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Confederation
of School Trusts

Salary Survey of Executive Leadership Roles in School Trusts

Summary Report
August 2023

Supported by

**Browne
Jacobson**





About us

About the Confederation of School Trusts

The Confederation of School Trusts is the national organisation and sector body for school trusts in England, advocating for, connecting, and supporting executive and governance leaders. Our members are responsible for the education of more than three million young people. Bringing together trusts from every region and of every size, CST has a strong, strategic presence with access to government and policy makers to drive real change for education on the big issues that matter most.

About Cendex from XpertHR

Cendex is one of the largest reported reward datasets in the UK with over 1.5 million employees. Cendex is an XpertHR product, and part of the RELX Group – a trusted provider of data since 1968. It provides expert insight and practical tools to help organisations make fair, data-driven reward benchmarking decisions – from submission to using the data – as easily and efficiently as possible.

About Browne Jacobson

Independently recognised as one of the best education law practices in the country, Browne Jacobson has a wealth of sector-specific knowledge and experience to assist school trusts, managing estate and construction projects, employment/HR issues and funding matters, to intellectual property, health and safety, defamation and disputes. The firm has bases in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Exeter, Dublin and Nottingham.





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Foreword



Welcome to this year's salary survey of executive roles in school trusts, presented by the Confederation of School Trusts alongside XpertHR and Browne Jacobson.

This is our third year of reporting and our survey continues to bring together intelligence from a broad range of school trusts about remuneration in the sector, with information this year on more than 2,100 job roles. I thank my colleagues from across the sector for their continuing help in compiling this valuable insight, and XpertHR and Browne Jacobson for collating the data.

Pay can be a controversial topic in the delivery of public services, and there is often particular focus on the salaries of school trust chief executives and so-called 'central teams'. The reality is that school trusts are complex organisations that require skilled and mature leadership. Just as we should all support fair pay for teaching staff, commensurate with other graduate careers, we must recognise that trust leaders in human resources, finance, estates, information technology, and communications have valuable skills too. Their contributions to providing the best environments for learning can be felt right through a trust – it is far from a remote, central, or abstract contribution.

We must also recognise that school trusts vary widely in their composition and organisation; this flexibility is one of the benefits of the trust model. Our purpose in this survey is not to set out a template of pay scales to be slavishly followed, but rather to help trust boards make evidence-informed decisions on remuneration, taking all their circumstances into account.

This year, for the first time, trusts that have taken part will receive a custom report helping them understand where they fit into the national picture. All trusts can access more detailed benchmarked data for schools and comparative public and private sector roles through XpertHR and Browne Jacobson's commercial services.

Together, we hope trusts will find these useful tools to help recognise the skills of their staff, to understand the wider employment landscape, and ensure good value for the public – with the best outcomes for the children we are all here to serve.

Leora Cruddas
Chief Executive
Confederation of School Trusts



Glossary of terms

Salary tables

Lower decile: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which one-tenth of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as LD.

Lower quartile: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which one-quarter of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as LQ.

Median: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which half of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as Med.

Upper quartile: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which three-quarters of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as UQ.

Upper decile: When all salaries are set out in ascending order, the figure below which nine-tenths of all salaries lie. Shown in salary tables as UD.

Average: The sum of all individual salaries divided by the number of individuals. Shown in salary tables as Av.

Sample: The data used in a given survey or table. NB: the sample size (ie number of records) for many tables is likely to be less than the sample size for the survey as a whole as refinements (eg by region or job function) will lead to the exclusion of some individuals.

Number in sample: The number of individual salaries in the sample. Shown in salary tables as Ind. No.

Basic pay or basic salary: Annualised cash payment of basic salary including London or other location allowances, merit/performance pay and skills supplement if they are pensionable items and excluding Mortgage subsidies, standby allowances, car allowances, shift, overtime and bonus payments.

Total earnings: Basic annual salary before deductions for tax, national insurance, pension contributions etc but including London or other location allowances, performance or skills supplements plus any bonuses, commission payments and mortgage subsidies as well as any shift or standby allowance paid and other cash allowances and honorarium.

Region: Regional breakdowns are provided for two broad areas – London and the UK excluding London. This is in order to reflect some significant variations in the London market compared to the rest of the UK



Number of participating organisations

The tables below summarise the number of participating organisations (Org. No.) and the number of individual employees they provided data for (Ind. No.) as well as a summary of the number of individual records as a percentage of the overall total.

Summary by Job Level of employee

	Ind. No.	Ind. %.	Org. No.
10 Chief executive	103	4.8	91
11 Senior director	235	10.9	77
12 Director	406	18.8	64
13 Senior function head	466	21.5	50
14 Function head	395	18.3	40
15 Department manager	559	25.8	40
Whole sample	2,164	100.0	96



Summary by number of schools within the trust

	Ind. No.	Ind. %	Org. No.
1-5	160	7.4	27
6-10	349	16.1	34
11-20	347	16.0	21
21 or more	1,155	53.4	7
Not provided	153	7.1	7
Whole sample	2,164	100.0	96

Summary by number of pupils within the trust

	Ind. No.	Ind. %	Org. No.
2000 or fewer	82	3.8	16
2001-5000	224	10.4	32
5001-10000	372	17.2	24
More than 10000	300	13.9	9
Not provided	1,186	54.8	15
Whole sample	2,164	100.0	96



Summary by location of trust

	Ind. No.	Ind. %	Org. No.
London	861	39.8	38
Rest of the UK (excluding London)	1,217	56.2	65
Not provided	86	4.0	5
Whole sample	2,164	100.0	96

Summary by education provision

	Ind. No.	Ind. %	Org. No.
Primary	363	35.5	41
Secondary	312	30.5	32
Teaching School	146	14.3	15
Alternative Provision	58	5.7	6
Special (SEND)	118	11.5	13
All Through	751	73.5	14
Whole sample	1,022	100.0	48

Note: Not all trusts provided phase details.



Salary tables

Level 10 (CEO)

Incumbents at this level will hold the most senior executive role in an organisation. They are accountable for the educational achievement of pupils and the mid to long term financial viability of the organisation. Along with the rest of the executive team, this role is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board.

Headline figures

National median
basic salary:

£140,000

National median
total cash earnings:

£140,991

Sample size
(number of individuals):

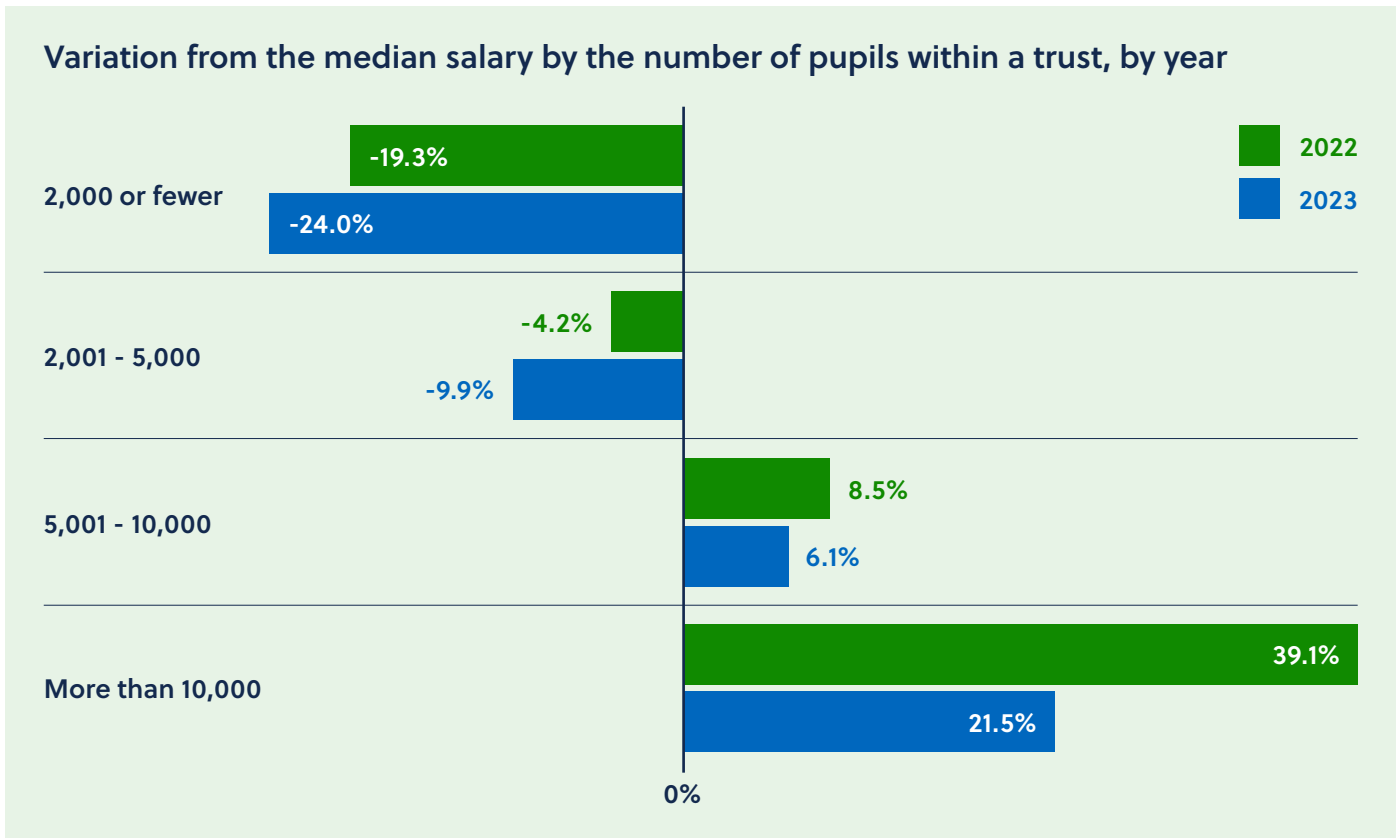
103

Year on year changes

A matched sample analysis indicates the median basic salary for CEOs has increased by 5% in 2023, compared with 2022. CEOs in the sample saw a smaller increase year-on-year compared with the total for all senior staff (Levels 10-15), which stood at an increase of 6.3%.



Number of pupils within the trust

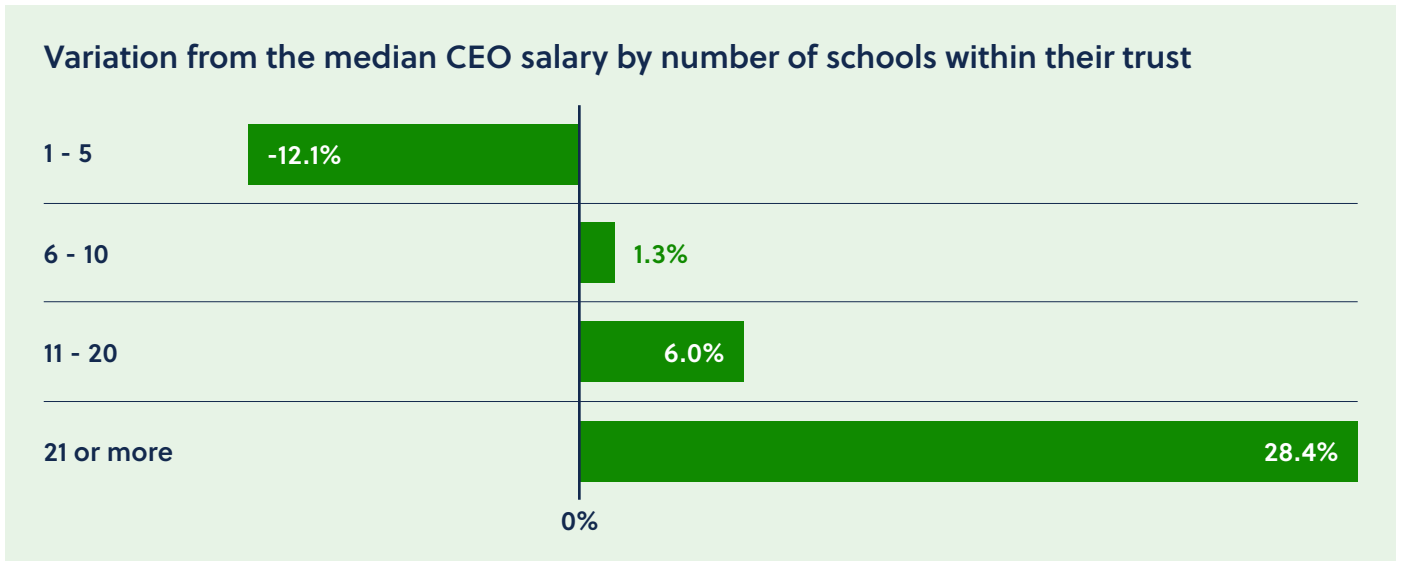


Salaries of CEOs increases in line with the number of pupils within a trust, a consistent trend seen in both 2022 and 2023. For example in 2023, in trusts with over 10,000 pupils, the median basic salary is 21.5% higher compared to the whole sample median, at £170,115.

Meanwhile, CEOs in the smaller trusts with up to 2,000 pupils receive a median basic salary around a quarter (24%) lower than median for the whole sample, at £106,382, which is 37.5% lower than the largest trusts.

In 2022, there was a larger degree of variance from the median in the largest trusts, where CEOs of trusts with over 10,000 pupils had a median basic salary around two-fifths (39.1%) higher than the whole sample median. This effect reduced in 2023, whilst maintaining the same trend.

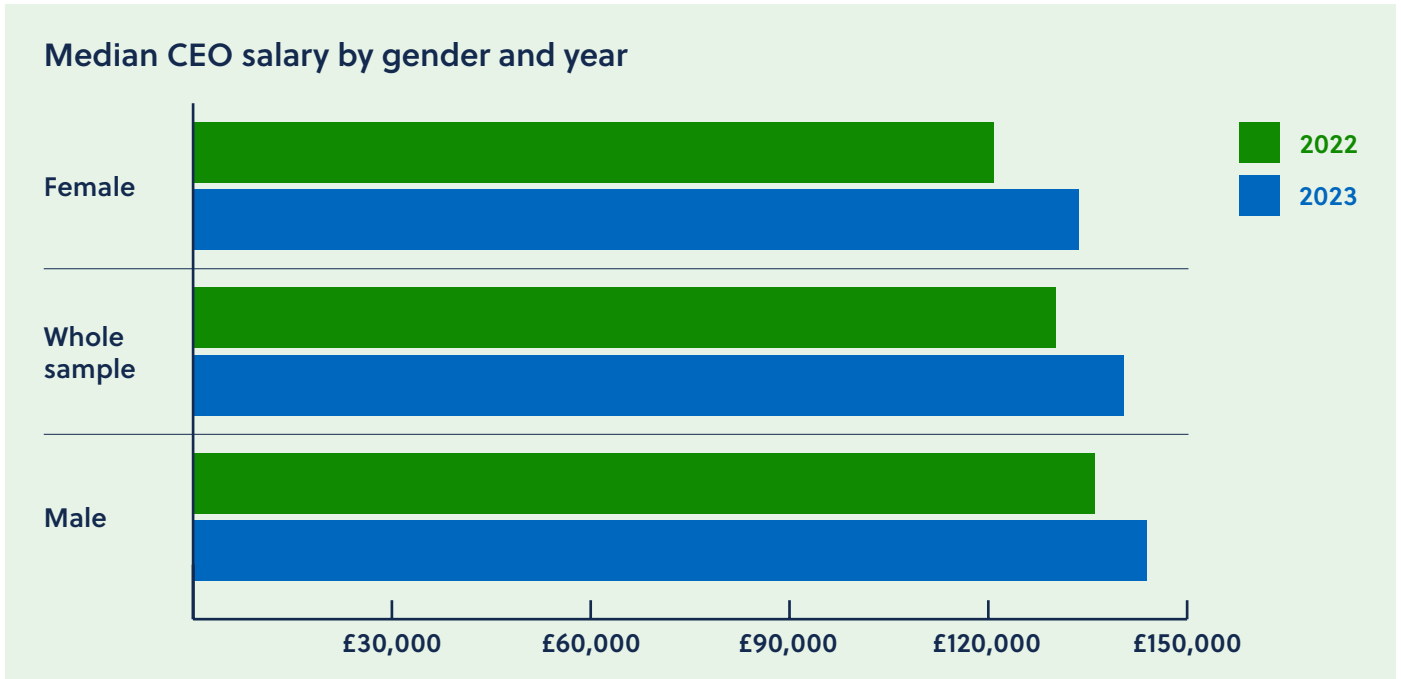
Number of schools within the trust



CEOs of the largest trusts (with at least 21 schools) received a median base salary of £179,791, standing almost one-third (28.4%, approximately £40,000) higher than the median for all CEOs within the sample. The smallest trusts with up to 5 schools in them had the median salary at over 10% below the whole sample median.

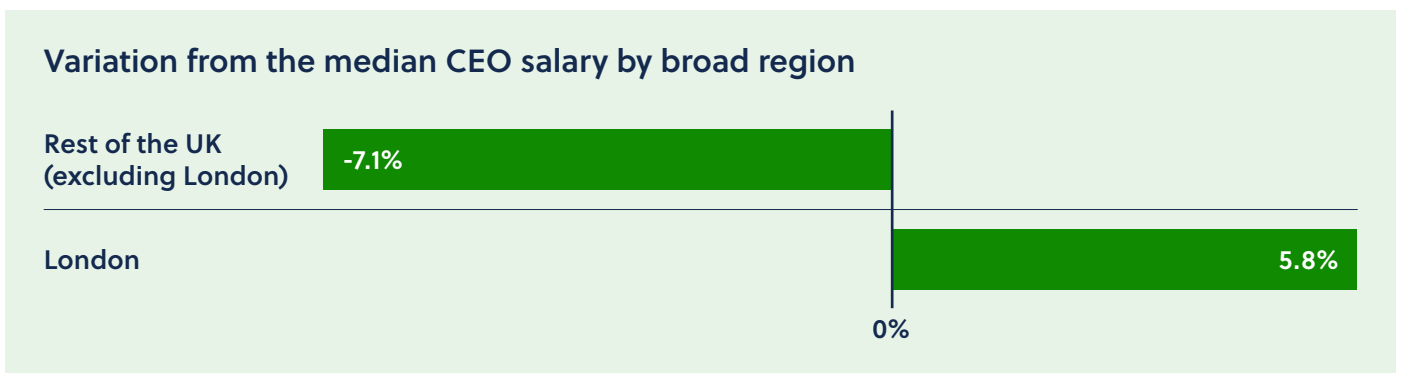


Gender



Female CEOs have continued to have median basic salaries lower than that of their male counterparts. The gap between males and females has decreased compared with 2022, with the median salary for women being 7% lower than males in 2023, compared with 11% lower in 2022.

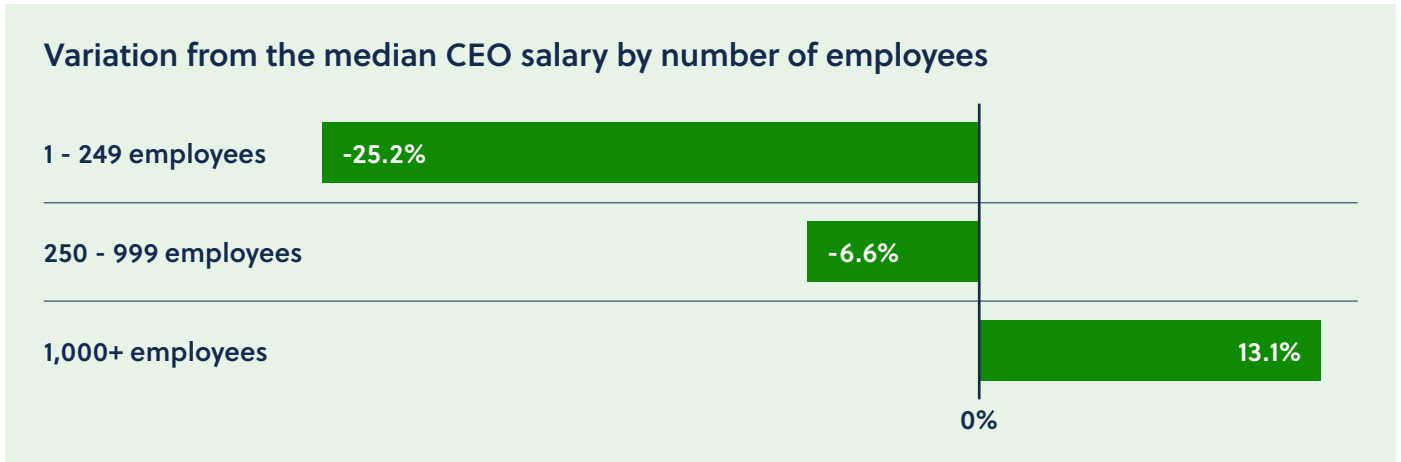
Region



London salaries for CEOs stood high at 5.8% above the whole sample, with the median salary close to reaching £150,000. Outside of London (rest of UK), salaries stood 12.2% lower than London median salary, and 7.1% below the whole sample median.



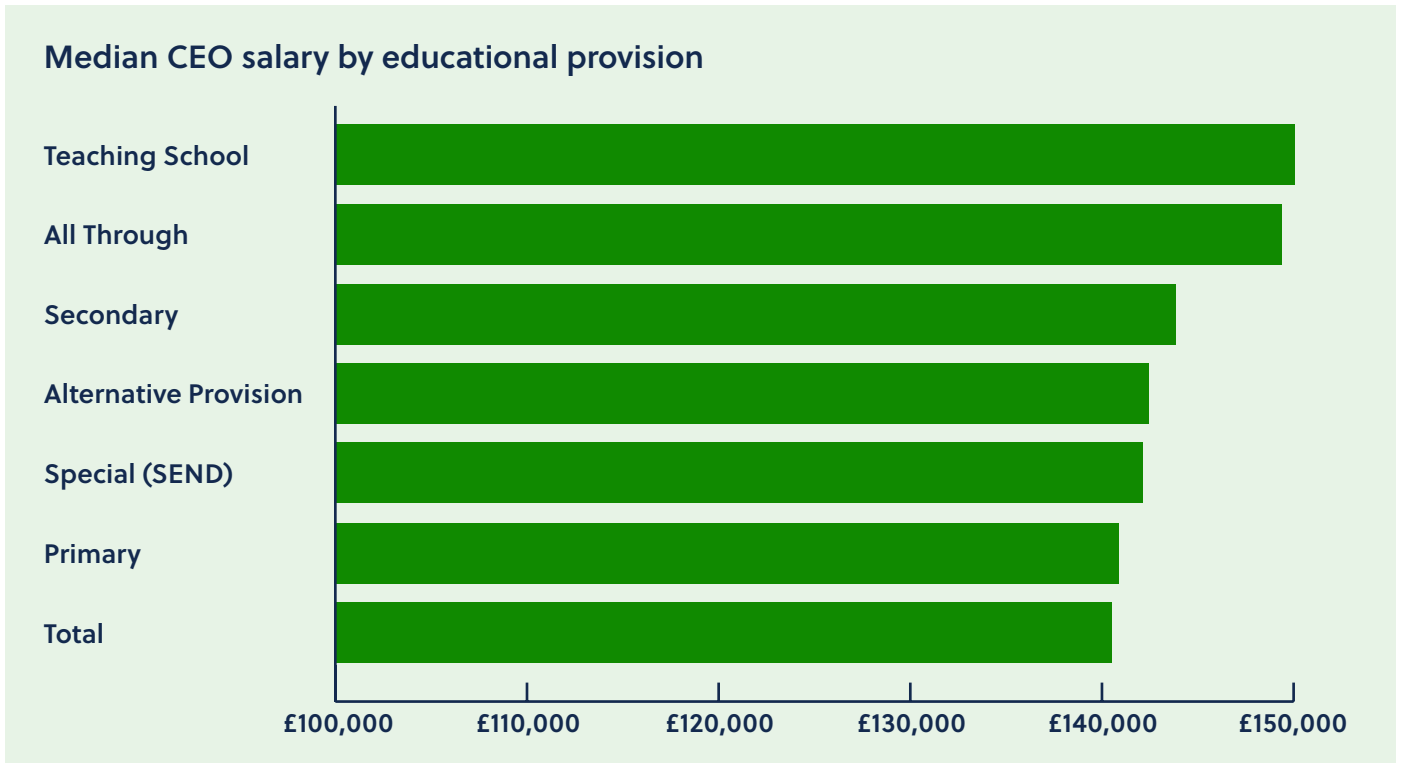
Number of employees



The median salary for CEOs with the smallest number of staff is 25.2% lower than the median salary for all CEOs in the sample. Whilst CEOs of trusts with more than 1,000 employees have the highest median salary at £158,296, this is over £10,000 lower for the same job level in 2022, where the median stood at £170,115.



Educational provision



Median salaries for CEOs differed depending on the educational provision their trust provides, with CEOs of primary school trusts being the lowest at £140,822. In contrast, CEOs of teaching school trusts had a median of £150,000, standing 6.8% above the total median salary. To note, the total median salary for educational provision differs to the whole sample median, due to details of educational provision not being provided by some respondents.



Salary tables

Level 12 (Operations Director)

Job holders at this level will almost always attend the board or executive committee of the organisation. As part of the executive team, this role is responsible for creating trust strategy for ratification by the board and then delivering this strategy.

Headline figures

National median
basic salary:

£78,010

National median
total cash earnings:

£78,024

Sample size
(number of individuals):

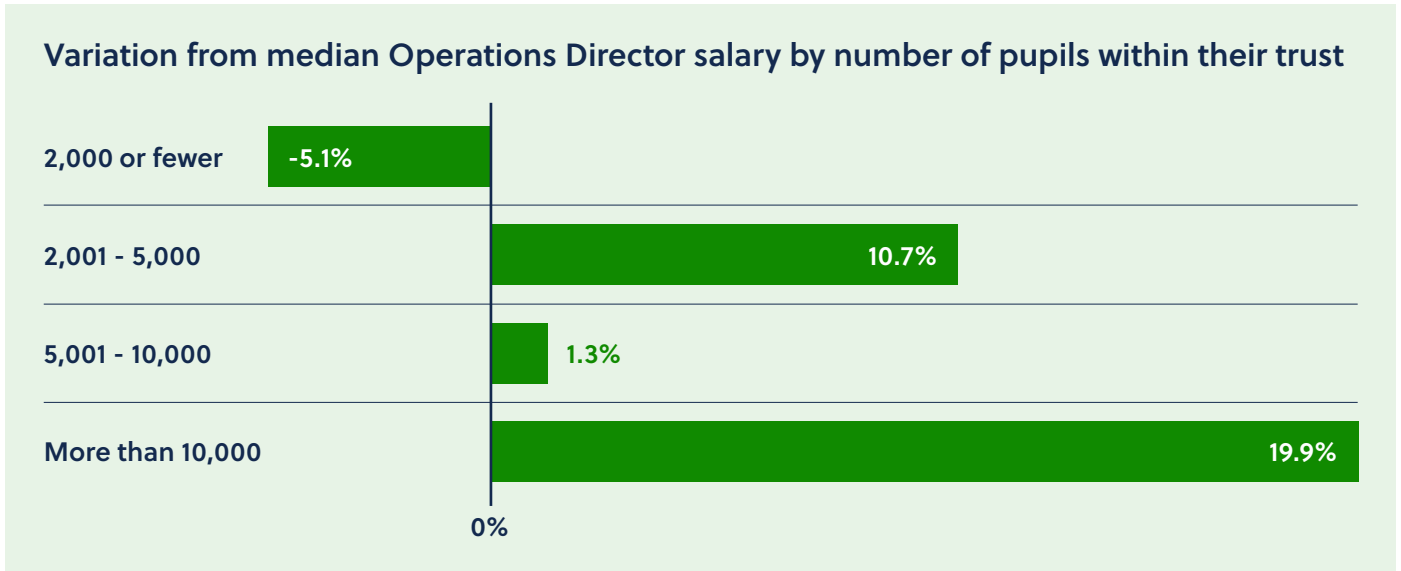
295

Year on year changes

A matched sample analysis indicates the median basic salary for Operations Directors has increased by 7.5% in 2023, compared with 2022.



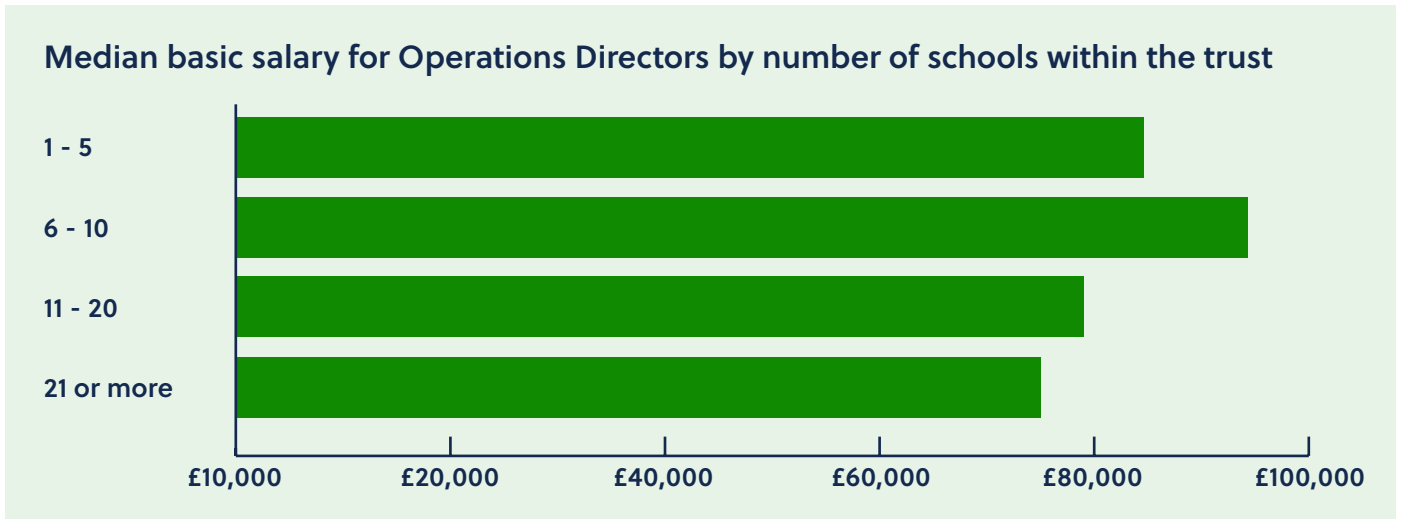
Number of pupils within the trust



Whilst Operation Directors with more than 10,000 pupils in their trust had the highest median salary, at 19.9% above the whole sample median, a clear pattern was not observed throughout the pupil number groups. The median salary of Operations Directors' working in trusts with over 5,000 but not more than 10,000 pupils was lower (£79,020) compared with those working in trusts between 2,001 and 5,000 pupils (£86,392).

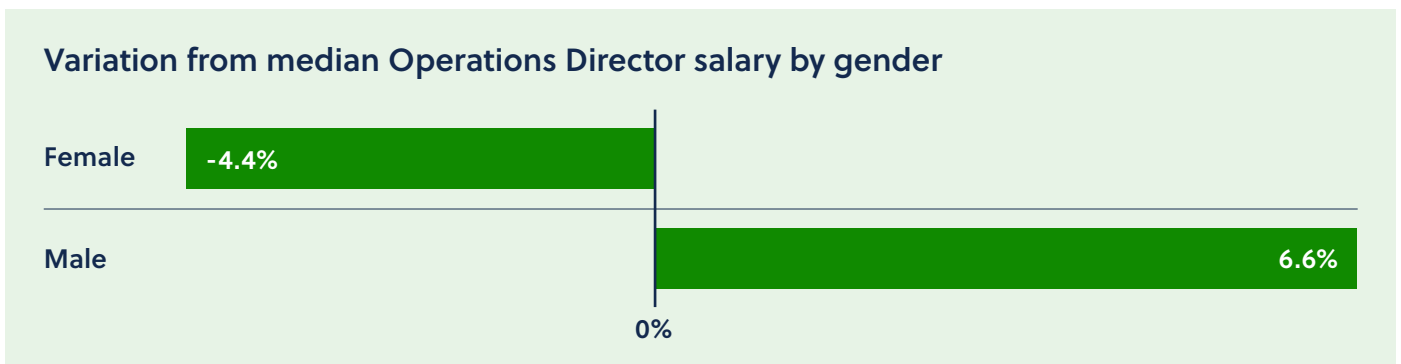


Number of schools within the trust



Operations Directors in trusts with fewer schools have higher median salaries than trusts with more than 10 schools. Working in a trust with 21 or more schools puts Operations Directors at a median salary of £75,078. In comparison, those in trusts with 10 or less had higher salaries at £93,956 (6-10 schools) and £84,555 (1-5 schools), both of which are above the whole sample median.

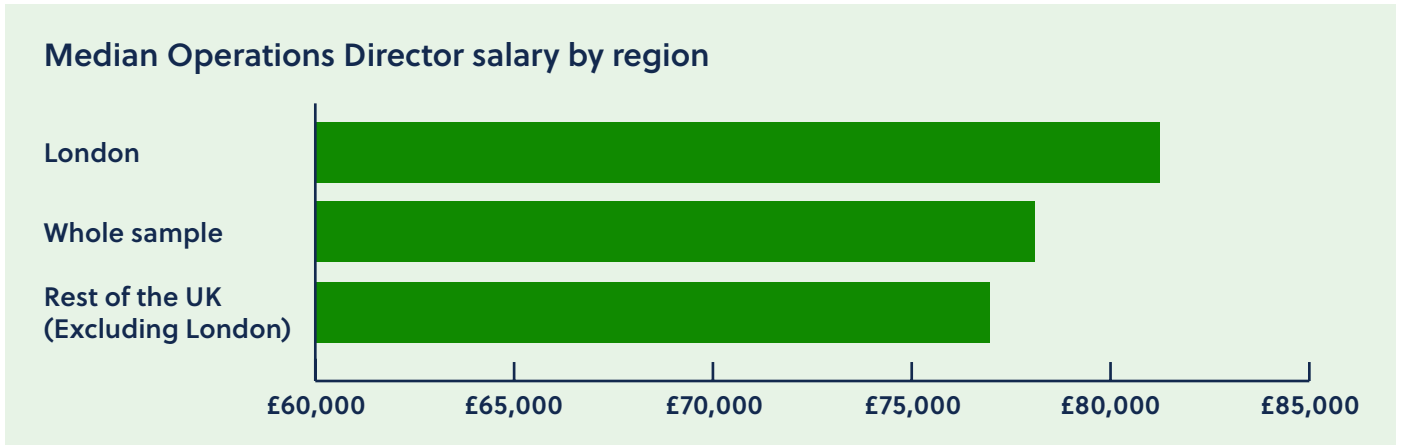
Gender



There was variation in median salaries based on gender, with males earning a median salary 6.6% higher than the whole sample median, at £83,195. Female Operations Directors salaries had a median value of £74,607, worth 4.4% less than the whole sample median and almost £10,000 below their male counterpart.

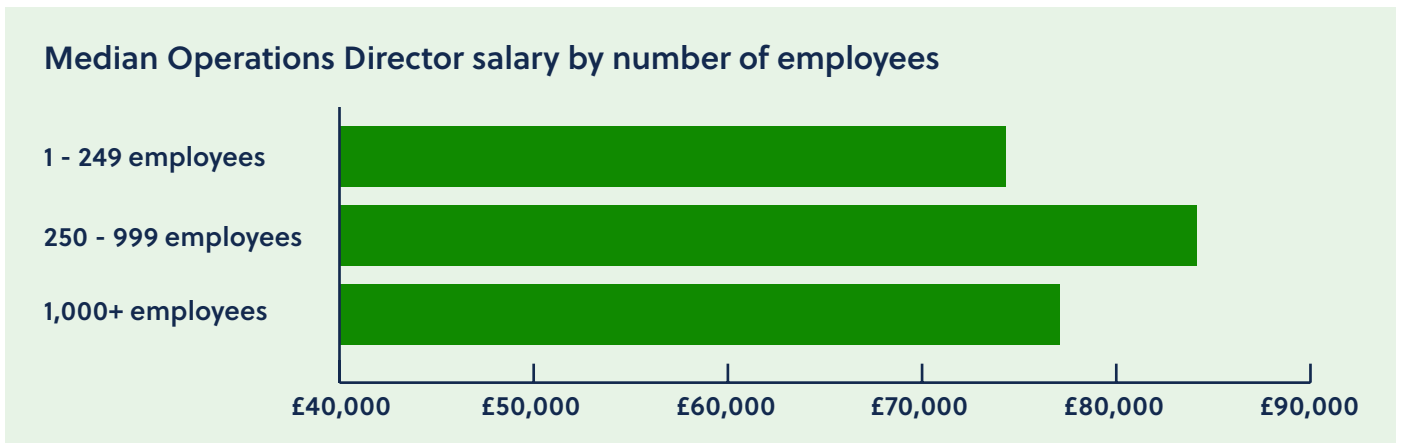


Region



Operations Directors working in London trusts continued to have a median salary above the rest of the UK, with the median salary standing £3,114 above the whole sample median.

Number of employees

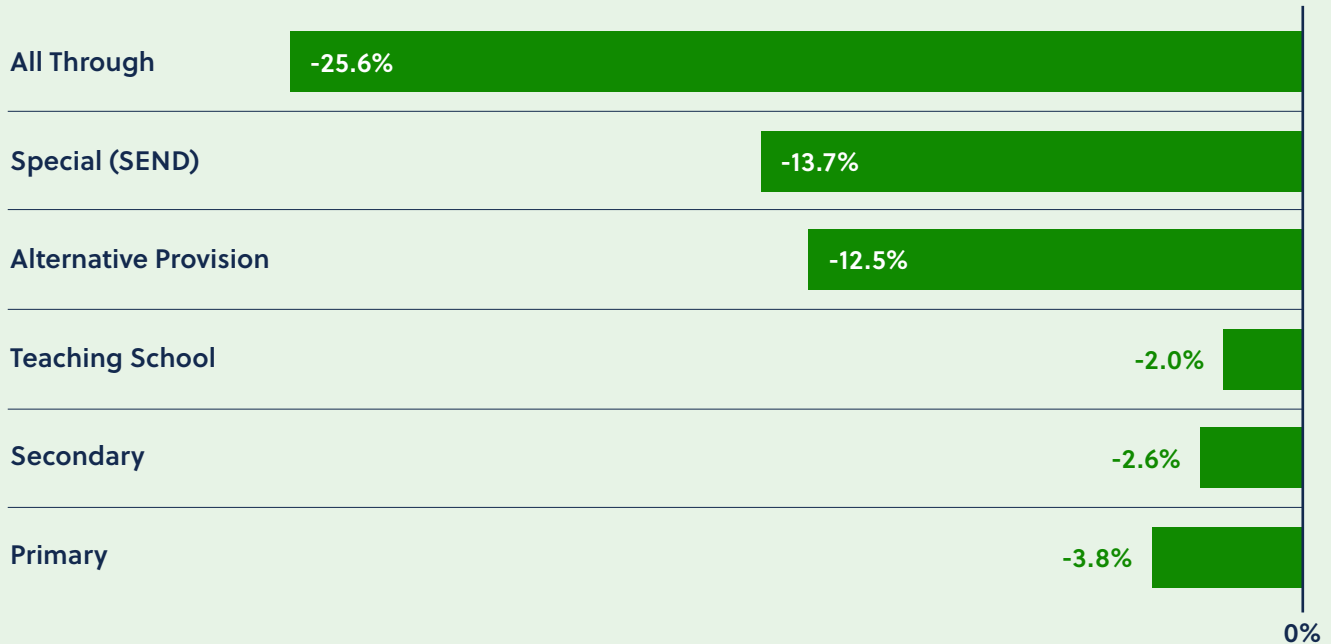


The salary for Operations Director was enhanced for those working in trusts with 250-999 employees, at 8.4% higher than the whole sample median. This same observation was made in the 2022 data, where this staff level stood 11.1% above the median for all Operations Directors in the sample.



Educational provision

Percentage change in median Operations Director salary since 2022 by educational provision



The median salary for Operations Director has decreased in all types of educational provision, compared with last year. The most pronounced decrease in salaries for Operations directors in all through schools, decreasing from a median of £99,681 in 2022 to £74,115. Large decreases were also seen in SEND and alternative provision schools, where the median Operations Director salary decreased over £12,000 for both types of provision. To note, this is not a matched sample analysis.



Salary tables

Broad industry sector comparisons

Year on year changes, by broad industry sector

	Average annual turnover, £	Average number of employees	Number of participating organisations	Average increase in basic salary (12 months)
Private sector services	10,672,329,935	69,796	292	5.1%
Manufacturing and production	875,830,736	4,951	109	4.8%
Public services	713,974,765	6,237	279	7.3%
Charities / not for profit	224,687,917	3,146	281	6.8%
School trusts	141,637,844	2,709	96	7.4%



Median basic salary, by broad industry sector

	School trusts	Private sector services	Manufacturing and production	Public services	Charities / not for profit
10 Chief executive	£140,000	£244,800	£210,000	£230,344	£141,364
11 Senior director	£98,325	£180,000	£157,621	£182,000	£109,922
12 Director	£77,089	£138,346	£122,712	£145,000	£91,097
13 Senior function head	£68,636	£116,650	£94,182	£107,141	£74,733
14 Function head	£55,359	£85,681	£80,000	£88,052	£73,000
15 Department manager	£54,393	£70,000	£70,000	£76,103	£62,215

Median total cash earnings, by broad industry sector

	School trusts	Private sector services	Manufacturing and production	Public services	Charities / not for profit
10 Chief executive	£140,991	£267,300	£230,344	£142,298	£135,960
11 Senior director	£99,660	£200,207	£182,000	£110,478	£118,448
12 Director	£77,089	£153,983	£145,000	£92,245	£98,000
13 Senior function head	£68,636	£135,000	£107,141	£74,902	£79,800
14 Function head	£55,359	£101,256	£88,052	£73,368	£67,631
15 Department manager	£54,393	£75,857	£76,103	£62,939	£57,680



Background

About this survey

This report summarises some of the key findings from the third national annual salary survey of executive leadership roles for school trusts.

The data collected through this research will give trust boards much-needed robust benchmark data to support fair and transparent decisions about executive reward. This headline report focuses on high level results and is not intended to provide sufficient information to inform decision making. We strongly urge those who wish to undertake further work as a result of this exercise, to access and scrutinise the full survey results. Those wishing to delve deeper into the data can subscribe to the XpertHR Cendex platform, to get a credible evidence base for their trusts decisions around pay.

Complimentary tailored summary for all survey participants

In addition to this high level summary report we also provide all participating trusts with a customised, confidential summary analysis of your trust's position in the national picture. If you took part in the survey then just log back into the My Files portal on Cendex to download your tailored analysis. If you did not take part in the survey but wish to do so, and obtain your free summary analysis please Rachel.Sunderland@xperthr.co.uk for details of how to participate.

Full survey results

The full survey results offer great depth and granularity in the breakdown of the results, allowing comparisons to be refined by parameters such as trust size (both number of schools within the trust and pupil numbers across the trust), phase, religious character, as well as detailed UK region, comparisons of part time and full time staff employees and article based content summarising pension provision and contribution and health benefits.



Why you need robust market pay data

HR professionals across all industry sectors increasingly turn to salary survey reports to access reliable, accurate, market pay data to inform and implement reward strategies. This data is increasingly used in ensuring pay levels are competitive yet fair, making informed pay review decisions and setting the right pay levels for new employees.

How to access the full survey results

The full benchmark dataset is now available for trusts to purchase and interrogate via our Cendex platform. CST members and all participants in this benchmarking study are able to subscribe to Cendex at significantly preferential rates. Please get in touch with us at cendex@xperthr.co.uk for further information or to register your interest.

How we collect the data

XpertHR uses a consistent methodology to collect, verify and analyse data.

All data for any given survey is collected as accurate on a given date, to ensure that pay data is consistent from one participant to the next, and to allow year-on-year trends (eg in salaries and labour turnover to be accurately calculated and reported).

Participants are asked to complete two questionnaires for each survey:

- ◇ an organisation questionnaire which establishes characteristics of the company which can be applied to all individuals within it (eg the number of employees, sales turnover and industry group); and
- ◇ an individual questionnaire which collects demographic, pay and benefits data for each employee as a unique line in a standard spreadsheet. Please note that for data protection reasons we cannot accept data which includes individual employee names, initials or similar information which might lead to their identification. However, we do ask participants to provide a unique but anonymous number or code enabling us to track changes in pay and employment status from one year to the next.

Data submitted to XpertHR on both questionnaires is further anonymised by the removal of the company name and contact details before it is added to our database and analysed.



How we check the data

XpertHR carries out a series of validation checks and audits on data to ensure that it is accurate and to identify anomalies that can be checked before being released for analysis and reporting. These include:

- ◇ checks within one organisation's spreadsheet – to ensure that all salaries submitted are within expected parameters, and that answers to linked questions are as expected;
- ◇ checks between one organisation's data and the whole survey data – to ensure that the salaries for one organisation are not consistently out of line with those for all other organisations; and
- ◇ checks from one year's survey database to the next – to ensure that trends are either as expected or can be explained.

Where anomalies are identified, XpertHR staff will ask participants to verify or amend data to ensure it is accurate. Further audits of the data are then carried out to ensure that no organisation dominates any given survey or table.

Where an organisation has previously submitted data for a XpertHR salary survey, this will be returned to the organisation for checking before subsequent publication – saving the participant from the time and effort involved in the initial submission.

How we analyse the data

Our reports include the most commonly requested salary tables. Where the data permit, they include, for any given survey, every possible breakdown by job level and job function plus one other variable (e.g. location, industry, or company size). This particular survey also shows industry and function grouped by company turnover. Further and more detailed breakdowns are available using the online JobPricing tool.

Where possible, the sample size is shown on each line of every table. By default, we report the average, median and quartile salaries for each line. However, to protect the identity of participating organisations and individual employees:

- ◇ no figures of any sort will be shown where the sample is less than four;
- ◇ median or average figures only are shown where the sample is greater than four; and
- ◇ a full quartile distribution is shown where the sample is greater than eight.

As an additional safeguard, no data will be published where all individuals in a data line are drawn from a single company.

