



Legal Recruitment News September 2024

Welcome to the September 2024 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, job references - tips for employees & employers, law firm valuation & sale queries, a full list of our charity donations for 2024 to date and a salary level guide.

Please note - we have changed the format of the newsletter this month. 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 - September 2024

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

Locum Recruitment - Very Busy

Locum work has been extremely busy over August, with a noticeable increase from last year. Conveyancing cover requests have increased, with hourly rates starting to increase again and law firm clients are reporting much larger caseloads than last year. In house assignments remain lower still. A quick look at the most recently posted roles shows fields of law include commercial litigation, conveyancing, wills & probate and commercial property. Number one difficulty for recruiting locums remains the preference of a significant proportion of locums to do remote working rather than office-based work. This is still an issue across the UK, particularly for wills & probate. Locum assignment [updates here](#).

Permanent Recruitment - Steady

Permanent roles are lower than usual as we get back and there is less activity on this side of the business. We still have a wide range of vacancies coming in for fields of law - wills & probate remains extremely popular and difficult to recruit for in all areas of the UK. Salary levels are increasing in the field. Recent vacancies in have been for corporate commercial, in house, conveyancing and family plus others. A good proportion of permanent vacancies remain unfilled after 3 months - mainly because of the lack of candidates generally in the market. Permanent vacancies can be viewed here: <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/vacancies/>

New Candidate Registrations - 70% Increase

Candidate registrations are a very good indicator for market conditions. Increasing numbers of candidates register with us when the market is going down, and drop when the market is on the up. Numbers are up by c70% for the last month compared with the previous year. The REC monthly report is still indicating a general increase in candidate numbers across the board with their sample of recruitment agencies.

Law Firms for Sale - Very Busy

Very busy. Not as many firms coming to market at present (fairly common until October and the PII deadlines) but large numbers of buyer enquiries coming into us daily for our firms for sale. The number of firms for sale with us has dropped in the last few months as deals have completed. [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 and speak to Jonathan Fagan or Tailte Mallon, or email jf@jonathanfagan.co.uk.

Ten Percent Group statistics for August 2024 (2023 figures in brackets)

- New locum roles added - 28 (16)
- New permanent roles added - 11 (20)
- New candidates added - 66 (39)

KPMG & REC Report on Jobs UK - September 8th 2024

- Steeper fall in permanent placements signalled
- Permanent pay growth weakest in five months
- Candidate availability continues to climb

Commentary from Jon Holt, CEO of KPMG UK

"While lower inflation has brought welcome stability to some sectors, and despite a first rate cut in August, monetary policy continues to be restrictive, which means that overall business confidence continues to fluctuate. Recent Government warnings that the UK's economy may weaken further before improving add to the overall sense of uncertainty, affecting recruitment plans. Firms holding back from hiring led to a sharp contraction in the number of people placed into permanent roles in August amid continued decline in demand, extending the downturn in the UK's labour market. The news that while salaries rose last month it was at the weakest rate since March could help make the case for more rate cuts when the Monetary Policy Committee meets to decide the future path of interest rates. Both employers and job seekers are still facing a challenging period that will require careful long term planning and adaptability."

Commentary from Neil Carberry REC CEO

"August is always a difficult market to judge because of the summer break, but this month's survey supports what we have been hearing around the country – employers are still cautious. They are waiting for a clear signal that sustained demand is around the corner. The new government said growth was its main priority – but it needs to deliver now. A vision for a positive, prosperous Britain has to accompany the fiscal realism that is being served up right now. That is the test for the Chancellor and Prime Minister this autumn."

Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives September 2024

Locum Hourly Rates - Solicitors and Legal Executives NB: Remote Working Role rates are about 10% lower.

- Civil Litigation – £45-£55 per hour
- Commercial Contract - £35-£75 per hour
- Commercial Litigation – £50-£125 per hour
- Company Commercial – £50-£90 per hour
- Construction (non-contentious) £60-£75, (contentious) £45-£60 per hour
- Conveyancing - £35-£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 - £40-£50 per hour
- Wills & Probate – £40-£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.

Salary Guide - September 2024

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-£90k
- 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

The Do's and Don'ts of Job References

As recruiters we regularly see references of all shapes and sizes. From the "we can only confirm that Joe Bloggs has worked for us for these dates and have nothing else to say" through to "Joe Bloggs was more than an employee - he was a friend and confidante and we cried when he left our firm."

A good reference can help a former employee get a new job, while a bad one might cause serious issues. Thankfully we rarely see really bad references. Generally, although the rule appears to be that employers don't have to give a reference if they don't want to, pretty much every employer will write something. Many employers choose to give references to keep good relationships with former employees. The key is that any reference must be truthful, fair, and not misleading.

A key frustration for us as recruiters is where employers only indicate dates and confirmation that a person was employed with them, without anything else. Quite often that same employer will be one who expects a detailed reference from others when recruiting!

A few tips for employers and employees:

Employees

- Ask for permission - never put someone down as a reference without asking first - it can annoy the former employer before they have even written anything about you.
- If you are planning on doing locum work, consider asking your references for a 'to whom it may concern' reference so you don't need to keep bothering your referees.
- If you are leaving a role, think about asking for an open ended reference before you leave so you can produce references as and when needed without having to ask.
- Be nice to your employers if you are going to need a reference. You never know when you might need a former employer to be nice to you as well!

Employers

- When giving a reference, you have to think about both the former employee and the potential new employer. Any information you give must be accurate and fair.
- If you decide not to give a reference, make sure it's not for any discriminatory reason. Also, avoid making comments about an employee's work or attendance that could be seen as discriminatory, especially on topics such as disability.
- Don't give out sensitive information, such as health records, without the employee's clear permission.
- Treat all employees consistently to avoid discrimination claims. If you give references for one employee, you should do it for others in similar situations.
- Sticking to factual information like employment dates and job titles to reduce legal risks is recommended (although it does make your reference a lot less useful).
- Consider adding a statement to your reference that states you're not responsible for any mistakes or information left out.
- Transparency - if your reference includes detailed information about how the employee behaved or performed, make sure the employee is aware of this.

- Keep detailed records of all references provided. Write down all information you provide and any messages regarding the reference.
- Avoid exaggerating an employee's positive qualities or downplaying any legitimate issues. Make sure all information is factually correct and fair. In addition to this, refrain from including personal opinions or irrelevant information. Focus on facts about job performance. Make sure the reference doesn't contain any comments that could be seen as discriminatory. For example, don't mention absences related to parental leave, disability or other protected characteristics. Avoid giving details about poor performance, disciplinary actions, or reasons for dismissal unless you have documented evidence.

Valuations - Queries re Sale of Part and PII Renewals

We have had a few queries in this month from clients.

I have a limited company SRA regulated practice and am thinking about closing down. What should I do?

Talk to us first. If you have a clean PII record, a trading history and no major issues then assuming you have the time to go to market (ie you don't need to close within a matter of days) your business almost certainly has a value, particularly at this time of year when there tends to be a surge in buyers looking for 'shell law firms' (a business without any clients, staff or much else). Shell law firms can sell for up to £50k in the right circumstances, although the price varies widely depending on circumstances and market conditions. This leads into the next query:

Why is there a surge in buyers looking to acquire law firms in September and October each year?

Firstly because buyers sit on the beach in August thinking about expansion plans and then decide to do something about it when they get back from holiday. We see this on an annual basis!

Secondly, because we are coming up to PII renewal season for a lot of firms and brokers will be telling their clients things like "the market isn't great and I am afraid your premium has gone up by 150%." Happily trading businesses suddenly find themselves in a difficult position of having their profits wiped out by random PII premium increases. One solution for some seems to be to go out and look to start again with a new SRA regulated entity (see above). Similarly other firms will find out that the relatively minor claim in one department has resulted in a huge increase in premiums and no possibility of continuing to trade in their current form so consider other options. Again, see above! We have had a few buyers try to register in the past few weeks and it tends to involve a keen interest in looking around at law firms who can sell or do a deal quickly.

Thirdly, new entrants to market often get through their first bits of form filling etc in the summer, speak with PII brokers and realise to their horror that the premium to open a conveyancing practice (for example) will wipe out their profits for the first 5 years of trading! Plan B is very often to look around for an existing practice to take over.

Finally there are occasions when firms look to separate out different parts of their business, particularly in relation to conveyancing, and then seek to acquire another firm in order to achieve this. Not a very common occurrence but we do see an increase in interest on this basis in September every year.

I want to sell my share of a small law firm but my co-owner wants to continue - is this possible?

Yes, but very rare to see in reality. Most law firm buyers do not want to acquire part of a business - they want the lot. Small business owners rely on huge amounts of trust between them in order to trade. Without trust it is virtually impossible to run a successful business, and a new buyer coming in would have to take an awful lot on face value to agree to take only some of the equity.

We have had a lot of interest in listings where firms have indicated a willingness to take on a partner who then looks to acquire the whole firm in due course. It is very rare to see anyone interested in a 50% share of a firm on an ongoing basis. Owner-managed businesses will always struggle in these circumstances. It is partly why law firms with partner disputes or issues between owners tend to have a low value on the open market, and it is often best to resolve any such issues where possible before selling a firm.

If you have any questions regarding your law firm, future acquisition plans or valuations, please get in touch - full contact info available at

<https://jonathanfagan.co.uk/contact/>

Charity Donations for 2024

This is a complete list of the donations made by the Ten Percent Foundation in the recent round of decisions by the trustees. Two of these organisations have yet to provide bank details so we can pay them, but the remainder of the donations have all been completed. Thank you to all our clients who suggested charities - we have included the three law firms who nominated. The majority of other nominations were from our university clients in other business areas. If you are unable to see the graphic below [please click here](#) for the online version.

Amount	Organisation	Website	Nominate
1000	The Cure Parkinson's Trust	cureparkinsons.org.uk	
100	Theatr Clwyd	theatrclwyd.com	
1000	Village by Village	villagebyvillage.org.uk	
500	Project Lighthouse	projectlighthouse.org.uk	
500	Evergreen Africa	evergreenafrica.org	
500	Diane Oxberry Trust	dianneoxberrytrust.org/	
500	Become Charity	becomecharity.org.uk	Nicholls C
500	The Dipex Charity	https://dipexcharity.org/	
1000	KIM Inspire	https://kim-inspire.org.uk/	
500	MYTIME Young Carers	hayley@mytimeyoungcarers.org	
1000	Irish Community Services	irishcommunityservices.org	Ewings &
1200	High Weald Swifts	https://www.highwealdswifts.co.uk/	
500	Headway Derby	headwayderby.org	
500	Door 84	door84.org.uk	
500	Hillingdon Womens Centre	hillingdonwomenscentre.org	
500	Sophie's Legacy	https://www.sophieslegacy.co.uk	Eric Robir
1500	Tiyeni	tiyeni.org	
500	The EGA Hospital Charity	https://www.ucl.ac.uk/womens-health/ega-hospital-charity	
500	Hemat Gryffe	https://www.hematgryffe.org.uk/	
500	Out of Sight	https://www.outofsight.org.uk/	
500	My Life, My Choice	https://mylifemychoice.org.uk/	
500	Boys in Mind	www.boysinmind.co.uk	
500	West Area Project	http://www.westareaproject.org.uk/	
2000	Wivenhoe Youth Hub	https://www.facebook.com/wivenhoehub/	
1500	Diversified	https://www.diversified.org.uk	
500	Paul Sartori Foundation	paulsartori.org	
500	Victoria's Promise	victorias-promise.org	
750	Off the Streets	https://www.offthestreetsessex.org.uk/	
500	Prisoner's Advice Service	prisonersadvice.org.uk	
500	Only Connect	https://www.onlyconnectuk.org/	

Peaceful Weekend Getaways

St Milburga Chapel in the Shropshire Hills is a cosy 4 person, Grade 2 listed holiday home in open countryside overlooking Titterstone Clee Hill. 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 from the chapel lettings are donated to the Ten Percent Foundation. Rated 4 star accommodation by Visit England. Website:

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

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 (our lowest fees are offered to legal aid firms). 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.

Interested? Call Clare Fagan on 0207 127 4343 or email clare.fagan@tenpercent.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 Translation & Typing

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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 12,000 lawyers are registered with us 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 £150k 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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Legal Recruitment News is produced by Ten Percent Legal Recruitment - you can view all versions of the e-newsletter at www.legal-recruitment.co.uk.

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