



CIEEM

Ecology and Environmental Management Employment and Salary Survey 2022

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INTRODUCTION

CIEEM's Employment and Salary Survey is a periodic opportunity to look at how practitioners are faring in relation to salaries and working conditions. Where possible we have drawn comparisons with the 2018 Employment and Salary Survey report (this current survey was due in 2021 but was postponed to 2022 as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic).

The survey was undertaken at a time when concerns have been raised about working conditions in our profession, particularly in relation to early careers practitioners but with challenges also being experienced more widely at all levels of seniority. Capacity is also an issue with employers in the private sector commenting that they have unprecedented volumes of development-related work and a shortage of suitably qualified staff to deliver it. This, in turn is creating recruitment difficulties in the public and NGO sectors.

It is an opportune time, therefore, to take a look at the impact of these issues on our profession. The climate emergency and biodiversity crisis will demand much of us as, through our work, we help to address these twin challenges and deliver positive benefits for biodiversity and society. We need to make sure that our profession is fit for the future and able to play our part alongside other professions and stakeholders.



THE HEADLINES

CIEEM's 2022 survey of members' and non members' employment, income trends and job satisfaction provides an important benchmark for the profession. Unsurprisingly it reveals a picture of a hard-working, highly motivated and committed workforce but one that is also under significant pressure that is impacting job satisfaction and wellbeing.

Employment levels and prospects are good. Indeed we have a noticeable shortage of people, especially more experienced people, for the roles available but working hours are long and many employed respondents still contribute un-remunerated time to their employer. Self-employed members work, on average, slightly longer hours but enjoy the flexibility and independence of their role.

Salaries, in general, are improving, at least in the private sector and industry although they have gone down for those in academia. Salaries are still below those of the mean UK salary for all occupations. Disappointingly the gender pay gap reported in 2018 has not been addressed and there is evidence that it is increasing.

There was little evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic has had much impact on employment levels or salaries/income.

Despite the challenges of long, anti-social hours and disappointing pay, job satisfaction levels are good and most respondents would recommend the profession to those looking for an interesting, varied and worthwhile career. Nevertheless there are early signs of a decline in levels of job satisfaction over the past four years and a reduction in the proportion of respondents that would recommend ecology and environmental management to others.

The results emphasise the importance of the work that CIEEM is doing by engaging with employers and employees to define the issues that are adversely impacting on job satisfaction and wellbeing and to jointly identify ways forward and to develop support and resources not only to help themselves but also others within our industry. Whilst it was gratifying through the survey to see the value our members place on the Member Assistance Programme provided as a benefit of their membership, this only accentuates the need to urgently find solutions to the pressures that are felt by many as we move forward to help deliver nature's recovery.



THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey was 'live' for a 6 week period in January and February 2022 and was completed by 1,828 respondents of whom 88.6% were CIEEM members. Just under 30% of CIEEM's eligible members took part. The response by gender was a little surprising: 60.5% of respondents identified as female, 38.3% as male, 0.2% as agender or non-binary and 1% preferred not to say. The percentage of respondents identifying as female was higher than we expected based on our membership profile from previous surveys.

The age profile of respondents (see Figure 1) still shows a comparatively youthful profession with almost three-quarters (72.4%) under the age of 45. The majority of respondents were in the senior professional membership grades of Full, Fellow and Chartered members representing those who are well-established in their careers (see Figure 2) although a good

number of Associate and Qualifying members at an earlier stage of their professional careers also responded.

As the professional body for both ecologists and environmental managers in the natural environment, we are always interested in how many of our members see themselves as an ecologist and how many as an environmental manager. This has not changed from 2018. Figure 3 shows that the majority of respondents (90%) regard themselves as an ecologist (77%) or both (13%), although the 5% who regard themselves as neither are an interesting group. Amongst the explanations given for saying 'neither' were roles such as Planning Consultant for Ecology, Project Manager on Community and Health, Policy Adviser, Biodiversity Data Manager, Conservation Biologist, Business Administrator, Operations Director, Landscape Officer, Data Scientist, GIS Specialist, Biologist and Ranger.

FIGURE 1:
Age Profile of Respondents

- Under 25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or over
- Prefer not to say

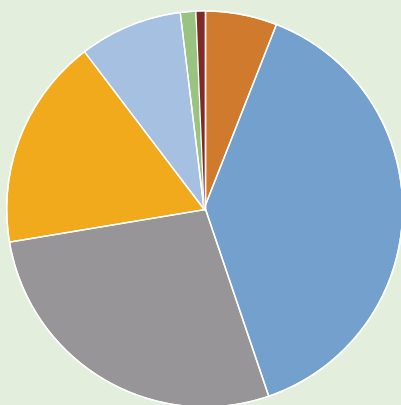


FIGURE 2:
Membership Profile of Respondents

- Student
- Qualifying
- Associate
- Full
- Fellow
- Chartered Full
- Chartered Fellow
- Not a member

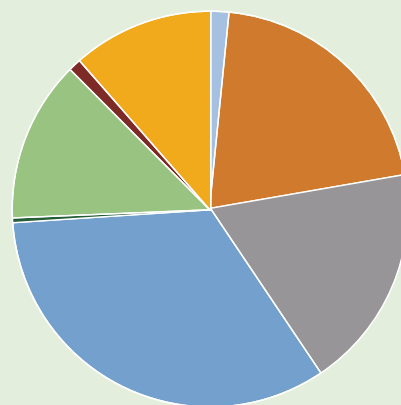
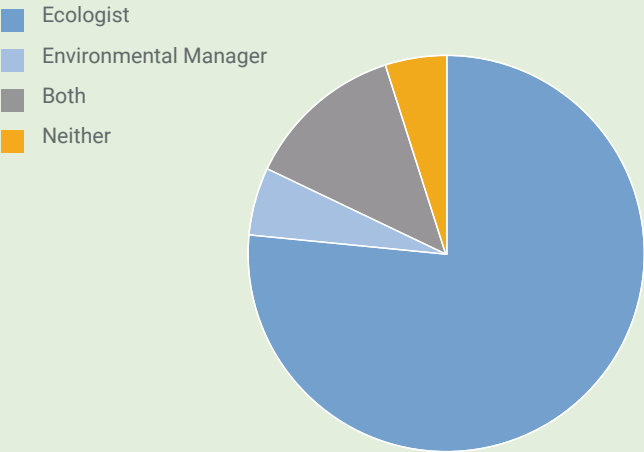


FIGURE 3:
Ecologist or Environmental Manager



The percentage profile of respondents by employment sector is shown in Figure 4 (below). There is remarkably little difference between the 2018 and 2022. Private sector consultancy has been the largest employment category for the profession for many years now and this shows no signs of changing. There have been small increases or decreases (approx. 0.5%) in figures for some other sectors (rises for voluntary/non-profit and statutory government agencies, slight decreases for academia and local government). The majority of respondents who chose 'other' could be allocated to one of the other sectors, typically NGO or industry, or worked in more than one sector in different roles.

The geographic distribution of respondents (Figure 5, next page) mirrored the membership profile with the majority being based in England. The island of Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) comprised 6% of respondents, Scotland just over 8% and Wales almost 7%. Less than 2% of respondents were based outside of the UK or Ireland, including those in UK Overseas Territories or Crown Dependencies. Those that were based elsewhere included respondents from Malaysia, Canada, Nigeria, South Africa, USA, New Zealand, Australia, Dubai and Sri Lanka.

FIGURE 4:
Employment Sector (% of response)

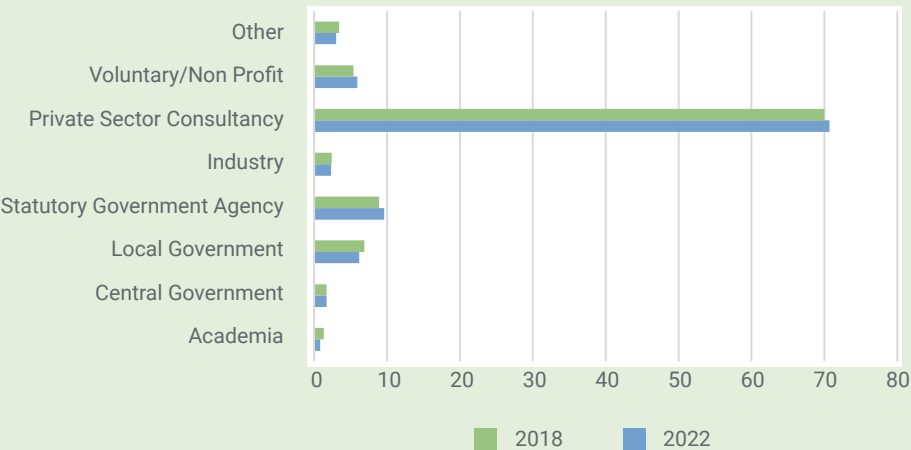


FIGURE 5:
Respondent Profile by Location

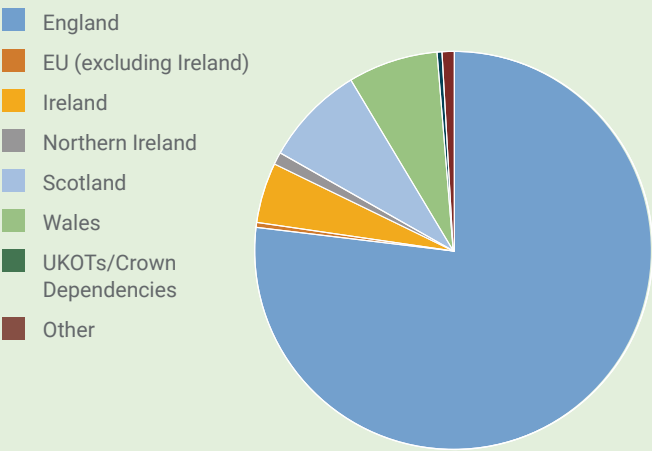
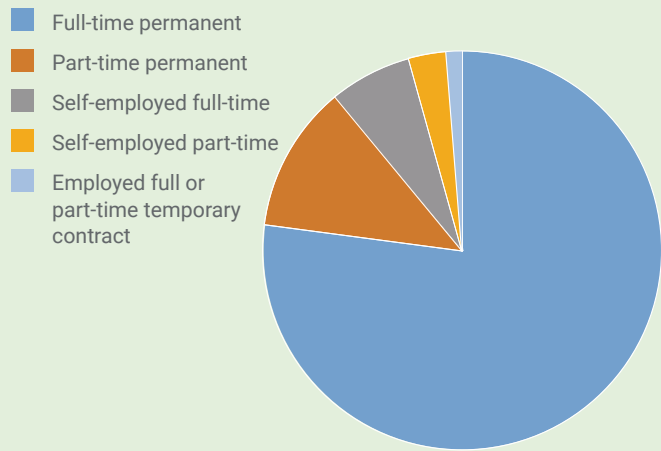


FIGURE 6:
Type of Employment



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Unsurprisingly the majority of respondents (97%) are employed in the profession. Less than 1% are currently unemployed. The remainder are students or are employed in a different sector having previously been an ecologist or environmental manager. Whilst the low unemployment rate is encouraging, and perhaps not surprising given the current capacity issues employers are reporting, just under 10% of respondents had had a period of unemployment during the previous 12 months. This mirrors the pattern seen in the 2018 survey and may be indicative of individuals transitioning from full-time education to a paid role. However we are also aware of some redundancies of staff during prolonged periods of lockdown and this could have been a factor.

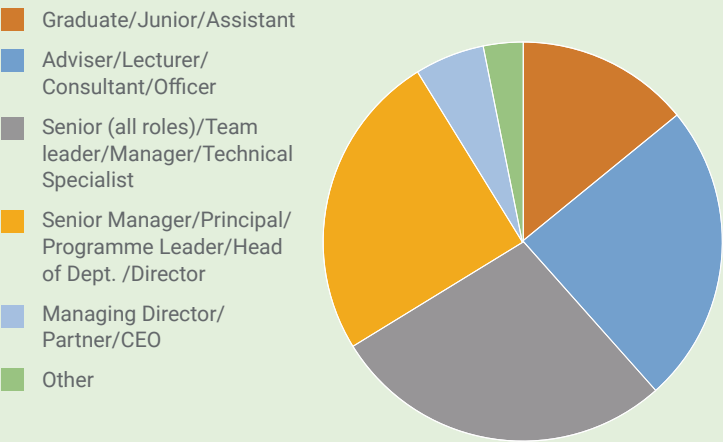
The response to the type of employment (Figure 6) shows that full-time employment is by far the most common model (74.9%) and is very slightly ahead of the position in 2018 (72.6%). The proportion of part-time employed staff has also risen slightly (11.6% compared with 10.4% in 2018). There has been a 2% drop in the number of self-employed respondents completing the survey and a 3% drop in the number of temporary or seasonally employed respondents but none of these changes are significant enough to illustrate an ongoing trend at this stage.

There were, however, some gender differences. Only 7.5% of respondents identifying as female were self-employed compared with 11.9% of those identifying as male. We saw a similar level of difference in the 2018 survey. The percentage of full-time and part-time employed workers also showed some differences with 69.0% of female respondents working full-time and 15.6% part-time compared with figures of 76% and 4.8% respectively for males. The difference in part-time working is particularly evident and it is reasonable to speculate (but not proven) that this is related to balancing care responsibilities.

The respondents' profile by job level is shown in Figure 7. The pattern very much follows that of 2018 with a fairly even distribution between the three middle grades, although the proportion of the more junior roles is slightly higher than in 2018, hopefully indicating more opportunities for those coming into the sector.

There were some interesting notable differences between male and female respondents as shown in Table 1, with twice as many females than males in what we would regard as an 'early career' role. This could reflect the pattern of degree choice (since most entry-level roles still require a relevant degree).

FIGURE 7:
Respondent profile by Job/Role Seniority



It would be worth exploring this further to see if this is the case but also to compare how long people are typically staying at this junior level and whether there are differences between the gender identities and/or employment sector.

The other noticeable difference is the higher proportion of males than females at the more senior grades. This was also the case in 2018 but whilst the gap has closed at Senior Manager/Principal/Programme Leader/Head of Dept./Director level (10% difference compared with a 13% difference) it has widened a little at Managing Director/Partner/CEO level (5.5% in 2022 compared with 2.8% in 2018). Some of this difference may be attributed to the higher number of self-employed respondents who identified as male, as sole traders will often have the job title of Managing Director or Principal. Again, it might be useful to examine these differences more closely.

Table 1: Gender identity variation in job role/seniority

Job role/Seniority level	% by Gender Identity	
	Female	Male
Graduate/Junior/Assistant	17.4	8.8
Adviser/Lecturer/Consultant/Officer	26.0	21.8
Senior (all roles)/Team Leader/Manager/Technical Specialist	28.4	27.0
Senior Manager/Principal/Programme Leader/Head of Dept./Director	21.3	30.3
Managing Director/Partner/CEO	3.6	9.1
Other (usually more than one role)	3.3	3.0



WORKING HOURS

This is a hard-working sector with almost 65.1% of employed respondents regularly working in excess of their contracted hours. This is a drop of 8.2% less than in 2018. Figure 8 shows the average weekly hours worked by employees in excess of the contracted hours. Disappointingly 37.5% of those working excess hours do not get any additional remuneration or recompense, slightly higher than in 2018. Just over 33% get their additional hours remunerated or recompensed in part whilst only 29.2% are remunerated or recompensed in full which is a slight improvement on the 27% figure in the 2018 survey.

Generally, part-time employees appear more likely to get their extra hours remunerated or recompensed either fully or in part when compared to full-time workers. It is disappointing that this is not an improving picture overall. Working conditions, fair pay and job satisfaction are key criteria when seeking an attractive career choice or deciding whether to stay in the profession. At a time when we need all the ecologists and environmental managers we can get we should surely not be expecting people to work for free.

As in 2018, for those that do receive additional remuneration or recompense, the most common form is Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) as shown in Figure 9. Many respondents noted that the more senior the role, the higher the expectation that you would not be recompensed for all of your excess hours. Even where the employer's working practices allowed you to claim TOIL for all of your excess hours many respondents noted that there often is not the time to do so, at least in full.

Some respondents receive a bonus or dividend depending on the company's financial performance, so they view the additional hours as being an investment in the company's success which will hopefully lead to a subsequent financial reward.

The most common average working hours (the mode) for self-employed respondents are 41-50 hours a week, higher than the full time employed respondents contracted hours of 35-40 hours a week (which does not take account of the regular additional hours worked by many employed members). However, these respondents were closely followed by those working 36-40 hours.

FIGURE 8:
Average Weekly Excess Hours

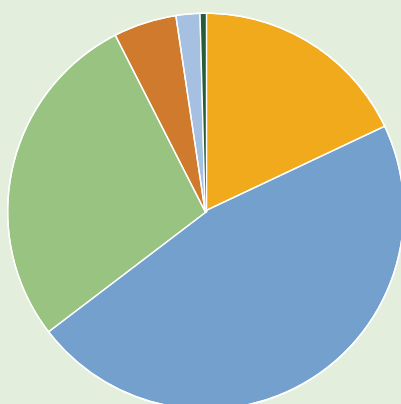
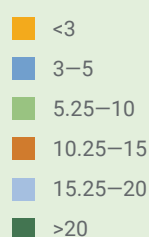
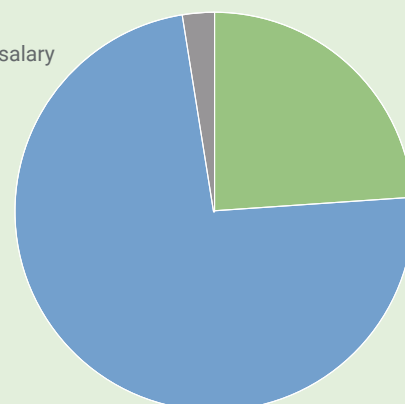
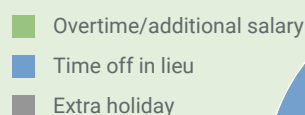


FIGURE 9:
Use of Additional Remuneration and Compensation



SALARY AND INCOME

The salary range for those employed full time in the profession (both members and non-members) is shown in Figure 10 and shows very little change from 2018, although it should be noted that all salary data may have been impacted by furlough salary schemes during the pandemic. The mean annual salary across all employment sectors (except self-employed) and all job roles/grades is £35,680 (+/- £601¹). This compares with £34,488 (+/- £432) in 2018 – a rise of 3.5%. The 2022 figure is significantly below the UK mean full-time salary across all occupations of £38,600 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) provisional October 2021 figure from the Office of National Statistics) and slightly below the ASHE mean annual salary figure for a full-time conservation and environment professional (£35,988). It is just above the ASHE mean annual salary for a town planner (£35,119) but significantly below the mean salary estimated for architects (£44,283). The most recent comparative figures in Ireland are from the 2020 Q4 Earnings and Labour Costs Survey published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) which showed an average full-time salary of €49,296 (equivalent to £41,425 at April 2022 exchange rates)

and an average Professional and Technical full-time salary of €55,948 (equivalent to £47,015).

Disappointingly there is a difference of over £8,000 between the mean annual salary of male respondents £42,814 (+/- £1013) and female respondents £34,142 (+/- £708). This compares with a gap of just over £5000 in 2018, suggesting the gender pay gap is getting worse rather than better. The data possibly reflects the challenges that some women face in reaching more senior positions. Only ten of the forty three respondents earning more than £70,000 per annum were female.

The income profile for full-time self-employed respondents is shown in Figure 11. The profile is broadly similar to that of employed respondents although the mean annual income is £44,361 (+/- £2052), significantly higher than for those in employment. This is not surprising given that self-employed respondents are likely to be mid-career onwards and perhaps also reflects the slightly higher average working hours.

FIGURE 10:
Average Salary for Full-Time Employees

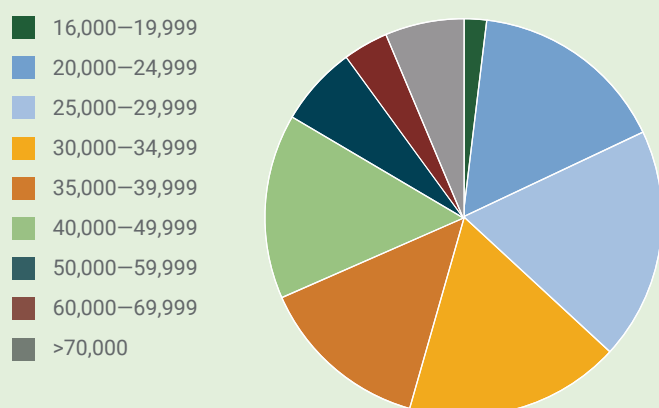
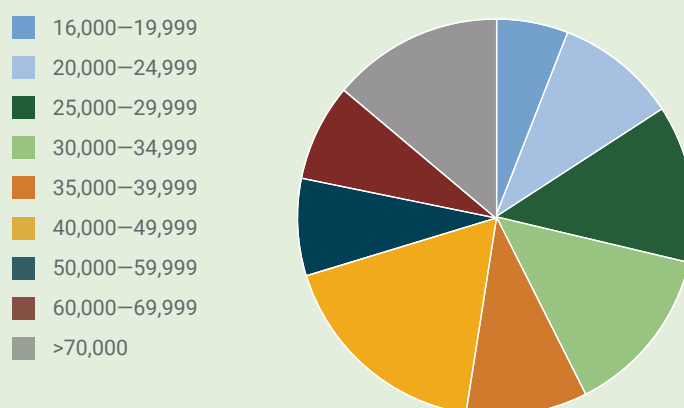


FIGURE 11:
Income Profile for Full-Time Self-Employed Respondents (£)



¹ Standard Error of the Mean

A comparison of male full-time self-employed respondents and female self-employed full-time respondents showed that males earned just over £5000 more on average compared to females (males = £46,433, females = £41,329). This difference may relate, at least in part, to earning opportunity with 64% of male full-time self-employed respondents working more than 40 hours per week compared to 54% of females but the size of the difference suggests that there may be other factors, such as rates charged, at play here.

A comparison by country for Full members only (so not including Chartered members) is shown in Table 2. With the exception of respondents from England, the numbers per country are low resulting in significant standard errors of the means in many instances. Scotland would appear to have the highest salaries in the UK although the strong 'market leader' is Ireland with an average mean salary/income over £15,310 or €18219 higher than respondents in Scotland at 1st May 2022 exchange rates. This is not surprising given that the cost of

living in Ireland is estimated as being 15-20% higher than in the UK. Once again Wales has a substantially lower mean annual salary than other countries.

For self-employed Full members the pattern is a little different. Ireland is still the highest earning country. Within the UK there have been some significant percentage increase in self-employed earnings for Full members. England has the highest UK self-employed Full member mean income, followed by Northern Ireland. As with the employed member data, self-employed Full members in Wales earn the lowest annual mean income.

It is not useful to calculate a mean annual salary or income for part-time workers without additional information regarding the contracted hours. However, Figure 12 shows the range of annual salaries earned by respondents working part-time. It is interesting to note that 83% of part-time employee respondents were female.

Table 2: Mean annual full-time salaries/income for Full members by country (£ equivalent)

	England	Ireland	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Other
Employed (% increase since 2018 shown in brackets) n=sample size	41,135 +/-1065 (4.9) n=152	60,667 +/- 5015 (28.6) n=15	42,500 +/- 9552 (41.7) n=6	45,357 +/- 2601 (13.3) n=21	35,000 +/- 1667 (2.1) n=9	69,500 +/- 9887 (8.4) n=5
Self-employed (% increase since 2018 shown in brackets) n= sample size	55,046 +/- 2452 (33.7) n=96	63,186 +/- 9199 (13.4) n=8	47,500 +/- 2500 (29.5) n=4	40,100 +/- 5884 (38.5) n=15	34,556 +/- 4789 (-6.5) n=9	30,000 +/-2500 (no data) n=2



Table 3 shows the mean annual full-time salary/income for members by CIEEM grade. It is evident that there has been substantial salary/income increases since 2018 (NB: the drop in mean salary for Qualifying members is probably due to the new requirement for Qualifying members to upgrade after three

years. Previously there were a significant number of higher-earning experienced members who had not moved beyond the Qualifying or Graduate grade).

Full-time Chartered members have a significantly higher mean salary when compared with Full members, as would be expected for a group who have been able to evidence additional competence and who are likely to be more senior in role. Fellows, who are typically the most senior in our profession, unsurprisingly have the highest mean salary.

A comparison by country (Table 4) shows that, whilst mean salaries in Wales are consistent with other countries at Qualifying membership stage, they fall behind at mid-career stage but then catch up (and overtake England) for Chartered Full members. Mean salaries in Scotland at higher grades are the highest in the UK (allowing for the unreliability of data for Northern Ireland given the low number of respondents).

What is surprising (and difficult to explain) is the drop in mean salaries for Chartered Full members in Ireland compared with Full members.

FIGURE 12:
Income Profile for Part-Time
Employed Respondents

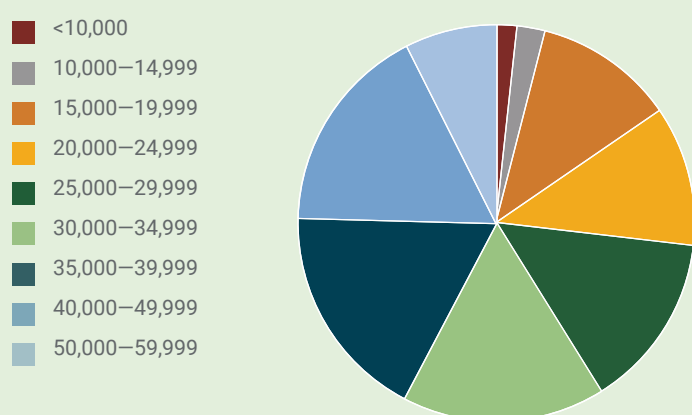


Table 3: Mean annual full-time salaries/income by membership grade (£)

	Qualifying	Associate	Full	Chartered Full	Fellow
Mean annual full-time salary	25,595	31,974	44,086	54,646	66,042
Comparison with 2018	27,052	28,532	38,046	44,814	47,813
% change	-5.4	12.1	15.9	21.9	27.6

Table 4: Mean annual full-time salaries/income (£) by membership grade and country

	Qualifying	Associate	Full	Chartered Full
England	25,264	32,394	41,807	53,471
Wales	25,735	28,929	35,938	57,500
Scotland	25,682	31,591	45,357	60,938
Northern Ireland	27,500*	No data	No data	70,000*
Ireland	27,154	27,500*	60,667	51,667

*= low number of respondents (<5)

Table 5: Mean annual full-time salaries/income (£) by membership grade and English region

	Qualifying	Associate	Full	Chartered Full
North West	26,667	36,458	45,313	57,857
North East	26,250	33,500	37,186	44,500
Yorkshire and Humberside	24,778	31,071	37,833	40,936
East of England	26,250*	35,833	38,036	61,250
East Midlands	25,063	30,681	45,682	48,833
West Midlands	25,167	30,955	43,077	54,000
South West	21,182	33,088	35,903	57,031
South East	24,396	31,786	45,714	58,366

*= low number of respondents (<5)

Table 6: Mean annual full-time Full Member salaries by employment sector (£)

	Local/Central Government	Statutory Bodies	Private Sector	Voluntary/ Non-profit Sector	Academia	Industry	Self-employed
Mean annual Full member salary 2022	39,028	39,286	46,780	34,861	45,833*	51,667	44,866
Mean annual Full member salary 2018	37,096	38,533	43,445	35,217	52,167	41,429	41,684
% change	5.2	2	7.7	-1.0	-12.1	24.7	7.6

*= low number of respondents (<5)

If we look at the English regions in more detail (Table 5) there are some interesting patterns. Members in the North West are amongst the highest earners at every membership grade whilst members in Yorkshire and Humberside are amongst the lowest earners. Similarly mean early career salary levels for the South East are amongst the lowest for all regions but amongst the highest for the senior membership grades. South

West salaries for Qualifying members and Full members are the lowest reported but closer to the overall mean at Associate and Chartered Full grades.

Another way to look at the data is by employment sector. Table 6 illustrates full-time employed Full members (including Chartered) by employment sector.



Industry, private sector, academia and self-employed salaries appear to be the highest-paying sectors, although academia has gone down significantly since 2018 (although with a very small sample size so this may not be typical). Voluntary / non-profit sector salaries are again the lowest within the profession.

A further approach to analysis is to look at the salary/income data by job level/responsibility as shown in Table 7. All categories showed at least some level of increase over 2018 figures but again the most significant increases are at the senior levels, perhaps increasing the shortage of candidates

to fill these roles in the current employment market. One of the most notable figures here is the very significant gap between a 'Senior' or Technical Specialist role and that of a Programme Leader / Principal / Director role.

Employers can augment salaries by providing additional benefits to employees. Figures 13 and 14 show some of the most commonly provided employer benefits and those additional benefits that respondents across all sectors would most like to have (NB: clearly those that are already regularly provided are going to score less well on the 'most like to have').

Table 7: Mean annual salary/income by job level/responsibility (£)

	Graduate / Assistant	Adviser / Lecturer / Consultant	Senior Adviser / Senior Lecturer / Senior Consultant / Technical Specialist	Principal Consultant / Director / Senior Specialist / Programme Leader	Managing Director / Partner / CEO
Mean annual salary 2022	23,510	28,969	38,232	55,118	60,000
Mean annual salary 2018	22,134	25,650	34,093	46,713	49,853
% change	6.2	11.5	10.8	18.0	20.4

**FIGURE 13:
Most Popular Additional Benefits**

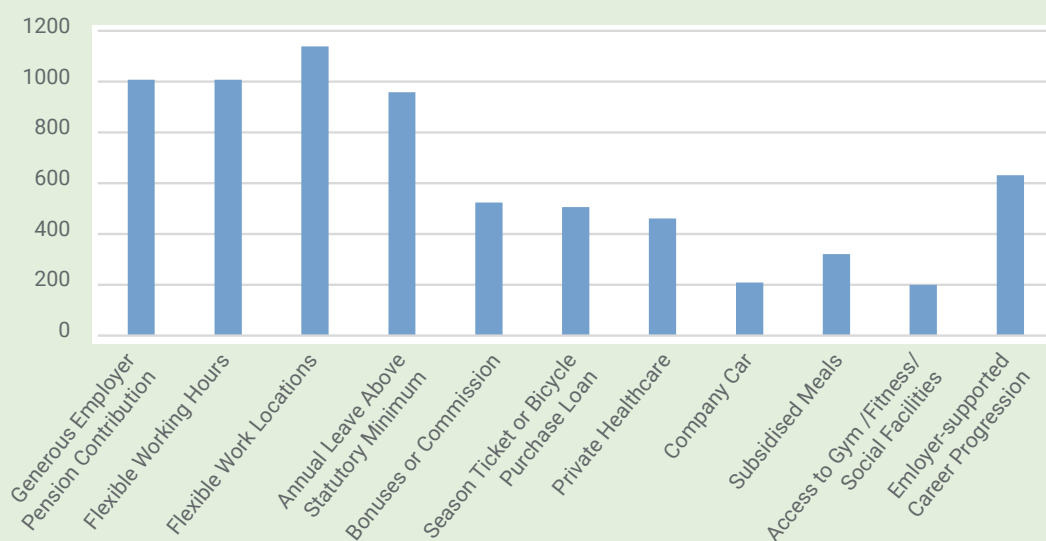
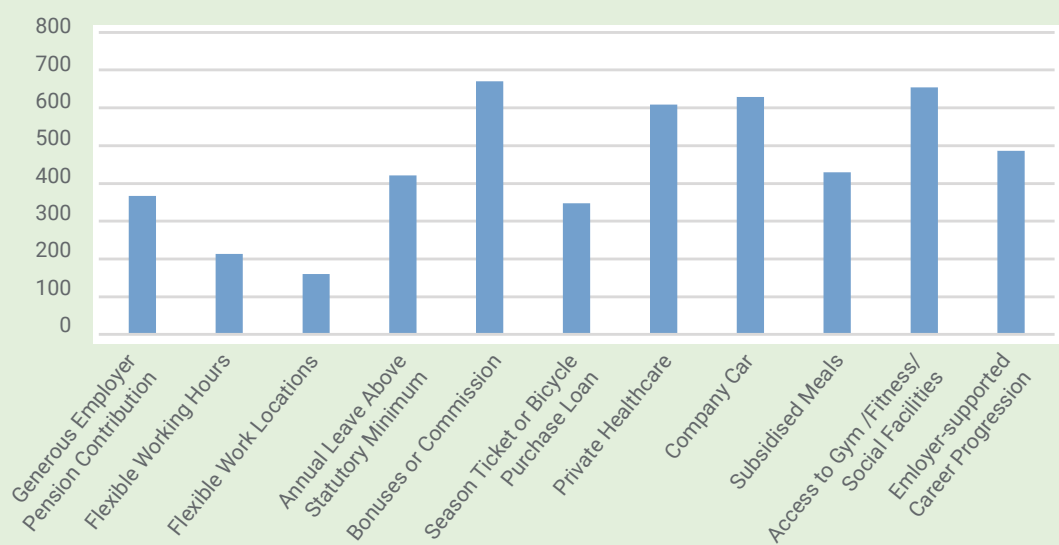


FIGURE 14:
Most Desired Additional Employee Benefits



An enhanced (above statutory minimum) pension scheme, flexible working, good annual leave entitlement (above statutory minimum) are the most commonly provided benefits followed by career progression and season ticket loan/bicycle schemes.

Of those that are less commonly provided, bonuses or commission, access to gym/leisure facilities and private health care were amongst the most popular along with company cars and more career progression opportunities.

For self-employed members the main benefits of their

employment status are the flexibility of working hours and the independence/choice over what to do and when to do it (see Figure 15). Improved income generation was also seen as a positive benefit. However there are also disadvantages, with income insecurity being the most prevalent (see Figure 16) along with professional isolation and more pressure/stress.

The good news for those employed in the profession is that generally salaries are increasing. Over 83% of employed respondents had seen their salary increase over the past three

FIGURE 15:
Most Popular Advantages of Self-Employment

- Flexibility of Hours
- Improved Income Generation
- Working From Home
- Independence/Choice Over When/What to Do
- Absence of Interference From Managers/ Colleagues
- Less Pressure/Stress

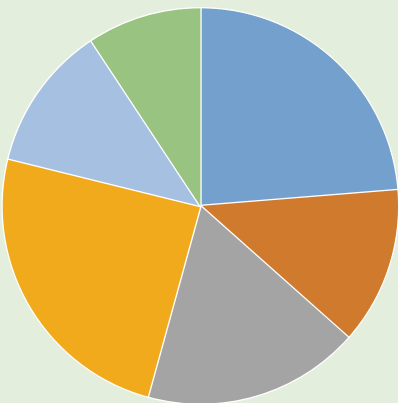


FIGURE 16:
Most Common Disadvantages of Self-Employment

- Hours Required to Earn Income
- Income Insecurity
- Loss of Income
- Professional Isolation
- More Pressure/Stress

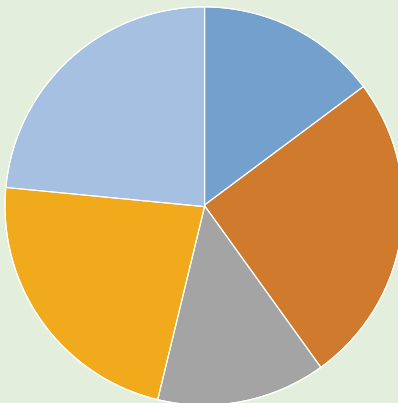


FIGURE 17:
Percentage Increase in Salary Over the Last 3 Years (Employed Respondents)

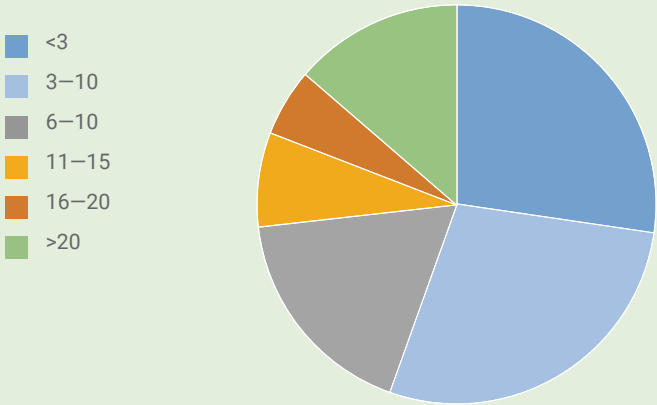
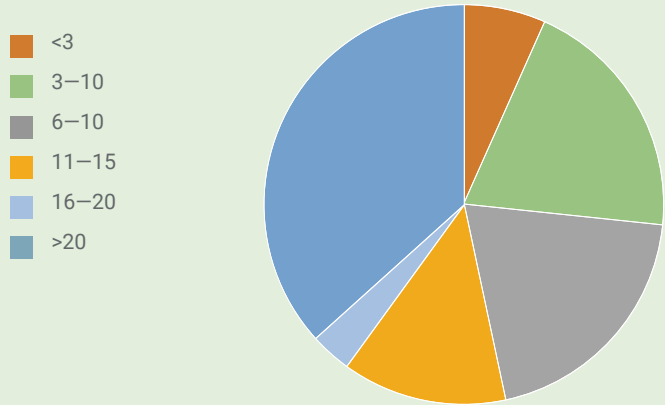


FIGURE 18:
Percentage Increase in Salary Over the Last 3 Years (Chartered Members)



years with 1.5% seeing a decrease. Figures 17 and 18 show the typical percentage salary increases. Generally chartered members have seen higher percentage salary increases.

Just over 18% of respondents ascribed their salary increase to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, although a further 60% thought that it had played a part in the most recent increases. Some respondents noted that the employment market is generally quite buoyant at present and 60% of those who have recently been involved in recruitment had experienced difficulties in finding the right people, especially at the more senior levels.

For self-employed respondents the picture is perhaps less positive with just over half (54%) having seen an increase in income over the past three years. In fact 15% had seen an overall decrease during the same time period. However, for those whose income had increased, over half had seen a change of more than 16% (see Figure 19).

If we examine salary trends by sector there are some stark differences with those working in academia and statutory bodies/central government least likely to have had a salary increase than those working in the voluntary sector, private sector, industry, or local government. (see Table 8). Interestingly the voluntary sector has the highest proportion of respondents that have received a salary increase, although as we know from Table 6, they are the least well-paid of all sectors overall. Just under half of self-employed respondents have seen a salary increase, and this sector also has the highest percentage of respondents that have seen a decrease. Less than half of self-employed respondents attributed any changes in income to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 19:
Percentage Increase in Salary (Self-Employed Respondents)

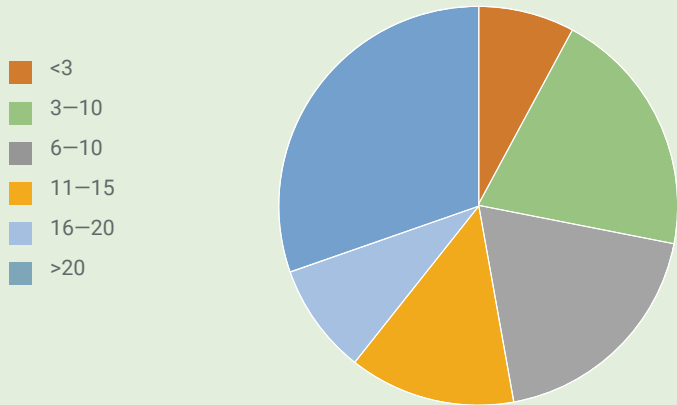


Table 8: Salary trends by employment sector (% of respondents in each sector)

	Local/Central Government	Statutory Bodies	Private Sector	Voluntary/Non-profit Sector	Academia	Industry	Self-employed
Increase in salary or income	75	45	85	90	0	83	49
Decrease in salary or income	0	12	4	0	8	0	17
No change	25	43	11	10	100	17	34

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

For employers, 60% have seen an increase in their number of employees in the preceding 12 months (44% in 2018). A further 22% had seen no change. This is encouraging in terms of painting a picture of a profession with good opportunities for recruitment and career progression. However 68% of employers who have been recruiting reported difficulties in recruiting suitable candidates at the senior levels and 31% reported problems in recruiting more junior roles.

For employees, just over a third (39.1%) had changed employers within the past three years (29.4% in 2018) with the most movement being within the private sector (50% of respondents who had changed roles). For those that changed from one employment sector to another there was a general trend towards the private sector, especially from academia, the voluntary/non-profit sector and from being self-employed. This is probably driven by changes in academia and the range of ecology and environmental management courses being

offered and public spending cuts (which have also impacted on charities in terms of funding streams). The next most common change was from the private sector to the public sector.

For those that had changed employer, just over 50.1% were in a more senior role, 72.2% had a higher salary and 44.7% had better working hours as a result of the change. However, 18.5% had a lower salary and almost a quarter (22.0%) had longer hours. A better quality of life is often a motivator for change and over two thirds of respondents who had changed jobs reported more job satisfaction than in their previous role with a fifth reporting no change. Unfortunately, whilst 39.0% reported lower stress levels than previously, a similar number (37.2%) had higher stress levels.

As in 2018, several respondents noted that self-employment is not necessarily less stressful than being employed but it is a different sort of stress, one which the respondents felt that they had more control over.



JOB SATISFACTION

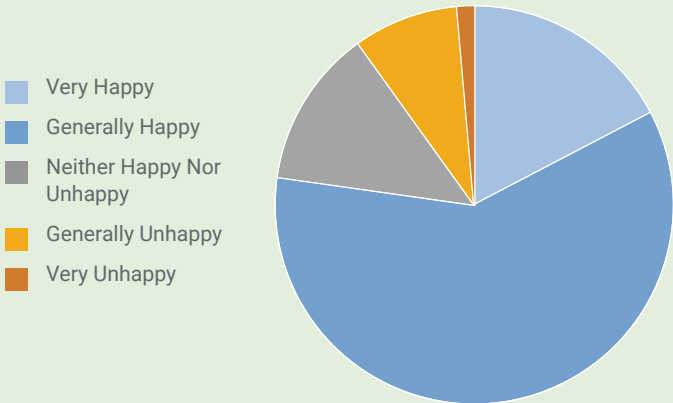
Finally, the ‘million dollar’ question. When asked how happy respondents are in their chosen profession just under a fifth are very happy and a further three fifths are generally happy (see Figure 20). These figures are slightly (3%) down on 2018.

There was a consistent theme to the reasons given for the high level of contentment – ecology and the environment is a personal passion, it is great to be doing something that you are genuinely interested in and feel that you can make a difference. Countering that is the ongoing problem of being comparatively poorly paid relative to other professions together with the long and often unsocial hours. Table 9 summarises the most commonly cited positives and negatives of the profession.

Overall, 18% of respondents are very happy in their chosen career and 60% are generally happy. This is down on 2018, however, when almost 25% were very happy and just over 60% generally happy. Only 1.4% are very unhappy although 8.3% are generally unhappy. This compares unfavourably with 2018 when 0% were very unhappy and 5% generally unhappy.

There is some slight variation in levels of job satisfaction amongst sectors (see Table 10). The ‘happiest’ sectors are the least well-paid (voluntary/non-profit sector) and the highest paid (industry), although the voluntary sector also had the highest percentage of very unhappy respondents (although still a low percentage overall). Statutory body/central government respondents and private sector respondents had the highest percentage of people who were generally unhappy or very unhappy. Academia stood out as having a high proportion of respondents who were neither happy nor unhappy.

FIGURE 20:
Level of Job Satisfaction



As a corollary to the relatively good levels of job satisfaction, the final question was whether our members would recommend ecology and environmental management as a career. Almost 80% of respondents said yes, which is a pretty positive endorsement of the profession overall although this is 5% down on the 2018 figure.

As above, doing a job that you are passionate about with a subject that is infinitely interesting and varied and having the opportunity to make a difference to the natural world and to people’s quality of life were suggested as big selling points to those looking for a worthwhile career. But there were two health warnings: be aware of the long and often unsocial hours and do not necessarily expect to be well paid.



Table 9: Most common reasons for job satisfaction/dissatisfaction

Most commonly reported positives	Most commonly reported negatives
Interesting/challenging work	Poorly paid compared to other professions
Feeling as though you are making a difference and having a positive impact on the environment	Long, often unsocial, hours
Variety of work	Feeling as though you are not making a difference or are having a negative impact on the environment
Working with like-minded people	Lack of respect from other professions
Flexible hours	Lack of career opportunities

Table 10: Job satisfaction by employment sector (% of respondents)

	Local / Central Government	Statutory Bodies / Central Govt.	Private Sector	Voluntary / Non-profit Sector	Academia	Industry	Self- employed
Very happy	15.7	16.7	15.3	33	18.2	31.5	30.0
Generally happy	69.7	60.8	60.0	50.1	54.6	59.3	53.3
Neither	6.7	10.8	14.0	8.9	27.8	7.4	10.0
Generally unhappy	6.7	11.7	9.1	5	0	1.9	4.7
Very unhappy	1.1	0	1.5	2.5	0	0	2.0

WORKING OUTSIDE
CHALLENGING
REWARDING
VOCATION
worthwhile
SHARED VALUES
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
HARD WORK
LONG UNSOCIAL HOURS
varied
INTERESTING
YOUNG INDUSTRY
STRESS

HELPING NATURE AND SOCIETY

WHAT DO THE SURVEY RESULTS MEAN FOR CIEEM AND OUR PROFESSION?

The results from the survey highlight some important questions/issues that we should not ignore. While the overall trend is one of increasing salaries, they are still below those of some peer professions. The continuing (and growing) gender pay gap is indefensible and something we need to work with employers to understand better and to encourage action to address.

The reliance on working long hours to get the job done is exacerbated by the unsocial hours that many respondents frequently have to work which, inevitably, has wider implications for families and personal relationships. There is strong anecdotal evidence of increasing mental health issues (supporting data evidence provided by our 2021 survey into equality, diversity and inclusion) due to the pressures experienced in many employment sectors. We need to tackle this if we are going to improve recruitment into ecology and environmental management and make it more diverse and inclusive.

Whilst our profession continues to have generally high levels of job satisfaction we should not ignore that this has dropped since 2018, as has the proportion of respondents who are very happy or generally happy in their role. At a time when many are reporting a capacity crisis in our profession we must do more to make the profession the best it can be in terms of fairness, remuneration and work/life balance.

It is pleasing to see that Chartered members' salaries are higher than other membership grades and we recognise that a number of employers reward staff financially for achieving Chartered status and its associated recognition of high levels of competence.

Over the past 12 months CIEEM has proactively engaged with early career ecologists, employers and managers to better understand the issues facing the sector and to work collaboratively to find solutions. This work must and will continue apace.

Recognition of the need for skilled and competent ecologists and environmental managers is increasing and we should be proud of the jobs we do and the social good we deliver. Over the next three years CIEEM will highlight the work that our members do by promoting better understanding of our profession and its contribution to society. We will also, as part of our Championing Change agenda, be advocating for a more diverse and inclusive profession. We need to attract talented, enthusiastic and passionate people from all backgrounds into ecology and environmental management to help tackle the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency. We also need to make sure that when they get here, they find a welcoming, rewarding, supportive and exciting career.





Grosvenor Court
Ampfield Hill
Ampfield
Romsey
Hampshire
SO51 9BD

t: 01962 868626
e: enquiries@cieem.net
www.cieem.net

