



# Salary Survey

A report by:



carnstone  
partners llp

flag



Foreword and  
introduction



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For more information about the CR and Sustainability Salary Survey 2016, please go to [www.crsalarysurvey.com](http://www.crsalarysurvey.com) or email us at: [Owain.Wood@acre.com](mailto:Owain.Wood@acre.com), [ac@acre.com](mailto:ac@acre.com), [Paul.Burke@carnstone.com](mailto:Paul.Burke@carnstone.com) or [Victoria.Taylor@Flag.co.uk](mailto:Victoria.Taylor@Flag.co.uk).

# Foreword

This CR and Sustainability Salary Survey – the largest of its kind – provides useful information to those in, and interested in, the sector. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on trends and prospects within the sector.

Two particular tests of whether a commitment to corporate responsibility and sustainability has genuinely taken root in a company are whether it survives economic pressure, and what happens when there's a change at the top.

Historically, companies in the natural resources or extractives sector were often ahead of the pack on mainstreaming corporate responsibility and integrating sustainability reporting. This reflected their dependence on having, sometimes literally, a licence to operate, as well as the huge challenges they face to operate sustainably.

Economic growth in that sector has slowed, reflecting the downturn in commodity prices and global demand. So the crucial test now is whether these and other companies facing financial pressures keep to their sustainability commitments (and retain the relevant staff), or sacrifice them for the sake of short-term profit benchmarks.

If it is to endure, sustainability needs to be so much a part of a company's DNA that for a new CEO it's part of the essence of the business. This is a powerful indicator of the degree to which sustainability has become embedded into the organisation's strategy and operations. Thus, M&S's 'Plan A' was originally championed by CEO Stuart Rose, then further developed by former CEO Marc Bolland, and now looks set to continue to flourish under his successor, Steve Rowe. So, with this in mind, stakeholders will be watching with interest how Kingfisher's commitment to sustainability will fare under its new CEO.

Visible engagement from the head of a company can help make a real difference. Take, for example, Mark Wilson, CEO of Aviva, or Paul Polman, Unilever's CEO. They both have excellent teams. But it's also thanks to their personal engagement and leadership that those teams managed to impact positively on the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which was agreed at the UN last year.

I for one will be keeping a keen eye on what happens next to corporate sustainability commitments – especially in the extractives sector, and where there's a change of CEO.



**David Nussbaum, CEO,  
WWF UK**

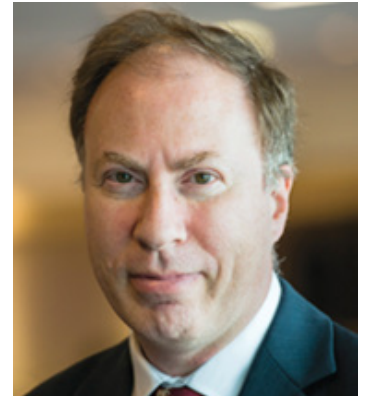
# Foreword

The CR and Sustainability Salary Survey does it again, providing a fascinating set of insights into the state of the market. The good news is that demand for deep expertise remains strong, across all sectors of the economy. There appears to be a genuine recognition that from retail to telecoms – which turns out to be the top-paying sector – there is a demand for the kind of integrative leadership that sustainability experts can provide.

There is no sign that companies are cutting back on their sustainability function and indeed, growing evidence that companies recognise the need to build this expertise in-house. Compensation for the internal teams is outpacing that for consultants. But there is also mixed news in this year's survey – and one that goes to the heart of the strategic agenda facing the sustainability professionals. Frankly, they are underpaid relative to the expertise and value that they offer. So, the real question for me is why are sustainability professionals paid a median wage of less than £60k? And why are there less than 20% paid over £100k? This would surely not be true in the Digital or Marketing or Finance functions? Something is clearly wrong in how the market for sustainability expertise works.

What, then, are the plausible explanations for the relatively poor compensation for highly trained professionals? As the survey points out, 63% of respondents had a master's degree or post-doc, and 9% even had an MBA. It is therefore unlikely that the explanation is that sustainability professionals are under-trained relative to their peers in other key functions. What about job experience? Here again, the evidence is strong that over 60% of respondents had 10 or more years of experience in the field. These are professionals, working on incredibly complex and critical issues, with many real 'miles under their skies'.

So, I am left with only three explanations for the relative under-compensation of sustainability professionals. The first is that they are willing to self-exploit because they believe passionately in what they are doing. That is almost certainly true and also hard to correct through the market. The truth is that many sustainability professionals believe in what they are doing and are committed to their agenda, even if they are not fully compensated for their expertise. In a sense, the sustainability world is not so different from the creative community – where musicians, actors and artists do what they do for the love of it. The second potential reason – the most hopeful one – is that the sustainability agenda has now become embedded into the work done across many other professional fields. So, there are any number of marketing, supply chain, manufacturing and service operations experts who are 'doing sustainability work' but just with different packaging. The third explanation – perhaps the most likely – is that not enough companies still fully appreciate the



**Jeremy Oppenheim, Director,  
Founder and Managing  
Partner, SystemiQ**



economic value which the sustainability team brings to their business. There is still a tendency to see sustainability as CSR – a necessary but marginal investment of funds to maintain the social licence to operate. But, in truth, not strategic and not a real value driver for the business. And even in those companies which get sustainability, there is not a strong enough understanding of the difference between ‘good enough’ and ‘truly distinctive’ sustainability know-how.

There is a real change in the world post-Paris and a sense that the sustainability agenda is growing up – and indeed, that it may be too important to be left only in the hands of sustainability specialists. We want a business world in which the concepts of circularity, resource efficiency, mission-driven brands and full supply-chain transparency are the ‘new norm’. We want our capital markets to quantify the relationship between great sustainability practice and the drivers of long-term corporate value. And we need consumers to make their purchasing decisions on a fuller, digitally enabled basis – recognising their purchasing power has an enormous potential to drive positive system change.

The Salary Survey is a hugely valuable tool for seeing these cross-cutting trends through the market for sustainability talent. This year’s survey shows solid progress – but we still have a mountain to climb.



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# Introduction

The corporate responsibility and sustainability (CRS) sector continues to grow, as does the reach of our survey. This year we achieved a record 1,296 responses, an 8% increase on 2014, and we are proud to share the results with you over the following pages.

As with our previous surveys, our aim is to shed light on the sector, the roles within it, organisational structures, gender split, responsibilities, education and qualifications, satisfaction and – of course – pay. And, as usual, the report's narrative is supplemented by commentary from significant industry figures. We thank them for their time in giving us their perspective, and we thank the ranks of CR practitioners who completed the survey.

For further information on Acre, Carnstone and Flag, please turn to page 35.

## Result highlights

- 1,296 respondents this year, an 8% increase on 2014
- In-house employees once again make up the majority of the survey's sample
- Average salaries have risen in all regions except the rest of the world and the rest of Europe, where they have dropped (slightly)
- On average, consultants are paid £10k less per year than those working in-house
- Those working in North America are the highest paid
- 93% of respondents have a first and/or postgraduate degree
- The average time in employment is 14.1 years
- The gender split was 51:49 in favour of women
- The global average salaries for men and women are £67,408 and £55,148 respectively
- While the average male salary decreased by less than 1% since 2014, the average female salary rose by 5.6%
- Over 55% of respondents were satisfied with their jobs and around 26% very satisfied
- 93% of respondents would recommend a career in the sector

## What we mean by corporate responsibility and sustainability?

### Corporate responsibility and sustainability (CRS) professionals

are hard to define. By their very nature, they are addressing complex, multifaceted problems and opportunities. People interpret CRS differently depending on factors such as culture, religion, governmental systems and legal/regulatory requirements. For the purposes of this survey (and in line with the approach adopted by the Institute of Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability in the UK), we have used the European Commission's definition, adapting it slightly.

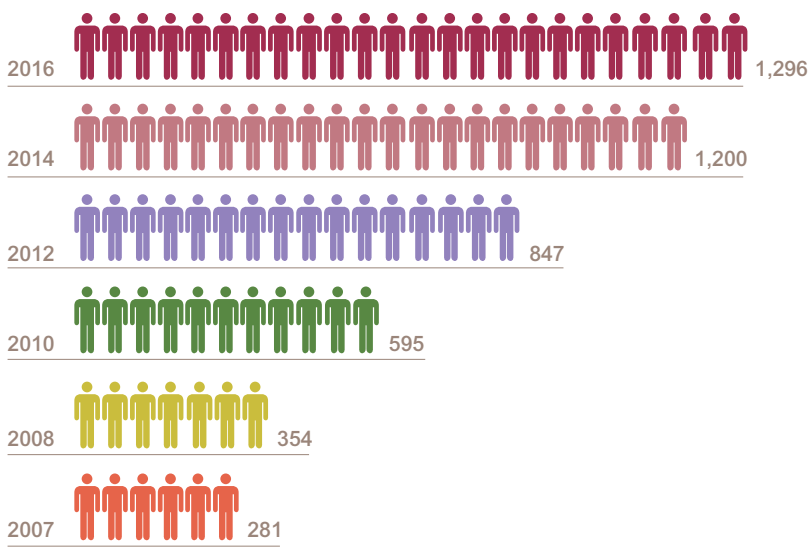
**We define CRS as** the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society and the environment. This means there needs to be strict adherence to relevant legislation and codes of practice, and social, economic and environmental impacts – such as ethics, human rights, consumer issues, climate change and constraints on natural resources – need to be addressed through an organisation's strategy.

# The sample

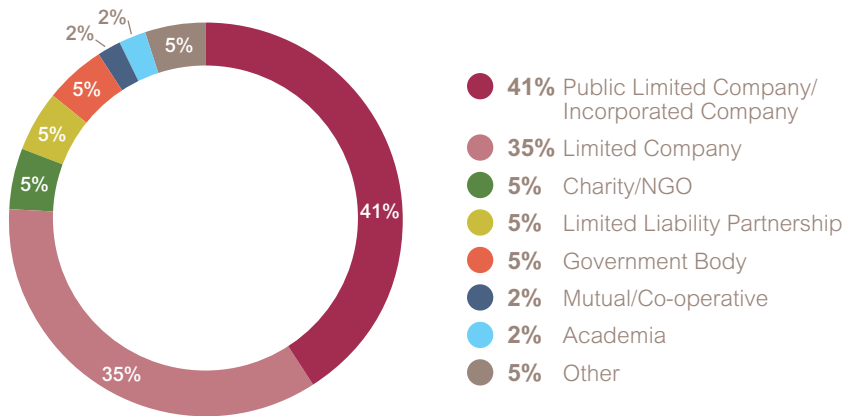
A total of 1,296 people completed this year’s survey, up from 1,200 in 2014. This was an 8% increase on the 2014 survey and gives us even greater confidence in the robustness of the results.

The respondents can be divided into two groups: in-house employees, who make up 71%, and consultants, who make up the remaining 29%. This split is broadly similar to what we have seen over the last two surveys, with a slight increase in the dominance of in-house respondents.

## History of number of respondents



## Participants by organisation type



## Chris Gorst

If you were to add up all the resources dedicated to CRS in the UK, the total value would likely exceed all other forms of charitable giving put together. But what impact, in particular what social impact, do all these resources dedicated to CRS have?

Of course, the comparison between CRS and the charitable sector isn't like for like. The charitable sector exists specifically to tackle social problems, whereas CRS sits within a commercial context and is often pursuing a mix of objectives. But is the social impact of CRS what it could be, even given that context?

This is one area in which the social sector, which is undergoing a quiet revolution in how it thinks about and measures impact, is actually ahead of the commercial sector. And speaking with CRS professionals, we know there is a strong appetite among them to grow the social impact of what they do.

The challenge CRS professionals face is how to reconcile social impact with the other objectives they are expected to pursue. But increasingly these same professionals are concluding that there is no trade-off between social impact and other objectives – that, for example, truly impactful CRS is what best engages and motivates employees.

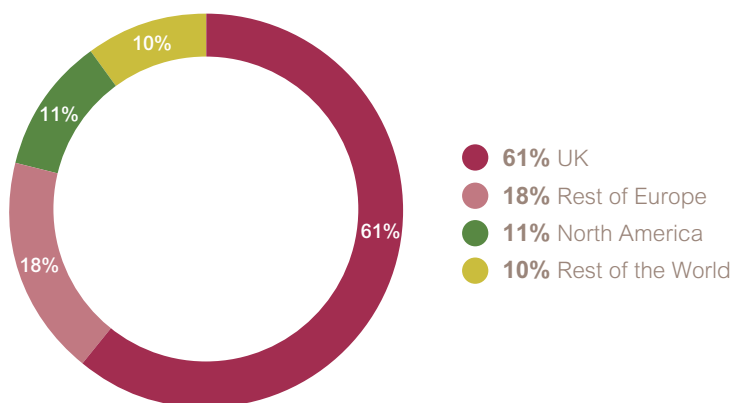
We believe it is only a matter of time until CRS's social impact is more commensurate with the resources businesses dedicate to it, and the winners will be the CRS teams and employers that get ahead of the curve.



**Chris Gorst, Director, The Social Innovation Partnership**



## Respondents by location



Our first two surveys focused solely on the UK, but in 2010 we took the decision to extend participation to a global audience. Since then, an absolute majority of the respondents in each survey have been based in the UK. This remains the case with 61% (2014: 60%) of participants located there. The percentage of respondents from the Rest of Europe rose slightly from 15% in 2014 to 18% this time, while North American responses remained static at 12%, and the Rest of the World declined (from 13% to 10%).

The Rest of the World category includes Africa, South America, Asia and Australasia – a very diverse set of regions. We've tried hard to increase participation in these areas and we would encourage anyone reading this report based there to share it with others and thereby raise awareness of the survey's existence. As soon as the response rates are sufficiently large we intend to bring a greater degree of granularity to the results, allowing more meaningful comparisons to be made across the globe.

In the 2014 survey, women were, for the first time since we began, in the minority. This time round, the historical predominance of women has been reasserted and they make up 51% of our respondents.

Finally, around three-quarters of respondents work for limited companies of one description or another, with the remainder split among NGOs, government organisations, co-operative and mutual, academia and limited liability partnerships.



**Julie Hirigoyen, Chief Executive, UK Green Business Council**

It's encouraging to see over half the respondents claiming to work for organisations that have either high or very high levels of commitment to sustainability. This is consistent with evidence from CEO surveys where an even higher proportion consider sustainability to be crucial to their organisation's ongoing success.

But, in reality, the progress being made is incremental at best, and imperceptible at worst even though CRS is now an established industry, with well-trodden career paths and an expanding community of professionals. What is needed to address the environmental, sociological and economic challenges we face as a species is transformational change. Disruptive new business models must emerge based on zero or net positive environmental impact coupled with clear social purpose. Few, if any, of the organisations that currently claim to be leaders are genuinely breaking new ground with sustainable innovation.

Let's not slip into complacency by virtue of familiarity and box ticking. If the survey's participants take only one thing from it, it should be to develop the leadership style required to embrace risks and ramp up the ambition to reflect the true scale of the challenge.



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# Remuneration

Salary trends provide objective evidence of the value attached to CRS and the people who work in the sector. When converting other currencies into pound sterling we use the relevant average exchange rates between 20 January and 12 February 2016 provided by oanda.com.

The rates used are as follows:

Currency	GBP
CHF 1.00	0.69
AUD 1.00	0.49
EUR 1.00	0.77
USD 1.00	0.70

Before looking in detail at this section's findings, we need to highlight a number of caveats.

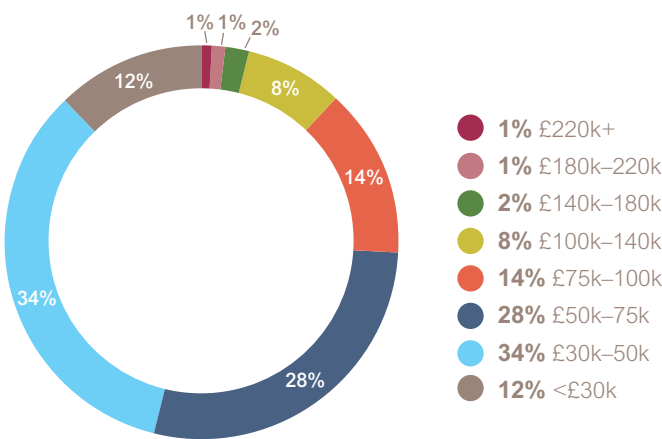
First, data of this nature can easily be affected when a relatively small number of outliers – very high or very low salaries, or bonuses – distort the averages.

Second, and more importantly, exchange rates vary over time, which obviously makes comparisons difficult. Looking back at the rates that prevailed at the time of the last survey, the pound's value has fallen relative to the Swiss franc (by 3%) and US dollar (15%) but risen in comparison to the Australian dollar (10%) and euro (6%). In addition to these exchange rate fluctuations, it must also be remembered that the headline figures for each region do not reflect cost-of-living variations across national economies. In other words, the purchasing power of sterling in one country or region cannot be reliably compared with its purchasing power in another, further compounding the difficulties of cross-region comparisons. Additional payment arrangements, such as bonus rates, that are specific to particular countries further complicate the issue.

Third, due to the relatively small number of responses from outside North America and Europe, it has not been possible to provide averages for the other regions. We did consider including a Rest of the World category but felt, on balance, that the widely varying salary levels in the various regions that make up this grouping would make the results misleading. Again, higher levels of participation from these areas in future surveys will allow us to include regional average salaries and bonuses for South America, Africa, Australasia and Asia. Where possible, we have also looked at the percentage of respondents working in each sector and how this varied across regions.

# Salaries

## Overall salary distribution



Overall, the median salary fell in the range of £50–75k, and at the lower end of that range. The mode fell in the range of £30–50k. The mean in the UK was £57,350 compared to £55,071 in 2014. The percentage earning above £75k in the UK has increased slightly to 19% from 17%. A small number of individuals are earning salaries at the higher end, with 4% of respondents being paid over £140k and 1% receiving over £200,000. The vast majority of those earning salaries in excess of £140,000 work in-house for major companies (ie with more than 1,000 employees) and are based in the Rest of Europe and North America.

Mean (average) salary:  
Global

**£61k**  
UK  
**£57k**

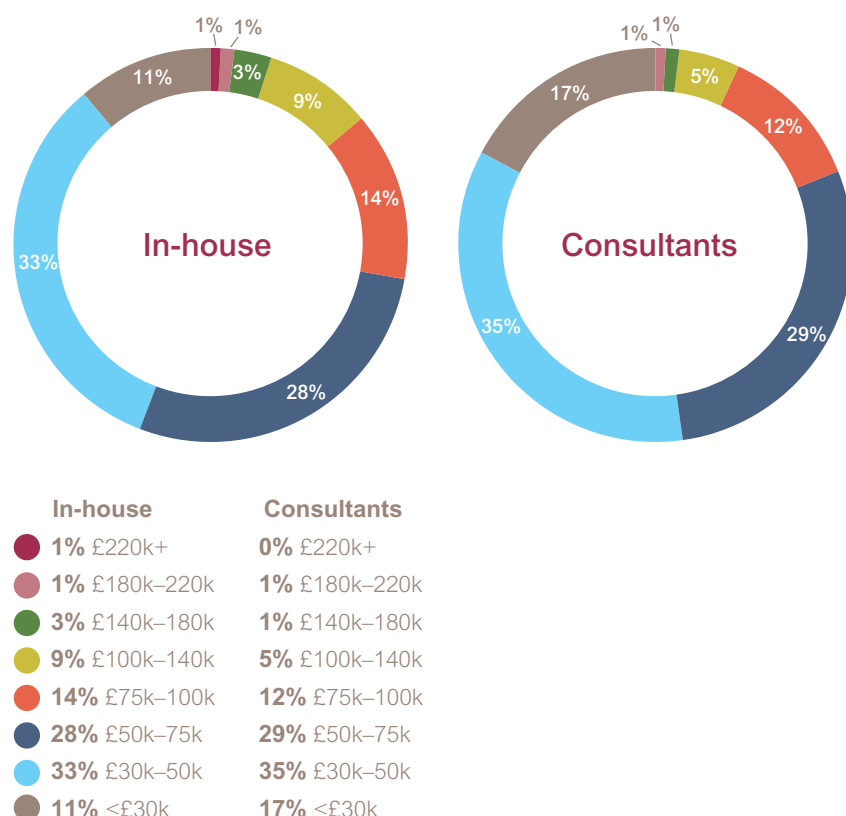
Median (middle) salary:

Global – lower end of  
**£50k–75k**  
UK – upper end of  
**£30k–50k**

Mode (most common)  
salary value:

Global  
**£30k–50k**  
UK  
**£30k–50k**

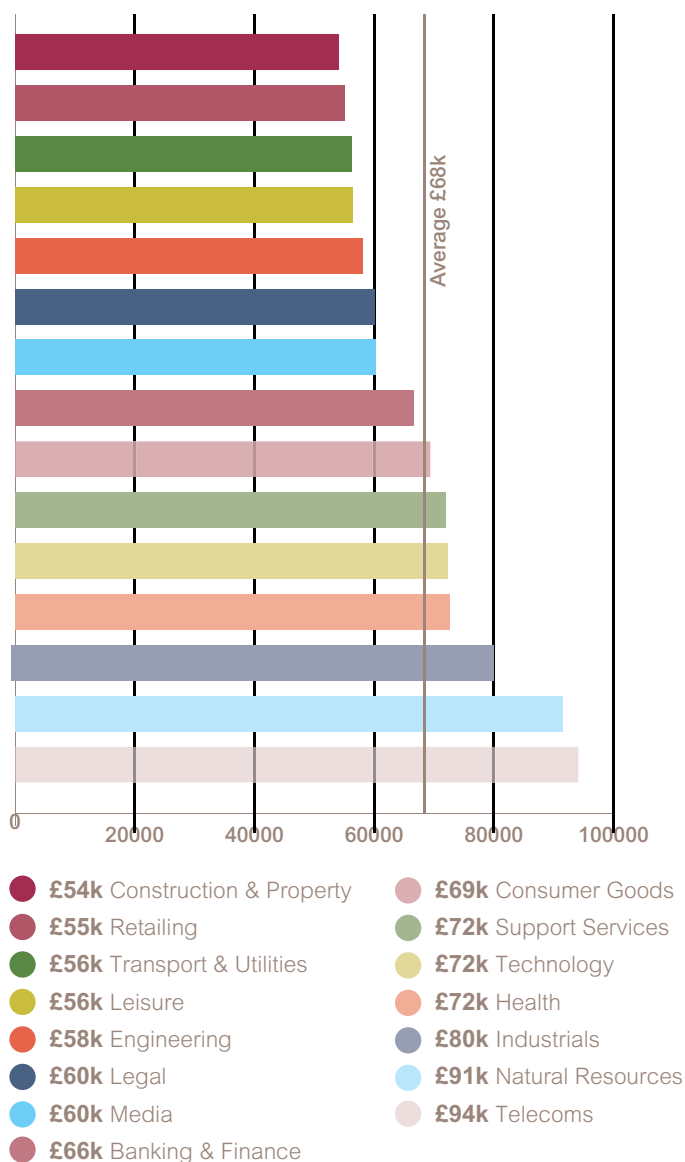
## Salary distribution by organisation type



One of the myths that has been conclusively laid to rest by our previous surveys is the perception that consultants are better paid than those working in-house. Once again, the survey has shown that this is not the case. Last time, the average difference was just under £9,000 but this has now increased to around £10,000 (the difference in the UK is around £5,000). We suspect that this is, at least in part, confirmation of the challenges confronting consultants operating in the sector with high levels of competition putting pressure on the level of fees that can be charged. Just over half (52%) of all consultants earn salaries of less than £50,000 compared to only 44% of those working in-house.

The highest average salaries can be found in North America (£82,445), which represented an 18% increase on the average salaries reported in the previous survey. However, as pointed out above, most of this change is explicable by the pound's fall relative to the US dollar. Likewise, the percentage decline in average salaries in the Rest of Europe (from £70,503 to £65,411) mirrors almost exactly the euro's fall against the pound. For those based in the UK, the 4% rise in average salaries (from £55,071 to £57,350) might not seem significant, but set against the historically low levels of price inflation, it represents a real terms pay increase.

## Average in-house salaries by sector



In the same way that changes in the performance of national economies – with the resultant impact on employment rates, inflation and wage growth – impacts the results of this survey, so does the performance of the different economic sectors. Last time round, the highest average salaries were found in Natural Resources (circa £102,000) followed by Support Services and Telecoms (both £74,000) and Industrials and Banking & Finance (again, both £73,000). Not surprisingly, given the crash in commodity prices, average salaries for those working in Natural Resources have fallen by around 10% to £91,500, while our new leader – Telecoms – experienced a 21% rise to £94,000. Those working in Industrials also appear to have done well with a 10% increase in average salaries.

Another important finding, which we reiterate this year, is that there is little if any correlation between team size and salary. Conversely, there does appear to be a connection between the size of budget directly controlled by an individual and his or her salary – though which is the cause and which the effect we haven't been able to determine.



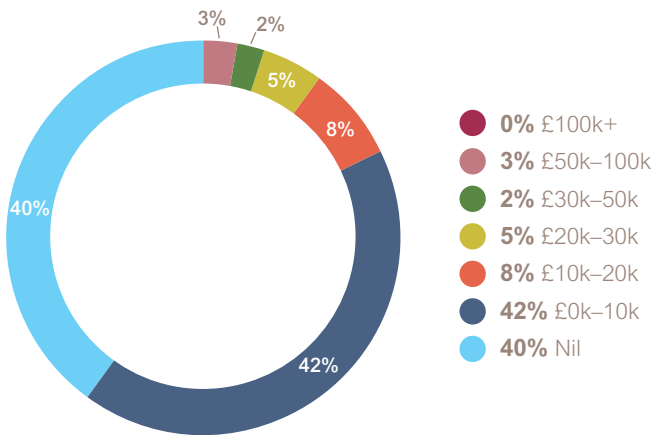
### Peter Hughes, Director of Sustainability, Pearson

"How much am I worth?" is certainly a valuable question to ask. It can be either satisfying (or mortifying) to personally benchmark one's value against your peers. More importantly, the ability to benchmark represents a coming of age for our profession. Looking back 20 years and when I started my corporate responsibility career in NatWest, we didn't even have a terminology to describe what we were doing. I was part of the community relations team and we were driven by a vision that the real impact of the company was through influencing the underlying business model and not just the partnerships we made. So, great kudos to Acre, Carnstone and Flag for sustaining this biennial event.

So, what are the highlights for me from the report this year? First, that the reach and remuneration continued to grow, and second that the gender pay gap in our sector is shrinking.

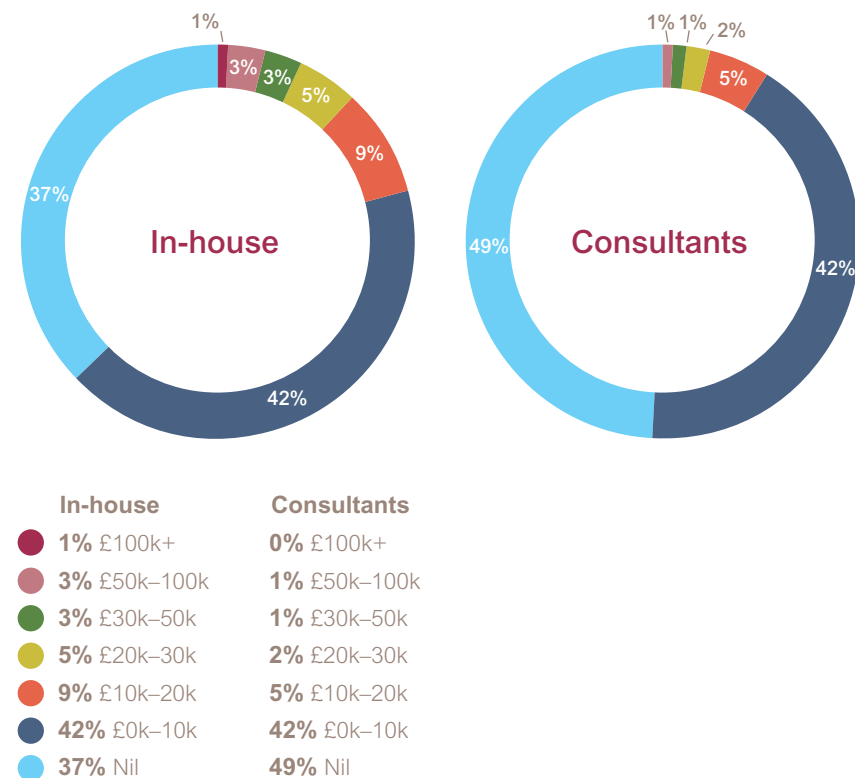
## Bonuses

### Overall bonus distribution



Overall, both the percentage of respondents receiving no bonus (40%) and those receiving less than £20,000 (90%) were in line with the previous survey. That being said, a number of individuals are clearly enjoying very significant bonuses and are, overwhelmingly, working in-house for larger companies.

### Bonus distribution by organisation type



While nearly half of all consultants received no bonus, only 37% of those working in-house were in a similar position. As we've said previously, the lower salaries of consultants are not offset by more generous bonuses.

Those paid higher salaries are likely to receive a higher percentage bonus. Average bonus rates range from around 8% of salary for those in the £30–50k salary band, around 23% for the £100–180k band and 33% for those earning over £180k.

Not surprisingly then, when considering total cash remuneration (salary plus bonus), those working in-house are better rewarded. Even allowing for bonuses, 48% of consultants receive less than £50,000 (versus 40% of those working in-house), while at the upper end of the scale, 4% of in-house respondents earned more than £180,000 compared to 1% of consultants.



**Jim Woods, CEO, The Crowd**

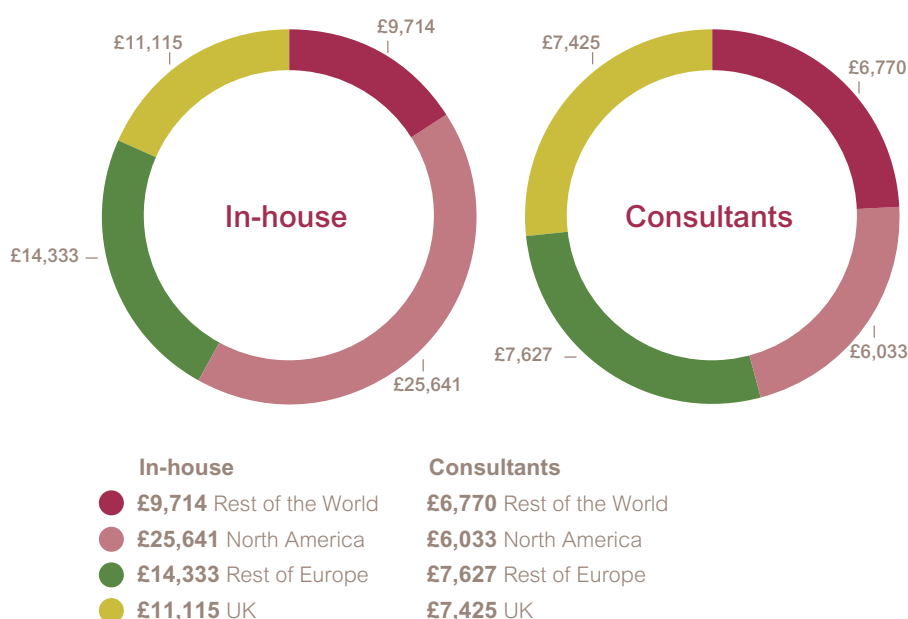
The biggest challenge facing most internal sustainability executives is how they influence mainstream decision-makers. Their direct budget, around £1m according to this survey, pales into insignificance when compared to R&D, property and marketing budgets. The best sustainability executives excel at the art of influence. They have a broad business skill set, and can balance their interests against the interests of their colleagues.

Hidden in the wealth of information in this survey are two important numbers. Firstly, over half of in-house CRS employees have previous experience beyond sustainability. That will help them understand how their organisation works, and it would be great to see that number increase. The second is that the remuneration of the most senior CRS person in the organisation is £121k. Is that enough to get the right level of business experience and talent? That might be the single biggest judgement call a board makes if it wants to win the support of society.

#### Average bonus level by salary band (of those that do receive bonuses)

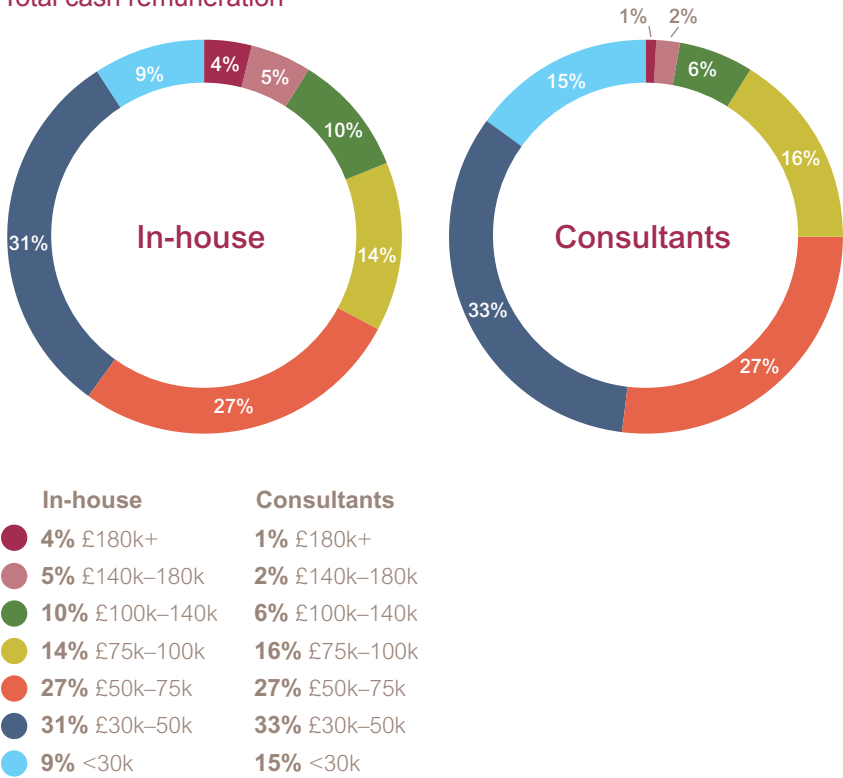
	Overall	Consultants	In-house
<30k	£3,699	£5,830	£2,847
£30k–50k	£3,273	£3,133	£3,319
£50k–75k	£7,461	£7,633	£7,120
£75k–100k	£14,895	£8,399	£16,200
£100k–140k	£28,393	£13,668	£30,643
£140k–180k	£36,631	£32,342	£36,961
£180k–220k	£64,318	£12,500	£74,682
£220k+	£83,969		£83,967

#### Average bonus level by region and organisation type (of those that do receive bonuses)



Cash remuneration

Total cash remuneration

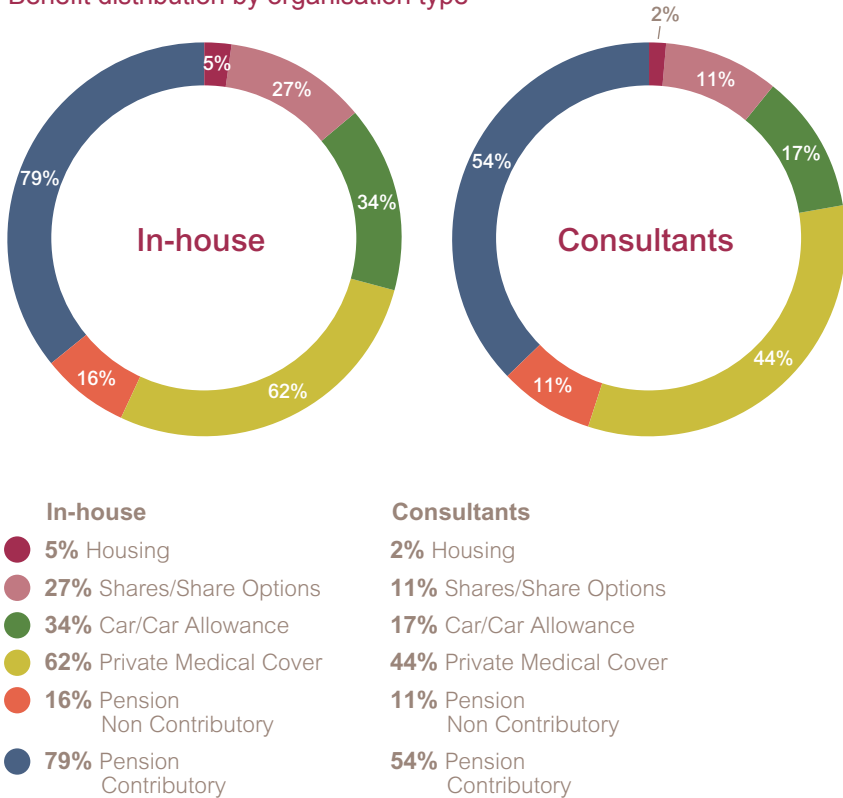


Mean (average)  
cash remuneration:  
Global  
**£68k**  
UK  
**£63k**

Median (middle)  
cash remuneration value:  
Global – lower end of  
**£50k–75k**  
UK – lower end of  
**£50k–75k**

Mode (most common)  
cash remuneration value:  
Global  
**£30k–50k**  
UK  
**£30–50k**

Benefit distribution by organisation type







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## Generic role descriptions

One of the main motivations behind our first UK survey in 2007 was to establish benchmark salaries for different roles across the sector and to identify – in broad terms – the type of people who occupied these roles. From the outset we realised that the survey was not – nor could ever be – a medium for capturing detailed and objective job evaluation information for each participant's role. Thus, based on the survey data, it is impossible to say, for example, whether respondents with the job title 'CR Manager' perform the same or similar roles, while subtle differences in job title (is a 'CR Manager' equivalent to a 'Manager – Sustainability'?) may signify the naming conventions of different organisations or something more fundamental.

However, notwithstanding these methodological challenges, we identified a number of generic roles, based on our own understanding and personal experience of corporate and consultant roles. We then analysed the data to suggest what each would receive by way of salary and bonus. What follows are composite descriptions of the educational qualifications, career histories and other personal characteristics that would most likely be attached to these roles. It is important to note that – as with all composite images – they are approximations of reality. Nonetheless, we believe they provide a valuable perspective on the 'typical' occupants of these roles.

All figures in the examples below are a combination of salary and bonus.

## In-house (large companies with more than 1,000 staff)

### Director/Head

The most senior CRS person in the organisation has an average total remuneration of £121.4k (UK – £110.9k), though many earn a lot more. The individual concerned is more likely to be male than female, although an increasing number of women now occupy this role compared to the last survey.

The person concerned will have a first degree – though not in a CRS-related subject – and been in full-time employment for a minimum of 15 years, and very possibly a lot longer. Overseeing a budget of around £1m compared to the last survey, it's increasingly the case that this won't be his or her first CRS role.

### Manager

Managers receive an average remuneration of £58.7k (UK – £51.6k) and control a budget of around £600k. People in this role report to a more senior individual with overarching responsibility for CRS. Managers are much more likely to be female and, typically, will have been in full-time employment for around 10 years, including time spent in another CRS role. Managers will almost certainly have a first degree – but not in a CRS-related subject – and over two-thirds will also have worked in other CRS before their current role. Over half will also have a master's degree, with two in three having studied a CRS-related subject to this level.

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### Adviser/Analyst

This person is a member of a larger team reporting to the Manager or Director/ Head roles described above. Advisers are likely to be female graduates earning around £50.5k (overall) and 38.6k (in the UK) and have been in full-time employment for less than 10 years.

### Assistant/Team member

This is a junior role that provides support to others within the CRS team. Average remuneration is around £34.4k (UK – £33.9k). Overwhelmingly female with around five years in full-time employment, including time spent in another CRS role, assistants will almost certainly have a first degree (though not in CRS).

## Consultancies

### Director/Partner

This could be a senior person in a CRS team at a large consultancy or the owner/ founder/director of a smaller consultancy. Three times as likely to be male than female, this person earns around £79.2k (UK – £78.5k) and controls a budget of around £500k. Around 70% of directors are graduates and a similar percentage have a master's, though probably not in a CRS-related subject. He or she will have almost certainly worked in CRS before the current role and have been in full-time employment for an average of 15–20 years.

### Senior consultant

Senior consultants are more likely to be men. These individuals have an in-depth knowledge of a particular aspect of CRS, though some might be generalists. On average, they earn around £51k (UK – £50k), will have worked in the sector for around 10 years and have previous experience in another CRS-related role.

### Consultant/Analyst

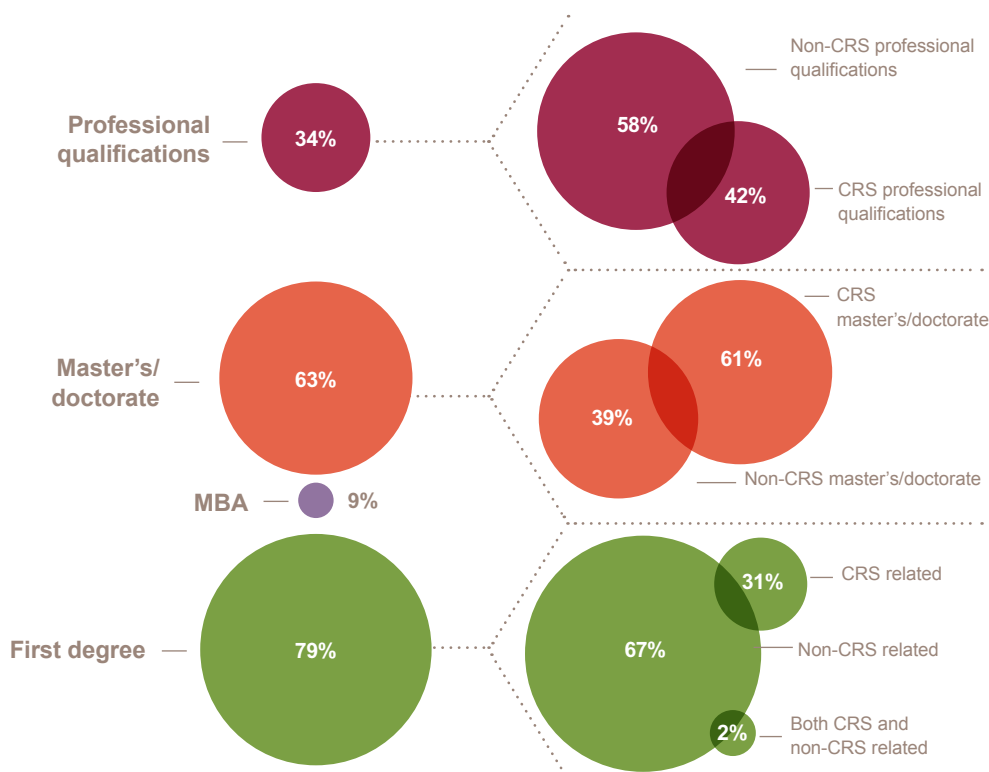
This role is usually occupied by someone with less experience of CRS and who supports more senior colleagues. They are predominantly female, earning about £39k (UK – £37k). They've worked in CRS prior to their current jobs and have been in full-time employment for around five years.

# Education, qualifications and career history

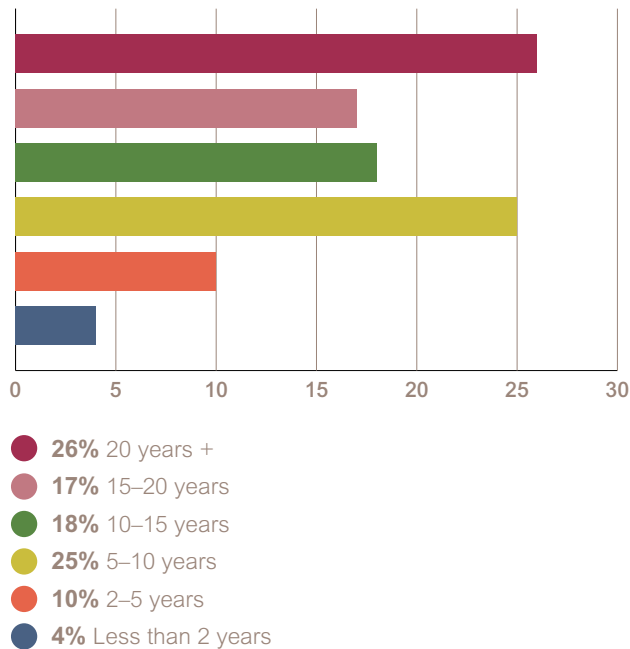
Another recurring theme this year is the extremely high level of educational attainment of those working in the sector. Overall, 93% of respondents had either a first degree and/or a postgraduate qualification – up from 90% last time. Nearly 80% had a first degree (a third in a CRS-related subject) and 63% a master's or doctorate (with just under two-thirds in a CRS-related topic).

The vast majority of respondents – 91% – had been employed in another job prior to their current role. Over 60% of respondents had been in employment for 10 years or more (similar to the previous survey) and 70% had previously worked in CRS. Just under 30% of respondents had worked in the sector for 10 years or more.

## Qualifications of participants (%)



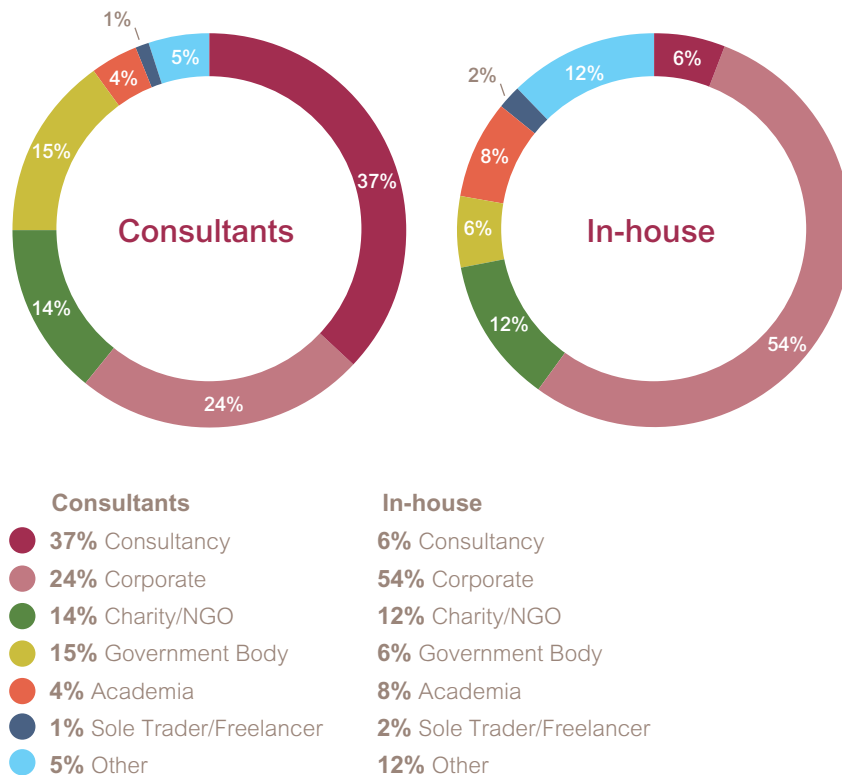
## Time in employment



**Becky Coffin, Head of Sustainability, Kingfisher plc**

What makes a role in sustainability so dynamic is the fact that much of it is about change management. The challenges faced are fast-moving and diverse, and the opportunities to be involved in so many different functions across the business are continually evolving. This means today’s sustainability leaders need a flexible toolbox of transferable skills and competencies as well as a sound technical background, as we can see in the results of this year’s survey. The ability to ‘engage with stakeholders’ has many facets to it – at Kingfisher, this ranges from getting buy-in from the board, to connecting with our 75,000 colleagues to support them in helping our customers have a sustainable home. In a business like Kingfisher that is transforming; it’s an exciting journey which offers opportunities to stretch and develop.

## Career switches from previous jobs



## Key competencies

The ability to engage with stakeholders was viewed by all respondents as the most important competence both for getting into the profession and operating at maximum effectiveness once in. In-house respondents then placed the ability to influence and persuade second – not surprising perhaps in the face of budgetary pressures and the need to convince sometimes sceptical colleagues in other functions of the benefits of CRS – followed by plan and develop strategy.

Conversely, for those seeking to break into consultancy, greater emphasis was then placed on the ability to research and analyse followed by plan and develop strategy. We presume this is because these are the skills that can be utilised from day one and are readily marketable to clients. However, according to respondents, to work with maximum effectiveness as a consultant the second most important competence is plan and develop strategy followed by influence and persuade. This accords with the standard career progression of consultants where, as they become more senior, there is a greater requirement for strategic advice and convincing clients that what is being proposed meets their needs.



### Beth Knight, Head of Corporate Sustainability for EY EMEA Financial Services

We intuitively know that CRS professionals need a wide-ranging and divergent mix of competencies to be successful. And, where individuals have more developed competencies, they are able to respond to sophisticated challenges in a way that others are not. In a profession where there is a consistent call for values-based and transformational leadership to drive the sustainability agenda, it's more important than ever to understand 'what good looks like'.

The competency findings in this year's salary survey correlate closely with my own research on this topic. Drawing on psychometric assessment data from 97 sustainability leaders across the globe, the most effective professionals are shown to be those who exhibit all five competencies shown here. To go further, sustainability leaders at the top of our profession are those who: prioritise the development of their own expertise and that of their team; have the ability to establish rapport and communicate via appropriate means for their audience; and operate inclusively and collaboratively with others.

### Top 5 entry competencies (in-house and consultants)

(the competencies have been weighted according to their position)

Top 5 entry competencies – In-house		Top 5 entry competencies – Consultants	
1	Engage With Stakeholders	1	Engage With Stakeholders
2	Influence & Persuade	2	Research & Analyse
3	Plan & Develop Strategy	3	Plan & Develop Strategy
4	Project Management	4	Project Management
5	Research & Analyse	5	Influence & Persuade

### Top 5 competences for maximum effectiveness (in-house and consultants)

(the competencies have been weighted according to their position)

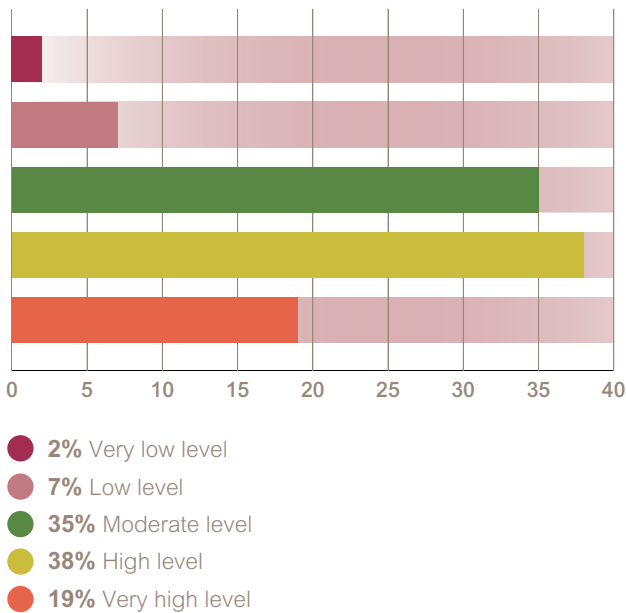
Top 5 impact competencies – In-house		Top 5 impact competencies – Consultants	
1	Engage With Stakeholders	1	Engage With Stakeholders
2	Influence & Persuade	2	Plan & Develop Strategy
3	Plan & Develop Strategy	3	Influence & Persuade
4	Measure & Report Impact	4	Research & Analyse
5	Project Management	5	Project Management

# Companies

The levels of commitment to CRS within organisations were roughly on a par with previous surveys and were, again, remarkably consistent across regions. Senior management remains more committed than other employees – 57% of respondents said the former demonstrated a high or very high level of commitment versus 41% of the latter.

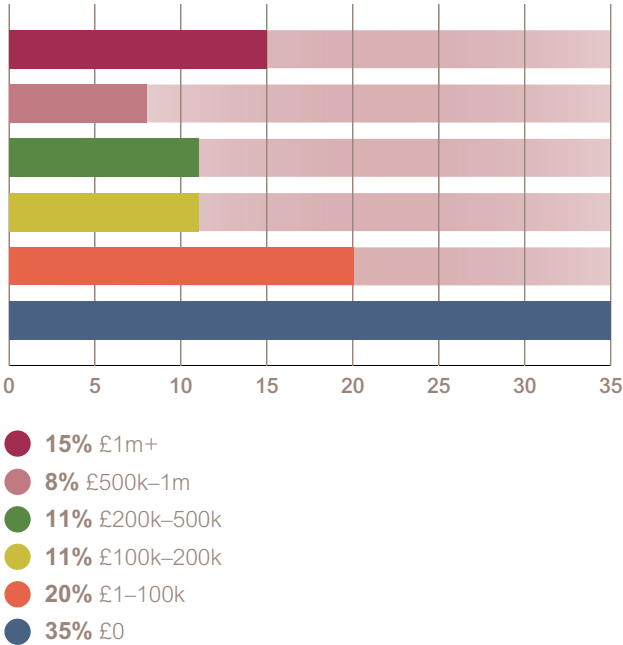
This supports our own experience where the majority of senior corporate figures ‘get’ the importance of CR and sustainability to the business whereas at other levels there often remains a lack of understanding, ambivalence or, on occasion, hostility. We see these results as powerful evidence of the continuing need to articulate the case for CRS effectively and in appropriate language to internal audiences.

## Overall levels of organisational commitment



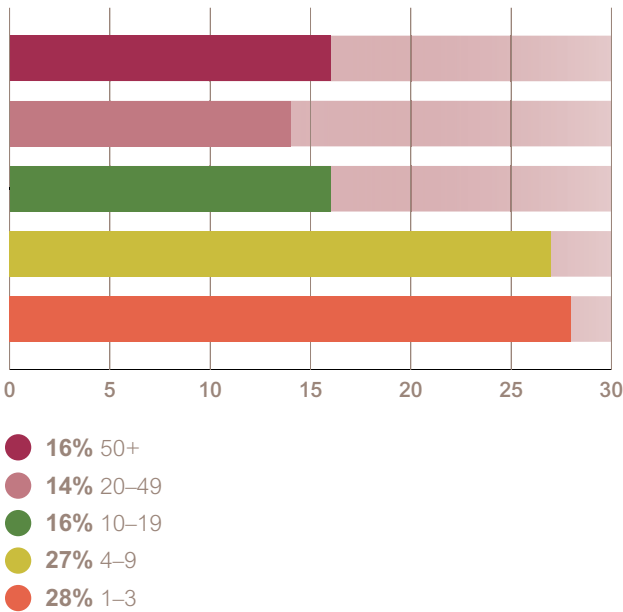
As with the previous survey, 35% of respondents have no budgetary responsibility, 15% have budgets in excess of £1m and the average budget for those managing over £1m is around £1,700,000.

Budgets



Over half of in-house respondents worked in teams with fewer than 10 members, while 29% were part of teams of 20 or more people.

Team size in-house



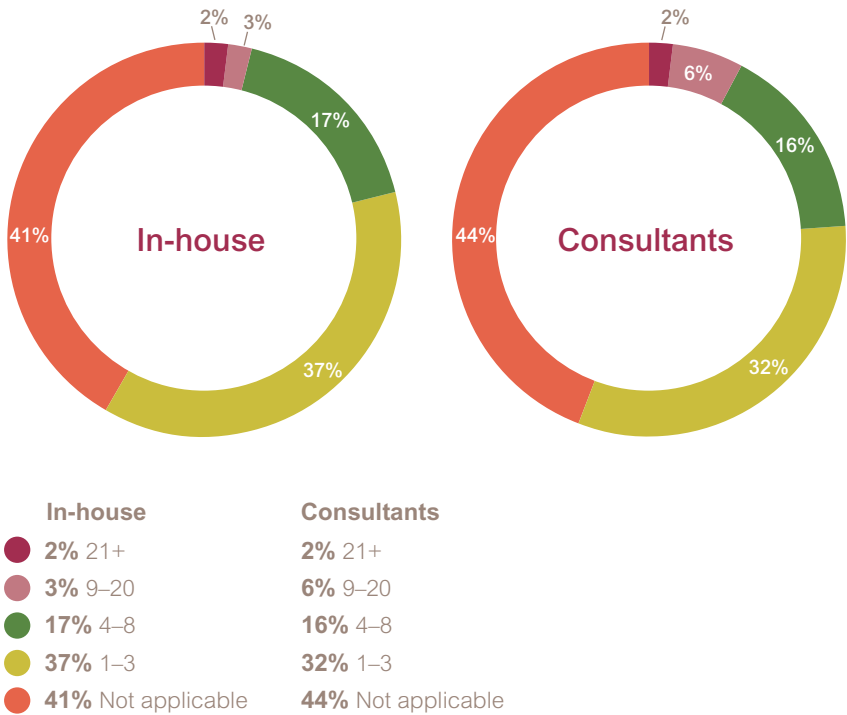
Jennie Galbraith, Group Head of Sustainability, BAT

Over the last few years we’ve worked hard to align CRS with the core business strategy. Consequently, this has resulted in greater board engagement and understanding of the issues. At the same time, the board’s closer involvement coupled with a tough economic climate means that CRS initiatives are subject to the same rigour and requirements as everything else. Given that many of our CRS projects focus on the medium to longer term, we need to be adept at making the business case when the benefits are not likely to be apparent over a shorter timeframe.

As well as being personally committed and interested in the strategic aspects of CRS, there’s an onus on the board and senior management to create an environment where it’s prioritised and valued throughout the organisation. This is about embedding CRS in the culture, policies and processes. Without this tangible support and reinforcement, sustainability gets lost amid the myriad of other priorities that are competing for middle managers’ attention. You can’t blame the latter for not caring if they are actually being ‘told’ to care more about other things. Leadership comes from the top and we should stop using lack of engagement of middle management as an excuse for not making progress.

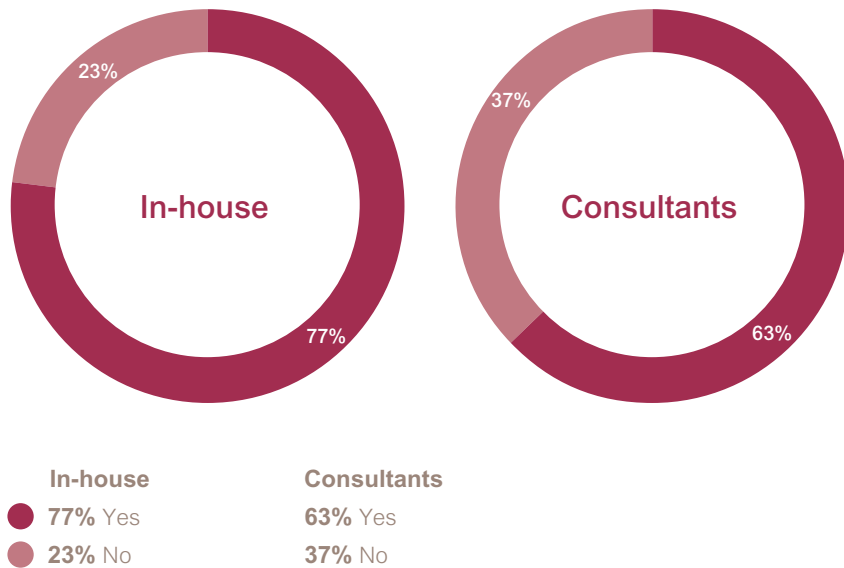
Overall, 42% of respondents had no direct reports. Of the remainder, over a third of those working in-house and around the same for consultants had 1–3 direct reports.

Number of direct reports (in-house and consultants)



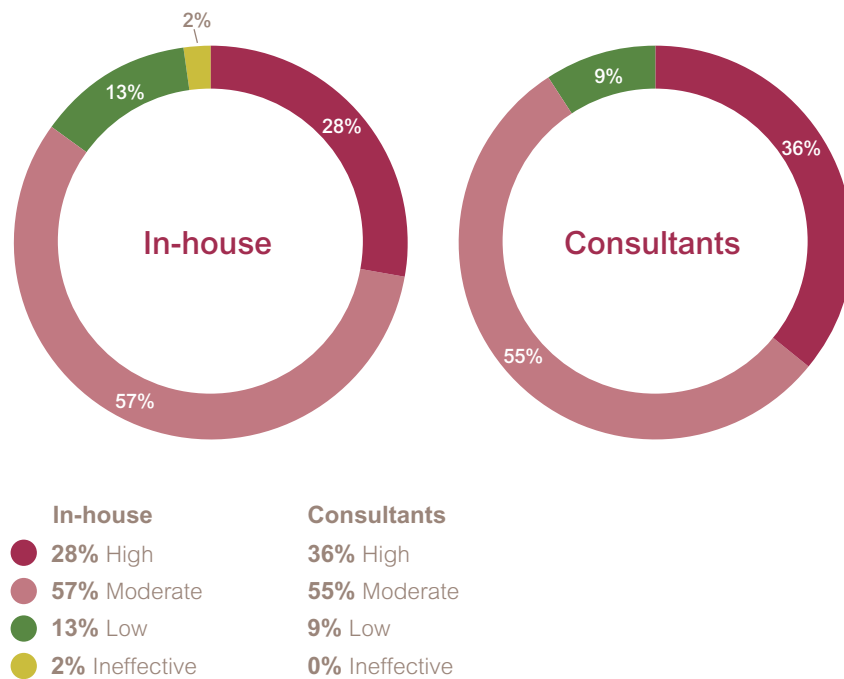


### Promote diversity (in-house and consultants)



A very significant percentage (77%) of in-house respondents said that their employers had a policy to promote diversity, and three-quarters felt that it was either highly or moderately effective. Among consultants, while diversity policies were less commonplace (63%), when they were in force, over 90% of respondents said they were highly or moderately effective.

### Effectively promote diversity (in-house and consultants)



**Tim Brooks, Vice President of Corporate Responsibility, LEGO Group**

The maturing of CSR over the last 15 to 20 years, and the fact that there are now clear career paths for graduates to follow in all sectors, means that we have never seen so many great candidates from all over the world: entrepreneurs, seasoned CSR professionals, new graduates with CSR master's, teachers, doctors, ex-military – the list goes on. This is true diversity and brings with it new ideas, new ways of working, and a relentless focus on success.



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Strategy development and reporting/performance measurement retain their top spots both in-house and for consultants. This accords with our own perceptions and anecdotal evidence and we are strongly of the view that these areas will continue to remain a focus of activity for the foreseeable future.

For in-house respondents there has been very little movement since the last survey in terms of where they focus their efforts. The only change has been that auditing/assurance has dropped out of the top five activities to be replaced by community investment. For consultants, while the top five activities remain the same, the running order has changed with stakeholder engagement and auditing/assurance rising to third and fourth places respectively while environment has dropped to fifth.

## Top 5 activities – in-house (and compared to 2014)

2014	2016	Activity
1	1 =	CR/Sustainability Strategy Development & Implementation
2	2 =	Reporting/performance measurement
3	3 =	Environment
4	4 =	Stakeholder engagement
–	5 ▲	Community investment
5	– ▼	Auditing/assurance

#### Top 5 activities – consultants (and compared to 2014)

2014	2016	Activity
1	1 =	CR/Sustainability Strategy Development & Implementation
2	2 =	Reporting/Performance measurement
4	3 ▲	Stakeholder engagement
5	4 ▲	Auditing/assurance
3	5 ▼	Environment

## Matthew Gitsham

To be effective, there are broadly three things that people working in this sector need to understand and be good at. First, most obviously, there is content knowledge – a good grasp of what CR and sustainability is all about, a good literacy of the key global issues and effective business responses. Second, the CR and sustainability professional needs a thorough grasp of their industry sector and the same kind of commercial awareness and language that everyone else in their organisation has. A personal track record of accomplishment in a commercial role goes a long way towards establishing credibility and authority. And third, they need to be an effective change agent. The ability to effectively engage with external stakeholders and to influence and persuade colleagues across the business is part of this – but the effective change agent needs to understand how organisations really tick, how change really happens, and what kind of interventions they can make to prod systems in the right direction. It is generally this third capability to understand how to lead change that sets apart the most effective CR and sustainability professionals.

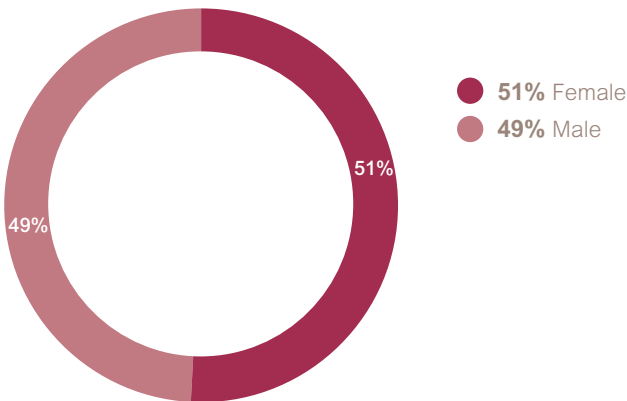


**Matthew Gitsham, Director,  
Ashridge Centre for Business  
and Sustainability at Hult  
International Business School**

# Gender

The survey continues to highlight disparities in the level of remuneration and seniority between men and women.

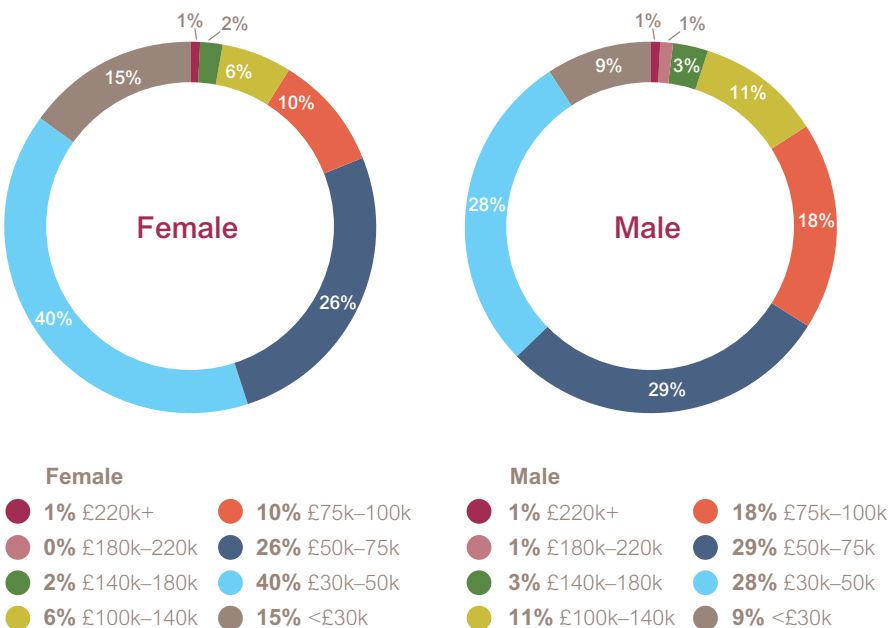
Overall gender split (in-house and consultants)



**Dr Márcia Balisciano, Director of Corporate Responsibility, RELX Group**

Women have regained their dominance in the survey and accounted for 51% of the respondents (compared to 47% last time) – the same split as in our very first survey back in 2007. In-house, women made up 54% of respondents, whereas in consultancies they were in the minority and numbered only 43%.

Salary distribution by gender



As corporate responsibility professionals, we are actively focused on promoting diversity and inclusion. But the findings of the 2016 CR Salary Survey show that within our own ranks, while women make up slightly more of the CR and Sustainability workforce, there is a 22.5% gap between what they are getting paid. This can be attributed to the fact that more men occupy top spots in the field, particularly striking in consultancies where 70% of directors and partners are male. Men are therefore earning more and receiving bigger bonuses. But even at the median they are doing better than their female counterparts: the percentage of men earning a bonus of £20,000-£30,000 is double that of women. The 7% rise in their salaries since the last survey is a positive development. But given our roles as champions for equality, if it doesn't start with us, then where?

The global average salaries for men and women were £67,408 – a decrease of 0.7% on the last survey – and £55,148 (5.6% increase) respectively. In the UK, average salaries were lower with men earning £63,180 (3% increase on 2014) and women £52,170 (8% increase). An increasing percentage of female respondents are earning in excess of the latter average and at the highest levels of remuneration the gender salary gap appears to be narrowing. However, female bonuses continue to be less generous than their male counterparts and men also continue to be more likely to receive bonuses in excess of £20,000.

In our second survey back in 2009, one of the commentators highlighted that there appeared to be a clear distinction between where men and women working in the sector focused their activities. In a memorable phrase, she described how men stride around in their big boots trying to save the planet while women stay at home, communicate with people and do the 'soft' community-related stuff. Have things changed much over the last seven years?

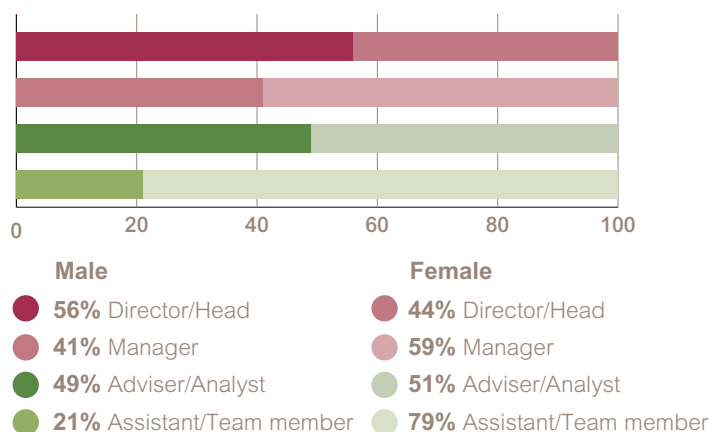


**Kate Wylie, Global Sustainability Director, Mars Incorporated**

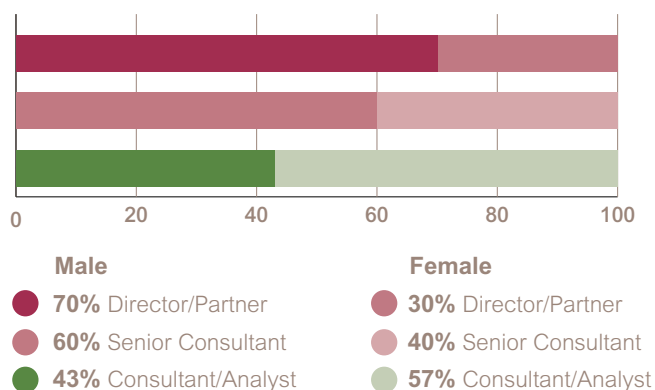
It is interesting to see that within sustainability, a sector that is focused on resolving social issues, we still have a gender gap. Female bonuses continue to be less generous than their male counterparts; granted, this is probably partly due to the fact that there are fewer women in the more senior positions. But we should try and shift both these data points.

An ongoing debate within gender is whether the different pay situations between the sexes are due to women being discriminated against or women not promoting themselves. I suspect it's a mixture of both. We all know the study where it was found that only 7% of female MBA students negotiated for their first job, while 57% of men did. This is an example of why Sheryl Sandberg is requesting women to 'Lean In'! What I request of those working in sustainability is to hold up the mirror and ensure we are behaving as we are asking others to.

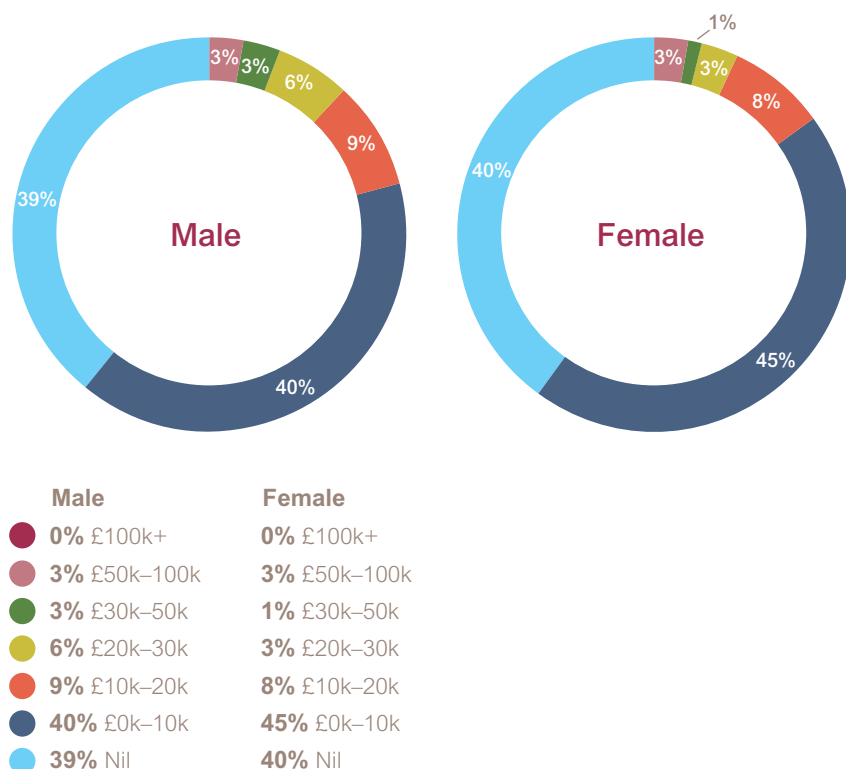
#### Gender distribution by job title (in-house)



#### Gender distribution by job title (consultants)



## Bonus comparison by gender



Looking at in-house respondents, the primary focus for both sexes is CR strategy development and implementation with 25% of men and 33% of women selecting this as their primary focus. However, men are still disproportionately represented in areas such as environment (12% chose this as a primary focus versus 7% of women) and health & safety (11% versus 2%), while community activities are still very much the preserve of women (11% versus 4%). Within consultancies, there is very little difference between the primary focus of men and women with the only real disparity relating to carbon and energy management (13% of men versus 8% of women).



**Mike Barry, Director of Sustainable Business, Marks and Spencer**

One interpretation of this year's report is 'steady as she goes' – a welcome shrinking of the gender pay gap and job security holding steady. Overall, though, no dramatic shifts compared to previous years. Yet we would be complacent in the extreme if we didn't recognise the seismic shift that is beginning around our profession. We saw major global policy statements in 2015 around COP21 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Inequality is growing and with it anger with the established political and economic 'system'. A technology revolution is happening; from 3D printing to driverless cars; artificial intelligence to the Internet of Things; drones to robotics. Together these trends set us on a long and complex journey towards a very different way of doing business. Our profession is no longer about sharpening up auditing, improving reports and managing stakeholders to preserve today's way of business. Instead, we must be entrepreneurs re-imagining how we serve customer needs in a way that delivers value for all. Leaders who are fleet of foot, highly networked across the economy, comfortable with risk, technology savvy, strategic and scalers of solutions will prosper in this brave new world. Is that you?



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# Job satisfaction and job security

As in previous surveys, those working in CRS roles clearly enjoy what they do and would strongly recommend pursuing a career in the sector.

Around a quarter of respondents were very satisfied with their jobs, with a further 56% declaring themselves to be satisfied. These percentages were the same for in-house employees and consultants. Taken together, these results re-affirm the findings from previous surveys that people working in the sector enjoy what they do. This is further supported by the fact that 93% – a figure that has remained remarkably constant over the years – would recommend a career in the sector.

## Job security

	Less secure (2014 score)	The same (2014 score)	More secure (2014 score)
<b>Overall</b>	21% (17%)	51% (51%)	28% (32%)
<b>UK</b>	20% (16%)	52% (52%)	28% (32%)
<b>Rest of Europe</b>	19% (20%)	50% (50%)	31% (30%)
<b>North America</b>	24% (13%)	50% (55%)	26% (32%)
<b>Rest of World</b>	21% (18%)	54% (47%)	25% (35%)

Overall, the percentage of respondents feeling less secure in their jobs increased to 21% (2014: 17%) while those feeling more secure declined to 28% (2014: 32%). The UK and Rest of Europe results were pretty consistent with these figures, but in North America the percentage of respondents feeling less secure nearly doubled from 13% last time to 24% this year and those feeling more secure fell by 6% to 26%. In the Rest of the World, those feeling less secure and the same were in line with the overall results but there was a 10% fall – to 25% – compared to the last survey in those feeling more secure. Again, we believe the North American and Rest of the World results may be heavily influenced by perceptions about the performance of the economy in those regions.



**Sonja Graham,**  
Managing Partner, Global  
Action Plan UK

No wonder that 93% of us would recommend a CRS career, given the smorgasbord of great people it attracts. As well as being gender-balanced, the wide-ranging talents needed mean that there isn't an identikit 'CRS' person.

This report highlights the vital skills needed, from stakeholder engagement to strategy development and influencing. The Global Action Plan team includes former lawyers, journalists, consultants and teachers – and we just cover the environmental dimension. If CRS professionals are to constantly challenge their organisations to improve, they can't afford to get trapped in a single mindset. This makes diversity in all forms a necessity and long may it continue. Conversely, the gender pay gap shouldn't – so let's use the powers of influence cited here to put that right.





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## Paul Burke

After nearly ten years and six surveys, this year's results confirm much of what we've highlighted previously; at the same time, they still have the capacity to surprise and provoke further questions.

Based on this and past data, we've been able to build up a fairly detailed picture of who works in the sector, where they focus their efforts, how they're organised, and the salaries and benefits they attract. We know, too, that the sector continues to attract new entrants and that, overwhelmingly, people enjoy what they do – in part, at least, because they feel they're making a difference.

This year's results also suggest that salaries are closely linked to the performance of particular sectors and that the changes to average salaries since the last survey are closely related to the relative values of the currencies in which they're paid. Being an optimist by nature, I see this as further evidence of the degree to which CRS is sitting ever more squarely in the mainstream of economic activity. There's also some evidence that the disparity between male and female salaries is narrowing – although not as fast as we might wish – as women progress up the career ladder and fill more of the middle and senior management roles.

Of course, and as I often have to remind people when they ask if a 'colleague' or 'friend' is paid the 'right' amount, the survey can't provide answers to every question! This is due both to the limitations of the survey methodology but also to lack of granularity of the data when we try to break it down into smaller and smaller chunks. Without making the survey a lot longer and more complicated there isn't much we can do about the former but the way to address the latter is through an even higher level of response – especially from those regions which, for whatever reasons, remain impervious to our entreaties to participate. As I've said before, we'll do our best to increase the response rate but we'd welcome any help you can give us.

My final comment relates to the competences required to enter the profession and to be successful within it. The fact that the ability to engage with stakeholders ranks so highly in both areas – and for those working in-house and in consultancies – mirrors my experience and that of my colleagues at Carnstone. This emphasis (or possibly re-emphasis) on the centrality of stakeholders to effective CRS approaches is a powerful message not just for those working in the sector but for their employers and clients as well.



**Paul Burke, Senior Partner,  
Carnstone**



## Andy Cartland

This has been a seminal 12 months for sustainability.

Lord Browne's book *Connect* sent shock waves through our community, with his calls for an end to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He argued that 30% of a typical business's value are now at stake in its relationship with society – which translates into around £5.6bn for a typical FTSE100 company – and current interpretations of CSR are woefully inadequate.

Almost as Lord Browne's book came out, the Volkswagen scandal broke. Only weeks after reaching the top spot on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index auto sector, leading 52 auto companies, it acknowledged it had been rigging its emissions results. And almost to validate Lord Browne's maths, the share price plunged 30% on the day of the announcement.

Some companies seem to be taking Lord Browne's message to heart. We have seen at least two FTSE100 companies – wittingly or unwittingly – significantly reduce the headcount in their sustainability teams. But at the same time, we're seeing some extraordinary examples of leadership.

Unilever's great journey continues, with Paul Polman demonstrating remarkable societal and business leadership. IKEA is seemingly going through an environmental change management programme since the arrival of its CSO Steve Howard. And then came Tesla's launch of its Model 3 – with over \$15bn worth of orders in 10 days for its mass market electric vehicle, it was the biggest product launch in history.

The challenge facing all sustainability experts today is bringing what matters to society into their core business decision-making. Only then does it address the 30% of business value at stake, rather than a nice-to-have side activity that makes people feel they are doing 'enough'. And that raises big questions about the skills and competencies of people in sustainability roles.

Effective and persuasive people with an understanding of core business are critical if sustainability is to prosper and to truly have the most beneficial impact on business. Technical experts will always be important, but if they can't cut it in the boardroom, they will preside over CR/S programmes which are subject to the volatility.

There are plenty of examples of companies that are starting to work this out. LEGO and Marks and Spencer are good case studies. The leadership in such businesses have similar traits mixing passion, an entrepreneurial outlook and significant management expertise. Such qualities are essential in our future sustainability leaders, and our ability to assess, attract, nurture and retain this calibre of talent is imperative.



**Andrew Cartland, Founder and Director, Acre**

## Vic Taylor

As CRS professionals, many of us are lucky to be doing a job we enjoy and gain a lot of personal satisfaction from, and we work with like-minded sustainability-focused teams. The survey results continue to show that this remains the case for many of us working in the sector, and that, regardless of whether our employer is a big corporate or a small consultancy, we benefit from consistent structures and approaches to remuneration and key issues such as gender equality.

Reading the results of the survey I did find myself wondering why there is a drop in the job security figures. What is it that is making some CRS professionals slightly more uncomfortable in their roles?

My suspicion is that this is due to the amount and speed of change. With the global launch of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the outcomes of COP21, and the focus on a more scientific approach for corporates to meet climate challenges, the atmosphere and approach to CRS within corporates could be beginning to change, and change rapidly. With change may come a move to integrate teams internally, and this kind of restructuring does cause uncertainty and often a consolidation of roles.

This, along with a continued progression towards integrating environmental and social elements into annual economic reporting, could, and hopefully will, herald a significant level of change in terms of the position CRS professionals have within, and when supporting, organisations. This can only be a good thing as we see CRS becoming more integrated into how big corporates do business, but in the short term this kind of change could cause a level of uncertainty.



**Vic Taylor, Managing Director, Flag**



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# About the authors



Acre is a specialist sustainability recruitment consultancy connecting companies and people across corporate responsibility, sustainability, environment, energy and health & safety to help build the next generation of sustainable business. The company was founded in 2003 to respond to the growing need for sustainability professionals and offers bespoke solutions for recruitment, executive search and business intelligence.

[www.acre.com](http://www.acre.com)



Carnstone is an independent management consultancy specialising in CR and sustainability. We have broad expertise and advise large, mainly corporate clients on the full range of social, environmental and ethical matters, from tentative first steps through to day-to-day management, strategic planning, measuring performance and corporate reporting.

[www.carnstone.com](http://www.carnstone.com)



Flag is a creative agency specialising in sustainability communications and corporate reporting. We help companies to tell their stories and engage with stakeholders.

With stakeholders increasingly demanding trust and transparency, businesses need to develop impactful communications that show performance, encourage dialogue and promote positive change. We're a 48-strong team of creative thinkers who work together with our clients to produce a range of communications solutions. We offer strategic advice, and editorial, design and production services – in digital and print.

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