



**Melbury
Wood**

SALARY & MARKET GUIDE 2022

Recruitment and talent experts

<https://melburywood.com/>



OUR 2022 MARKET GUIDE

Here is the Melbury Wood 2022 salary guide. We've pulled together an overview of UK salary averages in our specialisms, as well as provided updates on interesting developments and trends that we have seen over the past year.

WHO WE ARE

We are communications and insights recruitment specialists. Our core areas of expertise are policy and public affairs, corporate and consumer communications, market research, and digital.

With a history of building award-winning teams and driving commercial growth we unleash potential by bringing together great talent and exceptional businesses for a perfect fit.



Throughout 2022, we have seen a steady increase in the pay packets for most professionals in the industry driven by a huge demand for, but short supply of, talent. Things have developed at such rapid pace I feel pay bands are still converging to find a common consensus, with marked differences in remuneration from business to business. All of this, partly driven by the impact of covid, resulted in a lack of investment in talent in 2020 and a sedated job market. We are now seeing the consequences of that with job vacancies hitting an all-time high of around 1.25 million in 2022 in the UK as a whole.

This gives the jobseeker, for the time being, unprecedented negotiation power when looking for work or negotiating remuneration internally, thus placing them in a strong bargaining position to consider their options and career plans.

Greater demand for workers has compelled businesses to take a fresh and creative approach in their remuneration and benefits packages in order to stay competitive. Some are offering opportunities to work remotely overseas, signing on bonuses, etc. We are seeing counteroffers becoming more commonplace as companies try to hang onto talent, further driving up bandings.

However, there are signs we are starting to see a rebalancing on the horizon. There has been a slight reduction in the number of new roles coming onto the market since the middle of 2022. Although, for now at least, the market remains more talent led than ever as businesses are feeling the pressure to hire in a market where the competition for talent remains fierce, as it generally always has been in this industry.

**Amandeep Gill,
Founding Partner**



REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING

Greater demand for more flexibility, with this being the main driver for many candidates and sometimes a key deciding factor as to whether they want to accept a role or not.



TALENT SHORTAGE

With the UK recording the highest number of vacancies in Feb 2022, there is a real lack of talent versus jobs. The mid-level is an especially tough level and has been for a while.



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Abundance of financial incentives designed around employee retention, such as 3-5 year service bonuses, referral bonuses, new business bonuses. We have also seen a rise in signing-on bonuses.



BENEFITS & PACKAGE

25 days holiday, with additional holiday for birthday and Christmas. Sabbaticals and the newer perk of 'work anywhere in the world', with some businesses offering up to 6 weeks.



DE&I

Greater movement for industries to become more accessible to young people from different backgrounds, with more focus on paid internships or entry-level schemes targeted at ethnically diverse candidates. Also seeing more conversations about the lack of diversity at a senior/board level and methods to combat this.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2021 to 2022 has been a busy period for the industry in contrast to a relatively lacklustre 2020 in terms of recruitment activity. Demand for candidates has outstripped supply for large periods of the year across all strands within public affairs. This has resulted in sharp increases in some of the bandings, particularly at the mid-level where perhaps we saw the greatest demand and shortage of supply. This is partly due to the lack of investment in talent in 2020. The senior end of the market continued to be relatively competitive to obtain the most sought-after talent which resulted in modest increases in average salaries from the Associate Director level and above. Many commentators predict an economic recession and high inflation continuing well into 2023, which could yet impact salaries further. However, there has been a slight decline in 'new roles' coming on to the market from the middle of 2022 which would suggest the tide may be turning and we should see a recalibration within the market in late 2022 and early 2023 with a better balance between the supply and demand for talent.

| | Generalist | Property & Planning | Healthcare |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Account Executive | £22,000-£35,000 | £22,000-£32,000 | £22,000-£35,000 |
| Average | £27,000 | £26,000 | £28,000 |
| Account Manager | £35,000-£60,000 | £31,000-£46,000 | £35,000-£60,000 |
| Average | £38,000 | £35,000 | £45,000 |
| Account Director | £46,000-£70,000 | £46,000-£60,000 | £48,000-£70,000 |
| Average | £58,000 | £52,000 | £60,000 |
| Associate Director | £70,000-£95,000 | £65,000-£85,000 | £70,000-£95,000 |
| Average | £78,000 | £70,000 | £85,000 |
| Director/Partner | £80,000-£120,000 | £75,000-£110,000 | £85,000-£120,000 |
| Average | £100,000 | £82,000 | £104,000 |
| Managing Director | £130,000-£250,000 | £120,000-£150,000 | £130,000-£200,000 |
| Average | £150,000-£175,000 | £130,000 | £150,000-£175,000 |



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CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

2021 and 2022 saw major change in the comms industry with flexible working policies, office space changing and talent shifting their focus away from comms. Arguably, the most aggressive change was in salaries and salary expectations. This was the result of COVID and the lack of pay rises/promotions that occurred during 2020. Furthermore, 2020 gave people a period of reflection and ultimately, we have seen a lot of talent move out of comms or indeed out of the London market which has led us to the great battle for talent (at all levels) that we are facing now. This year we are starting to see the dust settle and the market recalibrate, however, this will take time and we anticipate the war for top tier candidates to rage on into the start of 2023. Across the board, agencies seem to be doing well and new business forecasts are looking healthy so the demand for good people is still high. Undeniably, we are still living in very uncertain economic times, and another dip is anticipated in the market, but 2022 has been a year with a wave of hiring needs pushing salaries up and raising expectations.

| | Generalist | Financial Comms |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Account Executive | £25,000-£33,000 | £26,000-£36,000 |
| Average | £29,000 | £31,000 |
| Account Manager | £35,000-£45,000 | £38,000-£48,000 |
| Average | £40,000 | £43,000 |
| Account Director | £45,000-£65,000 | £48,000-£70,000 |
| Average | £55,000 | £60,000 |
| Associate Director | £65,000-£85,000 | £70,000-£95,000 |
| Average | £75,000 | £80,000 |
| Director/Partner | £85,000-£120,000 | £95,000-£140,000 |
| Average | £100,000 | £115,000 |
| Managing Director | £125,000-£250,000 | £150,000-£280,000 |
| Average | £150,000-£175,000 | £175,000-£200,000 |



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CONSUMER PR & COMMUNICATIONS

Coming out of 2020/2021 has been an interesting challenge for the consumer PR market, with it being one of the most heavily affected industries during and after the pandemic. Consumer revenue did bounce back in 2021 and since then, consumer PR candidates have enjoyed a range of roles flooding in across all sectors as the market continues to re-build. For businesses, this has been tricky to navigate as there is a real shortage of talent in the market versus the demand, and with consumer industries paying lower than other sectors of communications, consumer agencies are struggling to remain competitive. The busiest, yet most stagnant area, is the mid-level banding, where there is an incredibly high demand but lack of candidates. Anxiety over rising inflation and cost-of-living has also led to a lack of movement on the senior end, with many Director-level freelancers struggling to find positions and a lack of permanent jobs opening up at this level.

Overall, the market right now is extremely candidate-led, and most junior and mid consumer comms candidates are in a great position, with plenty of roles to choose from out of a range of businesses who are now offering higher salaries and an amazing range of perks and benefits.

| | Salary Range | Salary Average |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Account Executive | £20,000-£28,000 | £24,000 |
| Senior Account Executive | £26,000-£32,000 | £29,000 |
| Account Manager | £30,000-£38,000 | £34,000 |
| Senior Account Manager | £35,000-£45,000 | £40,000 |
| Account Director | £42,000-£55,000 | £48,500 |
| Senior Account Director | £50,000-£65,000 | £60,000 |
| Associate Director | £65,000-£75,000 | £70,000 |
| Director | £75,000-£100,000 | £87,500 |
| Managing Director | £100,000-£140,000 | £120,000 |



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MARKET RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

2022 has seen the industry stabilise. Good agency planning across the board has meant steady hires and growth for most agencies. The demand for talent at the junior and mid-level end of the market continued from Q1-Q3 2022 as predicted, slowing down in Q3 over summer. The 'Great Resignation', wider economic factors, and poor work-life balance have led to salaries and expectations increasing 10% - 20% as the year progressed. Candidates at the junior and mid-level average closer to the top-end of their market value, so lateral moves are more challenging, whilst senior level recruitment picked up in Q3 as predicted.

Demand for Senior roles was met with a steady stream of Senior growth vacancies as predicted, particularly for medium-sized agencies investing in global hires and market expansion. Senior candidates were willing to sacrifice some salary for bonus/benefits, senior buy-in, collaborative teams and creative autonomy, although base salary is becoming important again into Q4.

The end of Q3, recruitment will slow down due to summer and as 2023 business planning begins. Agencies are planning with an abundance of caution post Brexit & Covid. Q4 2022, we expect a steady stream of vacancies with short-medium term planning rather than significant investment hires which will continue into Q1 2023. Q2 2023 onwards there may be uncertainty affecting the candidate market, but hires will continue whilst the pace of investment will slow down.

| | Salary Range | Salary Average |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Research Executive | £27,000 - £37,000 | £32,000 |
| Research Manager | £40,000 - £52,000 | £45,000 - £47,000 |
| Associate Director | £55,000 - £67,000 | £65,000 |
| Director | £70,000 - £100,000 | £85,000 |
| Senior Director | £95,000 - £150,000 | £120,000 |
| Managing Director+ | £150,000 - £300,000 | £160,000 - £180,000 |

Salary insights

Counteroffers and candidate demand has impacted salaries leading to a wide discrepancy in bandings. It will take some time for the market to re-balance. This has less impact on the junior end but has affected RM-AD bandings as experience at this level overlaps significantly. We may find that some candidates price themselves out the market and will stay in their current roles for a while, unable to move.



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DIGITAL & SOCIAL

Companies are continuing to invest in digital marketing and communications at all levels as it continues to be an important tool to combat crisis and to create brand love via earned and owned channels. We are also seeing more agencies investing in digital transformation or advisory services, supporting clients to re-evaluate how to reach the necessary customers, as well as how to act quickly and correctly in the digital-first environment. With this we have also seen greater integration of digital and insights services.

Unsurprisingly, social media is continuing to be in constant demand with social channels becoming the quickest way for brands to communicate and spread awareness, with video (fuelled by the rise of TikTok) becoming one of the most popular forms to create content. Influencer marketing, whilst coming under more scrutiny for false advertising and a lack of authenticity, is also still a growing space.

Those operating in more corporate markets are earning more than those in consumer industries which has been the norm for some time. Candidates who can integrate digital within the wider comms or marketing landscape are in high demand, with prospective employers looking for 'integrated skill-sets' or an understanding of the digital and social space for those who aren't specialists in this area.

| | Corporate | Consumer |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Executive | £25,000-£33,000 | £22,000-£32,000 |
| Average | £29,000 | £27,000 |
| Manager | £35,000-£50,000 | £32,000-£42,000 |
| Average | £45,000 | £37,000 |
| Account Director | £45,000-£70,000 | £45,000-£65,000 |
| Average | £57,500 | £55,000 |
| Associate Director | £65,000-£85,000 | £65,000-£80,000 |
| Average | £75,000 | £70,000 |
| Director/Head of | £85,000-£110,000 | £85,000-£95,000 |
| Average | £97,500 | £90,000 |
| Managing Director | £100,000-£130,000 | £95,000-£110,000 |
| Average | £115,000 | £102,500 |



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