

Legal Recruitment News - 10th November 2020

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Legal Job Market Report - November 11th 2020

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

Permanent Recruitment - Quiet

Whilst it is quiet, there are clearly patterns of recruitment needs forming across the country. It is not clear whether conveyancing is currently enjoying a temporary spurt in demand until the stamp duty holiday finishes, but there are firms dipping their toes in the water to see who is available as their departments are rushed off their feet. Other areas of law are ticking along but there is no major rush to recruit whilst everything is so uncertain.

Locum Recruitment - Steady

We work on the basis usually of a minimum requirement to sustain our business of one new assignment a day and one new placement every five days. We have comfortably exceeded this now for the duration of September and October. I expect the work to carry on into November before dying off in December. Firms are happy to look to the locum market to handle excess work and not risk recruiting permanently whilst there are so many variables coming into play. We have seen a number of firms taking on consultants - some have work, some do not. It seems a risk-free way of expansion, but it does usually only have any effect if you have an ongoing stream of work to offer..

Law Firms for Sale - Reasonably Busy

Law firm buyers remain active. In a nutshell sellers seek buyers with lots of cash, buyers seek sellers looking to hand over their firms for nothing. Our job as brokers remains to bring the two sides back to reality (I generalise of course!). Still a busy market with plenty of genuine buyers coming through for the right deals. Popular requests are conveyancing firms on lender panels, ABS firms, limited company firms and firms looking to merge with no or little cash changing hands and the sellers staying on as consultants.

REC/KPMG UK Job Market Report (we are members of the panel contributing to this report)

Key Findings

Renewed fall in permanent placements contrasts with quicker rise in temp billings
Overall vacancies decline, after rising in September
Substantial rise in candidate supply drives down starting pay

"With a reluctance to recruit permanent staff and a big increase in people available for work, the impending lockdown puts the UK jobs market in a precarious position. While the furlough scheme extension may give a brief respite, it will fuel economic uncertainty and further dampen prospects for jobseekers, hitting hiring activity hard. October brought a dose of realism after a quick economic bounce in the summer... the outlook remains uncertain, and concerning. We face a challenging winter and temporary work will be a vital tool for keeping businesses going and people in work."

Ten Percent Legal Recruitment Statistics - October 2020

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

New permanent vacancies added: 17 (37)

New locum vacancies added: 16 (27)

New candidates registering: 88 (72)



Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives

November 2020 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 – £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 – £28-£35 per hour.

Commercial Property – £32-£45 per hour

Employment Solicitors – £30-£45 per hour.

Family Solicitors – £30-35 per hour.

In House Counsel: 0-3 years PQE – £30-45 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.

Awkward Candidates at Interview Stage Tend to Waste Time - Recruitment Rule of Thumb

Recruitment agent rule of thumb number 323: If a candidate is hard to pin down for an interview time, they are almost certainly going to mess everyone around at some stage in the process.

We have produced numerous rules of thumbs for recruitment agents over the years, and this is one of the almost guaranteed rules that applies nearly every single time!

Picture the scene – we have taken a vacancy from a client, the vacancy seems very promising with a good salary, decent conditions in an easily accessible location, and we send it out to our candidates. We get six enquiries and send off four CVs. Three of the CVs we like the look of and we have found the candidate very easy to deal with. The fourth CV will be good, but we may have struggled a little bit to get hold of the candidate to confirm their interest. You can almost guarantee that the candidate the firm will want to interview will be the fourth one that we have been slightly uncertain about.

The Interview Arranging Dance

You can guarantee that when we try and contact the candidate the following will happen:

They will not reply to our interview request email.

They will not reply to a text message.

They will not answer a telephone call and let their phone ring through to voicemail.

They will not reply to a follow up email asking them if there is a problem with their email, text and phone lines.

The client will chase us lots of times asking what's going on, and trying to find out if we have done something wrong or not contacted the candidate.

Out of the blue the candidate will contact us and say their grandma has died or their car broke down or they lost their phone, and of course they are available for interview at the client's convenience.

The client will be very pleased to hear that the candidate has been in touch and give us some dates for interview.

The candidate will promptly repeat the first four steps at least twice, before we finally pin them down and get an interview arranged.

Phew! As a recruiter at this point we're usually quite pleased because we've done our job. We have sourced candidates, we have arranged an interview and now we just need to sit back and wait for the candidate to attend the interview, perform well and get offered the job. Wrong!

The "My Dog Ate My Grandma" Excuse

What happens next is that the candidate contacts us the night before the interview to say that they are unable to attend the interview because (insert your own excuse here) their grandma died, there was a gas explosion, the end of the world occurred, they crashed their car, they're not very well, they have developed symptoms of the bubonic plague or they are simply too tired to attend and won't do their best.

We will then have to go back to the client, rearrange the interview (unless the client tells us to clear off and immediately sacks us and goes with another agent as undoubtedly they will think it's all our fault), go through the whole process again of pinning down the candidate, arranging the interview and dealing with any last minute cancellations which may or may not occur.

Once this has all happened, and assuming the candidate has finally attended an interview and impressed the client enough to be offered the job, we then enter into the next phase of the recruitment dance, which is the 'receive the offer and disappear' stage.

The "Receive the Offer and Disappear" Trick

This is where the candidate gets the offer through from us, either by telephone or email, and then immediately disappears never to be seen again. We will email, text, phone, email, text and phone, and sometimes you can just guarantee that we are never going to hear from that candidate again. Whether they have taken the offer to their current employer to gain some leverage for a salary increase, decided they can't be bothered or simply have a psychological condition which makes them feel wanted so they attend lots of interviews in order to get lots of people to tell them how great they are, it does not matter.

The candidate will have disappeared never to be seen again, and we will lose our client who will be by now completely fed up of the whole thing and moving on to other agents to source a candidate.

Recruiters Get Nervous When Candidates Hesitate

Of course we can avoid all of this simply by dismissing the candidate at the first opportunity and not bothering putting them forward as soon as they start to show any signs of flakiness. This is why on some occasions recruitment consultants will be very nervous if anybody shows signs of flakiness at any time during the process. A candidate may have a perfectly valid reason for not wanting to attend an interview or taking their time to get a CV across, but bear in mind the recruitment agent rule of thumb. As soon as you show any sign of hesitancy, the recruitment consultant is instantly thinking of the worst case scenario...

Testing Times

It's that time of year when Interim Lawyers gets tested by various law firms as part of their emergency cover. Very often in law firms it seems that when work gets quiet the partners will ask the practice manager to see how fast they can find a locum and at what sort of rate. They will give the practice manager a specification of two to three months for either full or part-time cover, and it is usually for conveyancing.

The practice manager will get in touch with us, either by registering the vacancy on our website or giving us a ring. Sometimes I get tempted to ask if the request is just a test, but other times I am not quite sure and we do tend to be quite careful as to how we deal with these calls. The majority of the time we run the vacancy past our locums and see who we have and get CVs across.

If you are the practice manager thinking about doing this, please spare a thought for us. It is that time of year when work is starts to get quiet and if we send your vacancy out to our locums there's a very good chance we'll get bombarded with interested locums, who are of course available to do your work, because the market is quiet around Christmas.

What often happens is that we will take the vacancy from the practice manager, deal with it, get a selection of CVs across and then hear absolutely nothing for 24 hours before we get the obligatory response to tell us that they have managed to deal with the work in-house, and thank you for our efforts nonetheless. This is not an uncommon experience for the months of November, December and January.

I have never quite worked out which quality mark or accreditation scheme this particular exercise arises from, whether it is Lexcel or CQS, or something more generic such as ISO 9001.

What would be better is a request to your practice manager to make contact with us, give us some example dates and ask us to say who we would likely have available for these times. The one thing that is missed in all of these trial runs is that you may well phone us in November and find that there are 20 locums available and willing at an extremely competitive price to cover your assignments, but

when you actually need the cover in July next year, the number of candidates will be very different and the price considerably higher.

20 Second Guide to Writing a CV

Here is our quick 20 second guide to writing a legal CV.

Firstly include your name – is it the name you use on a daily basis? Underneath this have two columns with your contact details on the left hand side and your personal details on the right hand side. Make sure if possible that your address is close to the firm you are applying for and do not forget to include an e-mail address and mobile telephone number.

The next section should be a profile which should set out your job title, the number of years experience you have, where you are looking for work, how much money you want and when you can start. Keep this to one or two sentences if at all possible unless you have something very specific to say.

The next section should be your education in reverse date order with the most recent first. Do not forget to include one day training courses and include a sample of between 4 and 5 CPD courses. State your degree classification if relevant and also your grades for A Level but do not include your grades for GCSE except to confirm the number of them that are at Grades A to C.

Your work experience is your most important section and this should be the longest part of the CV if possible. Put it in reverse date order with the most recent first and do not forget to make sure that your most recent job title fits the job title of the post you are applying for if possible. Make sure that you explain who your most recent employer was, together with the dates you were there and use bullet points to detail your experience. Use facts and figures wherever possible and avoid any long detailed business speak. Billing levels, examples of work and facts & figures all make a CV stand out from the crowd.

The next section should be your computer and language skills and you should include a sentence explaining any specialist software you can use that is relevant to the post you are applying for and any general software such as Microsoft Office products or Open Source/Mac. Typing speed is worth including on a CV and for language make sure you state the level of fluency (and be honest).

Activities and Interests is the final section with 3 or 4 bullet points outlining if possible sporting and outdoor activities together with any specialist personal interests. Try to avoid any general comments such as socialising or reading.

Two references should be on the CV with one from your most recent employer if possible and the other from someone who knows you professionally.

Interview Question 40 – Do you consider yourself successful?

Advice

This is a difficult question and almost preloaded to allow the interviewer to question you further. If you are going to say that you are successful you need to be able to provide evidence as to your success, regardless of the level you are at in your career. If you are just starting your career you will need to be able to show that you are academically successful or successful in your sporting life.

If you have enjoyed a long career you need to be able to point at the moments in that career when it could be said that you have been successful. Do not make the mistake of saying yes but being unable to back this up with evidence of your success.

Examples of success can be anything from achieving a particular qualification with a good mark, constantly achieving promotion throughout your career, joining a firm and increasing both your income and the firm's income through new measures, receiving an award or providing general examples of an ongoing nature of things you have done that have been successful.

Examples of Answers

"Yes. You will see from my CV that I have enjoyed a steady promotion through my career to date and my application to you is to further this progression and climb to the next level. In every job I have had to date, my employers have provided me with an excellent reference and indicated they would be happy to employ me again if the opportunity arose. I would like to think that I have been successful throughout my career to date".

Or:

"Yes. You can see from my CV that I have enjoyed a successful academic career to date with good A Levels, consistent marks throughout my schooling and culminating with a strong 2:1 degree from a good university. I hope to be able to start my career and continue it with the same level of success".

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 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. 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.

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 Typing

TP Transcription Limited is our subsidiary company 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 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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