

YOUR 7-STEP GUIDE TO HIRING A SENIOR SOLICITOR FOR A SMALL LAW FIRM

Introduction

Hiring a senior solicitor in a small or local law firm isn't just about filling a gap—it's about safeguarding your reputation, maintaining client relationships, and planning for the future. Whether you're succession planning, expanding your practice, or replacing a key team member, this guide will help you make the right hire—discreetly and strategically.

✅ Step 1: Define the Real Need

Don't start with a job title. Start with a conversation.

- What business need is driving the hire? (Succession, expansion, workload relief?)
- Which clients or files will this person take over?
- What kind of soft skills will work well in your existing team?

Tip: Create a "Day in the Life" scenario to visualise what success looks like.

✅ Step 2: Write a Role Profile That Attracts, Not Just Describes

Your role profile should do more than list duties—it should *sell* the opportunity.

Include:

- What makes your firm different (culture, values, flexibility)
- Your client base and quality of work
- The impact the new hire will have
- Realistic progression or partnership potential

Tip: Avoid generic phrases like "must be a team player"—speak like a human.

✅ Step 3: Understand the Talent Pool (And Its Limits)

In smaller towns or niche practice areas, the perfect candidate may not be actively looking—or may not live locally.

- Map the market before advertising
- Be open to "relocators" or flexible working setups
- Consider adjacent practice areas or complementary skillsets

Tip: Candidates are more willing to move for the right work/life balance than you think.

✔ **Step 4: Promote With Purpose**

Your advert isn't just for applicants—it's your shop window to the market.

- Use clear, warm language
- Highlight benefits and flexibility
- Consider LinkedIn posts, law society bulletins, or local legal networks

Tip: Even if you don't find the right person this way, it signals growth and ambition to the wider market.

✔ **Step 5: Approach Passive Candidates (Professionally)**

The best candidate is often already working. That's why headhunting is essential.

- Use a professional search firm with experience in discreet outreach
- Avoid pressuring candidates—focus on curiosity, not urgency
- Communicate your firm's values clearly and consistently

Tip: A candidate is more likely to take your call if it comes through a trusted third party.

✔ **Step 6: Interview for Culture and Fit, Not Just Credentials**

At the senior level, chemistry and values alignment matter as much as technical skills.

- Use a structured but conversational approach
- Ask behavioural questions: "Tell me about a time you managed a client relationship"
- Involve future team members in second-stage interviews

Tip: Don't rush—one strong shortlist is better than a flood of misaligned CVs.

✔ **Step 7: Make a Thoughtful, Competitive Offer**

A strong offer isn't always about money.

- Offer flexibility, mentorship, client handovers, or community visibility
- Include a detailed onboarding and transition plan
- Leave room for negotiation—but act quickly when you've found your person

Tip: Losing a candidate over a slow offer process is more common than you think.

✚ **Need Help with a Senior Hire?**

At **Number Fifteen Legal**, we specialise in helping small and regional firms find exceptional senior talent—without drama, without delay. From market mapping to offer stage, we work as your discreet, professional partner.

 To discuss a specific search or request a free hiring consultation, contact us at kelly.white@numberfifteenlegal.co.uk