



NQ LAWYERS' HANDBOOK 2026

From qualification to real
world success

Unlocking your legal career

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A detailed breakdown of our team, their specialisms, and prior experience, along with links to their LinkedIn profiles, can be found here: [Meet the Team](#).

The BCL Legal NQ Lawyers' Handbook is released annually to provide you with a comprehensive guide in the lead up to qualification.

Partnering with BCL Legal gives you access to a full range of opportunities enabling you to make informed decisions now and in the future.

Congratulations on getting this far! May we take this opportunity to wish you well in your future career.



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Hello, we are...



**We've placed over 13,000+
Lawyers since 2003**

We're a specialist legal consultancy and pride ourselves in thoroughly understanding the markets you may want to work in as an NQ.

We have teams of consultants covering the whole of the UK & Ireland. We also work with offshore law firms, those in the Middle East and USA. We're committed to providing the highest possible service to you and our clients.

We work in partnership with private practice firms, large blue chip organisations and the public sector to help you find your ideal post qualification opportunity.

We have over 20 years' of experience and a leading reputation for quality: placing the right person into the right role.

If you would like to benefit on a one-to-one chat or you'd like to meet us in person, please contact us...



BCL Legal represents lawyers at all levels of their career: from Paralegal to Partner. Our work goes far beyond filling a job role; our approach respects the bigger picture, carefully considering our candidates' personal motivations and career aspirations and our client's organisational culture and business goals.

Over 60% of our consultant team are from a legal background. Our team of consultants work in one specific lateral market and geographical patch, allowing them to become true market specialists.

They will be able to offer you tailored market & job search advice, insights and up-to-date NQ salary survey information.

Email: info@bcllegal.com



What lawyers say about us...



“ Working with BCL Legal back when I was an NQ marked the beginning of my career. Not only was I fresh out of training, but I was also looking to relocate in the UK. BCL Legal were able to secure me an interview with one of the world’s largest law firms. The team at BCL Legal were very much in my corner, regularly checking in and helping me to prepare for what was at the time my biggest and most important job interview yet. Looking back, my journey very much started with BCL Legal and I’ve a lot to be grateful for.

My advice to anyone who is an NQ and looking to set off on their career journey is to keep your options open and explore all possible opportunities. There are so many job opportunities out there and finding the right role in the right firm is key. Register with legal recruitment consultants and let them know exactly what you want from your career, both in the interim and long term. Give yourself plenty of time to scout the market and do your research. By doing this you will give yourself options and there won’t be any missed opportunities.

Lucy Benton
Commercial Property Lawyer
Senior Associate at Harrison Drury & Co

“ I found attending (NQ) events, speaking to recruiters and building relationships very helpful. The NQ process is a uniquely uncertain point in your career, so if nothing else just speaking to people with lots more experience than you can be psychologically beneficial. Developing relationships with recruiters can also help you to feel as though you’re doing something to shape the process, rather than feeling like you have no control.

Be prepared to be flexible. For example, if you know you like a particular practice area, you may need to look at firms or locations that are not at the top of your wish list. Your NQ role does not define your career and there will be opportunities to alter your direction and get to where you want to be.

It is remarkable how many variables are at play in your early career, and how quickly things can change. There is no right or wrong way forward, and you’ll be fascinated by the diversity of career paths among your law school friends and training peers in five years’ time.

James England
Employment Lawyer
Managing Associate at Mishcon de Reya LLP



Navigating your options

Ahead of qualification, you're likely to fall into one of the following categories:



01. Staying at your firm

You've been offered the ideal role with your current employer.

02. Keeping your options open

You're competing with your colleagues for one or more vacancies with your current employer, or you simply haven't been told if you'll have a job on qualification.

03. Get job hunting

The job you want isn't available with your current employer, or you wish to leave your current firm.

04. Something different

You're hoping to go abroad, work inhouse, or as a locum.

05. Something completely different

You want to leave the legal profession.

What are your long term career goals?



As a newly qualified lawyer, think about your long-term career path:

As you approach qualification, it's important to consider the future direction of your career. Choosing the right practice area for your qualification is crucial for your longterm happiness and success. While colleagues and team dynamics matter, your interest in the work itself will be the only constant in your career. Your team will inevitably change over time.

Take time to think about the following:

- In-house or overseas?

Many lawyers choose in-house roles after a few years to achieve better work-life balance or to focus on commercial legal work. Moving abroad can offer valuable experience, and international roles are highly sought after.

- Aspiring to partnership?

If partnership is your ultimate goal, ensure you qualify into a practice area and firm with a clear route to partnership

- Work flexibility

Consider whether you want more flexibility in the future. Some practice areas or employers offer more flexibility in terms of hours and remote working.

- Non-fee-earning roles

If you prefer a non-fee-earning role, areas like Professional Support Lawyer (PSL), knowledge management, or business development may appeal. These positions typically offer a great balance and rewarding work without the pressure of billable hours.

Planning now will help you set your sights on a fulfilling, long-term career.

Navigating your options

Staying at your firm

If you've been offered your ideal role with your current employer, congratulations! This is an excellent outcome, especially if the role aligns with your long-term goals. However, if you're still uncertain, it's important to communicate openly with your firm to ensure you're on track for qualification in the right area. Consider reaching out to BCL Legal for the latest salary data, market trends, and advice.

If the role offered at your current firm doesn't align with your aspirations, carefully consider whether to accept it. The work you do as a newly qualified lawyer will shape your career, so choose a position that excites you. Don't hesitate to explore other options if you're unsure.

Keeping your options open

If you're still waiting to hear back about a qualified role at your firm/employer, don't panic. BCL Legal is here to help, with access to hundreds of legal job opportunities in private practice, and commerce and industry.



Get in touch with one of our specialist legal recruitment consultants for a confidential chat about your situation, and they will provide you with tailored advice and guidance on how to manage the NQ job search.

You can also check BCL Legal's job board, which is updated daily with new opportunities.

Additionally, you can sign up for job alerts via our 'job streamer' to receive real-time updates on roles that match your preferences. Keep in mind that many firms prefer to hire lawyers they've trained, which can limit external vacancies until after their internal recruitment process concludes. If you rely on your firm to retain you when you qualify, you're at risk of 'missing the boat' as some firms won't make offers until as late as August.

However, you can position yourself for success by staying proactive, getting registered with us at least six months before qualification, and searching for opportunities in areas you're passionate about.

Navigating your options



Something different?

If you're thinking about roles outside of traditional private practice, in-house positions or locum roles may be attractive alternatives. In-house work offers a unique career trajectory, often focusing on strategic, non-contentious legal work such as contracts, risk management, and corporate governance. Many in-house roles require at least a year of PQE, but there are opportunities for NQs, especially in large companies with established legal teams.

Locum work offers flexibility, exposure to different practice areas, and often the chance to work with prestigious clients or on high-profile matters. Locum roles may be temporary, but they can provide the variety and experience that can boost your career.

Get job hunting...

If you decide to look for opportunities outside of your current firm, BCL Legal can support you throughout your job search. With one of the largest legal job boards in the UK, we provide direct access to hundreds of jobs across all legal sectors. You can sign up for job alerts that match your criteria to stay informed about new opportunities.

We also offer valuable resources in our Knowledge Base, including CV templates, the latest Salary Survey results, and general advice to help you secure the right job.



Navigating your options



The law isn't for you after all

For some, the legal profession may not feel like the right fit. If you've decided to pivot away from law, there are plenty of options available. Many lawyers transition into business development, legal education, legal recruitment, or compliance. Non-fee-earning roles such as Professional Support Lawyer (PSL), knowledge management, or even teaching law at universities can offer rewarding career paths with a good work-life balance but tend to require a few years of time in practice first.

BCL Legal can also assist in career transitions, providing insights into alternative career options for lawyers who choose to leave private practice.

Staying in the loop



BCLLegal.com is one of the largest legal **jobs boards** in the UK and we update it with new opportunities on a daily basis. At any one time, we have hundreds of legal jobs in each region within private practice, public sector organisations and commerce and industry.

You can sign up to legal job alerts via our '**Job Streamer**', where you'll receive job information that matches your selected criteria. This way, you're regularly informed of jobs in real-time – as and when we receive instructions from our law firm and company clients.

You'll also find CV templates, the latest Salary Survey results, and general and useful information to assist you in securing the perfect job in our '**Knowledge Base**'.

CV advice



A well-crafted CV is essential to securing the right role. As a newly qualified (NQ) lawyer, your CV will likely form the first impression your potential employer has of you. Make sure it highlights your experience, skills, and achievements in a clear and compelling manner. Here are some key tips for creating an effective CV:

Detail your employment with bullet points

Structure your CV clearly

Your CV should have a clear and concise structure, making it easy for potential employers to navigate. Stick to a simple format and ensure that the most relevant information is presented upfront. The sections of your CV should typically include:

- Contact Information
- Personal Statement (optional but useful for highlighting your career ambitions and key skills)
- Professional Experience (detailing your seats and the work you've done)
- Education and Qualifications
- Skills (technical and soft skills)
- Interests and Personal Activities
- References (optional)

Under each role or seat, detail your experience in bullet points. This will help break down your responsibilities and achievements in an easily digestible format. Focus on your tasks, the clients you worked with, and the specific legal issues you handled. Ensure your experience is relevant to the position you're applying for.

For example:

Corporate seat:

Assisted with multi-million-pound mergers and acquisitions for blue-chip companies, providing due diligence and drafting shareholder agreements.

Dispute resolution seat:

Managed client relationships and drafted pleadings for commercial litigation cases, including a high-value breach of contract claim.

CV advice

Highlight your preferred practice area

It's important to demonstrate your interest and expertise in the area you wish to qualify into. Be sure to describe the work you've done in that area in more detail, even if it's just a portion of your training.

- Spend more time describing the work done in that team that aligns with your desired qualification. For instance, if you want to qualify into the corporate department, focus on the M&A transactions or the corporate advisory work you've been involved in.
- Don't hesitate to mention specific cases or transactions that are significant, especially those you were actively involved in. Employers will often focus on these during interviews.

Be honest and accurate

It's essential to be honest and accurate when describing your experience. Over-exaggerating your responsibilities or involvement can lead to awkward questions in interviews if you're caught out. Instead, focus on what you have contributed to the work, and don't be afraid to mention any achievements, even if they were part of a team effort. Employers are looking for genuine enthusiasm and integrity.



- For example, if you assisted in a high-profile merger, make sure to mention the deal's value, the client's name (if confidentiality allows), and your role in the process.

Don't worry about length, but be concise

While it's generally recommended that CVs should be no longer than two or three pages, if your experience requires more space, it's acceptable for your CV to run over. What's important is that the content remains relevant, factual, and clear. Ensure that every line adds value to your application and that the format is easy to read.

CV advice



Use a professional CV template

While it's important to make your CV personal and unique, using a wellorganised, professional CV template is a good idea, especially if you're unsure how to structure your CV. You can find a suitable template on our website.

[Click here to view our NQ CV template.](#)

Incorporate business development and marketing

If you've been involved in any business development or marketing activities, be sure to highlight them. Firms increasingly value these skills, especially for those seeking to progress into senior roles. This could include tasks like preparing pitch documents, client meetings, or contributing to marketing campaigns

- For example, you could say, **"Assisted in the development of marketing materials for a successful pitch to a leading international client."**

Personal interests matter

Including a section on your interests is an important part of the CV process, particularly as an NQ. Not only does it give interviewers insight into your personality, but it also offers an opportunity to build rapport during interviews. Make sure you're prepared to talk about these interests, especially if they demonstrate skills relevant to the role you're applying for.

- For example, interests like **"Leading a volunteer legal clinic"** could highlight organisational or leadership skills, while **"Running a personal blog on corporate law developments"** could indicate your interest in the legal sector.

Interview advice



Once your CV gets you through the door, the interview is your chance to demonstrate your suitability for the role and fit within the firm. Proper preparation is key to making a great impression and securing the job. Here are some tips to ensure you're fully prepared:

First impressions matter:

It may sound obvious, but making a great first impression is essential. It's important to look professional, polished, and confident. Wear a well-fitted suit, polished shoes, and ensure your personal grooming is neat. Even for a virtual interview, make sure your appearance is professional and your environment is tidy. Good lighting and clear sound are also crucial for a virtual setting.

Research the firm

Before your interview, make sure you've done your homework on the firm. This will allow you to ask informed questions and demonstrate your genuine interest in the role. Key things to research include:

- The firm's practice areas and the types of clients they serve.
- Any recent deals or cases the firm has been involved in.
- The firm's values and culture, which you can often find on their website or social media pages.
- Legal rankings in The Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners, as well as recent publications in legal trade press.

Know your CV inside and out:

Your CV forms the basis of any interview. Review it thoroughly beforehand so you can discuss every part with ease. Be ready to talk in detail about the cases or transactions you have worked on, as these are likely to be the focus of the interview. Take a copy of your CV to the interview or have it open in front of you during a virtual meeting. This will help you refer to specifics, if needed.



Interview questions

Prepare your answers to the questions below. Ensure you don't waffle your answers, try to give real examples whilst being brief and to the point. The questions will often be (deliberately) open-ended to make sure your answer isn't a simple yes or no. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the questions you may be asked.



- Why are you not being retained on qualification? Why do you want to leave the firm you've trained with?
- What do you enjoy about your current role? What do you not enjoy?
- Why have you applied for this job? What do you know about the vacancy?
- Why are you looking to join us? How much do you know about us?
- What have been the key achievements in your professional and non-professional life?
- Where does your initial interest in law stem from?
- What successes have you enjoyed in your current role? How did you achieve these?
- How would your boss/team describe you?
- What do you want to achieve over the next 2/3/5 years?
- What are your strengths and areas for development?
- How good are you at: time recording, dealing with targets; organising your day; prioritising?
- When have you ever worked under pressure?
- What is your ideal job?
- What do you like to do outside of work?
- What motivates you?
- Give an example of how you've worked as part of a team?
- What difficulties have you encountered in your current job and how have you overcome them?

Questions to ask at interview

In addition, you'll need to prepare some questions to ask the interviewer(s).

A good interviewer may have already answered most of your questions. Ideally, you will have developed a good rapport with them and asked questions throughout the interview rather than save them all to the end.

Here are some suggestions.



- How has this position become available? (i.e. growth or replacement?)
- How would you describe the culture of the organisation? Team spirited? Open door policy?
- What are the future plans of the business/department?
- How would you describe the individuals in the department currently?
- How do you appraise the performance of your staff?
- What type of work would I handle in this role?
- Which clients would I act for?
- How many files on average does each fee earner handle?
- Does the organisation encourage marketing by younger members of staff?
- How many chargeable hours are staff expected to bill per month?
- How much does the firm invest in technology?
- How would you describe the values of the firm?
- How has the firm/team changed over the last few years?
- How much training, support and development opportunity will there be?
- What are the long term prospects for the person who gets this job?
- When am I likely to hear if I have been successful at this stage of the process?
- What is the next stage of the recruitment process?
- Do you have any reservations about me?

Final thoughts ...



Your CV and interview performance are vital to securing your ideal role as an NQ lawyer. By focusing on our relevant experience, conducting thorough research, and practising your interview technique, you can set yourself up for success.

Good luck with your job search, and remember that with the right preparation, confidence, and enthusiasm, qualification is often the turning point where you can elevate your legal career to exciting new heights.

Whether you're staying at your training firm or looking to move elsewhere, our specialist legal recruitment consultants here at BCL Legal are here to support you every step of the way!



**Our specialist team
discuss benefits of
key legal hubs across
the UK, Ireland and
international markets**

Manchester & The North West

The Manchester team is dedicated to recruiting in private practice and in-house for both permanent and temporary job seekers. The North West region includes the beautiful Lake District of Cumbria in the north, down to Cheshire in the south.

Ever since Manchester's regeneration effort began in earnest during the mid-1990s, the city has developed into a fantastic place to live, boasting all the benefits of the Capital while maintaining a community feel. Manchester has a diverse range of law firms, from top tier firms including CMS, Pinsent Masons, DLA Piper, Eversheds Sutherland and Addleshaw Goddard, to national heavyweights including JMW, Shoosmiths, Gateley, Mills & Reeve, Brabners and TLT who all provide healthy competition to the top tier. Regional firms continue to prosper, with the likes of Pannone Corporate, Napthens and Harrison Drury offering excellent quality work and a fantastic alternative to the national firms, often having smaller teams and a greater ability for lawyers to make their mark and progress.

The variety of options available to lawyers is greater than ever with firms such as Lewis Silkin, Latham & Watkins and Freshfields increasing their head-count and market profile in Manchester. Law firms still continue to choose the city as the best place to open new offices; national law firm Foot Anstey recently opened an office in Manchester

city centre. Deloitte also launched their legal team in Manchester in 2019, joining KPMG, PWC and EY in offering a real alternative to the traditional law firm model; a unique offering for transactional lawyers looking for a breadth of corporate and commercial work.

With the quality of work being as good as the City, but without the same demand that comes with working in the Capital, the North West is very much open for business. With a thriving legal community, cosmopolitan music scene and home to four Premiership Football Clubs across Manchester and Liverpool, it really can offer everything the City can and more. Speak to a BCL Legal consultant who can advise on where to live, what life is really like, and which of the many firms best match your ambitions.

In 2025, the in-house legal market in the North West remained steady but was noticeably quieter compared with more buoyant years following the global pandemic. This was shaped by some key market trends:

Reduced hiring volume: National hiring data shows in-house and broader permanent recruitment has softened year-on-year, with overall placements tracking below 2024 levels as organisations prioritise cost control and strategic headcount decisions. **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...**

Manchester & The North West

Cautious employer sentiment: Weak business confidence and rising operational costs have influenced recruitment decisions, leading many legal teams to delay or limit new hires unless there's a clear, value-driven need. This has dampened the volume of junior and speculative roles coming to market.

Strategic hiring focus: When roles are opened, they tend to be tied to concrete business priorities – such as compliance, commercial support, or regulatory work – and often require lawyers who can contribute quickly with minimal ramp-up time.

Although new hiring activity became more considered and selective in 2025, demand for in-house counsel remains strong across most industry sectors, and the value-add of a dedicated in-house lawyer or legal team is not in question. A significant number of senior business leaders have seen the benefit of in-house counsel, and the in-house legal market had had a constant upward trajectory for many years.



Liverpool

Since Liverpool was named European Capital of Culture in 2008, the City has seen its economy and legal market continue to grow at a rapid pace. In 2025, the Liverpool legal landscape rivalled that of neighbouring Manchester.

The landscape and the famous skyline have been transformed, while the city centre has been modernised radically – as has the legal market-place.

In addition, Liverpool's legal market is incredibly diverse with a range of firms from the high street all the way up to top-tier international practice making it an exciting time to be a lawyer here. The traditional Top 5 firms, many of which were founded in Liverpool have been joined by a host of new entrants into the Liverpool market:

- DLA: a global law firm with longstanding Liverpool office;
- Hill Dickinson: a leading commercial law firm founded in Liverpool in 1810 based in the heart of the commercial district;
- Weightmans: a top 45 national law firm which houses 700 people in Liverpool;
- DWF: an International law firm founded in Liverpool and was the first law firm to float on the London Stock Exchange's main market in March 2019;

- Brabners: a large regional firm with a national reach. Although there are offices in Manchester and Preston, Liverpool remains a stronghold.
- Taylor Wessing: a transatlantic firm top 20 firm with an award winning office space on the Royal Albert Dock.
- CMS: a Top 10 international law firm has expanded its presence in Liverpool with a new, larger permanent home in The Plaza, Old Hall Street.

In summary, if you're a lawyer looking to do excellent work in a vibrant city, Liverpool is certainly worth considering.

Top-rated tech practice Taylor Wessing has continued its exciting growth in Liverpool, global giant CMS has expanded its presence in the city and is joined by Top 50 law firm Freeths in moving to larger offices. National law firm Irwin Mitchell have also opened their latest office in Liverpool in 2022. Leading regional firm, Naphthens also recently invested in a ten year lease for bigger premises at the heart of Liverpool's commercial business district.

There's now a wide variety of law firms to choose from in Liverpool. This includes international firms like DLA, CMS, Hill Dickinson and DWF, nationals

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Liverpool

like Irwin Mitchell, Freeths, Weightmans and JMW along with thriving regional firms like Brabners, Napthens and boutique firms such as In-House Legal Solutions with its founders originating from London / Magic Circle firms.

The addition of new firms has led Liverpool to become a really good place for junior lawyers to start their career. There is a thriving social scene for junior lawyers with The Merseyside Junior Lawyers Division being one of the biggest junior lawyer associations in the country.

The increasing financial investment in the city, bigger legal market and increased workflow means Liverpool is a worthy option for lawyers at any stage in their careers.

Why not also consider Chester?

Chester in itself has also recently emerged as quite the hub for legal activity. With easy access to Manchester, Liverpool, Cheshire, and the relatively untapped region of North Wales, Chester firms have managed to attract a range of clients across all different areas of law. There is now a range of strong regional firms with offices in the area, including the Legal 500 ranked, Knights, Aaron & Partners, DTM Legal and SAS Daniels. Cheshire based lawyers now have an alternative option to commuting into the big cities.



Leeds

As Yorkshire's largest city, Leeds remains one of the fastest-growing legal markets in the UK. The 'Big Six' firms: Addleshaw Goddard, DLA Piper, Everheds, Pinsent Masons, Squire Patton Boggs and Walker Morris continue to dominate the top tiers of Chambers UK and Legal 500 rankings, but with a number of other key players in the region such as DAC Beachcroft, Bevan Brittan, Shoosmiths and Clarion picking up some top rankings in some areas.

Leeds's legal market that has changed significantly over the last 15 years, from one dominated by the Big Six, supported primarily by a range of regional firms, to one where most of the other second tier national and international firms have now moved in, built up full service offices and found their place in the market.

These include Hill Dickinson, Freeths, Shoosmiths, Ward Hadaway, Mills & Reeve, DWF, Bevan Brittan, Womble Bond Dickinson, Gateley, Capsticks, Knights and Brabners. Some of these firms have seen significant growth over the last few years which is set to continue, bringing an abundance of opportunities. Newer entrants to the market, such as Gowling and Lewis Silkin, will only add to this.

Regional players such as Clarion, Blacks, Gordons, Schofield Sweeney, Tyr Law and Wrigleys and more recent entrants, such as Square One and Flint Bishop continue to be great options for lawyers in

the region, with excellent training and development on offer and deep sector knowledge.

Lawyers in Leeds also have a range of other high-quality options to consider, including a number of boutique corporate, construction, planning, pensions, employment and property litigation firms, as well as profit-sharing models like Bexley Beaumont. Some of the world's leading accountancy firms such as KPMG and Deloitte also continue to build their presence in Leeds.

Leeds JLD continues to be a really active group with a large membership, hosting a broad range of networking and social events in the region.



Sheffield

Sheffield continues to strengthen its position as a major legal hub in the UK. As Yorkshire's second-largest legal centre, the city hosts a diverse range of firms, from high-street practices to leading national and international players. Many of these firms hold top-tier rankings in The Legal 500 and Chambers UK, including global names such as DLA Piper and CMS, alongside national heavyweights like Freeths, Shoosmiths, Irwin Mitchell, Knights, and Kennedys, as well as well-established regional firms like Taylor & Emmet and Wake Smith.

Like much of the wider market, Sheffield's legal sector has experienced steady growth over the past couple of years. However, momentum is clearly building as we move into the year ahead, with recent mergers and acquisitions highlighting this expansion. In September 2025, Sills & Betteridge Solicitors merged with Sheffield-based Bell & Buxton Solicitors to create one of the city's largest legal practices, with a turnover exceeding £25 million. Additionally, Flint Bishop's acquisition of Lupton Fawcett LLP has significantly strengthened its northern presence, adding offices in Leeds, Sheffield, and York, and bringing 83 new employees across commercial, property, and private client services.

Supported by strong relationships with local clients, BCL Legal expects recruitment activity to continue

increasing as the market expands. Beyond professional opportunities, Sheffield offers an outstanding quality of life. The city benefits from a thriving business community that enriches our work through valuable networking opportunities and access to new clients, along with a constant sense of momentum driven by ongoing investment and development.

BCL Legal is proud to be an active member of this vibrant legal community. We're particularly excited to engage with the Sheffield JLD, who host a wide range of networking and social events. With both the legal market and the city evolving rapidly, it's an exciting time to be part of the Sheffield junior lawyer community, both professionally and socially.



Newcastle & The North East

The financial strength and confidence of the Newcastle market are evident by continued growth within the legal sector. International firms Womble Bond Dickinson, DWF, DAC Beachcroft and Eversheds Sutherland all have offices in the city with home grown firms like Muckle, Ward Hadaway and Sintons maintaining impressive positions in the Legal 500 and Chambers Rankings, not to mention numerous awards across most disciplines.

We have seen a number of smaller and medium-sized firms undergo complete rebranding exercises in recent years, including Hay & Kilner, Hill Dickinson and Square One, as well as some firms relocating to newer, more modern offices both in the city centre and on the outskirts. The arrival of the Helix site prompted moves from Womble Bond Dickinson, Clifford Chance, Hay & Kilner and Savage Silk into various swish new premises in the Heart of the City Centre. DAC Beachcroft, Knights and Burnetts have all been on the move. Both Sintons and Ward Hadaway have recently under-gone mass refurbishments at their St. James' Park and Quayside offices respectively.

Well known national practices including Hill Dickinson, Kennedys and Gateley now have small compact offices in the City, offering an insight into their developing workstreams and specialisms, attracting top talent from across the region.

Further afield in the North East, we continue to see a lot of movement across the full-service commercials, as well as the smaller regional and more high street practices. The likes of Jacksons, Tilly Bailey and Irvine and Hewitts remain leaders of the pack in Teesside, with Knights thoroughly settling into life in Teesside. The recent takeover of The Endeavour Partnership by Ward Hadaway has seen their expansion into the Teesside market, as well as Muckle who have recently opened an office nearby. Swinburne Maddison and EMG Solicitors maintain fantastic reputations in Durham, with EMG recently opening new offices closer to Newcastle as they continue to demonstrate fantastic growth and an enviable reputation.



Birmingham

BCL Legal has a dedicated team of legal recruiters in Birmingham and the wider Midlands region. We work with all major national, international, and regional law firms in the city and are on the preferred supplier list (PSL) for each of these firms. Our strong and long-standing relationships with Birmingham's leading law firms place us in a unique position to advise junior lawyers on the best opportunities as they approach qualification.

We also have close ties with regional firms across the West Midlands, giving us unique insights into the market and enabling us to guide junior lawyers as they navigate their post-qualification options. Whether you're looking to stay in Birmingham city centre or explore other areas, we can help you position yourself for success.

The Birmingham legal market has steadily recovered from the political and economic challenges faced in recent years. While there is still some caution, firms remain eager to recruit talent, though fewer NQ roles have been available in the past couple of years. That being said, the start of 2026 has shown promising signs of growth, with law firms anticipating a stronger year compared to 2025, particularly as market confidence continues to improve.

One of the key shifts in recent years has been the significant salary increases for newly qualified

solicitors (NQs). Top-tier firms in Birmingham now offer salaries starting at over £70k (with two firms paying £80k+), while mid-level firms offer around £60k. While this has created a highly competitive environment, it has also brought higher expectations in terms of performance, including more stringent chargeable hour targets and tougher business cases for new hires.

Retention rates will remain a focus for firms in 2026, with all firms aiming to retain as many of their newly qualified lawyers as possible. However, the number of NQ vacancies in certain sectors, such as corporate, commercial, IP, employment, and commercial litigation, will likely remain modest. This means that junior lawyers will need to consider a broader range of practice areas and locations as they approach qualification.

Flexibility will be key, and we highly recommend that you begin your search early to ensure you don't miss any opportunities. Having a clear Plan A and Plan B will be critical, as opportunities in specific sectors may be fewer.

Several notable law firms, including Ward Hadaway, Hill Dickinson, and TLT, have opened new offices in Birmingham over the past couple of years, expanding their presence in the Midlands.

This signifies the ongoing investment in the

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Birmingham

Birmingham legal sector, creating a range of new opportunities for junior lawyers.

Established firms such as Browne Jacobson and Shoosmiths have moved to prestigious new offices at 103 Colmore Row, while others, such as Mills & Reeve and, shortly, Eversheds Sutherland and Fieldfisher, are taking up space in the Paradise development, highlighting the importance of the city in their regional strategies.

The 2024 acquisition of Thursfields Solicitors by Knights and the more recent acquisition of Wright Hassall by HCR is a sign of the ongoing consolidation in the legal market, with regional firms being absorbed by larger national players. This trend presents new opportunities for junior lawyers in the region.

The ongoing regeneration of Birmingham over the past decade has driven significant investment and transformed the city into a key legal hub. With improved transport links, including the development of HS2, Birmingham continues to be an attractive location for both lawyers and clients. Competitive salaries, a diverse range of high-quality legal work, and a vibrant city centre make Birmingham a fantastic place for ambitious junior lawyers to build a long-term legal career.

BCL Legal is also a preferred supplier for various

professional services firms outside of traditional law firms. These organisations often offer exciting career paths beyond private practice, providing diverse opportunities for those interested in alternative legal roles.

As a junior lawyer approaching qualification in 2026, now is the perfect time to explore the opportunities available in Birmingham and the West Midlands. Let BCL Legal help you navigate this competitive landscape and secure a role that will allow you to thrive in the next phase of your career.



East Midlands

The East Midlands legal market continues to offer a broad range of opportunities for legal professionals at all stages of their careers. Whether you're interested in international firms, nationally recognised practices, or well-established regional boutiques, the region provides a diverse and resilient legal landscape. Following a relatively cautious period in the market, confidence has continued to build into 2026, with hiring activity and deal flow showing clear, sustained improvement.

Nottingham remains the driving force of the region, led by major firms such as Eversheds Sutherland, Browne Jacobson, Shakespeare Martineau, Gateley, and Freeths, all of which maintain significant offices in the city. These firms handle complex national and international work, continuing to anchor the region's reputation as a serious legal centre. Alongside them, strong regional players such as Geldards, Nelsons, Flint Bishop, Howes Percival, and Rothera Bray are crucial in ensuring the East Midlands remains competitive, accessible, and varied in its legal offering.

Growth in the region's technology, innovation, and life sciences sectors is driving demand for legal expertise in commercial contracts, corporate transactions, intellectual property, and corporate M&A. Law firms are increasingly supporting

high-growth businesses, start-ups, and investors, reinforcing the region's importance as a hub for innovation-driven work.

Overall, the East Midlands presents a confident and forward-looking legal market in 2026. With improving momentum, a strong business community, and clear opportunities for progression and specialisation, the region remains an attractive destination for junior legal professionals looking to build impactful and sustainable careers.

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East Midlands

While 2025 saw fewer NQ openings than we would have liked, retention rates were relatively high, mirroring the wider market across the UK. However, the outlook for 2026 is much more promising for external NQ opportunities, with an increase in vacancies, particularly in transactional areas like Corporate and Real Estate.

Although the NQ market remains competitive, there is cautious optimism for the year ahead. The East Midlands offers junior lawyers the opportunity to secure high-quality roles that strike a balance between high quality work and a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, the region's local JLDs host an exciting range of events, which we proudly support throughout the year.



East Anglia

Covering Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk, East Anglia serves as a hub for legal and commercial activities, often overlooked by newly qualified candidates. However, all cities within the region boast vibrant legal sectors, mirroring East Anglia's pivotal role in agriculture, transportation, shipping, technology, biotech, and telecommunications industries.

Cambridge stands out as the largest legal market in the region, benefiting from the global prestige of The University of Cambridge and a multitude of spin-off businesses. It forms part of the renowned "Golden Triangle," acclaimed for its expertise in the life sciences sector. The city's technological prowess has positioned it as a top destination for venture capital investment globally, second only to the United States.

Key law firms in Cambridge include international giants like Eversheds Sutherland, Pennington Manches, Mishcon de Reya, Taylor Wessing, and the esteemed US firm Goodwin Procter. National firms such as Mills & Reeve and Birketts also contribute to the city's legal landscape, alongside smaller yet prestigious commercial firms like Greenwoods and HCR Hewitsons, boasting impressive clienteles, including education and charity sectors.

Norwich, the historical capital of East Anglia, hosts

a diverse legal market dominated by firms like Mills & Reeve, Howes Percival, and Birketts in the corporate and commercial sphere. Birketts particularly engages in corporate work with a substantial international component.

East Anglia excels in private client and agricultural law within the UK, with Mills & Reeve, HCR, and Howes Percival leading the charge. Larger firms retain significant private client teams, while specialist firms like Roythornes, Ashtons Legal, and Greenwoods further enhance the region's reputation. Suffolk emerges as a prominent center for bloodstock and horse-racing related legal matters.



Thames Valley

A lesser-known location for lawyers and arguably the profession's best-kept secret, the Thames Valley and Oxfordshire region has much more to offer newly qualified lawyers than you might first think. A plethora of leading law firms and multinational businesses have offices and/or their head-quarters in the region; taking advantage of the close proximity to London and access to graduates from top universities.

The strength of the legal community in the region is demonstrated by international law firms such as Clyde & Co, Charles Russell Speechlys, Osborne Clarke and Penningtons Manches Cooper maintaining a presence in the region. Established national firms such as Shoosmiths, Gateley and Freeths have been bolstering their offerings, while ambitious firms such as Knights, Harrison Clark Rickerbys and IBB have also entered the market in recent years. Several more local firms also boast impressive national reputations, including Stevens & Bolton, Field Seymour Parkes and BoyesTurner.

Oxford firms such as Mills & Reeve are capitalizing on the city's reputation as a global center for life sciences, technology, and education. Several more local firms also boast impressive national reputations, including Stevens & Bolton, Field Seymour Parkes and BoyesTurner.

Geographically, the area provides easy access to

outstanding natural beauty and popular attractions such as Legoland and Windsor.



Bristol

In 2025/2026, the Bristol legal market continues to reinforce its status as one of the UK's leading regional centres. Widely regarded as the strongest legal hub outside London, the city offers a genuine alternative to the capital: high-quality, complex work combined with a more balanced lifestyle. Its appeal is reflected in the breadth of firms operating in the city, from international and national players to well-established regional and boutique practices.

In Bristol, salary competition has been a massive talking point over the past couple of years, particularly at NQ level, with leading national and international firms driving pay upwards and creating upward pressure across the wider market. Simmons & Simmons set a regional record with newly qualified solicitor pay at around £96,000 from May 2025, far above many local peers and Burges Salmon raised its Bristol NQ pay to approximately £76,000, reflecting broader competitive pressure. It is clear that this has had a ripple effect, prompting broader salary reviews and contributing to a more active market. Demand for lawyers at the mid-level bracket remains the strongest, with many firms looking for lawyers who can add depth to already established teams or bring in those with niche expertise.

In terms of practice areas, real estate remains central to the Bristol market, underpinned by

ongoing development (with firms like Freeths boasting an entirely development focused real estate team in Bristol) and the city's strength in sectors such as energy, transport and technology. Corporate work also continues to hold up well, particularly in the mid-market and private equity space, while specialist disputes practices, including construction, property and regulatory litigation remain steady. On the flip side, general commercial litigation roles are less abundant. As a whole we have found that rather than large-scale growth, many firms are taking a targeted approach to expansion, prioritising strategic hires and sector alignment.

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Bristol

Firms are also continuing to invest heavily in technology, with firms in Bristol investing in legal technology and AI-enabled tools. This mirrors a broader national trend, but Bristol firms seem to be ahead of the curve when it comes to implementing these type of processes with many knowledge lawyer opportunities with an AI focus being at the forefront for many firms.

Overall, the feeling across the market is cautiously positive. Firms are aware of the wider economic pressures and the ups and downs in deal flow, but there's a general sense that things will continue to grow steadily. With strong quality work, improving salaries and solid long-term prospects, Bristol remains one of the UK's most attractive legal markets, offering real depth and genuine opportunities for junior lawyers.



Essex

For newly qualified solicitors, Essex offers a compelling range of opportunities, particularly in commuter cities like Colchester and Chelmsford. These areas are ideal for those looking to transition out of London's fast pace but still work with high-quality clients and complex matters. Firms such as Birketts, a Top 100 UK practice, are particularly attractive to NQs, providing an opportunity to work on City level projects while offering a more balanced lifestyle. The firm's strong reputation across various sectors makes it a great choice for NQs looking for both career development and a healthier work-life balance.

Other well-regarded firms such as Birkett Long LLP, with its focus on commercial property, corporate, and private client work, continue to be popular among NQs looking for exposure to a diverse range of practice areas. Thompson Smith and Puxon is a standout in agricultural law, offering niche but significant opportunities for NQs interested in this sector. Fisher Jones Greenwood LLP's expansion in real estate provides additional opportunities, while Tees Law's continued focus on family and employment law makes it a prime choice for NQs interested in these fields, particularly after their merger with Wortley Byers LLP in Brentwood.

For NQs in Essex, regional firms like Palmers, Pinney Talfourd LLP (highly recommended for

employment and family matters), and Mullis & Peake LLP, an up-and-coming firm in Romford, provide additional options for career growth in a supportive regional setting.



Beds, Bucks & Herts

The legal market across Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and Bedfordshire continues to offer promising prospects for NQ solicitors. With a blend of global law firms and dynamic regional practices, the Northern Home Counties present a diverse array of opportunities for NQs starting out in their legal careers.

Northampton, with firms like Howes Percival and Harrison Clark Rickberys, offers a growing legal market for NQs looking to gain experience in general practice or specialist sectors. Both firms have strong reputations in providing services to SME's and high net-worth individuals, giving NQs a broad range of practice areas to explore. National firms such as Shoosmiths LLP also offer opportunities for NQs, providing exposure to a wider range of commercial clients across multiple industries.

Milton Keynes remains a significant hub, with Dentons leading the way as a global player. NQs at Dentons will have access to top-tier cross-border transactional work, particularly in real estate and commercial law. For those interested in regional firms, EMW Law LLP and Woodfines Solicitors provide excellent opportunities, particularly for NQs with an interest in commercial property, as well as offering a more balanced work-life dynamic.

As we look toward 2026, firms across these

counties are embracing new technologies and work models, making it an exciting time for NQs to join firms that are focused on innovation and future-proofing their services.



London

Working in the City ...

London is one of the world's leading legal centres and its reputation has coined it 'the lawyer of the world.' It's one of the most prominent centres in international law and has also merited its reputation as a global leader for professional services. London employs 40% of all solicitors in private practice and is home to 25% of all private practice firms in the UK. Regarded as the top law firms in the UK are the Magic Circle, consisting of Clifford Chance, Linklaters, Freshfield, Slaughter and May and A&O Shearman. To those for whom bigger is better (bigger deals, bigger money, bigger staff numbers), this is the place to be.

Across 2025 there was a large shift in growth throughout the market, particularly within the Employment space, no doubt as a result of the newly-implemented Employment Rights Bill; as a result, demand for employment lawyers took off, as firms looked to bolster their ranks across the board, from NQ level upwards, with leading boutique firms such as Littler, Doyle Clayton, and BDBF all growing in size, having added extensively. International firms such as Pinsent Masons, DAC Beachcroft, and Withers also added to their Legal 500-ranked employment teams, at all levels, but with a focus on Associates, and Magic Circle heavyweights A&O Shearman, Clifford Chance, and Slaughter and May all added junior Associates to

their prestigious Employment teams.

Divided into City/International, West End/Boutique and National/Regional, London has the most diverse range of legal practices to be found anywhere in the UK, and this continues to make it the most popular choice for legal careers. In addition to the Magic and Silver circle there is also a rich array of commercial firms from large to small; smaller commercial firms may well be a great choice for those looking to exchange a more modest payslip in exchange for better hours. In the mid-market, firms such as Harbottle & Lewis, Fladgate, Wedlake Bell, and Farrer & Co looked to continue their growth from 2024 into 2025, recruiting heavily across all practice areas with a particular focus on Private Client, and Family law, matching the respective ethos' of the firms. Practice areas such as Real Estate and Construction saw steady growth throughout 2025, a trend which has continued into 2026 with a significant desire for growth in both transactional and contentious teams from the City and International circuit, through to the West End and Boutique practices due to a combination of market forces, sector trends, and strategic growth. Demand for Real Estate advisory (especially in corporate and commercial) has been boosted by increased private capital targeting UK assets, giving scope for highly complex and highly valuable deals, and

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London

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Retention rates have been lower in the city over the past few years and there has been significant competition for the limited roles across all London firms, however 2026 is looking to be a more typical NQ market with NQ roles for March already being filled and instructions received from the more

ambitious firms for September! We're expecting to see a good number of external roles across most practice areas, but it will continue to be more competitive than previous years, with more candidates in the market and firms beginning their processes much earlier. With this more typical NQ season in view, it's crucial that you are well prepared so that you can enter the market with confidence.

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London

Magic Circle, Silver Circle & US Firms with a London office

2024 and 2025 saw significant senior and partner hires across US firms in London: Paul Weiss are now established having launched a new Commercial Litigation team under the watch of Richard Hornshaw, previously of Cooley, taking their London office from a small satellite office to one of London's biggest US names; Perkins Coie launched their London office with the legendary Ian Bagshaw; Sidley Austin began growing out their Leveraged Finance offering with the introduction of 8 Lathams partners and a view to grow a 40 strong team; and Milbank expanded its Structured Finance team with 6 from Lathams. But what does this mean for NQs?

Whilst the Magic Circle and Silver Circle prefer to keep hold of their home grown associates with rarely any need to look externally, the US firms have a smaller number in their trainee intake and often require additional headcount from their competitors. As these partners settle in and build their pipeline, the firms get ahead of the game for NQ season, with many already on the hunt for September qualifiers. Most of these requirements are within transactional teams such as Structured Finance, Leveraged Finance, Funds and Private Equity, with some Competition and M&A needs. Simpson Thacher & Bartlett have now, after much

speculation, decided to start developing their own trainees, having previously resorted to raiding their US and leading UK counterparts for junior talent.

These US firms offer unparalleled exposure to some of the most interesting transactions at the junior end and NQ salaries of £180k+ so the competition is fierce.



Scotland

Scotland has again shown considerable growth in the Legal Sector, with increasingly promising signs for the future.

Whilst Edinburgh and Glasgow are the main legal hubs, the cities further North such as Aberdeen (which has a key focus on Energy related work) and Inverness are home to many of the top Scottish and International firms, such as Brodies, Burness Paull, CMS and Addleshaw Goddard.

We have seen a real sense of consolidation across the Scottish legal market in 2025 with several leading firms committing to greater office space to accommodate further growth plans leading well into 2030- these included TLT, Addleshaw Goddard, Brodies, Lindsays and Winn Solicitors.

The international firms are performing as highly as ever with CMS, Addleshaw Goddard, Pinsent Masons, Eversheds, Dentons and Clyde & Co just some of the global firms who are deeply rooted in the Scotland market along with top National firms such as Shoosmiths, TLT and Burges Salmon - Silver Circle firms Ashursts are also also in the market, based in Glasgow.

We continue to see the diversification of English personal injury specialists (both pursuer and defender) into the Scottish market. Most notably we have seen the continued expansion of the

insurance defender personal injury teams across the central belt, but most recently we have seen a steep uptick in the number of roles/firms in the pursuer sphere opening new offices and recruiting across Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Interestingly we are seeing more of the top Scottish firms investing in English focused work and continuing to grow and develop specific English teams, which is a testament to how those firms are performing and developing.

Many of the Scottish firms are continuing to excel and regularly appear at the top of the Legal 500, with Brodies, Burness Paull and Shepherd & Wedderburn being almost permanent features across the top Tiers of the Legal 500.

Other well recognised Scottish firms such as Anderson Strathern, Harper Macleod, MFMac, Lindsays, Gillespie Macadrew, BTO, WJM and Thorntons to name a few, all regularly feature on the Legal 500.

Scotland has seen unprecedented levels when it comes to salary increases - Whilst the market as a whole across the UK has seen huge increases over the last few years, the gap between Scotland and the other legal hubs has well and truly closed.

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Scotland

International and National firms for the most part now share the same NQ salaries across the UK, which further proves how the market is performing.

Culture remains one of the driving forces of the Scottish legal market – The collaborative nature runs throughout the legal firms in Scotland, more so than any other location, featuring at the firms you could be forgiven for thinking might not promote it quite so much. That strong culture is of course true of Scotland as a whole, with the major cities also offering a strong social scene as well as beautiful surroundings.

Whilst we're expecting certain areas to be quieter than usual this year, such as Corporate/Commercial, Employment and Dispute Resolution NQ positions, opportunities will appear. There's a huge variety of law firms to choose from and with the legal market continuing to thrive, it's safe to say the legal market in Scotland offers brilliant opportunities tools for a successful legal career.



Dublin

BCL Legal works closely with all of the domestic “Big 6” firms, a broad range of mid-tier and specialist commercial practices, as well as the international firms now firmly established in the Dublin market. We also maintain strong relationships with professional services legal teams including PwC Legal, EY Law and KPMG Law.

The Dublin legal market remains highly active and competitive in 2026, with continued lateral movement across all PQE levels and sustained demand in key commercial practice areas. While the pace of new firm launches has normalised compared to the initial surge of international entrants, head-count growth and team build-outs continue across both domestic and international platforms.

International firms that entered the market over recent years have now moved beyond launch phase and are operating as established full-service or multi-practice offerings. Many have expanded from initial corporate or finance-led teams into disputes, real estate, regulatory, employment and technology practices, typically led by high-profile partner hires from leading domestic firms.

Large international firms with Dublin offices continue to invest in their Irish capability, with further strategic growth across regulatory, finance, disputes and technology-driven practices. US and UK firms alike view Dublin as a long-term

European hub supporting cross-border work, funds, tech, life sciences and financial services clients.

Market consolidation among mid-tier firms has also continued, driven by scale requirements, sector specialisation and international client demand. Strategic mergers and team moves have reshaped parts of the mid-market, creating several larger and more competitive full-service platforms.

Despite increased international competition, the core pillars of the market remain the Big 6 domestic firms; A&L Goodbody, Arthur Cox, McCann FitzGerald, Matheson, Mason Hayes & Curran and William Fry, which continue to lead on high-value transactional, regulatory and disputes work. These firms offer deep bench strength, structured training, and consistent deal flow across major sectors of the Irish economy.

Alongside these, well-established mid-tier commercial firms such as Philip Lee, ByrneWallace Shields, Dillon Eustace and Beauchamps continue to provide excellent quality work, strong client access, and often more flexible career progression and work-life balance. These firms are frequently overlooked by candidates but represent some of the most attractive long-term career options in the market. **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...**

Dublin

Candidate shortages remain a feature of the Dublin market, particularly at 2-5 PQE level in areas such as Banking & Finance, Commercial Technology & Data Privacy, Corporate M&A, Construction, Funds, and Regulatory. International experience, particularly from UK or other common law jurisdictions, continues to be valued by Irish firms.

Salary levels remain competitive following several years of upward pressure. NQ salaries at the top domestic and international firms are now typically in the €80,000+ range.

From a lifestyle perspective, Dublin continues to rank strongly as a European legal hub, offering access to high-quality work within a relatively compact and well-connected market. While housing supply and cost remain ongoing challenges, the city continues to attract both domestic and international legal talent due to career opportunity, market visibility, and sector diversity.



Belfast

The Belfast legal market in 2026 is well-established, outward-looking and increasingly integrated into both UK and cross-border international legal work. Over the past decade, the market has expanded significantly, supported by inward investment, the growth of UK national and international firms, and the continued strength of leading domestic Northern Irish practices. BCL Legal works closely with all of the major Northern Ireland firms, UK national firms with Belfast offices, international practices and the Big Four accountancy legal teams.

Belfast continues to attract international business due to its skilled workforce, competitive operating costs, strong infrastructure and unique dual-market access to both the UK and EU for goods. The city has developed a strong reputation in financial services, technology, advanced manufacturing and renewables, all of which drive consistent demand for commercial legal services. International investment and shared service legal and professional operations remain a key feature of the local economy.

BCL Legal maintains long-standing relationships with the leading firms in Belfast, placing us in a strong position to advise candidates on market conditions, hiring trends and how best to position themselves in what remains a close-knit and competitive legal community - particularly at NQ and junior associate level.

The Belfast market now includes a broad mix of firm types. Alongside the long-established Northern Irish leaders are a growing number of UK national firms with established Belfast offices, including Pinsent Masons, Eversheds Sutherland, TLT, DWF, DAC Beachcroft, Shoosmiths, Gateley and Lewis Silkin. These firms continue to invest in local teams across disputes, insurance, employment, real estate, banking and commercial work, with Belfast viewed as a strategic long-term location rather than a short-term expansion play.

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Belfast

The leading domestic firms - including Carson McDowell, Tughans and Cleaver Fulton Rankin – continue to perform strongly in Legal 500 and Chambers rankings and remain central to the market, acting on many of the most significant Northern Ireland transactions and disputes. These firms are recognised for offering high-quality work, strong client access and clear progression routes. Competition for both talent and mandates has increased, encouraging ongoing team growth and selective lateral hiring across the market.

Overall, the Belfast legal market in 2026 offers a broadening range of career options across firm types, practice areas and client sectors, while continuing to offer lifestyle and cost-of-living advantages compared with many larger UK and Irish legal centres.



USA

The largest and most sophisticated legal market in the world, the US legal sector is often seen as a potential destination for aspirational lawyers from the UK and elsewhere. New York is the largest legal hub in the US, and by way of context, there are more attorneys in the 5 boroughs of NY than there are barristers and solicitors in the entire UK! BCL have a specialist team that focus on the US market, and NY in particular, and are always open to conversations with UK-qualified lawyers who have a hankering for experiencing this legal behemoth.

However, this is not a move for the fainthearted as it is a difficult leap to make from the UK, requiring as a minimum an H1-B Visa (which can take up to a year, and is genuinely based on a lottery system) and passing of the New York Bar exam.

If you add to these hurdles that the firms' preference is generally to take someone with substantive US experience, you can see the natural barriers for a UK-qualified NQ.

However, it is feasible after 2-3yrs experience within the UK, or if you were to take up the option to study for a 12mth LLM at a US Law School. This latter option is very viable, but be aware it comes at some considerable expense.

