

Legal Recruitment News - 7th June 2022

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Good morning and welcome to the June 2022 edition of Legal Recruitment News. It includes our legal job market report, locum hourly rates, remote working, stopping running a law firm, welcoming a new employee and more.

Legal Job Market Report - June 2022

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

Locum Recruitment - Very Busy

It has seemed as if the whole world and his dog is looking for a residential conveyancing locum for the past few weeks and this shows no sign of abating! We have been anticipating the conveyancing locum market was due to slow down as the economy gets more difficult, but still absolutely manic on the property side. Part of the problem is permanent recruitment and the huge disparity between employee and employer expectations (see below). Other areas also busy, with a number of corporate commercial roles on a consultancy basis cropping up. Private client very busy too.

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

Permanent Recruitment - Very Busy

Finding PAYE/salaried staff for any jobs at the moment is hard work. There is a shortage of just about everyone other than inexperienced paralegals and one of the hardest jobs for us at the moment is managing expectations - employers looking for employees and vice versa. Difficulties arise primarily around remote working (see article below) and salary levels. Candidates want figures far higher than firms can often afford and some firms are still living in the early 2010s! Wages to attract candidates need to be higher than levels we are seeing a number of firms try to recruit at. Candidate registrations are still plummeting - we would expect over 75 new registrations this month, whereas we have only had 34. Most recruitment is now taking place from our database of existing candidates rather than job posting, which is having less effect than usual.

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

Law Firms for Sale - Busy

Still busy, although as I write this I should say that this week has been one of the quietest we have seen for some time (linked to the double bank holiday I think!). In the last few weeks we have had a number of firms complete, including a sole practitioner in Yorkshire and a 2 partner firm in London. A good number to follow as well in the next month, with a further 8 completions expected before the end of June. Good time to be looking at the market - plenty of choice for buyers and good options for most sellers.

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

Ten Percent Legal Recruitment Statistics

General Statistics for May 2022 (bracketed number is for May 2021)

New permanent vacancies added: 35 (29)

New locum vacancies added: 48 (36)

New candidates registering: 34 (54)

S&P Global & CIPS UK Report on Services June 2022

Summary:

Business activity expansion eases for second month running

Input cost and prices charged inflation hit fresh record highs

Growth projections lowest since October 2020

Commentary

May data pointed to a difficult month for the UK service sector as business activity growth eased considerably since April and margins were squeezed again by rising inflation. Survey respondents often noted that concerns about the economic outlook and heightened risk version had taken a toll on customer demand. As a result, service providers signalled that growth expectations for the year ahead dipped for the fourth month running to the lowest since October 2020.



Hourly Rates of Pay for Locum Solicitors and Legal Executives

June 2022 Locum Hourly Rates - Solicitors and Legal Executives

NB: Remote Working Role rates are about 10-20% lower.

Child Care - £40-£50 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 - £35 per hour and upwards

Commercial Property – £40-£55 per hour

Employment Solicitors – £28-£45 per hour.

Family Solicitors – £30-£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) - £50-£75 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 – £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.

I'm fed up of running a law firm, can you help me?

A very common query into Ten Percent Towers - we get calls from partners of law firms asking us for advice on how they get rid of their law firms because they are completely fed up with them!

We hear lots of different reasons for this, but they can be narrowed down into a few categories – money and the stress of having to pay monthly bills out of money generated, regulatory issues and the hassles dealing with the SRA, the ever-increasing cost of professional indemnity insurance, or the incredibly long hours that they are having to work to pay the bills.

Reasons for Being Fed Up

This is a very important discussion to have if you are thinking about getting out of your law firm because you are fed up, because there are so many different things going on here, that quite often what you actually think you want and what you actually should be thinking about are two very different things.

Regulatory Example

Take the regulatory issue for example. If you are getting fed up having to deal with the SRA all the time, and compliance, completing lots of forms and perhaps undertaking your CQS accreditation, or go through your renewal of LEXCEL, then there are other ways of dealing with this other than closing down your practice. In fact, I would go so far and say that in these circumstances closing down your practice is probably a little bit extreme, and you could perhaps think about other things instead.

For example, you could speak to a regulatory and compliance expert (we can recommend a good one) who will do all the regulatory and compliance work for you at a set monthly rate.

Long Hours Example

In relation to the long hours you are working, can you possibly cut down on these by recruiting someone else to help – it does not necessarily have to be a similar high level fee earner, but you could perhaps consider taking on an administration assistant to help you with the more mundane tasks you are undertaking.

Money Stress Example

So far as the money is concerned, do you really need to carry on with the same level of staffing that you currently have, or could the practice be streamlined a little bit? Quite a lot of firms we see seem

to pick up staff and keep them for generations, and some of the salaries they end up on appear quite unaffordable for the size of the practice. I think at times partners struggle with a sense of obligation – I know that I have done this in the past myself - and it can be an extremely hard situation to extract yourself from.

Separation is the Key

There are a whole load of different factors that kick in when it comes to thinking about a sale or disposal, but it is important to separate them out in your mind and to see whether or not it is a sale or disposal that you seek and not simply a remedy of one particular problem that your practice has.

Help is at Hand!

We can assist if you would like us to look at any issues like this and provide you with advice. For details of our services, please visit www.jonathanfagan.co.uk.

I've been working from an office for 40 years, so why can't others?

Flexible working has become all the rage in recent months, as increasing numbers of employees have got very used to working from home for some or all of the time. It has become an absolute requirement for us to specify on every job vacancy whether there is scope for remote working and flexible hours, simply because so many employees now ask for them.

Home Working is Normal?

This would appear perfectly normal to most, after all, a good proportion of the workforce have been working from home for many years. In fact, as the author of this article, I have to confess to working remotely since 2000 when I set up the Ten Percent Group.

One of the key issues in relation to offering flexible hours and remote working is the attitude of well established law firm owners, particularly in the smaller sized SME sector, where the recruiting partner or manager is very often the owner of the practice.

Reasons for not working from home

Partners very often like the idea of offering remote working and flexible hours, but when it actually comes down to it, some of them simply cannot get their head round why anybody would want to work remotely from home rather than in the office.

We get comments such as:

“Why would they want to work from home unless they were looking to do other things other than work?” or, “they've got children at home so how on earth are they going to work with the children there – are they just wanting to look after their children and do a bit of work for us on the side?” Recent correspondence has been as follows: “I've been working from my office for over 45 years. I work from an office because I'm at work, and I just don't understand why anyone would want to work from home, because I go to my office to work and then I go home to not work.”

Why people want to work from home

I think the attitude to work and the way we work has changed for some and this has partly been brought on by lockdown and work necessarily becoming part of everyday life.

Homeworking Example

Take a recent day in my life. I am a home worker probably working around 45 hours a week on average, sometimes a lot more, sometimes but rarely less.

I got up at 6.30am and did the school run. Whilst out I completed a five mile jog around a local country park, followed by a spot of gardening. After a morning work session I returned to school to collect a daughter who had completed a GCSE exam. On the way back we called in to a pet shop to pick up a new UV light for her tortoise! Later this afternoon I will stop work at 4:30pm because I go off and coach an under-7 girls football team for an hour, before returning to do a bit more work probably at about 8pm this evening, before finishing for the day around 9.30pm.

I have included this example not because I am a narcissist but simply to highlight why flexible working is so sought after these days. During lockdown people have got very used to being able to do things as and when they want to, rather than having to fit them around their hours of work of 9am to 5:30pm. This is one of the key reasons people like working from home, because lifestyles have evolved to a point where work is not the only thing done during the day.

Institutional Thinking

Society is changing in its attitudes towards office hours. If you have been working in offices since the age of 18 and you are now in your 60s, to a certain extent you are going to be a little bit institutionalised in the way you see your work. I strongly suspect you will not view your time in the same way that I view my time, in the sense that I can go for a run in the morning and start work an hour later than usual and then do a little bit of work in the evening instead. Or at the weekend get up 6:30am to do a couple of hours work to catch up for the round of golf I played on a Friday morning. I think younger generations view flexible hours even more keenly.

Moving the conversation forward slightly I think that in part this relates to a need for younger generations of lawyers to feel that they do not need to work 60 hour weeks. There is a shortage of lawyers looking to take partnership at a lot of practices and a substantial number are more interested in a much more even work/life balance. This is possibly relating to the inability for most people in certain salary brackets to stand a chance of ever purchasing a house.

No Right or Wrong

Every business is different and business requirements are different, but I suspect over time it will become increasingly rare to see job adverts for 9am to 5:30pm roles and instead an increasing number of roles will have to offer remote working to fit around lifestyles out of necessity.

Business Requirements

Very often I think allowing remote working is a question of trust on one hand and managing client expectations on the other. As an employer can you trust your staff to work if they are at home and can the business be flexible with how client enquiries are handled?

Very often it is a bit of a learning curve in terms of client contact. If a client calls to speak to a member of staff who has popped out from their house to visit the garden centre, can colleagues manage client expectations sufficiently to enable this to happen? Something to think about carefully if you are likely to be recruiting in the next 12 to 24 months - it remains a key issue in recruitment that is not likely to go away any time soon.

How to get a new employee off to the best start

You've managed to recruit the perfect candidate for your job. It has taken you quite literally months to get the person interviewed, and then to accept your offer and then to serve their notice period. But the big day comes when they actually start work with you – so what things can you do to make that new candidate feel like this has been the right move for them?

Welcome!

Firstly, you need to make them feel welcome, and make sure that your staff make them feel welcome. It is all well and good you being exceptionally nice to the new employee, but not great if the rest of your staff don't make an effort to speak to them from the moment they walk through the door.

You need to be aware of the need to make sure the person fits in to the existing team, without stepping on other people's toes or into their spaces, and to make sure that you do not upset the status quo of your team in order to accommodate the new person. At the same time, you can alienate all your existing staff who may wonder why you are being so nice to the new person when you are never nice to any of them. Make sure you treat everyone the same, but be extra nice to the new person for a short period of time at least!

Private space and IT ready to go

Make sure the new employee has their own space and ensure that the IT systems they are going to use are set up ready for them from the point that they start work with you, rather than at a later date.

Quite often we hear from candidates who have joined a new firm and ring us the following day to complain that the place is awful, they have not got their own computer, and nothing seems to be set up for them. Make sure that on the day the person starts, you have the right equipment in place for them ready to sit down and commence work. In particular, ensure they have a desk.

I can think of a couple of horror stories where candidates have turned up on their first day only to discover that the firm actually do not have any offices for them to work from, or even worse, the firm have evicted an existing employee from a room or desk to accommodate the new person because they do not have anywhere to put them. Not only does behaviour like this cause resentment between employees, it also makes the new person feel very unloved.

Work

Make sure you have work for the new person to do. We sometimes hear of candidates who join a firm who welcome them with open arms, show them their desk, switch on their computer, introduce them to all their new colleagues, and then go away and leave them sat in a room without any work to do.

If your firm does not have any work for the new person to do, then it is not exactly going to be much of an encouragement for them to stay around with you. People do not like sitting in a chair doing nothing, even if they are being paid. It can be quite soul destroying. With this in mind, make sure you have lots of work ready to give the new person.

Work overload

Do not overload the new person with work. We get telephone calls from candidates who ring us on the second day to say that all was well and good on the first day and everyone was very nice and everything looks to be there ready to go, but on the second day the desk they were sat at was suddenly coated in hundreds of files and things for them to do, and they weren't sure how to cope in the long term. Gradually ease your new employee in, and do not throw them in at the deep end without any assistance.

Good atmosphere

A very rare occurrence but it does happen - keep an eye on the support staff. You may get along really well with all of your team at the firm but a new person may find that the staff resent them, and there is a bit of an atmosphere going on. As the boss just keep a careful eye on the support staff to make sure that they understand the new person who has come in has your full confidence and is very capable. In due course everyone will settle down with the new dynamic sorting itself out.

We have come across very occasional incidences where candidates have phoned us in tears to say that it appears like a secretary or office administrator is completely undermining everything they do, and going out of their way to make them feel bad about their work. Try to ensure that this does not happen – there is a lot of importance to making sure that the new person has your trust and the support of your team and it is your job as the boss to make sure that this happens.

Moving in gift

It can be a really nice touch for a new person to have something on their desk on the first day to congratulate them on their move, whether this is a bouquet of flowers, a bottle of prosecco or a box of chocolates, it is just a nice thing to do to welcome the person to your business. Small touches like this hardly cost the earth, but they can make a world of difference to the psyche of the person starting a new job.

Photo and social media

Finally, take a photograph of the new person with your team and stick it all over social media. This shows you are welcoming the person with open arms into your firm, and that they are a new valued part of your team. Make sure you highlight their experience and skills so that your clients and other parties can see that you have successfully managed to persuade someone to come and join your practice who has an exceptional level of skills and adds something to your team.

Summary

So many of us as employers forget within a very short space of time that everyone who works in your business needs to feel valued. This is particularly so right at the start of their employment, and doing small things like the above simply gets everyone off to a good start.

Charity Donations

The Ten Percent Foundation trustees have made their first round of awards for 2022 and decide to donate to the following charities:

- Arun Sunshine Group - £500
- Ichthyosis Support Group - £500
- Men in Sheds - £500
- The First Step - £1500
- Rights of Women - £750
- Cure Parkinsons - £1000
- Prison Choir Project - £500
- PACE Charitable Trust - £500
- Dundee Stroke Exercise Club - £1000
- The Proud Trust - £500
- The Cure & Action for Tay-Sachs - £1000
- Leeds Womens Aid - £500

- The Children's Heartbeat Trust – £1000

We will provide an outline of each charity every month for the next 12 months and how the money has been spent.

Two of the charities are existing recipients of funding - The First Step has been receiving donations from us for over 7 years and we have funded long term projects for them including a perpetrators of domestic violence course. This time round we are funding an industrial strength tumble dryer for their Merseyside refuge. Cure Parkinsons is a charity very close to our hearts as one of our family members suffered from Parkinsons for a good number of years. We have been donating for over 8 years and monies donated to this particular charity go straight into funding research around finding a cure for Parkinsons unlike certain other charities in this area.

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 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.

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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.

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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