

Legal Recruitment News - January 2020

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Legal Job Market Report

Legal Recruitment - busy market

Each month we run a comparison between the last calendar month and the same time period in 2019 to see if there has been any noticeable difference. In November we saw a 40% decrease in the number of new permanent vacancies and a 28% decrease in the number of locum assignments.

So how was December 2019 compared to December 2018? We saw a 63% decrease in the number of permanent vacancies registered with us and a 100% increase in the number of locum vacancies. The locum vacancies figure can be discounted as the number of assignments was negligible (from 5 to 10), but the permanent figure is almost certainly due to the General Election and minds being focused elsewhere for everyone in the UK. Now that there is some political certainty we expect to see an increase in recruitment in the first quarter of 2020.

Statistics

General Statistics for December 2019 (comparison is with December 2018)

Current live vacancies: 1073

New permanent vacancies added: 7 (19)

New locum vacancies added: 10 (5)

New candidates registering: 43 (33)

We have 32 law firms for sale at the moment with a couple more coming to market this month - [for details of current law firms for sale please click here to view our list.](#)

Candidate Database Statistics - December 2019

London Candidates: 3064

Midlands Candidates: 1189

North East Candidates: 846
North West Candidates: 988
South East England Candidates: 4834
South West England Candidates: 512
Northern Ireland: 21
Scotland: 64
Wales: 393

Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives

January 2020 Locum Solicitor Rates - still fairly low unless summer bookings

Residential Conveyancing Locum Solicitors – 1-5 years PQE, £28-33 per hour (no variation for central London).

Conveyancing Locum Solicitors & ILEX – 5-35 years PQE, handling all levels of conveyancing including managing a department – £30-37 per hour, including central London.

Commercial Property Solicitors – 1-40 years PQE – £32-55 per hour - average is £40-44 per hour.

Wills & Probate Solicitors and Legal Executives – 3-35 years PQE – £35-50 per hour, going up to £55 per hour. Average currently around £45.

Family Solicitors – 2-40 years PQE – £30-34 per hour+. Care work - usually around £35-40 per hour (very rare).

Civil Litigation Solicitors and ILEX– 1-35 years PQE. £28-35 per hour. These rates cover mainstream litigation.

Commercial Litigation Solicitors – 3+ years PQE – £35-75 per hour.

Company Commercial & General Commercial Solicitors – 3+ years PQE – £35-85 per hour.

Employment Solicitors – 3+ years PQE – £28-45 per hour.

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

In House Legal Department Rates: 0-3 years PQE – £25-40 per hour, 3+ years PQE – £40-90 per hour (very wide range due to the nature of in house work).

Local authority rates: variable.

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

KPMG & REC Report on Jobs - January 2020

The KPMG and REC UK Report on Jobs is compiled by IHS Markit from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment consultancies (including the Ten Percent Group).

Key Findings

Permanent placements rise for first time in a year.

Vacancy growth remains near decade low.

Staff availability continues to fall sharply.

Comment from KPMG:

“It would appear that following the clarity of the election outcome, the jobs market finally began to show signs of life with permanent placements rising for the first time in a year.

“However, growth was modest and coming off a historically low base, so UK business will be hoping for quick government action to get the UK back on the path to growth including an investment in upskilling the workforce. Linger uncertainty around the Brexit deal to be

secured will continue to weigh on employers' decision making around hiring and investment over the coming months, as well as job-seekers desires to seek new opportunities."

Comment from the REC:

"After the uncertainty of 2019, there are some signs of a clearer outlook for hiring in today's survey. With a new government in place and the path ahead looking more predictable, some businesses have decided that they have waited long enough. The first increase in permanent placements for a year should give encouragement to both recruiters and employers – let's hope this is a sign of positive things to come. Feedback from recruiters shows that the upcoming IR35 changes are affecting both placements and the availability of flexible workers. This is a delicate period for the jobs market, and is the worst time to push through sweeping changes to the way we tax contractors."

Family Solicitor Locum Rates - a view from a family law locum

A locum with experience of family law locuming in both private practice and local authority has kindly emailed us over an outline of their experience of the locum market during their career to date. This includes their local authority experience but also rates in the family law market.

"When I started 5 years ago I was charged at £28 per hour. This was through an agency. I qualified [over 20 years ago] and am an accredited mediator and children panel lawyer but also do finances and private law for which I also have accreditation . This carried on for about 3 years on different contacts at roughly the same rate .

I took on a local authority contract direct. This paid £40 per hour. They were a total nightmare. Didn't pay on time. Wouldn't pay if the IT wasn't working and I couldn't do matter related time. The worst employer ever. I did 10 months as it was local but I would never go back.

I've done numerous contracts since then all at £40-£45 per hour mainly for private client but some care. I have a different agent and feel that the rate reflects my many years of slog and getting accredited. I see my " old " agency is still offering roles for senior people at £24-28 per hour which makes my blood boil as they depress the rate for everyone. Transport and parking is so expensive these days rate that the first and sometimes second hour of my day represents my travel costs and parking for that day so I feel £40 is reasonable."

We would like other comments from current and former local authority locums - what hourly rates have you come across in local authority locum roles and in which general locations in the country? **You can email us at jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk**. All correspondence received in strictest confidence by Jonathan Fagan, Managing Director of Ten-Percent.co.uk Limited.

Improve your CV in 5 minutes

How to change your CV and improve it dramatically with this simple hack.

Simply change your profile at the top of your CV so that is actually reflects who you are and not the usual nonsense that 90% of CVs seem to contain. By this I mean including factual information rather than a load of meaningless words.

So if I was a residential conveyancing solicitor with five years experience, specifically dealing with

freehold and leasehold property properties up to a value of about £1 million and looking for a job in the High Wycombe area my profile would read something like this:

“A five year PQE residential conveyancing solicitor looking for a role in the High Wycombe area. Specific experience of both freehold and leasehold sales and purchases up to a value of £1 million.”

My CV should definitely not say:

“A dynamic resource full and enthusiastic solicitor whose commitment knows no boundaries with many years of professional experience client interfacing and being customer orientated at all times. Conscientious, committed and dynamic, I am the solicitor for you.”

What a load of nonsense this is! Anyone could say something similar as all the information included in this paragraph is subjective and not objective. It does not assist recruiters at all and hence is completely worthless. The suggested paragraph above is objective information and this is what employers want to see. You have but a few seconds to impress the reader of your CV. Wading through reams of waffle to get to the facts does not help.

One thing to perhaps consider adding to the paragraph I have written above is your salary range and start date although this is not essential.

Spend five minutes checking your profile - is it factual or waffly? Whilst you are at it check your LinkedIn profile for the same waffle - but that's another article..

Interview Questions & Answers Series

Each month we include 2 interview questions and model answers for popular (or unpopular) interview questions, with advice from our Managing Director. If you would like an ebook with over 50+ of these questions and model answers, please email Jonathan Fagan at jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk and we'll send it over to you - no charge.

You can also view our free online legal job interview training videos on our website - <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/interview-advice/>. 100 minutes of advice on technique, interview styles, dealing with technical questions, etc.. Some of the footage is a bit grainy, but the advice is good!

Interview Question 33 – Describe the project or idea that you were most satisfied to sell to your management.

Advice

This is another question where you need to have a stock of answers ready to be tailored according to the particular question that is put to you. This one gives you the chance to demonstrate something of quality that pushes your case with the company in relation to the role you are applying for and gives positive examples of why you are ideally suited for the position you are applying for. Try to concentrate on something that you can quantify and a specific achievement as opposed to a set of general achievements.

Examples of Answers

“When I started work as a GP in my training practice I discovered that the method of taking patients' appointments was simply to write them in a big diary and copy this by hand for each

doctor first thing in the morning. This meant that each doctor did not know what they were doing more than 24 hours in advance. In my own time I researched the various software packages that could be used and, knowing that the GPs were notoriously careful with their budgets, priced up the cost of hand-written appointments against a computerised package giving two or three weeks information to each GP.

I presented my findings to the other GPs who were most enthusiastic and before I left the practice the new software was introduced to great effect. I estimated that the practice would save about 10% costs each week in cancelled appointments from GP absences and made the individual doctor's lives much easier."

Interview Question 34 - Describe your strongest and weakest colleagues – how do you cope with such diverse personalities?

Advice

This is a difficult question because it is asking you to in some way criticise work colleagues and to perhaps idolise other work colleagues. This is a question potentially loaded towards the interviewer as opposed to the interviewee.

At its rawest form you could end up giving an answer that indicates to the interview that you are not someone who gets on well within a team as you have found faults or identified weaknesses in your work colleagues.

By identifying weaknesses in work colleagues you are indicating that either there are issues with you and your colleagues or you have deep rooted prejudices against certain types of people who may or may not justify this.

The best way to handle this type of question is to try and keep your answer as positive as possible. This will entail identifying that some people have more strengths than others as opposed to some people having weaknesses.

Examples of Answers

"I believe that everybody has their strengths, some more so than others and that even in the most inexperienced member of any team you can find strengths that others within that team do not necessarily have. My belief has always been that provided you build on these strengths and utilise them to the overall good of the team, then you need not concentrate on any weaknesses. Where there are members of the team who do not have as many strengths as others I have always found it a useful exercise to identify what they have that can be utilised for the good of the team generally. There is always something and personality does not come into this when you are working on a professional basis as part of a team".

Or:

"When I was captain of the University First-11 Cricket Team it was always the case that we had our strong players as well as those who had less strength and less ability. However each player had their part to play within the team and it is very important as a captain to make sure that any player tries their best, performs to their optimum levels and is given the necessary encouragement to do this. Some may have more strengths and perform to a higher level than others, but that does not make them a more integral part of the team and playing team sports. All 11 players need to be encouraged and to always play to the best of their ability.

Managing personalities is a completely different issue as captain one often finds that some of the

better players need a different type of management to the weaker ones. Often the better players need reigning in and encouraging to concentrate on their individual performance, whereas the weaker players often require encouragement to succeed as part of a team.



Annual Predictions - how did the professional psychic do?

We have been following the predictions of Craig Hamilton-Parker of psychics.co.uk for some years now - it is fascinating to see how he fares every year with his previous year's predictions.

Here are a selection of Craig's 2019 predictions together with our scores:

THERESA MAY GOES - She survives until Brexit on the 29th March but resigns immediately afterward. (correct - sort of)

HARD BREXIT BUT NO IRISH BORDER

The Irish border is left open. A ruptured border allows the free flow of international goods into Europe. Ireland eventually enforces the border. (incorrect - so far...)

POUND SOARS AFTER BREXIT

The City of London sees unprecedented activity and a general improvement after a sharp initial fall. (incorrect - no brexit yet!)

NEW POLITICAL PARTY FORMED

I have spoken about this in the Sun newspaper psychic predictions in 2017. I believe it will happen this year and will draw politicians from all parties. (correct!)

BORIS JOHNSON BECOMES TORY LEADER

In a close fight with David Davis, Boris eventually becomes PM (correct!)

GENERAL ELECTION CALLED

Late in the year, maybe in September, there will be another election. Tories win we see the rise of a new political party. (correct and incorrect but title is accurate..)

PROPERTY MARKET IGNITES: FIRST TIME BUYERS REWARDED

The government offers huge incentives to first time buyers. Incentives for tenants to buy from Landlords. (incorrect)

BUSINESS BRIBES

A top company is accused of fixing an international deal using bribes. There is a Scottish influence connected with this story. Nicola Sturgeon implicated. (incorrect)

UK FLOODING

Large swathes of the country see record flooding. Hardest hit are the West Country and Lancashire. (incorrect)

INDUSTRIAL EXPLOSION (the UK and or the USA?)

A large factory explodes. Initially I 'saw' in my psychic predictions a Gas Works but I feel that there are chemicals involved. (incorrect)

RUDI GIULIANI BETRAYS TRUMP

Trump promotes Rudi Giuliani to a high office. Giuliani turns on Trump when a new scandal hits the fan. Rudi Giuliani will one day run for president. (incorrect - so far..)

RIOTS IN CHINA: DEBT BUBBLE BURSTS

China plunges into recession and people take to the streets. (incorrect)

RUSSIA HIT BY METEORITE

A large meteorite hits Russia and makes the international news. This is not a threat to the world but a wakeup call that we pay more attention to avert future problems. (incorrect).

If we have inaccurately marked any of the above please let me know, but we reckon Craig's

predictions were correct on the basis of 4 out of 13...

Here are a selection of his predictions for 2020:

War in the Middle East

Trump Reelected

Boris Marries Carrie Symonds

Meghan Markle Pregnancy

Revolution in China

European Economic Crisis

After some temporary leaders and a period of strife, Yvette Cooper becomes the leader of the Labour Party.

Prince Charles will be hit by an egg.

Elizabeth Warren will be the Democrat Presidential Contender

We will revisit in January 2021 with a score! Incidentally psychics are available now to speak to at £1.50 per minute on the website above...

First Meetings for Law Firm Sales

I have found myself today emailing the same information across to at least three different law firms in relation to potential acquisitions and meeting the sellers for the first time.

Buyers seem to want to go straight into the sellers' offices and meet them, as well as expecting the seller to want to arrange this immediately without delay.

Buyers almost seem surprised that sellers may not want to instantly meet them at their offices, and I have found myself advising various buyers and sellers today of the merits of meeting in a remote location rather than in the sellers' offices.

There is very good reason for this, and that is that you should never meet potential buyers in your offices if you are a seller in the first instance because a) you really have no idea who the buyers are in most circumstances, and b) you do not want your staff or clients finding out that you are in discussions with another firm to take over your practice.

If you allow buyers to come to your practice then there is a very good chance that someone on your staff is going to find out, and if someone in your staff finds out there is a very good chance that most of your staff will know pretty quickly that you are planning a sale of your business.

If you are planning a sale of your business and your staff find out, then it is very likely your staff will immediately start looking round for other work because they may not want to be in your practice at the time it transfers.

It is a fairly well known rule of thumb that if the staff find out you are seeking to sell your practice without a deal being concluded there is a strong likelihood that the staff will seek to move to another firm. Employees hate uncertainty and it's partly why people like employed work, because it gives them more certainty than if they worked for themselves. If you take that certainty away from them then you almost pull the rug from underneath their feet and leave them facing an uncertain future. This is the main reason why you should not allow buyers to come and meet you on your premises for a first meeting, but instead seek to meet them in a hotel lobby or quiet cafe in a neutral venue, where there is much less likelihood of anyone finding out about the meeting and holding it against you.

Of course finding a decent hotel lobby or cafe that is convenient for both parties is another matter entirely, but if both parties know this from the outset, that they are not going to have a meeting at the sellers' offices then it does make things a bit easier when it comes to arranging an external meeting...

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

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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 Reprive.

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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