

Legal Recruitment News - 10th March 2021

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Good morning and welcome to the March 2021 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, careers advice and suggested interview answers.

Legal Job Market Report - March 10th 2021

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

Locum Recruitment - Busy

In the last few weeks in February we experienced a registration of family locum roles like we had never seen before. Yet at the same time we saw a drop in the demand for conveyancing locums, something we were not expecting! So far this week for example we have had just one conveyancing locum role in. There still seems an issue with locums being extremely reluctant to travel and some firms still very reluctant to use remote working lawyers. Litigation roles on the increase. Generally we anticipate a few busy weeks leading up to Easter. Increase in demand for corporate commercial and commercial contract lawyers working remotely, but hourly rates generally lower than they have been for some time due to increased competition.

Locum assignment updates here: <https://www.interimlawyers.co.uk/category/locum-solicitor-updates/>

Permanent Recruitment - Busy

If I had written this a few weeks ago it would have been different but we are starting to see firms reaching out to recruit permanent staff again. Whether or not they are successful is another matter - lots of lawyers staying put for the time being and holding off from deliberations on taking a new position unless absolutely necessary. Clear that some vacancies are going to stay live for some months to come.. We have seen an uptake in the number of new enquiries about our unlimited recruitment service - [details here](#).

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

Law Firms for Sale - Busy

Law firm market still generally very busy. Every firm listed on our website has received an enquiry of some sort since Christmas and although there are still some buyers out there who are looking to take over a practice without paying anything for it, there is still a premium price to be paid for just about every law firm currently listed for sale. Very few distressed sales at the moment. Buyers include groups of solicitors looking to set up, firms seeking expansion by acquisition and larger businesses buying up multiple law firms.

Full list at <https://www.jonathanfagan.co.uk/law-accountancy-firms-for-sale/>. For a confidential discussion please ring 01824 780937 and speak to Jonathan Fagan or email jbfagan@ten-percent.co.uk.

Ten Percent Legal Recruitment Statistics

General Statistics for February 2021 (comparison is with February 2020)

New permanent vacancies added: 22 (44)

New locum vacancies added: 19 (20)

New candidates registering: 66 (60)

REC/KPMG UK Job Market Report

(we are members of the panel contributing to this report)

Key Findings

Permanent placements decline again

Temp billings expand only modestly

Upturn in candidate availability slows sharply

Demand for staff broadly stable after drop in January

KPMG Vice Chair Comment:

“Business confidence remained subdued in February, with a further drop in permanent appointments and the lingering pandemic uncertainty still evident. The jobs market remains on hold with hiring decisions stalled, people reluctant to seek new roles and the growth in temporary billings has also slowed. However, it’s encouraging that it’s not seeing the big drop in vacancies or hiring that were seen in the first national lockdown. There’s a long way to go to rebuild confidence in the UK jobs market. But with the Covid roadmap to recovery in place and the Chancellor’s Budget announcement to further support businesses and individuals, there is reason for optimism for the UK’s future workforce.”



Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives

March 2021 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 – £30-£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 – £30-40 per hour.

Commercial Property – £35-£45 per hour
Employment Solicitors – £30-£42 per hour.
Family Solicitors – £32-£40 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 Lawyers (SMEs) - £50-60 per hour
Insolvency - £35-55 per hour.
IP - £50-80 per hour
Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence – 3+ years PQE – £25-£40 per hour.
Professional Negligence - £45-£55 per hour.
Wills & Probate – £30-£45 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.

Charity Donations 2021 - £24,000 Fund - Suggestions

Welcome

The Ten Percent Foundation bank account currently has over £24,000 sat in it, which means that it is that time in the year again when the trustees of the Ten Percent Foundation meet to discuss our donation of 10% of the annual profits of the Ten Percent Group of websites.

Our donations meeting has been delayed last month due to trustee illness so we can still consider suggestions put forward over the next week or so. All current suggestions will of course be considered - thank you to all the firms and solicitors who have put forward ideas for donations - most appreciated.

We avoid charities with top heavy staffing & admin costs and welcome any suggestions from clients, candidates and general readers of our newsletters. We particularly like small charities with limited funds. Examples of donations made over the past 20 years can be found on our website at www.tenpercentfoundation.org. To suggest a charity please email Jonathan Fagan at cv@ten-percent.co.uk. We consider all requests very carefully.

IR35 - something to worry about?

No, if you are a small business hiring locums - see the definition below. Please note that this article is not intended as tax or legal advice to be relied on - simply our thoughts.

IR35, for those not in the industry, is a tax rule related to 'off-payroll working' and is all about levelling up tax contributions so that self-employed workers in theory pay the same as employed workers. It is therefore relevant to locums working in law firms and in house legal departments.

A change is coming in from April 2021 - from the 6th April the clients/fee payers will be responsible for managing IR35.

Firms will be required to state whether a role is 'outside of IR35', which will mean that the assignment in their opinion falls into the definition of self-employed work and will be paid gross/in full, or 'inside IR35', which means that it is caught by the legislation and hence net of tax and national insurance.

If a role is 'inside IR35' then it means that the hirer has decided that the worker is not truly self-employed and therefore will have to have NI and PAYE tax deducted from any payments made.

The rule has been applied to the public sector for some time and has caused a few nightmares for contractors, pushed up prices and made it harder to find temporary workers willing to shoulder the extra tax burdens that are passed onto them as a result of the legislation. This is particularly the case where hirers have applied IR35 rules on a blanket basis, mainly to avoid any future issues with HMRC and pass the burden of any unpaid tax onto the introducing agency or the contractor.

However... the main point if anyone talks about IR35 (and we are hearing the term used a lot by some locums!) is that it does not apply to smaller sized companies and hence does not become an issue.

A company is classed as a small company if it meets two of the following three conditions:

An annual turnover of less than £10.2 million, a balance sheet total of less than £5.1 million and fewer than 50 employees.

This applies to most law firms in most sectors and hence the IR35 rules will not usually apply. In these cases the contractor remains responsible for determining their own tax position.

Blanket Assessments

We have come across local authorities and larger companies who will simply state that all their assignments are going to be inside IR35, regardless of actual status of the contractors in question. This has caused issues. The REC (the recruitment industry trade body) has produced the following list of reasons why this is a very bad idea. I am not sure some of them are particularly good arguments, but here it is..

The regulations require you to assess contractors on a case-by-case basis. So, if you're assessing everyone the same without looking at people as individuals and how they provide their service, that's not right.

Contractor relations affected. Contractors are rightly concerned about their tax liabilities if you're just making a blanket decision without considering what they actually do, or have done in the past. For example, contractors who have worked without supervision and have autonomy being classified as same as those who have worked under the direct supervision of the client. It would be understandable for contractors to feel undervalued and at risk.

Future litigation. Contractors will be able to take clients and agencies to court to claim back costs of wrongly working inside IR35. So not looking at contractors individually could have a big financial consequence later on.

Complex supply chain. If you're forcing your contractors to go PAYE, they may go through different routes to achieve that – direct employment or using a so-called umbrella company or even a sole trader. That will make your supply chain more complex and compliance more difficult to establish.

Additional benefits. There are regulatory changes that come with moving people to PAYE as they will have more legal entitlements. For example, you'll need to think through the Agency Workers Regulations and treating staff equally with your own employees on pay, hours and holidays.

The CEO of the REC finished his article with the following quote:

"There's a moral to this story. Just because the government hasn't thought through IR35 properly doesn't mean you should follow their example."

Here's hoping that the legislation never applies to smaller businesses!

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/private-sector-off-payroll-working-for-clients>

<https://www.rec.uk.com/recruiters/legal/ir35>

<https://www.paystream.co.uk/helphub/ir35/articles/ir35-mythbuster-3-the-small-company-exemption/>

Podcasts - a benefit to my business?

On Monday night I gave a talk to the 93PercentClub in Guildford. This is a new organisation set up to provide a network of support and assistance to the 93% of the population who may want to enter the legal profession and attended a state school. I was the inaugural speaker and enjoyed giving a talk to a collection of law students on subjects as diverse as 'high street law vs commercial law', 'nepotism in the legal profession', 'criminal law - avoid like the plague?'.

The organisers recorded the session for me via Zoom and I have uploaded it to our legal recruitment blog here:

<https://legalrecruitment.blogspot.com/2021/03/podcast-talk-by-jonathan-fagan-high.html>

But what value is this audio recording to the standing of our website?

Getting a double dose of SEO from your podcast

Podcasting has become the new thing to do for every well-regarded website, celebrity and journalist. You have the freedom to be your own radio station, say what you like, post it all over the internet and hope somebody, somewhere listens to it. It doesn't really add very much at all to the SEO value of your website, because at the moment Google (as far as I know) is unable to detect the spoken word and use it to rank your website accordingly. Maybe this has changed or is about to change, but as it stands, your podcast is of value to all the people who want to listen it, but in terms of getting your website noticed is not likely to do very much at all.

However, there is an option to add value from your podcast to your website very easily, and this is through the use of transcription. If you record your podcast, get it transcribed and (once edited for the inevitable waffle!) you can have a full transcript of your podcast ready to upload on to your website as a blog entry or selection of articles.

This means that not only can anyone listen to your podcast who has their earphones in and is able to, but similarly anyone who wants to read it can do so as well.

Not only does this have issues in relation to disability access to your content, but it also means that you have increased the potential reach of your audience from just the audio audience to also the visual audience.

This can be very useful in relation to your SEO, because the search engines can now detect everything that you have said on your podcast and use it to rank your website. If you are lucky, it may even come up in the search engine rankings.

Naturally we should declare links to a transcription business, but the main purpose of the website is point out that offering to provide advice or talks to groups, particularly when online via Zoom or

similar, can benefit your business.

If anyone wants to offer their own time to the Guildford 93Percent club please email Jess at 93percentclubguildford@gmail.com.

Help – I Can't Get a Training Contract – What Am I Doing Wrong?

Probably nothing at all is the very quick answer, the slightly longer answer would be to check your work experience, get an application form reviewed and relax a bit. An even slightly longer answer would be as follows.

Check Your Academics

Are you fitting the criteria for the training contract applications you are making? Large Central London law firms usually have requirements of virtually perfect GCSEs, virtually perfect A levels, a very high 2:1 or first class degree from a 'good university' and some evidence of an interest in the law. If you have DDE at A level, barely any GCSEs, a 2:2 degree and no work experience, then in most cases you will be wasting your time applying.

If you have low grades then chances are your route into law is going to be very different to someone with good grades, because you are going to have to seize opportunities as they come. This means that you'll probably have to go down the paralegal or work experience route and hope something crops up following this. You cannot expect to be applying for jobs where the law firm want specific academic qualifications and you don't have them.

Check Your Work Experience

Work experience is not just something you do for the sake of it, it gives an employer evidence that you know what a legal job entails. For example, applying for a job in a high street law firm undertaking conveyancing and wills and probate work is not going to be a good idea if you have no idea what a conveyancing or wills and probate solicitor does. You may get offered a job and then absolutely hate the work and leave quickly. In that case the employer has wasted their time taking you on in the first place.

It is much easier for the employer simply to recruit someone who has got two years conveyancing experience working as a paralegal in a high street law firm. This way the employer knows full well that the person they're taking on knows what the job is going to be and simply has a desire to qualify. Similarly the same applies in a commercial law firm – if you have no work experience or three months work experience as a family paralegal in a legal aid firm, it's really not going to help you know whether or not you want to be a corporate finance solicitor one day.

A two week vacation placement with a good quality practice will go quite a long way towards confirming whether or not this type of career is going to be of interest to you (some people regard the work as utterly boring and tedious but good for paying your bills), but the more experience the better.

What we usually recommend is to get work experience in a whole host of different types of law and legal settings including in-house, private practice (large and small) and local authority. This way you build up a bank of work experience that may or may not open doors for you, but similarly will provide you with lots of evidence of your experiences when filling out application forms.

Check Your Applications Carefully For Grammatical and Spelling Mistakes

We see so many applications and CVs that have errors in them, that we strongly recommend checking through every single time on a word for word basis. The applications you make are virtual investments in your future career and any time spent on them is good time (provided you do not just go over the same things again and again). Write your application form to start with, then read it, thinking about if you were an employer and what you think of it, and then read it as if you were a proof reader checking it for mistakes. This should give you a good idea of what needs revising and what sounds good.

Check Your Personal Life

Something that aspiring lawyers quite often overlook is the need to have a connections with the person interviewing you. If you have a boring existence without any external extracurricular interests then your conversation during interview is going to be pretty much based on the law, and you won't ever get to discuss anything where you might have a connection with the person interviewing you. For example, if you like skiing and have skied across France, Austria and Bulgaria, then if this is on your application form or CV it gives the interviewer something to chat about if they are similarly keen skiers. If it's not on the form they won't actually know this and whether or not to instigate a conversation about it.

Don't Panic!

So many graduates come through their lives in a completely sheltered environment where they succeed at everything they do, that when they get rejected from a training contract application or paralegal work they instantly panic and think there's something wrong with them. The same applicants then start looking around for magic touches to add to their application forms and get convinced that there's something in them that means they're not suitable for that particular firm, or they start to suffer with mental health issues, view themselves as failures and consider something has gone tragically wrong with their career.

Nothing could be further from the truth, and you need to get this into your mind from the outset if you are going into law. This is an incredibly competitive profession with very few jobs available and lots of people chasing them.

Even when you qualify as a solicitor there are certain fields of law where getting a job as a newly qualified solicitor can be difficult and there are lots of solicitors out there looking for roles. You are going to fail at times, and it may be you have done absolutely nothing wrong. You may have perfect academic results, outstanding work experience and a high level of extracurricular activities. You may have been for interview and shone and be eagerly anticipating an offer of a training contract. However, the law firm you have been to may have had 2000 applications and really liked 200 of them, but only have 30 places to offer, and it may just be that you were one of the unlucky ones.

Geographical Locations

If you are applying for a law firm based in Leeds but have absolutely no connections to Leeds, then your chances of success are lower than somebody who has lived in Leeds all their life. It is important to bear this in mind and whilst we cannot encourage you to move to Leeds in order to make an application, you do need to think about this carefully, and how you can make your application to that firm more locally linked. There are ways and means of doing this, but you will need to make decisions and include details as you personally see fit...

Don't Give Up

Failing to get a training contract is not a failure at all; it is simply a change in your circumstances. It

may be that you have to spend another year looking around at paralegal work while you make more applications, but this may be a good thing for your future career as it may give you more options or change your mind as to the type of law you want to do.

Never see a rejection as a failure, but instead see it as an opportunity to do something different.

Interview Question 44 – Do you mind working for someone older than yourself? Younger than you? Or the opposite sex?

Advice

This is the sort of question that should not, under any circumstances, be asked during an interview unless framed in a better way than this! If you are asked this question it usually means the interviewer is either trying to pick an argument with you, has serious doubts themselves about whether they can work with you, or are simply completely ignorant about the various bits of legislation regarding discrimination. It is likely that if this question was asked you will probably not want to join the employer asking you as they are likely to have serious issues themselves! However if it is asked and you feel the employer is simply either being ignorant or not really thinking about the question they are asking, the best way to deal with it is simply to be as firm yet as polite as possible.

Examples of Answers

“No. I do not mind working for anyone at managerial level and try to communicate and deal on a daily basis with everyone in the same manner, whether they are old, young, male or female. This is evident by my work at Jones & Co, where my line manager was 15 years younger than me. The work he did was tremendous and he was a very gifted manager.”

Or:

“No, not at all. I am applying for this job as an architect because I believe this suits me at the present time in my career. If there are partners in the firm who are 20 years younger than me this causes me no issues at all. Perhaps they are more suited to that role than I am.”

Or:

“No, not at all. I am at a junior level of my career and will listen to anyone who has good advice for me and who has already worked in the industry for a number of years. I hope to be able to progress myself at some stage but I am always eager to learn and take advice from those who have more experience from me, whether they are male or female.”

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 provide free CV reviews, providing you are willing for us to post our review live on our website - example of a recent one is here: <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/cv-review-commercial-paralegal->

[with-experience/](#)

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 and are preferred suppliers to a number of institutions. Try the service out - email your recording to anna@tptranscription.co.uk, upload your file using our secure systems at 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 20 years ago. So far over £125k 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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