



the HARRIS HILL 2023 salary survey



HarrisHill
charity recruitment specialists



How we compile the survey

We start with the salaries of every role we've worked on in the past financial year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), from each specialist area.

Role by role, our experienced specialists review the data for highly unrepresentative or mistitled jobs that may distort the picture, applying their extensive insight and market knowledge to ensure figures accurately reflect current salaries across the sector.

Smaller charities/larger charities

Working as Head of Fundraising for a £100m+ revenue charity is very different from doing so for a local hospice, with very different remuneration. The range is too wide for a useful benchmark, so instead we look at each role within larger and smaller organisations.

These categories aren't perfectly correlated with revenue or headcount, any more than salaries are, but can be broadly taken as indicative of rates in a major, household-name charity, relative to a <50-person local organisation.

Job titles

For the purposes of this survey, '**Manager**' refers to those managing people, as opposed to (for example) account managers with no reports. '**Officer/Executive**' also covers titles such as Coordinator or Advisor where they are of a similar level: senior to assistants/entry-level staff, but more junior than managers.

How to find out more

You'll find our relevant specialists listed with each set of salaries: click a name to email or call the numbers shown for advice on salaries or any other recruitment queries.

For more general queries on the survey, please email salaries@harrishill.co.uk

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expertise
in charity
recruitment

 **1,500**
successful
placements
per year

7 years

average staff tenure

 **600+**
charity
clients
per year

4.7 
from 150+ Google reviews



New and inclusive

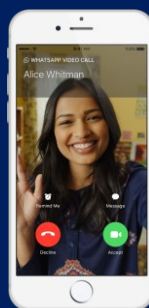
If you're reading this there's a good chance you're already on our new website, fully redesigned and upgraded for 2023.

But did you know it's now more accessible than ever, thanks to the award-winning Recite Me assistive toolbar?

Available throughout the site via the icon above, Recite Me is a fantastic addition that provides screen reading functionality, customisable styling, translation into multiple languages and a whole host of tools for users who may otherwise face barriers to engaging with the site, due to disability, learning difficulty, visual impairment or a different language.

www.harrishill.co.uk

Harris Hill
charity recruitment specialists



Lights, camera, applications!

What if you could skip the traditional job ad and simply talk to candidates about the opportunity, while showing them around? What if you could see and hear them in person rather than looking through faceless CVs?

We're currently piloting video messaging that allows you to do all that and more, giving candidates greater insight, helping you bring the role to life, and generating far more engagement than a typical job ad.

Look out for more details soon as it's a valuable tool: just one of the innovations we're currently exploring and investing in to bring you the most effective recruitment channels and campaigns.

And the winners are...

Breaking news as we go to press that our positive, supportive and inclusive culture is being recognised with a forthcoming industry award!

Naturally we're delighted, but being a great place to work is good news for you too: happier people provide a better service, and our exceptional retention rate means you can count on our specialists to bring years of expertise and sector knowledge to your search.

More details on the way via social media and the Harris Hill website.



Welcome to the latest edition of the Harris Hill Salary Survey, your annual guide to salaries in the UK charity and not for profit sectors.

It covers the financial year to 31 March 2023, the first for some time not to be significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and one you could almost describe as a 'normal' year, were it not for almost everything.

Resilient as ever though, charities march on, driving high demand for new talent in almost every team, but the sector certainly has its share of the UK's wider labour shortage, currently running to [more than a million vacancies](#) according to official figures (April 2023).

Turning the tables

In a year when the high cost of living has dominated public discourse, with widespread strikes keeping pay, inflation and the widening gap between them firmly in the headlines, it's probably no surprise that charity professionals are also seeking more, with salary expectations significantly up across the board.

More than ever this year, candidates have started to realise their worth and demand more from employers - scarcity in most areas has enabled candidates to hold out for what they want and generally get it: what one short-staffed, frazzled employer won't offer, the next may just be desperate enough to agree.

Central to that offer is flexible working, which might have returned to the margins had the pandemic left employers with the balance of power, judging by ongoing efforts to coax workers back to the office.

However, having come at a time when they largely call the shots, candidates have been able to keep flexibility still, embedding it into the working landscape by refusing to entertain offers that fall short.

Hybrid roles are now seen as the norm, with one office day per week widely favoured, two days accepted by most, and three or more the mark of an employer who may need a rethink if they're planning to fill the role.

Moving swiftly on...

Still, once you've secured the perfect candidate, you're all set, right? Well, not for long.

All of our teams report that employees are moving on sooner than ever, rarely staying beyond their second anniversary, seeing it as the best route to career progression and a higher salary.

And understandably so, when most of the other routes are now closed or barely accessible, promotions coming too rarely, slowly and unreliably for ambitious employees, while the idea of working extra-hard to earn an increase has long joined the list of Things Your Parents Assume You Can Do But Are Just Not How It Works These Days.

Speaking purely as recruiters, long may these rapid moves continue – we've never been so busy – but we've no doubt charities will ultimately find innovative ways forward that are rather more sustainable than some of the increases we're seeing this year.

[So what's been happening to salaries in your line of work? Read on...](#)



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general	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £26,000	£24,000 - £28,000
Officer/Exec	£27,000 - £33,000	£29,000 - £35,000
Manager	£36,000 - £44,000	£37,000 - £48,000
Head of	£45,000 - £60,000	£50,000 - £75,000
Director	£50,000 - £75,000	£75,000 - £120,000

major donor	smaller charities	larger charities
Officer/Exec	£28,000 - £33,000	£29,000 - £36,000
Manager	£36,000 - £45,000	£39,000 - £53,000
Head of	£45,000 - £55,000	£55,000 - £70,000

Individual giving	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£20,000 - £25,000	£25,000 - £30,000
Officer/Exec	£25,000 - £33,500	£28,000 - £38,500
Manager	£33,000 - £42,000	£35,000 - £48,000
Head of	£45,000 - £52,000	£50,000 - £60,000

events	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £25,000	£23,500 - £26,500
Officer/Exec	£26,000 - £29,000	£27,000 - £34,000
Manager	£35,000 - £40,000	£38,000 - £45,000
Head of	£42,000 - £48,000	£49,000 - £57,000

corporate	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£25,000 - £28,000	£25,000 - £29,000
Officer/Exec	£27,000 - £33,000	£29,000 - £36,000
Manager	£37,000 - £45,000	£38,000 - £50,000
Head of	£45,000 - £55,000	£55,000 - £65,000

community	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £26,000	£23,500 - £26,000
Officer/Exec	£26,000 - £29,000	£27,000 - £33,000
Manager	£32,000 - £38,000	£36,000 - £45,000
Head of	£42,000 - £48,000	£47,000 - £57,000

legacy	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £27,000	£24,000 - £29,000
Officer/Exec	£27,000 - £33,000	£28,000 - £35,000
Manager	£34,000 - £43,000	£36,000 - £50,000
Head of	£42,000 - £55,000	£50,000 - £60,000

trusts & statutory	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£25,000 - £28,000	£25,000 - £28,000
Officer/Exec	£28,000 - £33,000	£29,000 - £35,000
Manager	£38,000 - £45,000	£39,000 - £50,000
Head of	£45,000 - £55,000	£50,000 - £65,000



market trends: fundraising

Candidates have the upper hand in most of the market at the moment and nowhere is that more evident than in fundraising, where the basic rule of supply (limited) and demand (high) is pushing salaries for fundraisers steadily skywards.

We've seen the biggest hike in candidates' salary expectations for many years, since they're well aware of the demand, and with charities having to compete in something close to a bidding war, most will eventually get what they're asking for.

That's one reason we've seen a marked fall in direct applications and response to advertising: fundraisers know they can wait for jobs to come to them, and indeed most of our work on fundraising placements is now proactive, seeking out potential candidates rather than handling incoming applications, with senior fundraising professionals being the most elusive.

Why are fundraisers so scarce?

As ever, it's down to the perennial issue of charity sector experience.

While at times during the year it seemed the barriers to those outside the sector might finally be starting to fall, we've yet to see any lasting increase in cross-sector hires, most of which still follow the well-trodden path from the business to charity side of a corporate partnership.

With few opportunities at entry level or alternative routes into the sector, charities are inevitably competing for an ever-smaller pool of candidates, who increasingly have multiple offers as a result, giving them plenty of power to set the terms.

What are candidates looking for?

Flexibility remains the number one concern after (and sometimes even ahead of) pay, among fundraisers considering a move.

Employers who can stretch no further on salary are increasingly seeking to attract new talent with extra-flexible arrangements like a four-day week for full-time pay – and whether these look like creative solutions or desperate measures probably depends very much on where you're standing.

What can charities do?

The charities having most success in hiring new staff are the roughly 40% (we estimate) who recognise that the market has changed, and are realistic about what they need to offer from the outset.

But it's a shift in perception that's sure to take time: employers have held the balance of power in these transactions for so long that it's widely taken as the default setting, making some slow to appreciate that the shoe is now firmly on the other foot.

However there's no room for 'slow' in the race for new fundraisers: with such fierce competition, it pays to be speaking with candidates at the first opportunity, making swift decisions before somebody else snaps them up.

Indeed, we're steadily seeing more employers making do with single-stage interviews, showing how keen they are to get what we probably can't call bums on seats so let's go with 'people on board'. Much more professional.

For more on this, see our tips on how to secure new talent (p14).

marketing, pr and digital



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marketing	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£20,000 - £25,500	£21,000 - £27,000
Officer/Exec	£24,000 - £32,000	£26,000 - £35,000
Manager	£33,000 - £44,000	£36,000 - £47,000
Head of	£43,000 - £55,000	£48,000 - £65,000
Director	£52,000 - £60,000	£55,000 - £85,000

communications	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£21,000 - £25,500	£22,000 - £27,000
Officer/Exec	£23,000 - £30,000	£26,000 - £35,000
Manager	£33,000 - £44,000	£38,000 - £46,000
Head of	£43,000 - £55,000	£48,000 - £65,000
Director	£50,000 - £60,000	£60,000 - £90,000

pr	smaller charities	larger charities
Officer/Exec	£22,000 - £32,500	£26,000 - £35,000
Manager	£33,000 - £40,000	£38,000 - £46,000
Head of	£41,000 - £53,000	£46,000 - £63,000

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digital	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£21,000 - £25,000	£25,000 - £29,000
Officer/Exec	£26,000 - £30,000	£29,000 - £35,000
Senior Officer	£29,000 - £33,000	£33,500 - £42,000
Manager	£35,000 - £42,500	£42,000 - £47,000
Head of	£45,000 - £55,000	£47,000 - £65,000
Director	£54,000 - £65,000	£60,000 - £80,000

policy, advocacy & campaigns



[Hayley Wilson](#) 020 7820 7306

policy, advocacy & campaigns	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £26,000	£24,000 - £28,000
Officer/Exec	£28,000 - £35,000	£30,000 - £38,000
Manager	£38,000 - £48,000	£40,000 - £50,000
Head of	£45,000 - £60,000	£55,000 - £65,000
Director	£52,000 - £65,000	£66,000 - £85,000



market trends: marketing, pr & digital

There's always one. One team swimming against the tide, bucking the trend and making us add caveats like 'in most areas' to every statement, and this year it's the turn of the marketing, PR and digital world.

Salary increases have been modest, and candidates can only dream of having the same kind of clout as their fundraising colleagues, for several reasons.

Chief among these is that marketing teams have long sourced talent from outside the sector, with marketing skills considered transferable and a commercial perspective often actively sought. As a result, charities can draw from a far bigger pool of candidates, who in turn have more competition.

However, the traffic isn't all one way: a considerable number return to commerce each year, after accepting a salary cut to get into the charity sector, expecting a sizeable increase after a year's experience, and learning that whoever told them to is not to be trusted in future.

The trouble with transformation

It's been a focus for some years, but opportunities in digital transformation multiplied as Covid-19 saw charities scrambling to shift operations online, dragging even the last few digital dinosaurs into the new decade. Here in 2023 however, with most of those transformations now complete, it leaves a lot of experienced talent looking for what comes next.

That may be one reason we've seen roles becoming broader: instead of hiring separate communications and digital specialists, charities are now more likely to have one person covering both, which makes sense now the lines between these categories are so blurred as to barely exist.

Condensing two roles into one leaves fewer in total, of course, making the market more competitive still.

Marketers on the move

The pandemic also plays a part in the current abundance of available candidates, with the numbers looking to move in 2022-23 boosted by those who'd have done so in 2020-21, but held off until it felt less like a very bad and possibly ruinous idea.

Once that bumper cohort settles into new roles, those numbers are likely to decline, but not for long: marketers are now moving on sooner and more frequently than ever, often motivated by salary, and with many seeing it as the only reliable route to a respectable increase.

Most charities are fairly up to date on the market and realistic about what they need to offer, but some continue to aim low, banking on the strength of their brand to attract new talent. Unlike other areas however, charities rarely need to increase their original offer to fill a vacancy.

A flexible step too far

Like others, marketers have firmly embraced hybrid and remote working, with few takers for roles requiring more than two office days per week.

Employers have occasionally tried to offer lower rates for remote workers, but candidates have invariably put the idea back in its rather mean-spirited box by rejecting such offers, leaving roles all but impossible to fill on these terms.

business services



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admin & support	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £26,000	£23,000 - £28,000
Officer/Exec	£24,000 - £29,000	£25,000 - £30,000
EA/PA	£28,000 - £38,000	£35,000 - £45,000
Office/Admin Manager	£32,000 - £38,000	£40,000 - £45,000
Head of	£38,000 - £45,000	£45,000 - £55,000

data management	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant/Coordinator	£24,000 - £28,000	£26,000 - £30,000
Officer/Exec	£28,000 - £33,000	£30,000 - £37,000
Data Protection Officer	£29,000 - £35,000	£31,000 - £37,000
Analysts/SQL Specialists	£34,000 - £41,000	£42,000 - £52,000
Manager	£37,000 - £45,000	£42,000 - £52,000
Compliance Manager	£40,000 - £52,000	£45,000 - £60,000
Head of	£50,000 - £55,000	£57,000 - £65,000

operations	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£24,000 - £28,000	£25,000 - £28,000
Officer/Exec	£26,000 - £33,000	£30,000 - £35,000
Manager	£38,000 - £48,000	£42,000 - £55,000
Head of	£40,000 - £50,000	£52,000 - £65,000
Director	£48,000 - £67,000	£60,000 - £85,000

human resources



[Faye Marshall](#) 020 7820 7303 [Emma Stone](#) 020 7820 7304

human resources	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£23,000 - £30,000	£25,000 - £33,000
Officer	£25,000 - £33,000	£33,000 - £42,000
Advisor/Coordinator	£30,000 - £38,000	£33,000 - £39,000
Manager	£35,000 - £50,000	£38,000 - £52,000
L&D Manager/Business Partner	£37,000 - £40,000	£40,000 - £46,000
HR Business Partner	£37,000 - £47,000	£40,000 - £55,000
Head of	£45,000 - £55,000	£58,000 - £70,000
Director	£55,000 - £68,000	£65,000 - £75,000

projects & programmes



[Faye Marshall](#) 020 7820 7303

projects & programmes	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£25,000 - £28,000	£26,000 - £30,000
Officer/Exec	£26,000 - £36,000	£30,000 - £38,000
Manager	£36,000 - £42,000	£40,000 - £50,000
Head of	£42,000 - £52,000	£48,000 - £59,000



market trends: business services

If you're working in one of these areas, encompassing most of those who deliver an organisation's work or provide essential support, you'll likely be happier with the state of the market than your employer, struggling to hire anyone like you (but of course...)

Sure, advertising jobs is easier than ever, but what comes rolling in will more likely be tumbleweeds than great applications. That's why most of our placements in the last year have resulted from proactively seeking out candidates, taking the job to them rather than the reverse.

Saving the day

Like others, professionals in these areas have begun to realise their value and expect increases worthy of the name. So it's good news for them that many organisations made savings from slimming down operations during the pandemic – extra budget they can now (in theory) spend on staff.

Charities, for the most part, are clear-eyed about the challenges and the need to do more, although many continue to try their luck offering low rates, before invariably having to raise them to fill the positions.

Some now provide allowances on top of regular pay, for things like equipping your home workspace, while those who can't offer such extras are generally aware of it and working on ways to do so.

Candidates, meanwhile, are making full use of the upper hand while they have it, moving on quickly and frequently for a better offer, and waving away those that don't come with the desired flexibility.

They're also keeping options open until the very last minute, even after accepting a role – something better may be just around the corner, after all.

This means it's hard to be certain anyone's truly on board until they've walked through the door on day one, stood for their unflattering security-pass photo, and been awkwardly introduced to a load of people who might as well all be called Barbara for all the names they remember right now.

Or at least until they've joined an introductory Zoom call, this being 2023.

Next!

Even once they've started, there's no rest for the wicked (or in this case, HR) with staff often moving on after as little as a year in post.

Cost-of-living crisis or not, there's even a notable rise in people jumping ship before they have anywhere to land, such is their confidence in getting more offers — confidence that's rarely misplaced, as it turns out so far.

In response, we've seen some employers trying to introduce longer notice periods, such as three months rather than one, in a bid to slow down the dizzying turnover of staff.

What else can charities do?

Tough as the competition for talent may be, there are ways to give yourself an advantage that aren't all about the money: see p14 for our tips on how to secure new talent without spending a fortune.



finance	smaller charities	larger charities
Assistant	£25,000 - £30,000	£25,000- £30,000
Officer	£28,000 - £33,000	£28,000 - £40,000
Financial/Mgmt Accountant	£34,000 - £44,000	£38,000 - £48,000
Manager	£40,000 - £52,000	£44,000 - £55,000
Finance Business Partner	£43,000 - £50,000	£45,000 - £55,000
Controller	£45,000 - £55,000	£53,000 - £58,000
Head of	£47,000 - £59,000	£56,000 - £70,000
Director	£57,000 - £70,000	£65,000 - £90,000



Smaller or larger charity?

See page 2 for information on these categories.

To the world of charity finance now, where salaries in the past year have been increasing across the board.

At junior levels, it's a long time since we handled anything below £25,000 (£32,000 is now achievable with just 1-2 years' experience) while further up, once-rare salaries over £65,000 are now regularly spotted in our listings.

The reason is once again the scarcity of experienced charity candidates, who know they're in demand and will hold out for what they want, rather than compromise.

Quality over quantity

Candidates aren't the only ones with high expectations however: obliged to spend more on staffing, ever-frugal finance bosses are determined to get their money's worth, and will increasingly extend or re-run campaigns to find someone they feel is worth every penny.

As a result, while finance staff are moving more often, with average tenures nearer two years than the four or five of the past, vacancies are typically taking longer to fill, with appointments that were once made in a matter of weeks now frequently running into several months.

Not every move is for salary reasons though: a fair proportion are looking to lower their stress levels, making a break for something more balanced before ever-expanding workloads and responsibilities crush them altogether.

Flexibility first

Perhaps more than anyone, finance staff *really* don't want to be in the office, and have arguably the least need to be, so employers asking for even two days per week on site are asking for trouble filling that position.

They'll generally be among those who haven't quite yet recognised that salaries that served perfectly well for the last decade won't bring a deluge of applications. However, more than 40% (and rising) know they need to offer more and are finding new ways to do so, like financially supporting study for those seeking qualification.



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Sekai Lindsay 020 7820 7307

temp rates conversion tool

pay rate per			annual equivalent
hour	day	35-hr week	
£10.42*	£72.94	£364.70	£18,964
£11.00	£77.35	£385.00	£20,111
£11.95**	£83.65	£418.25	£21,749
£13.00	£91.00	£455.00	£23,660
£14.00	£98.00	£490.00	£25,480
£16.00	£112.00	£560.00	£29,120
£18.00	£126.00	£630.00	£32,760
£20.00	£140.00	£700.00	£36,400
£22.00	£154.00	£770.00	£40,040
£25.00	£175.00	£875.00	£45,500
£30.00	£210.00	£1,050.00	£54,600

For 37.5 hrs, multiply week and annual figures by 1.0714

* National minimum wage, age 23+

** Minimum living wage for London (Living Wage Foundation)

It's been an interesting few years in the temps market, which stayed relatively buoyant through the pandemic, due to charities choosing temporary solutions given the long-term uncertainty, and an influx of candidates needing a stopgap to their next permanent job.

That bubble may have passed but demand has remained high as things have gradually returned to – normal's not the right word but whatever's currently passing for it – where candidates are well aware of their worth and much more choosy about assignments as a result.

Out of the office

High on almost everyone's wish-list is hybrid working with minimum office time, putting them slightly at odds with employers, many of whom are keen to steer things in the other direction.

However despite the potential difficulties of getting up to speed at a distance, temping from home seems to be proving itself effective, with little reason to rule it out.

Another increasingly popular request is from senior candidates, looking for slightly more junior roles. They're seeking a better work/life balance and to lower their stress levels, even if they do come with a lower salary.

Temporary rates in 2023

Rates for temp roles are derived directly from their permanent equivalent, so when annual salaries rise, temp rates do the same. For comparison, our table helps you find the salaried equivalent to an hourly rate and vice versa, along with weekly and day rates.

Temps have played their part in driving increases too, having become more aware of their value and the level of demand. By having the confidence to reject assignments that offer too little, they're left near-impossible to fill, giving employers no option but to raise their game.

On the whole however, employers seem broadly in touch with the current market, with around 70% offering realistic rates from the outset, and just 30% in need of a gentle nudge.

chief executives and directors

THE HARRIS HILL SALARY SURVEY 2023

In the last two years alone, we've placed more than 50 of the UK's charity CEOs, along with plenty of chairs, trustees and directors.

Salaries depend on the scale of the job, remits and responsibilities, all of which vary enormously, so the salary for one may be no indication of the appropriate rate for another.

Recommendations are best made on a case-by-case basis, which we'll be happy to provide if you'd like to submit a query to executive@harrishill.co.uk



Aled Morris
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Jenny Hills
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Nick Shanks
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executive market trends

It's been a bumper year for the makers of leaving cards, given the number of long-time CEOs stepping down, inflated by many who would have gone sooner but held on to steer through the pandemic.

That's contributed to a busy market, and for a second year we're seeing more salary movement at the lower end (now from c.£60k) than at the top – what you might call 'levelling up', but actually happening.

That said, we've also seen a few CEO packages hitting £120k, mainly among care or clinical providers where exceptional growth has made them a much bigger proposition. In general however, exceeding £100k can bring limited returns: often the very same people, only now you're paying more for them.

Transparency is the best policy

For some of our CEO appointments it's about the cause, for others a bigger organisation or promotion to a first-time CEO role, but a higher salary is still the motivation for many moves.

Expectations are generally realistic, but problems arise when candidates reach the end of the interview process only to receive a substantially lower offer than the figure implied (through terms like 'up to' or 'circa') to attract their interest.

It's a self-defeating sleight-of-hand that all but ensures the offer is rejected, when the same figure might have been accepted if presented upfront.

Clear communication of salaries is vital (see p14 for more on this), as it is for flexible working, given it could mean anything from a fully remote, no-fixed-times fandango to a couple of hours at home on a Tuesday morning.

Candidates need these details to know if it's worth their time applying, so being specific about requirements avoids potential disputes further down the line.

Home or away?

In the last year those requirements have been shifting towards more time on site, but this does limit the field.

For example, of two otherwise near-identical CEO posts we recently filled, applications for the remote-based role outnumbered those for the office-based equivalent by more than five to one.

But perhaps the most ubiquitous request is that candidates should be 'entrepreneurial'. Yet will someone who's been running a business get the job over a charity sector veteran? Well, there's a first time for everything...

how to secure new talent (without spending a fortune)

THE HARRIS HILL SALARY SURVEY 2023

Beyond the world of marketing, where they grow on carefully-branded trees, our survey finds candidates in short supply and high demand.

It's the classic recipe for rising wages, but if you're out of money to throw at the problem, how else can you improve your hiring prospects?

1 Be specific about the salary

'Say what it is' might seem straight from the insultingly-obvious school of advice, but being upfront and transparent makes a difference.

Keen to maximise applications, many employers like to leave salaries open to interpretation, and if you happen to interpret more than is actually available, well, that's on you. And largely intentional.

Take a job advertised at £38-44k. To many candidates, that's £42k at least, because of *course* they'll qualify for the upper end. To the employer, it's a £38k job they might just have to pay a little more for, in exceptional cases.

Meanwhile £44k may be less a potential salary than a bid to attract high-calibre candidates at that level, hoping they'll miraculously accept a lower rate once they get to know the organisation.

However [SPOILER ALERT]: they won't. Not even for you. Which likely means repeating the process, with all the time, resources and cost that implies.

Ultimately, there's no point attracting talent with salaries you're not going to pay. Don't say 'circa £70k' if the maximum offer will be £65k, or '£36-42k' if Mother Teresa herself wouldn't get more than £37k. It only causes problems, burning trust, goodwill and time (which, as we all know, is money), and someone who feels lured under false pretences is never going to take the job.

State the actual salary and it becomes a known quantity, often preferable, and only those who'll accept it will apply, minimising the risk of drop-outs and giving you every chance of filling the role first time.

2 Be fast

If you can't outbid the competition, outrun them: being quick off the mark is a real asset in this fast-moving market.

The key is to ensure candidates are never waiting too long without news. Acknowledge applications as they arrive and if interviews are some way off, an initial screening call can at least engage them in the process early on.

Online interviews save a lot of time, and in our experience, often yield better results as candidates are more relaxed in their own environment.

Either way, make swift decisions and share them promptly: at least half of today's workforce have grown up in an on-demand, instant-feedback world where more than a week feels an impossibly archaic time to wait for *anything*.

Again, remember time is money: if negotiations save £3k on the salary, but the role takes two months longer to fill, is it really a saving?

3 Be flexible

Flexibility: essential in a beanbag, and just as popular in the workplace, with flexible working a major draw for the majority of candidates.

And with studies and experience consistently showing there's little downside to doing so, taking steps to become applicants' most flexible choice could be a smart way to make you their first.

Of course, in a cost-of-living crisis, the highest salary will often win out. However by making it a known quantity, moving fast and out-flexing the rest – probably not a word but go with it, we're nearly there – you create multiple grounds for candidates to consider it the better offer.

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