FOR LAW FIRMS

Questions for the first meeting

From our article: **How to choose a legal recruiter: a checklist for law firms**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/how-to-choose-a-legal-recruiter-checklist-for-law-firms

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IN SHORT

Choose a legal recruiter who knows your practice area, gives you one named contact and puts terms in writing before any CV is sent. Check the track record with references you can ring, and ask how candidates are screened and how your firm's name is handled. Then test two agencies on one live role and compare the whole terms, not the fee alone.

Key takeaways

- A good legal recruiter knows your practice area, gives you one named contact and shows you terms in writing before any CV is sent.
- Judge on references you can ring, how candidates are screened and how your firm's name is handled. A wall of logos proves little.
- Test two agencies on one live role. Then compare the full terms and the shortlist. The fee is one line of several.
- UK law sets a floor for agencies and does not cap what they charge. The REC Code adds standards, but only for its members.

Questions for the first meeting

- [ ] Who will look after our role, and how do I reach them?
- [ ] Which practice areas do you recruit in, and which roles have you filled in ours?
- [ ] Who are two clients in our practice area I can call?
- [ ] Who speaks to each candidate before a CV reaches us, and what do they check?
- [ ] Has each candidate agreed to be put forward to us by name?
- [ ] When is our firm named to a candidate?
- [ ] How will you advertise our role, and who approves the advert?
- [ ] What is the fee, what does it cover and when is it due?
- [ ] What happens if the hire leaves, and from which date?
- [ ] What does the market say about this role at our pay and working pattern?
- [ ] What will you do if two agencies send the same candidate?
- [ ] How will you handle the role if it is confidential?

How to run the test

1. **Pick a real role**
   Choose one you need filled, not a trial vacancy. For a conveyancing role, write the advert first so the brief is clear.

2. **Brief it in writing**
   Pay, working pattern, caseload, supervision and who the candidate will meet. A vague brief returns a vague shortlist.
3. **Ask for the market read first**
   What the market holds at your pay, before any CV. Note whether you hear anything you did not want to hear.
4. **Judge the shortlist on fit**
   Count the CVs that meet the points you set. Three that fit beat fifteen that do not.
5. **Ask what candidates were told**
   A candidate will tell you how the call went and what was said about your firm.
6. **Decide, then widen or stop**
   If the first shortlist fits, extend the brief. If it does not, you have lost a week, not a quarter.