

The evolving role of **LEGAL SUPPORT TEAMS**

Scoping and data gathering

- Time recording or workflow management systems will give visibility on key metrics like work type, volume, capacity and utilisation for informed resourcing and productivity decision making
- Run focus groups with lawyers to identify what support they need from legal support teams and any potential areas for process improvement
- Create buy-in from legal support teams by involving them in the restructuring process. Run consultations with the group through 1-2-1 interviews, committees or hosting panel discussions to get input and feedback on proposed changes

Key restructuring considerations

- Ensure there is a documented career management strategy that is known and understood by employees, managers and leaders. Clearly define and communicate benchmarks which demonstrate what skills are expected at key stages of their career
- Promotion pathways - aim to promote team leaders and managers from within the secretarial population. They will be responsible for maximising utilisation and driving equal distribution of workload, along with performance management and appraisals
- Update job titles and job description to reflect new roles
- If you have law graduates applying for entry level positions, ensure they are committed to a role as a legal secretary and not just using the role as a means to qualification. Consider 12 month fixed term contracts as a way of discouraging the role being used as a stop gap
- New policies and procedures should be clearly communicated with fee earners to drive effective utilisation
- Delegation training should be given for both fee-earners and legal support teams. This training should be practical, scenario based and should strive to create a common language between the groups
- Hybrid working policies should strive to create parity between support and fee earning populations, whilst ensuring client demands are met

Successful Integration

- Run regular focus groups that include both fee earners and support teams to discuss best practice and address any integration issues
- Work closely with figure heads from both groups to aid in creating positive messaging around changes
- Invest in resilience training to provide teams with the tools to navigate their changing role and build and maintain collaborative relationships in the hybrid workplace. This is an opportunity to promote engagement by showing a group that has been traditionally under-invested in that you value them and the role they play in your firm's culture