

One of the tangible benefits of ILEX membership is the research we carry out with selected recruitment agencies to bring some focus on current salaries over a range of specialisms. Use the salaries for what they are, indicators, to help you see what is going on in a wider context. It is pleasing to see that the agencies reports show a good deal of optimism for the near future. As ILEX push for increased recognition and rights for it's members hopefully we will see even more demand for our paralegals, trainee legal executives and legal executive lawyers.

### North

	Student ILEX / Junior paralegal	Member of ILEX	Fellow
Personal injury	£15-20,000	£18-30,000	£25-50,000
Debt recovery	£14-20,000	£18-25,000	£20-40,000
Family	£14-18,000	£18-25,000	£25-40,000
Private client	£16-20,000	£20-28,000	£28-45,000
Property	£14-16,000	£16-20,000	£18-30,000
Employment	£16-21,000	£20-26,000	£25-40,000
Crime	£13-17,000	£16-22,000	£20-30,000

Last year was a time of redundancies and salary freezes, but 2011 has been a much more positive year for the legal profession. Salary reviews have restarted and the North has seen a large increase in the amount of recruitment activity. This hasn't meant increases in all disciplines, but on the whole, there is a feel of cautious optimism.

#### Personal injury

Business is booming in personal injury (PI) and this discipline has appeared pretty recession-proof. As a result, salaries for PI fee-earners have remained competitive. The defendant PI market, particularly in the north-west, continues to grow, with competition amongst the firms for the strongest candidates pushing up salaries. Claimant fee-earners' salaries are also pretty competitive, with both solid basic salaries and lucrative bonuses. The MoJ portal has started to impact on the level of recruits required, with more pre-litigated non-qualified fee-earner roles and fewer opportunities at the more senior end as cost is driving down the market.

#### Debt recovery

It's a mixed story for debt. Firms are busy but fee-earners have been required to work harder on files and monies have been difficult to recover. As a result, commercial debt has seen limited recruitment and little movement in salaries. Opportunities have tended to be at the larger practices, with a focus on property related debt at the paralegal and trainee legal executive level, but salaries have been on the low side.

### South

	Lower range	Upper range
Paralegal	£14,000	£25,000
Trainee legal executive	£15,000	£25,000
Legal executive (Member)	£22,000	£35,000
Legal executive (Fellow)	£28,000	£45,000
Paralegal (unqualified but fee-earning)	£20,000	£40,000
Conveyancers	£18,000	£40,000
Probate executives	£18,000	£45,000

#### Property

This year has been much more positive for property fee-earners, with an increase in recruitment activity in both residential and commercial property. However, salaries are still suffering. Many will have taken a cut when the recession hit and have found it difficult to return to the level they were used to. Practices are very much in the driving seat and are demanding only the best.

#### Private client

There is a steady job market for private client fee-earners, which peaked over the summer. Legal executives are well recognised in this discipline and salaries are excellent. As you would expect, there is an increased demand for those with high net-worth and tax experience and legal executives are paid on a par with solicitors.

#### Family

It's been a turbulent time for family legal executives, particularly for those on the publicly funded side of things after the LSC contract changes in 2010. Things appear to have settled down and firms are recruiting at all levels, although at the senior end of the market panel membership is preferred. Salaries have remained pretty static.

#### Crime

Opportunities in criminal law continue to be limited and salaries tend to be lower than in other disciplines. Those with police station accreditation are more attractive and salaries can be bumped up with out-of-hours work.

#### Employment

Employment teams have been busy over the last year and recruitment has been steady both for applicant and respondent legal executives. Those with a mixed bag of experience, including tribunal work, have a greater choice of opportunities and salaries reflect this experience.

As the market recovers practices are very aware that they need to keep an eye on salaries and naturally this is very supply and demand led. Interestingly, some of the large commercial practices are looking at moving away from PQE bandings and rewarding solicitors on delivery, something that legal executives have been used to for quite some time!

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**SaccoMann\***

We have seen a slow but solid increase in recruitment activity for legal executives over the past year.

Employers are still being cautious about hiring new staff and this is reflected in the salary level of offers made. Provided that the residential property does not deteriorate in the next 12 months, we expect this gradual improvement to continue. As ever, employers are keenest to hire new staff who they know will add value to their business.

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### East

	Student	Member	Fellow
All specialisms	£16-22,000	£20-35,000	£27-60,000+

The market has not moved on in terms of salary advancement over the last two years but certain areas of law are now seeing a renaissance where demand is growing once again.

#### Personal injury

This has remained strong throughout the recession but demand on the claimant side has moved away from the high street and towards larger personal injury departments, as has been the pattern nationally. Defendant insurance practices have seen an upswing in demand for fraud candidates in particular and opportunities abound for people with defendant experience across the region.

#### Property

This is now emerging from the doldrums of the recession, with more and more roles becoming available. Some firms wish to test the water by engaging on a locum or fixed-term basis initially so as not to overstretch themselves, but the outlook for conveyancing and remortgaging is looking better than at any time in the last three years.

#### Family

This has been very quiet as firms try and grapple with the LSC

### West

NB These are very much the averages. You would be looking at more in higher-paying areas such as Bristol, and less in the lower-paying areas such as Cornwall.

	Non-qualified (approaching fellowship)	Fellow
Commercial property	£20-26,000	£27,000+
Residential property	£18-25,000	£26,000+
Crime	£17-23,000	£24,000+
Personal injury	£18-27,000	£28,000+
Debt	£18-23,000	£24,000+
Family	£17-23,000	£24,000+
Private client	£18-26,000	£27,000+

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**Chadwick Nott**  
LEGAL RECRUITMENT, EXPERTLY PLACED

#### Commercial property

Although this took a substantial hit during the early part of the recession, it was far quicker to recover than residential property. There are still relatively fewer jobs around and many experienced candidates, so there is still a lot of competition for the roles around but firms are always willing to pay for strong candidates.

#### Residential property

Since the recession there has been a sharp rise in the number of Residential conveyancers out of work as there have been very few positions available. This has in turn driven salaries down as there is extreme competition for the few roles around.

#### Crime

A lot of crime work is legal aid, which means that salaries can be a lot lower than other practice areas as firms have to put a greater emphasis on cost. Crime is also a very competitive area of law, which generally drives salaries down.

franchising and funding issues. Childcare has been the busiest area of recruitment, with franchised firms trying to gain dominant positions in this marketplace.

#### Crime

Funding issues continue to hamper recruitment in this area of law. As ever, candidates with police station accreditation are the most attractive to recruit.

#### Debt

There have been consistent small amounts of activity in this sector, particularly for candidates who can handle commercial property defaults.

#### Private client

Signs are good that this is an area ripe for revival. Candidates who have STEP qualifications and tax experience are in particular demand.

#### Commercial/Corporate

Firms are restocking solicitors in the NQ-five year PQE bracket to rebuild their teams post-recession – slow moving at the moment but expected to gain momentum as we go through 2012.

#### Personal injury

PI has remained fairly buoyant throughout the recession, making it quite a secure place to be. There is always a need for experienced PI fee-earners and thus salaries tend to reflect this.

#### Debt

Surprisingly, this practice area did not boom through the recession as you may think it should. It has stayed fairly consistent, with salaries and job opportunities remaining similar.

#### Family

Family law is another competitive area, which can mean salaries are often lower than other practice areas.

#### Private client

Firms tend to pay high salaries to experienced wills and probate Fellows. It is a common area to find experienced legal executives doing very well and there is always a need for strong individuals in this area.