

RESEARCH · UK FINANCE PAY

Am I Paid Fairly?

What 426 UK finance professionals actually earn, where your number should sit, and the three things that move it far more than your qualification or your last pay rise.

426

Permanent salaries, self reported,
Accounts Assistant to CFO

3%

Median last pay rise

19%

Had no rise at all

+25%

Senior pay in businesses over 1,000
staff against under 200

What this is built on

Every figure here comes from the Finance Pay Index, where UK finance professionals report what they are actually paid rather than what roles are advertised at. This edition uses the 426 permanent finance salaries in the Index up to 14 October 2026, counted once per person: the same records the live salary pages at [financepayindex.com/salary](#) are built from. Interim day rates are left out, because an annualised day rate is not a salary.

Two limits worth knowing before you compare yourself. The people who answer a pay survey are self selected, and two thirds of these responses are London based, so the London figures are the firmest. And where a group has fewer than eight responses it is left out rather than estimated.

Start with your level

Basic salary only, before bonus, pension or equity. The middle half of each level sits between the lower and upper quartile, so if your basic falls in that range you are being paid the going rate for the title. The question is then whether your title is the right one for the job you do.

JOB TITLE	RESPONSES	LOWER QUARTILE	MEDIAN	UPPER QUARTILE
CFO	80	£144k	£165k	£201k
Group Finance Director	18	£122k	£138k	£149k
Commercial Finance Director	13	£145k	£150k	£173k
Finance Director	55	£100k	£115k	£148k
Head of FP&A	9	under 10	£125k	under 10
Head of Finance	37	£85k	£100k	£120k
Group Financial Controller	18	£95k	£108k	£140k
Financial Controller	35	£71k	£82k	£90k
FP&A Manager	10	£72k	£78k	£85k
Finance Manager	34	£60k	£66k	£75k
Finance Business Partner	12	£48k	£57k	£71k
Financial Accountant	8	under 10	£54k	under 10
Management Accountant	35	£42k	£46k	£52k
Finance Analyst	14	£35k	£40k	£52k
Assistant Accountant	9	under 10	£34k	under 10
Accounts Assistant	15	£29k	£32k	£34k

Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 402 responses. Each title links to its live page at [financepayindex.com/salary](#), which shows the same figures. Quartiles are published from 10 responses.

The ranges are wide. A Finance Director at the lower quartile earns two thirds of one at the upper (£100k against £148k). Most of that spread is explained by the kind of business you work in, which is the next page.

The business matters more than the CV

To compare across levels, each salary below is measured against the median for its own job title. A figure of plus 7% means people in that group earn, at the median, 7% more than the typical person with the same title. This page covers the 270 Financial Controllers and above, where the differences are largest.

GROUP	RESPONSES	AGAINST THE MEDIAN FOR THE LEVEL
Under 200 staff	143	minus 6%
200 to 1,000 staff	75	plus 9%
Over 1,000 staff	52	plus 20%
Private equity backed	71	plus 8%
Privately owned	113	minus 1%
Listed (PLC)	34	plus 6%
London	187	plus 3%
Outside London	77	minus 9%

Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 270 responses. Financial Controller and above. Each salary against the median for its own job title.

Two of those three gaps hold when the data is resampled, which is the test we use to separate a real difference from noise:

- **Size.** A senior finance person in a business of over 1,000 staff earns 25 points more, relative to their level, than one in a business under 200 (90% interval 12 to 31 points).
- **Private equity.** PE backed businesses pay 9 points more than privately owned ones at this level, but the interval (0 to 18 points) reaches zero, so it is likely rather than proven. Across all levels the PE gap is 12 points and does hold. The listed and venture backed premiums do not survive the test at this sample size.
- **London.** 12 points between London and the rest of the UK (90% interval 1 to 18 points). Real, but the less certain of the two.

What does not move it

Which qualification you hold. At senior level, ACA, ACCA and CIMA holders are paid within 3 points of each other and none of the gaps is real. The argument about which letters are worth more is not one the pay data settles. Having a qualification does matter further down: across all levels, people without one are paid 7 points less than ACCA holders at the same level, and that gap holds.

Your last pay rise. People who had no rise last year sit within 4 points of people who had 10% or more, measured against their level's median, and the difference does not hold up. A rise tells you how this year went. It does not tell you whether the base it was applied to was right.

“ A Financial Controller in a 1,000 person business is not being overpaid. They are being paid for a different job with the same title.

HARPER MAY

The annual rise will not close a gap

The median last rise was 3%, from 253 people who answered the question. One in five (19%) had nothing. Six in ten (61%) had less than 4%. Only one in eight (13%) had 10% or more. The pattern is the same at every length of tenure: the median rise was 3% for people under two years in their role, between two and four years, and five years or more.

So if your basic is 15% below where it should be, the annual review is not the mechanism that fixes it. That gap closes in one of two ways: a promotion or a change of business, or a direct, evidenced conversation about the base itself rather than the rise.

Staying is not penalised the way people assume

A common belief is that the only way to be paid properly is to move every two or three years. At senior level the data points the other way. Financial Controllers and above with five or more years in their current role earn 7 points more, relative to their level, than those with under two years (90% interval 4 to 19 points).

We would not read too much into the cause. People who stay may stay because they are well paid, rather than being well paid because they stayed. What the data does not show is a loyalty penalty, and it is one reason a well placed move matters more than a frequent one. Every employer who reads your CV will also be counting the moves, which is the subject of our CV guide.

Working out where you stand

- **Find your level, then check the title is honest.** If you run the finance function of a 150 person business and are called Financial Controller, compare yourself with Head of Finance as well.
- **Adjust for the business.** Under 200 staff, outside London: expect to sit below the median for the title. Over 1,000 staff: expect to sit above it.
- **Compare the package, not just the basic.** A 20% bonus that pays out half the time is worth less than it looks. Our guide to negotiating an offer covers what bonuses actually pay.
- **Get your own percentile.** Add your salary to the Finance Pay Index and it shows where you sit against people at your level, in businesses like yours. It takes about two minutes and is anonymous.

Source: Finance Pay Index, data to 14 October 2026, 426 responses, counted once per person. Comparisons against the median for each job title; gaps called real only where the bootstrap 90% interval excludes zero; groups under 8 responses withheld.

If the number is not right

CHECK YOURSELF PROPERLY

financepayindex.com gives you a percentile for your own level, sector and size of business, free, in exchange for your anonymous salary.

TALK TO US IN CONFIDENCE

If you are wondering whether a move would fix it, send us your CV. We will tell you honestly what the market would pay you, including when the answer is to stay.

SENIOR FINANCE ONLY

We place CFOs, Finance Directors, Heads of Finance and Financial Controllers, and nothing else, mostly in London.