



# Heritage sector survey results 2022

A Prospect briefing • November 2022

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# Executive Summary

This is the second in a series of research reports prepared as part of Prospect's 2022 campaign assessing the impacts of the current cost of living crisis on workers within the UK Heritage Sector.

Our first report focused on the significant positive impact the heritage sector has, both on the UK economy and the beneficial impacts to physical, mental, and social wellbeing of individuals and communities engaged with historic places and assets and contrasted this with the low pay levels widespread across the breadth of roles in the sector, including those with high skills, qualifications, and experience requirements.<sup>1</sup>

This second report presents the results of a members survey conducted in July and August 2022 and examines from an individual perspective the impacts the current cost-of-living crisis is having on heritage sector workers. It is intended to complement other similar 2022 survey work undertaken by the Institute of Conservation (ICON)<sup>2</sup>, the Museums Association salaries research and guidelines<sup>3</sup>, and the British Archaeological Jobs Research Poverty Impact Report<sup>4</sup>.

The resultant picture is stark, not least because the findings come on the back of what was already understood to be a sector in difficulty.

Our previous heritage campaigns, Heritage in a cold climate (2014) and Heritage: cold climate to ice age (2018) documented the impact on jobs and funding from a decade of austerity cuts.

Prospect's 2014 report showed that our members were then deeply concerned about the impact of cuts in relation to:

- recruiting and retaining staff with key skills
- the reduction of services and programmes provided by heritage-based organisations
- the imposition of hidden charges to help maintain budgets
- a reduction in services because of job losses
- stagnating pay, leading to low morale and people leaving the sector.

And that these concerns had become heightened by the time of the 2018 report, further compounded by issues around the impacts of Brexit, with a significant number of sector staff (16.5% on average in 2017) being non-UK EU nationals.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2022/June/23/World-class-heritage-Second-class-pay-report>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.icon.org.uk/resource/conservation-salaries-survey-2022.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ma-production.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/app/uploads/2022/11/02145357/MA-Salary-Research-and-Recommendations-2022.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bajrfed.co.uk/bajrpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/BAJR-Poverty-Impact-Report-2022.pdf>

Fast forward to today and the COVID-19 pandemic has seen visitor numbers and revenues for heritage sites badly impacted, with predictions that visitor numbers will not return to pre-pandemic levels until perhaps 2025.

The combination of Covid-impacts together with pre-existing funding problems as identified in our 2014 and 2018 reports have had widespread implications for staffing levels, with the Museums Association redundancy tracker having recorded almost 5,000 heritage job losses in the period to March 2022<sup>5</sup>, equivalent to about 10% of the UK museums workforce.

The high inflation figures and soaring energy costs now being experienced across the UK economy constitute the latest elements of what has been described in a recent Scottish Parliamentary committee report as a 'perfect storm' for the culture and heritage sectors comprising long term budget pressures, reduced income generation, increased operating costs and workforce issues<sup>6</sup>.

Our survey findings concur with these conclusions, highlighting that this is a sector that will be in crisis without significant interventions now in respect of:

- much needed reviews of funding models and funding levels
- the provision of emergency funding to assist with current high energy costs
- greater freedoms and flexibilities to implement and maintain appropriate pay levels and more secure career progression mechanisms commensurate with other similarly qualified professions

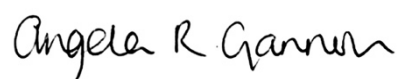
The cost-of-living crisis is now pushing many vital workers into poverty, debt, or severe financial distress. What the survey shows is that many working in the sector are at breaking point and increasingly feeling they have no option but to try to find alternative work which will leave the sector lacking the skilled and experienced workforce it needs to operate effectively.

We are keen to work constructively with policymakers, industry bodies, and employers to develop the solutions needed to address these key challenges.

It is time we properly valued the experts and specialists who bring so much value to our lives and add so much value to our economy.



**Ben Middleton**  
Prospect National Secretary



**Angela Gannon**  
Prospect Heritage Group Chair

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/workforce/redundancy-tracker/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/committees/constitution-europe-external-affairs-and-culture-committee/prebudget-scrutiny-funding-for-culture.pdf>

# Introduction

Prospect is proud to represent more than 10,000 professional and specialist members working in the heritage sector in areas such as curatorial, conservation, archaeology, and visitor services.

The heritage sector makes a valuable contribution to British cultural life. Providing the country with a wealth of historic sites, buildings and gardens, collections, and literature. Many of the museums and galleries are internationally famous and centres for research and conservation.

The economic contribution of the heritage sector is well understood.<sup>7</sup> Prior to the pandemic the heritage sector provided over half a million jobs and contributed an estimated £36.6 billion gross value added (GVA) to the economy.<sup>8</sup> In 2015 domestic and international tourists made 192 million trips to visit the UK's cultural, historic and natural assets, spending £17.5 billion.<sup>9</sup>

The sector has been rocked by the economic and political crisis that have engulfed the country. During the pandemic buildings were closed to the public and many workers were furloughed, from which the sector is slowly recovering. The sector has now been jolted by the economic crisis, caused by a range of factors, which has seen inflation rise above 10%. This has hit those working in the sector particularly hard. Although many workers have high-level qualifications salary levels, when compared with other sectors, are much lower.<sup>10</sup>

## Annual full-time gross pay by occupation<sup>11</sup>

Occupational description	Median salary
Conservation professionals	£31,215
Librarians	£27,599
Archivists and curators	£28,234
Conservation and environmental associate professionals	£24,552
Library clerks and assistants	£21,324
Median of all professional occupations	£41,141
Median of all associate professional and technical occupations	£32,926

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<sup>7</sup> <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2022/June/23/World-class-heritage-Second-class-pay-report>

<sup>8</sup> Heritage and the economy 2020, <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-and-the-economy-2020/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/20160927\\_-\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_heritage\\_tourism\\_on\\_the\\_uk\\_economy\\_-\\_final\\_repo.pdf](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/20160927_-_the_impact_of_heritage_tourism_on_the_uk_economy_-_final_repo.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [World class heritage – Second class pay report \(prospect.org.uk\)](#), p4

<sup>11</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), 2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/regionbyoccupation4digitsoc2010ashtable15>

To better understand how the cost-of-living crisis has affected those working in the heritage sector Prospect conducted an online survey during July and August 2022. There were over 2,500 responses, spread across 150 different organisations in all regions and nations of the United Kingdom.

This report provides a summary of the findings from the survey. It is broken up into three parts:

- Section 1: Salaries, progression, and maintaining professional standards
- Section 2: The impact of the cost-of-living crisis
- Section 3: Changes to working practices

## Key findings

The survey provides more evidence of low pay within the sector, but also reveals the uneven distribution between nations and regions and different organisations. This is most starkly shown by the different approach to pay progression taken by organisations based in Scotland and Wales compared with those in England. This clearly is one factor that exacerbates low pay within the sector.

- Median pay in London and the English regions is lower than median pay in Scotland and Wales even when there is an adjustment for the age of respondents and their length of service.
- A significant minority of respondents (39%) are in roles that have no progression through their pay grade, this includes curators (49%), conservators (46%), collections (47%), exhibitions (54%), administration and finance (56%), librarians (49%), IT (53%), facilities (51%), archivists (51%), project managers/programmes (63%).
- Respondents are more likely to reach the maximum in their grade if they work for organisations based in Scotland (35%) and Wales (30%). In London and the English regions a significant minority of respondents have no pay progression (49% and 37% respectively).

The survey provides a revealing snapshot of the sector. Salary pressures have left many feeling that they cannot cope with the rise in prices.

- 90% of respondents have had to make an adjustment to their normal spending pattern.
- Just 13% of low earners have enough income to cover their expenses. A shortfall in income is most likely to be felt by respondents working in London, English regions outside of London and Northern Ireland.
- More than a quarter (26%) have had financial support from their family, 13% have a rising credit bill, 11% have borrowed money from a bank or gone into some other form of debt, 11% of respondents have needed more than one type of support.
- Nearly two thirds of respondents feel anxious about the cost-of-living at least once a week or every day, only 3% are not anxious at all, those in the lowest salary band are most likely to be anxious every day (35%).

- A combination of low pay and rising prices has caused a significant proportion of respondents to actively seek another job. London and the English regions are the areas where respondents are most likely to be seeking work elsewhere, 52% and 46% respectively.

As well as the impact on individuals, organisations are also under strain.

- In the last year three quarters of respondents have had an increase in their workload, 41% a significant increase, 35% a small but noticeable increase. The most common changes are, an increase in administrative work (41%), a reduction in the people employed in respondent's area of expertise (38%), or a reduction in funding in respondent's work area (25%).
- In most organisations there has been an increase in supervisory responsibilities.
- More than half the respondents do not have time to complete their work every day, a few times a week or once a week (57%), and a clear majority of respondents (61%) do not think that there are enough staff to complete core work tasks, only 22% think there are enough staff.
- Just over a third of respondents report an increase in the use of temporary or freelance workers (36%). Respondents working in London (44%) and Scotland (39%) report the largest shift towards this type of contractual engagement.

## **World class heritage, second class pay**

The cost-of-living crisis is now pushing many vital workers into poverty, debt, or severe financial distress. What the survey shows is that many working in the sector are at breaking point.

Prospect believes it is time we properly valued the experts and specialists who bring so much value to our lives and add so much value to our economy.

This means:

- Greater value and recognition given to heritage and heritage workers, with improved funding to address historic low pay levels and the current cost-of-living crisis.
- Greater employer flexibility on pay, terms, and conditions, to enable wages to better reflect skills, qualifications, knowledge and experience.
- Meaningful pay progression mechanisms to ensure heritage staff can progress their careers and earnings.

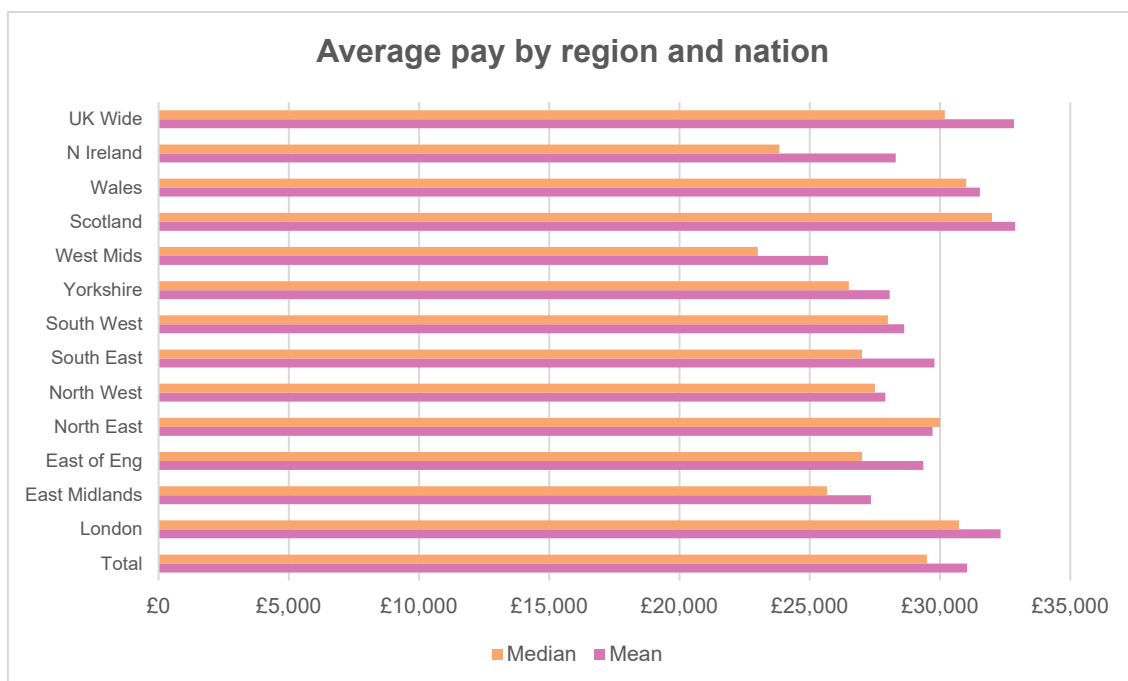
# Section 1 – Salaries, progression, and maintaining professional standards

## Salaries

The sector is dominated by organisations that are in the public sector and charitable trusts. This creates a sector that is driven by a set of values that are aligned with a duty of public service.

The skills and expertise required for many roles takes many years to develop. What the survey results show is that salaries do not reward this expertise, and what is perhaps surprising, average salaries are higher in Scotland than London.

Median pay in Scotland is £32,000, followed by Wales £31,000 and London £30,728. Pay in England, including London and the regions, is £28,964 and just £23,833 in Northern Ireland. London has a pay lead over all other English regions ranging from 2.4% in the North East to 25.1% in the West Midlands.



The average age of respondents is lower in London than Scotland and Wales, which helps to explain some of the difference. As the table below shows when similar age cohorts are compared, the median salary levels in London and Scotland converge for those aged under 45, but Scotland has a clear pay lead for those aged over 45 years of age. When salaries are compared by length of service there is a similar picture. London and Scotland lead Wales and the regions.



## Median salary by age and region or nation (full time)

Region or Nation	Under 45 years	45 years and over	Less than 5 years in grade	5 years or more in grade
London	£30,000	£34,498	£29,025	£33,100
English regions	£25,000	£31,500	£25,000	£29,112
Scotland	£29,800	£36,000	£29,638	£34,000
Wales	£28,500	£34,408	£28,000	£32,000

Scottish and Welsh organisations have the highest median salaries for full time respondents, salaries at the larger archaeology organisations lag behind those of respondents working in museums and galleries.

## Highest and lowest salaries by organisation (full time, median)

Highest	Lowest
Historic Environment Scotland – £37,142	Oxford Archaeology – £25,000
Nature Scot – £37,000	Museum of London Archaeology – £25,026
Historic England – £36,800	Science Museum Group – £25,500
National Museum Wales – £36,000	National Trust – £26,177
National Gallery – £35,513	Wessex Archaeology – £27,825

The highest paid occupations are managers followed by architectural roles, policy, historian, and historic building inspector. The lowest paid roles are museum attendant, collections, gardener, visitor experience/retail and archaeologist.

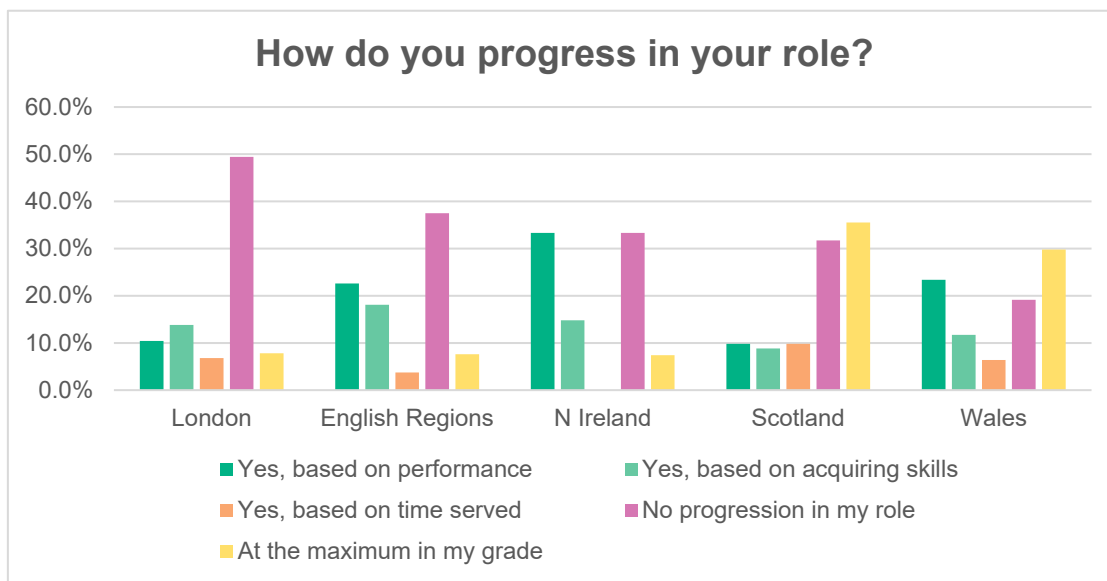
## Highest and lowest salaries by occupation (full time, median)

Highest	Lowest
Manager – £41,000	Museum Attendant – £19,400
Architectural – £38,902	Collections – £23,799
Policy – £38,729	Gardener – £24,000
Historian – £38,462	Visitor Experience/retail – £24,167
Historic Buildings Inspector – £38,450	Archaeologist – £25,600

A majority of respondents are female 63% and a similar proportion are aged under 45 years of age, just 6% are from Black, Asian or other minority ethnic background. Across all organisations the gender pay gap is 4.5%, and there is an ethnicity pay gap of 3.7%.

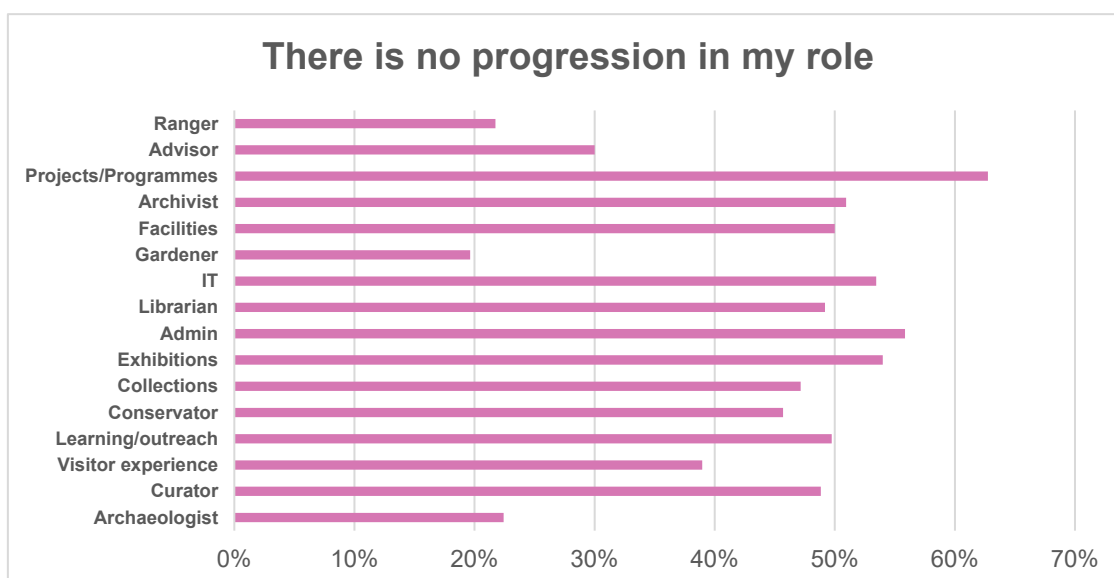
## Progression

There are different approaches to pay progression in the sector. This helps to explain difference in median salary outcomes of respondents working in Scotland, Wales and England.



A significant minority of respondents (39%) are in roles with no progression, and 13% have reached the maximum in their grade and are unable to progress further. Where there is progression, it is most likely to be based on performance (16%) or acquiring skills (15%). Only 6% of respondents have progression linked to the time served in their role. In Scotland the way respondents progress within their grade is equally split between these three different mechanisms; acquiring new skills, performance and time served. Incremental progression based on time served is least likely in English regions and performance-based progression is most likely in Wales and the English regions.

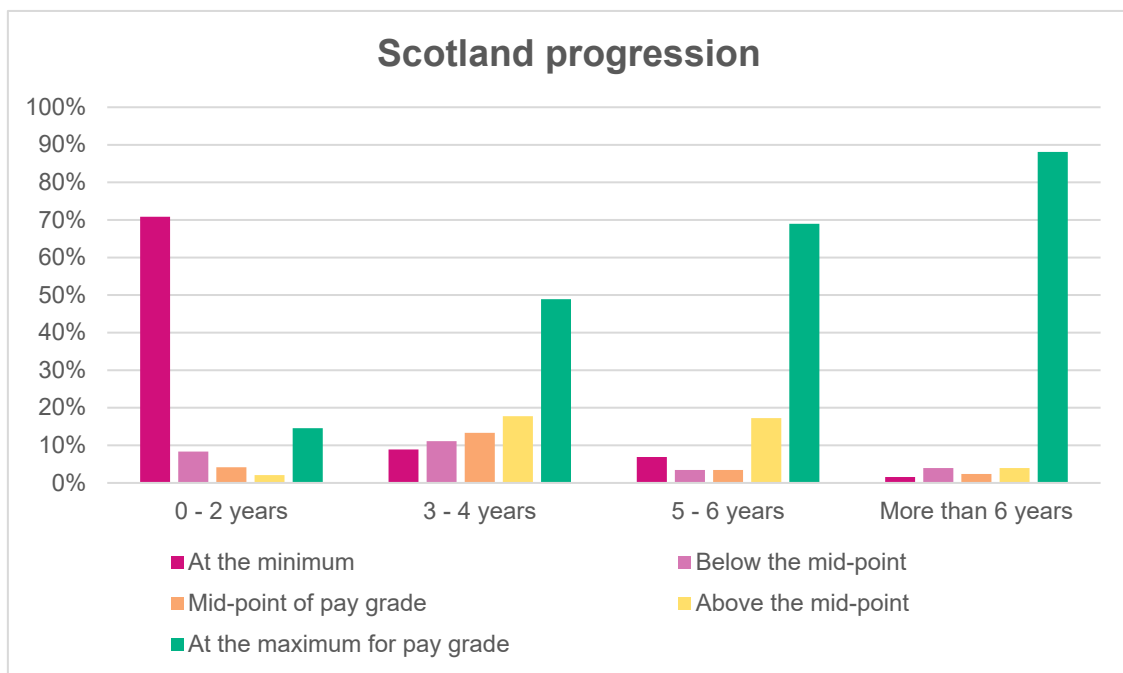
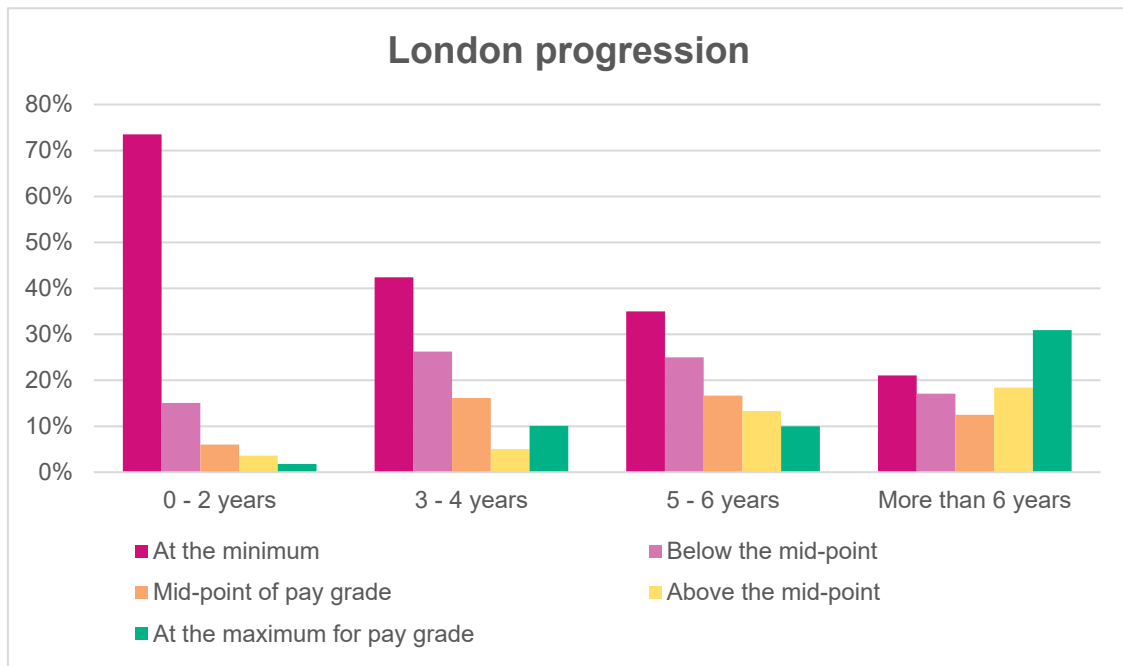
There is a broad spread of occupations where there is no progression. These include curator (49%), conservator (46%), collections (47%), exhibitions (54%), administration and finance (56%), librarian (49%), IT (53%), facilities (51%), archivist (51%), project/programmes (63%).



## Progression journey times

Respondents working for organisations in Scotland (35%) and Wales (30%) are most likely to have reached the maximum in their grade, London (49%) and the English regions (37%) are the least likely to have any progression mechanism at all.

Where progression mechanisms do exist, progression journey times are much quicker in Scotland compared with London and the English regions. In Scotland, after 3 to 4 years nearly 50% of respondents had progressed to the maximum for their grade compared to 21% in the English regions, and 10% in London. After 5 to 6 years this rises to 69% in Scotland but has fallen back to just 17% in the English regions and remains stuck at 10% in London.



## Maintaining professional standards

Roles in the heritage sector require in-depth knowledge and skills. For many roles networking and sharing expertise is an important part of the role. The learning culture within organisations is well established. A majority of respondents in the public sector (56%) are provided with regular Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and in occupational roles where membership of a professional organisation is more likely, respondents are able to attend events to help their professional development. Outside the public sector CPD training is most likely in Wales (54%) followed by the English regions (47%), London (42%) and Scotland (35%).

The roles most likely to have a CPD structure in place include advisor roles (72%), archivist (70%), conservator (69%), project manager/programmes (69%), architect (67%), registrar (67%), conservation (63%), ranger (63%), historic building inspector (62.5%), archaeology (61%), and scientist (61%).



In some roles maintaining membership of an accredited profession is an essential requirement of the job. Just over a third of respondents (34%) are members of a professional organisation. The roles that organisations are most likely to provide support are archaeology (83%), architect (97%), historic building inspector (100%), photographer (92%), project manager/programmes (85%). In roles where membership of a professional organisation is more likely, respondents are able to attend events to help their professional development. Although there is some variation by occupation, most respondents are able to attend events some of the time. Archaeologists are more likely to attend events in their own time (17%).

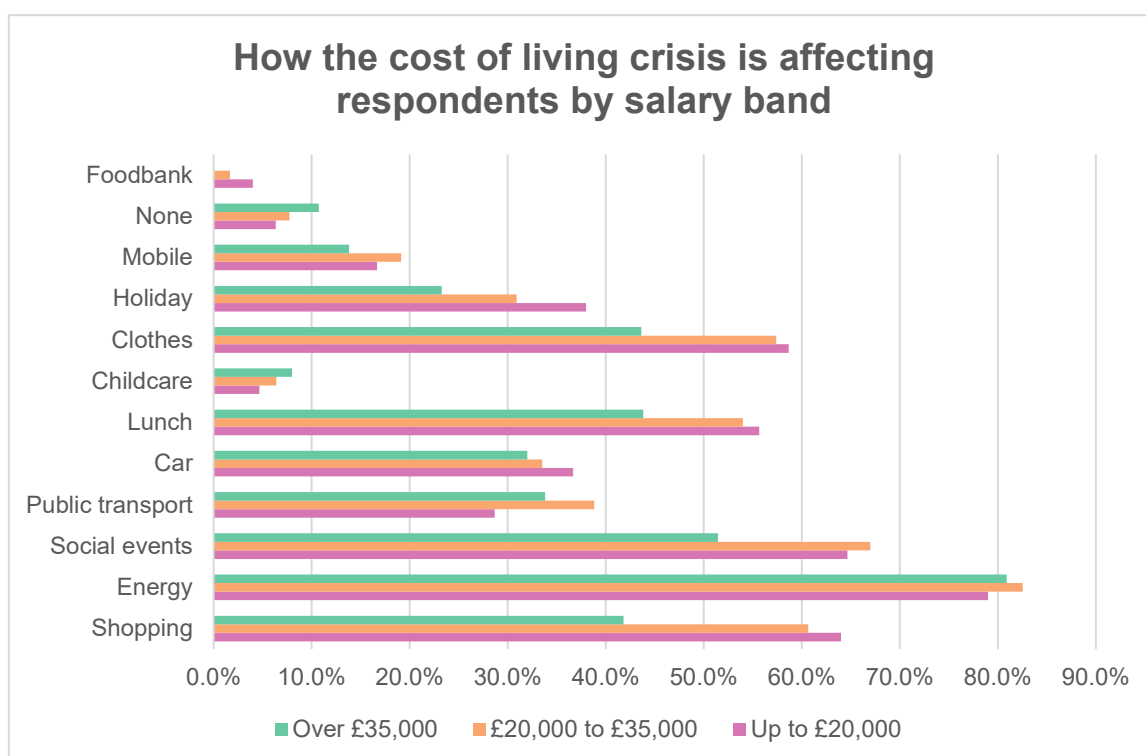
## Section 2 – The impact of the cost-of-living crisis

As we have shown in Section 1, pay rates in the heritage sector are low when compared with similar jobs in other sectors of the economy. This makes those working in the sector vulnerable to any unusual movements in prices. Inflation started to rise in the last quarter of 2021 as result of rising petrol costs and price rises for gas and electricity following the increase in the Ofgem cap on energy prices at the start of October. Energy prices continued to rise in 2022 feeding through to food and other goods and services by the summer.

The squeeze on incomes has been felt acutely by people working in the sector. Nine out of ten respondents have had to make an adjustment to their normal spending pattern. The rise in energy costs is causing the greatest concern, 83% of respondents are trying to reduce energy costs. There are some other examples of changes to non-discretionary spending behaviours, concerns about the weekly food shop (58%), limiting travel on public transport (37%) or car journeys (34%) and paying more for childcare (7%).

There is more impact on discretionary spending behaviours, such as restrictions on going out for social events (64%), not eating out at lunchtimes (53%), limits on clothes shopping to essential items (56%), not expecting to go on holiday this year (31%) and changing mobile plans to a cheaper option (18%).

There are 40 respondents that are considering using food banks. Although a small proportion of respondents, this underlines the wider impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the sector because of low pay in many organisations.



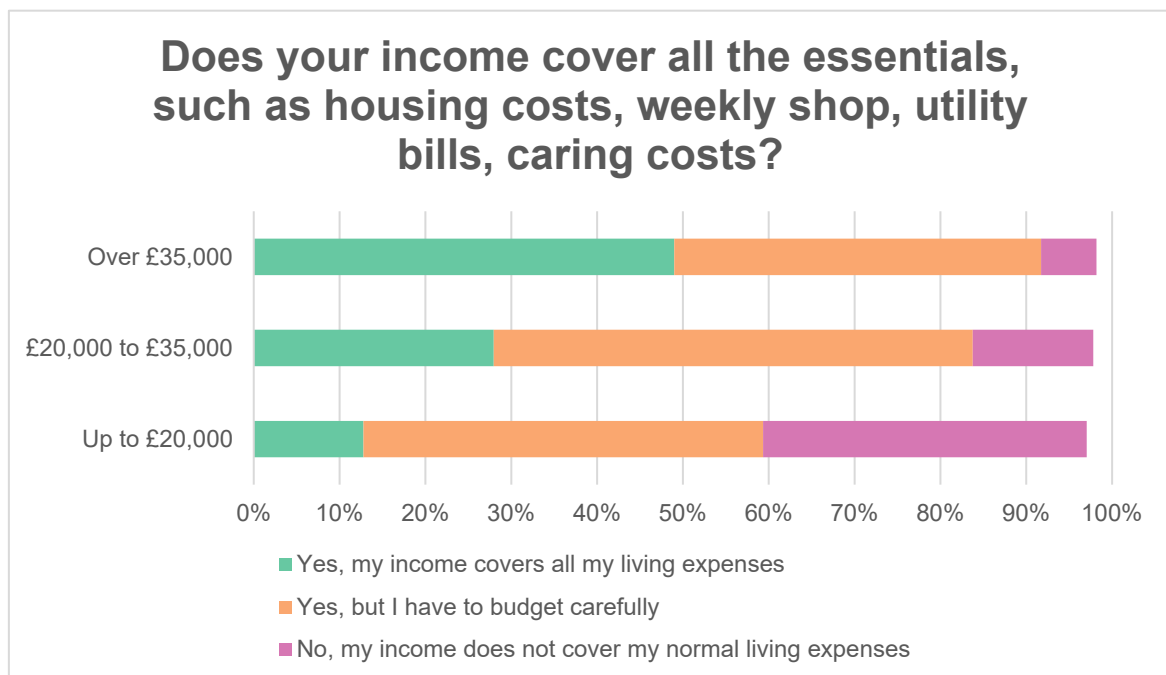
Other ways that the cost of living has impacted respondents include moving to smaller accommodation or changing the terms of mortgage to reduce costs, moving back in with parents, relying on partners income, using up savings, going into debt and taking on a second job.

The cost-of-living crisis is being felt evenly across the regions and nations of the UK. All demographic groups are concerned about rising energy costs, but there are some significant differences between age groups. Respondents under 45 years of age are more likely to highlight limits on the weekly food shop, changing the mobile phone plan, restrictions on social events and buying only essential clothes. Those aged 35 to 44 are most likely to be concerned about rising childcare costs. A similar proportion of all age groups have decided not to have a holiday this year.

There is a much clearer impact by salary band. Respondents that earning less than £35,000 are more likely to have changed their spending behaviours for their weekly shop, buying clothes, going out for social events and eating out for lunch. Those earning above £35,000 are still feeling the impact of higher energy costs, but are making less adjustments to their spending patterns.

## Does income cover all essential spending?

Just 13% of low earners and 15% of black, Asian and other minority ethnic respondents have enough income to cover their expenses. The shortfall in income is most likely to be felt by those working in London, English regions outside of London and Northern Ireland.



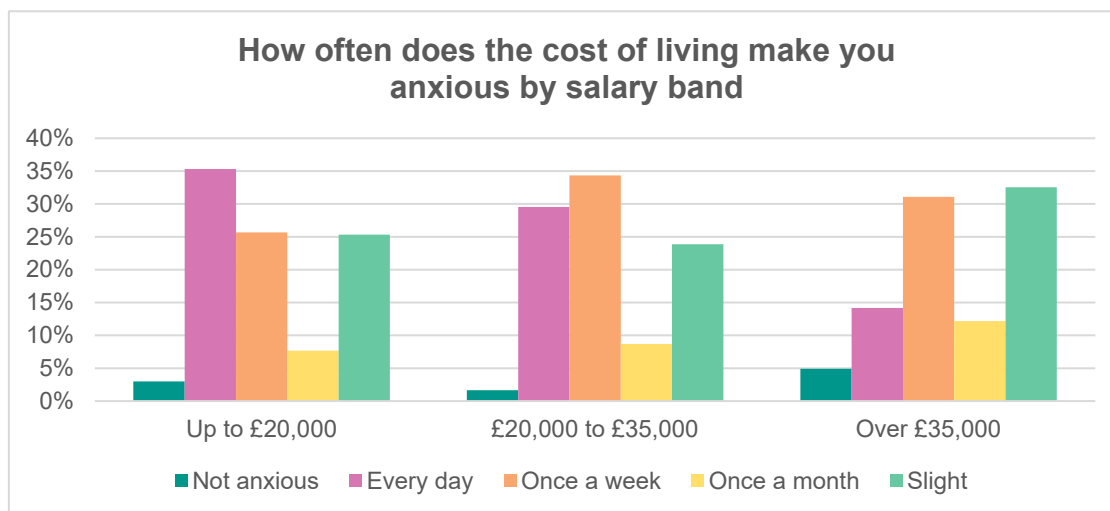
The difficulty of managing the rise in prices is underlined by the proportion of respondents seeking support to cover gaps in their income. More than a quarter (26%) have had financial support from their family, 13% have a rising credit bill, 11% have borrowed money from a bank or gone into some other form of debt, and 11% of respondents have needed more than one type of support. Support is needed most by those aged under 35 years, 64% of under 25 years of age, and 49% of those aged 25 to 34, have needed support, 48% of under 25s rely on the support of their family.

Respondents working in Scotland (68%) and Wales (62%) are the least likely to need support because of rising prices. This contrast with those working in Northern Ireland where 59% of respondents have needed some support with 37% relying on family support. In London and the English regions, a significant minority of respondents (49% and 44% respectively) have needed support.

## Does the cost-of-living crisis make you anxious?

All age groups have some anxiety about rising prices. Nearly two thirds of respondents feel anxious about the cost-of-living at least once a week or every day, only 3% are not anxious at all.

Those in the lowest salary band most likely to be anxious every day (35%), but even those in the higher earning bracket are anxious about the cost-of-living either every day or at least once a week (45%).



## Actively seeking work elsewhere

A combination of low pay and rising prices has caused a significant proportion of respondents to actively seek another job. London and the English regions are the areas where respondents are most likely to seek work elsewhere, 30% and 28% respectively in the heritage sector and, 22% and 18%, outside the heritage sector. Respondents under 35 years of age (59% of under 25 years, 53% of 25 to 35 years) and BAME respondents (57%) are the demographic groups most likely to be looking for work elsewhere.

The type of job role informs whether respondents will exit the heritage sector for good. Transferable skills open up opportunities outside the sector, whereas roles that are more closely identified with the sector are likely to stay but seek higher paying jobs. The organisations with the greatest retention challenges are AOC Archaeology (73%), Science Museum Group (60%), Imperial War Museum (59%), British Museum (58%), English Heritage Trust (58%) and Royal Museums Greenwich (55%).

## Actively looking for a new job inside or outside the heritage sector, by occupation

Inside the heritage sector	Outside the heritage sector
Collections (41%)	Marketing (31%)
Conservator (32.5%)	IT (29%)
Curator (31%)	Development/fundraiser (27.5%)
Operations/Technical (34%)	Administration (27%)

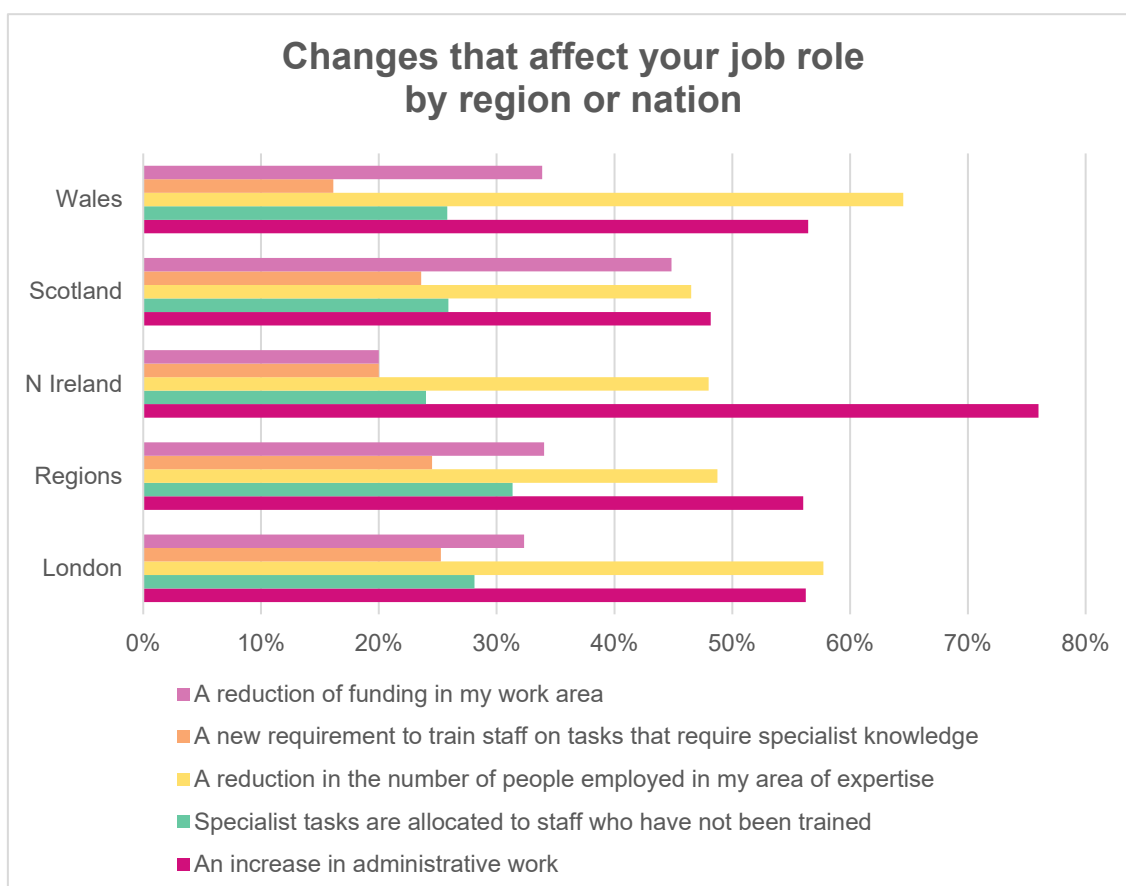
## Section 3 – Changes to working practices

As well as impacting individuals, inflationary pressures are creating an affordability crisis for heritage organisations. The spending squeeze will add to the pressures that many feel at work.

### Organisations where respondents report a significant increase in workload

Museum of London	51%
Victoria & Albert Museum	47%
Nature Scot	47%
National Galleries of Scotland	45%
The Tate	42%
Imperial War Museum	41%
The British Library	40%

In the last year three quarters of respondents have had an increase in their workload, 41% a significant increase, 35% a small but noticeable increase. The most common changes are, an increase in administrative work (41%), a reduction in the people employed in respondent's area of expertise (38%), or a reduction in funding in respondent's work area (25%).





Royal Museums Greenwich (67.5%) and the Imperial War Museum (59%) are particularly affected by cuts in staff with expertise. The organisations most likely to have reduced funding are the Imperial War Museum (45%), Historic Environment Scotland (44%), Nature Scot (42%), National Library of Scotland (40%) and the Tate (36%).

Nature Scot stands out as the organisation where there is a new requirement to train staff on specialist tasks (37%). At the Natural History Museum and Museum of London Archaeology are most likely to have a new requirement to train (29% and 27% respectively), and allocate tasks to untrained staff (28% and 29%).

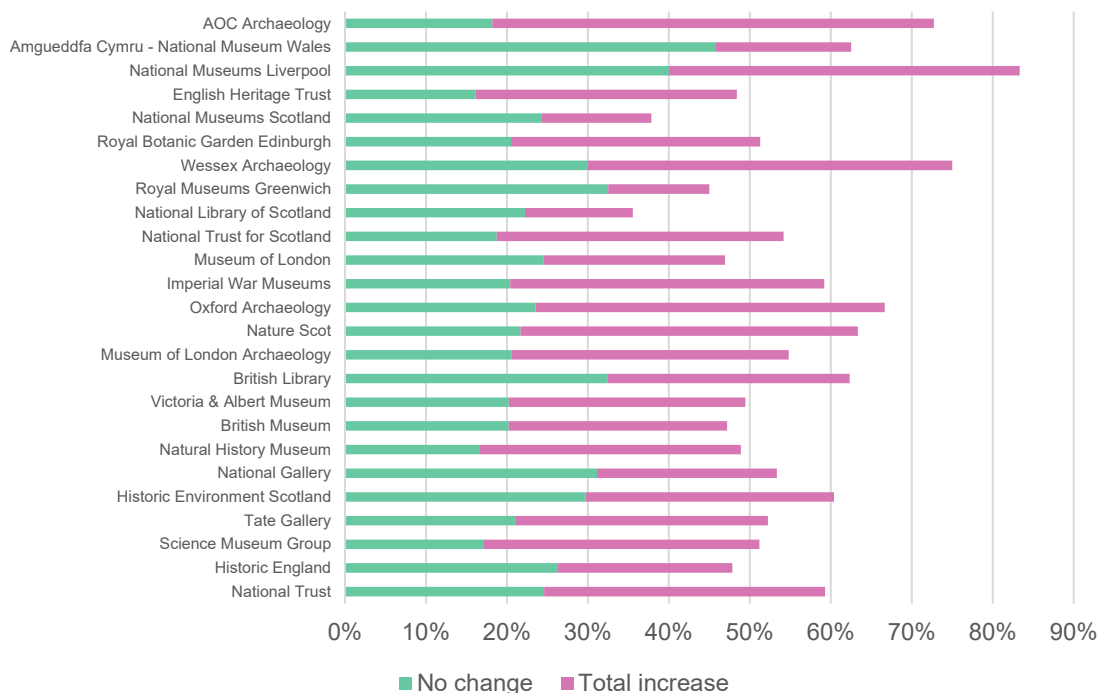
Occupations that have had the most significant increase in administrative work are ranger (61%), facilities (57%), registrar (56%) and exhibitions (55%). In all these roles a lower proportion of respondents have been affected by job cuts in specialist areas, these are more likely to affect librarians (54%), curators (50%) and those working on exhibitions (47%).

In most organisations there has been an increase in supervisory responsibilities. The organisations with the largest increases are Oxford Archaeology (23.5% significant increase, 20% small increase), Wessex Archaeology (20% and 20%) and AOC Archaeology (27% and 23%). The National Museum Liverpool (13%), Imperial War Museum (10%) and English Heritage Trust (10%) are most likely to have respondents that are supervising direct reports for the first time.

A majority of occupational roles have taken on additional supervisory responsibilities. Those occupations with the largest increase in respondents with more direct reports are manager (59%), ranger (46%), communications (44%) and archaeology (40%).

Black, Asian and other minority ethnic respondents are less likely than white respondents to have any direct reports (54% compared to 42%). A smaller proportion of female respondents have direct reports (44% compared to 39% of male respondents), but there is no difference in the proportion of female and male respondents that have taken on additional responsibilities for supervising direct reports (33.4% female, 33.5% male).

## Are you responsible for supervising more direct reports by organisation? (Total increase in supervision v no change)



## Time to complete your work

Although there is some variation between organisations there is a clear pattern in the sector, respondents often struggle to complete their work in their normal hours and there are not enough staff in core work areas. More than half the respondents do not have time to complete their work every day, a few times a week or once a week (57%), and a clear majority of respondents (61%) do not think that there are enough staff to complete core work tasks, only 22% think there are enough staff. Similar proportions of respondents in all regions and nations are struggling to complete their work in their normal hours.

The problem is most acute at the National Museum Liverpool (57% and 83%), the National Trust (55% and 64%), National Trust for Scotland (54% and 77%), Museum of London (53% and 67%), and Nature Scot (50% and 78%).

In most occupations more than half the respondents do not have time to complete their work in their normal hours. The occupations that struggle most are manager (72% and 71%), marketing (69% and 63%), gardener (68% and 68%), conservation (67% and 85%), curator (64% and 72%), and facilities (63% and 61%).

A higher proportion of female respondents do not have time to complete their work (59% of female and 53% of male respondents respectively) and do not have enough staff in their work area (64% compared to 56%). Those aged between 35 and 54 years of age struggle most with their working hours and to report staff shortages.

## Has there been a noticeable shift towards temporary or freelance contracts?

Just over a third of respondents report an increase in the use of temporary or freelance workers (36%). Although the trend towards an increase in these types of engagements is unclear overall there are some occupational groups that have had a clear shift towards temporary or freelance contracts. The job roles most affected are conservator (56%), collections (47%), digital/audio visual (45.5%), operations/technician (42%), exhibitions (41%), project manager/programmes (41%) and curator (40%).

Some heritage organisations have had a greater shift towards temporary or freelance contracts. The organisations that respondents are most likely to report a rise in atypical contracts are National Galleries Scotland (60%), Victoria & Albert Museum (53%), National Libraries Scotland (53%), Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (52%), Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (51%), British Museum (48%), Natural History Museum (47%) and the Tate (46.5%).

Respondents working in London (44%) and Scotland (39%) report the largest shift, followed by the English regions (32%), Wales (24%) and Northern Ireland (19%).

A shift towards temporary or freelance staff is more likely to be reported by female respondents (38.5%) than male respondents (33%) and BAME respondents (40%) than white respondents (36%). There are few differences by age, those aged under 25 are least likely to report a rise in temporary or freelance contracts (28%).

## Section 4 – Summary and next steps

The heritage sector provides a world class service to the public, but the workers in the sector receive second class wages. The survey shows quite graphically how the cost-of-living crisis is causing rising anxiety and forcing many to consider leaving the sector altogether. Alongside the squeeze on earnings organisations have increased workload and responsibilities as the sector navigates the post-pandemic period of recovery. A second wave of austerity that makes the affordability crises in the sector worse will be a further blow that many organisations will struggle to cope with.

There is a need for change:

- Heritage workers are a valuable asset for the nation that should be rewarded for their service with improved funding to address historic low pay levels and the current cost-of-living crisis.
- Organisations should be allowed the freedom to reform pay systems so that skills, qualifications, knowledge, and experience are recognised, and
- Meaningful pay progression mechanisms need to be established to ensure that heritage staff can progress their careers and earnings.