



Looking for a job in the Midlands but not sure what kind of salary and benefits you can expect? *Optician's* salary survey reveals some facts and figures

The Midlands boasts the UK's second largest city in Birmingham, which makes up a significant part of the West Midlands conurbation that also includes Wolverhampton and Solihull. *Optician's* salary survey found that the average optical professional in the Midlands earns £35,402. This is slightly more than the national average of £35,367 and is considerably more than the South West, which has an average salary of £31,923. It is also more than London (£34,848), which, given the additional cost of living in the capital, is an attractive advertising feature for recruiters or practice owners in the Midlands.

To earn these salaries, optical professionals in the Midlands work an average of 34 hours per week. This is equal to the national average and less than the average working week in East Anglia (35 hours) and the North (37 hours). Sixty-three per cent of respondents from the Midlands work full-time, with the remainder working fewer than five full days per week.

Benefits

What benefits can you expect from a job in the Midlands? Fifty-three per cent of respondents have their professional fees paid for them, making this the most commonly received benefit. Staff discount is enjoyed by 48 per cent, followed by training/education course (40 per cent) and a health plan (32 per cent). Twenty-five per cent of respondents did not receive any of the benefits listed by the survey.

In terms of what benefits are most valued by staff, the survey found that the payment of professional fees was considered very important or fairly important by 86 per cent of respondents. This was followed by provision of training or education courses (78 per cent), staff discount (66 per cent), paid overtime (65 per cent) and performance-related bonus (65 per cent).

Finding a job in the Midlands seems reasonably straightforward, with 44 per cent of respondents having found their current job in less than a month after they began searching, and only 6 per cent took over four months.

Location is the most important factor in choosing a job, with 99 per cent of respondents considering it as fairly important or important. Salary is also a very significant factor, with 94 per cent identifying it as fairly important or very important. Other considerations were type of practice (86 per cent), identity of employer (85 per cent), job description (80 per cent), training/educational courses provided (79 per cent) and flexibility of working hours (77 per cent).

The survey spoke to 88 people from the Midlands, with 52 per cent of the sample working for independent practices and 23 per cent for multiples. This compares to nationwide averages of 45 per cent working for independents and 28 per cent for multiples.

The majority of respondents in the Midlands are qualified as optometrists (55 per cent), with 32 per cent qualified as dispensing opticians and 8 per cent as contact lens opticians. ●

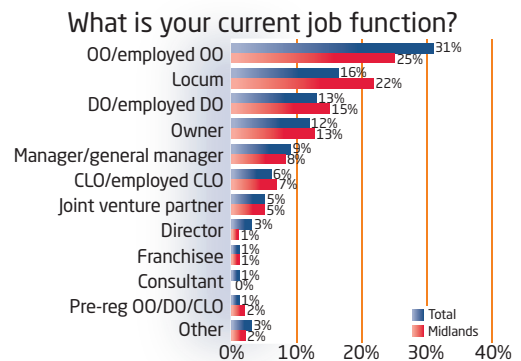


Figure 1 What is your current job function?

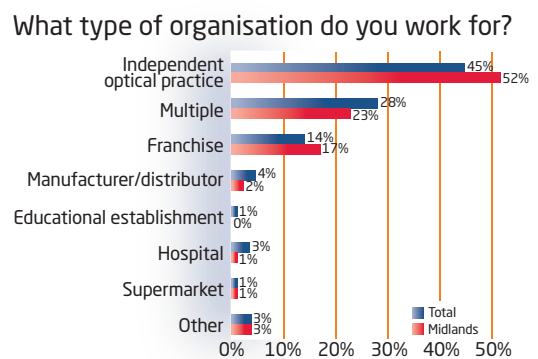


Figure 2 What type of organisation do you work for?

What is your current annual salary before tax?

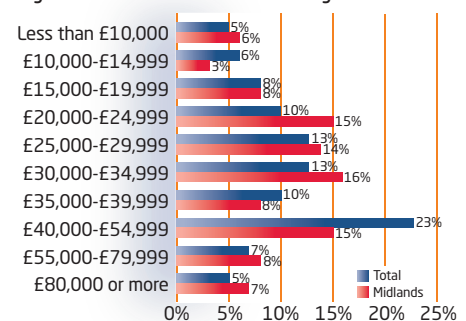


Figure 3 In which of the following bands is your current annual salary before tax? (excluding all benefits such as car, bonus etc)

How many hours do you work per week?

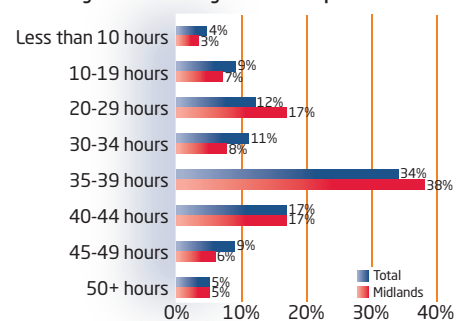


Figure 4 On average how many hours do you work per week? (excluding lunch breaks)