

C+D Salary Survey 2022

eBook

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Foreword

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C+D's annual Salary Survey provides insights and analysis on the latest trends in pay and benefits for pharmacists and pharmacy staff in the UK. C+D's survey is based on responses from a diverse range of pharmacy professionals across the country and provides a comprehensive snapshot of the current state of the industry.

With the ongoing challenges faced by the healthcare sector, including the COVID-19 pandemic and workforce shortages, understanding salary and benefits trends is more important than ever. The survey covers a range of topics, including average salaries, locum pay increases, and staffing levels.

In addition to providing valuable information for pharmacy professionals, C+D's survey can also help pharmacy owners and managers make informed decisions about compensation and benefits packages for their staff. By staying up to date on the latest trends in pay and benefits, pharmacy owners and managers can attract and retain top talent, while ensuring that their staff feel valued and supported.

C+D encourages all pharmacy professionals to participate in the Salary Survey, as your feedback is essential in helping to provide accurate and relevant insights into the industry. Whether you're a pharmacist, pharmacy technician, or another member of the pharmacy team, your input is valuable and will help C+D better represent the needs and experiences of pharmacy professionals across the UK.

Thank you for your participation this year. In this e-book, we have compiled some of the top stories from the Salary Survey this year. The results are a reflection of the difficult times the industry is currently facing but also reflects the innovations and tenacity within the pharmacy profession. I hope you enjoy this e-book.

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Revealed: The average UK pharmacist branch manager salary in 2022

The average community pharmacy branch manager salary across the UK was more than £50,000 in 2022, according to data from the annual C+D Salary Survey.

The survey of 250 community pharmacist branch managers found that their average salary stood at £50,589.52 - up more than £3,000 from just over £47,000 the previous year.

It also found that more than two-thirds (68%) of 246 respondents who answered the question had experienced a salary increase in the previous 12 months, while 30% said their pay had stayed the same and just 2% had seen a drop.

Of those who had experienced a pay rise, almost a quarter (22%) had seen a 3% increase and a fifth (20%) had experienced a 6-10% increase.

“High cost of living” tempers pay satisfaction

However, almost four in ten (39%) out of 246 pharmacist manager respondents described

themselves as ‘dissatisfied’ with their salary. Just 16% said they were ‘very’ or ‘more than satisfied’, while almost half (45%) said they were ‘fairly satisfied’.

READ MORE: [Eight in 10 employee pharmacists considered quitting in 2022](#)

Of those who were dissatisfied, 59% blamed their employer while 25% blamed the government for not providing enough funding.

One respondent said that the “high cost of living” has tempered any increase in salary, saying that they received a standard 2% pay rise but “feel like [they] have had a decrease”.

READ MORE: [Revealed: The average locum pharmacist pay rate in 2022](#)

Another survey participant said they saw “very meagre increases considering inflation is at 10-11% for most cost of living”.

They added that they “feel very much let down by the sector, especially as locum fees have very dramatically increased recently”.

“Never had a bonus in 32 years”

Meanwhile, more than half (54%) of 241 pharmacist manager respondents told C+D that they had received a bonus from their employer in the past year.

However, many others had never received a bonus, including one anonymous branch manager who said they had “never, ever had one in 32 years”.

Another respondent told C+D that targets to qualify for bonuses are “set so high it is almost impossible” at their pharmacy.

READ MORE: [A fifth of employee pharmacists report ‘dangerous’ levels of understaffing](#)

One branch manager told C+D that because of COVID, they received “no pay increase despite the additional pressure we worked through, just a £75 voucher”.

“Pharmacists earning below a basic rate have seen significant salary increase to retain them but nothing [was] awarded to experienced pharmacists,” they added.

And another respondent said that while other staff received a bonus, they as the manager did not, which was “hurtful”.

READ MORE: [Quarter of pharmacy workers suffered depression due to work over past year](#)

One told C+D they received their bonus to “spend within the company”, while others said they “had to fight to be awarded” it in the first place.

Luckier respondents reported bonuses, with one receiving £1,000 for Eid as well £1,000 for Christmas and another receiving a £9,000 bonus.

The C+D Salary Survey 2022 ran between October 25 2022 and January 20 2023 and was completed by a total of 1,480 pharmacists and pharmacy staff.

See all the coverage so far on the [C+D Salary Survey hub](#)



A fifth of employee pharmacists report 'dangerous' levels of understaffing

More than 70% of employee pharmacists believe staffing levels at their pharmacy are inadequate, C+D data has revealed.

C+D's Salary Survey 2022 found there were widespread reports of understaffing among UK pharmacists employed by community pharmacies, with almost a fifth (17%) branding staffing levels dangerously low.

Of 410 employed pharmacists, 70.7% said that staffing levels were either 'quite low' or 'so low they are dangerous'.

More than half (53.7%) said that staffing levels at their pharmacy were 'quite low', 17% said they were 'so low they are dangerous' and the remaining

29.2% of respondents said they were adequate.

READ MORE: [CCA: At least 720 English pharmacies permanently closed since 2015](#)

It comes as C+D yesterday (February 22) revealed that more than 80% of employee pharmacists considered leaving their job in 2022, with 43% having actively looked for another job.

The annual survey polled community pharmacist branch managers, area managers, second or

non-manager pharmacists and superintendent pharmacists.

"Unrealistic workloads"

The survey also found that increasing workloads were a major problem, with 92.2% of 412 employed pharmacists saying their workload had increased over the 12 months to the survey.

Almost two-thirds (65.4%) of 417 employed pharmacists said their workload was 'often' or 'always unrealistic' – with more than a fifth (21.5%) saying their workload was 'always unrealistic'.

READ MORE: [Revealed: The average locum pharmacist pay rate in 2022](#)

Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) director Paul Day told C+D that "too much work with too few staff means pharmacists sacrifice their own wellbeing in order to keep patients safe".

"Of course, that is not sustainable and in effect is employers driving professionals away from their practice," he added.

"We can't afford to pay more staff"

But Ketan Patel, owner and lead pharmacist at Acorn Pharmacy in Luton, told C+D that there is a "shortage of dispensing staff and the issue is we can't afford to pay more staff".

"The supermarkets are paying £11 an hour and we haven't had a pay increase in five years," he said.

Thanks to the increasing cost of medicines, the pharmacy is "dispensing at a loss", making staff unaffordable, he added.

READ MORE: [At a glance: Compare how locum rates vary across Great Britain](#)

People are "going into higher remunerated areas" leading to a shortage of staff in the sector, he said.

And Mr Patel added that pharmacies are facing a "perfect storm", with workload that has "increased tremendously because we are chasing our tails trying to obtain medicines" as well as increased costs.

"Our NHS statement doesn't even cover our wholesale bills," he told C+D. "If we weren't doing COVID vaccines, we'd be losing £2,000 a month."

"People leave for better pay"

Superintendent pharmacist at Tollesbury Pharmacy in Malden, Dimple Bhatia, said pharmacy staffing levels are "too low", with a "shortage of staff that want to work in pharmacy" and "significant difficulty in recruiting".

"I have been severely out of pocket where we have ordered staff uniforms and enrolled in statutory training courses only to see people leave for better pay," he told C+D.

READ MORE: [Locuming in 2022: 'A game of cat and mouse'](#)

"We need to ask why community pharmacies are not an attractive employment opportunity," he added. "Pharmacists are leaving to work in primary care and staff can earn more in the local supermarket."

"Until we fund pharmacies better, we are on a path of self-destruction", he said.

"Taking a toll"

Meanwhile, Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) policy and practice lead for England Heidi Wright said that "staffing pressures, alongside an increase

in workload, create an extra burden” on pharmacy teams.
This “takes a toll” on their “wellbeing”, she added.

READ MORE: [Eight in 10 employee pharmacists considered quitting in 2022](#)

“The government must make the most of pharmacists’ clinical expertise for the benefits of patients and the wider NHS, but this must be backed with adequate funding models and much-needed investment in pharmacy education and training”, she told C+D.
It comes as the pharmacy negotiator has revealed that it has rejected “totally inadequate” government

proposals to relieve pressure on pharmacists – but that legal advice suggests strike action is “not an option” for pharmacy businesses.
Data from the 2022 Salary Survey last week revealed that the average locum rate has rocketed to a new record high for a second year in a row, reaching £33.30 per hour in 2022.

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At a glance: Compare how locum rates vary across Great Britain

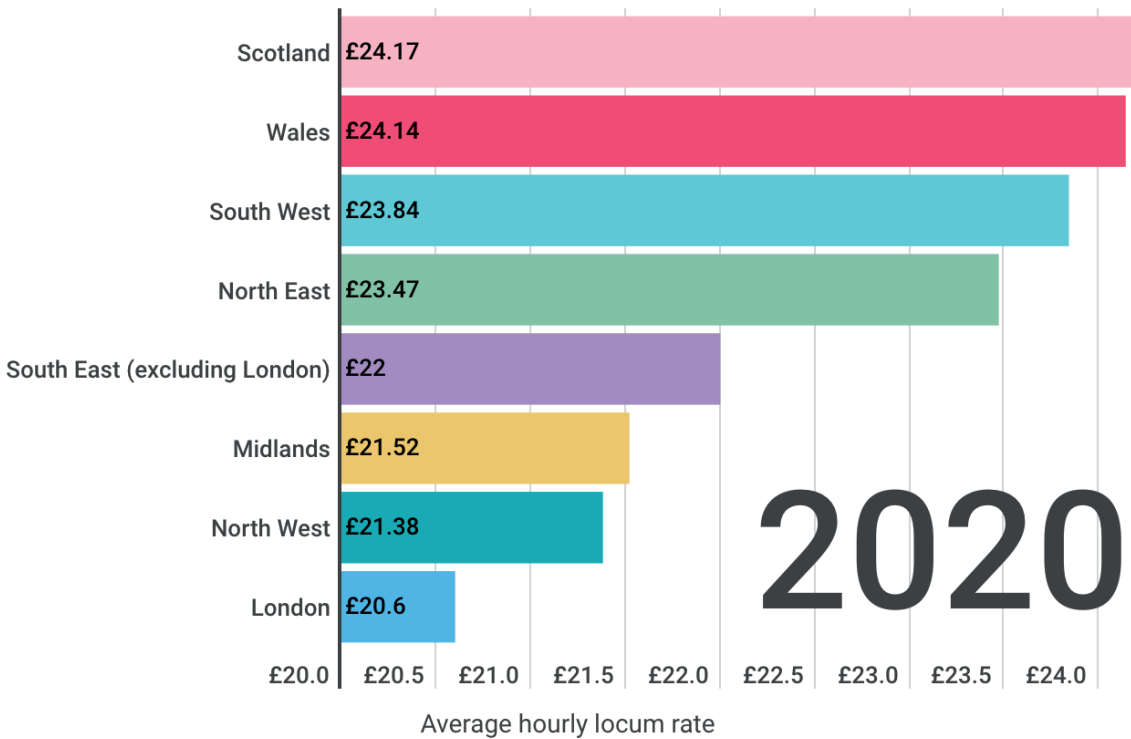
Use C+D's interactive chart to compare locum pharmacists' average hourly rate across Great Britain over the last three years

Data collected by C+D’s annual Salary Survey in 2022 showed that the average hourly rate for locums across the UK was £33.30 – up from £28.10 the previous year.
Click the play button on the interactive chart below to discover how the average locum rate in


each local area has changed over 2020, 2021 and 2022, according to data from the Salary Survey.
Then scroll down to compare how much locum rates have increased, as well as locums' ability to find work and rate dissatisfaction levels across regions in Great Britain.

Locum rates across Great Britain

Use C+D's interactive chart to compare locum pharmacists' average hourly rate across Great Britain over the last three years




North East




£33.04

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£6.18

Locum rate increase since 2021



8%

Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate




8%

Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022


Source: C+D Salary Survey 2022

North West




£31.20

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£4.15

Locum rate increase since 2021



33%

Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate




10%

Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022


Source: C+D Salary Survey 2022

London




£28.61

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£6.43

Locum rate increase since 2021



42%


Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate



16%


Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022

South West




£35.23

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£6.94

Locum rate increase since 2021



13%


Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate



6%


Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022

Wales




£37.53

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£8.44

Locum rate increase since 2021



18%

Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate




24%

Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022


Source: C+D Salary Survey 2022

South East (excluding London)




£33.89

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£8.98

Locum rate increase since 2021



20%


Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate



13%


Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022

Scotland




£40.22

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£7.04

Locum rate increase since 2021



13%


Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate



26%


Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022

Midlands




£32.60

Average hourly locum pay rate




+£2.15

Locum rate increase since 2021



33%

Percent of locums who were dissatisfied with their rate



16%

Percent of locums who said it became harder to find work in 2022

For this feature, C+D analysed the responses of 243 locum pharmacists. C+D did not have enough data from Northern Ireland for it to be statistically relevant, so data from the country is not included.

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Locum rates: 'If we all look for solutions we can move in the right direction'

It has been the best of times and the worst of times for locum rates over the past decade. Reece Samani shares his optimism about changes that could go some way to leaving everyone happy

Pay rates for locum pharmacists have been one of the most discussed topics in our industry in recent times.

While some industry leaders and pharmacy owners have suggested that locum rates are rising at unsustainable levels, many locum pharmacists feel that they are being squeezed or that any pay rise they have had is barely keeping up with rampant inflation.

It is an issue I've been thinking about a lot, and I can empathise with both viewpoints: I have been a locum and I have hired locums.

For pharmacy owners, times have rarely been tougher. We all know funding for pharmacies was cut in 2017, and that was in less turbulent economic times, long before inflation rates topped 11% in October 2022.

Operating costs have risen, drug prices have increased. Footfall in some pharmacies has gone back up towards pre-COVID-19 levels in recent months, but that does not offset the funding cuts. In that context, it is easy to see why any increase in locum rates is challenging for managers and owners.

READ MORE: [Average locum rate rises again as agency warns of market 'squeeze'](#)

I also know plenty of pharmacies have been accused of temporarily closing due to the difficulty in finding locums who are available and prepared to work at rates the pharmacy owners or managers feel they can afford.

None of us wants to see closures, and thousands of our colleagues – locums, permanent employees, managers and owners alike – work incredibly hard to keep pharmacies open and ensure they serve their communities.

On the other hand, I can fully understand the locums' position. I've been there. Demands on locums have risen over the last two decades; the work is tough. The number of services they are expected to provide has increased significantly.

And, if you look back to the middle of the 2010s, C+D's annual Salary Survey told a story of rapidly decreasing hourly rates. At their lowest, in 2016, the average locum pharmacist was getting just £20.50 an hour.

Locums, like all of the other staff working tirelessly in our industry, deserve fair remuneration for their hard work. So, locums naturally and rightly see any increase in pay that they have had as entirely justified. That applies even more at a time when everyone is seeing their food and energy bills and mortgages shoot up.

I can understand both parties, but the issue and the differences need to be addressed. We must try to work together as a whole industry to look for potential solutions, or for anything that might help move us towards a healthier balance, where locums feel they are getting the rates they deserve, but pharmacies feel they can afford those rates and stay open.

READ MORE: [Locum pharmacists: Industry rate rises unsustainable, Numark director warns](#)

Funding is a huge part of that. But there are perhaps other, smaller things that can be done to contribute to it, too.

Ever since my first day working as a locum, I have felt that the system by which locums are booked brings with it some real inefficiency. The booking of locums still mostly takes place through agencies, which I feel presents problems for locums and pharmacies.

For the pharmacy, it often means they do not know who the locum is that they will get to cover the shift and how that person might fit in with their team. I think it also creates an unhealthy reliance on a third party and potentially wastes time. If a first agency cannot find someone to fill a shift, then a pharmacy manager has to ring around other agencies until they do. Then add to that the agency booking fee.

For locums, meanwhile, going through an agency can make it more difficult to negotiate pay. Some locums felt – and still feel – that some agencies even try to drive rates down.

I want to see a situation where the middleman is cut out. With the technology now available to us, that has become a reality.

READ MORE: [Locum pharmacists: Agencies predict what Christmas rates will look like](#)

The solution I saw was an online platform where pharmacy owners and managers can quickly and easily post their available shifts and locums can directly contact them to tell them of their availability and talk about rates, which negates many of the issues mentioned above.

That direct contact means pharmacy owners only need to go to one source to find locums to fill shifts instead of calling multiple agencies, so they save time. It also means they build relationships with locums they trust.

For locums, direct contact means they can negotiate rates and working conditions, safe in the knowledge that nobody else apart from them and the pharmacy manager has a say in how much they are earning. It also potentially gives locums more choice between different pharmacies so they can work where they feel the conditions are best.

READ MORE: [Locum pharmacist rate woes: how much are they getting for shifts?](#)

Finally, in a system without agency fees, there is less money going out of that system. That money can go towards upping rates for locums without costing the pharmacy a penny more overall.

Of course, replacing the middleman in locum bookings is not a panacea to all these issues. Funding and locum rates are complex problems and, as pharmacists, we're well aware that miracle cures do not exist.

But I want to see a pharmacy ecosystem where both locums and those who are booking locums are happy with rates and conditions. I am an optimist, and I think if we all look for solutions we can move in the right direction.

Reece Samani is CEO of The Locum App and SignatureRx



Chemist+Druggist (C+D) has proudly been providing the latest news and analysis to the UK's community pharmacists and pharmacy staff for 160 years. C+D is a digital publication, covering everything from breaking news and in-depth features, to CPD modules, interactive investigations and podcasts to inform, champion and support community pharmacy.

The C+D brand also encompasses an industry leading jobs website, the annual C+D Awards, and C+D Data – an essential database of over 100,000 pharmacy products. Meanwhile, the monthly Price List book and biannual Guide to OTC and Diagnostics remain essential resources to have at hand in your pharmacy.

The C+D Community, is a new peer-to-peer network for pharmacy professionals. Allowing free access to exclusive content, events, and interact with subject matter experts and like-minded professionals. Newly hosted on the C+D Community is C+D Learning, featuring hundreds of peer reviewed CPD and learning modules written by pharmacists and clinical experts, for all pharmacy professionals.

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