



In the first of the regional breakdowns of the *Optician* salary survey, released in conjunction with Specsavers, **Mike Hale** crunches the numbers for East Anglia

**E**ast Anglia is a region that optical recruiters sometimes describe as challenging due to its isolated geography. However, the area does boast areas of outstanding natural beauty such as the Norfolk Broads and the north Norfolk coastline, and also cities associated with a high standard of living such as Cambridge. But how does the region compare in terms of salary and other working conditions?

The survey found that the average optical professional's salary in East Anglia is £34,333, which compares to an average salary across the UK of £35,367. If cost of living is taken into account, East Anglia's level of pay compares reasonably favourably with London's average of £34,848 as the capital is seen as a much more expensive place to live.

To earn their salaries the respondents in East Anglia worked an average of 35 hours per week, which is in keeping with the national average. However, 11 per cent of the sample work over 50 hours per week, compared to the national average of 5 per cent.

### Desirable benefits

The most commonly received benefit is staff discount, which is available to 56 per cent. Other common benefits include payment of professional fees (49 per cent), provision of training courses (39 per cent) and performance-related bonuses (33 per cent).

Asked to identify the most important benefits, respondents found that

payment of professional fees and staff discount were most desirable with 40 per cent and 36 per cent respectively saying these are very important.

When respondents last changed jobs over half (52 per cent) took one month or less to find a new job and only 5 per cent took over six months. The majority of respondents are settled with almost half (49 per cent) not expecting to move jobs and an additional 15 per cent expecting to remain at the same employer for their next job.

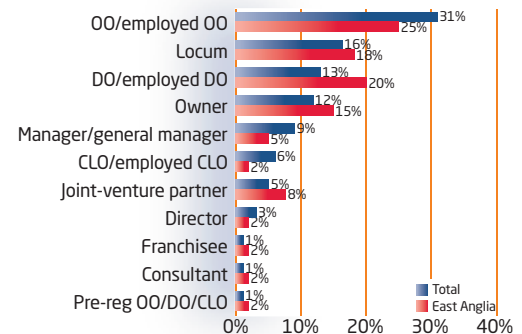
The most important factor in choosing a new job is salary; 98 per cent said this was very important or fairly important. The respondents also identified location as significant in choosing a new job, with 66 per cent saying this was very important to them.

The survey spoke to 61 people from East Anglia, of whom 74 per cent work full time. This is the highest of any region and compares to a national average of 64 per cent. The remaining 26 per cent of the sample work part time, which is defined as less than five full days per week.

Almost half (49 per cent) of respondents indicated they have trained as optometrists, while 36 per cent were qualified DOs and 8 per cent contact lens opticians.

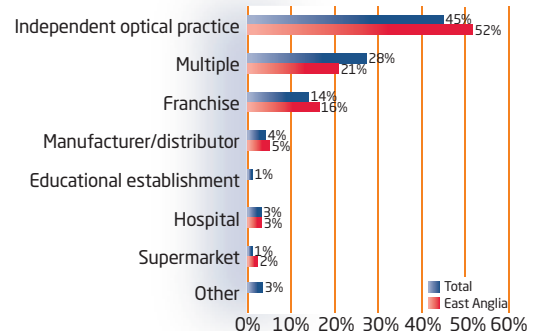
Just over half (52 per cent) of respondents based in East Anglia work for independents, slightly higher than the total average. Correspondingly, the proportion working for multiples (21 per cent) is lower than the total national average. ●

### What is your current job function?



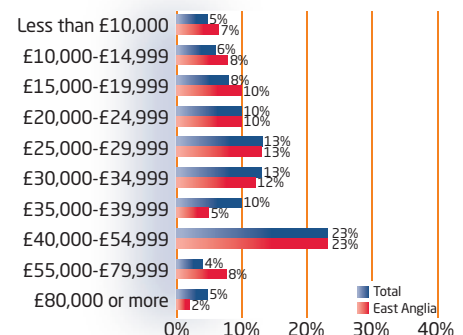
Base: all respondents (594) East Anglia (61)

### What type of organisation do you work for?



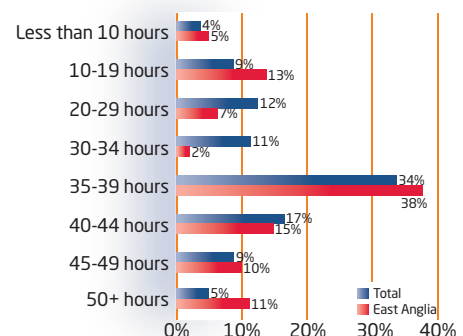
Base: all respondents (594) East Anglia (61)

### What is your current annual salary before tax?



Base: all respondents (586) East Anglia (60)

### How many hours do you work per week?



Base: all respondents (593) East Anglia (61)