

SACCOMANN ✖

Legal Salary Survey

2025 / 2026

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Sacco Mann's Legal Salary Survey 2025 / 2026

As we move into late 2025, the UK legal market is showing a new phase of maturity. After several years of volatility — from sharp post-pandemic salary hikes to subsequent slowdowns — 2025 has seen a clearer “levelling out” across much of the legal sector. Salaries are still rising, but at a slower, more sustainable pace, with the most pronounced changes concentrated in specific pockets of the market.

At the top end, a handful of leading international firms have continued to edge NQ salaries upward, but the “mega rises” of previous years are largely behind us. National firms are increasingly narrowing the gap, and some firms have shown more willingness to “break bandings” for standout lawyers, particularly in areas where demand has outstripped supply.

One notable international law firm decided not to increase its NQ salary this year at all; to allow for a widening of the gap with mid-level and senior lawyers, but salary compression remains a live issue across the wider market, especially at Associate level. Many mid-level lawyers continue to feel that an appropriate gap between junior and senior salaries has not been restored since the steep increases at NQ level in 2022/23. Some firms have tried to address this with targeted uplifts, but frustration persists where workloads have grown without commensurate financial recognition.

Economic and political uncertainty, alongside a still steady but unspectacular transactional market, means firms remain cautious about profitability. This has led to tighter financial management, closer scrutiny of new hires, and in some cases, revised bonus structures. Bonus pools were notably thinner in 2024 for some larger practices, though there is cautious optimism that improving pipelines in 2025/26 will see more predictable rewards returning. Some firms, with traditionally strong bonus pots, have reallocated some of that into higher salaries to make themselves more competitive — believing that lawyers value the certainty of salary over the variability of a bonus.

The ripple effect of higher major firm salaries continues to filter through to mid-tier commercial firms and in-house teams, though many employers in these spaces continue to lean heavily on their broader proposition: quality of work, work-life balance, and career progression. For exceptional talent, however, it's clear that salary ceilings remain flexible, with more firms prepared to go beyond “standard” bandings.

There is a strong appetite for senior hires, with many firms actively pursuing strategic appointments to round off their service offerings, broaden or deepen their reach, or support the launch of new offices. The appetite for these senior, high-impact hires is as strong as ever — if not stronger — as firms seek to strengthen their market position and prepare for long-term growth.

General practice and high street firms have seen modest growth, but the pay gap between these practices and larger commercial firms continues to widen.

Over the past year, salary growth for Chartered Legal Executives and Licensed Conveyancers has remained relatively steady. However, we have observed a broadening of salary bandings, driven in part by firms increasing offers to attract new talent in a competitive market. Balancing these rising offers with the need for internal equity remains a consistent challenge for employers.

In larger national firms, Chartered Legal Executives often receive lower remuneration compared to their solicitor counterpart, a disparity that has not been helped by the recent Mazur ruling. That said, many regional and smaller firms are offering more competitive and comparable salaries. Paralegal salaries continue to increase, largely driven by the increase in minimum wage at entry level.

Training opportunities remain a strong draw for junior candidates, with more firms offering internal training contracts and study support. While salary remains an important factor, the wider package — development, flexibility, and career pathway — is becoming increasingly decisive for candidates weighing up offers.

In-house salaries have stabilised but remain inconsistent across sectors and disciplines. While most in-house legal teams cannot compete with the upper quartile of private practice, many now benchmark against respected national firms outside the international elite. Flexibility, hybrid working and broader benefits continue to be strong differentiators for in-house roles, though candidates are more willing to move if pay progression stalls. Whilst commercial contracts expertise remains paramount, demand for employment, real estate, corporate and dispute resolution expertise is on the rise.

Overall, the picture for 2025/26 is one of greater stability but persistent complexity. Firms are under ongoing pressure to balance profitability with retention, and while headline-grabbing salary hikes are fewer, targeted uplifts, bonuses and broader benefits continue to play a vital role in securing and retaining talent. The market remains highly competitive, and the ability to attract and keep the best people will depend not just on salary, but on the full package firms can offer.

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Commercial Top 25

* there is a firm that pays in excess of the outlined salaries by up to £10,000 in Yorkshire and the North West, we have discounted them from this review to avoid skewing the figures

** there is one firm that pays in excess of the outlined salaries by £12,000 in Newcastle, we have discounted them from this review to avoid skewing the figures

	Yorkshire	North West	Midlands	North East
Level of Qualification	Low – High*	Low - High	Low – High	Low – High**
Newly Qualified Solicitor	£65,000 - £72,500	£65,000 - £72,500	£65,000 - £85,000	£53,000 - £60,000
Solicitor - 1 year PQE	£67,000 - £76,000	£67,000 – £76,000	£67,000 – £87,000	£55,000 - £68,000
Solicitor - 2 years PQE	£69,000 - £77,000	£69,000 - £77,000	£69,000 - £90,000	£60,000 - £70,000
Solicitor - 3 years PQE	£70,000 - £79,000	£70,000 - £79,000	£71,000 - £92,000	£62,000 - £74,000
Solicitor - 4 years PQE	£72,000 - £82,000	£72,000 - £82,000	£73,000 - £95,000	£65,000 - £75,000
Solicitor - 5 years PQE	£74,000 – £85,000	£74,000 - £85,000	£75,000 - £98,000	£70,000 - £80,000
Solicitor - 6 years PQE	£76,000 - £90,000	£76,000 - £90,000	£77,000 - £100,000	£75,000 - £85,000
Principal / Managing Associate	£80,000 - £100,000	£80,000 - £110,000	£80,000 - £105,000	£80,000 - £100,000
Legal Director	£100,000 - £140,000	£100,000 - £140,000	£100,000 - £170,000	£100,000 - £140,000
Salaried Partner	£120,000 - £200,000	£120,000 - £200,000+	£120,000+	£120,000+

Solicitors & Partners

Top 25-150

Significant Commercial, Public and Insurance Law Firms Nationally

* PI and Clinical Negligence are dealt with separately

	Yorkshire	North West	East Midlands	West Midlands	North East
Level of Qualification	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High
Newly Qualified Solicitor	£50,000 - £67,000	£50,000 - £67,000	£50,000 - £60,000	£50,000 - £67,000	£44,000 - £52,000
Solicitor - 1 year PQE	£51,000 - £68,000	£51,000 - £68,000	£52,000 - £64,000	£51,000 - £68,000	£45,000 - £53,500
Solicitor - 2 years PQE	£54,000 - £70,000	£54,000 - £70,000	£54,000 - £66,000	£53,000 - £70,000	£46,000 - £56,000
Solicitor - 3 years PQE	£55,000 - £71,000	£55,000 - £71,000	£55,000 - £68,000	£55,000 - £72,000	£47,000 - £60,000
Solicitor - 4 years PQE	£56,000 - £74,000	£56,000 - £74,000	£56,000 - £71,000	£57,000 - £74,000	£48,000 - £63,000
Solicitor - 5 years PQE	£60,000 - £77,000	£60,000 - £77,000	£58,000 - £74,000	£59,000 - £76,000	£50,000 - £64,000
Solicitor - 6 years PQE	£65,000 - £80,000	£65,000 - £80,000	£60,000 - £78,000	£65,000 - £81,000	£52,000 - £70,000
Solicitor / Managing Associate	£70,000 - £90,000	£70,000 - £90,000	£63,000 - £91,000	£70,000 - £91,000	£64,000 - £80,000
Legal Director	£75,000 - £130,000	£75,000 - £130,000	£77,000 - £136,000	£75,000 - £136,000	£80,000 - £110,000
Salaried Partner	£85,000 - £200,000	£85,000 - £200,000	£85,000 - £200,000	£85,000 - £200,000	£100,000+

	Yorkshire	North West	Midlands	North East
Level of Qualification	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High
Newly Qualified Solicitor	£35,000 - £47,000	£35,000 - £45,000	£34,000 - £42,000	£35,000 - £40,000
Solicitor - 1 year PQE	£36,000 - £49,000	£36,000 - £47,000	£35,000 - £44,000	£35,000 - £43,000
Solicitor - 2 years PQE	£37,000 - £51,000	£37,000 - £50,000	£37,000 - £50,000	£37,000 - £45,000
Solicitor - 3 years PQE	£39,000 - £53,000	£39,000 - £53,000	£38,000 - £52,000	£38,000 - £48,000
Solicitor - 4 years PQE	£41,000 - £55,000	£41,000 - £55,000	£40,000 - £55,000	£40,000 - £50,000
Solicitor - 5 years PQE	£43,000 - £57,000	£43,000 - £57,000	£42,000 - £56,000	£44,000 - £52,000
Solicitor - 6 years PQE	£45,000 - £69,000	£45,000 - £69,000	£45,000 - £60,000	£45,000 - £58,000
Senior / Managing Associate	£48,000 - £68,000	£48,000 - £68,000	£50,000 - £65,000	£48,000 - £65,000
Legal Director	£58,000 - £87,000	£58,000 - £87,000	£60,000 - £85,000	£55,000 - £80,000
Salaried Partner	£68,000 - £115,000	£68,000 - £115,000	£70,000 - £105,000	£70,000 - £110,000

Solicitors & Partners

General Practice Firms

	Yorkshire	North West	Midlands	North East
Level of Qualification	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High
Newly Qualified Solicitor	£30,000 - £36,000	£30,000 - £36,000	£30,000 - £40,000	£31,500 - £33,000
Solicitor - 1 year PQE	£32,000 - £38,000	£32,000 - £38,000	£32,000 - £42,000	£32,000 - £35,000
Solicitor - 2 years PQE	£33,000 - £42,000	£33,000 - £42,000	£34,000 - £44,000	£34,000 - £37,000
Solicitor - 3 years PQE	£34,000 - £44,000	£34,000 - £44,000	£34,000 - £46,000	£35,000 - £39,000
Solicitor - 4 years PQE	£36,000 - £46,000	£36,000 - £46,000	£35,000 - £48,000	£36,000 - £44,000
Solicitor - 5 years PQE	£38,000 - £48,000	£38,000 - £48,000	£38,000 - £50,000	£38,000 - £45,000
Solicitor - 6 years PQE	£40,000 - £52,000	£40,000 - £52,000	£40,000 - £52,000	£40,000 - £48,000
Senior / Managing Associate	£42,000 - £58,000	£42,000 - £58,000	£45,000 - £60,000	£44,000 - £56,000
Legal Director	£46,000 - £68,000	£46,000 - £68,000	£48,000 - £70,000	£46,000 - £66,000
Salaried Partner	£60,000 - £90,000	£60,000 - £90,000	£60,000 - £90,000	£60,000 - £90,000

Personal Injury & Clinical Negligence

Level of Qualification	Low - High
Solicitor NQ	£35,000 - £48,000
Solicitor 1 year PQE	£36,000 - £50,000
Solicitor 2 years PQE	£36,000 - £52,000
Solicitor 3 years PQE	£38,000 - £54,000
Solicitor 4 years PQE	£40,000 - £56,000
Solicitor 5 years PQE	£42,000 - £60,000
Solicitor 5 years PQE	£42,000 - £60,000
Senior Associate	£55,000 - £75,000
Legal Director	£65,000 - £90,000
Salaried Partner	£78,000 - £110,000

Chartered Legal Executives (Regions)

Trainee Chartered Legal Executive		Qualified Chartered Legal Executive
Area of Law	Low - High Salary	Low - High Salary
Personal Injury	£26,000 - £32,000	£35,000 - £65,000
Debt Recovery	£26,000 - £32,000	£30,000 - £52,000
Private Client	£28,000 - £35,000	£35,000 - £60,000
Commercial Property	£28,000 - £35,000	£35,000 - £55,000
Employment	£26,000 - £32,000	£35,000 - £60,000
Family	£26,000 - £30,000	£35,000 - £50,000
Residential Property	£28,000 - £32,000	£38,000 - £50,000
Commercial	£28,000 - £32,000	£38,000 - £55,000

Paralegals (Regions)

	0 - 2 years experience	2 - 3 years experience	3 - 4 years experience	5+ years experience
Area of Law	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High	Low - High
Personal Injury	£24,000 - £27,000	£26,000 - £32,000	£28,000 - £35,000	£32,000 - £45,000
Debt Recovery	£24,000 - £27,000	£26,000 - £32,000	£28,000 - £35,000	£32,000 - £45,000
Private Client	£24,000 - £26,000	£25,000 - £28,000	£27,000 - £32,000	£32,000 - £55,000
Commercial Property	£25,000 - £28,000	£25,000 - £30,000	£28,000 - £35,000	£35,000 - £40,000
Employment	£25,000 - £27,000	£26,000 - £28,000	£28,000 - £33,000	£35,000 - £45,000
Family	£24,000 - £25,000	£25,000 - £27,000	£27,000 - £30,000	£33,000 - £47,000
Residential Property	£24,000 - £25,000	£26,000 - £29,000	£26,000 - £35,000	£35,000 - £45,000
Commercial	£25,000 - £27,000	£26,000 - £28,000	£29,000 - £35,000	£33,000 - £50,000

Other Considerations

What factors impact salary bandings?

As you will see from the salary figures, the bandings are quite broad and there are a variety of factors that impact on where any individual lawyer could sit within these bandings.

Area of Practice:

It is not unusual for firms to pay different levels of salary dependent on practice area. Whilst it is not always consistent across the board, it is often the case that more commercial disciplines command higher salaries.

Market forces also directly impact salary levels, if there is a shortage of quality candidates, firms are prone to pay a higher basic and, where available, more attractive bonuses.

At the time of writing, it's fair to say that there are a lot of areas which are under pressure and have been for some time. Whilst most areas are challenging to recruit into, those under particular pressure at the time of writing are:

- Employment
- Commercial Property (which has been steadier this year but has still seen pockets of activity)
- Corporate (like property – this has been slower in 2025, but demand is starting to rise)
- Commercial
- Commercial Litigation (and niche areas of dispute resolution e.g. property litigation)
- Niche areas e.g. Tax, Pensions, Banking, Construction
- Private Client

Individual Skills & Capabilities:

Irrespective of demand or sector it is possible for an individual to impact on their earnings, we consistently see exceptional candidates being rewarded beyond what could be expected within the market. In our experience they do so for a range of reasons, the most frequent/important being:

- Input in wider projects
- Management input
- Business Development
- Client management
- Exceptional Fee Earning
- Potential

Most often it is a combination of the above. We also see people who simply work and perform beyond their 'PQE' being effectively treated, for financial and other reasons, as someone of more seniority.

Benefits

Bonuses:

There is a fairly even split between those who offer a bonus and those who don't, what is clear though is that they are increasingly of importance to individuals. The vast majority of bonuses are non-contractual, and these can be linked to salary, individual or company performance. We have seen several firms overhaul bonus schemes in 2025.

Commercial Firms: Some firms offer clear contractual bonuses however most are discretionary. Some are purely financially driven, others include a review of wider activities such as assisting with internal projects, excellent client services, strong business development etc. Many individuals prefer bonuses that they can more readily identify and consequently some are less enthusiastic about those that rely upon the firm or department achieving specified targets but would rather them be driven by their own performance. Equally, some firms have expressed concern that individual bonuses may encourage behaviours that aren't necessarily team and firm spirited. It can also be the case that some firms have additional bonuses at more senior levels, for example Senior Associate and Legal Director level.

Bonuses tied to chargeable hours can be extremely lucrative in some commercial firms – some offer up to c. 30 or 35% of salary, but this of course requires a high level of output in terms of chargeable work.

General Practices: Again, there is a mixed story, however it tends to be volume driven areas of work attract bonuses more frequently within general practices.

Currently approximately 50% of our clients offer bonuses, however we are seeing some firms offer them where they previously hadn't. It will be interesting to see if this continues...

Welcome payments:

A 'Golden hello' or relocation allowance is something we found to be quite prevalent in the post pandemic market, but something we have seen less of recently. They are still sometimes available within high demand areas in commercial firms and can be used as a way of enticing people on board, or to help them bridge the gap between London or overseas salaries and those in the regions. They are not just made when people are relocating. Over the past few years, we have also seen an increasing number of firms offering to 'buy' people out of their enhanced maternity leave claw backs, meaning that they don't need to return to their old firm, and firms compensating for pending bonus payments to allow people to commit earlier rather than delay resignations to protect their bonus. This trend slowed in 2024 and again in 2025 amidst a steadier market, but we think that most firms would still be willing to pull out the stops for exceptional candidates – particularly at a senior level. As demand starts to pick back up it will be interesting to see if more of this occurs.

Private Medical Insurance:

Whilst the vast majority of national and regional commercial firms will offer health insurance to their lawyers and an increasing number of mid-tier firms are offering this, many smaller firms still don't. Those that do offer it usually offer to cover other family members for an additional but competitive cost, a few already include this.

Pensions:

Since the introduction of auto enrolment minimum contributions have increased to 8% in total including 5% from the employee. Some firms offer a further enhancement in statutory minimums, but these vary greatly:

- Commercial Firms— most pay c5% - however we have encountered one firm that pays 13%!
- General Practices —there is greater variance here, but we are finding an increasing number paying up to 5%
- Employers usually require their contributions to be matched where they offer an enhanced contribution.

Death in Service Benefits:

Death in Service Benefits vary greatly; many firms do offer it but the amount of benefit on offer varies significantly, and again often smaller practices don't offer this benefit. The minimum amount was 1 x salary, and the highest level of benefit was 7 x salary. In some cases, this can be enhanced via flexible benefits packages, in some it was linked to membership of the Pension Scheme.

Critical Illness Cover and Income Protection:

- This is a benefit far more likely to be available to Partners /Directors than to all staff.
- We don't have evidence of any firm offering this benefit on an all-staff basis. These benefits are also often part of a flexible benefits package.

Parking:

As you would probably expect, this is a benefit that is generally only available to fee-earning and senior staff, particularly for City Centre roles. However, increasingly firms offering a salary sacrifice scheme to assist staff with parking costs, or indeed arrange discounted parking. We have seen a few firms phase parking out to support their ESG strategy.

Flexible Benefits:

Firms are looking at flexible benefits far more closely. With the emphasis that many lawyers are putting on work—life balance, flexible benefits packages are becoming more common. Generally, these give employees the ability to choose to 'buy' additional holidays, or elect to put their benefits fund into enhanced pensions, parking, pay for additional family health care or other benefits. The most common flexible benefit is the opportunity to buy or sell holiday. Normally this would be a maximum of one week and if buying the cost would be spread across the year via deductions from salary.

Flexible and Remote Working:

Flexible and remote working were slowly becoming more commonplace in the legal sector, but its implementation was hugely accelerated by the pandemic. Remote working policies do vary firm to firm and even between teams in some cases, but the norm in most firms is a hybrid of home and office working, with the majority asking lawyers to come into the office two or three days a week. In some cases, firms are viewing the ability to work remotely as an opportunity to cast a wider net for recruitment, on the basis that a new recruit based further afield may be

able to attend the office just one day a week, or perhaps even less. Some of the larger firms have allowed leaders to decide what works best for their individual teams and in some cases, this has seen decisions being made for the whole team to work entirely remotely – with office attendance only required for meetings. The process of embedding remote working policies has not been straightforward, with firms needing to strike a balance between offering sufficient flexibility to those that require it and being able to offer appropriate support and learning to juniors, who learn so much by osmosis from being around a team and are generally required to attend the office more frequently than experienced Lawyers. Whilst hybrid working is very much still the norm as above (and we are sure it will continue to be), there has been a slight shift in 2025 towards getting lawyers back into the office a little more. There are pockets of firms requiring 100% office attendance for Lawyers although this does now present a challenge from a recruitment perspective. Flexible working is now also quite commonplace in the legal sector, with firms generally happy to consider adjusted start / finish times, compressed hours etc. although this won't work in every case and client needs will always be the primary consideration.

Maternity Benefits:

Enhanced maternity benefits have been available within the larger National firms and we are now seeing an increasing number of regional, mid-tier commercial and larger general practices offering enhanced payments. Enhanced maternity benefits are usually linked to a minimum length of service with some form of repayment scheme in the event that a specified time period is not completed following a return from maternity leave. These usually range from anywhere between 3 to 12 months. Sums offered vary, with the first 12-15 weeks being paid at full normal salary and the remaining weeks of leave being paid at a lower percentage. We have come across a small number of firms who are now paying 6 months full pay. At some firms there is also the potential for longer serving members of staff to receive a 'return to work bonus', payable 3 months after the employee has returned to work. Paid time off for ante natal appointments for men is also becoming more widely available.

Pre-Maternity Leave:

We have seen one higher tier firm in particular offering up to 5 days full pay for time off for IVF treatment, while others are allowing time off for pre-natal appointments

Enhanced Adoption Pay:

Many larger firms offer this, most mirroring enhanced maternity leave

Paternity Benefits:

We have seen it becoming increasingly common for firms to offer enhanced benefits for employees with a minimum length of service (we have seen this range from 26 weeks to 52 weeks). This is usually in the form of full normal salary for the first week of Paternity leave and statutory Paternity Pay in the second week. Aside from this, in some larger firms we have seen employers offering enhanced benefits of up to 4 weeks full pay to fathers. With regards to shared parental leave, this is a Statutory benefit that is being used more frequently.

Holiday Entitlement:

The average number of holidays is:

- 30 days for Partners/Directors

- 25 days for Solicitors and support staff

Many firms offer additional holiday for long service

Salary Reviews:

The vast majority of firms are awarding annual salary increases again but with there being quite significant differences in the size of the review, largely related to the factors mentioned earlier in this document.

Other Financial Benefits:

- Income Protection Insurance
- Voluntary Critical Illness Cover
- Introduction Rewards
- Enhanced Sick Pay Scheme
- Hospital Funds
- 'Health & Wellbeing' – many firms try and do more around this: fresh fruit, access to financial advice, psychological support, stop smoking clinics etc.
- Discounted Legal Advice

It is becoming more commonplace for emphasis to be placed on the wellbeing of employees as well as the more traditional financial rewards.

This can include things such as:

- Gym Allowance/ Gym on Site, Ride to Work Salary Sacrifice Schemes or app subscriptions e.g. Grokker
- Season Ticket Loans / Parking / Travel / Childcare Vouchers
- Sabbatical Leave (unpaid/paid)
- Corporate Social Responsibility Days
- Flu Vaccination Health Screening
- Occupational Health
- Access to Perkbox or similar
- Subsidised Restaurants
- Well-Being Programmes, Confidential Counsellor Sessions & Mindfulness Lectures / Classes
- Some larger firms offer discounted shopping schemes with major high street stores
- Easter Eggs, Advent calendars, Birthday cards / gifts / deduction of hours or the day off on your Birthday

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below...



Industry (Regions)

Level of Qualification	Low - High
Solicitor NQ - 2 years PQE	£50,000 - £68,000
Solicitor 3– 4 years PQE	£60,000 - £80,000
Solicitor 5 - 6 years PQE	£65,000 - £90,000
Solicitor 7+ years PQE	£70,000+
Legal Manager / Number 2	£90,000 - £120,000
Head of Legal	£110,000- £150,000
General Counsel / Company Secretary	£145,000 - £250,000

Salary Bandings for Industry Lawyers

Salary bandings for in-house legal roles have always been trickier to categorise than those in private practice — and that’s truer now than ever. In today’s market, wage growth remains inconsistent across both sectors and practice areas, making it increasingly difficult to benchmark accurately. The disparity in pay — even at similar levels of seniority — continues to be significant.

That said, we’ve seen signs of stabilisation this year. The turbulence that followed the pandemic appears to be levelling off, with salary increases in the in-house market becoming more predictable. While in-house teams still can’t typically compete with top-tier private practice salaries, more organisations are now offering packages that rival respected national law firms — especially outside of the major City players.

The In-House Advantage: Work/Life Balance:

One of the key advantages of moving in-house remains the improved work/life balance and hybrid working arrangements. As more law firms push for increased office presence, in-house legal teams often retain greater flexibility — though this can still vary by sector. What’s clear is that in-house environments tend to offer a stronger appreciation of flexibility and outcomes-based working. While flatter structures may mean fewer formal progression steps, this also means in-house lawyers are more willing to “vote with their feet,” making retention a key concern for employers.

Demand by Practice Area:

Commercial, non-contentious skill sets remain the most sought-after, especially at the junior end. While it can be difficult to hire strong candidates at the NQ level, we’re seeing a growing number of employers offering retraining opportunities, opening doors that were traditionally closed. This has helped maintain salary levels in some areas.

That said, demand is growing in other areas too — particularly:

- Real Estate
- Intellectual Property
- Governance
- Commercial Litigation
- Employment Law

This increased demand has, in turn, driven up salaries in these areas due to ongoing supply constraints.

PQE Levels in Demand:

The highest demand continues to be at the NQ–5 years PQE level — a consistent trend in the in-house market. Competition for talent at this level remains fierce, with both law firms and in-house teams hiring actively.

While the post-pandemic labour shortages have eased, and salary inflation has cooled somewhat, the market has settled into a more stable rhythm. Total compensation packages and bonus structures have remained broadly consistent with recent years, although we are seeing greater innovation — for example, EV schemes replacing more traditional car allowances.

In-House Market Outlook:

The in-house market remains strong. More businesses are bringing legal work in-house — not only to reduce external legal spend, but also to gain better commercial alignment and responsiveness. This continued growth is creating new opportunities at all levels, particularly for lawyers who value variety, visibility, and flexibility.

For a more tailored assessment of your current package or guidance on benchmarking your in-house legal team’s salaries, get in touch for a confidential conversation.

Industry Benefits: What to Expect When Moving In-House

Compensation packages for In-house legal roles vary significantly, just as they do in private practice. Contrary to common perception, larger organisations don’t always offer better benefits. However, it’s generally true that the more senior or strategically influential your role, the more comprehensive the benefits package tends to be.

Bonus:

Most (though not all) In-house roles include a performance-related bonus. These are typically calculated based on a combination of company-wide results and individual performance objectives. As a general guide:

- Junior to mid-level roles: 10%
- Manager to Senior Manager: 15%-20%
- Head of Legal / Director-level roles: 20%–60%

Car Allowance:

While traditional company car schemes are less common due to tax inefficiencies, many organisations now offer a cash allowance instead. The rise of electric vehicles (EVs) is starting to influence these benefits, though availability still depends heavily on the sector and company. For junior roles, car benefits are increasingly rare unless travel is a core part of the role.

Life Benefits:

Pension contributions in industry often outpace those in private practice, with some employers matching or even doubling/tripling employee contributions. Contributions of 15%–20% are not uncommon at the upper end. Additional benefits typically include:

- Death in Service: 2x–4x salary
- Private Medical Insurance: Often extendable to spouse and/or family

Leave and Flexibility:

Standard holiday entitlement is now typically 25 days, with many organisations offering the ability to buy or sell up to 5 days. Some also close during the Christmas period without requiring you to use annual leave — a small but much-appreciated perk!

Hybrid & Flexible Working:

Hybrid working remains the norm across most industries. However, more organisations are beginning to contractually require a set number of in-office days to support collaboration or business needs. A 60/40 office-to-home split is common, though the actual enforcement varies widely.

Crucially, flexibility around working arrangements has become one of the most important factors for lawyers when considering a move. It's vital to clarify expectations around hybrid/flexible working — both current and future — before accepting a new role.

That's where we come in. We work closely with both clients and candidates to ensure there's complete transparency around benefits, expectations, and culture — so there are no surprises down the line.

Our Manchester Office:

Email: website@saccomann.com

Telephone Number: 0161 831 6890

Manchester has a thriving and dynamic legal community that has long been accepted as the strongest regional city from a law perspective (and many would argue from every perspective). Our Manchester office has a depth of expertise that reflects this and clearly has one of the leading legal recruitment offerings in the region. We are currently working on roles in the following locations:

North West

West Midlands

Manchester

4 Hardman Street
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3HF

Our Leeds Office:

Email: website@saccomann.com

Telephone Number: 0113 245 3338

Our office in Leeds, with its reach spanning across Yorkshire, Newcastle and the North East, as well as the East Midlands, is a fundamental part of Sacco Mann. Since our establishment in 1997 we have become a trusted partner to all types of legal practice in these parts of the country. The long-term nature of these relationships ensures we have unparalleled access to the key decision makers and can provide our candidates with a depth of knowledge and context that ensures they can make the right career choices. We are currently working on roles in the following locations:

North East

Yorkshire

East Midlands

1 Broad Gate
The Headrow
Leeds
LS1 8EQ

All salary information included in our Salary Survey reflects basic salary information only; guaranteed bonuses, car allowances and other benefits which could be deemed to have a financial value have not been included in the data provided.