JAMES ADAMS IN HOUSE

UK Talent Acquisition Salary Benchmark 2026

Regional pay for in-house TA teams, from Talent Coordinator to Director of Talent Acquisition, across ten UK markets.

SALARY INTELLIGENCE · 2026 EDITION

Part of the James Adams Group

THE MARKET IN 2026

What's shaping TA pay this year

TA pay is behind a slowing market

Advertised UK wage growth has cooled to 3.9%, the slowest since February 2022. TA pay is not even keeping pace with that. Outside AI-literate sourcing, cleared and regulated-sector work and genuine exec search, most in-house TA bands are flat year on year, and some are slipping.

A saturated applicant market

TA vacancies routinely attract 100+ applications within days, sometimes hours. More applicants has not meant better ones, but the sheer weight of supply removes any upward pressure on pay for all but the genuinely scarce profiles.

AI fluency is now in the job spec

A record 9.4% of UK job postings now mention AI, ahead of the US, Germany and France (Indeed). In TA, tooling is named as a core requirement rather than a bonus. Recruiters who can build AI-assisted sourcing workflows command a visible premium, particularly at Partner level and above.

Flexible models reshape the mix

UK permanent placements stabilised in July 2026 after 45 months of decline, the longest run since the survey began in 1997. London and the Midlands led; the South and North are still falling. Temp billings have grown four months running and temporary vacancies rose for the first time since August 2024.

The regional gap is narrowing, slowly

Hybrid working keeps compressing the London premium, now roughly 15–25% over regional markets. The compression is strongest at senior levels, where competition is national.

3.9%

advertised UK wage growth, slowest since Feb 2022. TA is behind even this

100+

applications per TA vacancy is now common

45

months of falling permanent placements, ended July 2026 (KPMG/REC)

2026 SALARY BENCHMARKS

Annual base salary: England

Permanent, in-house talent acquisition roles. Figures in £'000s, lower–upper quartile of typical offers.

	London	The South	Midlands	North West	North East
Talent Coordinator	£30–40k	£26–35k	£25–33k	£25–33k	£25–30k
TA Specialist / Advisor	£38–50k	£33–44k	£31–41k	£31–41k	£30–39k
Senior Specialist / TA Partner	£48–65k	£42–57k	£39–53k	£39–53k	£37–50k
TA Manager / Lead	£60–80k	£53–70k	£49–66k	£49–65k	£47–62k
Head of Talent Acquisition	£85–115k	£75–100k	£70–92k	£68–90k	£65–85k
Director of Talent Acquisition	£110–150k	£95–130k	£88–120k	£85–118k	£80–110k

Bonus, equity and benefits excluded. Sector, scale and remit shift individual roles beyond these bands; regulated, cleared and AI-heavy briefs price at the top end or above. Job titles vary widely between employers, so map roles by scope rather than by title.

2026 SALARY BENCHMARKS

Annual base salary: Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

Permanent, in-house talent acquisition roles. Figures in £'000s, lower–upper quartile of typical offers.

	Wales	Northern Ireland	Edinburgh	Glasgow	Aberdeen
Talent Coordinator	£24–31k	£25–28k	£26–34k	£25–33k	£25–28k
TA Specialist / Advisor	£30–39k	£29–38k	£32–42k	£31–41k	£30–40k
Senior Specialist / TA Partner	£38–51k	£36–49k	£41–55k	£39–53k	£38–52k
TA Manager / Lead	£47–63k	£46–61k	£51–68k	£49–65k	£48–64k
Head of Talent Acquisition	£65–86k	£63–83k	£72–95k	£69–91k	£67–89k
Director of Talent Acquisition	£80–112k	£78–108k	£90–125k	£86–118k	£84–115k

Bonus, equity and benefits excluded. Sector, scale and remit shift individual roles beyond these bands; regulated, cleared and AI-heavy briefs price at the top end or above. Job titles vary widely between employers, so map roles by scope rather than by title.

INTERIM & CONTRACT DAY RATES

Flexing the team: 2026 day rates

Typical UK-wide bands for interim and embedded TA professionals, quoted as inside-IR35 / umbrella equivalents.

Talent Coordinator	£120–180
TA Specialist / Advisor	£180–280
Senior Specialist / TA Partner	£250–400
TA Manager / Lead	£350–500
Head of Talent Acquisition	£450–650
Director of Talent Acquisition	£600–850+

LOCATION & DAY RATES

London +10–15% · **South East +5%** · **Midlands, North & Scotland at band** · **Wales & NI −5–10%**

Rates compress regionally more than salaries do. Interim work travels, so the London premium on day rates runs nearer 10–15% than the 15–25% seen on permanent pay. Outside-IR35 engagements typically price 10–20% lower, as contractors retain more of the gross rate.

WHEN TO FLEX, WHEN TO HIRE

Hiring spike or project surge

A defined burst of hiring, whether a funding round, a new site or a product launch, rarely justifies permanent TA headcount. Interim capacity absorbs the peak and then steps away.

Cover without the gap

Maternity cover, notice periods and restructures leave hiring exposed for months. Embedded recruiters keep pipelines warm while you take the time to make the permanent decision properly.

Build, then decide

Many teams flex first and convert later. An interim proves what the function actually needs before the permanent spec is written, and the day rate buys both speed and the option to change course.

BEYOND THE BENCHMARK

What moves you off the band

Four factors that consistently push individual packages away from the regional bands.

Remote & location arbitrage

Pay follows the employer, not the postcode

Location-agnostic pay is spreading. A London-benchmarked package worked from the Midlands or the North captures the entire regional gap. Roughly 14% of UK vacancies now advertise hybrid and 4% fully remote (Work Foundation/Adzuna); no TA-specific figure exists, which is one gap our survey will close.

Founding titles & equity

Title outruns the level

"Founding Recruiter" borrows the weight of Founding Engineer. Base typically sits a level above the equivalent IC role: one London role advertised at £60–75k plus £6–7.5k in options. Equity rarely closes the gap on its own.

Combined TA & People remit

A genuine step up, not just more work

Within small to medium sized businesses a combined Director or Head of TA & People will earn 25% more in their role. There is also a genuine interest in the TA industry to cross skill. This is on an individual and a departmental level.

Sector & funding stage

A small number of roles, felt widely

Frontier AI labs and well-funded scale-ups pay well above market and hire remotely by default. The number of roles is small, but they reset what senior candidates everywhere else expect to be offered.

Directional, drawn from live vacancies, our own placement data and market observation. We're quantifying each through our 2026 UK TA Salary Survey. Take part and we'll share the full dataset back.

METHODOLOGY & CONTACT

How we built these benchmarks

Figures blend published 2026 salary-guide and survey data (including Robert Half, Glassdoor, PayScale, Indeed and Salary.com regional indices) with James Adams placement and offer data across UK markets. Day-rate bands additionally draw on UK contractor market data, IR35 rate guidance and live interim vacancies.

Where a region-level pairing has thin public data, bands are modelled from national figures using regional pay indices, then sense-checked against live vacancies and our own network. Salary bands describe typical lower-to-upper quartile offers for permanent, in-house roles; day-rate bands are UK-wide, inside-IR35 equivalents. They are not minimums, maximums or averages.

Benchmarks are a starting point for a conversation rather than a substitute for one. Sector, scale, remit and urgency all move the number, so we're happy to benchmark your exact brief.

Regional definitions: "The South" covers the South East and South West excluding London. South East markets (Reading, Oxford, Brighton) typically sit at the top of each band, with the South West beyond Bristol toward the lower end. "Midlands" covers the East and West Midlands. "North East" includes Yorkshire and the Humber.

LET'S TALK

Want this benchmarked against your team?

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