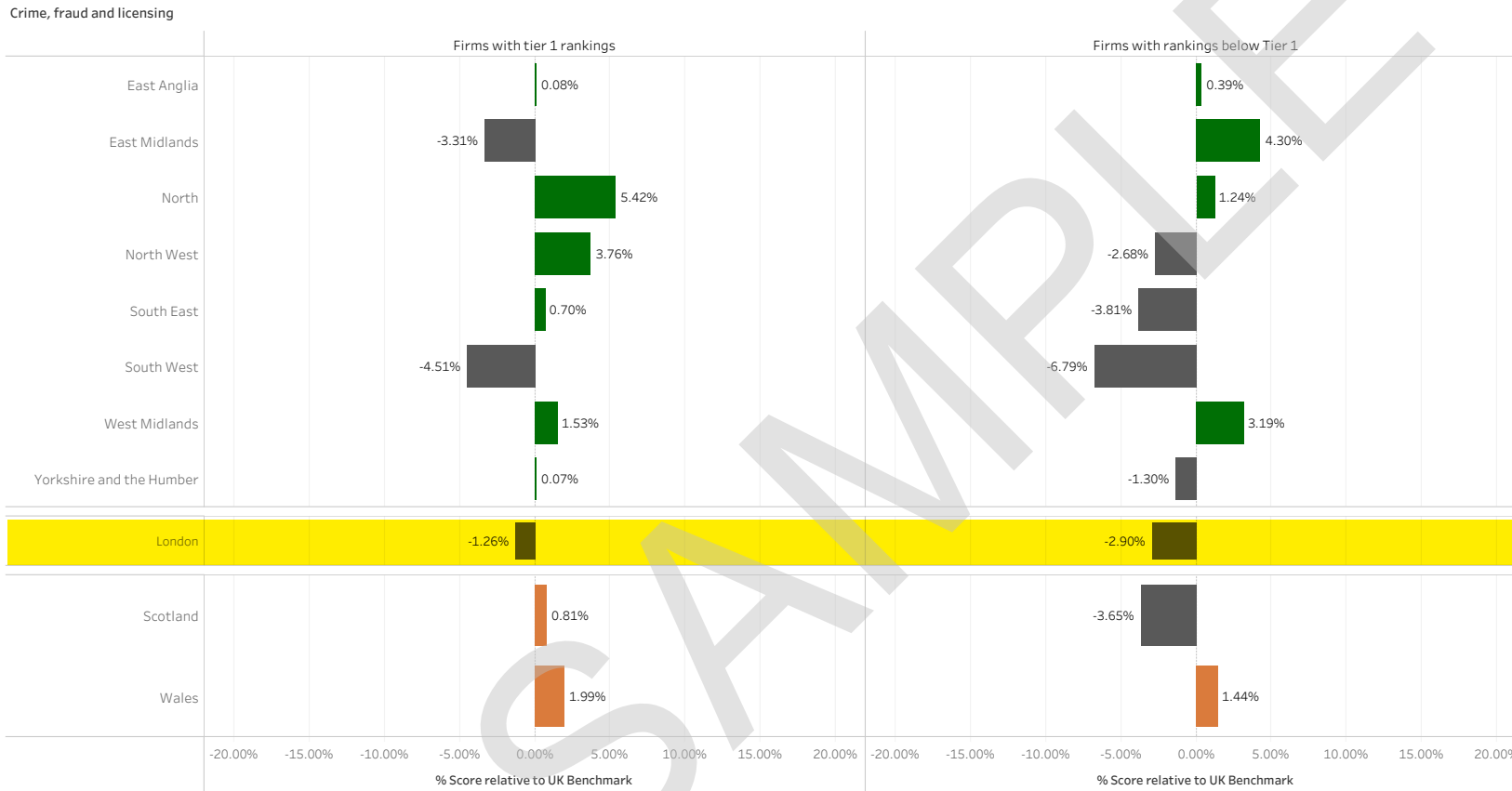


Overall client service scores at major UK firms remain well above UK Benchmark levels, although the largest of those firms have seen an appreciable drop in scores over the past 12 months. Consistency scores similarly, though declining somewhat from 2018 levels, indicate a reliable consensus as to the quality of service from these firms.

Boutique firms score highest overall for client service, but the Global Elite is not far behind, recording improved scores this year compared to last, as are major US offerings (albeit only fractionally so).

Once again, firms in London are clinging on to a higher score than those outside the capital but the gap has narrowed.

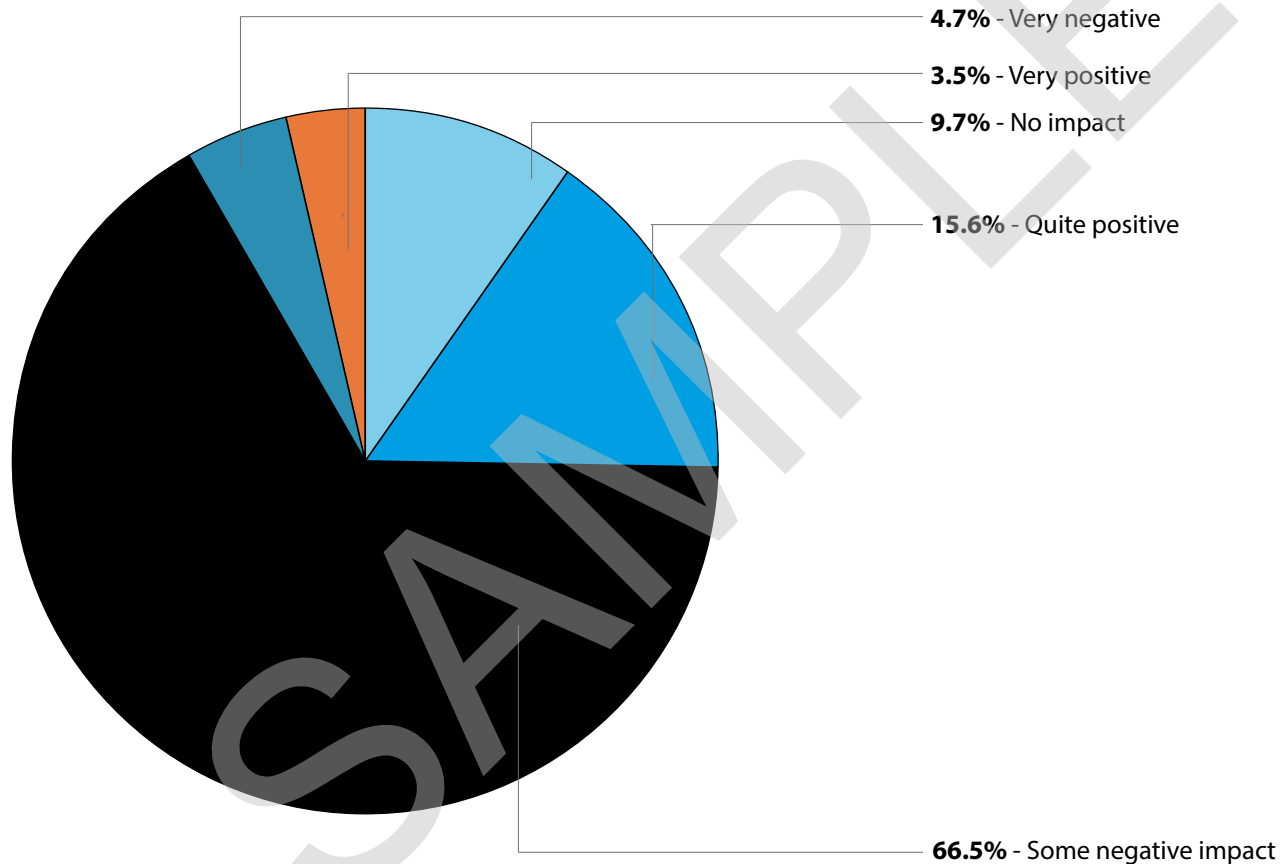
Fig 10.6 Regional/National Client Service scores for top tier and other tier firms compared to UK Benchmark | Crime, fraud and licensing



Crime, fraud and licensing is another area in which sharp differences appear between top-tier and lower-tier firms, with almost every region of the UK displaying significant positive or negative divergence between tiers.

In general, client service is perceived to be superior for top-tier firms across the UK than it is below tier 1 rankings.

Fig 11.1 What impact has Covid-19 and the ensuing recession had on your firm so far?



“Costs sensitivities have increased and are likely to remain a big driver for client work placements for at least 12-24 months”

Subscribers to *fivehundred* magazine, made up of partners and senior lawyers at the UK's top law firms, were invited to participate in a short survey designed to assess the impact of the Covid-19 led recession on the legal market in 2020, and to give their views on likely ongoing effects on client service and the law firm client relationship.

The overwhelming majority of those surveyed indicated they had already felt a moderately negative impact on their firms from the pandemic and ensuing recession.

Nevertheless a healthy proportion - some 16% - felt that from their firm's perspective the impact had been quite positive.

Relatively few of those surveyed felt that the consequences for their firms had been extreme at this stage. But there were notes of caution: “the bigger challenge is in building new relationships and winning new work in this climate”.