

Business Services

Salary Guide 2026

Pure

Your essential guide to competitive salaries & hiring trends

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Welcome to Pure



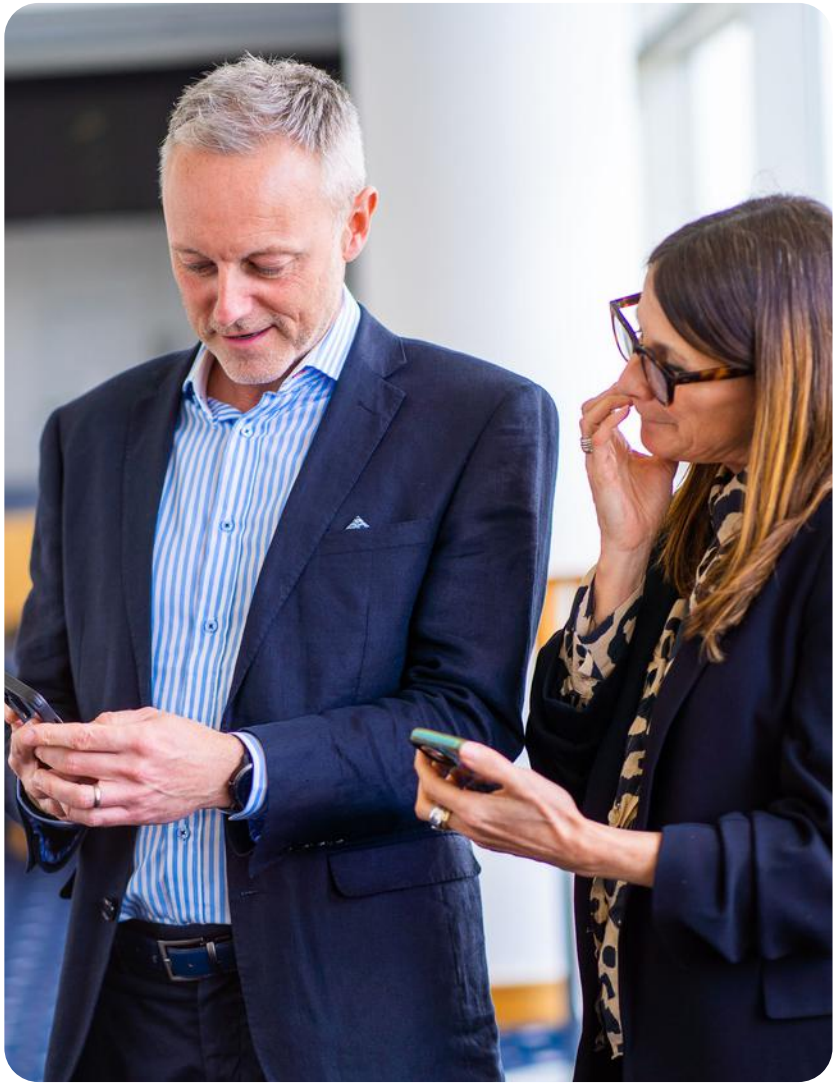
Pure is the East of England's professional recruitment consultancy, specialising in Accountancy, HR, Technology, Marketing, Business Services, Supply Chain and Engineering roles. We recruit at every level, from temporary and contract roles through to permanent positions, senior leadership and board appointments delivered via Pure Executive.

Our consultants combine deep sector expertise with strong regional networks, helping organisations access high-quality, hard-to-reach talent. We stay closely connected to the people and businesses we support, offering guidance from recruitment through onboarding and long-term career development.

We're also committed to strengthening our communities. Through programmes like Best Employers Eastern Region and the Women's Leadership Programme, plus ongoing fundraising and volunteering, we help organisations grow and people progress.

Your 2026 Salary Guide

Our new Salary Guide brings together the latest salaries, hiring trends and market movement across the East of England — now in specialism-specific brochures for clearer benchmarking and deeper insight.



Built on real-time regional data

Based on a full year of live market data from Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, the guide helps you:

- Stay competitive on pay and benefits
- Understand pressures shaping the regional labour market
- Make informed, confident decisions
- Benchmark your salary or assess your value as a job seeker

What each brochure includes

Each guide provides:

- Salary ranges
- Role profiles
- Market insight
- Fresh research into 2026 hiring trends

Click here to find out more about our salary benchmarking services.

Eastern Region

Recruitment Insights 2026

A concise snapshot for employers

88%
of employers conduct annual salary reviews

2.5%
Average salary increase in 2025

75%
of businesses surveyed operate a hybrid working pattern

25%
of roles are now fully office-based

Hiring Challenges

- Shortage of high-quality or available candidates
- Salary expectations exceeding employer budgets
- AI polished CV's masking weaker interpersonal skills
- On-site requirements shrinking candidate pools

Skills in Demand

- AI literacy and practical AI use
- Data analytics and digital fluency
- Project management and deliverability
- Stakeholder and change management

Working Patterns

42%	Hybrid with set office days
33%	Hybrid with flexible office days
25%	Fully office-based roles

Benefits - What's being offered

75%	Mental health support
62%	Development & training
53%	Private healthcare
53%	Life assurance
53%	Enhanced pension

Key Takeaways for 2026

- Specialist skills shortages are intensifying
- AI and digital capability are now mainstream requirements
- Hybrid working is stable; fully remote roles have largely disappeared
- Wellbeing and development benefits are now baseline expectations

*Insights are based on responses from our 2026 client survey, collated from over 100 employers across the Eastern region.

Business Services

Recruitment Insights 2026

A concise snapshot for employers

A modest rise in unemployment across the East of England has eased hiring pressure for generalist administration and office support roles. Employers now have access to broader candidate pools, creating more stable salary expectations.

However, specialist support roles such as project administrators, executive assistants in scientific or engineering environments, and data-literate coordinators remain harder to source. These positions continue to command higher salaries due to sector demands and the need for technical proficiency.

The region's ongoing investment in science parks, logistics hubs and engineering developments is also increasing the requirement for high quality administrative staff who can operate in complex operational settings.

Roles Most in Demand

- Demand rising for digitally capable Administrators & Executive Support Professionals
- Commercial & Sales Support Coordinators

Pain Points

- Businesses face tight labour markets in several sectors, slowing progress and creating operational pressure on support functions.
- Employers struggle with the shift toward digital literacy and hybrid working capability, as traditional admin skillsets no longer meet evolving needs.
- Regional firms report uncertainty and stalled investment, creating stop start hiring cycles and cautious vacancy creation in support roles.

Attraction Levers

- Candidates now prioritise hybrid working, flexibility, and work life balance.
- Strong interest in employers offering clear development pathways, digital upskilling, and varied support responsibilities.
- Business support salaries remain steady regionally, but digitally skilled candidates command a quality premium even in a subdued market.

Actions for 2026

- Upskill support teams in AI tools, data handling, and digital collaboration platforms to reduce capability gaps.
- Offer flexible/hybrid patterns, wellbeing support, and personalised reward packages to attract and retain high-quality candidates.
- Align hiring with regional growth drivers to secure talent early in expanding East Anglia markets.

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Business Services

Cambridgeshire

	2026		
ADMINISTRATION	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Administrator	£26,000	£30,000	£28,000
Senior Administrator	£28,000	£32,000	£30,000
Receptionist	£26,000	£30,000	£28,000
Data Entry	£25,000	£28,000	£27,000
Office Manager	£38,000	£55,000	£50,000
SECRETARIAL & EXECUTIVE SUPPORT	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Secretary	£26,000	£31,000	£29,000
Legal Secretary	£28,000	£35,000	£32,000
Personal Assistant	£30,000	£38,000	£37,000
Executive Assistant	£35,000	£60,000	£45,000

Business Services

Cambridgeshire

	2026		
CUSTOMER SERVICE	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Customer Service Administrator	£26,000	£31,000	£28,000
Customer Service Manager	£30,000	£40,000	£37,000
Compliants Handler	£25,000	£31,000	£28,000
Quality Assurance	£26,000	£35,000	£32,000
SALES SUPPORT	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Sales Administrator	£26,000	£30,000	£28,000
Sales Support Coordinator	£27,000	£32,000	£28,000
Sales Office Manager	£30,000	£40,000	£35,000
PROJECTS	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Project Administrator	£29,000	£35,000	£30,000
Project Coordinator	£30,000	£40,000	£35,000
Project Manager	£35,000	£50,000	£42,000

Business Services

Essex

	2026		
ADMINISTRATION	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Administrator	£25,000	£30,000	£27,000
Senior Administrator	£28,000	£32,000	£30,000
Technical Administrator	£28,000	£35,000	£30,000
Receptionist	£25,000	£28,000	£26,000
Data Entry	£25,000	£26,000	£25,000
Office Manager	£35,000	£50,000	£38,000
SECRETARIAL & EXECUTIVE SUPPORT	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Secretary	£28,000	£30,000	£29,000
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Sales Office Manager	£30,000	£40,000	£35,000
PROJECTS	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Project Administrator	£26,000	£35,000	£30,000
Project Coordinator	£30,000	£40,000	£34,000
Project Manager	£35,000	£48,000	£40,000

Business Services

Norfolk

	2026		
ADMINISTRATION	**MINIMUM**	**MAXIMUM**	**TYPICAL**
Administrator	£25,000	£27,000	£26,000
Senior Administrator	£27,000	£30,000	£28,000
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Business Services

Suffolk

	2026		
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Administrator	£25,000	£28,000	£26,000
Senior Administrator	£25,000	£28,000	£26,000
Technical Administrator	£28,000	£33,000	£30,000
Receptionist	£25,000	£28,000	£26,000
Data Entry	£25,000	£28,000	£26,000
Office Manager	£28,000	£40,000	£35,000
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Business Services

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Employee Benefits in 2026: From Expected to Differentiation

The Core Benefits Baseline

- Pension & life assurance
- Mental health support / EAP
- Development & training
- Enhanced sick pay
- Hybrid working policy
- Standard annual leave

The Middle Tier

- Private healthcare
- Enhanced holiday
- Discount platforms
- Learning budgets
- Flexible working support
- Bonus schemes
- Enhanced parental leave
- Flexible benefits allowance

The Differentiators

- Family support
- Profit share / exit incentives
- Gym & wellbeing packages
- Equity and LTIPs
- ESG-linked incentives
- Retention bonuses
- Financial wellbeing advice
- Sabbaticals
- 4-day week / reduced hours
- Personalised benefits

What employers are offering vs what candidates value

Benefits are no longer a supporting element of reward—they are now a core lever in attracting and retaining talent.

Our 2026 data highlights a clear shift: while many organisations continue to offer similar baseline benefits, true differentiation is becoming harder—and more important—than ever.

The majority of employers are offering a consistent set of benefits, which candidates increasingly view as standard rather than compelling. These are no longer seen as differentiators; they are widely expected.

A second group of benefits is widely offered but less influential in decision-making: These support retention but rarely win talent on their own. Candidates expect a package, not individual perks.

Some benefits remain relatively underutilised—and this is where opportunity sits

Differentiation is shifting toward:

- Ownership (equity/share schemes)
- Flexibility and lifestyle benefits
- Purpose-driven benefits (ESG, wellbeing, community)

*Insights are based on responses from our 2026 client survey, collated from over 100 employers across the Eastern region.

Employee Benefits in 2026: From Expected to Differentiation

Are Employers Actually Innovating?

Despite the growing importance of benefits:

40% of employers introduced new benefits in the last 12 months

60% made no changes at all

The market is evolving faster than employers are responding. This creates a clear opportunity for organisations willing to rethink their offering.

What This Means for Employers in 2026

1. **You can't compete on salary alone**
   Candidates are making decisions based on total reward and lifestyle alignment.
2. **"Standard benefits" won't differentiate you**
   Healthcare + pension + holidays = expected base benefits.
3. **Innovation is your competitive edge**
   Most employers are not evolving their benefits—this is an opportunity to aid retention and attraction.
4. **The future is personalised**
   The most effective strategies we're seeing include: Flexible benefits allowances, choice-led packages, tailored wellbeing support and work-from-anywhere policies.

Practical Actions for Employers

- Audit your benefits against the market baseline
- Identify 2–3 areas where you can genuinely differentiate
- Link benefits to your EVP (not just cost)
- Communicate them properly—many employers undersell what they already offer

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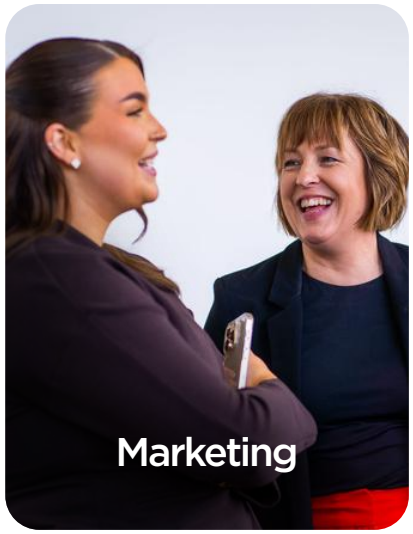
Our Specialisms

Struggling to find talent? We can help.

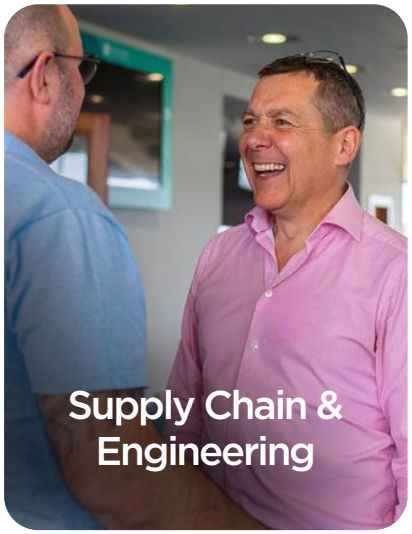
Managing a team or running a business leaves little time for reviewing applications, speaking to candidates and keeping up with a fast-moving hiring market. Our recruitment specialists know your sector and have the networks to reach people you won't find on job boards.

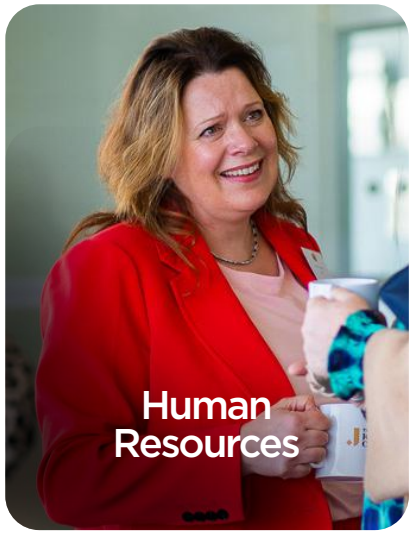
We handle the CVs and conversations so you can stay focused on what matters — helping you hire people with the right skills and the right cultural fit, whether you're recruiting one role or building a whole team.

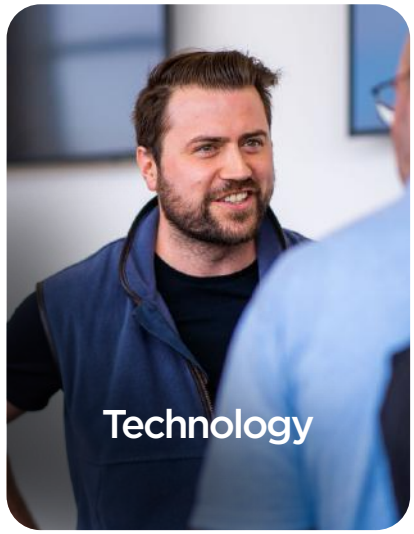












Executive Pay Trends 2026: A more content-driven approach

Pure Executive

Executive remuneration continues to evolve, becoming more tailored, less formulaic, and increasingly shaped by individual business context.

At board and senior leadership level, pay cannot be assessed in isolation. Ownership structure, growth stage, strategic agenda, and the specific mandate of the role all play a critical part. Benchmarking remains a useful reference point, but it only tells part of the story. Context is now the primary lens for effective remuneration decisions.

Market Dynamics Shaping Executive Pay

Stabilisation of base salary

Following a period of inflation driven increases, base salary growth has moderated. Most organisations are now operating within a more disciplined range of c.3–5%, with greater scrutiny on fixed costs and long-term affordability.

Rebalancing towards performance and outcomes

Variable reward remains central, with continued emphasis on performance-contingent structures aligned to:

- Financial delivery (EBITDA, cash flow, margins)
- Strategic execution (transformation, M&A, operational change)
- Sustainable long-term value creation

Long-term incentive plans (LTIPs) and exit-based structures are now well established, particularly in private and private equity backed environments.

Divergence across ownership models

Ownership continues to shape remuneration design:

- Listed organisations operate within tighter governance and external scrutiny
- Private and PE-backed businesses retain greater flexibility and closer alignment to value creation

This divergence reinforces the need for tailored approaches, rather than relying on direct cross-market comparisons.

More targeted use of incentives

Core benefits remain broadly consistent, but there is increased use of targeted, event-driven incentives, particularly sign-on and retention arrangements to secure critical talent.

Role scope over job title

Remuneration is increasingly defined by the scale, complexity, and impact of the role, not the title, making traditional comparisons less reliable.

Non-Executive Remuneration: From Oversight to Alignment

Non-Executive Director (NED) and Chair fees remain broadly stable but are under greater scrutiny, particularly in listed environments. The gap between listed and private companies is narrowing, with more structured benchmarking and clearer expectations around contribution.

Executive Pay Trends 2026: A more content-driven approach

Pure Executive

In private and PE backed businesses, there is a shift towards stronger alignment between NED remuneration and value creation. This is reflected in the increased use of equity, equity-linked incentives, and “phantom” equity structures where direct shareholding is not feasible. However, many privately owned organisations still prioritise independence, favouring fixed annual remuneration.

Why Benchmarking Requires a Different Lens

At board level, context outweighs comparison. Benchmarking alone cannot fully reflect the strategic importance of the role, the complexity and risk involved, or the realities of securing high-calibre talent. Over-reliance on generic data risks mispricing leadership, either overpaying without alignment or underestimating what is required to attract the right individual.

The most effective approaches in 2026 are contextual, aligned, and grounded in both the role and the individual.

Our Perspective

At Pure Executive, we combine disciplined search methodology with real-time market insight and independent judgement. Having supported over 95 board and senior leadership appointments in the last three years, we bring a practical view of how remuneration is defined in live hiring situations, not just how it appears in survey data. If you are considering an executive or non-executive appointment, or reviewing your leadership structure, we would welcome a conversation.



2026 Salary Benchmarking

Get your compensation strategy right.
Without reliable data, it's hard to know if your salaries and benefits are competitive. Salary benchmarking compares your pay with similar roles and organisations, giving you clear, evidence-based insight.

What we review.
Pure analyses base pay, bonuses, benefits and total reward packages to show where you stand and where improvements could help. Many organisations come to us after losing candidates, seeing top performers leave or simply wanting reassurance they're paying fairly.

Tailored to your organisation.
We take time to understand your goals, gather trusted market data and assess it against your current structure. You'll get clear insights, practical recommendations and support in making any changes.

If you'd like to explore how benchmarking could support your business, we're ready to talk.



Beyond Recruitment



Careers are at the heart of everything we do. But we're also keen to give back to the communities we work in.

We do that by creating development opportunities and programmes for individuals and organisations, and by being a responsible business and employer. Find out more about how we go beyond recruitment:

Best Employers Eastern Region

The go-to programme to understand the employee experience. Based around an employee engagement survey, Best Employers is helping forward-thinking organisations achieve more through their people.

best-employers.co.uk

Women's Leadership Programme

We've designed this programme to help women take control of their careers and expand their networks, all while improving their leadership skills.

womeninleadership.co.uk

Development Forums

We run various programmes with experts from across our region, designed to help you and your teams reach your full potential, and be the best you can be.

prs.uk.com/events

Environment Social Governance

We put positive and determined decisions at the heart of everything we do. To help us do that we have an ESG statement – it's our commitment to being good people, and changing for the better.

prs.uk.com/esg



Get in touch

Cambridge 01223 209888
Chelmsford 01245 708808
Ipswich 01473 250990
Norwich 01603 216450

pureresourcingsolutions
hello@prsg.co.uk
www.prsg.co.uk

Pure

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