FOR LAWYERS

Before you send a CV

From our article: **Ghost jobs: how to tell a real legal vacancy from a CV trap**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/ghost-jobs-how-to-tell-a-real-legal-vacancy

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

> **IN SHORT**
> A ghost job is an advert for a role that nobody is trying to fill, often posted to collect CVs. You can usually spot one by what is missing: the firm, the pay, the place and the working pattern. One short email asking for those four details tests most adverts before you send a CV.

Key takeaways

- A ghost job is an advert with no real plan to hire behind it.
- Nobody in the UK publishes an official count. The figures that exist come from software vendors, and they differ a lot.
- A recruitment agency may advertise a specific role only if it holds the details of the role and the firm's authority to recruit for it.
- The firm, the pay, the place and the working pattern are the fastest checks of a real role.
- One email asking for those four details tests most adverts.

Before you send a CV

- [ ] The firm is named, or described well enough to recognise.
- [ ] There is a pay band or a figure for this role.
- [ ] The working pattern is given in days.
- [ ] The advert has a date, and it is recent.
- [ ] You know who will see your CV, and you have said yes to each firm.
- [ ] The recruiter has said whether the role is open today.
- [ ] You have not signed anything that limits who else you can talk to.

The one-email test

1. **Write from your own address**
   Keep it short. Name the role and the date on the advert.
2. **Ask four things**
   The firm, the pay band, the working pattern in days, and whether the role is open today.
3. **Leave the CV out**
   You are testing the advert, not applying yet.
4. **Give it two working days**
   That is our suggestion, not a rule. A real recruiter with a real role has the answers to hand.
5. **Read the reply**
   Four answers is a good sign. "Call me and I will explain" is information too.

Should you send your CV?

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Is the pay shown as a figure or a band?	Read on. A band means someone set a budget.	Ask for the band by email before you send a CV.
Is the firm named or clearly described?	Check the firm's own website for the same role.	Ask for the firm's name. A reason for withholding it is worth hearing.
Is the working pattern given in days?	Good. You can weigh the commute.	Ask what hybrid means in days a week.
Is there a recent date?	Good. The role is likely live.	Ask whether the role is open today.