FOR LAWYERS AND LAW FIRMS

Before you accept, or change, a caseload

From our article: **How many live files is too many? Conveyancer caseloads explained**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/how-many-live-files-is-too-many-conveyancer-caseloads

Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

IN SHORT

There is no official number of live files that is too many for a conveyancer. The right figure depends on the type of work, the systems and whether there is an assistant, so the useful test is whether files are moving and the person can cope. Count your real caseload, then ask any firm for its number, not a description.

Key takeaways

- No regulator, professional body or survey we found gives a safe number of live files per conveyancer.
- The number that matters is yours: how many files, of what type, with what support, and whether they are moving.
- Ask every firm for its figure per fee earner and whether there is an assistant. A firm that will not say is telling you something.
- Firms should track files per person, stalled files and hours worked, not just completions.

Before you accept, or change, a caseload

- [ ] I know what the firm counts as a live file.
- [ ] I have the number per fee earner, not an average.
- [ ] I know the mix: resale, new build, remortgage, leasehold, commercial.
- [ ] I know who the assistant is and what they handle.
- [ ] I have seen the case management system.
- [ ] I know what happens at peak times.
- [ ] I know who covers my files when I am away.
- [ ] I have a named supervisor and review dates.
- [ ] I have counted my own caseload using one rule, and I will repeat it monthly.

Count your caseload in five steps

1. **Pick a rule**
   Decide what counts as live and write it down. Include stalled files and post-completion files, but count them separately.
2. **Count by type**
   Split the total into resale, purchase, remortgage, new build, leasehold and anything else. Fifty mixed files is not fifty of one kind.
3. **Mark the stalled**
   Note which files have not moved in a fortnight and why: the other side, the lender, the client, or you.
4. **Note the support**
   Write down who helps on these files, and how many hours a week.

5 **Compare**
Put today's count next to last quarter's and next to the figure you were given when you joined.

Reading the answer

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
How many live files does each fee earner carry, and how has it changed in a year?	A number and a trend, for example "about the same as last year". That is a firm that tracks it.	A phrase such as "busy but manageable". Ask again, and treat a second dodge as the answer.
Is there an assistant or file handler on these files?	Ask who opens files, chases searches and does post-completion work. A named person is a good sign.	If you will do it all yourself, ask what the count assumes about your time.
Which case management system, and who built the reminders?	A named system and a person who owns it. Ask for a short demonstration.	If files are tracked in spreadsheets, ask how stalled files are spotted.
What happens at peak times?	A plan: overflow cover, a resourcing review or a freeze on new instructions.	"Everyone pulls together" is not a plan. Ask what the last peak looked like.
Who covers your files during holiday or sickness?	A named colleague and a handover habit.	Nobody. Ask whether you would return to a pile.