FOSTER & MAY

MARKET REPORT
Q1 2026

For over nine years, Daniel has supported professional construction and property consultancies in hiring Quantity Surveyors across the UK, primarily throughout London and the Southeast. Since 2023, he has also published quarterly reports focusing on key statistics, trends, and insights within the construction consultancy recruitment market.

In 2025, these reports covered a range of disciplines; however, moving forward, they will return to focusing solely on the Quantity Surveying market.

In this report, we take a deep dive into the salary expectations of Quantity Surveyors, including a comparison of data from 2025 and 2026. We will also consider the possibility of salary parity across the UK, provide insight into how salary requirements are presented, and conclude with some final thoughts on the QS recruitment market.

SALARY INSIGHT

The figures shown below are based on the salary requirements of Quantity Surveyors we have supported over the course of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026.

Quantity Surveying Salary Expectations by Level (2025 vs Q1 2026)

2025 Salary Expectations

Level	Midpoint (£)
Graduate	26,849
Assistant	36,879
Quantity Surveyor	51,378
Senior	71,495
Associate	85,208
Director	102,500

Q1, 2026 Salary Expectations

Level	Low (£)	High (£)	Midpoint	Uplift
Graduate	25,000	30,000	27,500	2.42%
Assistant	28,000	42,000	35,000	-5.09%
Quantity Surveyor	42,000	70,000	56,000	9.00%
Senior	65,000	80,000	72,500	1.41%
Associate	80,000	102,000	91,000	6.80%
Director	95,000	125,000	110,000	7.32%

WHAT THE FIGURES SAY

The data shows that Quantity Surveyor salary expectations in Q1 have increased by approximately 4-5%, with most professionals seeking uplifts in the region of 5-9%. Outliers - including occasional downward flexibility - bring the overall average increase down to 3.6%.

In my previous report, I noted that salary expectations tend to spike at the start of the year. It will be interesting to see how these figures evolve in the coming quarter.

So far, this increase has not slowed hiring activity. Despite this upward pressure on salaries, most consultancy practices have remained active in the market. In many cases, they have not been deterred by higher expectations and have, at times, offered salaries above initial projections. This is likely driven by growing confidence in the market, alongside increasing awareness of the limited pool of high-quality Quantity Surveyors available.

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GREATER PARITY

Last year, I highlighted that salaries across the UK were, in some areas, beginning to align more closely with those in London, where pay has traditionally been significantly higher.

So far this year, we have worked with Quantity Surveyors across a range of locations, including Brighton, Surrey, Bristol, Northwest, and the Midlands. Across these regions, average salary expectations have increased in all areas except at Assistant level when compared to 2025 figures.

In March, I spoke with a Senior Quantity Surveyor (non-MRICS) based in Manchester who was earning £68,000, with expectations of this rising to £70,000+ in the coming months. This is a strong example of how regional salaries are continuing to close the gap with London benchmarks.

As Foster & May continues to expand its reach across the UK, it will be interesting to see whether this trend persists and if regional markets achieve greater parity with London and the Southeast.

UNDERSTANDING CANDIDATE'S SALARY REQUIREMENTS

I can only speak to how Foster & May presents salary requirements, although I expect there are similarities across the wider recruitment market. Typically, we present either a salary range (e.g. £40,000 - £45,000) or a specific figure (e.g. £75,000), with both agreed in advance with each Quantity Surveyor before being shared with clients.

Over time, I have seen these figures occasionally misinterpreted, so I wanted to provide some clarity.

A Specific Figure
When a Quantity Surveyor provides a single salary figure rather than a range, this should generally be viewed as their absolute minimum expectation. This may reflect their current salary or, in some cases, a willingness to accept a lower base in exchange for a stronger overall opportunity.

A Salary Range
Where a salary range is provided (e.g. £40,000 - £45,000), this typically indicates a degree of flexibility depending on how the Quantity Surveyor's experience and skill set are assessed by a prospective employer. It may also vary based on factors such as office location, hybrid or remote working arrangements, and overall benefits.

However, there is usually a clear minimum within that range that the candidate would be willing to accept.

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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Since December 2025, we have seen a significant increase in recruitment activity. Based on many of our conversations across the industry, there is a clear sense of growing confidence, with many consultancy practices operating at high levels of demand.

As we approach the new financial year, this trend is likely to continue. Historically, this period brings a further influx of hiring needs as clients push forward with new and existing projects requiring additional resource.

Finally, Foster & May continues to grow and expand its reach across the UK, supporting the hiring of Quantity Surveyors at all levels. Alongside this, we continue to assist with a broad range of other recruitment needs, both technical and non-technical.

If we can support your hiring plans in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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