



# The Works Search

## Salary Guide 2020

"If life were predictable it would cease  
to be life, and be without flavor"

Eleanor Roosevelt



# THE WORKS SEARCH – WHO ARE WE?

The Works Search is a search consultancy for the PR and corporate communications industry – one where you can expect more.

We have placed over 900 board and senior level corporate communications professionals, partnering with FTSE 100 companies, blue-chip organisations and leading agencies in London.

Known for our industry-leading salary guidance, our extensive network of high performing communications professionals and our passion for shaping exciting careers.

We are dedicated to securing the industry's best senior PR & corporate communications professionals, the top 5% performers – many of whom are signed up with us exclusively.

Partnering with us on a sole agency basis ensures you hire one of our professionals 95% of the time, and fast, which means that you can get back to doing your job.

# Welcome to The Works Search Salary Guide 2020

The Works Search is celebrating 11 years of this industry-leading salary guide for corporate communications professionals. One of our values is to share our knowledge and it's thanks to everyone who has taken part that we are able to deliver these insights.

Our Salary Guide looks in detail at salaries, bonuses, and benefits, as well as the trends and differences across in-house corporate comms teams and corporate agencies. This Guide is valued as a benchmark by Comms Directors and Agency CEOs across the industry, and we regularly hear professionals say how they have successfully used the Guide in pay negotiations.

With the current pandemic already affecting not only the way we work, but the way companies are paying (or not) their employees, we are aware that the impact of COVID-19 is likely to be sustained and will be significant across the wider economy, including the PR and communications industry – for 2020 and beyond. This will be more evident in our findings next year. For now, however, this Salary Guide remains relevant as we examine not only the distribution of salaries and bonuses, but also look more closely at the benefits currently on offer, and particularly how flexible working is viewed, which will be of interest to many professionals, with working from home forming part of a new norm.

Following on from this Guide, we will take a more detailed look at how the multiple shifts we are all experiencing in so many facets of life are likely to impact the way we work going forward; how businesses will need to rethink and reshape their overall approach, expanding the acceptability of the now 'tried and tested' WFH model, as well as the heightened need to embrace support for mental health and wellbeing provision. These articles will be published in our [Thought Leaders Connected newsletter](#). If you haven't already signed up, you can do so [here](#).

**Don't take our word for it...**

**"I sat up as one of my team walked into a meeting with The Works Search Salary Guide. I knew it was negotiation time."**

**STEPHEN BETHEL**  
Corporate Affairs Director,  
BRC (British Retail Consortium)

# KEY FINDINGS

We checked over 3,000 database records and polled 350 corporate comms professionals to gather these findings.

The time period of the survey was January – December 2019, and we compare results to those of 2018.



## Salaries

There has not been a great deal of movement in either in-house comms teams or agencies, with average salaries remaining very similar to those in 2018

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The average salary increase was 6%. This is the same figure as 2018.

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77% of in-house professionals received a pay rise; 71% of agency professionals were rewarded with an uplift

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The most notable average uplifts were at CEO and MD levels in agencies

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In in-house comms teams, Senior PR/Comms Managers and PR Officers fared best

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65% of comms professionals are happy with their pay



## Bonuses

The biggest bonuses were awarded to senior professionals in-house

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Bonuses were more evenly distributed in agencies

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More agency professionals received a bonus



## Benefits

In-house professionals continue to receive the higher value benefits

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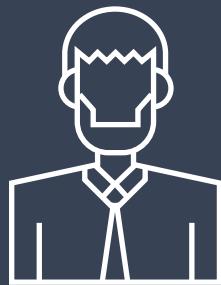
A higher proportion of in-house comms teams enjoy a flexible working policy

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Agencies are lagging behind in their mental health and wellbeing provision

# BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

## Gender



Male

42%



Female

58%

## Age bracket



Gen Z  
(18 – 23 years old)

1%



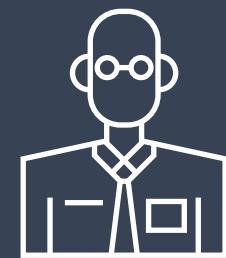
Millennials  
(24 – 39 years old)

63%



Gen X  
(40 – 55 years old)

33%

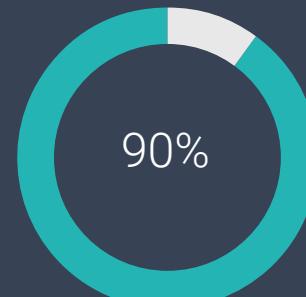


Baby boomers  
(56+ years old)

3%

## Do they have a degree or masters?

Yes



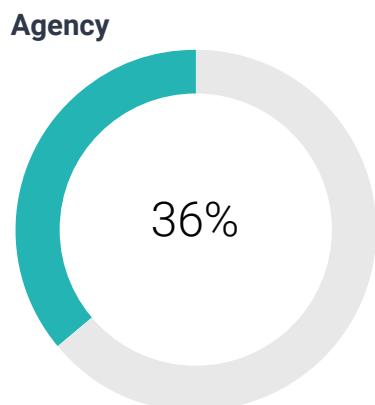
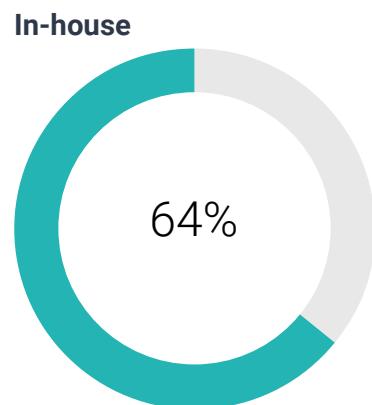
No



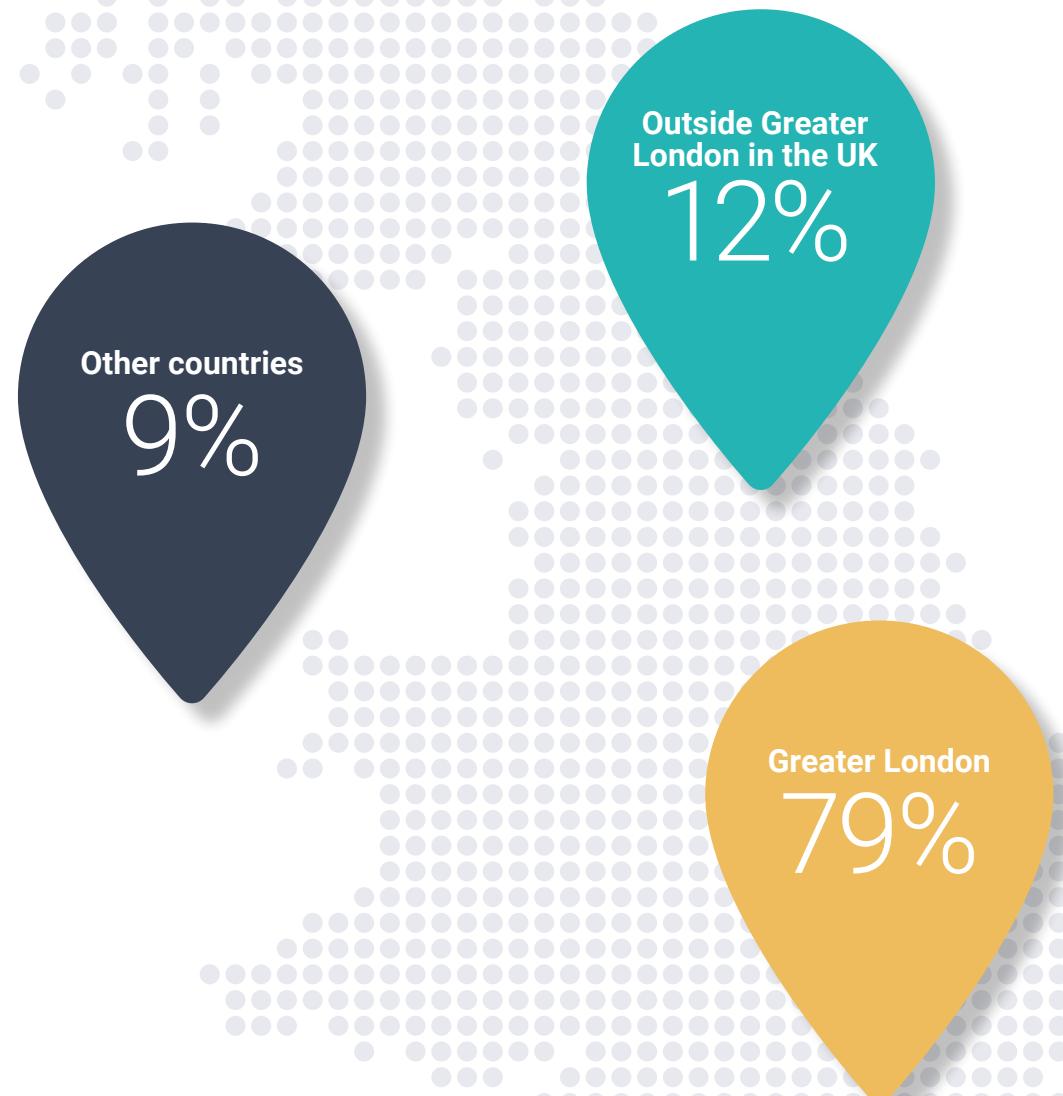
## Ethnicity

<b>Asian</b>	2%
<b>Asian British</b>	2%
<b>Black/ Black British</b>	2%
<b>White/White British</b>	88%
<b>Mixed background</b>	3%
<b>Any other ethnicity</b>	3%

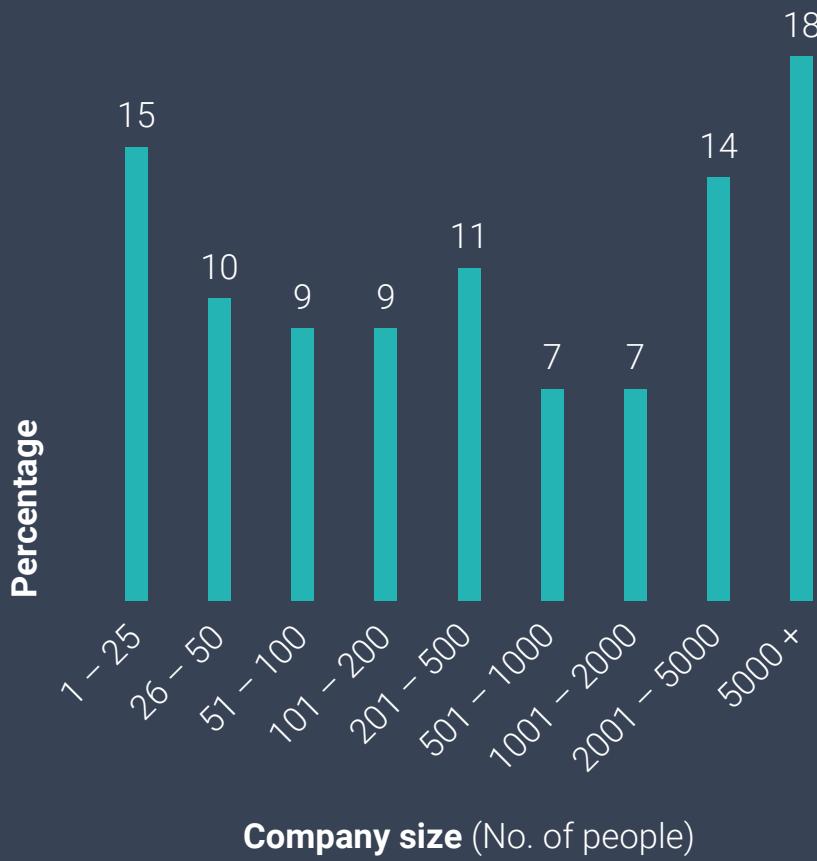
## Where are respondents working?



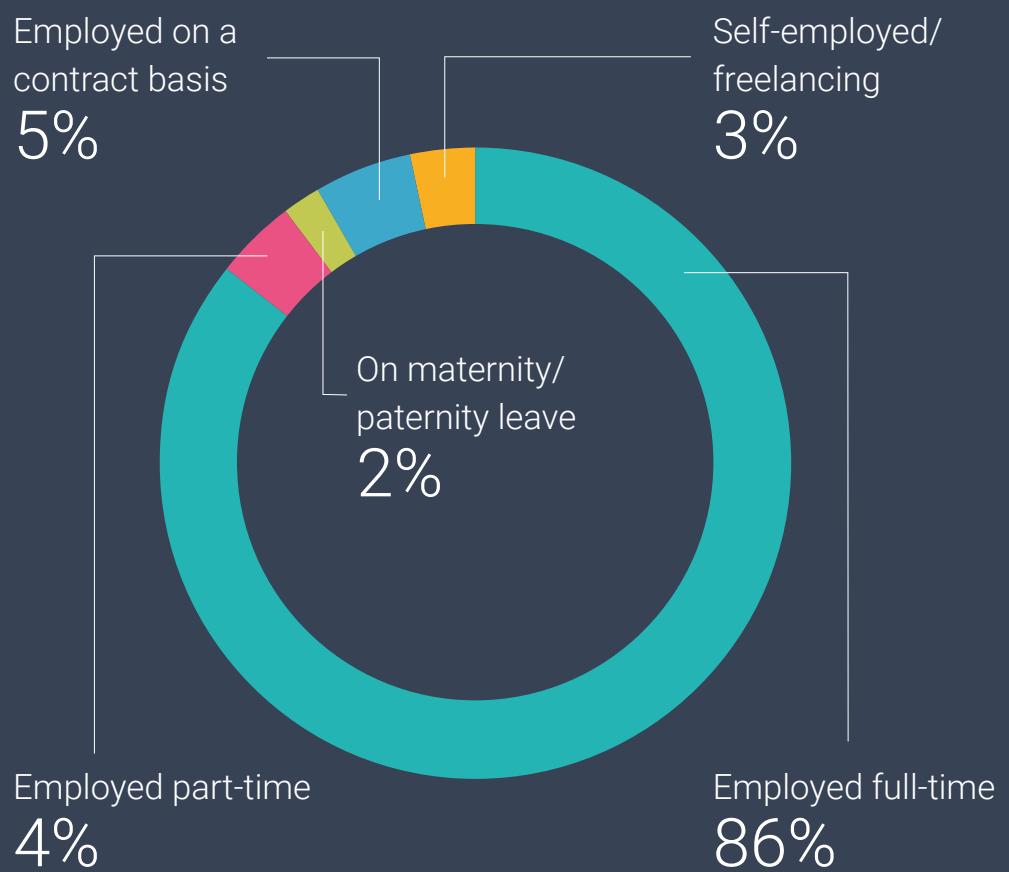
## Where are respondents' companies based?



## Company size



## Employment status



# How many years of experience do respondents have?

## In-house

Job level	Average years of exp	Typical years of exp	Overall range
Global Head of Comms/ Comms Director	17	10 – 20	9 – 20+ years
Head of Comms UK/ EMEA	16	10 – 20	8 – 20 + years
Head of Media	15	10 – 15	5 – 20 + years
Senior PR Manager	13	10 – 15	3 – 20+ years
PR/ Comms Manager	10	5 – 15	3 – 20+ years
PR Officer	8	2 – 9	2 – 15 years
PR Executive	6	1 – 5	1 – 10 years

## Agency

Job level	Average years of exp	Typical years of exp	Overall range
CEO	21	20+	10 – 20+ years
Managing Director	18	15 – 20	10 – 20+ years
Board Director/ Partner	16	15 – 20	9 – 20 years
Director/ Partner	15	10 – 20	9 – 20 years
Associate Director	11	8 – 15	5 – 15 years
Senior Account Director	9	6 – 15	6 – 20 years
Account Director	7	5 – 9	4 – 15 years
Senior Account Manager	4	3 – 6	3 – 6 years
Account Manager	4	2 – 4	2 – 5 years
Senior Account Executive	3	2 – 4	2 – 4 years
Account Executive	1	0 – 3	0 – 3 years

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### Key points

- The career trajectory is faster in agencies compared to in-house, although there are more steps on the agency career ladder
- More steps on the ladder offer a perceived faster progression, at a faster pace

# SALARIES

## In-house

Job level	Average salary	Salary ranges	Most common range*	Average salary increase (%)
Global Head of Comms/ Comms Director	£136,000	£55,000 - £260,000	£120,000 - £180,000	4%
Head of Comms UK/ EMEA	£132,000	£45,000 - £260,000	£110,000 - £160,000	5%
Head of Media	£94,000	£40,000 - £130,000	£90,000 - £120,000	4%
Senior PR/ Comms Manager	£67,500	£35,000 - £160,000	£65,000 - £80,000	8%
PR/ Comms Manager	£57,000	£30,000 - £80,000	£50,000 - £65,000	5%
PR Officer	£35,000	£15,000 - £55,000	£30,000 - £45,000	8%
PR Executive	£34,000	£15,000 - £65,000	£28,000 - £35,000	5%

*\*the most common range has been included as many of the brackets from the data are wide as titles can differ across the industry. The most common range is what we see on a daily basis for the job levels in question and may be considered a more accurate reflection of a typical salary range.*



### Key points

- There hasn't been a great deal of movement in average salaries overall
- Levels that have received the bigger increases are Senior PR/Comms Managers and PR Officers
- Average salaries for Global Heads of Comms /Comms Directors have actually decreased on those reported in 2018 (from £140k to £136k per annum)

## Agency

Job level	Average salary	Salary ranges	Most common range*	Average salary increase (%)
CEO	£182,000	£150,000 - £260,000	£150,000 - £220,000	6%
Managing Director	£146,000	£75,000 - £260,000	£130,000 - £200,000	6%
Board Director/ Partner	£121,000	£65,000 - 180,000	£110,000 - £160,000	6%
Director/ Partner	£111,000	£55,000 - £210,000	£100,00 - £140,000	3%
Associate Director	£73,000	£50,000 - £120,000	£70,000 - £90,000	9%
Senior Account Director	£62,000	£40,000 - £90,000	£60,000 - £70,000	3%
Account Director	£54,000	£40,000 - £75,000	£50,000 - £65,000	7%
Senior Account Manager	£47,500	£40,000 - £55,000	£40,000 - £50,000	4%
Account Manager	£37,500	£25,000 - £50,000	£30,000 - £40,000	9%
Senior Account Executive	£27,500	£25,000 - £45,000	£25,000 - £35,000	9%
Account Executive	£22,500	£15,000 - £30,000	£20,000 - £28,000	3%

### Key points



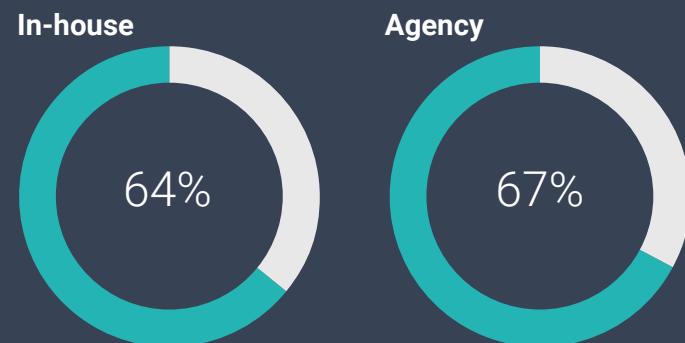
\*the most common range has been included as many of the brackets from the data are wide as titles can differ across the industry. The most common range is what we see on a daily basis for the job levels in question and may be considered a more accurate reflection of a typical salary range.

- Average salaries have remained very similar to those reported in 2018, which is probably a reflection of the political landscape and its effect on the economy
- The most notable average salary increases are at CEO and MD levels
- The average salary increase for an MD is 16% up on the average for 2018
- Senior Account Executives, Account Managers and Associate Directors received the biggest salary increases (9% on average)
- The bigger uplifts could be part of a retention strategy, as these roles are the ones that are harder to source

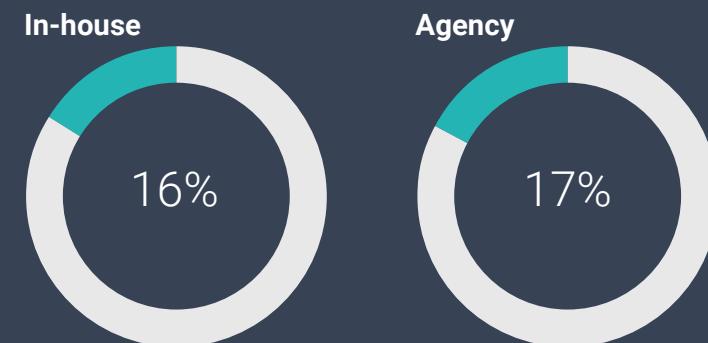
# BONUSES

Who fared better on the bonus front – in-house or agency professionals?

Percentage of respondents receiving a bonus



Average bonus as a percentage of salary



## Key points

- More agency professionals received a bonus compared to those working in-house; this was also the case in 2018
- Agency bonuses have increased by 3 percentage points, rising from the 14% average reported in 2018
- In-house bonuses dropped by 3 percentage points, down from the 19% average reported in 2018
- Agency bonuses have overtaken in-house bonuses for the first time

## Bonuses for in-house professionals

Job level	Percentage of professionals receiving a bonus (%)	Average bonus as a percentage of base salary (%)
Global Head of Comms/ Comms Director	77	22
Head of Comms UK/ EMEA	61	14
Head of Media	75	13
Senior PR/ Comms Manager	71	11
PR/ Comms Manager	50	13
PR Officer	44	13
PR Executive	40	13

### Key points

- 64% of in-house professionals received a bonus, a slight increase on the number reported in 2018 (63%)
- More senior level professionals received a bonus, compared to professionals in more junior positions
- Comms Directors/ Global Heads of Communications were rewarded with the highest average bonuses

## Bonuses for agency professionals

Job level	Percentage of professionals receiving a bonus (%)	Average bonus as a percentage of base salary (%)
CEO	60	28
Managing Director	100	23
Board Director/ Partner	50	35
Director/ Partner	71	20
Associate Director	55	18
Senior Account Director	50	11
Account Director	67	10
Senior Account Manager	100	6
Account Manager	75	15
Senior Account Executive	100	11
Account Executive	40	8

### Key points

- 67% of agency professionals received a bonus – slightly up on the 66% reported in 2018
- Proportions of employees who received a bonus is more evenly distributed across the levels
- Every MD, Senior Account Manager and Senior Account Executive received a bonus which is impressive – clearly levels cherished by agencies

## Let's compare: in-house vs agency bonuses

Level of bonus	Rewarded to % in-house professionals	Rewarded to % agency professionals
0 – 5%	21	20
5 – 10%	25	23
10 – 15%	15	20
15 – 20%	9	15
20 – 25%	14	4
25 – 30%	4	4
30 – 40%	4	6
50 – 50%	4	4
50 – 100% (50% +)	3	5

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### Key points

- 61% of in-house respondents received 0 – 15% bonus; 70% received between 0 – 20% bonus
- 63% of agency professionals received 0 – 15% bonus; 78% received between 0 – 20% bonus
- 5% of agency respondents received the 'top' bonus of 50 – 100%, compared to 3% of in-house respondents
- More positive results for the agencies again

# BENEFITS

## In-house

Benefits	Percentage
Holiday allowance	100
Pension	74
Flexible working policy	63
Private health insurance	63
Mobile phone	60
Cycle scheme	53
Annual season ticket loan	51
Death in service scheme	50
Corporate discounts	48
Mental health/ wellbeing programme	46
Charity/ volunteer days	46
Buy/ sell additional holidays	43
Gym discount/ membership	42
Life insurance payment	41
Maternity pay (company contributes)	41
Free eye test	41
Fresh fruit	39
Childcare vouchers	39
Employee referral (recruitment) scheme	38
Training budget	34

Benefits	Percentage
Private dental	31
Paternity pay (company contributes)	27
Mentoring scheme	25
Equity/ share options	25
Company car allowance/ cash in lieu	23
Income protection insurance	22
Enhanced sick pay	18
Complimentary holiday e.g. birthday off	16
Time off in lieu policy	16
Free breakfast	13
Sabbatical option	13
Share save scheme	13
Summer Fridays (finish early)	10
Profit share scheme	7
New business bonus	4
Lunch allowance	4



### Key points

- In-house continue to offer more higher value benefits than agencies
- 63% of respondents benefit from flexible working options – a significantly larger proportion than agency professionals (41%)
- There has been a big increase in in-house comms teams benefiting from flexible working since we last reported (only 35% in 2018) – clearly they are responding to what their employees want; great news for retention strategies

## Agency

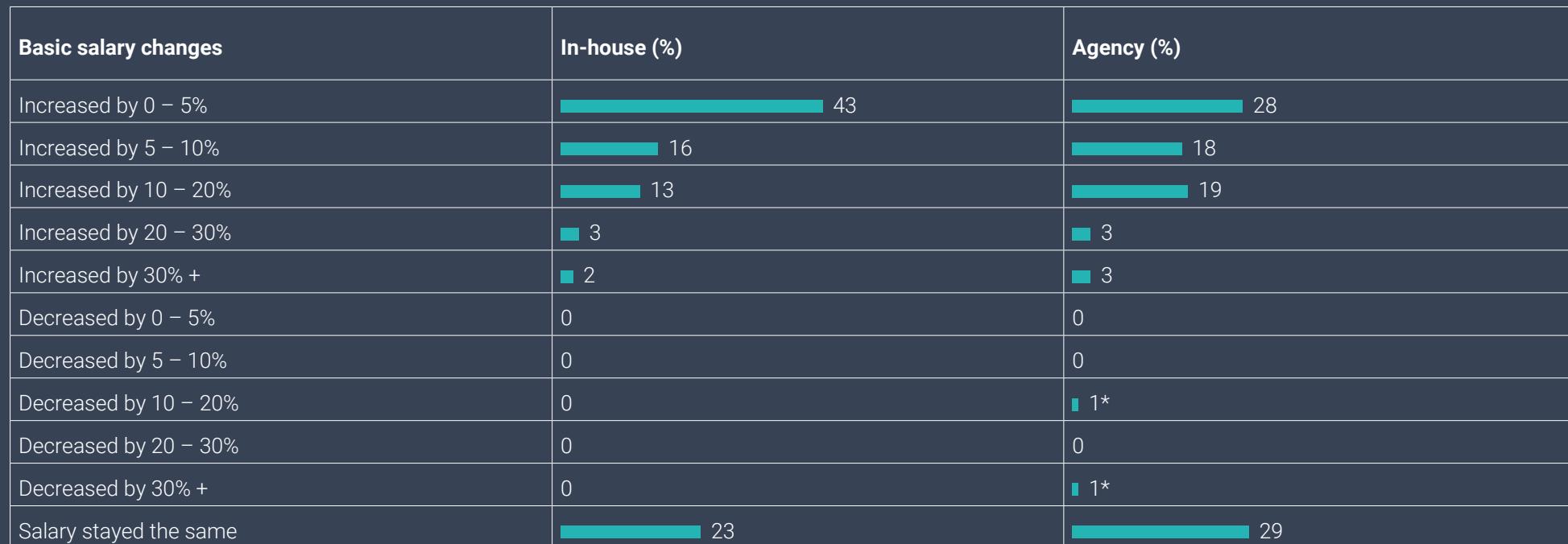
Benefits	Percentage
Holiday allowance	100
Pension	73
Private health insurance	63
Mobile phone	60
Fresh fruit	58
Employee referral (recruitment) scheme	47
Annual season ticket loan	45
Gym discount/ membership	43
Flexible working policy	41
Cycle scheme	36
Training budget	33
Free eye test	32
Maternity pay (company contributes)	30
Death in service scheme	26
Mental health/ wellbeing programme	26
New business bonus	26
Charity/ volunteer days	25
Childcare vouchers	25
Free breakfast	25
Time off in lieu policy	24
Corporate discounts	22
Mentoring scheme	22
Complimentary holiday e.g. birthday off	20

Benefits	Percentage
Summer Fridays (finish early)	20
Life insurance payment	19
Paternity pay (company contributes)	15
Private dental	15
Buy/ sell additional holidays	14
Equity/ share options	14
Sabbatical option	13
Income protection insurance	11
Enhanced sick pay	8
Profit share scheme	6
Lunch allowance	3
Company car allowance/ cash in lieu	2
Share save scheme	0

### Key points

- Agencies do keep up with in-house when it comes to offering pensions, private health insurance and holiday allowances, but fall behind on many of the other higher value benefits (eg. car allowance: only 2% of agencies offer this, compared to 23% in-house)
- Agencies continue to lag behind when it comes to offering flexible working (41%). While there has been a 10% increase in the number of agencies offering it in 2018 (only 31%), they still have a lot of catching up to match the number of in-house comms teams receiving this benefit (63%). In short, employers have recognised the strong desire for more flexibility in the workplace, and they are doing something about it.
- Agencies also need to work on their health and wellbeing provision – 26% uptake compared to 40% of in-house professionals

# Who got better pay increases: in-house or agency employees?



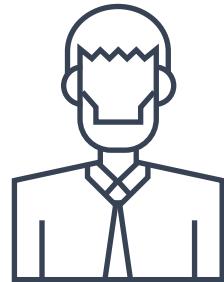
## Key points



- A larger proportion of in-house professionals received a pay increase (77% in-house vs 71% agency)
- Agency professionals tended to receive a bigger pay increase when they got one
- On average, in-house professionals received a salary increase of 5.5% – slightly lower than the average 6% uplift for agency respondents
- Average pay increases are lower than we reported in 2018 (in-house 6%; agency 5%)
- A lot of salaries stayed the same – more so in agencies

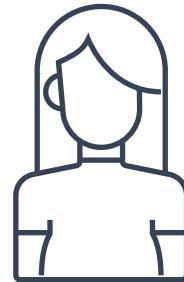
\*2% of respondents receiving a pay decrease in agencies could be explained by sabbatical or parental leave

## Who fared better: men or women?



Men's average  
salary increase

5%



Women's average  
salary increase

6%

### Key points

- Women received bigger pay increases in our latest findings; in 2018, we reported men and women both receiving an average pay increase of 6%
- With so much conversation around the pay gap in communications, are employers trying to make a small effort to rectify this?
- A healthy number of respondents were happy with their pay overall – more than in 2018 when 60% gave a positive response to their uplifts
- Have comms professionals come to realise that their employees are doing their best to look after them despite tough market conditions and the political uncertainty surrounding Brexit that dominated 2019?

## Were respondents happy with their overall pay in 2019?



Yes

65%



No

35%

### Key points

## Who's happier with their pay – men or women?



Women

64%



Men

67%

## How important is flexible working?

Neutral on these issues

1%

Not very  
important/  
distinctly  
unimportant  
0%



Extremely important/  
very important/ important  
99%

Neutral on these issues

8%

Not very  
important/  
distinctly  
unimportant  
2%

Extremely important/  
very important/ important  
90%

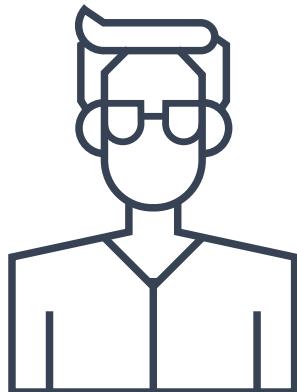
### Key points

- Slightly more men than women are happy with their pay
- This could be linked to the slightly higher average salary increase women received compared to men

### Key points

- There is a very strong desire for flexible working across the board
- While large proportions of both men and women place a high value on flexibility at work, there are comparatively more women who value this benefit

# Do levels of satisfaction with pay differ across the generations?

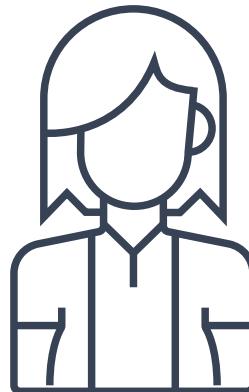


**Millennials**  
(24 – 39 years old)

**62%**

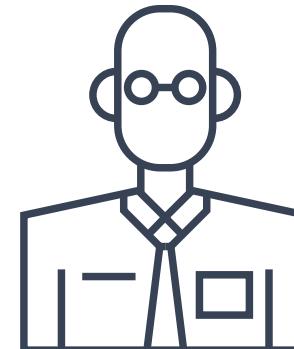
**Key points**

- Satisfaction levels increase with age



**Gen X**  
(40 – 55 years old)

**71%**



**Baby boomers**  
(56+ years old)

**75%**

- More than a third of Millennials are not happy with their salary; there could be a number of explanations for this – they are still climbing the ladder and have not yet reached peak earning potential, or they have been living beyond their current salaries, and still struggling to pay off student loan debts

# TO SUM UP

We hope the insights that the Guide provides will still be helpful, whether it's for benchmarking your team against others in the industry, thinking about budgets for new hires, or considering your own salary and market worth.

Over the coming months, we will look in more depth at the way we work, as further shifts take place as we look to return to the office, and start to consider the new expectations that employers and employees will have moving forward, as well as what a work culture that will work for all looks like.

To read our weekly [Thought Leaders Connected newsletter](#), where we discuss these issues, interview senior comms professionals, and keep you posted on market trends, please do sign up [here](#).

Thanks again for all those who have taken part; we are very grateful for your contribution.

**The Works Search Ltd**

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