



**Ten Percent**  
LEGAL RECRUITMENT

## **Legal Recruitment News April 2025**

Welcome to the April 2025 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, a solicitor salary guide, CV, interview & careers advice and a spotlight on one of our charity donations. You can read the entire content below in an email, or read the newsletter in PDF format at [www.legal-recruitment.co.uk](http://www.legal-recruitment.co.uk).

## **Legal Job Market Report - April 2025**

Here is our summary of the current state of the UK legal job market.

### **Locum Recruitment - Quiet**

Locum work is as ever quiet over Easter and has always been the same - the busy period is May to September. Conveyancing rates have remained higher due to demand (see our rate card below) - there is still the ongoing problem of firms wanting locums in offices, and locums not wanting to attend offices if possible. A quick look at the most recently posted roles shows fields of law include wills & probate, corporate and commercial contracts, commercial litigation, conveyancing and commercial property. Locum assignment [updates here](#).

### **Permanent Recruitment - Quiet**

Permanent roles have dropped off substantially and this is probably due to market conditions. We know from our law firm valuation and broker work that a lot of firms saw increases in turnover between 2021 and 2023, but less evident since 2024. With the stamp duty changes in April, firms are also holding back to see what the effect is going to be on the property market (which dictates a lot of legal recruitment planning). There is the continuing craziness emanating from the USA. Candidate registration numbers halved in March and this is a good marker for demonstrating a bit of nervousness entering the market.

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

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

If you are considering retiring or selling now is still a very good time to start thinking about it. The market remains busy with high demand for particular types of law firm. There remains a good flow of buyer enquiries coming into us daily for our firms for sale, although interestingly our list of firms is a lot smaller than usual due to recent deals completing and firms in advanced talks with buyers. [Full details of firms currently for sale on our website](#) - list updated daily. For valuations, exit planning or a confidential discussion about a potential sale or acquisition generally please ring 01824 780937 or email [jf@jonathanfagan.co.uk](mailto:jf@jonathanfagan.co.uk). You can also download our free detailed guides on [Buying a Law Firm](#) and [Selling a Law Firm](#).

### **Ten Percent Group statistics for March 2025 (2024 figures in brackets)**

- New locum roles added - 26 (18)
- New permanent roles added - 10 (25)
- New candidates added - 38 (71)

### **KPMG & REC Report on Jobs UK - 11th April 2025**

This is a monthly report prepared by KPMG following a questionnaire sent to over 400 UK recruitment consultancies, including ourselves.

- Substantial increase in staff supply amid redundancies
- Pay pressures remain historically subdued
- Demand for workers declines at softer, but still sharp pace

### **Commentary from Jon Holt, CEO of KPMG UK**

“At a time when global uncertainty is peaking and businesses are assessing the impact of market volatility alongside rising employment costs, the latest data demonstrates how the economic reality continues to weigh heavy on the labour market. With cost management a focus, those employers who are hiring are focused on securing the best talent, and while the rate of pay inflation has improved from last month’s four-year low, growth in starting salaries remains below the historic average. Recent global events have put pressure on any growth prospects in the UK, so it is unlikely that we will see an improvement in the data in the near term. Therefore, redoubling employee engagement programmes and maintaining morale for existing employees, who will also be concerned about uncertainty in the market, will ensure that businesses are ready to take advantage of any green shoots when they do appear.”

### **Commentary from Neil Carberry REC CEO**

“Today’s report shows that there were some signs of progress in the jobs market in March with permanent hiring in London ticking up a little, while the drops in other locations were not as sharp as those seen at the start of the year. The decline in temp billings at the UK-

level also moderated. Given the substantial effects of the Government's decision to increase payroll taxes hugely, these figures were if anything slightly better than expected and suggest that there is potential in the market. Nevertheless, activity in the UK jobs market has now been subdued for almost two and a half years. A cyclical hiring upturn was always likely in 2025, but the near-term prospects for this have been made all the more uncertain by the actions of the US Government in upending the global trade system. We can't ignore the immediate and second-order effects of this context even if the UK is better positioned than many nations to weather the storm."

## **Interim Lawyers - Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives April 2025**

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

- Civil Litigation – £45-£55 per hour
- COLP/COFA roles (temporary) - £50-£150 per hour/monthly retainer of £2-3k
- Commercial Contract – £35-£75 per hour
- Commercial Litigation – £50-£125 per hour
- Company Commercial – £50-£80 per hour
- Construction (non-contentious) £60-£75, (contentious) £45-£60 per hour
- Conveyancing – £40-£45 per hour
- Commercial Property – £45-£60 per hour
- Employment Solicitors – £50-60 per hour
- Family Solicitors (Legal Aid) – £35 per hour
- Family Solicitors (Private) – £45-£50 per hour
- Family (Child Care LA) – £35-£45 per hour
- Immigration Lawyers – £30-£55 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) – £60-£85 per hour
- Insolvency – £50-£55 per hour IP – £55-80 per hour
- Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence – 3+ years PQE – £40-£50 per hour
- Professional Negligence – £45-£55 per hour
- Property Litigation – £45-£65 per hour
- Wills & Probate – £40-£60 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.

## **Ten Percent Legal Salary Guide - April 2025**

Each month we publish a list of any salary levels we become aware of from employers in relation to jobs offered and salaries indicated. These are the salaries we have had indicated by law firms to us for 3 years PQE and upwards. London figures in brackets where relevant.

- Commercial In House Solicitor (General) - £80k - £120k (£85k-140k)
- Commercial Litigation - £45-£65k (£50k-£90k)
- Corporate Commercial - £50k-£150k (£65k-£175k)
- Construction - £65k-£95k
- Commercial Property - £55k-£100k
- Insolvency - £55k-£75k IP - £50k-£90k
- Professional Negligence - £45k-£65k
- Crime - £40-45k
- Civil Litigation - £40k-£60k
- Conveyancing £35k-£55k (£60k)
- Employment Solicitors - £35k-£55k
- Family Solicitors - £35k-£50k
- Immigration Lawyers - £35k-£45k
- Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence £30k-£55k
- Property Litigation - £45k-£60k
- Wills & Probate - £45k-£60k

#### Support Staff

- Office Manager - £40-60k
- Legal Cashier - £30-35k
- Senior legal accounts professional - £35k-45k
- Secretary - £22-28k
- Paralegal - £22-27k

### **Candidate Salary Expectations**

Candidate salary expectations are very often higher than salaries being paid to existing staff within a law firm with less than a £2 million turnover. We regularly view staff lists when valuing law firms via our business broker service, and the salaries being paid by law firms to existing staff are invariably lower than candidate salary expectations for similar roles. There is also a huge disparity at the moment between expectations for remote working from candidates compared with firms' requirements - hybrid working is becoming the minimum requirement for a significant proportion of candidates.

### **Salary Level Assistance**

If you would like assistance with salary levels, please contact our specialist permanent recruiter, Peter Gresty FIRP. Email [pete.gresty@ten-percent.co.uk](mailto:pete.gresty@ten-percent.co.uk)

# Dangling Partnership Carrots in SME Law Firms

Partnership in a law firm can be incredibly alluring for employees. It conjures up images of prestige, status, respect, increased financial prosperity and a sense of achievement in a career. It is the pinnacle for most solicitors in small high street law firms. However, beneath the enticing promise of partnership, there can lie hidden motivations and pitfalls. It's critical to approach any partnership offer with caution, prudence, and a thorough investigation. Law firms often offer partnership—or equivalent senior roles such as directorship or shareholding—as a reward for loyalty, competence, and dedication. In the best scenarios, these offers stem from genuine appreciation and a sincere belief in your long-term contribution to the firm. Partnership serves as a mutually beneficial bond, cementing your relationship and committing both parties to shared success and growth.

Isn't the world a great place to be?

Unfortunately, the motivation behind a partnership offer isn't always altruistic or even straightforward and here are a few of the more nefarious reasons we have come across!

## 1. Genuine Commitment or Strategic Ploy?

At its best, a partnership offer signals genuine regard for an employee's talents and strategic intent. One cunning plan some law firm owners have is to find a partner to run the business on a day to day basis in future whilst they continue to take a hefty chunk of the profits to fund their lifestyles in retirement.

Make sure that if you are offered a partnership there is some benefit to it - for example we often see salaried partners in firms where there doesn't seem to have been a lot of benefit to the individuals other than the prestige and status of the title 'partner'. Firms might even leverage the prestige and perceived status of partnership to minimize or defer salary increases. If you are going for salaried partnership without any equity, think about negotiating at least some element of profit share or bonus. Also think about asking for equity - there are other ways of paying for it without just handing over cash.

## 2. A Mask for Financial Instability?

Be alert to signs of financial distress. Firms that face dire financial challenges might use the lure of partnership to encourage you to invest, which shifts the risk onto you. In these cases, your partnership isn't just a career milestone—it becomes a financial lifeline for a struggling business. Once a partner/owner, you almost always take over a percentage of the risk, both regulatory and financial.

## 3. Hidden Risks and Liabilities

Occasionally, less scrupulous firms might seek partners as scapegoats for impending legal or financial crises. We have seen this happen a number of times, and the back of the Law Society Gazette is littered with SDT cases where solicitors have ended up part of a case simply by virtue of being a partner. When you read through the judgement (and we occasionally have to do this when checking out potential locum candidates), their crime seems to have been simply to have agreed to become a partner. Circumstances tend to be very unfair but also avoidable. New partners can unwittingly find themselves accountable for the actions of others, especially in cases of fraud or mismanagement.

## **How to Protect Yourself**

When presented with a partnership offer, protect yourself by following these essential steps:

- **Review Financial Records:** Insist on full transparency regarding the firm's financial health. Personally I would ask to see the last 3 years of accounts - check the profit and loss accounts in particular.
- Have the accounts reviewed by an independent accountant who can detect any underlying financial issues or irregularities.
- Ask to see the last professional indemnity insurance proposal form and the claims history for at least the last 5 years.
- Get an independent market valuation. Happy to oblige if needed!
- **Conduct Due Diligence:** Investigate all aspects of the firm's operations. Know exactly who controls the firm, their reputations, and their operational history.
- **Motivations:** Carefully evaluate why the partnership is being offered now. Are you genuinely being rewarded, or is this a strategic move to manage expenses, liabilities, or expectations?
- **Negotiate Terms Clearly:** Never accept partnership in lieu of a pay rise. If salaried partnership, get a profit share arrangement of some sort if you can.

## **Why Online Business Valuation Calculators Can Be Misleading**

Recently, we've had several clients approach us with concerns about our valuations appearing significantly lower than the figures they obtained from online business valuation calculators. This discrepancy has been particularly notable in our sectors of law firms & accountancy practice sales.

Whilst online business valuation calculators can indeed provide useful guidance, it's essential to understand their limitations and why professional, market-based valuations often differ.

## **The Usefulness of Online Calculators in Certain Industries**

Online calculators can be useful tools for gaining initial insights into typical valuation methods within specific industries. Accountancy practices, for example, are commonly valued by applying a multiple to their gross recurring fees. This method is straightforward and reliable because accountancy practices typically enjoy long-term, stable client relationships generating consistent revenue. However, the calculators' accuracy depends entirely on how current the market data underpinning their multipliers is. Without recent deal-specific market data, the resulting valuation can be significantly skewed.

## **Why Online Calculators Fall Short for Solicitor Firms**

When it comes to solicitor firms, valuation calculators can only be described as complete nonsense! Applying standardised multiples based solely on EBITDA, turnover, net profit, or gross profit doesn't make sense in most cases. Unlike accountancy practices, law firms rarely have recurring fees. Instead, their income depends heavily on future business opportunities and the expertise of individual staff members. If key professionals leave the firm, clients often follow, resulting in immediate revenue losses. Solicitor firms' valuations depend on an extremely wide range of factors, including:

- Brand longevity and walk-in client reputation
- Market activity (key point)
- Quality and service history of the staff team
- Specific areas of law
- Regulatory accreditation (CLC vs. SRA regulated)
- Business structure (ABS vs. standard practice)

Practices regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers (CLC) typically attract higher valuations compared to those regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), due to perceived lower regulatory burdens.

ABS (Alternative Business Structure) law firms, which allow broader ownership structures, generally hold greater value and appeal to a wider range of buyers.

## **Why Online Calculators Often Inflate Valuations**

Many online valuation calculators are linked to business brokers or sales platforms incentivised to provide inflated figures. This approach attracts business owners looking for higher valuations and prompts them to engage business broker services involving significant upfront fees. Our tests of numerous calculators consistently demonstrate inflated valuations—sometimes triple or quadruple realistic market prices, if not significantly more. Providing excessively high valuations might attract attention, but it does not reflect realistic market expectations or result in successful sales.

An easy way to test a valuation is simply to ask what you would pay for a business.

## Example Law Firm

Take a 2 partner law firm turning over £300k. The firm has a wage bill of £75k in support staff costs and they employ a solicitor on £45k per annum. Additional costs are £50k. Both the partners are in their 60s and looking to retire. Each partner would cost about £70k per annum to replace. Net profit on this firm would be £130k if you remove the partners' replacement cost and -£10k if you include the replacement costs.

To make any money in this practice, a buyer would firstly need to recruit two fee earners to replace the partners and then increase turnover. On current turnover of £300k, regardless of the price paid, the buyer would actually make a loss every year and never recover their investment!

What would you pay for this business?

There are a large number of factors involved as well that move values up and down – for example what if all the fees came from clients contracted to the business on fixed 5 year contracts? Is there a bad claims history? Are all the clients are linked closely to one of the solicitors who wants to retire immediately?

## Realistic Valuation: The Market Approach

Ultimately, your business is worth precisely what someone is prepared to pay for it. The only accurate way to determine this is through a professional market valuation—one grounded in recent comparable sales and realistic market conditions. Valuations derived solely from standard multipliers or accounting formulas might flatter the ego but fail to provide practical insights into what your business can genuinely achieve in today's market.

When considering a business valuation, always question:

- Who is performing the valuation?
- What is their motivation (ie are they looking to sell something to you)?
- How recent and relevant is the market data?

## Final Thoughts

Online calculators can be a helpful starting point to understand valuation techniques within your industry, although even then a lot of them get this wrong (eg traditional high street law firms with a turnover of less than £1 million do not usually sell for 2-5 x EBITDA!). Particularly for complex sectors including law, relying on them is unwise.

Professional, market-informed valuations remain the best tool to understand your business's true value and to plan effectively for its future.



## **What Notice Should I Give a Locum (And Vice Versa)**

When law firms engage self-employed locum solicitors, one key consideration often overlooked is the appropriate notice period. We often get asked, even if a locum is not working via our company. Here's an exploration of the moral, ethical, and legal factors that law firms should consider.

The main reason for the lack of a definitive answer is because the majority of locum solicitors do not work via a contract, but rather on a day to day basis in a business to business relationship. Its all about flexibility and it usually works for both parties.

However, what about the circumstance of a locum agreeing to cover a 3 month assignment and you need to terminate after 6 weeks through no fault of the locum? The simple answer is that as this is a business to business relationship the expectation is that you can simply end the arrangement at any time and without any notice unless you have signed an agreement to the contrary.

### **Moral Considerations for Law Firms**

From a moral perspective, is this fair on the locum if they have been providing a good service but circumstances have changed? The quick answer is no, not really! A notice period that is too short or poorly communicated can cause significant financial distress and disruption for a locum solicitor who may rely heavily on planned income, particularly longer term assignments. We would suggest that firms may want to think about the morality of their decision making and recognise the locum's reliance on promised work when giving them notice.

Locums do talk between themselves, and if you get a reputation as a firm that is a bit ruthless about terminating locum agreements it may well come back to haunt you at a later date when you are looking for emergency cover.

### **Recommendations for Law Firms**

To maintain good relationships, and uphold ethical and moral standards, law firms are recommended to:

- Sign a locum agreement - we provide them to all clients.
- Explicitly define the notice period within the agreement.
- Our opinion is that a week's notice is reasonable in most circumstances where you need to end an assignment early. Most locums would be very happy with this. If you need to end a short term assignment of less than 1 month, then a shorter time period would be fine.
- Communicate any proposed changes to notice periods so locums are aware.

# How (not) to Negotiate a Pay Rise

Asking for a pay rise can be daunting, and let's face it, many of us approach it in an extremely amateurish way. Here are ten negotiating points to avoid. We have come heard of at least eight of them being used by candidates with clients over the years!

## 1. My Mum Told Me To Ask

Start by confidently declaring, "my mum said I should ask you for a pay rise." After all, who wouldn't trust the judgement of your mother?

## 2. Use Blackmail Techniques

Open negotiations with: "Give me a pay rise, or I'll go on Glassdoor and say how rubbish you are".

## 3. Burst into Tears Immediately

Why articulate your points clearly when you can sob uncontrollably instead? You could throw in a few unfortunate circumstances - eg your dog died recently - and go for the sympathy vote.

## 4. Go Out Drinking and Text Your Boss at 2am

Go out to the pub, have a few pints, build up a bit of Dutch courage and send your boss a text message asking for more money in the early hours. This clearly demonstrates your dedication and professionalism.

## 5. Threaten to Quit (Then Backtrack Rapidly)

Dramatically announce your resignation, pause for impact, then hastily retract with: "Only joking, unless you give me a pay rise."

## 6. Point Out How Much a Train Driver Earns

"The average train driver gets £65,000 a year so can I have a pay rise please" - this is guaranteed to work, even though you are not a member of one of the strongest trade unions in the history of the TUC.

## 7. Point Out You Are Not Getting Any Younger

Make a reference to your age, your hair line and wrinkles, and make the very reasonable point that you are growing older and should therefore get paid more. Makes so much sense.

## **8. Ask for Flexible Working Hours First**

Negotiate flexible working hours and then immediately ask for a pay rise. Works every time..

## **9. Reference Celebrity Salaries**

"If Gary Lineker gets millions for crisps, surely I deserve a pay rise?" Solid logic.

## **10. Promise to Work Harder**

Reassure your boss with enthusiasm: "If I get this pay rise, I will start working really hard."

# **Careers Guides - Articles to Improve Your CV, Interview Technique and Career Prospects**

## **Charity Donation - £1,556.98 to The Prison Choir Project, HMP Wormwood Scrubs**



The Prison Choir Project

The Ten Percent Foundation decided to donate to The Prison Choir Project, a venture we have supported before. We were approached by Adam Green, the founder, who asked us

to contribute specifically to purchase equipment for their music and spoken word studio at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. Adam has written to us with a letter of thanks.

*"On behalf of the Prison Choir Project I am writing to thank you and all those involved in the Ten Percent Foundation for your most recent support of our work in prisons and to acknowledge receipt of £1556.98 towards building a music and spoken word studio in HMP Wormwood Scrubs. The men in HMP Wormwood Scrubs will be absolutely delighted to hear news of this support. I am pleased to write that we are busy working within prisons.*

*This year the Prison Choir Project looks to expand its reach and we have plans already in place to run programmes in six prisons. We have a weekly residency at Wormwood Scrubs in London running an Arts programme, giving inmates the opportunity to explore all types of singing, from opera to bluegrass and rap, alongside professional musicians handpicked to give workshops throughout the year. So far these have proved to be a great success.*

*As always, we are working in a very difficult environment. Prison staff shortages and a reluctance to remove restrictions imposed during Covid keep many locked in their cells for 23 hours a day. It is against this background that we hope to bring just a little joy to those incarcerated."*

**Adam Green, Founder – The Prison Choir Project**

## **What is this all about?**

Ten-Percent Legal, Interim Lawyers, and Jonathan Fagan Business Brokers donate 10% of annual net profits to charity via the Ten Percent Foundation, a charitable trust set up by our group of companies to distribute monies to charities in the UK and Africa. We have been doing this for over 25 years. The Foundation never incurs any administration costs (other than Triodos bank charges, which are minimal). All monies donated are distributed to charities and community organisations. [www.tenpercentfoundation.org](http://www.tenpercentfoundation.org)

## **Why do we donate?**

We set up our companies over 25 years ago with the intention of being ethical in everything we do. As part of this, we decided that a percentage of our profits should always be earmarked for charitable work and set the rate at ten percent. A sudden burst of inspiration meant we called ourselves the Ten Percent Group.

## **Nominations 2025**

We have received over 75 charity nominations from academic clients, business clients, locums, solicitors, transcribers (via our sister company TP Transcription Limited) and staff. We have a strict list of criteria concerning our donation available on the Ten Percent Foundation website. Donations tend to be within the range of £500-£2000 per charity per

year. However, in the past, we have supported charities over a period of 5 years with donations going towards specific ongoing projects. Our trustees will be meeting shortly to decide on this year's donations.

## **Peaceful Weekend Getaways in Shropshire**

St Milburga Chapel in the Shropshire Hills is a cosy 4 person, Grade 2 listed holiday home in open countryside overlooking the Clee Hills. Renovated in 2022, it is approximately 10 minutes' drive from Ludlow with its highly regarded restaurants, cafes and independent shops. The chapel is perfectly located for family holidays (Ironbridge & Church Stretton nearby), weekend breaks and walking holidays. 10% of profits are donated to the Ten Percent Foundation. Rated 4 star accommodation by Visit England.

Website: <https://www.stmilburgachapel.co.uk>

## **About Ten-Percent Legal Recruitment**

We are a specialist legal recruiter, covering both permanent and locum roles across the whole of the UK. Over 12,500 lawyers are registered with us on our own database and we have access to a range of external & 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, merge and sell law firms.

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 £225k 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

Jonathan Fagan

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