

## Legal Recruitment News - February 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 December we saw a 63% decrease in the number of permanent vacancies registered with us and a 100% increase in the number of locum vacancies..

So how was January 2020 compared to January 2019?

We saw an 8% decrease in the number of permanent vacancies registered with us and a 6% decrease in the number of locum vacancies. It has been a quiet January in terms of vacancy registrations - we usually see a large surge immediately after the New Year, but that did not happen in 2020. The market is busy generally, although in house roles are scarce. Permanent recruitment is still happening and locum assignments are starting to pick up nicely.

### Statistics

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

Current live vacancies: 1013

New permanent vacancies added: 33 (36)

New locum vacancies added: 16 (17)

New candidates registering: 55 (64)

We have 33 law firms for sale at the moment with another one potentially coming to market this month - [for details of current law firms for sale please click here to view our list.](#)

Candidate Database Statistics - January 2020

London Candidates: 3058

Midlands Candidates: 1191  
North East Candidates: 845  
North West Candidates: 987  
South East England Candidates: 4836  
South West England Candidates: 512  
Northern Ireland: 22  
Scotland: 64  
Wales: 393

## Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives

### February 2020 Locum Solicitor Rates

Residential Conveyancing Locum Solicitors – 1-5 years PQE, £30-33 per hour (no variation for central London).

Conveyancing Locum Solicitors & ILEX – 5-35 years PQE, handling all levels of conveyancing including managing a department – £32-37 per hour, including central London.

Commercial Property Solicitors – 1-40 years PQE – £35-55 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 £40-45.

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

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 – £40-85 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 – £40-105 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 - February 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 staff appointments increase modestly...

...but temp billings fall for first time since April 2013

Permanent staff vacancies rise at quickest pace since last March

#### Comment from KPMG:

“Following the UK exit of the EU, there are promising signs that the UK jobs market is finally on the up with the strongest rise in permanent places for over a year – good news for job hunters.

However, with regulatory and trade negotiations all to play for, there is still a long way to go for a deal to be struck and businesses to have the clarity they need. Brexit is uncharted territory so

the reality is the uncertainty will linger.."

Comment from the Recruitment & Employment Confederation:

"It's good to see that businesses have grown in confidence over the past two months and taken the opportunity to restart hiring. Permanent placements are up again, and demand for staff has risen at the quickest rate for ten months.. But the upcoming IR35 reforms are having a negative impact on the availability and placement of temporary workers. It is vital that people pay the right amount of tax and that the system is fair, but for both of those things to happen we think the government needs to pause and think again on how IR35 changes. The temporary labour market is being stifled, and that's not good for employers or our economy."

## **Locums - how to get your hourly rate right to land the work**

Here is our guide on how to accurately pitch for locum work.

**Use our hourly rate guide here -**

**<https://www.interimlawyers.co.uk/features/hourly-rates/>**

This will give you an idea as to what rates we expect to see for each area of law. We are more specific with high street locum work than we are with niche commercial or in house positions. This is because we see patterns for high street solicitors firms whereas commercial tends to be much more variable and individualistic.

### **Calculate your own costs**

So many times over the years we have had new locums apply for roles, land them and then pull out. Why? Because they hadn't calculated the actual costs of undertaking the work. If a role is in Minehead in Somerset and you live in London, you will need to work out the total cost of travel, accommodation and food before you pitch an hourly rate. Don't forget that if you are booking in a holiday destination the prices will go up in the summer and peak times like Christmas.

### **Be Realistic**

Some locums seem to have a very high level of self-worth that does not reflect their actual market value. If you are not getting assignments very often you may need to look at your pitch and ask if this is the reason. Speak to agents - personally I am always happy to have an informal chat about hourly rates. Also take a long hard look at your CV. Is it really as good as it should be for the rate you are pitching at?

### **Ask the Agent**

You may think it's the agent's job to get you down to as low a level as possible, but we sometimes find ourselves marking up hourly rates to make them competitive and to avoid clients asking questions as to why John Smith is so cheap compared with every other locum out there! We will always try to give you an impartial assessment of what we think the rate should be. Easier said than done as quite often we don't know much more than you.. However we do know what everyone else is going in at so its possible we can give you a range.

### **Don't Pitch for the Client**

We recently had a locum assignment come in for an upmarket Central London commercial practice looking for a company/commercial lawyer. This firm are extremely well known, large numbers of solicitors, and we know for a fact that some of the associates at this firm earn in the region of about £350,000 to £400,000 per year. The HR manager as usual did not give us many

hourly rates, and no indication as to what budget they were looking to cover the role for.

One candidate got back to ask what the daily rate was on the role, and I replied as I thought the hourly rate would come within the range of about £50 to £75 per hour. I know for a fact that the candidate in question has before now been prepared to look at assignments paying £35 per hour so I was expecting something back from him confirming he was looking at somewhere in the region of perhaps £50 to £55 per hour.

I was very surprised when the candidate indicated that he was actually looking for £75 and upwards per hour! Clients will usually sense that the hourly rate being pitched is way too high and walk away feeling aggrieved that the locum has even considered ramping up the rate..

We would like to post comments from private practice locums on rates - what hourly rates have you come across over the years and what do you normally pitch at? **You can email us at [jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk](mailto:jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk)**. All correspondence received and posted in strictest confidence by Jonathan Fagan, Managing Director of Ten-Percent.co.uk Limited.

## **Is it possible to work as a paralegal when you are a qualified solicitor?**

This question comes up all the time and is quite a common query that we imagine the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) are getting better at answering due to the sheer number of people asking the question. Many years ago the advice seemed a bit varied at times, but we have recently had a candidate who wanted to work in a locum role in the short term and waiting to go back on the Roll and get a practising certificate after some time spent outside the profession. She has been given fairly concise advice on whether she could work as a paralegal whilst waiting to be readmitted which we are repeating here.

This article is written as a discussion point and is not intended to be advice in any shape or form. For full advice on your particular set of circumstances please speak to the SRA (or whoever else you like, but please do not depend on the information in this article!). The SRA have a simple online test to determine if you need a practising certificate and this is available here: <https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/ethics-guidance/when-do-i-need-a-practising-certificate-/>

The simple test appears to be that if your name is not on the roll of solicitors in England and Wales, either as a practising or non-practising solicitor, then the SRA have no problem with you taking work as a paralegal or non-qualified lawyer, provided you do not hold yourself out as a solicitor. Conversely, if your name is on the roll of solicitors, even if you are classed as a non-practising solicitor, then you cannot work as a paralegal and would have to apply for a practising certificate and have this in place.

We make no comment at all on whether this is a good idea, a bad idea or something that should be prohibited, but we see a number of locum conveyancers, private client lawyers and corporate commercial lawyers working this way for a host of differing reasons. We also repeat that you should speak to the SRA if you have any questions about this issue and not depend on this 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](mailto: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 35 – Did the course live up to your expectations?**

#### **Advice**

This relates specifically to somebody who has just left university and has very little work experience for the interviewer to discuss and explore. It will rarely be asked of anyone who has been out of college or university for a number of years as there are so many more interesting things to ask questions about during a job interview.

You can either think of a constructive answer if you are going to criticise the course in any way. If you unduly criticise it for the wrong reasons you will come across as quite a negative person, so it is important to make sure you try constructive criticisms if you intend to pass any comments on your course. Remember that the interviewer is unlikely to be very interested in your academic career at all, and more interested in your potential as an employee. This is difficult to grasp if you have just spent three or four years of your life at university, but in the work place very often your university experiences are simply narrowed down to the final grade that you obtain at the end of your course.

#### **Examples of Answers**

“Yes. Nottingham University was a strong provider and I knew this before attending as I have carefully researched which university to make applications to. I was very satisfied with the course, enjoyed my time at university and I am now ready to enter employment.”

Or:

“Yes to a certain extent. There were certain aspects of the course that could have been improved, for example providing more practical hands on experience to ensure smooth transition from the academic world to the practical work environment, but the course was well run generally and I enjoyed my time at university”.

### **Interview Question 36 – Did you enjoy university?**

#### **Advice**

This again is a fairly simple question with a fairly straight forward answer to it. Remember at all times in interview you must stay positive. Failing to stay positive will result in firms unnecessarily considering you to have negative thoughts. Negative thoughts in interview indicates someone who may be overly critical of both themselves and others or perhaps they do not make the most of their opportunities. For example if you did not enjoy university and you tell an interviewer so, why have you not enjoyed it? The answer will always be that any lack of enjoyment would be self-inflicted because there is so much to do at university you really have no excuse for not enjoying your time there. If something happened in your personal life that affected your time at university this again does not need to be disclosed to the interviewer.

## Examples of Answers

“Yes, I thoroughly enjoyed my time, spending it ensuring I worked hard but also played hard and as you can see from my CV I was a member of the First 11 football team, and finished with a strong 2:1 degree.”

## Getting your business ready for sale

You have made the decision to sell your business after deciding that 35 years at the helm was quite enough. It's time for you to move on and get someone in to pay you cash to take over the business that you have built up and generated goodwill for.

So what do you do next?

Naturally I would like you to use our law firms for sale service - we do not charge any sellers fees, which makes us fairly unique in the market. Ten Percent work in the opposite direction and we charge buyers a fee instead.

However there are a number of things you can do to prepare your business for sale.

### Initial Questions

Right from the start any broker or potential buyer will have a list of questions you need to be able to answer swiftly. They will want to know your turnover and profit margin for the last 3 years, details of any assets being sold with the business, details of any staff likely to be subject to a TUPE agreement, number of ongoing clients and files open at any one time, sources of clients, geographical spread of clients, percentage mix of work. reason for sale, plans after sale - most importantly whether you plan to stay on for any length of time, claims historical or present and details of any run off cover quotes you have had.

One of the first questions every buyer asks is how much you want for the business. This is a very difficult figure to indicate of course (see our website for full advice). Some people know exactly what they want, others are better speaking to a few buyers initially to gauge an idea as to what they can expect.

Once you have this detail, you can then move on to consider the more extensive information that will inevitably be required if a firm if you manage to get to the due diligence phase. It is worth thinking about this level of detail from the outset. This will take some time! We have put together a list of questions that will need addressing here:

<https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/questions-to-ask-yourself-when-preparing-for-the-sale-of-a-law-firm/>

## Charity Donations 2020

The trustees of the Ten Percent Foundation have met and decided to award the following sums to charities in 2020 as follows:

Flying High Trampoline Club, Denbigh, North Wales. A club set up for disabled children and adults, entirely self-funded following government cuts. £1,500 grant towards the purchase of a pair of end deck spotting platforms with wedge mats.

First Step, Merseyside. £1,000 as emergency funding - purchasing security products for victims of

domestic violence.

British Stammering Association. £500.

Cure Parkinsons Trust. £500.

The trustees have also put aside funds for a new small interest free loans scheme for charities based locally to our offices in Flintshire & Denbighshire in North Wales to apply for funding for items of equipment.

## 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](http://www.chancerylane.co.uk). Interested? Call Clare Fagan on 0207 127 4343 or email [clare.fagan@ten-percent.co.uk](mailto:clare.fagan@ten-percent.co.uk). [www.tenpercentunlimited.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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

Jonathan Fagan  
Director

E: [jbfagan@tenpercentgroup.com](mailto:jbfagan@tenpercentgroup.com)  
T: 0207 127 4343

London Office:  
Ten-Percent.co.uk Limited  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
London  
WC1N 3AX

Head Office:  
Ty Brith  
Llandegla Road  
Mold  
CH7 4QX

Jonathan Fagan is a solicitor, qualified recruitment consultant and Managing Director of Ten-Percent.co.uk Limited. His LinkedIn profile can be viewed here - [www.linkedin.com/in/jbfagan](http://www.linkedin.com/in/jbfagan)

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