



Twenty four per cent of lawyers want to quit

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A quarter of all lawyers want to get out of the law, according to the largest-ever research programme in the legal profession.

The report, commissioned by The Lawyer and carried out by YouGov, found that a stunning 24 per cent of lawyers would like a change of career. This figure rises to a third among associates with between six and 10 years' PQE. More than 2,500 lawyers took part in the survey.

The findings underline the recruitment and retention crisis facing City law firms struggling to cope with the pressures of the M&A boom.

The last survey by YouGov/The Lawyer revealed that 63 per cent of lawyers at £250m-plus turnover firms were not aiming for partnership, but young lawyers are not the only ones looking for a move. A fifth of the 74 managing partners polled said they wanted to leave the law.

The trend is most severe in the lower part of the mid-market. More than 50 per cent of associates at £25m to £50m turnover firms would like to switch professions. At firms with revenues greater than £250m, 25 per cent want to leave for a different career.

Sarah Ingwersen, a recruitment consultant at Taylor Root, said: "Part of the dissatisfaction comes from lawyers thinking that they're restricted to the law for ever. It's really quite pertinent to emphasise that lawyers have a lot of skills."

Although the City has seen a series of hefty salary rises and increases in partner profits, the rise in earnings has not contributed to overall happiness. It has, however, been an effective retention tool.

The prospect of a cut in pay is cited by 70 per cent of those that want to quit as the main barrier to leaving the law. The most desired job is a non-legal role in a company, which garnered 24 per cent of the vote of lawyers looking for a way out.

Nine per cent said they would like to work in the City in an investment bank or similar. Nine per cent also said they would like to teach. Only 47 per cent of degree-holding respondents said they always wanted to be a lawyer.

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