

SALARY SURVEY

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VG CHARLES & CO





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REGIONAL LAW FIRMS



REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

South East England

The South East of England continues to enjoy considerable levels of activity, both in terms of firms which service loyal client bases in the locality as well as those firms where their reputation is built upon attracting work out of London, offering city-calibre service combined with the more competitive charge-out rates common in the regions.

As such the demand for high quality lawyers at all levels remains, whilst firms also recognise the need to pay salaries which are likely to be sufficient to retain talent and avoid the possibility of them eyeing a move into London, where the prospective salaries may be higher but associated travelling costs and times may not appeal to everyone.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£130k - £350k* (>£700k)
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£85k - £200k*
Legal Director	£75k - £120k*
8 yr +	£70k +*
5 - 7 yr	£46k - £80k*
2 - 4 yr	£40k - £55k*
1 yr	£38k - £45k*
NQ	£37k - £42k* (£47k+)
Legal Executive	£33k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£80k - £400k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£65k - £135k
Legal Director	£60k - £80k
8 yr +	£55k +
5 - 7 yr	£40k - £65k
2 - 4 yr	£33k - £48k
1 yr	£32k - £40k
NQ	£30k - £37k
Legal Executive	£28k +

NB salaries marked with an asterisk indicate that, although a 'standard' range is shown, remuneration in this bracket can be skewed considerably due to the presence of large London firms having an office in the region and paying salaries far above what the typical regional player may be offering. Figures in italics give a better idea of the likely remuneration at one of those sorts of firms.

REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

South West England

The South West market, and Bristol in particular, has continued to develop at a huge pace, with only London having more office space taken up by law firms than Bristol. Having previously had a number of very high calibre firms headquartered in the area, the legal community has grown as other national and City firms have opened new offices in the area over the last few years, seeking to profit from a talented local workforce with experience of dealing with high value matters.

The South West also continues to attract lawyers from other parts of England & Wales, seeking a relocation to the area for lifestyle reasons but seeking to maintain the quality of work they deal with.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£120k - £500k
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£85k - £150k
Legal Director	£65k - £120k
8 yr +	£60k +
5 - 7 yr	£55k - £75k
2 - 4 yr	£40k - £55k
1 yr	£38k - £49k
NQ	£37k - £47k
Legal Executive	£30k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£75k - £350k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£50k - £125k
Legal Director	£45k - £65k
8 yr +	£45k +
5 - 7 yr	£35k - £55k
2 - 4 yr	£30k - £45k
1 yr	£27k - £38k
NQ	£25k - £35k
Legal Executive	£30k +

West Midlands

The West Midlands has continued to be a regional powerhouse of legal activity, with Birmingham sitting behind only London and Bristol in terms of the amount of office space in the city occupied by law firms. With various mergers, new offices and aspirational firms continuing to expand both in Birmingham and in the surrounding towns, the growth of the West Midlands legal market shows no signs of slowing, with the quality of work rivalling that in London and earning potential also being significant for senior equity partners yet with the cost of living being considerably lower than that in the City.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£120k - £500k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£90k - £160k
Legal Director	£65k - £110k
8 yr +	£60k +
5 - 7 yr	£45k - £60k
2 - 4 yr	£39k - £48k
1 yr	£37k - £42k
NQ	£35k - £41k
Legal Executive	£30k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£75k - £350k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£50k - £120k
Legal Director	£45k - £65k
8 yr +	£44k +
5 - 7 yr	£35k - £50k
2 - 4 yr	£30k - £45k
1 yr	£26k - £35k
NQ	£25k - £34k
Legal Executive	£30k +

REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

East Midlands

The East Midlands has proven to be a robust and yet diverse market place, with successful High Street firms often competing with large regional and national firms in the war for talent. As such candidates have the option to step-up to a larger and more prominent name in the market with comparative ease, although it has to be said that salaries in the East Midlands typically lag slightly behind those in the West Midlands offices of the same firms. As such, firms in the East Midlands need to recognise and be aware of the possibility of talented individuals looking to head west or south and salaries have risen accordingly to limit this.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£110k - £500k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£90k - £150k
Legal Director	£60k - £110k
8 yr +	£55k +
5 - 7 yr	£42k - £55k
2 - 4 yr	£37k - £46k
1 yr	£36k - £41k
NQ	£35k - £39k
Legal Executive	£30k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£75k - £300k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£50k - £120k
Legal Director	£45k - £65k
8 yr +	£42k +
5 - 7 yr	£34k - £50k
2 - 4 yr	£30k - £42k
1 yr	£28k - £35k
NQ	£26k - £33k
Legal Executive	£25k +

East Anglia

East Anglia continues to be a diverse hub of legal activity, with high street firms in the regions competing with large commercial players centred around the main centres of Norwich, Ipswich, Peterborough and particularly Cambridge. Due to the excellent train links into London there is always the risk of losing talent to the City, and thus the leading East Anglian practices often have to pay sufficiently high salaries to prevent this from happening. Cambridge in particular offers scope for lawyers to split their time between there and London, hence again salaries can reflect this. The city also enjoys access to a broad range of technology and educational clients due to the number of specialist companies and start-ups based around the vicinity.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£130k - £300k + <i>(>£600k)*</i>
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£80k - £140k*
Legal Director	£60k - £100k*
8 yr +	£55k +*
5 - 7 yr	£48k - £60k*
2 - 4 yr	£39k - £52k
1 yr	£36k - £41k
NQ	£34k - £38k <i>(£50k +)</i>
Legal Executive	£30k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£55k - £250k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£45k - £100k
Legal Director	£55k - £80k
8 yr +	£45k +
5 - 7 yr	£38k - £60k
2 - 4 yr	£28k - £47k
1 yr	£27k - £40k
NQ	£25k - £37k
Legal Executive	£25k +

NB salaries marked with an asterisk indicate that, although a 'standard' range is shown, remuneration in this bracket can be skewed considerably due to the presence of large London firms having an office in the region and paying salaries far above what the typical regional player may be offering. Figures in italics give a better idea of the likely remuneration at one of those sorts of firms.

REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

North West England

As with the Yorkshire market, the North West benefits from having two distinct and major legal centres in Liverpool and Manchester, with many major national and international players having a presence in one or both cities. Due to the excellent transport links to Manchester there is also the possibility for high calibre lawyers in both Sheffield and Leeds to commute to the area as well, hence the talent pool which the firms can 'fish' in is considerable. Smaller and high street firms have found life a little more difficult post-Jackson but there are still impressive and boutique players in the market which continue to punch above their weight and which seek to attract the best talent accordingly.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£120k - £525k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£120k +
Legal Director	£60k - £110k
8 yr +	£60k +
5 - 7 yr	£46k - £60k
2 - 4 yr	£41k - £48k
1 yr	£39k - £43k
NQ	£37k - £41k
Legal Executive	£35k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£75k - £300k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£50k - £120k
Legal Director	£44k - £66k
8 yr +	£41k +
5 - 7 yr	£35k - £50k
2 - 4 yr	£31k - £43k
1 yr	£28k - £36k
NQ	£25k - £34k
Legal Executive	£25k +

REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

North East England

Newcastle remains the main centre of legal excellence in the area boasting branch offices of several national firms. As a rule of thumb, salaries in this area fall slightly behind that of Yorkshire and many candidates choose to make the journey south for better remuneration.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£105k - £280k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£95k +
Legal Director	£55k - £95k
8 yr +	£55k +
5 - 7 yr	£44k - £55k
2 - 4 yr	£37k - £44k
1 yr	£37k - £41k
NQ	£36k - £41k
Legal Executive	£29k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£60k - £175k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£50k - £120k
Legal Director	£44k - £66k
8 yr +	£41k +
5 - 7 yr	£35k - £46k
2 - 4 yr	£31k - £40k
1 yr	£26k - £34k
NQ	£25k - £32k
Legal Executive	£25k +

REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

Yorkshire

The Yorkshire market has continued to prove buoyant as a number of prominent national and international firms have large and successful offices based in the region, and as such considerable remuneration packages are on offer for the best talent, particularly in the commercial disciplines. With Yorkshire covering the Leeds, Sheffield and York centres, plus many lawyers working with prominent Manchester or Lincolnshire firms residing in the vicinity, it continues to attract high calibre individuals seeking top drawer work typical of many London firms, but without the need to relocate to the South East.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£120k - £475k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£115k +
Legal Director	£60k - £110k
8 yr +	£60k +
5 - 7 yr	£46k - £60k
2 - 4 yr	£41k - £48k
1 yr	£39k - £43k
NQ	£37k - £41k
Legal Executive	£35k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£75k - £300k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£50k - £120k
Legal Director	£44k - £66k
8 yr +	£41k +
5 - 7 yr	£35k - £50k
2 - 4 yr	£31k - £43k
1 yr	£28k - £36k
NQ	£25k - £34k
Legal Executive	£25k +

REGIONAL LAW FIRMS

Wales

Swansea and primarily Cardiff remain the main commercial legal centres in the South Wales area attracting the highest salary levels with many people commuting from the latter over the bridge from Bristol and vice versa. In North Wales there are no obvious main hubs but offers a talent pool that supplies the law firms of Liverpool and Chester, as well as a range of local high street firms which generally have well-established and loyal client bases.

Top 100 Firm

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£175k - £350k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£75k - £125k
Legal Director	£60k +
8 yr +	£55k +
5 - 7 yr	£45k - £55k
2 - 4 yr	£38k - £49k
1 yr	£35k - £42k
NQ	£35k - £40k
Legal Executive	£30k +

Firms outside Top 100

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£75k - £180k +
Salary/Fixed Share Partner	£65k - £100k
Legal Director	£50k +
8 yr +	£45k +
5 - 7 yr	£40k - £50k
2 - 4 yr	£35k - £45k
1 yr	£28k - £35k
NQ	£25k - £30k
Legal Executive	£23k +



LONDON LAW FIRMS



US Law Firms

The US law firms dominate the upper end of the salary bracket, with a number paying their newly-qualifieds in excess of £100k. This continues throughout the various levels of seniority although does come at a price, as associates at all levels are expected to record billings considerably in excess of those demanded at their UK peers.

The US firms all naturally enjoy an international platform and thus London is typically far from being their largest office, although many have continued to grow and develop their UK offering. As such the quality of work tends to be exceptional, with many Fortune 500 and international blue-chips featuring prominently in the client list

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£650k - £2.7mil. +
Salaried Partner	£350k - £555k
Legal Director	£150k - £275k
Of Counsel	£150k - £255k
8 yr +	£150k - £375k
5 - 7 yr	£130k - £265k
2 - 4 yr	£100k - £195k
1 yr	£94k - £170k
NQ	£92k - £150k

Magic Circle Law Firms

The 'Magic Circle' law firms continue to offer high quality work and the highest salaries of the UK-based players. Although salaries have increased in an effort to ward off the lure of the US firms, there is still a talent drain within the City as non-partners consider making a move to the highest bidder.

Remuneration does however remain competitive by anyone's standards, and the draw of working for one of the most established names within the UK legal sector does continue to ensure that there is considerable interest from those looking to join, although moves to some firms at lateral/partner level tends to be rare.

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£499k - £2mil. +
Salaried Partner	£200k - £380k
Legal Director	£120k - £180k
Of Counsel	£110k - £160k
8 yr +	£120k - £180k
5 - 7 yr	£105k - £150k
2 - 4 yr	£80k - £125k
1 yr	£72k - £93k
NQ	£65k - £79k

Silver Circle/Top Tier City Firms

Filling the space immediately below the Magic Circle there are a number of very highly-regarded City practices which similarly enjoy client bases of an excellent quality and offering remuneration to match. Although the quality of firms is often a match (and indeed on occasion exceeds) the quality of legal advice from the Magic Circle firms, the remuneration is usually a fraction lower than that available at the more prestigious players.

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£350k - £1.6mil. +
Salaried Partner	£180k - £270k
Legal Director	£100k - £160k
Of Counsel	£100k - £150k
8 yr +	£105k - £165k
5 - 7 yr	£95k - £138k
2 - 4 yr	£80k - £110k
1 yr	£68k - £76k
NQ	£65k - £74k

West End Firms

The West End firms offer a high level of legal expertise but are often slightly more niche or boutique than their City counterparts. There may be a more full service offering as opposed to a concentration on commercial law, with niche HNW private client and matrimonial firms rubbing shoulders with smaller regional firms which may be headquartered outside London but remain keen to have a presence in the capital to service London-based clients.

PQE	Average Range
Equity Partner	£300k - £1mil. +
Salaried Partner	£150k - £270k
Legal Director	N/A
Of Counsel	N/A
8 yr +	£82k - £120k
5 - 7 yr	£60k - £95k
2 - 4 yr	£46k - £74k
1 yr	£42k - £60k
NQ	£38k - £55k