FOR LAWYERS

Before you press send

From our article: **Is AI reading your CV? What happens to your application at a law firm**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/is-ai-reading-your-cv-law-firm-applications

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

> **IN SHORT**
> Sometimes, yes. Some firms and recruiters use software to search, score or sort CVs, and some use none. UK law gives you rights where a significant decision about you is made with no meaningful human involvement, and you can ask any firm or recruiter who reads your application and how your data is used.

Key takeaways

- Some recruiters and employers use software to search, score or sort CVs. Some use none. You can ask which.
- UK law sets rules for significant decisions made with no meaningful human involvement, and gives you rights if one is made.
- Write one clear CV for people first. Plain headings and honest keywords also suit software.
- You can ask for your data with a subject access request. It is free in most cases and has a one-month deadline.

Before you press send

- [ ] I have read the advert and used its own terms where they are true.
- [ ] My CV is one column, with plain headings and no tables or graphics.
- [ ] My contact details are in the body of the document.
- [ ] The dates, titles and qualifications are right.
- [ ] I know who will read my application, or I have asked.
- [ ] I have the privacy notice, or I know where to find it.
- [ ] I know how to make a subject access request and have the sample saved.
- [ ] I have kept a record of where I sent this CV.

A CV that reads cleanly

1. **Use plain headings**
   Profile, Experience, Qualifications, Education. Unusual headings can confuse both a person and a parser.
2. **Keep the layout simple**
   One column. Avoid tables, text boxes, graphics, icons and photographs. Put contact details in the body, not a header or footer.
3. **Use standard fonts and a normal file**
   Follow the advert. If there is no instruction, use a Word document or a PDF made from text, not a scan.
4. **Take keywords from the advert, honestly**
   Use the advert's own terms for skills you really have, such as "residential conveyancing" or "CQS". Do not paste in terms you cannot back up.

5. **Write dates and titles in full**
   Month and year for each role, full job titles, and spell out an abbreviation once, for example "post-qualification experience (PQE)".

6. **Describe results in plain sentences**
   Say what you ran and what happened, such as a team size or a type of matter. Do not invent figures.

Four questions worth asking

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Does a person read applications?	A direct yes, and who. A named contact is better still.	Vague wording such as "it is reviewed by our system". Ask again.
Is software used to reject, rank or score?	A clear answer about what the software does and where a person takes over.	"We cannot say." That is not an answer.
How is my data kept, and for how long?	A retention period and a privacy notice. The ICO recommended giving a clear retention period.	No period given, or "indefinitely".
Can I withdraw my application and have my data deleted?	Yes, by email, with a reply.	Silence, or a reply that sends you to a form that does not exist.