



Richmond CVS Pay Survey Report

16 December 2025

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Summary of key findings

- We received 32 responses to the survey. Whilst the sample size is small and results should be interpreted with caution, we believe that the sample is broadly representative of local VCSE organisations that employ staff.
- The median reported CEO salary was in the £50,000–£54,999 range. There was significant variability, which was largely explained by organisation size:
 - Organisations with an annual income under £100k reported a median CEO salary of £35,000–£39,999.
 - Organisations with an annual income between £100k and £500k reported a median CEO salary of £50,000–£54,999.
 - Organisations with an annual income above £500k reported median CEO salary of £60,000–£64,999.
- Two thirds of CEOs in our sample were female – this is broadly in line with the national picture, aside from the bigger national charities where male CEOs tend to be predominant.
- The median CEO length in time in post was between 7 and 15 years, and was higher in larger organisations. This has significant benefits in terms of stability and knowledge retention, and reflects a strong local voluntary sector led by experienced individuals with a long-term commitment to the sector, though there are also risks for succession planning.
- Salary data for other roles needs to be treated with caution, as the exact nature of the roles and level of responsibilities may not be comparable across organisations.
 - The median Fundraising Officer / Manager salary was in the £40,000–£44,999 range.
 - The median Volunteer Coordinator salary was in the £30,000–£34,999 range.
 - The median Service Delivery / Programme Manager salary was in the £40,000–£44,999 range.
 - The median Administrator / Admin Officer salary was in the £25,000–£29,999 range.
 - The variability in other roles was too high to provide useful benchmarks.
- The median reported salary increase for 2025-26 has been around 3–4%, and in most cases this has been applied across the board. Most organisations are not planning a lump sum payment in addition or instead of a percentage increase.
- Almost all organisations in our sample are committed to the London Living Wage. The recent increase in the London Living Wage (announced in October 2024 with required implementation by May 2025) has presented a challenge for many organisations, and a majority of organisations reported that this has presented an even bigger challenge than the changes to National Insurance contributions introduced in April 2025.
- The recent changes to the rates and thresholds of employer National Insurance contributions have had a moderate to significant impact in payroll costs, and a minor to moderate impact on charity operations. This seems to be affecting larger charities more than smaller charities, as many smaller charities are somewhat protected by the increase in the Employment Allowance. The most common response has been to increase fundraising.
- Most organisations offer some form of staff benefits, with flexible working arrangements being the most common, followed by training and developing budgets. A third of

organisations on our sample also offer enhanced pension contributions, health or wellbeing support, and additional annual leave.

- A majority of organisations on our sample did not report challenges with staff recruitment and retention, which is in line with the current trend of a recruiter-led market. However, there was a significant number of organisations that did experience recruitment and retention difficulties, including lack of suitable skills in candidates and competition from national organisations. These challenges are accentuated for organisations that are unable to offer hybrid working.

Methodology

Richmond CVS launched the VCS pay survey in June 2025. The survey included 28 questions and aimed to collect up-to-date information on pay, benefits, and workforce trends across charities and voluntary organisations in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. The questions were designed in house, following conversations with local voluntary and community sector organisations.

The survey mentioned it was only relevant for organisations that employ people, so organisations without employees were not included. It was otherwise open to all voluntary and community sector organisations that operate within the borough, regardless of their legal structure.

Responses were collected through Microsoft Forms. The survey link was shared through our mailing lists, with efforts made to reach out to as many local voluntary and community sector organisations as possible. Responses were collected between 18 June and 1 August 2025 and were anonymised before data analysis took place.

Sample of organisations

Sample size and representativeness

We received 32 responses to the survey. Whilst the sample size may not have been as high as we would have hoped, it does still provide us with interesting insights about pay practices in the local voluntary and community sector.

There is no publicly available data on how many VCSE organisations in the borough employ staff, making it difficult to assess how representative the survey sample is.

According to the London VCSE Dashboard, there are 899 charities and social enterprises within the borough, of which 754 are charities and 145 are social enterprises. This is an underestimate as there are also many voluntary and community organisations that are not registered charities, but play an important part in delivering support and services to residents.

At the same time, not all VCSE organisations registered in Richmond operate locally, and the grand totals also include organisations that operate nationally or overseas. The dashboard shows that only 426 of the 754 registered charities within the borough operate locally or regionally. There is no data on scale of operations for social enterprises.

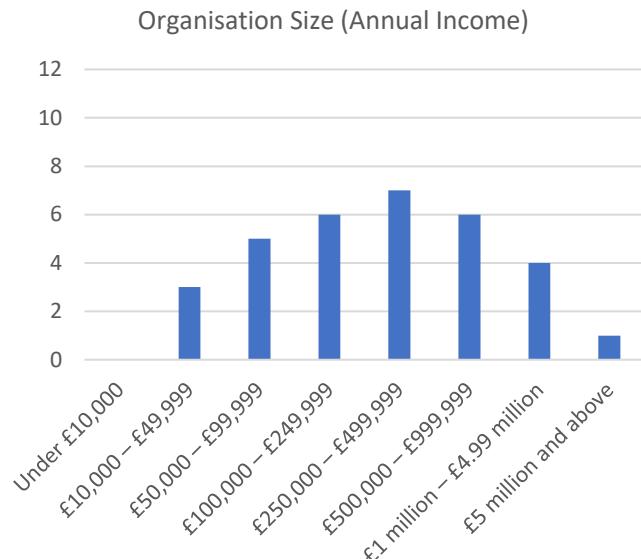
Similarly, many local organisations are very small in size and do not employ any staff. The London VCSE Dashboard includes annual income data for 410 registered charities within the borough that operate locally or regionally. Over a fifth of these charities (81) have an annual income of less than £10k, meaning it is highly unlikely they would be employing any staff. Almost two-thirds of these charities (179) have an annual income of less than £100k. At this level, charities often operate with very limited staff capacity, sometimes relying entirely on volunteers. Where paid roles exist, they are typically few in number, often part-time, and may include self-employed or freelance arrangements rather than permanent contracts. There is no comparable annual income data for social enterprises.

Based on our local knowledge of the borough, we believe the 32 organisations that responded represent a good cross-section of locally focused organisations that employ staff. Please be aware though that this is a small sample and that caution should be taken when interpreting the results.

Annual income

The annual income breakdown of our sample is broadly in line with what would be expected given that the vast majority of local organisations are small, yet the very smallest are also less likely to be employing staff.

Organisation Size (Annual Income)	Number of responses
Under £10,000	0
£10,000 – £49,999	3
£50,000 – £99,999	5
£100,000 – £249,999	6
£250,000 – £499,999	7
£500,000 – £999,999	6
£1 million – £4.99 million	4
£5 million and above	1



Legal structures

We also asked about the organisation legal structure or status. 30 out of 32 responses were from registered charities, with the remaining 2 being CICs. This means that CICs are slightly underrepresented in our survey (6% of all responses) compared to borough-level data (16% of all VCSE organisations). We had no responses from charitable trusts or community benefit societies.

Organisation legal structure or status	Number of responses
Registered Charity (unincorporated)	7
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	9
Company Limited by Guarantee (with charitable status)	14
Community Interest Company (CIC)	2
Charitable Trust	0
Community Benefit Society	0
Other	0

Number of employees

The reported full time equivalent (FTE) number of employees was as follows:

Number of Employees (FTE)	Number of responses
Less than 1 FTE	5
1–5	12
6–10	6
11–20	5
21–50	3
Over 50	1

As expected, there were significant differences in median values across organisation sizes, with organisations with higher annual incomes reporting higher numbers of employees.

Organisation size (annual income)	Median number of employees (FTE)
Less than £100k	Less than 1 FTE & 1–5 (tied)
Between £100k and £500k	1–5
Above £500k	11–20
All organisations	1–5

Number of volunteers

The reported number of volunteers was as follows:

Number of Volunteers (including trustees)	Number of responses
1–10	6
11–25	6
26–50	9
51–100	5
Over 100	6

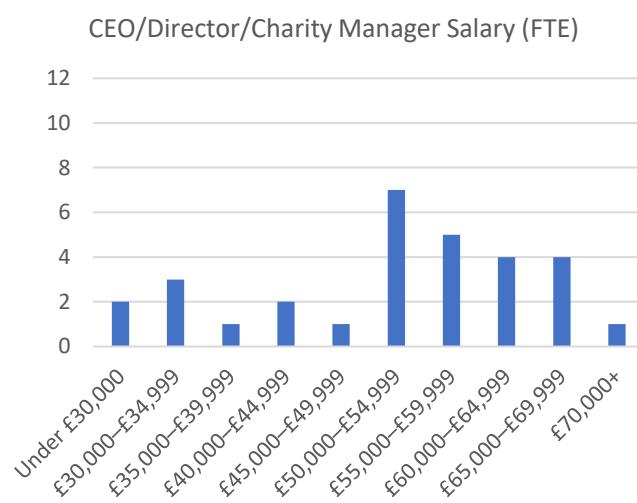
There were no significant differences in number of volunteers across charity size.

The CEO role

Salary

There was significant variability in CEO salaries. The median FTE CEO salary was in the £50,000–£54,999 range, but responses varied all the way from under £30,000 to above £70,000. Full details are shown below.

CEO/Director/Charity Manager Salary (FTE)	Number of responses
Under £30,000	2
£30,000–£34,999	3
£35,000–£39,999	1
£40,000–£44,999	2
£45,000–£49,999	1
£50,000–£54,999	7
£55,000–£59,999	5
£60,000–£64,999	4
£65,000–£69,999	4
£70,000+	1
N/A – No CEO	2



As expected, much of the variability is explained by charity size, with larger charities providing higher CEO salaries. The below table shows median CEO salary per organisation size.

Organisation size (annual income)	Median CEO/Director/Charity Manager Salary (FTE)
Less than £100k	£35,000–£39,999
Between £100k and £500k	£50,000–£54,999
Above £500k	£60,000–£64,999
All organisations	£50,000–£54,999

This is broadly in line with the national picture, with a tendency towards slightly lower salary levels, though comparisons can be tricky. CEO salary is heavily dependent on organisational size, and a lot of the publicly available data is not broken down by organisational annual income.

- The [CharityJob Salary Report 2025](#) shows median CEO salary as £72,000, but there is no publicly available breakdown according to organisation size.
- The [2025 ACEVO Pay and Equalities Survey](#) showed median CEO salary as £59,850. There was also a significant gender gap, with the median salary being £64,067 for male CEOs and £57,250 for female CEOs. There is no publicly available breakdown by organisational income.
- The [Harris Hill 2025 Salary Survey](#) does not report the median CEO salary, but does mention that charities often struggle to recruit CEOs unless the salary is above £60,000, and that salaries of £120,000 or more remain very rare in the sector. It also says that the pay differential between the average CEO and the average employee is around 4:1 at the charity sector, which is much lower than the average of 150:1 across FTSE100 companies.

- The [Association of Charitable Organisations \(ACO\) 2024 Salary Benchmarking and Working Patterns Report](#) includes some data broken down by annual income. In their survey of their member organisations, the median CEO salary was £60,690 for those with an annual income below 1 million, and £83,236 for those with an annual income between 1 and 2 million. It should be noted though that ACO member organisations tend to be charitable trusts and benevolent associations, which may have different income profiles and fundraising models compared to local frontline organisations.

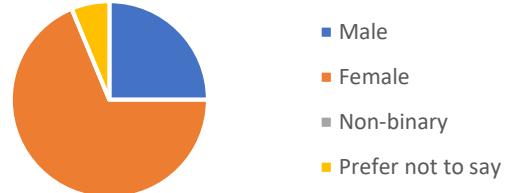
Whilst the CEO salaries in our sample look slightly lower than those in these national surveys, it is unclear whether this reflects a genuine disparity or simply results from our sample containing a higher proportion of smaller organisations.

Gender

In terms of gender, 69% of CEOs in our sample were female, with 25% male.

Gender of CEO/Director/Charity Manager	Number of responses
Male	8
Female	22
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	2

Gender of CEO/Director/Charity Manager



This is broadly in line with the national picture, with a slight tendency towards a higher figure for female – for example, the ACEVO Pay and Equalities Survey 2022 showed that the number of female CEOs in charities of all sizes had increased to 63% (as reported in [Civil Society](#)).

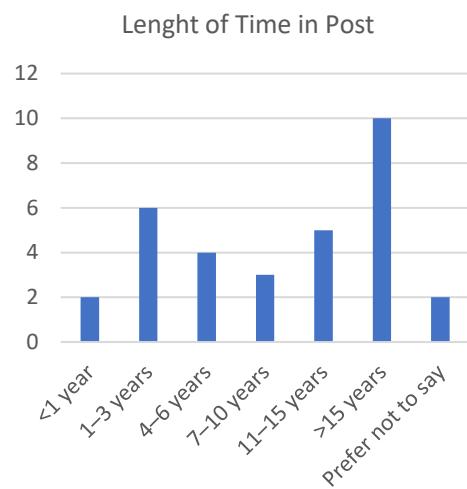
This is also in line with the sector-wide workforce statistics, with a report from [Pro Bono Economics](#) estimating that 68% of employees in the charity sector are women.

It is worth noting that this trend is reversed for the very largest charities – for example, only 1 in 3 of the 100 biggest UK charities have a female CEO (as reported in [Civil Society](#)), but we did not have any of the bigger national charities on our survey so that would not show on our results. The [ACEVO Pay and Equalities Survey](#) also shows that smaller charities are more likely to have female CEOs, and that may be reflected in our sample.

Length of time in post

Below are the results for CEO length of time in post.

Length of Time in Post	Number of responses
Less than 1 year	2
1–3 years	6
4–6 years	4
7–10 years	3
11–15 years	5
Over 15 years	10
Prefer not to say	2



Interestingly, there was a trend for larger organisations to have CEOs who had been around for longer, as shown below.

Organisation size (annual income)	Median Length of Time in Post
Less than £100k	4–6 years
Between £100k and £500k	7–10 years
Above £500k	Over 15 years
All organisations	7–10 years & 11–15 years (tied)

Longer length of times in post provide significant benefits in terms of retaining knowledge and steady leadership. At the same time, there are risks around succession planning that need to be carefully managed.

Other roles

Types of roles

We also included a section on other roles. This part was experimental and needs to be treated with caution – the exact nature of each role will vary across different charities, and so will their level of responsibilities and seniority, so the comparisons may not always be like for like.

We started by asking organisations which roles they currently had in post, whether paid or voluntary. A majority of organisations reported having a Finance Officer or Manager or Bookkeeper, as well as an Administration or Admin Officer. A significant number of organisations also reported having other roles such as Operations Manager, or Volunteer Coordinator or Manager, amongst others. Full results are shown below.

Which of the following roles does your organisation currently have in post (whether paid or voluntary)? (Select all that apply)	Number of responses
Finance Officer / Manager / Bookkeeper	20
Fundraising Officer / Manager	12
Marketing & Communications Officer / Manager	14
Operations Manager	15
Volunteer Coordinator/Manager	14
Service Delivery / Programme Manager	13
Administrator/ Admin Officer	19
Other	10

Other responses included assistant managers, HR officers, partnerships officers, policy officers, project officers, company secretaries, support workers, team leaders and venue managers.

Benchmark data

Where possible, we tried to compare our results to national data.

The [CharityJob Salary Report 2025](#) includes useful data for a number of job categories. The [ACO 2024 Salary Benchmarking and Working Patterns Report](#) includes useful data on a number of roles and seniority levels. The [Harris Hill 2025 Salary Survey](#) provides useful data for a number of roles. Their data is broken down by smaller versus larger organisations. Their definition of smaller organisations refers to organisations with less than fifty employees, as opposed to the bigger national charities – it is likely that almost all of the organisations in our sample would meet this definition, so we will be using their smaller organisations data when making comparisons.

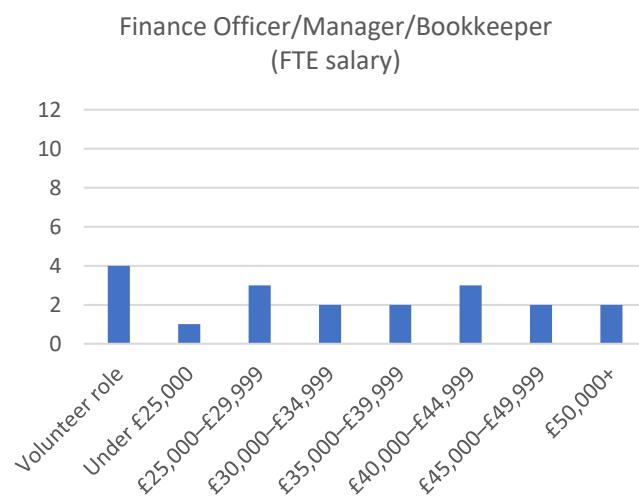
It is worth noting that these figures will be based on national samples, and that London salaries tend to be higher than the national average. For example, CharityJob reports that London salaries are 24% higher than those outside London. Whilst the high proportion of charities operating in London may mean some of this is already reflected in national averages, it would still be expected that local salaries may be slightly higher than the national averages.

Salary results

Finance Officer / Manager / Bookkeeper

Responses for the Finance Officer / Manager / Bookkeeper role showed very high levels of variability, going all the way from under £25,000 to over £50,000. It is likely that many of these roles will have had different responsibilities across different charities, making comparisons difficult.

Finance Officer / Manager / Bookkeeper (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	4
Under £25,000	1
£25,000–£29,999	3
£30,000–£34,999	2
£35,000–£39,999	2
£40,000–£44,999	3
£45,000–£49,999	2
£50,000+	2
Median value: £35,000–£39,999	



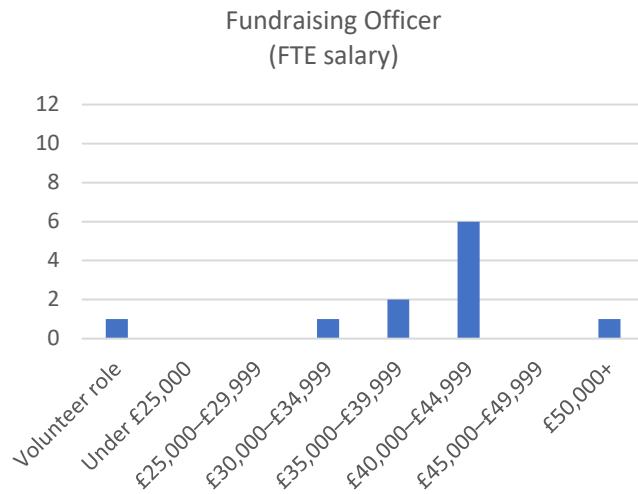
Below is some national benchmark data:

- CharityJob reported a median salary of £49,999 for finance roles.
- ACO reported a median salary of £30,880 for finance and administration officer or management accountant, and £50,205 for chief accountant or finance manager.
- Harris Hill reported median salaries of £28,500 for assistant level, £32,500 for officer level, £46,000 for manager level, and £50,000 for controller level.

Fundraising Officer / Manager

There was a clearer pattern for the Fundraising Officer / Manager role, with 60% of respondents reporting a role in the £40,000–£44,999 range. There was still some variability at both ends, which may reflect different levels of responsibility within different roles, as well as different charity sizes.

Fundraising Officer / Manager (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	1
Under £25,000	0
£25,000–£29,999	0
£30,000–£34,999	1
£35,000–£39,999	2
£40,000–£44,999	6
£45,000–£49,999	0
£50,000+	1
Median value: £40,000–£44,999	



Below is some national benchmark data:

- CharityJob reported a median salary of £38,158 for fundraising roles.
- ACO reported a median salary of £31,433 for fundraising officer, and £39,579 for fundraising manager.
- Harris Hill reported a median salary of £31,500 for officer level and £43,000 for managers.

Our numbers seem slightly higher than these averages. Our description included both the words officer and manager, and this could just be a reflection that a lot of the roles in our sample were manager roles. London salaries being higher than the national average could also be a factor.

Marketing & Communications Officer / Manager

Responses for the Marketing & Communications Officer / Manager role showed very high levels of variability, going all the way from £25,000–£29,999 to £45,000–£49,999. This is likely to reflect varying levels of responsibilities, making comparisons difficult.

Marketing & Communications Officer / Manager (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	2
Under £25,000	0
£25,000–£29,999	2
£30,000–£34,999	3
£35,000–£39,999	2
£40,000–£44,999	2
£45,000–£49,999	1
£50,000+	0
Median values: £30,000–£34,999 & £35,000–£39,999 (tied)	



Below is some national benchmark data:

- CharityJob reported a median salary of £37,581 for marketing, PR and digital roles.
- ACO reported a median salary of £32,246 for Communications / Marketing Officer, and £41,857 for Communications / Marketing Manager.
- Harris Hill reported a median salary of £33,000 at the officer level and £41,500 at the manager level.

Our median values seem more or less in line with what would be expected, and the variability may reflect different levels of seniority.

Operations Manager

There were also high levels of variability for the Operations Manager role, with responses going all the way from under £25,000 to over £50,000, making comparisons difficult. Whilst the question specifically referred to a manager role, it is possible that some responses may have referred to any role related to operations. The variability may also be a reflection of the different sizes of organisations.

Operations Manager (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	0
Under £25,000	2
£25,000–£29,999	3
£30,000–£34,999	4
£35,000–£39,999	1
£40,000–£44,999	2
£45,000–£49,999	3
£50,000+	3
Median values: £30,000–£34,999 & £35,000–£39,999 (tied)	



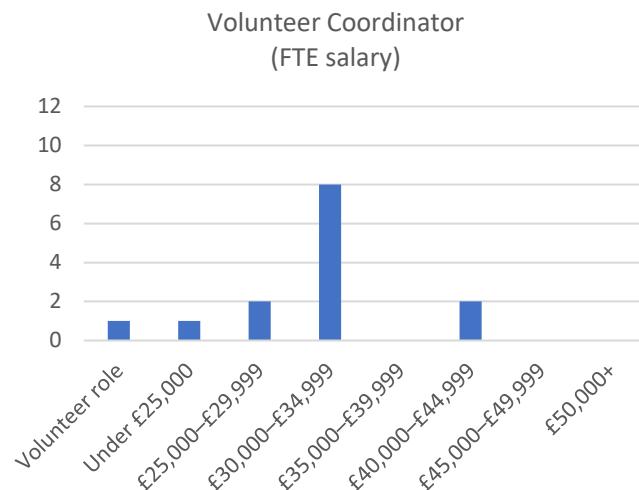
Below is some national benchmark data:

- CharityJob reported a median salary of £30,144 for operations roles, though that may not be specific to the manager level.
- There is no comparable data from ACO.
- Harris Hill reported a median salary of £30,000 at the officer level and £43,000 at the manager level.

Volunteer Coordinator

There was a clearer consensus for the volunteer coordinator role, with 62% of responses being in the £30,000–£34,999 range. There was still some variability on both ends, which may reflect different levels of responsibility within different roles, as well as different charity sizes.

Volunteer Coordinator (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	1
Under £25,000	1
£25,000–£29,999	2
£30,000–£34,999	8
£35,000–£39,999	0
£40,000–£44,999	2
£45,000–£49,999	0
£50,000+	0
Median value: £30,000–£34,999	

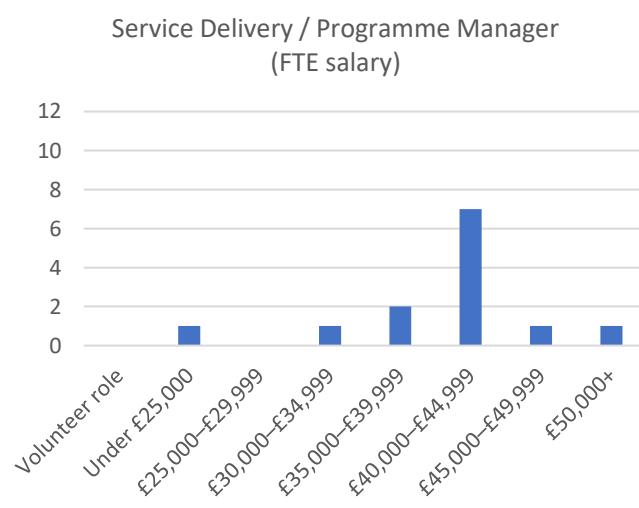


Unfortunately, there is no publicly available comparable data from CharityJob, ACO or Harris Hill on the volunteer coordinator role. ACO reported a median salary of £39,902 for volunteer managers, but did not report any data at the officer/coordinator level.

Service Delivery / Programme Manager

There was also a clearer trend for the Service Delivery or Programme Manager role, with 54% of responses in the £40,000–£44,999 range. There was still some variability on both ends, with may reflect different levels of responsibility within different roles, as well as different charity sizes.

Service Delivery / Programme Manager (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	0
Under £25,000	1
£25,000–£29,999	0
£30,000–£34,999	1
£35,000–£39,999	2
£40,000–£44,999	7
£45,000–£49,999	1
£50,000+	1
Median value: £40,000–£44,999	



Below is some national benchmark data:

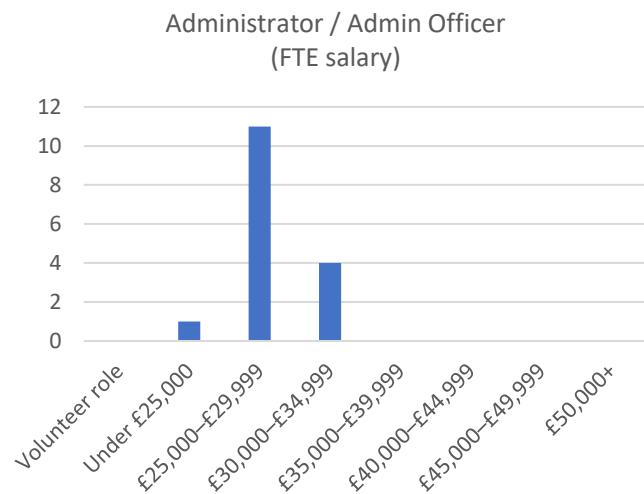
- Harris Hill provided a range of £37,000 - £45,000 for the median salary of a projects and programmes manager, which is very much in line with our results.

- There is no comparable data from CharityJob or ACO for this role.

Administrator / Admin Officer

There was a clear consensus on the Administrator / Admin Officer role, with 69% of responses in the £25,000–£29,999 range. There was some variability at both ends, with a few responses in the £30,000–£34,999 range and one response in the under £25,000 range, which may reflect different levels of responsibility or different charity sizes.

Administrator / Admin Officer (FTE salary)	Number of responses
Volunteer role	0
Under £25,000	1
£25,000–£29,999	11
£30,000–£34,999	4
£35,000–£39,999	0
£40,000–£44,999	0
£45,000–£49,999	0
£50,000+	0
Median value: £25,000–£29,999	



Below is some national benchmark data:

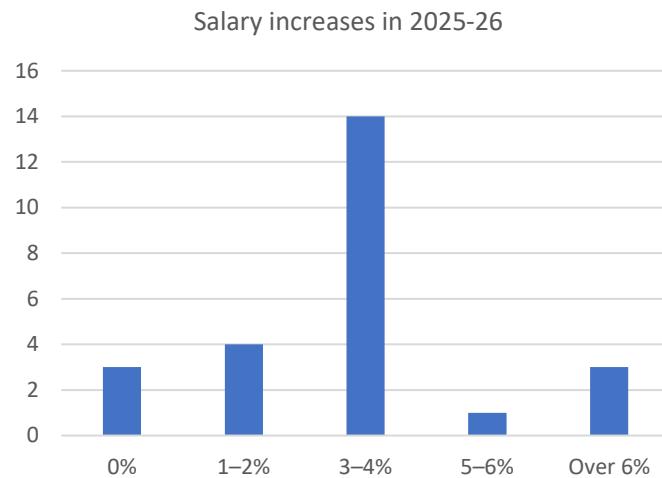
- CharityJob reported the median administrator salary as £29,999.
- Harris Hill provided a range of £25,000 - £30,000 for the administration officer category.
- ACO reported £30,880 as the median salary of a finance and administration officer, though the inclusion of finance as an additional responsibility means this role may not be directly comparable.

Our results seem very much in line with these averages.

Salary increases

We asked what salary increases organisations had implemented or were planning for 2025-26. The median value was 3–4%, chosen by 44% of respondents (or 56% of respondents who had already decided the percentage increase). There was also some variability, with responses ranging all the way from 0% to over 6%. There were 7 respondents who reported not yet having decided what the percentage increase would be.

What salary increases (%) have you implemented or are you planning for 2025/26?	Number of responses
0%	3
1–2%	4
3–4%	14
5–6%	1
Over 6%	3
Not yet decided	7
Median value: 3–4%	



The vast majority of respondents (79%) reported that the percentage salary increase is applied across the board. A few respondents reported targeting it by salary band, job role, or a combination of these.

Is the % salary increase applied across the board or targeted?	Number of responses
Across the board	23
Targeted by salary band	2
Targeted by job role	1
Combination of above	3
Not applicable	3

Is the % salary increase applied across the board or targeted?



We also asked whether organisations had implemented or were planning a lump sum payment in addition to or instead of a percentage increase in 2025-26. There was near unanimity in the responses, with 30 saying no and 2 that it had not yet been decided.

Have you implemented or are you planning a lump sum payment in addition to or instead of a % increase in 2025/26?	Number of responses
Yes – in addition to % increase	0
Yes – instead of % increase	0
No	30
Not yet decided	2

Broader pay context

London Living Wage

The vast majority of respondents (97%) reported their organisation pays the London Living Wage (which at the time was £13.85/hour).

Does your charity pay the London Living Wage?

Does your charity pay the London Living Wage (£13.85/hour)?	Number of responses
Yes	31
No	1



This is significantly higher than London-wide data – for example, the [CharityJob Salary Report 2025](#) reports that 24% of full time or annualised entry-level and junior roles in London pay below the London Living Wage. At the same time, paying the London Living Wage is an expectation of many local and regional funders, local authority commissioners and the National Lottery Community Fund, and it is likely that most respondents will be benefiting from one or more of those income sources, so that may also have been a factor in our results.

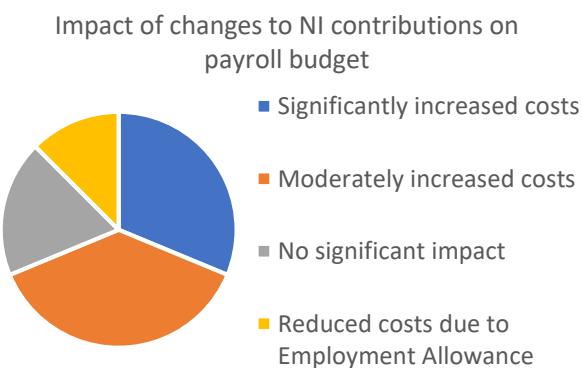
The London Living Wage increased from £13.15 to £13.85 in October 2024 (a 5.3% increase), with required implementation from May 2025, and from £13.85 to £14.80 (a 6.9% increase) in October 2025, with required implementation from May 2026, reflecting the increase in the cost of living. Free text responses showed this had a significant impact on the budgets of many charities.

Changes to National Insurance contributions

We also asked about the recent changes to National Insurance contributions. At the start of the 2025-26 financial year, the rate of employer National Insurance contributions went up from 13.8% to 15%, whilst the threshold went down from £9,100 a year to £5,000 a year. At the same time, the maximum Employment Allowance was increased from £5,000 to £10,500.

There was a significant variability in the responses. The median value was that it moderately increased payroll costs, and was selected by 38% of respondents – however, 31% also reported significantly increased payroll costs, and another 31% that reported either no significant impact or a reduction in payroll costs due to the increase in the Employment Allowance.

How has the recent increase in National Insurance contributions (from 13.8% to 15%) affected your payroll budget?	Number of responses
Significantly increased costs	10
Moderately increased costs	12
No significant impact	6
Reduced costs due to Employment Allowance	4



As expected, much of the variability is explained by organisation size. As shown in the table below, larger organisations reported higher increased payroll costs than smaller organisations. That is likely because the increase in the Employment Allowance may be offsetting the impact of the rate and threshold changes in the case of smaller organisations.

Organisation size (annual income)	Median Level of Impact
Less than £100k	No significant impact & Moderately increased costs (tied)
Between £100k and £500k	Moderately increased costs
Above £500k	Significantly increased costs
All organisations	Moderately increased costs

When we asked the measures that their charities had taken to mitigate the impact of increased National Insurance contributions, 50% of respondents reported having increased fundraising efforts. Only 13% of respondents reported having reduced staff hours, and only 3% of respondents reported having frozen salaries.

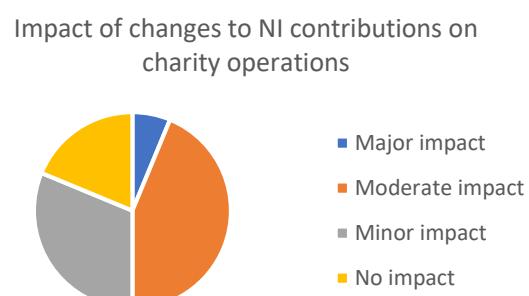
What measures has your charity taken to mitigate the impact of increased NI contributions? <i>(Select all that apply)</i>	Number of responses
Reduced staff hours	4
Frozen salaries	1
Increased fundraising efforts	16
Other	14

Other responses included reviews of roles and budgets, increased trading, considering the use of reserves in the short term to support the difference, looking for efficiencies, negotiations with contract providers, increasing prices, and managing all expenditure tightly.

There were also seven free text responses that mentioned no mitigating actions had been needed as they had not been significantly impacted by increased National Insurance contributions.

We also asked about the anticipated impact of these changes on charity operations in the next financial year. Responses were similar, with 44% expecting a moderate impact and 31% expecting a minor impact – in turn, only 6% expected a major impact and 19% did not expect any impact.

How do you anticipate these changes will impact your charity's operations in the next financial year?	Number of responses
Major impact	2
Moderate impact	14
Minor impact	10
No impact	6



As expected, organisation size was a factor in this, with bigger organisations expecting a larger impact, as shown on the table below.

Organisation size (annual income)	Median Level of Impact
Less than £100k	Minor impact
Between £100k and £500k	Minor impact
Above £500k	Moderate impact
All organisations	Minor impact & Moderate impact (tied)

Additional comments and insights

Three additional responses highlighted how the increases in the London Living Wage have had a larger impact for them than the changes in National Insurance contributions. This is particularly the case for smaller charities, which are more likely to have staff at the lower end of the London Living Wage. Two more responses mentioned that their average 6% pay increases were the direct result of trying to keep up with the London Living Wage. Another response explained that the increase in the London Living Wage has pushed their entry level salaries far faster than inflation and has caused real difficulties with recruitment and retention. One organisation said they were now unable to employ interns, which narrows access to the sector for local graduates.

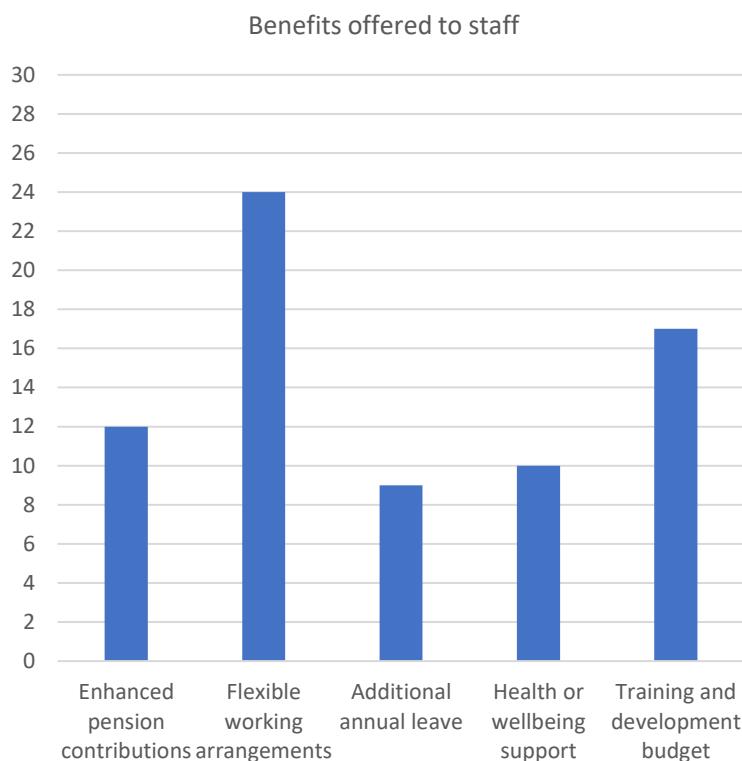
Another key concern was around salary increases not being met by contract income. One organisation mentioned that the gap between what their contract covers and what it actually costs keeps growing, and that they are now supplementing NHS and local authority contracts with fundraising. Another organisation mentioned that whilst they wished to continue raising salaries in line with inflation and London Living Wage increases, this would need to be subject to affordability and their ability to grow income.

This year in particular was highlighted as having been quite tough. One organisation said they had always given pay increases but that this year they had had no choice but to freeze salaries as they could not risk a bigger deficit. Another organisation mentioned that the combination of the London Living Wage increase and the National Insurance contributions changes effectively meant that one full time equivalent post was cut from their headcount. Other organisations reported worries about the implications of these changes on future recruitment prospects.

Staff benefits

We asked about benefits offered to staff. The most common benefit was flexible working arrangements, reported by 75% of respondents. More than half of respondents (53%) reported offering a training and development budget, whereas around a third of respondents reported offering enhanced pension contributions, health or wellbeing support, and additional annual leave.

Which of the following benefits do you offer to staff? (Select all that apply)	Number of responses
Enhanced pension contributions	12
Flexible working arrangements	24
Additional annual leave	9
Health or wellbeing support	10
Training and development budget	17
Other	7



Other responses included access to employee assistance programmes, shop discounts, disability related benefits, personal development opportunities, and hybrid working opportunities.

As noted by the [Harris Hill 2025 Salary Survey](#) report, staff benefits play an important role in staff recruitment and retention in the charity sector – whilst charities would inevitably struggle to offer equivalent pay rewards to those of the private sector, other benefits can increase the appeal of roles. Charity employees are paid on average significantly less than private sector employees, yet they tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction, a better work/life balance, and feeling more passionate about their work compared to other sectors.

Data from the [NCVO Civil Society Almanac 2024](#) also showed that the shift towards hybrid or remote working was higher in the voluntary sector compared to other sectors. For example, 28% of voluntary sector employees work from home, compared to 19% of public sector employees or 22% of private sector employees.

The [ACO 2024 Salary Benchmarking and Working Patterns Report](#) provides some comparator data on staff benefits. For organisations with a revenue of less than £1 million, which should reflect most of our sample, the report showed 75% as providing an enhanced pension scheme, 61% as providing professional development training, and 47% as providing an employee assistance programme. The report also showed 88% of organisations as providing a flexible working or working from home policy, and 91% of organisations as requiring less than five days a week in the office. These numbers seem higher than those in our sample. That being said, as mentioned previously ACO member

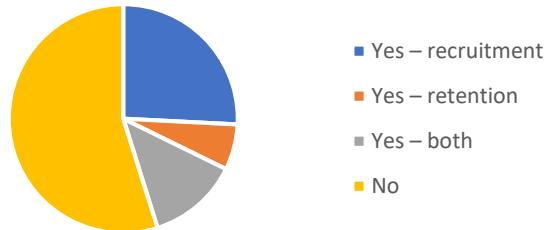
organisations tend to be trusts and benevolent associations, and their operational model may be different to those of local frontline organisations, so these comparisons should be treated with caution. Similarly, it is possible that our sample may contain a higher proportion of smaller organisations.

Recruitment and retention

We asked respondents whether or not they had experienced challenges recruiting or retaining staff over the past year. A slight majority of respondents (55%) indicated they had not experienced any recruitment or retention challenges, but a significant minority of respondents reported having had challenges with recruitment (26%), retention (6%) or both (13%).

Have you experienced challenges recruiting or retaining staff in the past 12 months?	Number of responses
Yes – recruitment	8
Yes – retention	2
Yes – both	4
No	17
Not applicable	1

Have you experienced challenges recruiting or retaining staff in the past 12 months?



The current national trend is for a recruiter-led market. CharityJob figures show that paid job postings went down from 61,900 in 2022 to 36,900 in 2024 (a fall of 40%) – in turn, the average clicks on the apply option went up from 20 per paid role in 2022 to 61 per paid role in 2024 (an increase of 205%). This is not specific to the charity sector and is in line with the trends of other more generalist job boards.

At the same time, it is important to note that there are some areas where employee recruitment is particularly difficult. Richmond suffers from a lack of affordable housing both in the borough and in surrounding areas, and the combination of high parking charges and some parts of the borough being poorly served by public transport mean that some people are priced out from being able to afford to work in Richmond, particularly in low income roles. Recruitment can sometimes be challenging in areas such as health and social care, including paid carer roles or support workers.

Additional responses provided further insights on the current challenges. One organisation highlighted that the pool for good quality staff is quite small and that it can be very hard to find suitably qualified and experienced staff. There was also a comment around recruitment challenges being accentuated for organisations that cannot offer home working options due to the nature of their work. Another response highlighted the difficulties in retaining staff as a result of national organisations being able to offer higher salaries. There was also a comment around trying to offer a good work-life balance to compensate for salaries being lower than in other organisations.

Conclusion and useful resources

We hope this survey may offer valuable insights to the local voluntary and community sector. We would really value your feedback – if this data is useful we may look into repeating this survey, and we would very much appreciate any comments that may help us shape future surveys.

We are including below some useful links and resources for voluntary and community sector organisations that employ people:

- [ACAS](#): resources on good practice and legal requirements when managing staff, including free tools, templates, checklists and helpline for both employers and employees.
- [Cranfield Trust](#): access to free HR guidance, and for eligible charities, free management consultancy support.
- [NCVO](#): guidance on employing and managing staff.
- [Richmond Work Match](#): local recruitment support.
- [Russell-Cooke](#): contact Richmond CVS for access to their free helpline.

We can also advertise job vacancies from the local sector at [Richmond CVS](#), as well as offer you tailored advice and support. Please get in contact at action@richmond cvs.org.uk to discuss how we may be able to support you.

Prepared by Richmond CVS

16 December 2025

For any questions or comments please email action@richmond cvs.org.uk