

Legal Recruitment News January 2025

Welcome to the January 2025 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, a solicitor salary guide and a spotlight on one of our charity donations. 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 - January 2025

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

Locum Recruitment - Quiet

Locum work has remained relatively quiet (although we have come back to a busy order book in January), as winter is with us and traditionally firms don't have the same number of absentees for annual leave etc. Conveyancing rates have remained lower and you can currently get residential conveyancing locum cover (remotely) from £30 per hour or £35 per hour for office based. A quick look at the most recently posted roles shows fields of law include court of protection, property litigation (still very hard to source), corporate and commercial contracts, commercial litigation, conveyancing, wills & probate and commercial property. Locum assignment [updates here](#).

Permanent Recruitment - Busy

We have been inundated with permanent roles being registered after the Christmas break. Some of this is as always wishful thinking (deciding to recruit but not actually go through with it), but there is a clear increase in the market. Reports from our law firm clients both on the recruitment and M&A side is that they have seen quite an increase in work since Christmas and it has caught some firms by surprise. Recent vacancies in have been for litigation, corporate commercial, in house, conveyancing (quite a bit of this) and family. A good proportion of permanent vacancies still remain unfilled after 3 months - mainly because of the lack of candidates generally and the wide discrepancy between employer specified work conditions and candidate expectations. Permanent vacancies can be viewed here: <https://www.ten-percent.co.uk/vacancies/>

Law Firms for Sale - Very Busy

Very busy - in fact it is currently almost off the scale for the number of enquiries we are presently getting for law firms listed with us. It is a very good time to get listed as the market is going to remain busy for some time. There remains a good flow of buyer enquiries coming into us daily for our firms for sale. [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 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 December 2024 (2024 figures in brackets)

- New locum roles added - 16 (10)
- New permanent roles added - 5 (24)
- New candidates added - 22 (30)

KPMG & REC Report on Jobs UK - 9th January 2025

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

- Cost concerns and redundancies reported at UK companies
- Pay continues to rise for high quality candidates
- Staff availability increases to the greatest degree in six months

Commentary from Jon Holt, CEO of KPMG UK

"As we start the new year, it's a muted one for the UK jobs market. December's data shows weakening demand causing the biggest contraction in vacancies since August 2020, coupled with hiring intention declining at a pace not seen for 16 months. The hiring market could continue to show signs of caution in the short-term, as businesses pause to take stock of higher employment costs, a more gradual pace of interest rate cuts and rising inflation. However as 2025 progresses and UK economic growth picks up, businesses will need new talent. Salary inflation being at its steepest in four months shows they are still willing to compete for it."

Commentary from Neil Carberry REC CEO

"This emphasises a weak mood in some businesses as they built their budgets for this year, and made changes designed to save on costs after a tough Budget. That said, sentiment can change quickly. December is always a hiring low point, and a new year brings new hope – with inflation under control, low unemployment and economic growth expected, the fundamentals are better than many appreciate. It is what happens now, as firms return to the market in January, that will decide the path ahead. Recruitment is one to watch in early 2025 because it is one of the earliest indicators of a broader economic recovery."

Interim Lawyers - Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives January 2025

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-£80 per hour
- Construction (non-contentious) £60-£75, (contentious) £45-£60 per hour
- Conveyancing – £30-£40 per hour
- Commercial Property – £45-£55 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 – £45-£60 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.

Ten Percent Legal Salary Guide - January 2025

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

Expansion Plans for 2025 - Acquisition vs Recruitment?

We have recently had a number of discussions with firms who have struggled to recruit in certain areas. They have received advice from consultants to suggest an alternative plan to

finding a new family solicitor - simply acquire a family law firm. Problem solved, simple solution!

Is it so simple? To a certain extent, yes. If you were able to find a family law firm with a family solicitor or team of lawyers looking to move as a unit and join another practice, it would be a very easy way to solve a problem. Your firm would become the successor practice, the lawyers would join you with the senior staff possibly on some kind of consultancy arrangement, and your firm reaps the benefits of their existing caseload plus the caseload you have for them to service.

In reality, this is a much harder prospect than it may seem. If you strike it lucky you may well come across a solicitor who has set up on their own but then decided the life is not for them and seeks to return to safer shores of a larger firm. However most law firms for sale have owners who are looking to retire in the short to medium term without any intention of remaining involved.

As a result, you may well manage to 'merge' (in reality its an acquisition) a smaller operation into your larger one and get the benefit of their staff team, but in practice, you may well find you get all their clients, a family lawyer for a limited time frame, and then be back in the same position you were before but with increased costs.

Recruitment problems often seem to end up with solutions being proposed that are a lot more extreme than appear necessary - eg closing down a firm, looking to acquire another firm, ceasing to cover a type of work, look for another practice to take over, and more besides.

Our usual advice is to look at acquisition as an option, but bear in mind it is quite an extreme solution to your recruitment problems. Have you considered all other options - eg taking on a locum in the short-medium term to cover on an ad hoc basis whilst you recruit? Could you promote a more junior member of staff to take responsibility for the work and arrange for a consultant to supervise in the short term?

If you decide to go down the acquisition route, consider your attitude to risk - are you prepared to take over a practice that does more than just the practice area you need to recruit for, what extra level of overheads are you prepared to take on? Are you prepared to add the acquired firm's PII history to your own?

A cynic may write an alternative headline for acquisition instead of recruitment: "increase your risks, bump up your overheads, get more staffing & recruitment headaches and generate a bit of extra profit." Buying a law firm carries specific risks and is not always suitable. You need to have cash & resources available to invest and also the time to manage the larger entity.

Where Do We Source Quality Candidates - is there a 'Secret Place'?

Finding lawyers in some parts of the UK for particular types of law can at times feel a little like hunting for a needle in a haystack. Lawyers can be incredibly cautious about moving and law firm owners can be particularly specific about their requirements. Put the two together and recruitment can be quite a task!

Indeed and LinkedIn are by far the two most mentioned places for clients saying where they managed to do their own recruitment and both are indeed valuable resources. As a recruitment agency we don't use either very much, other than to post jobs and articles into our LinkedIn feed. The majority of our placements come from our own candidate database (12,500 solicitors and counting) which we have built over 25 years. There are no secret groups online stuffed full of exciting candidates looking for work and who are only being approached by certain law firms. Similarly candidates are not sat waiting to be cold called by headhunters (which is also incredibly expensive). So no, there is no 'secret place' that only certain law firms get to access.

So how do you find them?

The answer is fairly simple. You need to see vacancy filling as marketing. Here's a very simple example that probably just about sums up the two possible approaches to recruitment:

Option 1 Conveyancing Job - Full Time in West London

Wanted, conveyancing solicitor with at least 5 years PQE to handle their own caseload. Must be professional, IT literate and willing to work hard. Office based only. 25 days annual leave, salary levels up to £55k. Apply with a covering letter explaining why you are the perfect candidate by the 5th November.

Option 2 Conveyancing Job - Full Time in West London

Friendly, approachable law firm with a very relaxed approach to flexible & remote working is looking for a conveyancing lawyer to grow with them as they expand their practice. Good sized caseload, full secretarial support provided. Full time role, but very happy to discuss flexible hours. Generous package including a base salary of £55k. Contact us to discuss further, or send us a CV across. Partners willing to meet at any time for a confidential chat with anyone interested. Long term opportunities to develop your career in a caring and nurturing environment.

Which one would you want to apply for - the firm friendly version (option 1) or the candidate friendly version (option 2)? At present, the key reasons for moving that we see time and again are a) remote working opportunities, b) flexible working opportunities and c) earning potential. Reasons for not moving on and staying put in a current job include a) stability and concern about a new firm's finances, b) loyalty to an existing firm and c) working conditions and environment at the present firm even if the new firm offer a higher salary.

Firms who regularly complain that there is a lack of quality out there and no candidates applying for their jobs, are often the same firms who offer rates of pay so low a solicitor cannot get a mortgage! We find that in most areas firms with a good reputation for quality of work and life, and treatment of staff in general, are the ones that do not have problems recruiting. Those that are smaller, and perhaps have no reputation at all find that if they offer reasonable salaries and working conditions they attract candidates who will stay and grow the firm. Those firms who simply see their staff as an expense and fail to appreciate the direct correlation between paying solicitors a wage that enables them to live and treat them as qualified professionals, tend to be the ones who constantly need to look around for staff to replace existing lawyers departing.

Charity Donation - £1,000 to The Irish Community Centre, London



Mehak Gupta (Ten Percent) and Shauna Mulligan (Director) at the Irish Community Centre

In 2024 our donations included £1000 to the Irish Community Centre in Bexleyheath, after they were nominated by Paul Ewings, senior partner at Ewings & Co and a trustee of the centre. We sent our graduate trainee, Mehak Gupta, along to meet the director and some of the people.

Irish Community Centre visit

During a recent visit to the Irish Community Centre in Bexleyheath, I had the pleasure of meeting Shauna Mulligan, the Director, who told me about the centre's important work in supporting the community. The centre has been around for over 40 years. It mainly serves the Irish community, but it's open to everyone. What stood out to me right away was the friendly, welcoming vibe throughout the building. "We're here for everyone, but especially for our Irish community members," Shauna explained. "The latest census shows that Irish people are one of the oldest minority groups in the UK, and those over 70 are more likely to be living alone. That's why what we do is so important."

The centre's highlight is Aggie's Cafe, a warm and cozy spot that's now open every Wednesday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. It's not just for a cup of tea; it's a place where people make friends, share stories, and feel less lonely. But the cafe is just the start. The centre also runs regular lunch clubs, an annual Christmas party, and a Wednesday advice drop-in service.

As we walked through the centre, I had the chance to talk to both regulars and newcomers. Their stories were all quite similar – they spoke about finding connection, purpose, and happiness in this place. "This is my outlet," one older man shared. "I don't know what I'd do without it."

Even though the centre has a big impact, it still faces challenges. Rising costs make it tough to keep services free. Shauna and her team work hard to continue to secure grants and donations to cover the costs and ensure services remain free.

Recently, our foundation, The Ten Percent Foundation, gave a boost with a £1,000 donation. The funds were used to purchase refurbished IT equipment. The centre offers IT training sessions to help seniors build confidence with technology, enabling them to stay connected with loved ones, access vital information, and participate in community activities that increasingly depend on digital platforms.

"We're always looking for volunteers," Shauna said. She emphasized how important they are to the centre. "Having regular, dependable help is key to keeping our services running."

This is a recurring theme across a lot of the charities we support around the UK – keeping volunteering levels up to sustain a charity can be harder than attracting funding.

As our visit came to a close, it was clear how much this small building means to so many. In a time when loneliness and isolation are all too common, especially among older people, the Irish Community Centre offers hope and connection.

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 20 years. The Foundation never incurs any administration costs (other than Triodos bank charges, which are minimal). All monies donated are distributed to charities and community organisations. www.tenpercentfoundation.org

Why do we donate?

We set up our companies over 20 years ago with the intention of being ethical in everything we do. As part of this, we decided that a percentage of our profits should always be earmarked for charitable work and set the rate at ten percent. A sudden burst of inspiration meant we called ourselves the Ten Percent Group.

Nominations 2024

We received over 60 charity nominations from academic clients, business clients, locums, solicitors, transcribers (via our sister company TP Transcription Limited) and staff. We have a strict list of criteria concerning our donation available on the Ten Percent Foundation website. Donations tend to be within the range of £500-£2000 per charity per year. However, in the past, we have supported charities over a period of 5 years with donations going towards specific ongoing projects.

Peaceful Weekend Getaways

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 (Ironbridge & Church Stretton nearby), weekend breaks and walking holidays. 10% of profits 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@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 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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