



Legal Recruitment News - June 2023

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Good afternoon and welcome to the May 2023 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, advice for small law firms, strategic career planning for lawyers and more.

Legal Job Market Report - June 2023

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

New Candidate Registrations

Candidate registrations are usually a good indicator for market conditions. When the job market is buoyant, candidate registrations go down. Jobs are in plentiful supply and candidates are happy in their current roles unless firms offer more money. Last May, this was the case - the job market was extremely busy.

When job market conditions are poor, candidate registrations & job applications usually go up. In May 2023, market conditions are declining, yet our statistics show a 33% drop in new candidate registrations compared with last year.

This is very unusual - and it will be interesting to see how the market plays out over the summer. It is expected that the mortgage interest rates will dampen the property market, but it is uncertain whether conveyancing work will drop significantly as a result, or just decline a small percentage.

Locum Recruitment - Quiet

May and June are usually our busiest months of the year. We are often flat out handling holiday leave cover, increased capacity cover and extensive recruitment replacement cover. This year the market is very different. Whilst we have picked up regular locum assignments throughout the month we are down about 50% on the same month last year. Whilst 2022 was quite exceptional for recruitment (there was a shortage of locums last summer due to demand), it is still the current trend for firms to be cautious about potential workload when booking assignments in.

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

Permanent Recruitment

We have just conducted a sweep of old vacancies to update them, which will skew our statistics for June 2023, but in May we saw a steady trickle of new permanent vacancies, but not the anticipated increase in the numbers of candidates applying for these vacancies. Candidates seem to be looking very nervously at the market and thinking carefully before jumping ship. Last person in, first out, tends to be the driving factor here. Until there is a bit more of a settled period, both politically and economically, recruitment will remain difficult.

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

Law Firms for Sale - Busy

Business brokerage work continues to be virtually completely unconnected to the rest of the economy. The summer is a quiet period of new listings, but we are in the process of completing on a number of deals (10 are going through at present post-HoT signing) and three have completed in the last week. The market remains busy for new enquiries. Plenty of 'kicking tyres' enquiries, but similarly a lot of new genuine interest as firms look to expand and individuals seek to build empires!

Full list of firms for sale at <https://www.jonathanfagan.co.uk/law-accountancy-firms-for-sale/>. 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 email jf@jonathanfagan.co.uk

Ten Percent Group statistics for May 2023 (May 2022 in brackets)

New locum roles added - 24 (47)

New permanent roles added - 15 (35)

New candidates added - 22 (36)

KPMG & REC Report on Jobs UK 8th June 2023

Permanent placements fall further, temp billings growth eases
Strongest rise in candidate numbers since end of 2020
Starting salary inflation slips to 25-month low

Commentary from Claire Warnes, Head of Education, Skills and Productivity at KPMG UK

"The jobs market remains subdued, with the latest survey results showing dampened hiring activity amid ongoing economic concerns. Overall vacancy growth slowed for the third month as businesses delayed hiring decisions, and permanent staff appointments fell for the eighth month in a row as many employers stick to temps."

Commentary from Neil Carberry REC CEO

"We've been hearing more and more about differences between sectors in hiring rates over the past few months, and today's data really highlights this. While hospitality, healthcare and engineering remain strong, construction, IT and retail are all weakening. Despite the overall temporary work market continuing to grow – and permanent hiring declining from the sugar rush of 2022 – the story can vary widely across different businesses as their economic outlook remains unclear."



and Legal Executives

June 2023 Locum Hourly Rates - Solicitors and Legal Executives

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

Child Care - £35-£45 per hour.

Civil Litigation – £32-£37 per hour.

Commercial Contract - £35-£75 per hour

Commercial Litigation – £35-£75 per hour.

Company Commercial – £50-£90 per hour.

Construction (non-contentious) £60-£75, (contentious) £45-£60 per hour

Conveyancing - £30-£35 per hour (fairly static at present)

Commercial Property – £35-£45 per hour

Employment Solicitors – £45-55 per hour.

Family Solicitors – £32-£40 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-£75 per hour

Insolvency - £45-£55 per hour.

IP - £55-80 per hour

Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence – 3+ years PQE – £35-£50 per hour.

Professional Negligence - £45-£55 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.

Improving the value of your small law firm - series 1 - Clean & Tidy

This article is more than just advice on making sure you have polished your name plate!

Key feedback from buyers after initial meetings with sellers either at their offices or off site is the appearance of the seller and their firm.

Individual appearance

Feedback by a buyer from one meeting with a seller some years ago was that whilst the business looked sound, with good figures and potential, the buyer was not proceeding because the seller looked like they were sleeping in the back of a car and hadn't washed for a week. First impressions always count.

Firm appearance

Google street view is a very handy tool and so often we take a look at a firm for valuation purposes or to prepare a sales pack and notice that a firm's shop front has not been cleaned or tidied up for a very long time. It does not take a lot to put a lick of paint around the windows and doors, or book the window cleaner in regularly.

Offices

Another piece of regular feedback over time has been the state of the firm's individual offices. If you have fee earners with a paper problem, ie they scatter it all over the floor, their desk, plus any other surface they can find, a buyer will immediately be wondering whether the firm is sufficiently organised. Will they have to come in and spend a few months sorting everything out, or are there future issues hiding away in the paperwork? Make sure, if you can, everything in the offices is tidy & neat before any buyers visit. Chase your fee earners to finish off files and get them billed (this is worth doing as well from a financial perspective).

Files and Old Files

When I ask the question about how many wills there are in a will bank, quite a lot of sellers give me the answer "4 filing cabinets, half a floor and 3 boxes". Similarly buyers have come back after visiting a seller's premises to say that the seller has serious issues with their filing systems and have files spread out everywhere. Other firms pay lip service to their case management software, and don't get the full benefit out of using it because some of the fee earners refuse to utilise it properly.

Having full facts at hand when negotiating a sale or merger makes a big difference to the chances of success. The only way of getting full facts is to make sure the firm's systems are being used correctly by everyone.

Summary

I accept that a lot of the advice in this article is just common sense. However it is always surprising how often we find ourselves discussing this with sellers!

Paralegal Apprenticeships - guest article from Jane Robson CEO, National Association of Licensed Paralegals

Firstly, before we agreed to run this article, we asked Jane for a bit of background information on paralegal practitioners. These were in part her responses.

How many paralegal practitioners are there?

"There are no stats as such for how many paralegal practitioners there are out there. This is because they are not statutorily regulated and so there is no requirement to keep an overarching record of who is practising as a paralegal. We can say that roughly 15% of our members are working as Professional Paralegal Practitioners, but that doesn't account for members of IOP, CILEX or McKenzie Friends, plus lots of others who are not members of any professional body or perhaps don't even realise that the work they are doing qualifies as being 'paralegal' work."

The reason for the existence of licensed paralegals?

"Most consumers cannot afford the fees charged by solicitors and barristers. Paralegals can do almost everything a solicitor does with the exception of the Reserved Activities [...]. If there were no options, such as paralegals, to assist [...] litigants in person, they would not have the money to engage a solicitor and would have to rely on the limited advice that can be given by the already overburdened court staff."

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are found in every occupation. Salespeople are frequently thought to only care about themselves. The folk in IT are expected to be socially awkward. And working in the legal profession is often viewed as something for the 'elite'. To be fair, there has been a lot of snobbery around the law—both real and perceived—and it is well documented that the traditional legal professions lacked

diversity and did not reflect those they were representing.

Diversity is vital

In recent years, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and Bar Standards Board (BSB) have sought to address this particular issue of inequality and lack of diversity. Just as they had previously noted that ethnic and gender equality was extremely beneficial to the sector, they recognised that having legal professionals from all walks of life brings similar benefits and this led to the first legal apprenticeships—the Higher Apprenticeships in Legal Services—being introduced in 2013.

In his speech on reforming legal education in 2012, the then Supreme Court President, Lord Neuberger, estimated the overall cost of entering the legal profession through university at around £100,000 including living expenses. He highlighted the inherent threat saying:

“A less diverse profession is an impoverished one, one less able to reflect and support a flourishing democracy committed to the rule of law”.

Apprenticeships help

The new apprenticeships brought new options to those who had not gone on to higher education, but who wanted to work in Law and were put off by those high costs, and without the guarantee of a job at the end of it. After the success of the initial apprenticeships four ‘Trailblazer apprenticeships’ were set up in England in 2016, replacing the earlier ones. Included was the Level 3 Paralegal Apprenticeship Standard which continues to grow in popularity, despite a few hiccups when it was first launched, including the End Point Assessment Organisation—CILEX—being sanctioned by Ofqual in 2019 following major issues with the first assessments in 2018.

The Level 3 Paralegal Apprenticeship Standard is now being completely overhauled, bringing many improvements designed to give the apprentices a great foundation on which to build a career as a Professional Paralegal. The new Standard is expected to be signed off and launched in Summer 2023. In addition, more End Point Assessment Organisations have been approved to deliver the End Point Assessment for the Level 3 Paralegal Apprenticeship Standard, giving apprentices, employers and training providers more choice for the delivery of the assessment. One of those new End Point Assessment Organisations is NALP (The National Association of Licensed Paralegals), the UK’s oldest established professional membership body for paralegals.

There are also moves to encourage smaller firms to take on apprentices. In-house legal teams can benefit from having a paralegal apprentice, as can small specialist firms, such as probate research or those offering Wills and succession planning services, many of whom may be wholly staffed by paralegals.

Boosting experiences

One of the many positives of paralegals undergoing an apprenticeship is that they get real-world experience of dealing with legal matters and even, in some cases, with clients. Paralegals are the fastest growing profession within the legal sector, so this experience can make the knowledge and qualifications gained during their apprenticeship invaluable to other potential employers, enhancing their transferable skills and opening more doors for them.

Apprenticeships have shown their worth and are here to stay, bringing diversity and opening doors to those for whom working in the legal sector might otherwise have been just an unfulfilled dream.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Robson is CEO of the National Association of Licensed Paralegals (NALP), a non-profit

membership body and the only paralegal body that is recognised as an awarding organisation by Ofqual (the regulator of qualifications in England). Through its Centres around the country, accredited and recognised professional paralegal qualifications are offered for those looking for a career as a paralegal professional.

Web: <http://www.nationalparalegals.co.uk>

Twitter: @NALP_UK

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NationalAssociationofLicensedParalegals/>

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-association-of-licensed-paralegals/>

CV Writing - 10 tips for getting noticed

Write a detailed CV

Make sure your CV is extremely detailed and contains all the work relevant to the application you are making. Information such as details of billing levels for the past 3 to 4 years of practice, examples of cases dealt with, details of additional work undertaken that was not just fee earning, such as supervising staff and business development, and full information on the number of files worked on at any one time are all useful.

Testimonials

Include testimonials from former clients giving details of where they met you, how you obtained their business and their thoughts on you as a practitioner.

Draft a business plan

Put together a draft business plan demonstrating how and where you would be looking to obtain work both for yourself and the firm you are trying to join (only really relevant for senior roles). Review the firm you are applying to and include suggestions on increasing turnover or marketing initiatives (will require web research). Look at the firm's competitors - what are they doing?

Include references from recent former employers and a solicitor who knows you in practice

Much better than your next door neighbour and your doctor!

Include your last staff appraisal (if fairly brief and very positive).

Not a good idea to include one that says 'could do better'.

Telephone or email the recruiter or firm before making the application

Discuss the role. Once you have called, send over the CV and the extra information (together with proof of ID and residence) and then follow this up with an additional email to check that it has all arrived safely.

Be more interested in telling the employer what you can offer them.

So many candidates get this confused. Job applications are not there for you to tell somebody all about yourself, but rather to tell somebody or indicate to them what you can do for them by providing evidence. Without doing this, job applications can be very poor indeed.

Send the CV as a Word document, not pdf

Pdf CVs are not very easy for recruiters to manipulate. Word documents are much easier. The

same applies for larger firms with HR departments using the same software.

Do not attach a covering letter by email but put this in the email body

Its a lot faster for a recruiter to quickly read through than having to open an attachment.

Don't delay on applying and sending over a CV, particularly if applying via agents

If you want to apply, send a CV over as soon as you can. If you leave it, chances are the recruiter will line up other applicants and you will be further down the line.

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 (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@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.

Country Retreat

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. Detached self-catered accommodation with cast iron stove, Wifi, Netflix, electric car charger and off-road parking. Open plan lounge & dining room, kitchen, bathroom with underfloor heating, mezzanine double bedroom and 1 x twin bedroom. The chapel is perfectly located for family holidays, short breaks, golfing holidays, mountain biking and walking holidays. 10% of profits from the chapel lettings are donated to charity.

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

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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 four recruitment consultants, Jonathan Fagan, Clare Fagan, Peter Gresty and Emma Ireland. Jonathan is a non-practising solicitor and Emma is a law graduate. As a team we have over 40 years of experience in the legal profession. Three of us are Fellows of the Institute of Recruitment Professionals (FIRP) and we all hold the Certificate of Recruitment Practice.

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 £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

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