

## Legal Recruitment News - 8th December 2021

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Good morning and welcome to the December 2021 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, careers advice and suggested interview answers.

## Legal Job Market Report - December 2021

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

### Locum Recruitment - Busy

The locum market still remains busy for this time of year than ever before, with a 100% increase in the number of assignments last month compared with the same time last year. We are starting to see availability for just about every assignment coming our way which remains a huge improvement on the summer season.

Conveyancing locums are available in most areas now. Other fields of law are generally not too bad at all, although family locums are a little scarce at the moment. Most corporate and commercial areas still attract a lot of interest, whether in private practice or in house.

Locum assignment updates here: <https://www.interimlawyers.co.uk/category/locum-solicitor-updates/>

### Permanent Recruitment - Busy

There remains a shortage of good candidates for most jobs and we are now into the traditional dip in the market prior to the Christmas break. Most people have better things to do than apply for new jobs and usually the market drops completely until mid-January, which is good news for recruiters with Christmas shopping to do! However as most job interviews are still being undertaken via Zoom and Teams we anticipate interviews taking place right up until Christmas Eve, which does not usually happen. The decrease in new lawyers registering with us remains acute - we are 100% down this month again in new candidate registrations.

Vacancies can be viewed here: <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/vacancies/>

### **Law Firms for Sale - Busy**

Quieter this month than last, but a new national client seeking to purchase a number of firms quickly has pushed our workload up a bit from the usual dip in our workloads. There has been a noticeable change in potential values of firms downwards, courtesy we think of the hostile PII market in recent months.

Full list at <https://www.jonathanfagan.co.uk/law-accountancy-firms-for-sale/>. For a confidential discussion about a potential sale or purchase please ring 01824 780937 and speak to Jonathan Fagan or email [jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk](mailto:jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk).

## **Ten Percent Legal Recruitment Statistics**

General Statistics for November 2021 (bracketed number is for November 2020)

New permanent vacancies added: 46 (25)

New locum vacancies added: 50 (20)

New candidates registering: 34 (88)

## **IHS Markit / CIPS UK Services PMI Report December 2021**

### **Headlines**

New business growth hits five-month high despite surging price inflation  
Strongest increase in new work since June  
Output growth eases slightly from October's three-month high  
Input costs and prices charged rise at record rates in November

### **Summary:**

A strong recovery in UK service sector activity continued during November, helped by the fastest rise in new business intakes for five months. Export sales were a key factor supporting growth across the service economy in November, with looser travel restrictions contributing to the steepest upturn in new business from abroad since March 2017. The latest survey data highlighted another round of rapid cost inflation, driven by higher fuel prices, wages and utility bills. Prices charged by service providers also increased at the fastest rate since the survey began in July 1996.



## **Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives**

### **December 2021 Locum Hourly Rates - Solicitors and Legal Executives**

NB: Remote Working Role rates are about 10-20% lower.

Child Care - £35-£45 per hour.

Civil Litigation – £30-£35 per hour.

Commercial Contract - £35-£75 per hour

Commercial Litigation – £35-£75 per hour.

Company Commercial – £50-£90 per hour.

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

Conveyancing - £30 per hour and upwards (£35 the usual base rate).

Commercial Property – £37-£55 per hour

Employment Solicitors – £30-£42 per hour.

Family Solicitors – £30-£40 per hour.

In House Counsel: 0-3 years PQE – £35-£50 per hour,

In House Counsel: 3+ years PQE – £50-£95 per hour

In House Interim Lawyers (SMEs) - £50-£70 per hour

Insolvency - £35-£55 per hour.

IP - £50-80 per hour

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

Professional Negligence - £45-£55 per hour.

Wills & Probate – £35-£55 per hour.

We have an online calculator to convert hourly rates to salary equivalents [-click here](#).

NB all rates exclude agency fees. The rates are for self-employed locums billing firms directly on a weekly basis. These are the ranges we have seen over the last 30 days from assignments.

## Where Are All the Candidates? How to Recruit New Lawyers in the Current Climate

Here is our guide to recruiting new staff in a very difficult market.

At present in 2021 there is a huge shortage of potential candidates for most jobs across the UK, and the legal profession is not unusual in trying to find suitable candidates for vacant jobs.

### DIY Recruitment Guide

This is our guide on finding yourself a suitable solicitor for a vacant legal job. Of course we are always happy to assist as recruiters, but just in case you were thinking of doing it yourself and are currently surfing the internet looking for how to get recruitment for free this article might assist..

### Be Nice to Your Staff

One of the main ways of avoiding recruiting is to be nice to your existing staff in the first place and pay them sufficiently well to ensure they do not up sticks and move to one of your rivals for more money or better conditions.

### No Magic List

The first thing to bear in mind is that no-one has a list of amazing candidates instantly available for all types of work and it is simply a case of finding that source and taking candidates from them. So often we get indications from partners of law firms who tell us that they put an advert on Indeed or they just went on to Linked In, and within five minutes they had the most amazing candidates for their job. Similarly we have had incidences where a firm have sent us a job spec over and we have managed to find them the perfect candidate within 10 minutes. All of this is usually mere coincidence. There is no definitive way of finding new lawyers for vacant positions. The only way to do it effectively is to cover all bases and be prepared for a bit of a wait to source the right candidate.

### Advertise in the Law Society Gazette

We are regular subscribers to the Law Society Gazette job board because although we get very few job applications from it for one-off job postings, it also gives you a lot of exposure as a substantial proportion of solicitors will use the Gazette as first option when it comes to a job search because they trust the brand. Not only that, but at the moment (just about!) paper copies are landing on solicitors' desks every week and most lawyers will thumb the job pages in the Law Society Gazette, whether they are looking for work or not. Your advert may well just catch the eye.

### Linked In

We probably don't use Linked In as much as we ought to although all our jobs are automatically posted onto the company Linked In feed. Linked In is set up perfectly for doing candidate searches and being able to make contact with potential candidates for a relatively low cost if you use their recruiter option. We have tried it a few times over the years but we've always found that most of the solicitors we make contact with via Linked In are getting contacted so often by recruitment agencies that they are a bit numb to any vacancy we might want to send them through. Failing that, the lawyers use our approach as a test to see whether or not their current salary is reasonable and actually have no intention at all of looking for work. However, if you are doing this as a 'get your recruitment for free' option, then you definitely want to be on Linked In looking around, because you won't have access to the same databases as recruiters (see below).

### **Advertise on Reed.co.uk**

This is our go-to job board for pretty much every type of vacancy, although it's not the strongest for law unless you are looking to recruit at a more junior level. We have had some great successes over the years from Reed simply by advertising a vacancy on there.

The job board is huge and if you purchase a job advert you may be able to negotiate access to their CV bank which will give you a couple of CV searches a day to enable you to go and have a look at the CVs in the Reed CV bank. Although we do have access to Reed free of charge to do a CV search we have found over the years that it tends to be a waste of time. Anyone senior in law does not tend to let their CV go onto a job board unfortunately. This is yet another example of the old adage that there is no such thing as the perfect source for candidates. However, a quick search of the Reed CV database might be of assistance.

### **Stick an advert on your website and link to it via your social media**

This can be surprisingly more effective than you think because Google tends to pick up job adverts from websites and post them into its extremely cumbersome and very clunky job search engine. It doesn't cost you anything to add a job to your website and you just never know what might come from it. The one thing we would recommend not doing is putting a generic advert on saying that you're always happy to speak to lawyers who may be looking for work - this tends not to work because it doesn't have any specifics. You need to state quite clearly that you are looking for a corporate commercial solicitor with five years experience, able to deal with shareholders agreements and possibly a little bit of commercial contracts work, and that you are prepared to pay up to 70k with 30 days annual leave, pension contribution and a company car. If you are specific then not only do you tend to get picked up all over the place by other sources of jobs, but you will also find that you get potentially more applications than you would if you are more vague. (Incidentally it doesn't matter how many times we tell our clients that being specific is really useful, we always get vague job descriptions sent to us for a good proportion of the vacancies that are advertised through us!)

### **Speak to your current staff and tell them that you're looking to recruit, ask them if they know anybody and think about giving them an incentive to source someone for the vacancy.**

You don't know who your staff are speaking to on a daily basis and if you offer them the incentive of a couple of thousand pounds or an extra day's annual leave if you source someone through them, it might be that they suddenly remember that they do have a friend who might be interested, and the next thing you know you have filled a vacancy for very little money.

### **Consider local advertising**

Not as useful these days as it was some years ago, but regional news websites and papers at one

point were very effective at sourcing candidates. This is probably not so useful these days as circulation has declined..

### **Online Forums**

Get on to the various forums run by places like the Law Society and put a note on to say that you are looking for someone and see if anything comes from that.

### **Advertise on Indeed (and other job boards)**

We don't use Indeed ourselves - it has never been a good job platform for us as a company - but so many partners of law firms claim they have found the perfect candidate on there within minutes I have to suggest you try it. Our experience over the years is that we have ended up with irrelevant applications to sift through.

### **Sit back and wait**

Don't think that because it has taken a long time to find anybody that you could have done it any quicker. This is a common mistake to make in recruitment – if you rush into finding someone it often backfires and you end up back where you started but with the damage done by a terrible candidate. It is much better to take your time and perhaps think about having a locum to cover in the meantime (which we can assist with). Again, bear in mind there is no such thing as the perfect source of candidates and it might well take you some time just like it takes everyone else, particularly when there are not many candidates looking for work.

### **Recruitment Agencies**

Finally – you could consider using a recruitment agency. It does not cost you anything to advertise your vacancy with them and they will probably be doing most of the above, but the main thing in addition will be that agencies have their own databases of candidates, which is where most recruiters like ourselves do our work. The majority of the placements Ten Percent and Interim Lawyers carry out are not from advertising on job boards or surfing Linked In, but rather from our own database of 12,500 solicitors and legal executives who may have been registered with us for many years, and may just be looking for work when we drop out an update with a new vacancy coming through.

If you have any questions about recruitment techniques - drop us a line to [cv@ten-percent.co.uk](mailto:cv@ten-percent.co.uk) - always happy to help if we can (whether or not you use our services).

## **Interview Question 52 – Why haven't you had many interviews?**

### **Advice**

This question will have followed a previous one discussing the number of interview applications you have made. You will probably have given an answer to say that you have applied to lots of places.

The best way of giving you advice on this is to take a step back and go to the previous question which in all likelihood you have probably answered incorrectly by giving away that you have applied to lots of places.

However, if you find yourself in this situation the best way of answering it is probably to dig yourself out of the hole and concentrate on something positive about the interviews you have had or if not to get the conversation back to the interview you are currently having. Something along the lines of

this may suffice.

### Examples of Answers

"I have a number of applications outstanding at present and anticipate a response in the next few weeks. However I am very keen to progress my application with your company and hope that you think I am a good fit."

Or;

"It is a difficult market at present and I am very grateful for you giving me the opportunity to be interviewed here. I think that my skills and experience fit the job description you have and I hope you see this as well."

There is no right or wrong approach to this question as it is one asked when you have gone down the wrong route by revealing the number of interviews you have had. Try to deflect any attention away from the number of interviews you may or may not have had and onto the present interview.

## Reducing locum hours after an assignment has started – a good idea?

Sometimes, and it is a fairly rare occurrence, we get a law firm who go through the whole process of finding, interviewing and accepting a locum to work for them, usually fairly long term, and everything looks good. The locum goes through the whole process of booking themselves out for a period of time, providing all their documentation, dealing with all the various queries and issues and starting work.

On the first day of work the firm welcome the locum with open arms, but after an hour or so inform them that there's been a change of plan and rather than them working 9:30am to 5:30pm they will instead be working 10:00am until 4:00pm. This is usually because someone in the management team has worked out that if they cut one or two hours a day they will save the firm money each week.

This sounds great for the firm and you would imagine that the locum would be delighted as well because they will be working less hours and have more time to spend on other things. Nothing could usually be further from the truth. Very often the locum will be quite annoyed, whether or not the changed hours suit them. You can almost guarantee that within a matter of weeks the locum will be thinking about assignments to move on to. All because someone in the management team has decided they can save themselves a bit of money simply by cutting the hours of the locum without telling them first.

So is it a good idea to unilaterally cut locum hours?

No, absolutely not. Any firm who do this almost immediately label themselves as a problem to the locum and damage their relationship.

### Locum = B2B Relationship

Unilaterally changing hours of locums is an extremely bad idea and never goes well. Locums see it as arrogance on the part of the firm, that they think they can treat them like this but not taking into account that a locum is self-employed and in control of their own circumstances (one of the many reasons lawyers turn to locuming). If locums don't like a firm or the assignment they will simply leave and find another one.

If you consult with the locum, advise them after a short or medium period of time that circumstances have changed and you don't actually need a locum for a full day but instead just need them for a bit of a day and ask them for their thoughts on it, this may all have a different response.

You may find that the locum is quite pleased and says, "No problem at all, I'll source work for the other time when I'm not needed at your practice," or is pleased that they can avoid the rush hour at the start and finish of the day, or simply that they would rather just work less hours if at all possible. It just has to be done very carefully and with an eye on the needs of the locum as well as on your firm.

Do not expect a locum to be happy about a reduction in hours if you notify them of it on their first or second day. Just think about the time you have spent recruiting a locum and how long it is going to take you to find another one when your current locum is so annoyed with you that they simply leave and find another assignment. It is really important to look after your relationship with a locum because you just never know how long you're going to need them for, or how hard it is going to be to find someone else to replace them.

So if you have a locum working with you and you are thinking about reducing the hours, please speak to the locum and tell them your thoughts and ask for their opinion on it. You may be pleasantly surprised and find that the locum is quite happy with you changing the hours; similarly the locum might have another suggestion for you which works just as well for your practice and avoids any awkwardness.

## **Law Firm Sales - making sure you are not the asset for sale.**

A recent law firm sale process has got us thinking about an issue that comes up quite regularly when it comes to selling a law firm, which is that very often a lot of the business coming into a firm for sale is flowing through and sourced by the person selling the practice.

A practice might have a senior partner, two or three consultants, junior fee earners and support staff. The owner will probably do the vast majority of the work but also it is likely he/she will also be the person who doesn't want to carry on working once the sale has gone through. Sellers tend to expect a lump sum to be paid for the practice upfront and for themselves to leave and stop working within a period of a maximum of six to nine months.

Buyers on the other hand instantly see things differently. Feedback after some initial meetings can be that as far as they can see all the value is in the seller and there is very little else up for sale. The buyer cannot understand why a £400,000 turnover practice is for sale with a cash price of £200,000 if the main creator of all the work is going to be leaving the business within six months. As such, they can't see any value and the most they can think of offering will be somewhere around the £25,000 to £30,000 mark.

This has happened a few times over the last couple of months and it is a common issue right across all kinds of business sale in all sectors. Countless business books have been written about the issue - planning for the future and extracting yourself from a business with maximum benefit. The main piece of advice is always that you should avoid making yourself the asset that is going to be up for sale.

### **Hire a Manager**

This is easier said than done. I run businesses and I know how hard it is to recruit to take over my work so I can concentrate on other things, because I know as soon as I hand over part of the

business that particular area will find the income dropping. I have the possibly inaccurate perception that someone else is not going to generate as much work as I do. It means that one day when I don't need to work anymore and want to sell up, the value of my business is going to be lower than if I recruit staff who do that work and I simply manage the teams.

There are so many law firms right across the country where this is just not contemplated, for whatever reason, and lawyers carry on working without looking to take on other fee earners until they're in their 70s and then seek to release equity from their practice even though they haven't got a team to run the work if they retire.

### **Walk Away**

This of course is all absolutely fine if your plan is simply to use the business to generate work and then when you want to stop you simply close down the business, pay the run off cover and walk away. No problem at all. However, if you want to sell your business and walk away with a lump sum from it, or you want someone else to pay the run off cover because it's a huge amount of money, then you are going to need to think about this issue very carefully.

### **Step Away from Fee Earning**

Do you really need to be doing the fee earning work or would it be better to simply find someone else to do that for you, and for you to concentrate on managing your business and growing it further? If you source a fee earner to do your work would you be free to spend more time generating new income streams?

### **Pros and Cons**

Weigh up the pros and cons – the pros of doing it yourself are that if you do the work your business makes more money, you have no stress over paying staff, you don't have to manage or supervise someone else doing your work, you know the work is going to get done properly. Cons – your business will be worth less when you sell it, you will not have any time to generate any more work but simply spend most of your time dealing with work you already have, your company will never grow substantially, your business will simply stay the same size.

### **Feeling Lucky?**

I guess it all boils down to whether or not you are someone who likes to take risks. If you take a risk and employ someone to do certain types of work, if it doesn't work out you can always let them go. If you don't like taking risks then aiming at a disposal when you retire that simply results in someone else taking over the practice and avoiding run off cover is probably the safest and easiest thing to do.

I'm not always sure that the SAS motto of 'he/she who dares wins' always counts when it comes to business, but if you are thinking of selling in the next 10 years it is probably a very good idea to be thinking about whether or not you are the sole asset to your business, or whether there is a way that you can get out of this and set up a structure that you can then sell to someone else when you want to get out.

For further information and advice on buying and selling a law firm, please contact Jonathan Fagan Business Brokers at [jonathanfagan.co.uk](http://jonathanfagan.co.uk) or by calling 0800 246 5016. We are always happy to have a confidential chat about future plans.

## **Career Coaching & CV Review Services - free and paid**

Ten Percent Legal has been coaching lawyers and reviewing CVs for over 20 years. 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. [Testimonials for our careers services can be found here.](#)

### CV Reviews

We provide free CV reviews, providing you are willing for us to post our review live on our website - example of a recent one is here: <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/cv-review-commercial-paralegal-with-experience/>

We review CVs as a paid service (£64.99) and application forms for all kinds of legal work (£75). We will review your CV or form, provide full feedback and suggestions on how to improve it as well as any additional follow up advice needed. [Details here.](#)

### Career Coaching

We are offering a career coaching session with one of our consultants for a fixed price. One hour consultation by Zoom, usually on a Monday morning. We are always happy to answer any questions by email at no cost (we post our answers on our blog). [To request a session please click here.](#) Feedback on our legal career coaching service (established in 2001) [can be found here.](#)

### 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/>

## Low Cost Recruitment for Solicitors - 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 and some of our member firms have been using the service for over 10 years. 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](http://www.chancerylane.co.uk).

Interested? Call Clare Fagan on 0207 127 4343 or email [clare.fagan@ten-percent.co.uk](mailto:clare.fagan@ten-percent.co.uk). [www.tenpercentunlimited.co.uk](http://www.tenpercentunlimited.co.uk).

## 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](http://www.interimlawyers.co.uk).

## Outsourcing Translation & Typing

TP Transcription Limited is our subsidiary company offering outsourced typing & translation work by our team of over 200 secretaries and translators. Established in 2003, we work on thousands of hours of recording every year for law firms, the NHS, academic institutions and individuals. We are preferred suppliers to a number of institutions. Try the service out - email your recording to [anna@tptranscription.co.uk](mailto:anna@tptranscription.co.uk), upload your file using our secure systems at [www.tptranscription.co.uk](http://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 four recruitment consultants, Jonathan Fagan, Clare Fagan, Peter Gresty and Emma Ireland. Jonathan is a non-practising solicitor and Emma is a law graduate. 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](http://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 20 years ago. So far over £125k 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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