



Legal Recruitment News from Ten Percent Legal

Welcome to the April 2026 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our Legal Job Market Report, locum hourly rates & solicitor salary guide, CV writing & legal careers articles and our charity work. You can read the entire content below in an email, or read the newsletter in PDF format at www.legal-recruitment.co.uk.

Legal Job Market Report - April 2026

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

Locum Recruitment - Quiet

Locum assignments remain low; in March our numbers were down by 50% compared with the previous year. We have seen increased traffic from locum solicitors checking in with us to see if any roles have come up, including a number we rarely hear from who are usually fully booked throughout the year. This is indicative of a very quiet market. However, we are still not seeing a drop in rates being pitched by locums for assignments, which will surely have to happen at some point if the market does not pick up significantly.

Locum assignment [updates here](#).

Permanent Recruitment - Quiet

Permanent recruitment is also quiet. Candidates and firms are not particularly active, and world events appear to be making candidates very nervous about making a move currently. There remains a huge gap between interest in roles from candidates and vacancies being posted, together with a disparity between salary expectations and working arrangements of candidates and firms. No signs of any change here, although more firms are at least talking about remote working options these days rather than flatly refusing to engage.

Permanent vacancies can be viewed here:

<https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/vacancies/>

Law Firms for Sale - Busy

Law firm M&A activity never appears to be very affected by world events, and there is a steady stream of new firms coming to market (we anticipate May being a busy month for new listings).

We ran a webinar in March, attended by over 75 law firm owners, on retirement and exit strategy. Our next webinar will be on Wednesday May 20th 2026 1-2pm and is going to be a Q&A with an experienced SME law firm M&A solicitor, Harry Winkley from Herrington Carmichael LLP. Ask any question you like, no limits. We expect to be talking about price negotiation, due diligence, common

pitfalls with sales, heads of terms preparation, practical considerations, keeping legal costs low, regulatory issues and compliance. Sign up on our website by clicking here:

<https://jonathanfagan.co.uk/selling-buying-law-firms-practical-legal-guidance-from-an-experienced-ma-solicitor/>

[Full details of firms currently for sale on our website](#)

available here - list updated daily. For valuations, exit planning or a confidential discussion about a potential sale or acquisition generally please call 0800 246 5016 or email 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 2026 (2025 figures in brackets)

- New locum roles added - 13 (26)
- New permanent roles added - 16 (10)
- New candidates added - 32 (38)
- New law firms listed for sale: 2
- Law firms for sale: 54
- Deals going through (heads of terms signed): 5

KPMG & REC Report on Jobs UK - April 2026

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

- Marginal fall in permanent placements and slower drop in temp billings
- Demand for staff falls at softest pace in ten months
- Rates of pay growth ease amid steeper upturn in staff availability

Commentary from Jon Holt, CEO of KPMG UK

“Despite the increased global uncertainty there have been signs this year that the long-term decline in hiring may be starting to stabilise as businesses press ahead with their previously delayed recruitment plans. However, until the wider economic impacts of the conflict in the Middle East start to become clearer, many employers will remain cautious about committing to new roles. If that uncertainty remains, the risk is that hiring decisions and investment are deferred again, delaying any sustained recovery in the jobs market.”

Commentary from Neil Carberry, REC CEO

"The Gulf Conflict provided a headwind to hiring in March, but this did not stop the trend of stabilisation that has defined 2026 so far. The effects of a longer-run crisis are unclear, but the resilience of the jobs market last month was heartening. Permanent placements showed their



weakest contraction in three years. Modest growth in London, which usually runs ahead of the national trend, is particularly heartening. Likewise, temporary recruitment fell more slowly than in February, with a sustained upturn in the Midlands a clear trend through the winter."

Interim Lawyers - Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives April 2026

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

- Civil Litigation – £50-£70 per hour
- COLP/COFA roles (temporary) - £50-£150 per hour/monthly retainer of £2-3k
- Commercial Contract – £35-£75 per hour
- Commercial Litigation – £55-£125 per hour
- Company Commercial – £60-£120 per hour
- Construction (non-contentious) £80-£110, (contentious) £60-90 per hour
- Conveyancing – £45-£55 per hour
- Commercial Property – £50-£60 per hour
- Employment Solicitors – £50-65 per hour
- Family Solicitors (Legal Aid) – £40 per hour
- Family Solicitors (Private) – £45-£55 per hour
- Family (Child Care LA) – £40-£45 per hour
- Immigration Lawyers – £35-£70 per hour
- In House Counsel: 0-3 years PQE – £40-£50 per hour
- In House Counsel: 3+ years PQE – £50-£125 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-£60 per hour
- Property Litigation – £45-£75 per hour
- Wills & Probate – £45-£65 per hour



- Locum Legal Cashiers - £25-£35 per hour
- Locum Paralegals - all areas - £20-£30 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 locum solicitors billing firms directly on a weekly basis. These are the ranges we have seen at www.interimlawyers.co.uk over the last 30 days from locum assignments posted with us, rates indicated by locums and rates agreed on new assignments started. For expert guidance on locum work please email Emma Ireland at emma.ireland@ten-percent.co.uk.

Ten Percent Legal Salary Guide - April 2026

Each month we publish a list of any salary levels we become aware of from employers in relation to jobs offered and salaries indicated via [Ten Percent Legal Recruitment](#). 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-£70k (£50k-£95k)
- Corporate Commercial - £50k-£150k (£65k-£175k)
- Construction - £65k-£95k
- Commercial Property - £55k-£100k
- Insolvency - £60k-£75k
- IP - £55k-£90k
- Professional Negligence - £55k-£75k
- Crime - £40-50k
- Civil Litigation - £45k-£60k
- Conveyancing £45k-£75k (£70k)
- Employment Solicitors - £45k-£55k
- Family Solicitors - £37k-£50k
- Immigration Lawyers - £37k-£75k
- Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence £40k-£60k
- Property Litigation - £50k-£70k

- Wills & Probate - £45k-£65k

Support Staff

- Office Manager - £40-60k
- Legal Cashier - £30-40k
- Senior legal accounts professional - £40k-50k
- Secretary - £23-28k
- Paralegal - £22-27k

Candidate Salary Expectations

Candidate salary expectations are very often higher than salaries being paid to existing staff within law firms 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. Similarly there is a 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. If you would like assistance with salary levels, please contact our specialist permanent recruiter, Peter Gresty FIRP. Email pete.gresty@ten-percent.co.uk.

Poaching Staff from Competitors - Mistakes to Avoid

There is often an assumption that recruitment consultants are working away in the background, planning to approach law firm staff at every practice and encourage them to move to a new practice. Headhunting is exactly this; looking at the market, identifying potential candidates that may be a fit and making direct approaches.

It rarely works for recruitment consultants. The headhunting market is saturated, LinkedIn has been completely overused, and most candidates are completely immune to cold callers offering them a pot of gold. As recruiters, we prefer to work on longer term roles and would much rather a candidate make a move (or not) for the right reasons and flourish.

However, this does not mean that poaching staff from competitors is not without its merits. We speak with a lot of law firm owners in relation to M&A work, and it is really interesting just how much recruitment takes place on a very informal basis, within the law firm's own networks. A partner will know of someone they used to work with, who will know someone at another firm who may be up for a move, very relaxed chats will be had to ascertain an interest and subsequently employment will be offered.

This type of recruitment is considerably more effective than using recruitment agencies - you have references before interviewing from people you trust, there tend to be genuine reasons for the

candidates to look for a move, there is some confidence that the recruitment will be successful and a lot cheaper than using recruitment agencies!.

However, here are some of the key pitfalls to avoid when recruiting from competitors.

Political Ramifications

Making direct approaches to competitor firm staff can leave a very awkward relationship if the other business owners find out. Although it is just business, in reality most employers take it very personally when a candidate leaves. If you have a good relationship with a local firm, who may even refer you work from time to time, you need to take this into account when making the approach.

Restrictive Covenants

Although our experience of this is that in most cases the restrictive covenants are either a) too badly drafted to be enforceable or b) not enforced because the law firm owners can't be bothered, many solicitors & fee earners will be subject to them and you do need to look carefully at them. It may be worth asking target staff to provide further details about clauses preventing them from soliciting clients, approaching former colleagues or joining a direct competitor for a set period.

Failing to Oversee Client Approaches

Its certainly the case that new hires often possess valuable market knowledge, but there is a clear distinction between benefiting from a new lawyer's experience and accessing another business's confidential information. Whilst I am sure some firms are more than happy for new staff members to approach clients at their old firm and attempt to tap them up, most would be horrified. Keep a close watch on exactly how new clients are being obtained and avoid the obvious serious issues that could affect both you and the new lawyer.

Ignoring the Existing Team

Very often not enough thought is put into how a new member of staff, freshly recruited, is going to fit into the existing staff team. Who are they going to report to, who is going to report to them? Is everyone going to work together or are there going to be issues? The new member of staff may be wonderful, but if they cannot fit into the existing team is this going to have an effect on your profitability?

Overlooking Cultural Fit

It can be tempting to recruit a high-performing individual purely because of their client following. However if your new star lawyer works 80 hours a week, shouts at his/her secretary and gets very upset if the tea bags are not put neatly in the cupboard, your existing fairly chilled team of staff may well want to move firms themselves fairly swiftly! If the candidate's working style, expectations or values do not align with your firm's culture, the move can quickly become expensive and disruptive.

Failing to Protect Your Own Business



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Businesses eager to recruit externally often forget to review their own employment protections. If you are targeting talent from competitors, chances are your competitors may be targeting yours too. Now is a sensible time to review employment contracts.

Being Poached?

If you are the lawyer being poached, think carefully about any move like this. If you are in a small town where chances are you will be bumping into your former boss at Sainsburys, is this something you are going to be comfortable doing? Why are you considering a move - are you doing it for the right reasons? Do not rely on the word of others that the new firm has the work culture you want to be part of. Check everything out yourself, make sure you see for yourself that the firm is good for you. And remember that if you are approached by a firm, you are in the driving seat when it comes to salary negotiation. Very often the only way you can get a sizeable salary increase is by moving firms - don't miss the opportunity.

Jonathan Fagan Running the London Marathon to Support Cure Parkinson's

Jonathan Fagan, Managing Director of Ten Percent Legal Recruitment, will be running the London Marathon on the 26th April in aid of Cure Parkinson's.

"This is a particularly personal endeavour for me because in April 2016 my father died with Parkinson's Disease, so I thought I would do the marathon 10 years on to remember him. I did think about carrying a rucksack full of rocks, but soon worked out it was going to be an achievement just to run it; the training is an absolute killer. I have experienced rather a lot of aches & pains since I started training in January in places I didn't know existed!"

"Cure Parkinson's do exactly what they say on the tin; the charity exists to find a cure for Parkinson's, something a lot of experts didn't think remotely possible until recent years. We have been proud to support them for a number of years now, and its an honour to be running the Marathon as part of their team."

You can sponsor me by clicking the link here -

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/jonathan-fagan-1>

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 bank charges, which are minimal. All monies donated are distributed to charities and community organisations.

www.tenpercentfoundation.org



Peaceful Getaways in Shropshire



Ludlow Holiday Cottage - Sleeps 4

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, weekend breaks and walking holidays. 10% of profits are donated to the Ten Percent Foundation. 10% discount code for newsletter readers: NEWS10

<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 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 25 years ago. So far over £270k 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.



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Warm regards

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