

Salary Guide 2023
- Legal

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2023



Welcome

Welcome to the Abacus Careers comprehensive Salary Guide for Legal Professionals in Northern Ireland. This guide is designed to provide you with an overview of current salary ranges in the local marketplace across various job roles and experience levels.

Despite the headwinds caused by the after effects of the pandemic, current global economic pressures and local political challenges, Northern Ireland has been experiencing consistent growth in employment numbers in the last 2 years. As of the end of 2022, there were 128,170 private sector businesses employing 552,000 people locally. 16% of these businesses reported that employment numbers had increased during the year with 43% expecting further employment number growth in 2023.

This continued economic growth paired with an increasing amount of remote working opportunities available to Northern Ireland based professionals, has created a high demand for skilled professionals. Competitive salary packages must now be being offered to attract and retain top talent. The demand for suitably qualified lawyers for commercial, corporate, litigation, banking & finance, and in-house positions based locally, has never been higher.

In this Salary Guide, we have compiled data from a range of reliable sources, including our own extensive network of industry professionals who are actively involved in hiring, to provide you with a comprehensive overview of salaries. We have included data on a range of job roles, from entry-level Solicitor positions to Associate and Senior Partner positions, across a variety of specialisations.

We understand that salary is an important factor when considering employment opportunities and when hiring, and we hope that this guide will provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions. Whether you are a recent graduate entering the workforce for the first time, an experienced professional seeking new opportunities, or involved in hiring or retaining talent, this guide will be a valuable resource for you.

Please note that the salary ranges provided in this guide are intended as a general overview and should be used as a starting point for salary negotiations. The actual salary offered may vary based on a variety of factors, including the specific job role, level of experience, and individual skills and qualifications.

Thank you for choosing the Abacus Salary Guide as your resource for navigating reward levels in the Northern Ireland market.



Alex Noble

MANAGER LEGAL RECRUITMENT

The tables below provide guidance on basic salary levels for a range of positions. No consideration of benefits, bonuses, or other emoluments is included in these ranges. The information has been summarised by the Legal Recruitment team at Abacus Careers and is based upon salary information provided by candidates in-post throughout 2022.

Private Practice: Qualified Solicitor

	Salary Average	Salary Low	Salary High
NQS	£ 33,000	£ 28,000	£ 36,000
PQE 1	£ 34,000	£ 30,000	£ 38,000
PQE 2	£ 36,000	£ 32,000	£ 40,000
PQE 3	£ 39,000	£ 34,000	£ 42,000
PQE 4	£ 41,000	£ 35,000	£ 45,000
PQE 5	£ 50,000	£ 40,000	£ 56,000
Associate (5-8 years)	£ 55,000	£ 48,000	£ 68,000
Snr Associate (7-9 years)	£ 63,000	£ 53,000	£ 73,000
Salaried Partner	£ 90,000	£ 75,000+	£ 125,000+
Equity Partner	£ TBC	£ TBC	£ TBC

Private Practice: Support and Non-Qualified

	Salary Average	Salary Low	Salary High
Paralegal / Law Grad	£ 23,000	£ 21,000	£ 26,000
Contract/Legal Analyst	£ 24,000	£ 22,000	£ 27,000
Exp (career) Paralegal	£ 30,000	£ 26,000	£ 33,000
Legal Secretary (1-4 years)	£ 25,000	£ 22,000	£ 30,000
Legal Secretary (5+ years)	£ 28,000	£ 26,000	£ 32,000

Non Practice & In-House

	Salary Average	Salary Low	Salary High
Jnr Solicitor (NQ-2)	£35,000	£30,000	£42,000
Mid-level Solicitor (2-4 years)	£40,000	£37,000	£48,000
Snr Solicitor (4-7 years)	£52,000	£44,000	£60,000
Team Leader / Manager (8+ years)	£58,000	£50,000	£65,000
Legal Director	£85,000	£70,000	£95,000
Head of Legal / GC	£90,000	£70,000	£120,000

For further advice or perspective on the information provided please contact one of the Legal Recruitment team who will be glad to assist.

Benefits & Total Reward

The number and range of employment benefits has risen considerably in recent years. Benefits play an important role in attracting and retaining top talent. With demand for talent in 2023 so acute, expect benefits to be wide-ranging.

Common elements of an offer of employment, outside of basic salary, can include; Pension contribution, Annual bonus, Professional fees, Exam support, Life Insurance, Health Cover, Company car, etc.

When considering a job offer it is best to take a moment and calculate the total reward being offered. We can best illustrate 'Total Reward' with an example. An offer of employment includes:

Basic Salary	£ 40,000
Employer Pension contribution 6%	£ 2,400
Annual bonus to 15%	£ 6,000
Life Insurance	£ 250
Company car allowance	£ 6,000
Total Reward	£ 54,650

This example assumes that a full 15% bonus is achieved.

Not all benefits have a measurable financial value...






















It is also very important to realise that a range of other benefits, which may not be directly attributable to a financial value, can be highly valuable to a potential employee. Examples of such benefits can be; promotion, change/increased responsibility, transferability, flexible start and finish times, work-from-home/flexible working arrangements, additional/enhanced holiday leave, learning and development opportunities, enhanced maternity/paternity leave, etc.

Below is a list of financial and non-financial benefits, that the team at Abacus Careers has seen offered by clients in the last 12 months. This list is comprehensive but not exhaustive, the important item to note is that one rule does not fit all in respect to benefits.

At different stages of our lives, we value certain benefits more than others...

Employer pension contributions are not a key focus for those at the early stages of their career, their focus tends to be maximising take-home pay. The best employers tend to have a strong base of core benefits for all staff to avail of, they then provide additional benefits for staff who perform at higher levels in the organisation. Taking time to bespoke the benefits offering is just as important as making the correct basic salary offer.

The Benefits List

 <p>Pension</p>	 <p>Cycle to work</p>	 <p>Car allowances</p>
 <p>Exam support</p>	 <p>Professional advice</p>	 <p>Childcare vouchers</p>
 <p>Paid study leave</p>	 <p>Company share scheme</p>	 <p>Paid for volunteering</p>
 <p>Discount scheme</p>	 <p>Paid overtime</p>	 <p>Clubs & Societies</p>
 <p>Gym membership</p>	 <p>Private/Subsided Healthcare</p>	 <p>Staff events</p>
 <p>Subsidised canteen/ vending</p>	 <p>Enhanced family policies</p>	 <p>Company Merchandise</p>
 <p>Laptop/Mobile phone</p>	 <p>Work travel/secondment</p>	 <p>Holiday Purchase</p>

Conclusion

In conclusion, this Legal services Salary Guide provides valuable information for individuals and organisations operating in Northern Ireland's job market. It highlights the prevailing salary ranges across various positions, allowing job seekers and employers to make informed decisions about compensation.

The Northern Ireland economy in 2022 has once again shown to be robust and able to handle the fallout of national and global pressures. Our strong and resilient SME and Micro business base (76% of NI businesses employ less than 250 people), continues to increase sales turnover and report improved business confidence. Couple this local push with ongoing investment from new and established International businesses gives a positive outlook for the year ahead. Legal support services are therefore continuing to see a growth in demand be it; employment, merger & acquisition, property or litigation related.

Several segments of the market are currently experiencing growth in salaries and new sub-segments are arriving with regularity. This positive trend is likely to continue as the economy stabilizes, and new entrants continue to search for top talent in safe and robust jurisdictions.

At a local level, the Northern Ireland region has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK at 2.5% and one of the lowest average weekly earnings levels. We predict further increases in basic salaries in the year ahead, firstly to ensure retention of current staff and secondly to support the attraction of new talent.

Another area of the labour market to reference is that of graduate talent, 2022 saw graduate hiring reach new heights, with range of industry sectors and job types for this group wider than ever. Large businesses and SME's have made a significant effort to capture talent earlier through investment in development programmes that will support their future growth. Again, we would estimate that the year ahead will see similar high demands for graduates in all disciplines, especially those with finance, business, law and technology bias.

Overall, this guide provides a comprehensive overview of salaries in Northern Ireland, which is a useful resource for both job seekers and employers. It underlines the importance of fair compensation, which not only benefits employees but also organizations, by attracting and retaining top talent, increasing productivity, and promoting long-term growth.

If you have a specific query on salary levels or a related matter, please contact any member of our team who will be happy to help.



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