

Legal Recruitment News - August 2020

Contents

- * [Legal Job Market Report](#)
- * [Hourly Rate Guide for Locums - updated](#)
- * [I want to Recruit a Solicitor with a Client Following - Advice](#)
- * [My Firm wants to Grow - Options](#)
- * [My Nickname is "The Wolf" - a good idea to include on a CV?](#)
- * [Fixed Price Locums](#)
- * [CV Writing Resources](#)
- * [Remote Working and in need of audio typing assistance?](#)
- * [Law Firms for Sale](#)
- * [Need a Locum?](#)
- * [Recruiting Staff?](#)

Legal Job Market Report - August 5th 2020

Good morning. Here is our summary of the current state of the legal job market:

Permanent Recruitment - Picking up

Vacancies are starting to come in, but fall into three camps. First are the vacancies from firms who have genuine need for new staff following usual career or retirement moves etc.. The second vacancies are from firms seeking a bargain - they have a reasonable amount of work coming in and want to recruit, but think there are going to be hoards of interested and quite desperate candidates working for low salaries. The third is a group of firms who have a vague notion of wanting to expand, eyeing up the perceived success of Setfords et al and looking to recruit solicitors who have their own clients and work on a fee share basis.

Locum Recruitment - Quiet but Signs of Life

Still quiet, but on Monday 3rd August we saw a return to a normal day with 5 locum assignments coming in at once! Usually in July and August we get c.3-6 assignments and queries registered each day and at the moment we are lucky to get this number in a week. Increase in rates reflected in our hourly rates guide below.

Law Firms for Sale - Reasonably Busy

We have seen a few deals going through, a few in advanced stages of talks and a number of enquiries. Some enquiries coming through from potential investors looking for distressed firm sales which at the moment are not cropping up as far as we can see. [For details of current law firms for sale please click here to view our list.](#)

Permanent Jobs - Candidate Advice

Our advice to candidates looking for new permanent roles is to register and apply for jobs wherever you see them as you would normally, but don't expect a response from law firms or agencies. As firms and agents update their sites and job boards the jobs ought to be more up to

date. There are a number still being advertised where firms have not updated for some time. You never know who may be in need of staff and when the market reactivates itself so it is still worth going through the motions.

Locum Jobs - Candidate Advice

Be prepared to compete for work, which means drop your prices, and if you want the work drop them substantially. Instead of getting 1-2 locums expressing an interest in covering each assignment we are getting up to 40 each time. Make sure we have all your documents on file as we will always go with our Tier 1 locums (fully checked) for roles where possible - and we usually have at least 2-4 available for each post.

REC Guide to the Job Retention Scheme and Furloughed Workers

The REC (our trade body) has produced a very helpful and updated (4th August) guide to the Job Retention Scheme and Furloughed Workers. You can get your copy here -

<https://www.rec.uk.com/our-view/topics/covid-19-hub>

CIPS UK Services Sector Report (we are members of the panel contributing to this report)

Headlines: New work returns to growth in July amid reopening boost and business optimism improves for the fourth month in a row.

UK service providers reported a strong increase in business activity during July, with the rate of growth the sharpest recorded for five years. New orders also rebounded during the latest survey period, reflecting an improvement in corporate and household spending. Growth was mainly linked to the phased reopening of business operations across the UK economy.

Employment was a weak point in July, with staffing numbers falling at a steep and accelerated pace amid concerns of only a partial recovery in longer-term demand from the levels seen prior to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Around 38% of the survey panel reported an increase in business activity during July, while only 24% signalled a decline. However, survey respondents often noted that output had simply risen from an extremely low base and would take a long time to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Statistics

General Statistics for July 2020 (comparison is with July 2019)

New permanent vacancies added: 21 (33)

New locum vacancies added: 9 (24)

New candidates registering: 112 (85)

Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives

August 2020 Locum Hourly Rates - Solicitors and Legal Executives

Child Care - £35-45 per hour.

Civil Litigation – £28-35 per hour.

Commercial Contract - £35-75 per hour

Commercial Litigation – £35-75 per hour.

Company Commercial – £45-85 per hour.

Construction (non-contentious) £60-75, (contentious) £45-60 per hour

Conveyancing – £25-£35 per hour.

Commercial Property – £35-50 per hour

Employment Solicitors – £30-50 per hour.

Family Solicitors – £30-35 per hour.

In House Counsel: 0-3 years PQE – £25-40 per hour,

In House Counsel: 3+ years PQE – £45-105 per hour

In House Interim Advisors (SME) - £55-65 per hour

Insolvency - £30-60 per hour.

IP - £50-85 per hour

Local authority rates: variable.

Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence – 3+ years PQE – £25-£40 per hour.

Professional Negligence - £45-55 per hour.

Wills & Probate – £35-50 per hour.

NB all rates exclude agency fees. The rates are for self-employed locums billing firms directly on a weekly basis.

My Nickname is "The Wolf" - a good idea to include on a CV?

We have recently received a CV from a candidate applying for a job and including the following in his summary at the top of the CV:

"Nicknamed as 'The Wolf' to reflect the quality of problem solving skills."

We think this is the most outlandish thing we have ever seen on a CV and a quick office poll here decided that this was most definitely not something to include on your CV! Comments were made querying whether the candidate had a death stare like The Wolf off Gladiators and wondering if the candidate usually hunted in a pack and tears his victims from limb to limb given the opportunity.

Should your nickname appear anywhere during the recruitment process? I know of candidates who have names they are known by (ie their surname or a middle name) and this can be highlighted on their CVs or job applications, but nicknames are something else.

Many years ago I attended an assessment day at Booth & Co in Leeds (as they were then called) and in groups we were asked to name something that was memorable about us. One attendee explained that the memorable thing for him was that he had once been to Australia and his nickname was 'Ozzie Dave'. I recall the room going very quiet at this point and I don't think he made the cut at lunchtime!

We have not yet emailed this candidate back to point out that being nicknamed 'The Wolf' is probably not a good idea unless you are a wrestler or martial arts instructor. Definitely not a good idea for a wills & probate solicitor..

I want to Recruit a Solicitor with a Client Following

At the moment there are a number of firms considering ways of generating new streams of income. One of these is to simply find a solicitor with their own clients and get them to join your firm.

Similarly we often get partners indicating that expect solicitors with more than 5 years' experience to have their own following of clients.

So just how easy is it to find solicitors with their own clients prepared to move firms and become consultants?

On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is dead easy and 10 is really difficult, I would say 11.

Whilst candidates with client following do exist there are not many. Out of the c.12,000 solicitors and legal executives registered with us, I would say less than 20 have a genuine following of clients to come with them to a new firm.

There is of course the small matter of restrictive covenants which prevent the overwhelming majority of solicitors from taking clients with them to a new firm. Similarly I have not come across a firm who have been pleased when one of their senior solicitors has left and mentioned in passing that all their clients are going with them to a new practice.

Solicitors with 5-20 years PQE do not have a following in the vast majority of cases - it tends to be virtually impossible for this to occur unless they are planning to steal the database from their current clients. It then begs the question whether this would be the type of candidate that you would want to recruit. Solicitors with 5-20 years PQE tend not to have a following unless it consists of friends and family not tied to a firm.

In our experience the only solicitors with a genuine client following are those who have had their own practice or worked as consultants already and developed their own following, but these do tend to be solicitors with 20 to 30 years experience or more and very specific requirements as to what they expect out of a new role, whether this is part time work, a very high percentage of the billing or a very high salary.

My Firm Wants to Grow - Options

Your firm is quiet in your traditional areas of law. The conveyancing department is busy, but not completely flat out, your family department is busy dealing with all the coronavirus divorces coming through and your private client team are occupied handling probate matters and new wills as more people start to come to terms with their own mortality. But profits are down and you are thinking of new ways to create revenue streams. What potential options do you have?

Here are some ideas:

Recruit More Staff and Increase Advertising

Take on more staff into the busy departments in the hope you can handle more work. Increase your marketing budgets and step up your advertising efforts to generate increased enquiries.

New Areas of Law

Move into new areas of law. Now is a good time if you are finding free time each day to work on new project. Take a look at your competitors - what are they offering? Do a search online for potential work types - there is a very useful app you can install to the Chrome internet browser called "Keywords Everywhere" which gives you lists of keywords being searched around specific topics. What could you easily move into with existing staff? Are there specialist areas you could advertise for from your current offering? This morning I was searching for IP Lawyers as we have a cybersquatting issue on one of our sister sites. I was fascinated to see how few IP solicitors actually have "cybersquatting" on their websites or "domain name disputes". It took me a while to find a few specialists to request a quote from.

New Firm

Buy a law firm. Take over a practice, open a branch office, move into new areas of law already covered by the seller and increase your staff. Alternatively I could have written "increase your risks, bump up your overheads, get more staffing & recruitment headaches and all for a bit of extra

profit." Buying a law firm carries specific risks and is not always suitable. You need to have cash & resources available to invest and also the time to manage the larger entity.

Recruit Consultants on an Ad Hoc Basis

In a similar way to moving into new areas of law, consider taking on consultants to handle specific types of work and then market those areas to your existing clients and new leads. Using consultants can be a low cost method of expansion without risk, but bear in mind that consultants who do not benefit from work coming in tend not to hang around for long.

Set up a Network

Low risk option - simply refer work across to another firm in a reciprocal arrangement as and when it comes through. Major disadvantage of losing control of your client of course, but a cost-free solution.

Do Nothing and Be Happy

At the moment everything remains very quiet unless you have been fortunate to find yourself in an area with a busy property market or lots of commercial property lease negotiations etc.. An argument could be made for simply sticking as you presently are and seeing what occurs as time goes by.. Even if you move into new areas of law, these are likely to be quiet for the time being.

Interim Lawyers Locum Bank

The top query we are getting from law firms and businesses at the moment is in relation to hiring consultants to work on an ad hoc self-employed basis either now or once the lockdown has ended.

With this in mind, we have developed "The Locum Bank". This is an online directory of vetted locums registered with us and available either to work on assignments or ad hoc work for solicitors' firms, or to contract directly with businesses to provide legal advice as required.

If you would like to use the service simply [click here](#).

If you would like to be listed on the Locum Bank, you will need to be registered as a Tier 1 locum with us. Full details on how to apply for Tier 1 status can be found by [clicking here](#).

Fixed Price Locums

We have also set up fixed rate locum services for all areas of law: Conveyancing £30 per hour, Wills Probate £40 per hour, Family £30 per hour, Corporate £50 per hour, Commercial Contracts £50 per hour. For details of how to use the service [please click here](#).

CV Writing Services - free and paid

Ten Percent Legal has been reviewing and writing CVs for over 20 years on a daily basis for lawyers at all levels. We have worked on CVs at all levels of experience, from law students through to senior partners.

This is a guide to our services, both free of charge and paid. If you would like to use our paid careers services we have a discount code valid for 30 days enabling you to get 20% off all products in our online career shop. [Testimonials for our careers services can be found here](#).

Please enter the code W7A6XYL3 when you checkout at our [legal careers shop website](#).

CV Reviews

We review CVs as a paid service (£64.99). We will review your CV, provide full feedback and suggestions on how to improve it as well as any additional follow up advice needed. [Details here.](#)

CV Writing

We offer a [CV Writing Pack](#) for £39.99, [CV Preparation for Qualified Lawyers](#) and [CV Preparation for non-qualified lawyers](#).

CV Guides - no charge

CV Guides - [take a look at our CV guides](#) - all available at no cost online. <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/cv-advice/>

Articles include: CV Myth - fitting a CV onto two pages, 20 second guide to writing a CV, Adding Extra Value, CV Writing Tips for Senior Solicitors (if you don't bother reading this it basically says write a lot more!), CV Writing for NQ Solicitors, Skills Sections, 5 Common Mistakes to Avoid, CV Writing for Locum Work, Avoiding Waffly Nonsense, Lying on CVs, Applying for Jobs after 25 years in the same role and many, many more. We have been writing CV guides for almost 20 years so there are quite a few! Full index here - <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/cv-advice/>

Remote Working and in need of secretarial assistance?

You may be currently working from home and finding yourself short of secretarial support, particularly for online audio typing services. Whilst there are plenty of systems out there that can be set up with ongoing contracts, what options are there for ad hoc typing and secretarial support? Self-interest alert - I have marked the service that our company part owns in the list below.

www.upwork.com - simply post your job on the site, specify your preferred hourly rates and sit back and wait for freelancers to bid for your work. The site works well - we use it regularly for IT and website developers - and occasionally you can source quality PA assistance.

*www.tptranscription.co.uk - our outsourced audio typing service, established in 2001. Prices from 80p per minute for dictation. Instant website uploading service - email return. ISO 27001 & 9001 accredited.

www.theofficegenie.co.uk - virtual PA, copy typing, audio typing, conferences, exhibition stand manning and more. No prices online.

www.transcribeit.co.uk - outsourced audio typing. no prices but start £1 per minute. This is the oldest established transcription agency in the UK (1992).

www.rev.com - Silicon Valley 'disrupter' company - \$1.25 per minute for all transcription. They use AI and humans to prepare transcripts and offer possibly the fastest service.

Low Cost Recruitment for Solicitors - Ten Percent Unlimited and Chancery Lane

We offer not one but two lower cost budget recruitment services.

1. Ten Percent Unlimited

Recruit as many staff as you like over a set period of time (3 or 5 years) for a low monthly fee starting at just £65 plus VAT. We offer this service to law firms and accountancy practices. There are no restrictions on numbers and no other similar services exist in the recruitment industry. You can save £000s on your ongoing recruitment. Includes unlimited job posting on www.chancerylane.co.uk. Interested? Call Clare Fagan on 0207 127 4343 or email clare.fagan@ten-percent.co.uk. www.tenpercentunlimited.co.uk.

2. ChanceryLane.co.uk

Our online jobs board. We have used this ourselves for years as a useful source of candidates from time to time. It is picked up by Google Jobs amongst other aggregators and has been around for over 10 years. This year we have decided to allow anyone to post onto the board for just £50 per vacancy. No time limit - keep the vacancy live for as long as it takes you to recruit and full CVs are sent over to you automatically when a candidate applies. For details please visit www.chancerylane.co.uk or give us a ring on 0800 246 5001.

How to be a Locum - pdf guide

We have produced a guide on how to be a locum. This includes sections on getting work, realistic expectations, hourly rates, popular fields of law, payment, insurance, umbrella companies and much more. Available for download or to read online from www.interimlawyers.co.uk.

Outsourcing Transcription

TP Transcription Limited is our wholly owned subsidiary offering outsourced typing work by legal and medical secretaries since 2003. We work on thousands of hours of recording every year for law firms, companies, the NHS, academic institutions and individuals. Try the service out - email or whatsapp your recording to anna@tptranscription.co.uk, visit www.tptranscription.co.uk or call 01745 813306.

About Ten-Percent Legal Recruitment

We are a specialist legal recruiter, covering both permanent and locum roles across the whole of the UK. Over 11,000 lawyers are registered with us and we have access to a range of external and internal job boards and websites where we do not have candidates available ourselves. We also assist with recruitment advice and assistance, regularly advising partners and practice managers on suitable salary and package levels.

Our company is unique for a number of reasons, including the fact that we are not shy to publish our fee structure and also donate a chunk of our profits to charity each year. We offer unlimited permanent and locum recruitment for a fixed monthly fee or one-off fees depending on the job. We also buy and sell law firms. We donate 10% of our profits annually to charity, hence our name.

We have three recruitment consultants, Jonathan Fagan, Clare Fagan and Peter Gresty. As a team we have over 40 years of experience in the legal profession.

Ten-Percent Legal Recruitment also owns Interim Lawyers, a specialist locum service. We operate an outsourced UK based typing service as well – www.tptranscription.co.uk and are preferred suppliers to a number of institutional clients and law firms across the UK and overseas.

The Ten-Percent Group of Legal Recruitment websites gives 10% of annual profits to charity. We have maintained this tradition since we formed the company 19 years ago. So far over £100k has been donated to charities in the UK and Africa including LawCare, Unlock and Reprieve.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter and look forward to hearing from you if we can assist further.

Warm regards

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