

Life in Dubai

A Guide for Legal Professionals



It's a very exciting time for the Dubai legal market. Tax-free salaries are on the rise, the work is varied and the experienced gained is highly valued. However, relocating to the Arabic Peninsula is no small decision and it's important to understand exactly what to expect from your new life. I've put together the most frequent questions I receive from those considering the move.

Stuart Greenland Director, DMJ Middle East



Q What is the make-up of the Dubai Legal Market?

A The Dubai/Middle East international legal market consists of Magic/Silver Circle, US/International and UK Top 40 law firms. Most lawyers at the major international UK & US law firms in Dubai/the Middle East, demonstrate are England & Wales Qualified Solicitors, so those lawyers relocating find adapting to the work and environment generally easier than they might have expected.

Q Why should I relocate to the Dubai?

A For over 25 years, Dubai has drawn in lawyers from the UK with its cosmopolitan lifestyle, tax-free remuneration, clement weather and travel hub opportunities. Many of whom have settled in the region for the long-term and now partners or GC's in the region. For those relocating back to London after a stint in the Middle East, the experience gained at a high-profile firm in terms of emerging markets exposure, quality of work and experience is seen as a major positive.



Q Which practice areas do law firms operate? Which are the most popular for relocators?

A The Legal500 law firms look to hire from NQ level upwards in traditional core areas such as Corporate/Private Equity, Banking & Finance, Construction Arbitration (making up most of Dispute Resolution & Litigation), Project Finance, Projects/PPP, Debt Capital Markets, Real Estate. There is also a need in growing and developing areas in the region such as Restructuring, TMT, IP, Funds, Financial Services Regulatory, Structured Finance, Corporate Trustee & Agency.



Q What are the financial benefits of relocation to Dubai?

A Dubai is the number 1 globally in terms of locations where Ex-Pats take home 100% of their earnings, with salaries at the leading UK & US law firms commensurate to those paid in London. For lawyers moving over on the same equivalent salary, without Income Tax and NI it would equate to 50% + increase in Net remuneration for UK upper bracket tax-payers, making it a very attractive financial proposition.

Q What is the cost of living in Dubai?

A The costs of living in Dubai are similar to London/Sydney and other major conurbations. Of course, this is dependent on lifestyle but like for like, it is comparable. With the financial tax-free element lawyers relocating tend to be significantly better off, particularly those moving from Australia/New Zealand with proportional net salary uplift.

Q Do firm's assist with relocation?

A As a well-trodden path for lawyers moving from the UK to Dubai, relocation packages can include flights, accommodation, relocation allowance and support.

Q What is the lifestyle in Dubai like and COVID situation?

A The UAE has a tolerant and metropolitan culture, year-round sun, excellent infrastructure and facilities, easy access to a range of travel destinations (COVID restrictions permitting). With 78% + of the UAE population fully vaccinated, day-to-day life and international relocation in the 'new normal' has resumed.



Stuart is Director of **DMJ Middle East**, our Dubai based private practice and in-house recruitment location. He has over 15 years of partner & associate level recruitment experience for UK, US and Middle Eastern law firms and in-house legal positions (General Counsel to entry level) within companies and financial institutions.

Outside of the office, **Stuart** enjoys travelling, exploring Dubai, outdoor activities and learning to kite-surf.

Stuart qualified as a solicitor in 2006 and moved into recruitment on qualification. His experience is gained at leading international and boutique recruitment businesses focusing on the legal sector.

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