



Informing Progress - Shaping the Future

## FOIL Update – 7 December 2023



### Guideline Hourly Rates for 2024 published

The Master of the Rolls has confirmed that he has accepted the recommendations of the Civil Justice Council’s 2023 Costs Review ([Responding to recommendations of the Civil Justice Council Costs Review and new Guideline Hourly Rates - Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#)) and has issued solicitor’s guideline hourly rates (GHRs) for 2024.

#### The 2024 rates

Grade	Fee earner	Band <sup>1</sup>														
		London 1			London 2			London 3			National 1			National 2		
		New 2024	Current	% Change	New 2024	Current	% Change	New 2024	Current	% Change	New 2024	Current	% Change	New 2024	Current	% Change
A	Solicitors and legal executives with over 8 years’ experience	£ 546	£ 512	6.64	£ 398	£ 373	6.70	£ 301	£ 282	6.74	£ 278	£ 261	6.51	£ 272	£ 255	6.67
B	Solicitors and legal executives with over 4 years’ experience	£ 371	£ 348	6.61	£ 308	£ 289	6.57	£ 247	£ 232	6.47	£ 233	£ 218	6.88	£ 233	£ 218	6.88
C	Other solicitors or legal executives and fee earners of equivalent experience	£ 288	£ 270	6.67	£ 260	£ 244	6.56	£ 197	£ 185	6.49	£ 190	£ 178	6.74	£ 189	£ 177	6.78
D	Trainee solicitors, paralegals and other fee earners	£ 198	£ 186	6.45	£ 148	£ 139	6.47	£ 138	£ 129	6.98	£ 134	£ 126	6.35	£ 134	£ 126	6.35

<sup>1</sup> London 1 = Very heavy commercial and corporate work by centrally based London firms. Not restricted to any particular London postcode. London 2 = EC1 to 4, W1, WC1, WC2 and SW1. London 3 = All other London boroughs, plus Dartford and Gravesend. National 1 = The counties of: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Essex, Hampshire (and Isle of Wight), Kent, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Wiltshire. Plus: Birkenhead, Birmingham (Inner), Bristol, Cambridge City, Cardiff (Inner), Leeds (Inner) (within 2km of City Art Gallery), Liverpool, Manchester (Central), Newcastle City (within 2m of St Nicholas Cathedral), Norwich City, Nottingham City, and, Watford. National 2 = All places not included in London 1 to 3 and National 1.

## **About the new rates**

The Service Producer Price Index inflationary rate has been applied to the previous figures to arrive at the 2024 rates. This will be repeated annually to ensure the rates are not allowed to stagnate as they did between 2010-2021, when the rates remained unchanged.

The new rates will apply to work carried out by solicitors on or after 1 January 2024.

Since the expansion of the fixed recoverable costs regime rolled out to most claims up to £100,000 in October 2023, the GHRs will apply to far fewer cases than ever before but still remain relevant to historic claims and claims over £100,000.

## **Comment**

Lewis Thompson, Partner at Kennedys and member of the Costs SFT commented, *“Whilst the GHRs were first established to be “broad approximations” regular updating of them is likely to mean that judges and costs officers across all courts are unlikely to depart from the published levels without good reason, as they are arguably up-to-date and reflect current market rates.”*

## **Next steps**

As a result of the changes to the GHRs, it is likely that an amended version of the Guide to Summary Assessment of Costs will be released shortly.

During the 2023 Costs Review ([Civil Justice Council report on costs - Final Report May 2023 \(judiciary.uk\)](#)) consultees expressed a number of concerns about the current GHR methodology and geographical divisions stating that hourly rates applicable outside of London, “are considerably lower than the rates commonly seen in schedules of costs and that they unfairly discriminate in favour of London, driving work away from locations outside London. The strong view was expressed by these respondents that GHRs for London and elsewhere should not be different, particularly since the pandemic has changed working practices. It was suggested that there could be a separate band for Business & Property Court work regardless of location, similar to London 1 – i.e., a new National Band. A number of respondents suggested that the bands should reflect the complexity of the work, rather than the location in which the work was done.”

The Master of the Rolls as Chair of the Civil Justice Council has indicated that a further working group will be created to look at the methodology of how the rates are determined and applied.

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