

Salary & Benefits Guide 2009

Overview

Generally salaries have remained steady with rises registered for all the main job roles, "Demand for social housing professionals has been resilient despite the economic backdrop, with London and the South offering the highest levels of remuneration." says Richard Gelder, Director at Hays Social Housing. One of the key trends has been the increased focus of employers on their customer service provision, "This has led to a buoyant demand for tenant liaison officers from both housing associations and other organizations such as contractors, builder and utilities companies," adds Richard Gelder. The Decent Homes Programme has also created further opportunities for customer involvement officers and community engagement officers.

The rise in repossessions and homelessness has also left its mark on the social housing landscape across the UK, "The demand for housing advice officers has increased significantly over the past few months and the competition for skills has added pressure on salaries," comments Philip Hill, Senior Consultant at Hays Social Housing. The acceleration of the government's plan to build more housing has generated a requirement for other specialist roles, "While the demand for shared ownership has remained steady, we have noticed an increase in the demand for development and regeneration officers," adds Mark Flannery, Manager at Hays Social Housing.

Employers are predominantly looking for individuals with a solid work history who are able to hit the ground running. While CIH qualifications are important, particularly for senior roles, rarely are these a pre-requisite for any role. Benefits remain competitive in the industry and in some cases cars are being offered to housing officers. The current environment has led many organisations to develop their own talent pool and train their staff in house. The importance of a timely recruitment cycle cannot be underestimated, particularly with senior appointments, "Even though not always obvious in the short term, delays can be costly in terms of meeting government targets," remarks Paul Hemsworth, Senior Consultant at Hays Social Housing.

Future

Remuneration and benefits have remained competitive despite the recession and we see no reason for this trend to change during the coming months. "The downturn has created opportunities for a range of specialists, such as homelessnees and housing advice officers. Salaries should remain stable and may increase as the competition for skills increases in order to attract the best applicants as pressure for these services increases," notes Richard Gelder. "The demand for social housing professionals is likely to continue given the pressing need to increase the supply of affordable housing, as highlighted by the government's commitment to build new homes, which is a continuing sign that the sector remains buoyant."

As our survey reveals, the main concern for both employers and employees is the duration of the downturn. However, homelessness is a concern for more than one in four employees (26%) while one quarter of employers feel that Mergers and Acquisitions will have a big impact over the next five years

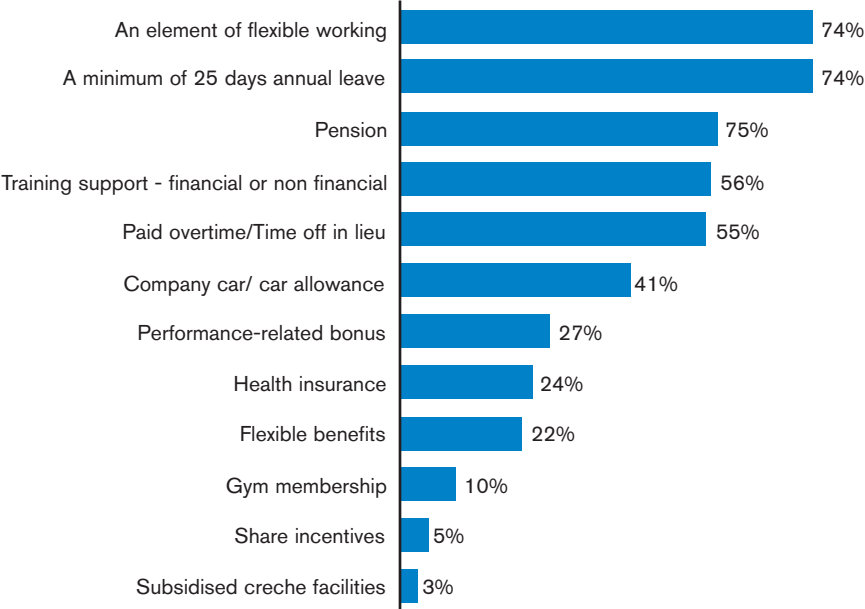
Profile of respondents and key findings

- Employees in generic (56%) and supported housing roles (44%)
- The majority of respondents were female (61%) and the average age is 41
- Almost seven in 10 have worked in social housing for under 10 years while 16% have over 15 years' experience
- Senior managers are the highest paid on average, closely followed by housing mangers
- The majority would recommend their employer (56%) and job satisfaction was 'good' or 'OK' for almost nine in 10
- Over half felt either 'fairly' or 'very' insecure in their roles, not surprising given the downturn

Benefits

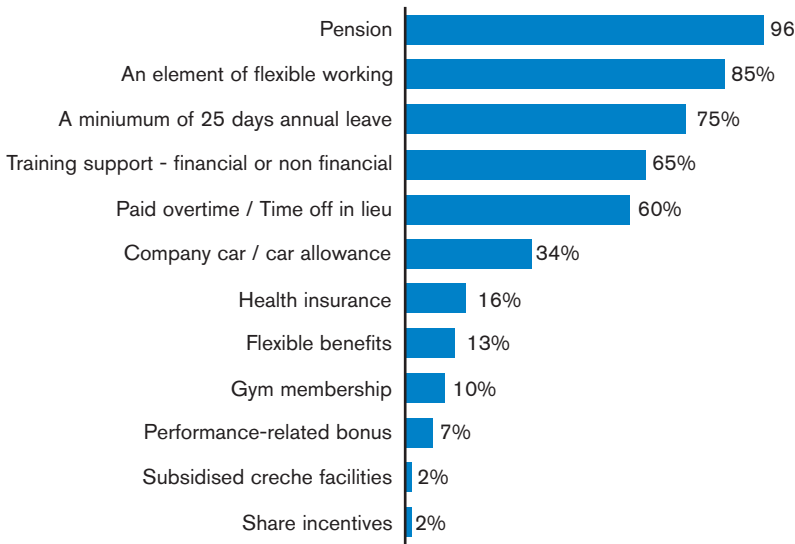
- Annual leave (minimum of 25 days) and flexible working considered to be the most important benefits when considering a new role (74%), followed by pensions (57%), training support (56%) and paid overtime/time in lieu (55%)
- The three least common benefits offered by employers were performance-related bonuses (7%), subsidized crèche and share incentives (2%) – no change from 2008.

Which of the following benefits do you consider to be important when considering a new role?



- Pensions are the most common benefit, offered by 96% of employers, followed by flexible working (85%), minimum annual leave of 25 days (75%) and training support (65%). The top three have all risen, but training support has fallen from 80% to 65%, which is indicative of the current economic climate
- Indeed, this matches with those benefits deemed less important when considering a new role

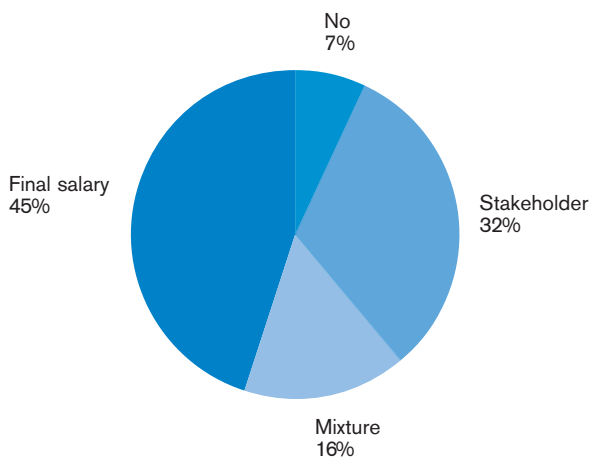
Benefits offered to all employees



Pensions

- The two most popular types of pension are final salary (45%) and stakeholder (32%). Offering a mixture to employees has risen in popularity (16%) but there has also been an increase in employers not offering a pension at all (7%)
- There has been a 10-point percentage decline in employers offering stakeholder pensions to new employees (from 42 to 32%)

Pension offered to employees



Job satisfaction

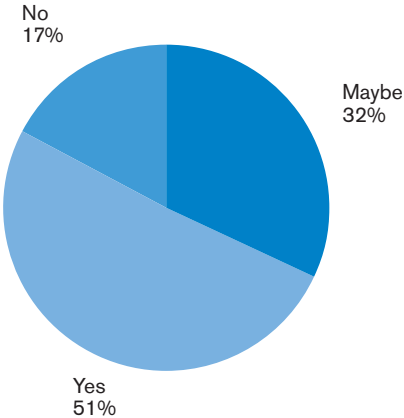
- 83% of respondents anticipate that they will change jobs within the next three years, which raises questions about retention
- Employees value job security more, with 15% not planning on moving jobs (up 50% on 2008) while 54% felt either 'fairly' or 'very' insecure in their jobs
- 56% of respondents would recommend their current employer to a friend
- Career development (26%) is the main reason why employees are looking for a new job; the importance of a higher salary when looking for a new job has decreased from 41% to 25%, which indicates that social housing professionals are not as motivated financially as workers in other sectors. Seeking a new challenge (16%) has also dropped by more than half, from 33% to 16%, which would suggest that employees are more cautious in the current market.

Why will you change roles?



- The majority of employees would remain with their employer if these issues were addressed (51%)

Would you stay with your employer if they addressed the issue?

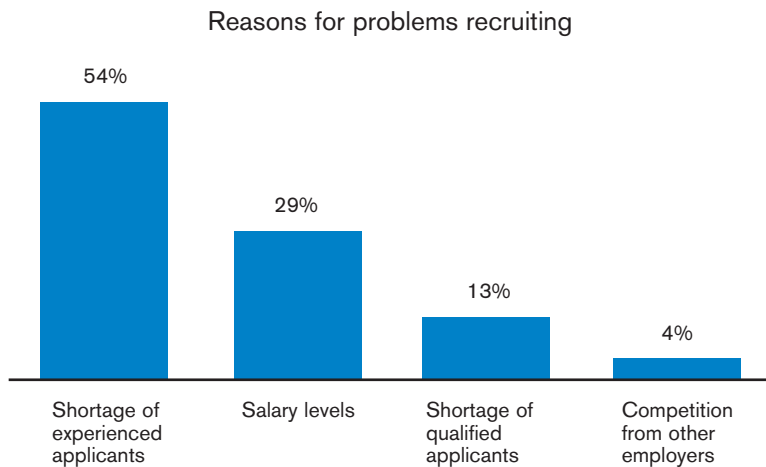


Work-life balance

- 88% rate their work-life balance as 'good' or 'ok'
- For almost a third, work-life balance is 'good' but this is a sharp fall from 2008 (62%), which would indicate that the downturn is increasing stress levels for individuals at work
- 74% of respondents currently enjoy an element of flexible working, which has remained relatively unchanged compared to 2008

Recruitment

- 41% of employers experienced problems recruiting over the past 12 months although 88% actually hired staff)
- 69% are looking to recruit only permanent staff during the next 12 months while 27% have factored in a combination of permanent and freelance/interim staff
- The majority of employers continue to attribute their recruitment problems to a shortage of experienced applicants (54%)



- On a positive note, 39% of employers stated that they are planning to recruit social housing professionals during the year, but nearly half (46%) could not forecast this
- Only 17% of employers encountered retention difficulties – salaries were cited as being the chief motivator for staff wanting to move jobs although a new challenge was the prime motivator according to employees

About Hays Social Housing

Hays Social Housing is the sector's leading specialist recruitment company in the UK. Offering permanent and freelance vacancies in local authorities, housing associations and not-for-profit organisations, Hays is committed to exceptional service. A comprehensive and bespoke approach ensures that our specialist recruitment consultants offer up-to-date industry knowledge and essential advice about the employment process.

For further information and to access the latest social housing jobs, contact Richard Gelder, Director of Hays Social Housing, on 0115 959 8786 or visit www.hays.com/socialhousing.