FOR LAWYERS

The lawyer’s checklist pack

Every lawyer’s checklist in one document: notice periods, counter-offers, recruiter questions, adverts, pay questions and first-job checks.

15 checklists. Print it, tick as you go, or keep it on your phone.

Every checklist comes from a Wilson Mannion Insights article, with its sources. The newest article in this pack was checked 22 October 2026.
No sign-up and no cost. Wilson Mannion Recruitment Ltd, 0121 661 3617, info@wilsonmannion.co.uk.

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FOR LAWYERS

Before you say yes to a role

From our article: **What a wrong job really costs a lawyer, beyond the salary**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/what-a-wrong-job-really-costs-a-lawyer
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

IN SHORT

No UK study puts one pound figure on what a wrong job costs a lawyer, so any single number is an estimate. Published data does show the parts: faster pay growth for people who change jobs, 22.9 working days lost per case of work-related stress, and falling odds of finding work the longer you are out. Most of the cost is avoidable if you check the role before you accept it.

Key takeaways

- No UK study prices a wrong job for a lawyer. The cost has to be built from parts, and most of those parts are about pay, health and time.
- Pay growth is lower for people who stay than for those who change jobs, so a move that goes wrong is judged against a good one.
- The longer you are out of work, the lower your odds of getting back in. Line up the next role before you resign.
- Most of the cost can be checked before you accept: supervision, caseload, hours, probation and review dates, in writing.

Before you say yes to a role

- [ ] Ask for the pay and the working pattern in writing, not just in conversation.
- [ ] Ask how many live files you would carry, and what is typical for the team.
- [ ] Ask who supervises you, how often you would meet and who covers when they are away.
- [ ] Ask about probation length, notice during probation and the review dates.
- [ ] Ask what happened to the last person in the role, and why.
- [ ] Talk to someone who works there now, if the firm will allow it.
- [ ] Check your own notice period, so you know your earliest sensible start date.

What to do, in order

1. **Write down what is not working**
   Facts and dates, not feelings. It helps you judge it clearly and say it clearly.
2. **Raise it with someone**
   A supervisor, a partner or a mentor outside the firm. Ask for a dated review and note what is agreed.
3. **Look after your health**
   If sleep, appetite or anxiety is affected, speak to your GP, or LawCare on 0800 279 6888.
4. **Check your contract**
   Read your written statement for notice and probation, so you know your earliest exit date.
5. **Line up the next role first**
   Where you can, start the search before you resign, because time out of work lowers your odds.

Should you act now?

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Have you raised it with anyone at the firm?	Ask for a dated review and write down what was agreed.	Choose who you can raise it with first. A mentor outside the firm counts.
Is it affecting your sleep or your health?	Speak to your GP or LawCare before you decide anything about the job.	Keep notes of what is not working, so you can judge it later.
Do you know your notice and probation terms?	Work out your earliest sensible exit date.	Read your written statement first, or ask HR for it.

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.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you resign

From our article: **How long is a solicitor's notice period, and can it be shortened?**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/how-long-is-a-solicitors-notice-period
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

IN SHORT

Your contract sets it. The legal minimum is only one week once you have been in the job a month, and solicitor contracts can run longer. Your employer can agree a shorter period, but it does not have to.

Key takeaways

- The legal minimum when you resign is one week, once you have been in the job a month. Your contract can ask for more.
- We found no reliable survey of notice by grade, so we do not quote typical lengths for associates or partners. Read your own contract.
- Your employer can agree to a shorter period. It does not have to. Get any agreement in writing.
- Garden leave and payment in lieu both end the working period, in different ways.
- Tell a new firm your real notice at offer stage, before you accept.

Before you resign

- [ ] I have read my contract and my written statement
- [ ] I know my notice period and whether it must be in writing
- [ ] I have checked for a garden leave clause
- [ ] I have checked for payment in lieu
- [ ] I have read any restrictive covenants and know what they cover
- [ ] I have a signed offer and the checks are clear
- [ ] I have a handover list ready
- [ ] I will ask for any change to my last day in writing

How to ask for an earlier last day

1. **Wait for a signed offer**
   Do not ask until your contract is signed and any checks are clear. See resigning from a law firm.
2. **Name the date**
   Say the last day you would like, and the date your new firm needs you.
3. **Offer a handover list**
   List every live file, the next step on each, the diary dates and who takes it over.
4. **Ask for it in writing**
   The agreed last day, pay to that date and any holiday arrangement, in one email.
5. **Tell your new firm**
   Give them the agreed date, in writing, once your employer has confirmed it.

A move, in order

1. **Interviews and a decision**
   The number of rounds, and the gaps between them, vary by firm.
2. **Offer and terms**
   Pay, working pattern and start date, agreed in writing.
3. **Signed contract and checks**
   Do not resign before both are done.
4. **Resignation**
   The conversation first, then a short letter.
5. **Notice**
   Worked, shortened by agreement, put on garden leave or paid in lieu.
6. **First day**
   The date the two firms and you have agreed.

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.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you accept a first law job

From our article: **How to check supervision and support before your first law job**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/how-to-check-supervision-before-your-first-law-job

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

IN SHORT

Check supervision by asking who will review your work, how often you will meet, how many matters you will hold and what training time is protected. The SRA expects firms to have an effective system for supervising clients' matters, and says less experienced staff need more of their work checked. Ask for the answers in writing before you accept.

Key takeaways

- Good supervision means a named person, regular time, checked work and a clear route when you are stuck.
- The SRA expects an effective system for supervising clients' matters. It sets no single model, so ask what this firm's is.
- Ask about review frequency, caseload, training time and the last person in the role. Get the answers in writing.
- Support is worth weighing against salary. A gap in pay shows on day one. A gap in supervision shows by month three.

Before you accept a first law job

- [ ] I know my supervisor's name and level.
- [ ] I have been told how often we will meet, and when the first review is.
- [ ] I know how much of my work is checked before it goes out.
- [ ] I have a figure, or a range, for my caseload at month three.
- [ ] Training time is stated and protected.
- [ ] I know who I go to when my supervisor is unavailable.
- [ ] I have spoken to at least one other junior.
- [ ] I know why the role is open and what the last person did next.
- [ ] Pay, hours and working pattern match the advert.
- [ ] Probation, notice and review dates are in the offer letter.
- [ ] If I am qualifying, I know who confirms my qualifying work experience.
- [ ] I have the offer in writing before I resign.

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.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you take the call

From our article: **Should you tell a recruiter your current salary?**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/should-you-tell-a-recruiter-your-current-salary
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

> **IN SHORT**
> Not first. You can ask for the budgeted band, then say what you want and what you would not accept. We found no UK law that makes you give a recruiter your current salary, and none that stops them asking.

Key takeaways

- You can decline to give your current salary. We found no UK law that makes you give it to a recruiter.
- Ask for the budgeted band first. Without one, you are being asked to bid against yourself.
- Give a range built on the role and the market, not on what you earn now.
- A number is reasonable once the band is on the table, or when you earn more than the band offers.
- Never give a false figure. A polite refusal is easier to defend.

Before you take the call

- [ ] I know the band, or I will ask for it first
- [ ] I have a range whose lower end I would accept today
- [ ] I have a floor I will not discuss
- [ ] I know whether I mean base salary or the whole package
- [ ] I have written down the one line I will say if pushed
- [ ] I will ask who sees any figure I give
- [ ] I have read my contract for a pay-confidentiality clause

Answering a pay question, in order

1. **Ask for the band**
   "What is the budgeted band for this role?" is a normal question. Ask it before anything else.
2. **Check it against the market**
   Compare it with the salary guide and the pay on live adverts.
3. **Set a range**
   Make the lower end a figure you would accept today. Do not set it where you hope to land.
4. **Know your floor**
   Decide the figure below which you would stay put. Do not announce it. Say you would need the lower end of your range.
5. **Count the whole package**
   Base, bonus, pension, working pattern, caseload and progression. Base is one line.

FOR LAWYERS

Get these in writing before you resign

From our article: **Moving jobs when unfair dismissal protection starts after six months**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/unfair-dismissal-six-months-moving-jobs-2027
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

IN SHORT

From 1 January 2027, an employee in England, Scotland or Wales can claim ordinary unfair dismissal after six months in the job, instead of two years. Probation periods, notice periods and a firm's right to dismiss fairly stay as they are, and discrimination and whistleblowing protection already need no minimum service. For a lawyer thinking of moving, the written terms matter more than the date.

Key takeaways

- From 1 January 2027, ordinary unfair dismissal protection starts after six months in a job, not two years.
- The test is the day your employment ends, not the day you joined.
- Probation, notice and a firm's right to dismiss fairly all stay. Discrimination and whistleblowing protection need no minimum service.
- Get probation length, notice during probation and review dates in writing before you resign.

Get these in writing before you resign

- [ ] Probation length and what the conditions are.
- [ ] Notice during probation, both ways.
- [ ] Review dates in the first six months, and who holds them.
- [ ] The name of your day-to-day supervisor.
- [ ] What happens at the end of probation, in writing.
- [ ] Role, practice area, pay and working pattern, matching the advert.

A move, in order, with the dates that matter

1. **22 October 2026: today**
   The six-month rule is enacted but not yet in force. Acas still says January 2027. Check GOV.UK for any change.
2. **Before you resign**
   Get the written offer. Check probation, notice, reviews and the supervisor's name. Think about a counter-offer in advance. Our guide on whether to accept a counter-offer will help.
3. **Resignation**
   Serve notice as your contract says. In this example, three months' notice from early November 2026 ends in early February 2027.
4. **1 January 2027**
   Section 25 comes into force. It applies where employment ends on or after this date, in England, Scotland and Wales.
5. **Your start date**
   Your new firm's six-month count begins. In this example, that is early February 2027.

6 **Six months in**
Ordinary unfair dismissal protection applies. In this example, early August 2027. Probation may end earlier or later, depending on your contract.

Does the date change your plan?

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Do you have a signed offer with a start date before 1 January 2027?	Your six months run from that start date. The six-month rule applies once your employment ends on or after 1 January 2027.	Your six months run from your 2027 start date. The window is six months whichever month you start.
Is the new role on a fixed-term contract?	Ask about renewal. Not renewing counts as a dismissal, so the rule can matter at the end of the term.	Check the probation and notice terms in the written statement.
Is the extra protection your main reason to move or to wait?	Weigh supervision, caseload, pay and progression first. Those decide whether a move works.	Good. Weigh the offers on those reasons.

FOR LAWYERS

What a good recruiter does

From our article: **Why recruiters ghost lawyers, and what a good recruiter does instead**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/why-recruiters-ghost-lawyers-and-what-good-looks-like

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

> **IN SHORT**
> Recruiters ghost lawyers mostly because of volume, a firm that has gone quiet, and a pay model that rewards the placement and not the update. It is common: in three vendor surveys, 42% to 61% of jobseekers reported silence after an interview. Set the terms of contact early, send one follow-up, then move on.

Key takeaways

- Most ghosting comes from volume and from silence at the firm, not from a view of you.
- In three vendor surveys, 42% to 61% of jobseekers reported silence after an interview. None of them measures recruiters on their own.
- A recruiter who asks where else you are interviewing, and tells you nothing in return, is asking for a lead.
- Set the terms at the start: email first, calls by appointment, and a date for the next update.
- Send one polite chaser, then move on.

What a good recruiter does

- [ ] Writes to you, not to a list, and shows they read your file.
- [ ] Names the firm, or describes it clearly, before asking for your CV.
- [ ] Gives the pay band and the working pattern in days.
- [ ] Agrees how and when to contact you, and keeps to it.
- [ ] Asks before sending your CV to any firm, one firm at a time.
- [ ] Does not ask where else you are interviewing so they can pitch there.
- [ ] Updates you on the date they promised, even when there is nothing new.
- [ ] Tells you when the answer is no, and why if they know.

Setting the terms

1. **Reply by email**
   Even if they called. It puts the terms in writing.
2. **Say how you want to be contacted**
   Email first. A call at a time you book. Not at your desk if your current firm could overhear.
3. **Ask for the basics in writing**
   The firm, the pay band and the working pattern in days.
4. **Say what needs your yes**
   Your CV goes to no firm without your agreement for that firm.
5. **Ask for a date**
   When will they update you, and will they tell you if the answer is no?

When a recruiter goes quiet

1. **Check the date**
   Did they promise an update by a day that has passed? If so, that is your cue.
2. **Send one chaser**
   Wait until the date they gave you. If there was none, about a working week after the last message.
3. **Ask a closed question**
   "Is this role still live, and is my CV still with the firm?" A yes or no is easy to give.
4. **Wait a second week**
   Then stop chasing. Two messages is enough.
5. **Move on, and say so**
   Tell them you will assume the role has closed. Keep their reply, or the lack of one.

Is this a fair question or a flip?

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Did they tell you the firm and the pay band before asking about your other interviews?	That is an exchange. Carry on.	You are being asked for information and given none. Ask them to go first.
Have they asked which firms you are speaking to?	Ask what it is for. If it is to avoid a duplicate CV, give the one firm name that matters.	Fine. Say nothing you are not happy to share.
Did the call come without a time agreed?	Say you can talk briefly, then ask for the basics by email.	Good. You were ready for it.

FOR LAWYERS

Take this to the interview

From our article: **How to read a legal job advert: what the phrases really mean**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/how-to-read-a-legal-job-advert
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

IN SHORT

Most phrases in a legal job advert are not lies, but they leave out the detail that matters. Each one has a plain question that gets the detail: the pay band, the number of live files, who supervises you and the working pattern in days. Ask before you apply, and take the checklist in this guide to the interview.

Key takeaways

- A phrase in an advert is a prompt to ask, not proof of anything.
- Pay, place, working pattern in days and the date posted are the four details most adverts should show.
- Statutory holiday and a workplace pension are what the law already gives most employees, so ask what comes on top.
- "Hybrid" is not a number. Ask for the days in the office and whether the contract will say so.
- Take the checklist at the end to every interview.

Take this to the interview

- [ ] The pay band is shown, and it is for this role.
- [ ] I know how many live files a fee earner carries.
- [ ] I know who reviews my work and how often.
- [ ] I have the working pattern in days, and I know where it is written.
- [ ] I know whether the 28 days include bank holidays.
- [ ] I know the employer's pension rate.
- [ ] I know what the last two people in the role did next.
- [ ] I know who will see my CV, and I have agreed to each firm.

What to do with the answer

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Did they give a number of live files?	Compare it with your last role, and with the support on offer.	Treat the missing number as an answer. Ask once more, then weigh it.
Is there a named person who reviews your work?	Ask how often you meet.	Ask who covers you. "Own caseload" with no reviewer is a lot for a junior.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you apply to an advert

From our article: **Why legal job adverts should show the salary, and what to show**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/why-legal-job-adverts-should-show-the-salary

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

> **IN SHORT**
> A legal job advert should show the pay band, the working pattern in days, the place and the date posted. Many UK jobseekers use pay to decide whether to apply, and a firm that hides it loses people before it meets them. In a CV-Library survey of 1,043 UK jobseekers in August 2026, 41% said they would not apply without salary information.

Key takeaways

- Pay is the first thing many jobseekers look for. In a CV-Library survey of UK jobseekers, 41% said they would not apply without it.
- About 58% of UK adverts show pay, on both CV-Library's and Indeed's figures. The rest leave lawyers guessing.
- A range beats "competitive". A narrow range beats a wide one.
- "DOE" is honest only when the range comes with it.
- The government consulted from 14 July to 27 October 2026 on requiring pay on every advert. The consultation has closed. Nothing is law yet.

Before you apply to an advert

- [ ] The advert shows a pay band for this role, or I have asked for one.
- [ ] I know whether the figure is base pay or a package.
- [ ] I know which level the band covers.
- [ ] I have the working pattern in days, the place and the date posted.
- [ ] I have a range of my own, built on the role and the market.
- [ ] I have not named my current pay first.
- [ ] I know what "DOE" means for this role.

Reading a wide band

1. **Ask which levels it covers**
   Is it one role as advertised, or several levels in one advert?
2. **Give your years, not your pay**
   Say how many years PQE you have and ask where that would land.
3. **Ask what moves a person up it**
   Caseload, supervision of others, a qualification or a client base.
4. **Ask for the typical offer**
   A firm that hires often knows where most people start.
5. **Check it against the market**
   The salary guide and what a conveyancer earns give outside figures.

6 **Decide with what you have**
If nobody can answer, treat the width itself as the answer.

What to do with "DOE"

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Is there a range next to it?	Read it as a band, and ask where you would sit in it.	Ask for the range before you apply. "DOE" alone is "competitive" in fewer letters.
Do they ask what you earn now in return?	Give the range you would accept, not your current pay.	Good. Compare their band with the market.
Does the band cover several levels?	Ask which level this role is.	Ask what the typical offer is.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you send a CV to any recruiter

From our article: **What to ask a legal recruiter before you send your CV**

Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/what-to-ask-a-legal-recruiter-before-you-send-your-cv

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

> **IN SHORT**
> Before you send a CV, ask which firm it is, what the pay band and working pattern are, and who will see your CV. Also ask whether they will change it and how long they will keep your details. UK law sets only a floor, so get the answers by email and agree each firm before anything is sent.

Key takeaways

- Ask for the firm, the pay band and the working pattern before you send a CV. Not "competitive". A figure.
- Ask whether your CV goes anywhere without your yes, who will see it and whether anyone will change it.
- UK law gives you a floor, not a veto. Agree each firm in writing instead of assuming the law does it for you.
- You can ask what data a recruiter holds, how long they will keep it and to stop using it. The ICO's usual deadline for a reply is one month.

Before you send a CV to any recruiter

- [ ] I know which firm it is, or I have a description and a reason it is private.
- [ ] I have the pay band as a figure or a range.
- [ ] I know the working pattern in days.
- [ ] The recruiter has confirmed in writing that my CV goes to no firm without my yes.
- [ ] I know whether my current firm, or one linked to it, could see it.
- [ ] I have asked to see the final copy if it is changed.
- [ ] I know how long my details will be kept.
- [ ] I know how to withdraw, and who I tell.
- [ ] I have not signed anything I do not understand.

If your CV went somewhere you did not agree

1. **Write to the recruiter**
   Say which firm and when. Ask them to withdraw it and to confirm in writing. Keep a copy.
2. **Ask who has it**
   The ICO's list of privacy information includes third-party recipients. Ask who your CV went to, and for a copy of your data.
3. **Ask for corrections**
   If the copy sent on was changed, ask for it to be corrected. The ICO says inaccurate data can be rectified.
4. **Allow a month**
   The ICO's usual deadline is one month. Note the date you wrote.

5 **Complain, then escalate**
The ICO says to raise it with the organisation first, then complain to the ICO. GOV.UK says the Fair Work Agency enforces the Conduct Regulations.

Is the recruiter's answer enough?

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Will they name the firm now?	Good. Ask for the pay band and the pattern, then decide.	Ask for a description in writing: size, region, practice area and pay band.
Is the reason that the firm asked for confidentiality?	Fair. Agree in writing that your CV stays with the recruiter until you say yes to a named firm.	If the reason is "our policy", or none, say you will wait until they can.
Do they want your CV before they say anything?	Do not send it. Ask again by email.	Good. You can talk freely.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you hand in notice

From our article: **How to resign from a law firm: the order, the letter, the meeting**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/resigning-from-a-law-firm
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

> **IN SHORT**
> Resign only once you hold a signed contract, and read your own contract first for notice, garden leave and restrictive covenants. Tell your supervising partner in person, then confirm in a short letter the same day. Take no client files, and agree with your firm what clients are told.

Key takeaways

- Resign only when you hold a signed contract with a start date and any checks are clear.
- Read your own contract before you speak to anyone. Notice, garden leave and restrictive covenants all sit there.
- Tell your supervising partner in person, then confirm in a short letter the same day.
- Take nothing that belongs to a client. Your duty of confidentiality does not end on your last day.
- Agree with your firm what clients are told, who tells them and when.

Before you hand in notice

- [ ] I have a signed contract with a start date, and the checks are clear.
- [ ] I have read my notice clause, garden leave clause and restrictive covenants.
- [ ] I have written down what, if anything, would change my mind.
- [ ] I have a handover list for every live matter, with diary dates and open undertakings.
- [ ] I know which documents are mine and which belong to clients, and I have asked if unsure.
- [ ] I know who I will tell first, and I will tell them in person.
- [ ] I have a short letter ready, with a copy for myself.
- [ ] I will ask for my last day, final pay and holiday in writing.

A resignation, in order

1. **Week before**
   Signed contract in hand, checks clear. Contract re-read. Handover list drafted. Quiet slot booked with your partner.
2. **Day 0, morning**
   The conversation. Say you are resigning and give your notice. Offer a handover. Decide nothing on a counter-offer in the room.
3. **Day 0, same day**
   Send the short letter. Ask for written confirmation of receipt and of your last working day.
4. **Day 1**
   Agree who tells colleagues and clients, and what is said. Answer any counter-offer in writing.
5. **Days 2 to 5**
   Hand over matter by matter. Update every file note. Ask about early release.

6 **Notice period**
Work it, or follow what is agreed. Leave client files, lists and precedents where they are.

7 **Last week**
Return equipment and passes. Check final pay and holiday in writing.

8 **Last day**
Leave on good terms. Tell the new firm if your date moved.

What if they say...

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Do they offer more to stay?	Do not answer in the room. Ask for it in writing and for time. Your decision test is in the counter-offer guide.	Move to the handover plan and the last day.
Do they put you on garden leave?	GOV.UK says you get the same pay and contractual benefits. Check what your contract lets you do, and tell your new firm the date.	Agree your last working day in writing.
Do they offer early release?	Get the new last day, pay to that date and holiday in one email.	Work the notice in your contract.

FOR LAWYERS

Before you answer a counter-offer

From our article: **Should you accept a counter-offer from your law firm?**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/should-you-accept-a-counter-offer
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

> **IN SHORT**
> Accept a counter-offer only if it fixes the reason you started looking, in writing, with a date. If the reason was pay and the pay is now right, staying can be a good result. If it was supervision, caseload, progression or how the firm treats people, a rise does not change that.

Key takeaways

- Write down why you started looking before you resign. A counter-offer has to fix that reason, not just the pay.
- Ask for any offer in writing, with dates. A promise to review is not an offer.
- The research is thin and mostly old. Job changers had faster pay growth than stayers in 2018, and many counter-offered staff left within a year in a 2021 survey. Neither figure is about lawyers.
- Do not resign to start a negotiation. An employer cannot reject a resignation and does not have to accept a withdrawal.
- If you decline, do it quickly, kindly and in writing.

Before you answer a counter-offer

- [ ] I wrote down why I started looking, and dated it.
- [ ] I asked for the offer in writing, with dates.
- [ ] I know whether it is base salary, a bonus or a promise to review.
- [ ] I have asked why it was not offered before I resigned.
- [ ] I have checked it against what the role pays in the market.
- [ ] I have told my new firm, if I am considering it.
- [ ] I know my notice period and my real start date.
- [ ] I will answer in writing, kindly, by the time I said.

Work out your answer

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
Was money the only reason you looked?	The figure may fix it. Check it is in base salary, in writing, from a date.	Money will not fix it. Go back to the line you wrote down.
Does the offer change that reason, in writing, with a date?	Staying can be a good result.	Expect to look again within the year. The conversation about leaving does not go away.
Is the new role clearly better on supervision, caseload and progression, not only pay?	Weigh it honestly. Moving may be right.	If the new role is only a little better, the counter-offer may decide it.
Did the firm only offer after you resigned?	Ask why. Ask whether it will still value you in a year.	Good. A firm that already listened is a firm worth staying with.

FOR LAWYERS AND LAW FIRMS

Before you accept a conveyancing role

From our article: **What does a conveyancer do, and what do they earn in the UK?**
Read it in full, with the sources for every figure: https://www.wilsonmannion.co.uk/insights/what-does-a-conveyancer-do-and-what-do-they-earn
Checked 22 October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

IN SHORT

A conveyancer handles the legal side of buying or selling property in England and Wales, from the draft contract to exchange, completion and registering the new owner. Published pay varies: the National Careers Service gives £25,000 for a starter and £65,000 for an experienced licensed conveyancer, and a July 2026 recruiter guide gives £45,000 to £75,000 at three years PQE and over. Pay moves with level, region, caseload and supervision duties.

Key takeaways

- A conveyancer runs the legal side of a sale or purchase, from the draft contract to registering the new owner at HM Land Registry.
- You can get there as a solicitor, as a licensed conveyancer regulated by the Council for Licensed Conveyancers, or with CILEX conveyancing practice rights.
- Published pay ranges differ by thousands of pounds. The National Careers Service gives £25,000 to £65,000. A July 2026 recruiter guide gives £45,000 to £75,000 at three years PQE and over.
- Level, region, caseload and supervision duties move pay more than the job title does.

Before you accept a conveyancing role

- [ ] I know the pay, and which level and region it matches.
- [ ] I have the working pattern in writing, including any hybrid days.
- [ ] I know how many live files I would carry and what the firm counts.
- [ ] I know who supervises me and how often we meet.
- [ ] I know my notice period and when I could start.
- [ ] I know the route to the next level and who decides it.
- [ ] The offer is in writing and matches what I was told.

A purchase, from instruction to registration

1. **Take instructions**
   The client instructs the firm. The conveyancer explains the stages, the costs and who does what.
2. **Review the draft contract**
   The seller's side drafts the contract. The buyer's conveyancer reads it and checks who owns the property.
3. **Raise enquiries**
   The buyer's conveyancer puts questions to the seller's side. The seller helps answer them, and details are negotiated if needed.
4. **Order searches and deal with the lender**
   Searches are arranged and paid for. Any mortgage lender's requirements are dealt with.

5. **Report to the client**
   The conveyancer advises the client on what was found and what the documents mean.
6. **Exchange contracts**
   Both sides sign and swap final copies. The agreement to buy and sell becomes legally binding, and the contract sets the completion date.
7. **Complete**
   The buyer's conveyancer pays the seller. The buyer receives the documents and the keys.
8. **After completion**
   The Stamp Duty Land Tax return and payment are due within 14 days of completion. In Wales it is Land Transaction Tax. The new owner is then registered at HM Land Registry.

The ladder, as BCL Legal defines it

1. **Paralegal**
   The entry level in the survey. It is where many careers start.
2. **Junior conveyancer**
   Can handle a small caseload of non-complex files.
3. **Advanced conveyancer**
   Can handle a mixed caseload with supervision.
4. **Senior conveyancer**
   Can handle a complex caseload without supervision.
5. **Expert or team leader**
   Strong technical ability across the role, or experience leading and mentoring a team.
6. **Head of department or team manager**
   Can run a busy department or a large team.