Reed

Salary guide 2026

Scientific

Navigating the new jobs landscape

James Reed CBE
Chairman and CEO, Reed

Welcome to our 2026 salary guides. As we look ahead, it is clear that the UK labour market is navigating one of the most profound transformations in living memory. In my four decades in recruitment, I have never witnessed a period of such rapid and fundamental change.

Our economic landscape has defied traditional expectations. Historically, periods of economic growth have aligned with rising job vacancies, but that relationship is no longer guaranteed. Recent trends suggest a structural shift in the labour market, where vacancy levels can decline even as the economy expands. This disconnect signals deeper changes in how businesses approach hiring and workforce planning. For employers and jobseekers alike, understanding these dynamics is critical - because the old assumption that growth equals more jobs is increasingly outdated.

The AI revolution: A white-collar recession

One of the primary drivers behind this permanent change to the jobs market, alongside policy, regulation, changing worker expectations, globalisation and supply chain pressures, I believe is artificial intelligence. The advancement and adoption of AI technologies have been breathtakingly fast, and its appetite for consuming tasks, particularly in white-collar professions, is the biggest story of our time.

AI is incredibly effective at reducing costs for employers, and it achieves this primarily by reducing the number of employees required. This is not a distant, future threat; it is happening right now. A recent survey we conducted of 500 companies revealed that 15% were already reducing their hiring plans specifically because of the arrival of AI. Combined with other pressures, such as National Insurance increases and general hiring freezes, the overall impact on job creation has been noticeable.

We are witnessing what I term a 'white-collar recession,' which mirrors the blue-collar recession of the 1980s when automation hollowed out many industrial and manufacturing jobs. Today, it is entry-level and process-driven roles in sectors like administration, finance, and even law that are being consumed. These are the traditional gateways for many professionals starting their careers, and their rapid decline poses a significant threat to social mobility and future workforce development. The very nature of what constitutes a 'good job' is being redefined before our eyes. Roles that once seemed secure and promised a stable career path are now vulnerable to automation. This forces us, as employers and as a society, to rethink our approach to education, skills, and career progression.

> **The advancement and adoption of AI technologies have been breathtakingly fast, and its appetite for consuming tasks, particularly in white-collar professions, is the biggest story of our time.**

The graduate dilemma: A shrinking horizon

Nowhere is this shift more acutely felt than among our young people and recent graduates. The data is deeply concerning. Our own figures at Reed show that the number of graduate jobs advertised on Reed.co.uk has plummeted from around 180,000 just a few years ago to a mere 50,000 at the end of 2025. This represents a staggering two-thirds reduction in opportunities for those leaving higher education. Other job sites are reporting similar, sobering figures. This is not just a dip; it is a collapse in the entry-level market.

This 'graduate crunch' is creating a generation of highly educated individuals who are struggling to find a foothold in the professional world. Nearly half of all jobs lost since mid-2024 have been among those under 25, and youth unemployment has soared to its highest level in a decade, excluding the pandemic period standing at 15.3%. The UK's top 100 employers reduced their graduate hiring by 14.6% in 2024, the steepest fall since the 2009 recession.

For those who do manage to secure a role, the rewards are often diminished. We are seeing entry-level graduate jobs offering salaries that are perilously close to the minimum wage, especially when factoring in the long hours often expected of new recruits. This situation challenges the long-held assumption that a university degree is a guaranteed ticket to a prosperous career. We must encourage aspiring families and young people to broaden their horizons. While a degree remains valuable, it is no longer the only path.

The jobs that are proving most resilient to the AI wave are those that require a human touch, creativity, and manual dexterity. Roles in skilled trades, hospitality, and healthcare, for example, involve a level of nuanced interaction and physical skill that AI is far from replicating. We must guide the next generation towards developing practical, hands-on skills. Learning to do things with your hands, whether in a highly educated field like osteopathy or a skilled trade, is becoming an increasingly wise career strategy.

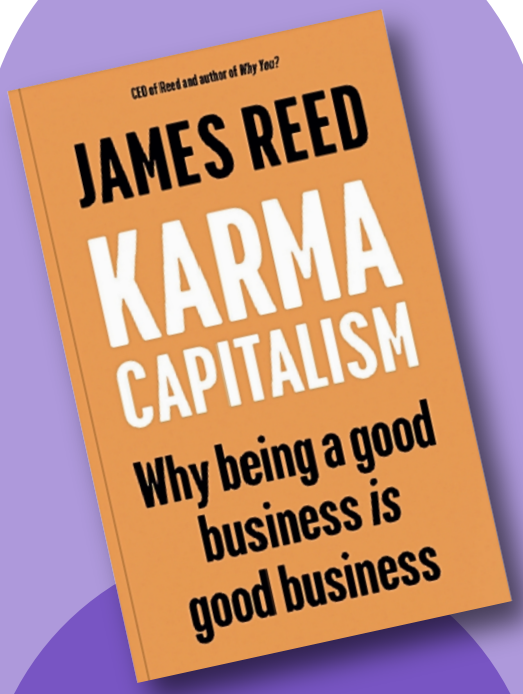
Thriving through purpose: The PhilCo advantage

In this challenging environment, how can businesses not only survive but thrive? How can you attract and retain the talent you need when the market is so volatile? The answer, I believe, lies in purpose. Today's employees, especially the younger generation, are not just looking for a salary; they are seeking meaning and a sense of contribution from their work. This is where the concept of a philanthropic company, or PhilCo, becomes a powerful competitive advantage.

A **PhilCo** is a business that has committed a significant portion of its ownership - typically 10% or more - to a charitable foundation. At Reed, we are proud to be a PhilCo, with 18% of our company owned by the Reed Foundation. This is not just a footnote in our corporate structure; it is a fundamental part of our identity. It means that a portion of our success is directly channelled back into the community. Our dividends help fund a wide array of good causes, many through our partnership with the Big Give, which has raised hundreds of millions for thousands of charities.

Being a PhilCo has a tangible and profound impact on our business. It is a cornerstone of our employee engagement strategy. Our team members - known as co-members - know that their hard work contributes to something larger than the bottom line. This shared purpose fosters a culture of responsibility, collaboration, and pride. It creates a powerful reason for people to join us and, just as importantly, to stay with us.

As hyper-capitalism has created vast inequalities - with the top one per cent in the UK holding more wealth than the bottom 70% - models like the PhilCo movement offer a way to transform business for good. It aligns profit with people and the planet, ensuring that corporate success contributes to societal wellbeing. This is not just corporate social responsibility; it is a sustainable and highly impactful business model for the 21st century.



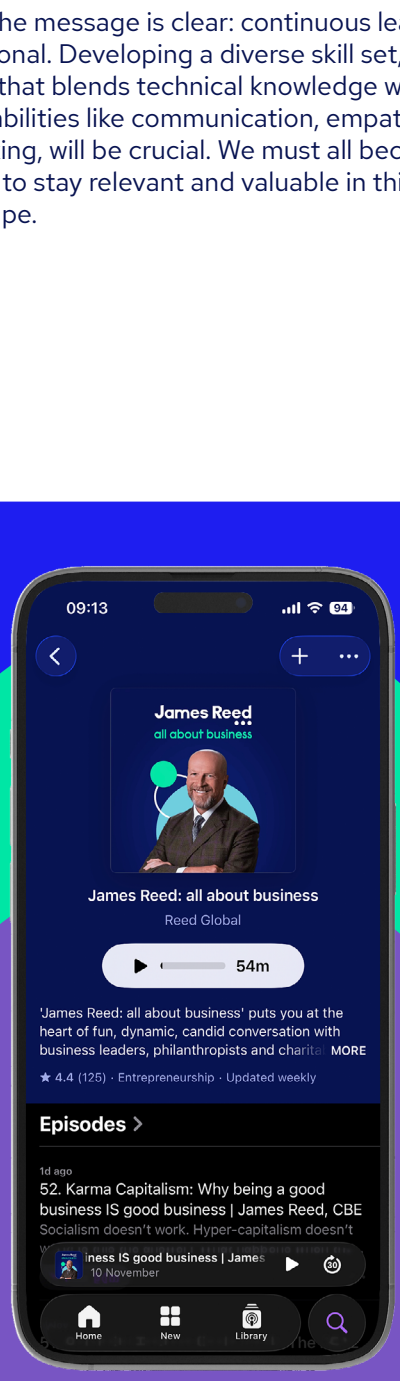
Find out more about being a PhilCo in James' book
'Karma Capitalism,
Why being a good business
is good business'

A look to the future

The road ahead is undoubtedly challenging. The forces of AI, economic uncertainty, and shifting market dynamics require us all to be more agile, more innovative, and more people centric than ever before. For employers, this means rethinking recruitment strategies. You must look beyond traditional qualifications and focus on skills, adaptability, resilience and potential. It means investing in upskilling and reskilling your existing workforce to meet the demands of the new economy. And it means building a strong employer brand rooted in a genuine purpose that will attract the best people.

For individuals, the message is clear: continuous learning is no longer optional. Developing a diverse skill set, particularly one that blends technical knowledge with people-centric abilities like communication, empathy, and critical thinking, will be crucial. We must all become lifelong learners to stay relevant and valuable in this evolving landscape.

These salary guides are designed to provide you with the data and insights you need to navigate this complex environment. They offer a benchmark for compensation in a time of great flux, helping you make informed decisions to attract and retain the talent that will drive your organisation forward. While the headlines may be daunting, there is always opportunity in disruption. By understanding these trends and adapting proactively, we can build a more resilient, skilled, and purposeful workforce for the future.



James Reed CBE
Chairman and CEO, Reed

Listen to James Reed's podcast 'all about business'.

Hosted by James Reed CBE, the Chairman and CEO of Reed Group, you'll hear the highs and lows of what it means to be a true business leader to empower you to implement smarter, more meaningful strategy in your business or career.

Listen here

Why use Reed's scientific salary guide?

For both jobseekers and employers alike, Reed's salary guide stands as an invaluable resource, offering unparalleled insights to keep you well-informed and ahead of the curve in 2026.

Extensive view

This guide covers a wide range of jobs at all seniorities across the scientific sector. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting out, you'll find valuable insights to help you succeed.

Superior insight

Our scientific expert provides key insight into the sector, with Reed's local recruitment specialists discussing the job landscape at a deeper regional level. This means you'll get a unique perspective on the job market that is not available elsewhere.

Stay well informed

The data in this guide is based on salaries expected today, so you can use the information to steer your decisions and make informed choices on the salaries you offer your employees or accept yourself. You'll be able to stay up to date on the latest trends and developments in the sector.

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The new rules of scientific hiring: Flexibility, data, and digital growth

Adam Buckland
Regional Director - Scientific, Reed

The scientific sector is in a period of significant transformation. A combination of funding pressures, rapid technological advancement, and evolving employee expectations is reshaping the employment market. For organisations to attract and retain the specialist talent needed to drive innovation, they must understand these shifting dynamics. From the struggles of established biotech companies to the exponential growth of computational biology, the landscape for scientific professionals is more complex than ever.

Biotech's funding squeeze and its ripple effect

Over the last year, we have seen a number of companies struggle to obtain funding, particularly within the biotech sector's 'Golden Triangle' of Cambridge, Oxford, and London. While it's common for startups to face a volatile funding environment, we're now seeing more established companies - those that have successfully navigated initial funding rounds - grapple to secure their next phase of investment.

This led to a difficult but necessary stripping back of headcount and, consequently, a notable number of redundancies. The result, as we enter 2026, is a market flooded with highly qualified and experienced scientists. While this may seem advantageous for hiring companies, it presents a new set of challenges. Employers are receiving a high volume of strong applicants. But, this abundance of talent makes it harder for organisations to shift through applications and for jobseekers to stand out in a crowded field.

Professionals impacted by these changes are adapting by diversifying their skill sets and broadening their career horizons. Lab-based scientists are increasingly looking for roles where they can leverage their academic qualifications and industry experience in a more commercial capacity. And, we are seeing a rise in individuals exploring opportunities in business development, sales, and technical support, moving to roles that still require deep scientific knowledge but where they can apply it in a different context.

The rise of the data-driven scientist

While some areas face headwinds as we enter the new year, others are experiencing unprecedented growth. The most significant shift is the increased demand for professionals in computational biology and bioinformatics. These roles represent a move from the 'wet lab' to the 'dry lab', where scientists use computational data to interpret trends and make predictions.

Most professionals in this field start with a degree and perhaps a master's in a biological science before pursuing a PhD in computational biology. This combination of deep scientific understanding and advanced programming and data analysis skills is highly sought after. Historically, this work might have been outsourced, but today, most biotech and pharmaceutical companies are building their own in-house computational teams. This has created a surge in demand for talent that can bridge the gap between biology and computer science.

Alongside this, we're witnessing rapid growth in app-based health technology. More companies are leveraging digital platforms to monitor and diagnose health issues, such as diabetes, through user-friendly mobile applications. A key advantage of these technologies is their ability to reach and support a much wider audience, providing access to health monitoring and guidance with far greater efficiency than traditional dependence on in-person GP visits. This digital approach enables patients to manage their conditions remotely, allows for continuous data collection, and helps

healthcare providers deliver timely interventions without geographic limitations.

At the same time, the field of precision medicine is advancing quickly. Biotech companies are now able to develop treatments that target specific genes or cells, offering highly personalised therapies for complex diseases such as cancer and neurological disorders. These breakthroughs mean that approaches to treatment can be tailored to an individual's unique genetic profile, improving outcomes and minimising side effects.

Together, these innovations point to a future where technology and data not only enhance healthcare delivery but also revolutionise our ability to predict, prevent, and treat serious illnesses with unprecedented accuracy. The common thread is the integration of technology and data, signalling a clear direction for future innovation and talent acquisition.

Flexibility, automation, and the new shape of scientific roles

The conversation around remote and flexible work has evolved differently in the scientific sector. For lab-based roles, working from home is simply not feasible. However, that doesn't mean flexibility is off the table. Instead of remote work, the focus has shifted to flexi-time. To help employees avoid peak traffic in innovation hubs like Cambridge, many labs now operate on extended hours, allowing staff to start earlier or finish later. This operational adjustment provides the flexibility needed to improve work-life balance without compromising essential onsite duties.

For non-lab roles in areas like bioinformatics, the story is entirely different. These professionals can often work from anywhere, and companies are embracing this, requiring on-site presence as little as once or twice a quarter.

When it comes to automation, we are seeing a complete overhaul of the laboratory itself. A single machine can now run thousands of tests in an hour - a task that would have previously required a team of scientists working for a full day. While this speeds up processes immensely, it reduces the need for hands-on lab staff. However, it also creates new roles. There is a growing demand for specialists who can manage, validate, and maintain this sophisticated equipment. These roles, such as field service engineers and application scientists, require a unique blend of scientific knowledge and technical expertise to install, repair, and train others on the use of automated systems.

An uptick in temporary and contract-based hiring

In response to market uncertainty, particularly around funding, there has been a significant rise in temporary and contract-based roles across all specialisms and seniorities. For employers, this offers a way to access skilled professionals for specific projects without the long-term commitment of a permanent hire. It provides agility in a volatile environment, allowing them to bring in expertise to get a project over the line and then re-evaluate their needs.

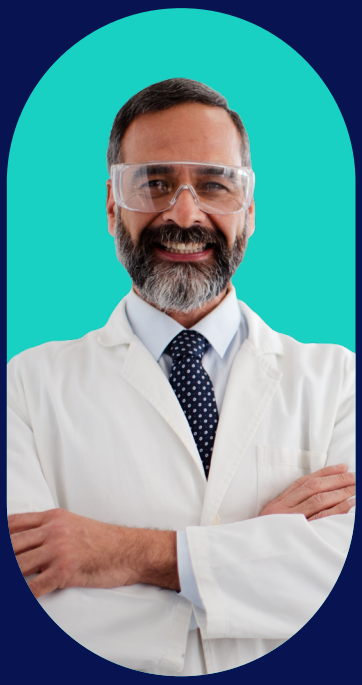
This trend is also beneficial for professionals. In a competitive job market, contract work provides an immediate income stream and a way to stay engaged with the industry. It also offers a degree of flexibility for professionals who may be hesitant to commit to an organisation whose long-term funding is not guaranteed. This mutual benefit has created a thriving contract market, with both parties recognising and embracing the opportunity.

Salaries and benefits

Despite the competitive market, salaries in the scientific sector are generally holding strong and increasing in line with market fluctuations. An interesting development is that some people are even lowering their salary expectations to position themselves more attractively.

However, for many scientists, compensation is only one part of the equation. They are often more driven by a passion for their work and the opportunity to contribute to meaningful research. As a result, they are increasingly asking "what else?" when considering a role. Benefits packages, including robust pension schemes, private healthcare, and share options - particularly in startups - are crucial differentiators. While startups may not have the established benefits of a large corporation, they can offer significant rewards through share options if the company succeeds.

It's a balancing act, and employers who present a compelling total package are best positioned to attract the best talent.



Our survey says...

At the end of 2025, Reed conducted its annual snap survey of 5,000 professionals. The research asked UK workers about their current and preferred salary and benefits, their organisation's performance and priorities, how they rated their job satisfaction and career prospects, as well as the key recruitment and skills trends they're witnessing.

Here are the top trends that the survey revealed:

1. Financial strain is widespread

The overwhelming reason for salary dissatisfaction (52% of unhappy respondents) is that pay hasn't kept pace with the cost of living. This far outweighs other factors, such as workload or industry pay.

• **Declining affordability:** Only a quarter of the population (25%) feels they're earning more in terms of what they can afford compared to four years ago, before the cost-of-living crisis.

• **Limited disposable income:** A concerning 26% of respondents have **£100 or less leftover** each month after essential bills, with seven per cent stating their entire salary goes to essentials. This highlights a struggle for many to save or enjoy non-essential spending.

2. The growing 'comfort gap'

There is a stark **£11,110.38 gap** between what people are currently earning and what they say is their comfortable living wage.

• **Desired vs. current earnings:** Our research found the average current annual salary is **£40,638.35.** However, the average income people believe they need to live comfortably is **£51,748.73.**

3. Salary remains the dominant job motivator

To switch jobs, individuals expect a substantial average pay increase of **£12,139.55.** This is significantly higher than the average £3,923.62 pay rise that would satisfy them at their current employer, indicating a clear financial incentive is needed to overcome the inertia of changing roles.

• **Increased importance:** A vast majority **(73%) report that salary is more important** now when considering new job opportunities than it was before the cost-of-living crisis - 40% even say it's "significantly more important".

• **Higher progression expectations: Nearly half of the 5,000 people surveyed** (44%) have increased their expectations for salary progression within their current role over the last four years.

4. Benefits are secondary to cash

Many employees are willing to sacrifice 'soft' benefits like free refreshments (11%), cycle-to-work schemes (11%), onsite parking (eight per cent), and wellness programmes (seven per cent) for higher pay. Even some 'harder' benefits like health insurance are on the table for six per cent of those who took part.

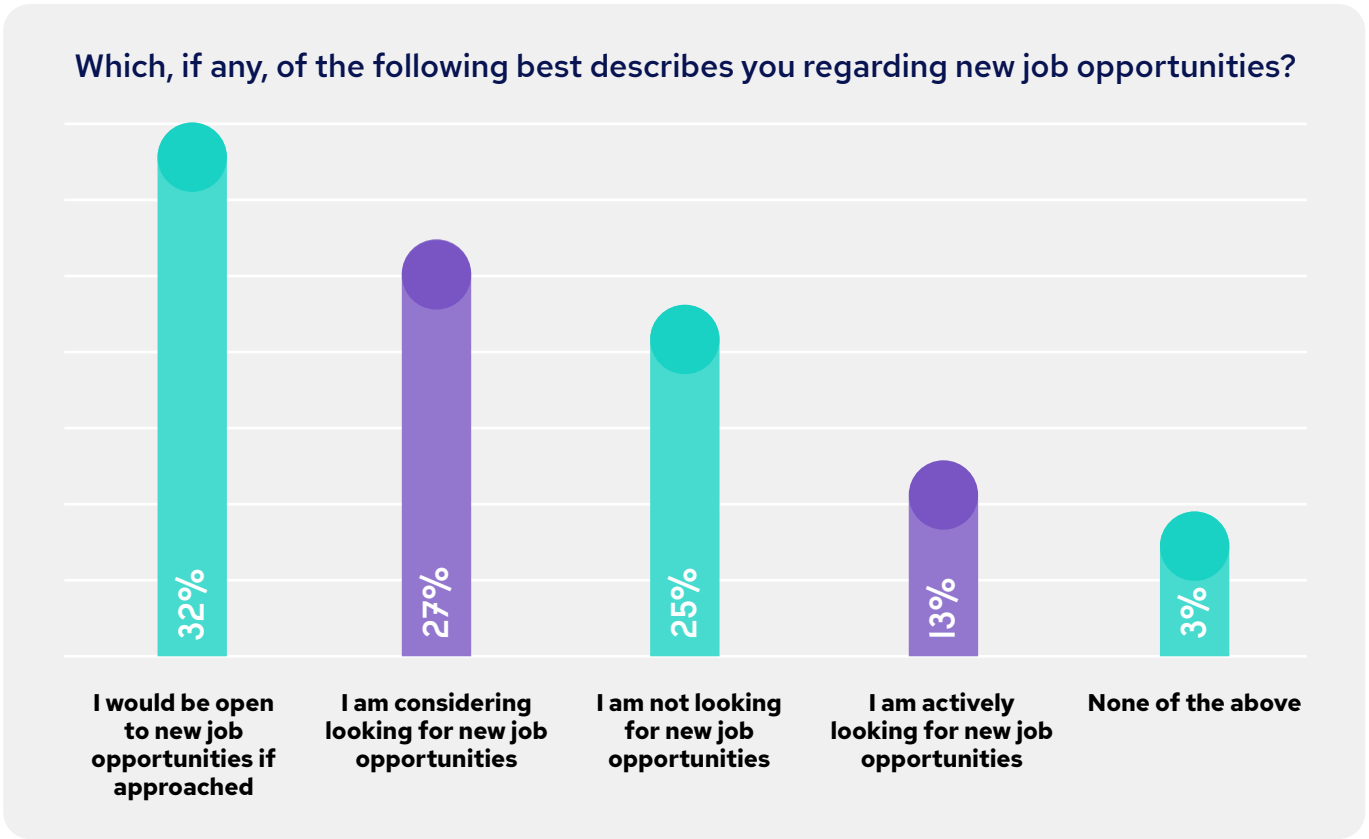
• **Underutilised benefits:** Some commonly offered benefits, such as cycle-to-work schemes (11% unused) and the ability to purchase additional annual leave (seven per cent unused), are not being fully utilised by employees. This suggests that while benefits are appreciated, their perceived value can be lower than direct cash compensation, especially in the current financial climate.

• **Prevalence of benefits:** Common benefits include onsite parking (27%), hybrid working (23%), and Christmas shutdown (21%). However, 15% of respondents receive no benefits at all.

5. A highly mobile workforce

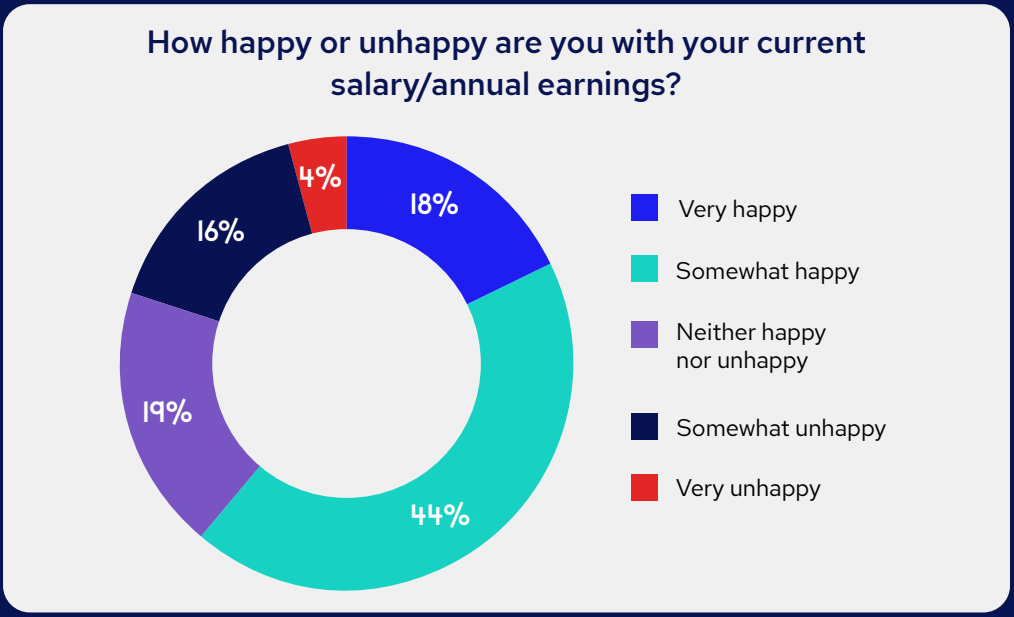
While the **average tenure is 8.54 years,** the high openness to new roles suggests that even long-serving employees are not immune to the pull of better compensation.

• **Open to new opportunities:** A significant majority **(72%) of the workforce is considering a new role.** A third (32%) are open to new job opportunities if approached, 27% are considering looking and 13% are actively looking. Only a quarter of employees (25%) are not looking for a new job opportunity at all.



Money, money, money

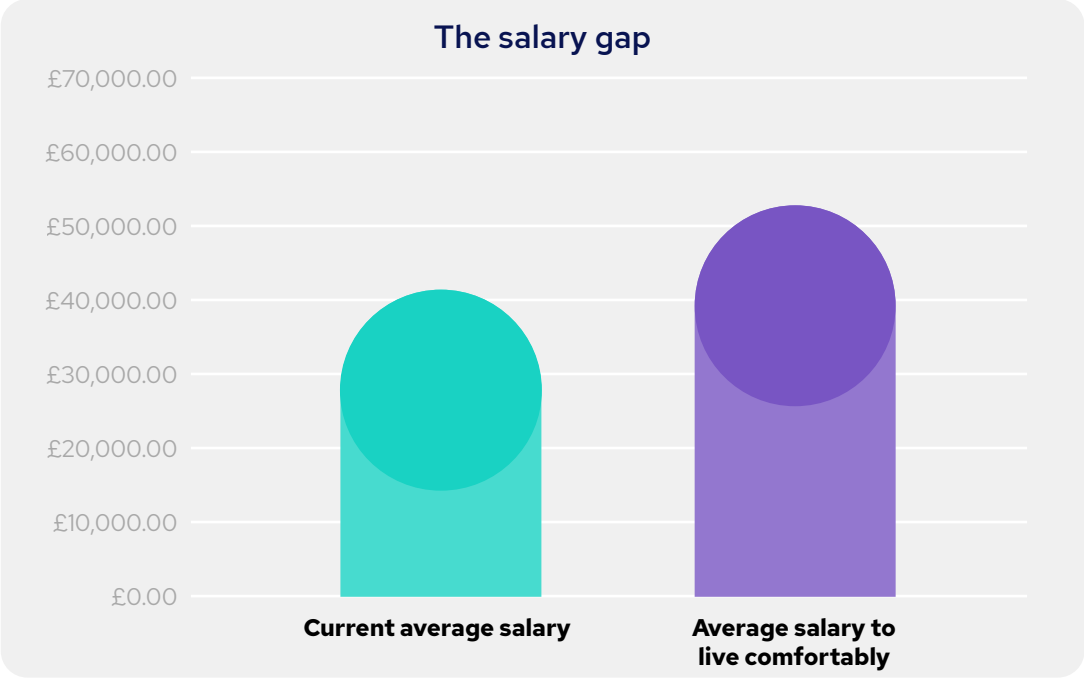
With ongoing cost-of-living challenges, salaries continue to be a huge area of discussion in the employment market, for both professionals and businesses. The data reveals the UK workforce is under significant financial pressure, with a clear and growing emphasis on salary as a primary driver of job satisfaction and career decisions.



Currently, over half (61%) of workers are happy with the pay they receive. However, that leaves a significant 20% of professionals feeling unhappy with their current salary, and another 19% feeling ambivalent ("neither happy nor unhappy").

Of those who are unhappy, the overwhelming reason, cited by over half (52%), is that their pay hasn't risen with the cost of living. Other key reasons include feeling they "do so much more than my job role" (39%), being "unable to save enough to meet my financial goals" (37%), and their salary "not being enough to live the lifestyle I want" (35%).

The disparity between the average current wage and the salary people would be comfortable with remains substantial. This year, the average current salary for survey respondents stands at **£40,638.35.** However, the average income people believe they need to live comfortably is **£51,748.73,** representing an average **£11,110.38 gap.** This 'comfort gap' indicates a widespread desire for higher earnings.



The financial strain is evident in monthly disposable income. A concerning **seven per cent of respondents have £0 leftover** each month after essential bills, with their entire salary going towards necessities. Overall, **26% have £100 or less remaining** for non-essential spending, savings, or leisure.

As a direct consequence of the financial climate as we enter 2026, 73% of professionals state that salary is more important now than it was before the cost-of-living crisis began in 2021, with 40% saying it is "significantly more important." Expectations for salary progression within the same role have also increased for 44% of workers. **To switch jobs, individuals expect a substantial average pay increase of £12,139.55.**

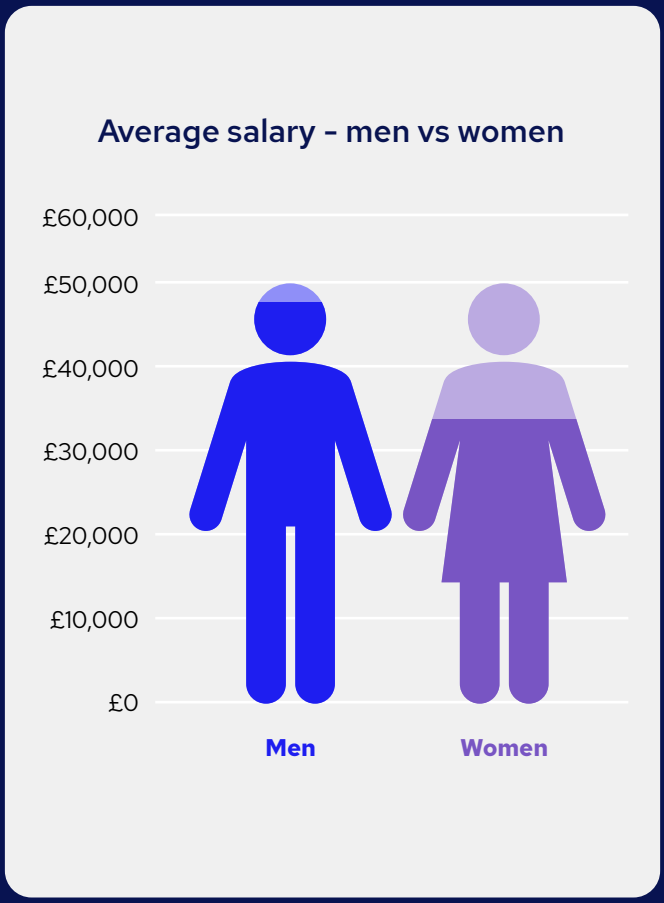
A deeper dive...

• **Gender pay gap:** There remains a significant gender pay gap. The survey found that on average, men earn £48,367.15, while women earn £33,852.12, **a difference of over £14,500**. This disparity extends to satisfaction: 66% of men are happy with their salary compared to 57% of women, and women are more unhappy (24%) than men (16%). Men also perceive a higher comfortable salary (£59,688.07) than women (£44,707.25).

• **Disposable income gap:** Women have significantly less disposable income, with an average of £626.61 left over monthly compared to £983.38 for men. Women are also twice as likely to have £0 leftover.

• **Age and earnings:** Current salaries peak in the 25-34 age group (£49,853.43), while the desired comfortable income peaks in the 25-34 age group (£65,341.10). Salary satisfaction is highest for younger workers (18-34) and lowest for the 45-54 age group, where only 51% are happy with their pay. This 45-54 age group also reports the highest percentage (nine per cent) with £0 leftover monthly.

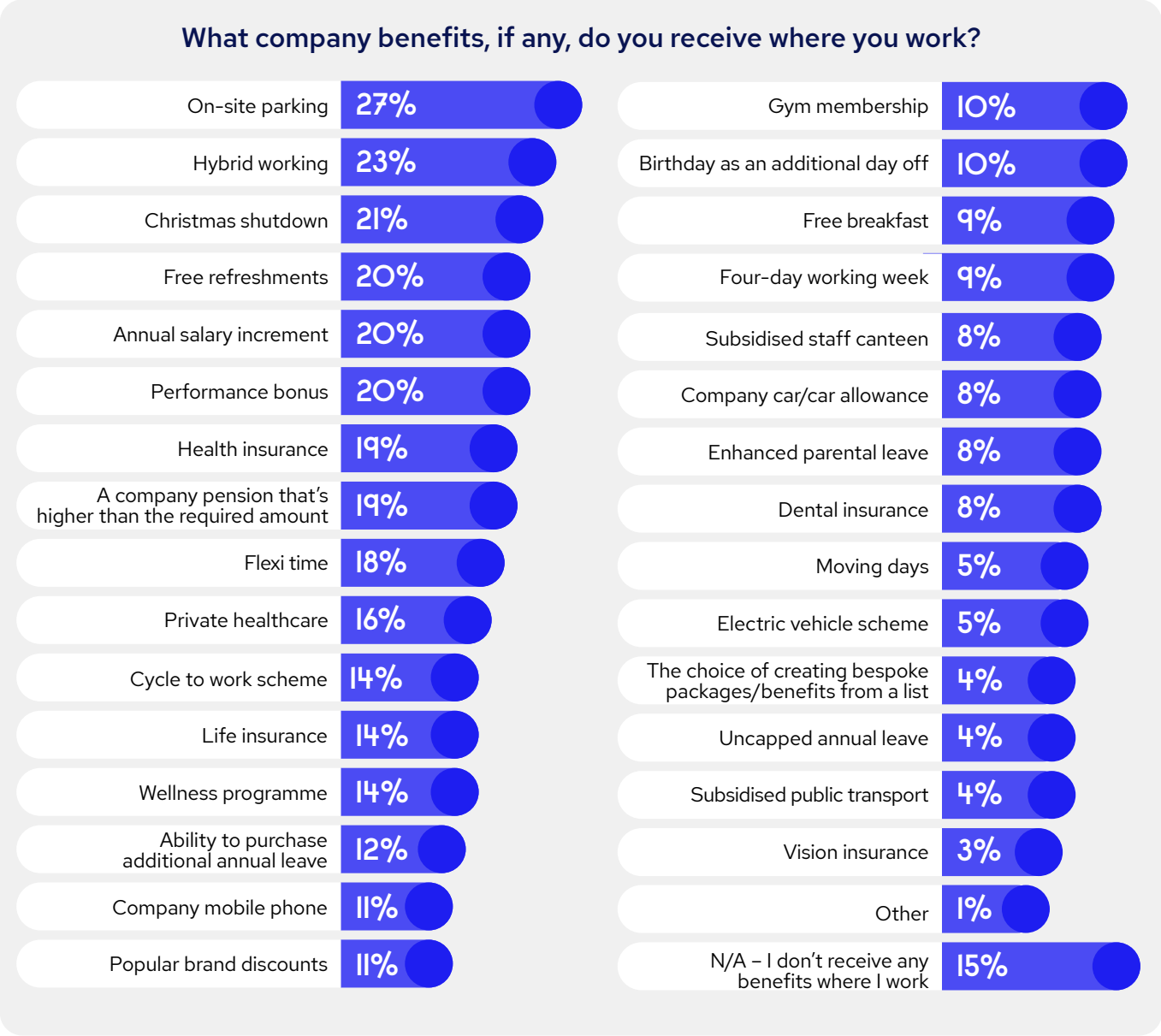
• **Job mobility:** Younger workers (18-34) are most willing to change jobs for salary increases, while older workers (55+) are significantly less likely to change jobs for more money, indicating that other factors become more important with age.



All about the benefits

While offering a higher salary remains the most direct way to attract and retain employees, the benefits package also plays a role, especially for businesses unable to match top-tier salaries. **However, 15% of respondents currently say they receive no workplace benefits at all.**

Commonly offered benefits include onsite parking (27%), hybrid working (23%), and Christmas shutdown (21%). However, there's a noticeable disconnect between offered and desired benefits, and also a willingness to sacrifice many perks for higher pay.



A deeper dive...

• **Sacrificing perks for pay:** Many employees are willing to sacrifice 'soft' benefits for higher pay. Free refreshments (11%) and cycle to work schemes (11%) are the benefits most employees would be willing to give up.

• **Age and benefits:** Younger workers (25-34) are most willing to sacrifice benefits for higher pay, while older workers (55+) are significantly less willing to do so, suggesting they value their existing benefits more.

• **Gender benefit gap:** Women are more likely to receive no benefits (17% vs. 12% for men) and, on average, men report receiving more benefits overall.

Key takeaways for businesses:

Over two-thirds of professionals (72%) are currently looking or open to looking for a new job – highlighting a critical need for businesses to audit what they are offering their current and future talent. The primary drivers for this job market engagement are financial, with the cost-of-living crisis acting as a significant catalyst.

Address the 'comfort gap': The £11,110.38 gap between current and desired comfortable income is a major source of dissatisfaction and a driver of job mobility. Competitive salaries are no longer just about attracting talent but retaining it.

Targeted retention: Mid-career professionals (25-44) are a high-risk group, demanding the largest pay increases to switch jobs and showing the highest increase in salary progression expectations. Retention strategies must be robust for this segment.

Acknowledge gender disparities: The significant gender pay gap, lower salary satisfaction, and reduced financial flexibility for women are critical issues. Businesses must address these disparities to foster equity and retain female talent.

Strategic benefits offerings: While salary is king, benefits can still make a difference. However, businesses should evaluate the relevance and perceived value of their benefits packages. Many employees are willing to sacrifice less-valued benefits for higher pay, suggesting that resources might be better allocated to more impactful perks or direct compensation.

Prioritise financial wellbeing: The struggle to meet financial obligations and save for goals is widespread. Benefits that directly support financial wellbeing (e.g., better pensions, performance bonuses) are likely to be highly valued, especially when employees are willing to trade other perks for them.

The current economic climate has made salary a paramount concern for the majority of the UK workforce. Businesses that fail to recognise and adapt to these heightened financial expectations and disparities risk losing valuable talent in a highly mobile job market.

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Leadership

Company size: <1,000 employees

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
London	£110,000 – £160,000	£15,000 – £50,000	£125,000 – £210,000
South England	£105,000 – £150,000	£10,000 – £40,000	£115,000 – £190,000
Midlands	£100,000 – £145,000	£10,000 – £35,000	£110,000 – £180,000
North England	£95,000 – £140,000	£10,000 – £30,000	£105,000 – £170,000
Scotland	£90,000 – £135,000	£10,000 – £30,000	£100,000 – £165,000
Wales	£85,000 – £130,000	£10,000 – £25,000	£95,000 – £155,000

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
London	£140,000 – £200,000	£30,000 – £70,000	£170,000 – £270,000
South England	£130,000 – £190,000	£25,000 – £60,000	£155,000 – £250,000
Midlands	£120,000 – £180,000	£20,000 – £50,000	£140,000 – £230,000
North England	£110,000 – £170,000	£15,000 – £45,000	£125,000 – £215,000
Scotland	£105,000 – £160,000	£15,000 – £40,000	£120,000 – £200,000
Wales	£100,000 – £150,000	£10,000 – £35,000	£110,000 – £185,000

Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
London	£130,000 – £190,000	£25,000 – £60,000	£155,000 – £250,000
South England	£120,000 – £180,000	£20,000 – £50,000	£140,000 – £230,000
Midlands	£110,000 – £170,000	£15,000 – £45,000	£125,000 – £215,000
North England	£100,000 – £160,000	£15,000 – £40,000	£115,000 – £200,000
Scotland	£95,000 – £150,000	£10,000 – £35,000	£105,000 – £185,000
Wales	£90,000 – £140,000	£10,000 – £30,000	£100,000 – £170,000

Leadership

Company size: 1,000–9,999 employees

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
UK average	£140,000 – £200,000	£25,000 – £70,000	£165,000 – £270,000

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
UK average	£180,000 – £260,000	£40,000 – £100,000	£220,000 – £360,000

Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
UK average	£160,000 – £230,000	£30,000 – £80,000	£190,000 – £310,000

Company size: 10,000+ employees

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
UK average	£200,000 – £280,000	£50,000 – £100,000	£250,000 – £380,000

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
UK average	£250,000 – £400,000	£80,000 – £200,000	£330,000 – £600,000

Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)

Region	Base salary	Annual bonus	Total compensation
UK average	£220,000 – £350,000	£60,000 – £150,000	£280,000 – £500,000

Leadership insight

Adam Buckland
Regional Director - Scientific, Reed

"The scientific leadership landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, shaped by funding shifts, rapid technological progress, and evolving market demands. With the biotech sector experiencing funding pressures, a surge of highly qualified scientists, including those with extensive research and development (R&D), regulatory, and clinical development experience, have entered the job market. Demand for senior leaders remains robust as organisations seek executives who are adept at defining scientific vision, shaping R&D and operational strategies, driving digital transformation, and building crucial partnerships across academia and industry.

Leaders are being called upon not only to oversee pre-clinical and clinical programmes or manufacturing and supply chains, but also to manage regulatory engagement, fundraising, investor relations, and the commercial side of innovation in both established and scaling companies. The ongoing evolution of digital health, computational biology, and precision medicine has heightened the need for leadership comfortable with technology integration and data-driven decision-making. As roles become more complex, responsibilities frequently blend scientific oversight with operational leadership, strategic execution, and resource allocation, ensuring alignment with broader business goals.

There has been a notable increase in temporary and contract-based leadership hiring which is providing organisations the flexibility to meet immediate project needs while allowing senior professionals to maintain industry engagement and impact.

The market's trajectory is further propelled by investment confidence, such as the recent £1.1 billion venture capital injection into UK life sciences, which amplifies the focus on securing leaders to manage investor relations and guide transformational growth. All these dynamics underscore the growing complexity and opportunity within scientific leadership, where the most successful executives will be those who can balance high-level scientific expertise, operational acumen, and a forward-thinking approach to technology and partnerships."

North East

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,700	£27,000
Laboratory Team Leader	£40,100	£43,100
Laboratory Manager	£49,200	£53,100
Formulation Scientist	£38,700	£41,700
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£38,700	£41,700
Analytical Chemist	£37,500	£40,300
Senior Analytical Chemist	£40,000	£42,900
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£48,300	£52,000
Head of Quality Control	£54,300	£58,600
Microbiologist	£24,200	£26,000

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£36,200	£39,100
QA Officer	£35,000	£37,700
QA Supervisor	£52,000	£56,000
QA Manager	£59,300	£63,700
Validation Engineer	£59,300	£63,700
Validation Manager	£71,300	£76,700
QP	£90,800	£97,500
Process Chemist	£42,200	£45,500
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£38,000	£41,000
Regulatory Manager	£66,600	£71,500

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£28,200	£31,300
Quality Officer	£33,100	£36,700
Quality Manager	£57,600	£64,000
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£31,900	£35,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£55,100	£61,300
Validation Scientist	£33,600	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£51,800	£68,300
Production Technician	£26,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,400	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£24,000	£26,500
Clinical Trial Assistant	£24,300	£26,400
Clinical Research Associate	£30,900	£34,100
Clinical Data Manager	£43,200	£47,900
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£38,900	£43,000
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£41,500	£45,800
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£35,700	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£48,500	£55,200
Clinical Operations Manager	£72,500	£83,000
Head of Clinical	£85,000	£95,000

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£30,600	£34,100
Formulation Chemist	£35,700	£39,900
Polymer Scientist	£33,100	£37,000
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£31,800	£35,400
Analytical Chemist	£31,800	£35,400

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£28,000	£31,300
QA Manager	£50,900	£56,800
Development Chemist	£35,000	£39,100
Chemical Engineer	£47,100	£52,600
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£49,700	£55,400

North East

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,700	£27,300
Research Assistant	£26,200	£28,900
Scientist	£37,800	£41,700
Senior Scientist	£49,400	£54,500
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£53,600	£59,300
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£57,900	£64,100
QA Technician	£32,600	£35,800

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£45,100	£49,900
Scientific Director	£69,200	£85,200
Chief Scientific Officer	£90,500	£117,200
Bioinformatician	£51,000	£68,100
Senior Bioinformatician	£62,400	£73,700
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£73,700	£96,400
Head of Bioinformatics	£90,700	£136,100

North East insight

Stuart Nunn
Area Manager, Reed

"The North East of England is emerging as a distinctive force in the UK's scientific landscape, combining its proud industrial heritage with a surge of innovation. Historically a hub for large-scale manufacturing, the region continues to offer significant scientific employment, with major chemical, medical device, and advanced materials companies maintaining a strong presence. Many of these facilities are strategically located near ports, enabling efficient import of raw materials and export of finished products.

Newcastle, in particular, is rapidly evolving into a vibrant biotech hub, attracting investment and creating fresh opportunities. This reflects a broader trend of specialist innovation clusters developing beyond the traditional 'Golden Triangle' of London, Cambridge and Oxford, making the North East an increasingly attractive destination for scientific professionals seeking career growth in a dynamic market.

Beyond biotech, the region excels in sectors that leverage its coastal access and engineering expertise. Offshore wind and subsea engineering are thriving, while the chemicals industry remains a cornerstone of the local economy. Together, these industries form a diverse and resilient scientific ecosystem.

Within manufacturing sites, scientists play a critical role throughout the product lifecycle, from early-stage research and formulation design to rigorous quality control and assurance. As a result, skilled professionals in these roles remain in high demand, ensuring continuous opportunities across the sector.

Overall, the North East offers a compelling blend of established industry and emerging innovation. With its strong manufacturing base, growing biotech scene, and leadership in offshore energy, the region is well-positioned for sustained growth and scientific advancement."

North West

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,000	£25,900
Laboratory Team Leader	£46,300	£49,800
Laboratory Manager	£48,100	£51,800
Formulation Scientist	£36,400	£39,100
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£38,700	£41,700
Analytical Chemist	£37,500	£40,300
Senior Analytical Chemist	£41,200	£44,300
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£50,200	£54,000
Head of Quality Control	£54,500	£58,600
Microbiologist	£26,600	£28,600

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£36,400	£39,100
QA Officer	£36,400	£39,100
QA Supervisor	£50,800	£54,800
QA Manager	£61,800	£66,500
Validation Engineer	£60,500	£65,000
Validation Manager	£75,100	£80,700
QP	£98,600	£106,100
Process Chemist	£40,500	£43,600
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£41,800	£44,800
Regulatory Manager	£69,000	£74,200

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£28,200	£31,300
Quality Officer	£33,100	£36,700
Quality Manager	£60,100	£66,700
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£31,800	£35,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£57,600	£64,000
Validation Scientist	£33,900	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£53,600	£69,100
Production Technician	£26,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,500	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£24,000	£26,500
Clinical Trial Assistant	£24,300	£26,400
Clinical Research Associate	£30,900	£34,100
Clinical Data Manager	£43,200	£47,900
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£36,400	£40,200
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£44,000	£48,800
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£37,100	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£49,300	£55,200
Clinical Operations Manager	£72,500	£83,000
Head of Clinical	£85,000	£95,000

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£30,600	£34,100
Formulation Chemist	£34,400	£38,400
Polymer Scientist	£34,400	£38,400
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£29,400	£32,600
Analytical Chemist	£31,800	£35,400

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£30,600	£34,100
QA Manager	£52,200	£58,300
Development Chemist	£35,700	£39,900
Chemical Engineer	£47,100	£52,600
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£50,900	£56,800

North West

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£25,900	£28,600
Research Assistant	£27,400	£30,300
Scientist	£36,800	£40,500
Senior Scientist	£49,300	£54,500
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£51,800	£57,200
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£58,300	£64,300
QA Technician	£33,200	£36,600

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£43,700	£48,200
Scientific Director	£76,700	£95,900
Chief Scientific Officer	£95,900	£138,500
Bioinformatician	£47,900	£63,900
Senior Bioinformatician	£58,600	£69,200
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£69,200	£90,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£85,200	£127,800

North West insight

Brigid Blair
Recruitment Consultant, Reed

"The North West is charting a course of strategic and sustainable growth within its life sciences sector, demonstrating a resilient and focused approach to talent acquisition. While the hiring climate can be described as cautious, it remains steady, with biotechnology and pharmaceutical firms concentrating their efforts on securing talent for critical roles. This targeted recruitment strategy ensures that investment is channelled into areas that will deliver the most significant impact.

This precision-focused environment has created significant opportunities for specialists. There is a clear and growing demand for professionals skilled in biostatistics, AI, and precision medicine, as companies seek to leverage data and advanced technologies to drive innovation. Experts in bioinformatics and regulatory compliance are also sought after, reflecting the industry's dual focus on groundbreaking research and stringent quality standards. To secure these niche skills, businesses are increasingly looking at international talent pools and offering competitive salaries, with retention bonuses becoming more common to keep top performers.

When it comes to flexibility, remote options for research and development (R&D) roles are notably declining as businesses prioritise onsite collaboration. However, hybrid working models remain prevalent in areas such as regulatory affairs and data-focused roles, where a balance between in-person teamwork and remote productivity is still seen as effective.

Despite challenges such as a limited local pipeline for certain specialisms and a gradually aging workforce, the outlook for the North West is positive. Investment from initiatives like the Northern Powerhouse continues to support the expansion of pharmaceutical manufacturing hubs, creating a stable foundation for future growth. The region's commitment to filling high-value roles is attracting some top scientists, positioning the North West as a hub of excellence where professionals can make a tangible contribution to cutting-edge science."

Scotland

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,200	£26,200
Laboratory Team Leader	£36,000	£43,000
Laboratory Manager	£40,200	£48,000
Formulation Scientist	£30,500	£36,400
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£31,700	£37,800
Analytical Chemist	£32,100	£38,200
Senior Analytical Chemist	£35,400	£42,400
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£41,100	£49,000
Head of Quality Control	£48,500	£57,900
Microbiologist	£21,100	£24,600

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£29,800	£35,700
QA Officer	£32,400	£38,600
QA Supervisor	£44,700	£53,500
QA Manager	£51,600	£61,600
Validation Engineer	£50,000	£59,600
Validation Manager	£64,700	£77,100
QP	£77,100	£92,100
Process Chemist	£33,600	£40,200
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£34,400	£41,100
Regulatory Manager	£60,400	£72,000

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£27,200	£30,400
Quality Officer	£31,800	£35,300
Quality Manager	£55,100	£61,300
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£31,800	£35,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£55,100	£61,300
Validation Scientist	£33,900	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£51,600	£61,300
Production Technician	£25,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,500	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£24,000	£26,500
Clinical Trial Assistant	£24,300	£26,400
Clinical Research Associate	£30,900	£34,100
Clinical Data Manager	£43,200	£47,900
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£38,900	£43,000
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£45,400	£50,100
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£37,100	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£49,300	£55,200
Clinical Operations Manager	£72,500	£83,000
Head of Clinical	£85,000	£95,000

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£35,700	£39,900
Formulation Chemist	£33,100	£37,000
Polymer Scientist	£37,300	£41,500
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£33,100	£37,000
Analytical Chemist	£28,000	£31,300

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£30,600	£34,100
QA Manager	£50,600	£56,600
Development Chemist	£35,700	£39,900
Chemical Engineer	£42,000	£47,000
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£44,500	£49,800

Scotland

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,600	£27,400
Research Assistant	£25,200	£27,800
Scientist	£35,400	£39,200
Senior Scientist	£42,200	£46,600
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£50,300	£55,700
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£52,700	£58,100
QA Technician	£27,800	£30,800

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£39,700	£43,800
Scientific Director	£74,500	£92,500
Chief Scientific Officer	£92,500	£134,000
Bioinformatician	£47,900	£63,900
Senior Bioinformatician	£58,600	£69,200
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£69,200	£90,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£85,200	£127,800

Scotland insight

Stuart Nunn
Area Manager, Reed

"Scotland's scientific market is experiencing a period of dynamic growth, marked by significant investment and a blend of traditional industry and cutting-edge innovation. The nation is solidifying its position as a key player in the UK's scientific landscape, attracting both new companies and skilled professionals.

The central belt between Glasgow and Edinburgh is becoming a vibrant biotech hub. Thanks to a steady flow of investment, new companies are emerging, many of them coming from Scotland's world-class universities. This academic-to-industry pipeline is fostering a culture of innovation and creating exciting opportunities for scientific professionals. The growth in this sector is proving to be a strong draw, with many professionals willing to relocate to be part of its burgeoning biotech scene.

Historically, the sector benefited from strong links to offshore energy, particularly in regions like Aberdeen, but the recent turbulence in the North Sea market - driven by high taxes and levies - has created uncertainty. Many international firms are scaling back operations, reducing opportunities in areas once considered stable.

In response, attention is shifting toward renewables and sustainable technologies. Scotland's established offshore expertise positions it well to lead innovation in green energy, with wind power and related technologies expected to drive significant growth. This transition is creating new opportunities for scientific professionals, particularly those with skills in environmental science, data analysis, and research that supports the development of cleaner energy solutions.

To attract the best professionals, employers should highlight innovative projects, academic partnerships, and clear growth plans which will help position their organisation as an employer of choice. For scientists open to relocation, offering competitive benefits like relocation support, development programmes, and flexible work options can help draw skilled professionals from across the UK and beyond."

South West

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£25,100	£27,000
Laboratory Team Leader	£45,300	£48,800
Laboratory Manager	£46,200	£49,800
Formulation Scientist	£34,900	£37,700
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£35,700	£38,400
Analytical Chemist	£33,900	£36,600
Senior Analytical Chemist	£38,900	£42,000
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£44,800	£48,400
Head of Quality Control	£54,200	£58,600
Microbiologist	£26,000	£28,100

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£41,700	£45,000
QA Officer	£37,700	£40,600
QA Supervisor	£48,800	£52,600
QA Manager	£58,000	£62,700
Validation Engineer	£59,400	£64,100
Validation Manager	£77,900	£83,900
QP	£99,000	£106,800
Process Chemist	£39,500	£42,700
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£35,200	£37,900
Regulatory Manager	£66,800	£72,100

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£26,500	£28,300
Quality Officer	£30,900	£34,100
Quality Manager	£53,600	£59,200
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£28,600	£31,600
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£47,500	£52,600
Validation Scientist	£33,900	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£49,800	£59,000
Production Technician	£26,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,500	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£24,700	£27,100
Clinical Trial Assistant	£25,100	£28,200
Clinical Research Associate	£29,500	£33,000
Clinical Data Manager	£36,500	£40,800
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£37,100	£41,300
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£43,100	£48,200
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£37,100	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£49,300	£55,200
Clinical Operations Manager	£74,500	£85,000
Head of Clinical	£87,500	£98,000

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£31,600	£34,100
Formulation Chemist	£32,700	£35,400
Polymer Scientist	£33,500	£36,200
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£35,000	£37,800
Analytical Chemist	£31,900	£34,500

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£30,400	£32,700
QA Manager	£51,800	£56,100
Development Chemist	£35,300	£38,400
Chemical Engineer	£48,000	£51,900
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£50,600	£54,800

South West

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£25,900	£28,600
Research Assistant	£27,400	£30,300
Scientist	£34,100	£37,600
Senior Scientist	£42,600	£48,500
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£49,800	£55,000
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£57,300	£63,300
QA Technician	£30,100	£33,300

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£41,100	£45,400
Scientific Director	£79,500	£95,000
Chief Scientific Officer	£95,400	£140,000
Bioinformatician	£47,900	£63,900
Senior Bioinformatician	£58,600	£69,200
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£69,200	£90,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£85,200	£127,800

South West insight

D'Aundre Ryan
Recruitment Consultant, Reed

"As we enter 2026, the South West has firmly established itself as a vibrant hub for the scientific industry, offering an exciting blend of innovation, growth, and an enviable quality of life. Anchored by cities like Bristol and Exeter, the region is home to some of the most dynamic government-supported clusters and science incubators, driving rapid expansion for startups and SMEs. This collaborative environment has created a fertile ecosystem for discovery, making the South West a magnet for both emerging and established life sciences companies.

The region's growth has brought a surge in demand for specific expertise, particularly in molecular biology, protein science, and quality control. As the sector leans into modernisation, skills in digital technology, automation, and advanced analytics are becoming increasingly valuable for employers seeking to stay competitive in a global market. Startups and larger organisations alike are investing heavily in digital transformation, underscoring the need for professionals who can bridge the gap between traditional biotechnologies and cutting-edge tech.

Beyond its professional opportunities, the South West offers a lifestyle that is hard to beat. While average salaries in the region may be slightly lower than in London, the difference is offset by a significantly better work-life balance. Employees enjoy access to stunning coastlines, national parks, and charming rural towns - all of which contribute to a strong sense of wellbeing. Employers in the South West are leveraging this quality of life as a key tool for attracting and retaining talent, especially from local universities such as the University of Bristol and the University of Exeter, both of which produce world-class graduates in life sciences disciplines. By adopting hybrid working practices for roles like quality assurance and regulatory affairs, the region is further building its appeal, creating a flexible and future-ready workforce to sustain its growth trajectory."

Wales

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,500	£27,100
Laboratory Team Leader	£40,600	£44,800
Laboratory Manager	£41,300	£45,600
Formulation Scientist	£33,000	£36,400
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£34,200	£37,800
Analytical Chemist	£33,000	£36,400
Senior Analytical Chemist	£37,600	£41,400
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£44,000	£48,500
Head of Quality Control	£51,900	£57,300
Microbiologist	£25,900	£28,600

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£33,600	£37,100
QA Officer	£36,800	£40,600
QA Supervisor	£46,600	£51,400
QA Manager	£55,500	£61,400
Validation Engineer	£60,700	£67,100
Validation Manager	£77,600	£85,700
QP	£103,400	£114,200
Process Chemist	£37,500	£41,400
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£32,200	£35,400
Regulatory Manager	£59,500	£65,700

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£24,600	£27,700
Quality Officer	£32,200	£35,400
Quality Manager	£53,600	£59,200
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£27,300	£30,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£47,500	£52,600
Validation Scientist	£33,900	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£49,600	£59,000
Production Technician	£26,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,500	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£24,400	£26,800
Clinical Trial Assistant	£24,800	£26,700
Clinical Research Associate	£29,500	£33,000
Clinical Data Manager	£38,200	£42,700
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£37,100	£41,300
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£40,200	£44,800
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£35,800	£42,700
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£49,300	£55,200
Clinical Operations Manager	£72,000	£81,000
Head of Clinical	£84,500	£93,500

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£32,700	£35,400
Formulation Chemist	£32,700	£35,400
Polymer Scientist	£33,500	£36,200
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£32,700	£35,400
Analytical Chemist	£29,100	£31,400

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£31,600	£34,100
QA Manager	£52,900	£57,500
Development Chemist	£35,300	£38,400
Chemical Engineer	£44,300	£47,900
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£50,600	£54,800

Wales

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£25,900	£28,600
Research Assistant	£27,400	£30,300
Scientist	£34,200	£37,800
Senior Scientist	£47,200	£52,000
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£49,800	£55,000
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£56,300	£62,200
QA Technician	£29,200	£32,400

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£40,800	£44,900
Scientific Director	£77,500	£92,000
Chief Scientific Officer	£85,000	£115,000
Bioinformatician	£47,900	£63,900
Senior Bioinformatician	£58,600	£69,200
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£69,200	£90,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£85,200	£127,800

Wales insight

Stuart Nunn
Area Manager, Reed

"Wales is rapidly gaining recognition as a dynamic destination for the scientific industry, driven by a flourishing network of government-backed initiatives. Cardiff plays a central role in this growth, hosting science parks and innovation hubs that support both startups and established companies.

The region's progress is generating strong demand for specialised skill sets and as the sector adopts advanced technologies, skills in digital tools and automation are becoming indispensable.

Medtech and diagnostics professionals are sought after as Wales continues to lead in cutting-edge healthcare solutions. Other critical roles include qualified persons (QPs), analytical chemists, and quality assurance (QA) specialists - fields essential for upholding the rigorous quality and regulatory standards that drive the industry forward. We are seeing that employers are offering competitive salaries in these areas in order to attract more professionals.

Wales' appeal goes beyond professional opportunities, offering an excellent quality of life for those who choose to live and work there - a factor that employers increasingly leverage to attract talent. Welsh universities consistently produce highly skilled graduates, creating a steady pipeline of entry-level and early-career professionals, however, finding experienced senior specialists remains more challenging, with employers often needing to look beyond regional boundaries to secure the expertise required for leadership and advanced technical roles. In fact, Wales is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for skilled European scientists, further enriching its workforce.

By embracing hybrid working and investing in flexible employment models, Wales is positioning itself as a leader in workforce resilience and agility. This adaptability, combined with its growing network of medtech and diagnostics innovators, makes Wales an exciting destination for scientific professionals looking to make a meaningful impact."

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- Tailored recommendations and implementation support to strengthen your strategy.

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London & South East

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£28,200	£33,000
Laboratory Team Leader	£42,900	£49,900
Laboratory Manager	£51,400	£59,900
Formulation Scientist	£40,400	£47,100
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£41,700	£48,400
Analytical Chemist	£34,900	£40,600
Senior Analytical Chemist	£42,000	£48,900
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£51,500	£59,900
Head of Quality Control	£60,100	£70,000
Microbiologist	£28,300	£33,100

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£41,200	£48,000
QA Officer	£41,200	£48,000
QA Supervisor	£57,900	£67,400
QA Manager	£64,300	£75,000
Validation Engineer	£65,700	£76,400
Validation Manager	£86,200	£100,500
QP	£108,000	£126,000
Process Chemist	£42,200	£49,300
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£41,400	£48,300
Regulatory Manager	£71,100	£82,900

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£29,500	£32,600
Quality Officer	£34,200	£38,000
Quality Manager	£62,300	£69,300
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£42,900	£47,500
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£73,500	£81,600
Validation Scientist	£35,800	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£33,300	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£55,400	£68,300
Production Technician	£27,300	£31,700
Production Manager	£44,300	£50,600

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£26,500	£29,100
Clinical Trial Assistant	£28,500	£30,100
Clinical Research Associate	£43,200	£47,900
Clinical Data Manager	£52,400	£57,800
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£54,400	£60,200
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£54,400	£60,200
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£37,100	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£51,900	£58,900
Clinical Operations Manager	£92,000	£108,000
Head of Clinical	£97,000	£142,500

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£37,300	£41,500
Formulation Chemist	£38,200	£42,700
Polymer Scientist	£35,700	£39,900
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£39,700	£44,400
Analytical Chemist	£34,400	£38,400

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£35,700	£39,900
QA Manager	£59,000	£65,900
Development Chemist	£38,200	£42,700
Chemical Engineer	£54,800	£61,200
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£57,900	£64,700

London & South East

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£27,400	£30,300
Research Assistant	£28,700	£31,800
Scientist	£45,600	£50,300
Senior Scientist	£54,500	£60,200
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£63,300	£69,900
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£59,700	£67,100
QA Technician	£36,200	£40,000

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£50,700	£55,900
Scientific Director	£85,000	£125,000
Chief Scientific Officer	£110,000	£175,000
Bioinformatician	£55,000	£70,000
Senior Bioinformatician	£65,000	£82,500
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£75,000	£92,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£90,000	£130,000

London & South East insight

Stuart Nunn
Area Manager, Reed

"London and the South East together form a dominant force in the UK's scientific sector, acting as a magnet for investment, talent, and groundbreaking research. The region combines the commercial and clinical power of the capital with the growing manufacturing and development capabilities of the surrounding counties, creating a diverse and dynamic employment market.

The city is home to numerous key innovation clusters that receive substantial funding, driving research and development at a rapid pace. Its global reputation and excellent transport links make it a prime location for the head office functions of many national and international scientific companies.

While large-scale manufacturing is rare in London due to space and cost constraints, the city excels in the clinical and biotech spheres. You'll find a high concentration of roles in research, data analysis, and commercial strategy. This environment attracts the best talent from around the world, all looking to be at the forefront of scientific discovery.

The South East is rapidly emerging as a vital region for scientific manufacturing and development. Companies are increasingly choosing to locate or relocate to areas like Surrey and Kent, drawn by a strong local talent pool that includes professionals who previously commuted into London.

This region is seeing a particular surge in the medical device and automation equipment manufacturing sectors. Unlike the office-based functions prevalent in London, the South East is where the physical creation, testing, and scaling-up of products often takes place. This creates a different set of opportunities for scientists, particularly in new product development, quality control, and quality assurance, which are essential for bringing new innovations to market.

The synergy between London and the South East is what makes the region so powerful. The capital provides the commercial engine and research focus, while the surrounding areas offer the space and infrastructure for development and manufacturing. For scientific professionals, this means a wealth of diverse career opportunities across a wide spectrum of roles and specialisms."

East Anglia

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,500	£28,600
Laboratory Team Leader	£40,400	£47,100
Laboratory Manager	£44,900	£52,400
Formulation Scientist	£34,700	£39,700
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£39,100	£45,600
Analytical Chemist	£31,600	£36,800
Senior Analytical Chemist	£36,700	£42,800
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£48,900	£56,900
Head of Quality Control	£55,100	£64,200
Microbiologist	£25,700	£29,900

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£38,800	£45,300
QA Officer	£34,200	£40,000
QA Supervisor	£46,600	£54,200
QA Manager	£55,100	£64,200
Validation Engineer	£64,000	£74,600
Validation Manager	£83,700	£97,500
QP	£103,000	£119,900
Process Chemist	£40,800	£47,400
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£33,200	£38,700
Regulatory Manager	£65,300	£76,000

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£26,500	£29,300
Quality Officer	£31,800	£35,300
Quality Manager	£55,000	£61,000
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£34,200	£38,000
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£67,400	£74,800
Validation Scientist	£33,900	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£53,600	£64,000
Production Technician	£26,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,500	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£25,200	£27,300
Clinical Trial Assistant	£24,800	£29,200
Clinical Research Associate	£30,900	£34,100
Clinical Data Manager	£43,200	£47,900
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£38,900	£43,000
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£49,200	£54,400
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£37,100	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£50,600	£56,900
Clinical Operations Manager	£87,500	£102,000
Head of Clinical	£92,000	£125,000

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£33,800	£37,300
Formulation Chemist	£35,100	£38,700
Polymer Scientist	£32,700	£36,100
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£32,500	£35,800
Analytical Chemist	£33,500	£36,800

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£32,500	£35,800
QA Manager	£58,600	£64,500
Development Chemist	£36,400	£40,100
Chemical Engineer	£53,300	£58,700
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£58,600	£64,500

East Anglia

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£26,000	£28,700
Research Assistant	£27,300	£31,600
Scientist	£40,900	£45,200
Senior Scientist	£51,800	£57,200
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£57,200	£63,200
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£61,000	£67,400
QA Technician	£33,200	£36,600

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£46,400	£51,300
Scientific Director	£85,000	£125,000
Chief Scientific Officer	£110,000	£175,000
Bioinformatician	£47,900	£63,900
Senior Bioinformatician	£58,600	£69,200
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£69,200	£90,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£85,200	£127,800

East Anglia insight

Danny Brooks
Recruitment Consultant, Reed

"East Anglia, anchored by the world-renowned Cambridge life sciences cluster, continues to solidify its position as a global powerhouse for scientific research and development (R&D). The region is experiencing strong and sustained demand for talent, particularly within the dynamic fields of biotechnology, bioinformatics, and pharmacology. This hiring boom is fuelled by the presence of major international R&D organisations and a flourishing ecosystem of innovative startups, creating a highly competitive and vibrant job market.

The concentration of pioneering companies has created an exceptional environment for scientific professionals. However, this rapid growth has also highlighted specific skill shortages. There is an acute need for experts in computational biology, bioinformatics, and AI-driven drug discovery, as the industry increasingly relies on data to accelerate innovation. Professionals with these niche skills are in demand and can command premium salaries and benefits packages, with many companies actively recruiting from a global talent pool.

There has been a slight improvement in the supply of graduates entering the sector, with more universities offering specialised courses in fields like bioinformatics and AI applications in life sciences. On the other hand, senior-level talent with extensive industry experience remains scarce.

Despite the challenges of a competitive market, the outlook for East Anglia remains overwhelmingly positive as we progress into 2026. Ongoing investment, including the expansion of dedicated biotech incubators, continues to generate new opportunities. For scientists and employers alike, the region represents a frontier of discovery, offering a unique chance to be part of a community that is shaping the future of medicine and technology. The adoption of hybrid working models for data-centric roles further enhances the region's appeal, providing flexibility in a fast-paced sector."

Midlands

Pharma

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£24,400	£27,500
Laboratory Team Leader	£38,900	£47,600
Laboratory Manager	£40,900	£50,000
Formulation Scientist	£29,500	£36,000
Synthetic Organic Chemist	£31,800	£38,900
Analytical Chemist	£29,000	£35,400
Senior Analytical Chemist	£33,200	£40,600
Bioanalyst/Bio-Analytical Scientist	£44,500	£54,500
Head of Quality Control	£51,500	£63,000
Microbiologist	£22,200	£27,200

Role	Min	Max
Pharmacologist	£30,000	£36,700
QA Officer	£32,400	£39,700
QA Supervisor	£44,500	£54,500
QA Manager	£56,000	£68,400
Validation Engineer	£51,600	£63,200
Validation Manager	£67,300	£82,300
QP	£84,200	£103,000
Process Chemist	£36,000	£44,100
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£29,800	£36,600
Regulatory Manager	£58,700	£71,700

Medical devices

Role	Min	Max
Quality Technician	£25,400	£28,000
Quality Officer	£32,400	£36,100
Quality Manager	£55,100	£61,300
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£28,800	£31,900
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£51,400	£57,200
Validation Scientist	£33,900	£44,500
R&D/Product Development Scientist	£31,600	£37,900
R&D/Product Development Manager	£54,200	£65,400
Production Technician	£26,200	£30,500
Production Manager	£41,500	£48,000

Clinical

Role	Min	Max
Clinical Data Entry	£24,300	£26,500
Clinical Trial Assistant	£24,500	£26,800
Clinical Research Associate	£30,900	£34,100
Clinical Data Manager	£43,200	£47,900
Clinical Scientist/Biomedical Scientist	£38,900	£43,000
Registered Clinical Scientist/ Biomedical Scientist	£42,800	£47,300
Regulatory Affairs Associate	£35,800	£44,300
Regulatory Affairs Manager	£49,700	£55,700
Clinical Operations Manager	£74,500	£85,000
Head of Clinical	£87,500	£98,000

Chemical

Role	Min	Max
Inorganic Chemist	£30,600	£34,100
Formulation Chemist	£34,400	£38,400
Polymer Scientist	£34,400	£38,400
Material Scientist/Metallurgist	£29,400	£32,600
Analytical Chemist	£31,800	£35,400

Role	Min	Max
QA Assistant	£30,600	£34,100
QA Manager	£52,200	£58,300
Development Chemist	£35,700	£39,900
Chemical Engineer	£47,100	£52,600
Regulatory Affairs Officer	£49,700	£55,400

Midlands

Biotech

Role	Min	Max
Laboratory Assistant/Technician	£25,900	£28,600
Research Assistant	£27,400	£30,300
Scientist	£36,800	£40,500
Senior Scientist	£49,100	£54,200
Principal Scientist/Team Leader	£52,200	£57,700
Laboratory Manager/Study Manager	£57,300	£63,300
QA Technician	£31,800	£35,100

Role	Min	Max
QA Manager	£42,300	£46,800
Scientific Director	£78,000	£105,000
Chief Scientific Officer	£85,000	£130,000
Bioinformatician	£47,900	£63,900
Senior Bioinformatician	£58,600	£69,200
Principal Bioinformatician/ Team Leader	£69,200	£90,500
Head of Bioinformatics	£85,200	£127,800

Midlands insight

Adam Buckland
Regional Director - Scientific, Reed

"While the hiring climate in the Midlands slowed down after the pandemic, the region, particularly in the key centres of Birmingham and Coventry, showed steady, moderate growth towards the end of 2025. This stability is underpinned by a strong industrial heritage and a forward-looking approach to innovation.

Investment in infrastructure, such as the Birmingham Health Innovation Campus, is fuelling this expansion and creating new avenues for medtech development. As the sector evolves, specific skill sets are becoming increasingly crucial.

Within the medtech sector, there's a significant shortage of professionals in gene editing and cell therapy. These positions often require advanced qualifications, such as PhDs, and a unique blend of specialised skills. Professionals in these areas must not only possess expertise in cutting-edge scientific techniques but also have a strong understanding of regulatory affairs to navigate the complex process of bringing innovative therapies to market.

There is also a notable demand for professionals with expertise in regulatory affairs and advanced therapy manufacturing, areas critical for bringing next-generation treatments to market.

To attract specialist talent, employers in the Midlands are offering competitive packages and embracing flexible work options where possible. While SMEs may find it challenging to compete with the perks offered by large pharmaceutical giants, the region's focus on tangible innovation and its growing reputation provide a compelling draw. The key challenge ahead lies in upskilling the existing workforce to meet the demands of digital and AI integration in drug development. By addressing these skill gaps, businesses in the Midlands will be well-positioned to strengthen their role as a vital contributors to the UK's scientific landscape."

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