

# The CSR Salary Survey

2008/2009

A Report by

acona



Acre

ethical performance

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## Introduction

Welcome to the 2nd annual survey of salaries, responsibilities and backgrounds of professionals working in the CSR and sustainability industry.

The fact that more than 350 people (a 26 per cent increase on last year) took the time to complete our questionnaire suggests there is considerable interest in the survey and its results among practitioners.

As with last year our target audience was UK-based individuals working both in-house and for consultancies in CSR and sustainability. We used our extensive network of contacts to distribute the survey and to alert people to its existence. The online questionnaire was completed in November and December 2008.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the commentators who have provided views on the results; but above all we extend our deepest thanks to all those who participated in the survey. We couldn't have done it without you!

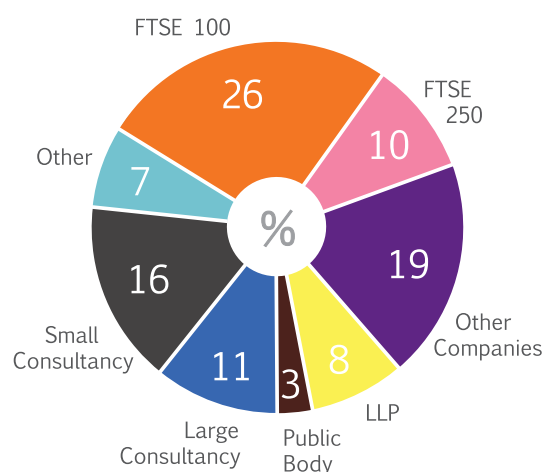
For details on Acona, Acre Resources and Ethical Performance, see last page.

# 1. The Sample

A total of 354 people completed the survey, with more than two thirds describing themselves as working in-house and the remainder operating as consultants – a similar split to last year.

Likewise, the breakdown of sectors that in-house respondents work within was little changed from last year – the biggest being financial services, professional services, retail and transport/utilities. There was one notable change from last year's results – the percentage of people falling within the professional services category increased from one per cent to 12 per cent. We suspect this is due mostly to the fact that those working for limited liability partnerships were not included in this section last time round. It may also be due to increased interest in CSR from professional services firms.

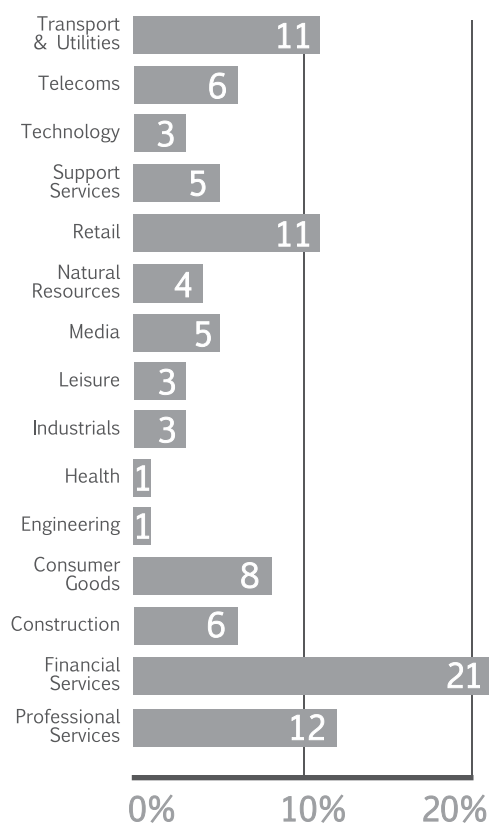
Participants by organisation type



Just over a third of respondents worked for FTSE 350 companies, which was slightly down on last year.

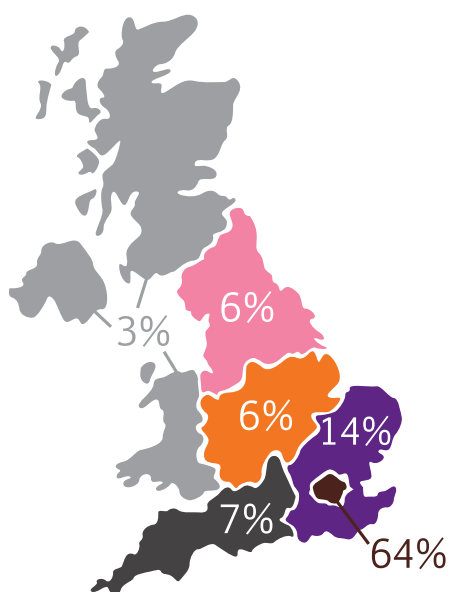
Perhaps the biggest surprise was the dramatic shift in the gender of the respondents. Last year, the respondents were almost evenly split between male and female. This year the balance is 62 per cent female to 38 per cent male. This gender split was broadly the same for both in-house and consultancy roles. We can think of no obvious reason for this change on last year's results, although this year's figure appears to be more in line with our own observations of the profession. (See Gender section for more detailed information on the differences between male and female respondents).

Company respondents by sector



Once again, London and the South East were far and away the most common work locations for respondents. Overall, 64 per cent worked in London (exactly the same as last year) and 14 per cent selected South East (12 per cent last year). Eighty per cent of consultants were based in London compared to 58 per cent within in-house roles. The vast majority (more than 70 per cent) continued to work from a single fixed location, with homeworking very much the exception; only four per cent of in-house respondents and 10 per cent of consultants fell into this category (both unchanged from 2007). More than ninety per cent of respondents worked full-time.

#### Participants' location



In terms of geographic focus there was little change from 2007, with just over 40 per cent of respondents having a global focus in their work and a similar percentage identifying the UK (or particular regions of the UK) as their area of operation.

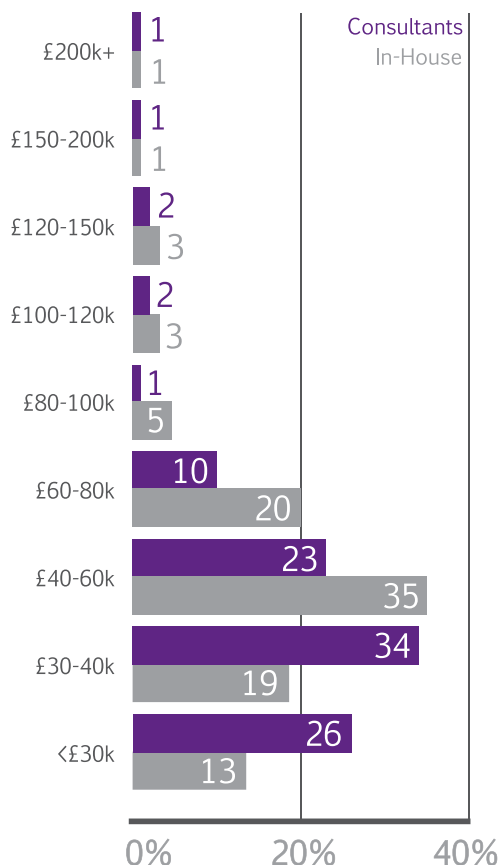


## 2. Remuneration

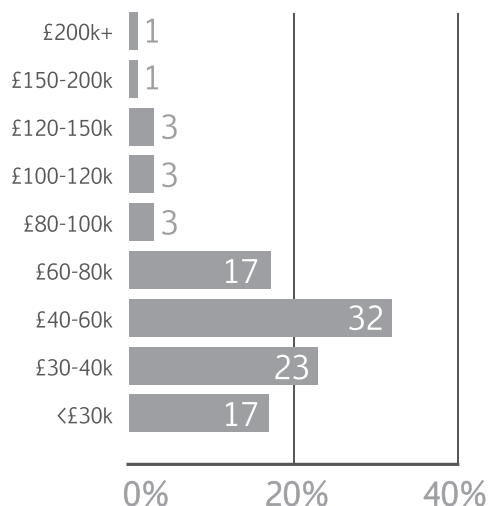
Overall, salary levels remained roughly in line with last year, with the £40-60k range accounting for nearly a third of all respondents.

However, the greater degree of detail provided by the narrower pay bands we included in this year's survey suggests that the median salary is actually in the region of £45-50k. The percentage of respondents in the lower pay brackets, earning less than £40k, increased by five per cent. The proportion of those earning £80k or more fell, from 15 per cent to 12 per cent. As in 2007, five per cent of respondents reported salaries of £120k+.

Salary distribution by organisation type



Overall salary distribution



Consultants' salaries continue to lag behind those working in-house, with 60 per cent of consultants earning less than £40k (around £10k less than the median in-house salary).

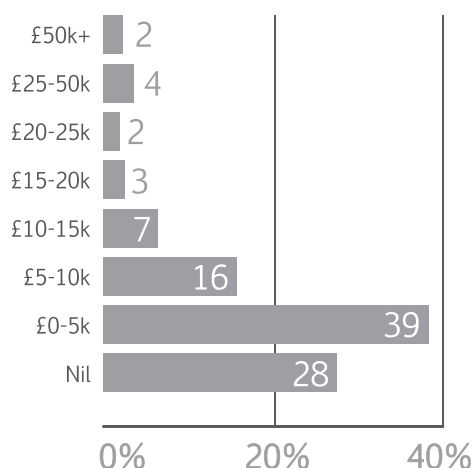
## Benefits & Bonuses

Overall, six per cent of respondents secured annual bonuses of £25k or more, and two per cent (nearly all in-house) received over £50k. Just under 30 per cent of all respondents received no bonus.

This year, because of additional salary bands in the survey we were able to identify that two per cent are earning £150k or more. Virtually all of the respondents who earned over £100k were based in London and the South East.

FTSE 100 companies were the most generous in terms of bonuses, with more than a quarter of respondents working for these companies receiving £10k+ and only 15 per cent getting nothing. The banking and finance sector paid more generous bonuses than elsewhere.

#### Overall bonus distribution

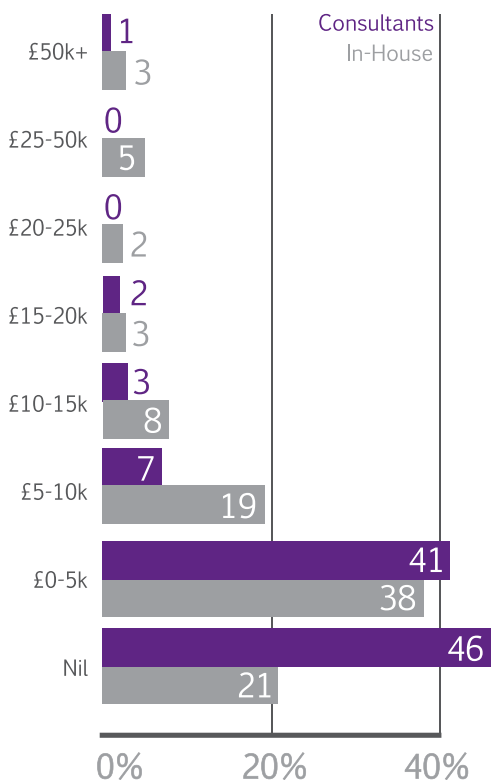


As in 2007, consultants' lower salaries were not offset by higher bonuses. Only just over half of consultants received a bonus of any kind, compared with 79 per cent of people in-house. While the median level for both consultants and in-house was in the £1-5,000 range, only six per cent of consultants got a bonus of £10k or more compared with 21 per cent of in-house respondents.

Hardly any consultants received a bonus of £20k+, as opposed to ten per cent of in-house respondents.

As we said last year, we do wonder to what extent the lower salaries in consultancies are the result of people holding equity in the business and being prepared to defer immediate financial rewards for the prospect of building profits (and a realisable asset) in the longer term. Also, we wonder if CSR attracts people who – for a mixture of reasons – feel more comfortable in smaller and/or 'values-driven' organisations.

#### Bonus distribution by organisation type



#### Average bonus level by salary band

Salary	Bonus
£120-150k	£25-50k
£100-120k	£20k
£80-100k	£10-15k
£60-80k	£5-10k

For people earning below £60k the average bonus is £5k or less, with a significant number of these people receiving no bonus.

## Benefits

Just under a fifth of consultants claimed not to have access to (or had decided not to avail themselves of) a company pension scheme, compared with three per cent in-house. Those working for smaller consultancies were even worse off, with 40 per cent of respondents claiming not to have access to a company pension scheme.

Benefits distribution

	In-House	Consultants
Contributory Pension	84%	63%
Non-Contributory Pension	13%	20%
Medical Cover	74%	57%
Car	47%	25%
Shares	43%	25%

## Job Titles

Last year we attempted to provide some indications of the likely salaries for certain roles. We have taken this analysis a couple of steps further this year by suggesting what people at these levels receive by way of bonus and other benefits. Based on the data we have also given brief descriptions of the likely educational, career and other characteristics of the individuals concerned.

## In-House

Corporate salaries and bonuses

	Average Salary	Bonus (% Av. Salary)
Director/Head	£95k	£20k (25%)
Manager	£52k	£5k (10%)
Advisor/Analyst	£35k	<£5k (10%)
Assistant Support	£25k	NA

### Director / Head

This is the most senior CSR person in the organisation. Despite this year's survey showing a dominance of women in CSR, this position is still more likely to be held by a man. They will have been in post for up to three years, work in a team of up to nine people, and have three or four employees reporting directly to them. They will control a budget of between £500k-1m and have been in full time employment (post education) for ten to 15 years. They are more likely than not to have worked in CSR before their current job and, if so, will have had five to ten years experience in the sector. They will almost certainly have a first degree (probably in a non-CSR related discipline), plus a postgraduate qualification and, on occasion, a professional qualification in CSR.

Overall, the data suggests that salaries at this level have risen since last year. Depending on the exact nature of the role and reporting relationships, we believe the average

salary in London and the South East is around £95k, with a bonus in the region of £20k (or 25 per cent of salary). Much higher salaries are not uncommon – in some cases with higher bonus levels. We suspect these significant differences in remuneration reflect reporting relationships, the degree to which CSR has been recognised as a core issue, and the personal qualities and expertise of the individuals concerned. Team size (except where the team is 20+ people) appears to have little direct impact on salary, while those with control of £1m+ budgets are more likely to have salaries in excess of £100k.

The data revealed a clear geographical gulf in pay at this level, with jobs based outside London and the South East attracting, on average, around £65k with slightly lower bonus levels (just under 20 per cent of salary). For this job level, 80 per cent of the respondents received a car or car allowance. Of those who didn't, the vast majority were based in London. Everyone had access to a pension scheme and just under 90 per cent had private medical cover.

While salaries for the most senior CSR jobs have risen, the average for this level has remained fairly static at just over £50k, and this holds true for those based in London/South East and elsewhere. Around ten per cent are earning in excess of £70k and 30 per cent fall below the £45k threshold. Three quarters of the respondents receive a bonus – typically worth less than £5k – and just over half receive a car or car allowance.

## Advisor / Analyst

This role sits within the larger CSR team and reports to the Manager or Director/Head. Most likely to be a female graduate with no direct reports, they will have little if any budgetary responsibility. They will have been in their current role for three years or less and are likely to have had no prior experience of CSR, although they will have been in full-time employment for five to ten years.

While the average salary is around £35k in this role, those working for FTSE 100 companies can expect up to £10k more. The fact that an individual has direct control of a budget has no bearing on remuneration – and neither does location.

## Manager

People in this role will report to a more senior individual who has a specific and overarching responsibility for CSR. Almost certainly graduates (possibly with a postgraduate qualification) and probably female, they will control a budget of between £100-150k – though will not necessarily have any people directly reporting to them. They will have been in full-time employment for 10-15 years, and are more likely than not to have previously worked in CSR for less than five years.

## Assistant / Support

This is a junior and, usually, entry level role that provides support to others within a team across a range of CSR activities (with a possible bias towards community involvement and charitable giving). Occupants are

typically female graduates who have been in full-time employment for five years or less and are unlikely to have any previous experience of CSR.

higher, and lower, amounts being earned. In part we believe this wide range reflects the different ownership structures within the consultancy sector and the personal motivations of the individuals concerned. Around a third receive no bonus – though whether this is due to the effect of the economic downturn on fee income is difficult to say. The average bonus was less than £5k but some people did a lot better. Neither the average salary nor bonus levels were affected by whether the individual works for a large or small consultancy. Most have access to a company pension scheme – less so in smaller consultancies – while hardly any receive a company car or car allowance.

## Consultants

### Consultancy salaries and bonuses

	Average Salary	Bonus (% Av. Salary)
Director/ Senior Partner	£70k	£4k (6%)
Senior Consultant	£40k	£2.5k (6%)
Consultant	£30k	NA

### Director / Senior Partner / Senior Manager

This could be the owner of a smaller consultancy, its directors and senior partners, or the most senior individual within a CSR-focused team of a larger consultancy. They will be based in London and have a first and possibly a postgraduate degree – though neither will necessarily be in a CSR-related discipline. They will have been in full-time employment for around 15 years, the overwhelming majority of which has been spent in CSR, and will have been in their current role for around three years.

The average salary has remained at around £70k for this role (or possibly a shade less) – although there are considerable variations with much

### Senior Consultant

This role is performed either by someone with an in-depth knowledge of a particular area (environment, for example) or more wide-ranging knowledge of CSR. Typically a female graduate/postgraduate, they will work in London and have been in full-time employment for around ten years, of which around half or more will have been in CSR. They will have been in their current job for less than three years.

The average salary is in line with last year at £40k. Just under half of the respondents at this level receive no bonus and of those who do, we estimate the average is less than £3k. Again the size of consultancy appears to have no impact on average salary or bonus. Most had access to a pension scheme of one form or another and the vast majority of those working for larger consultancies were in receipt of a car or car allowance – compared to no-one in the smaller consultancies.

## Consultant

This role is occupied by someone with limited experience of CSR who works under the guidance and supervision of more senior colleagues. Slightly more likely to be female than male, and based in London, this graduate will have been in full-time employment for around five years, with about half of that spent in CSR.

The average salary was in line with last year at £30k and less than half of those who responded received a bonus. The vast majority had access to a contributory pension scheme and less than ten per cent received a car or car allowance as part of their package.

Anne Pattberg  
Head of Corporate  
Responsibility,  
Camelot Group



*2008 has been an economically challenging year for many companies so I am interested to see what impact the financial crisis will have on CSR functions and remuneration in the future. Turbulent times might lead to an increased need for focusing on wider responsibility issues within companies to ensure transparency and accountability, and as such I hope that practitioners will be remunerated appropriately.*

*The disparity between consultant roles as opposed to in-house roles, on bonuses and benefits, is still significant. I wonder if further analysis is needed in relation to consultancy size, as many of the respondents might be working independently rather than being part of a larger organisation.*

*I'm surprised to see that the number of CSR professionals in lower salary bands has increased, while those earning over £80,000pa has decreased. Perhaps this might be because more graduate/junior-level positions are opening up in the market or maybe it is a reflection of the fact that this year more women have filled in the survey than men.*

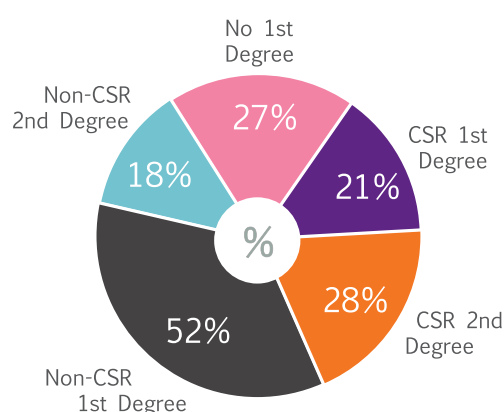
*I would hope that in future years this imbalance will be addressed and that the survey is acknowledged as a useful measurement tool to track progress on this issue.*

### 3. Education, Qualifications & Career History

We highlighted last year the high level of academic and other qualifications held by those working within CSR. This year's results confirm that finding.

More than 80 per cent of respondents had a first and/or second degree, with just under half (the same as 2007) having a postgraduate qualification. Of the latter, the split was 60:40 in favour of CSR-related subjects.

Qualifications of participants



\*Total value exceeds 100% as some subjects fall into multiple categories

An interesting point to note is that only 11 per cent of all CSR professionals have a specific professional CSR qualification. Perhaps this indicates that such qualifications are not seen as being particularly important or relevant either by the individuals concerned or their employers. Whether this figure increases as the sector matures will be an interesting trend to watch.

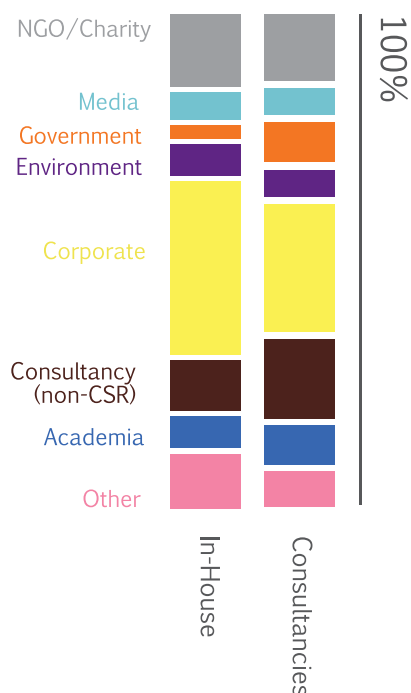
It is noteworthy that, unlike last year, we may be beginning to see some evidence that postgraduate qualifications are becoming the norm for the more senior and better paid roles, especially in-house.

For the overwhelming majority of respondents (94 per cent compared with 95 per cent last year) their current role in CSR was not their first job. Five to ten years was the median period for time spent in employment post-full-time education. Only four per cent had been in full-time employment for two years or less. 53 per cent of all respondents had been working for ten years or more.

43 per cent (56 per cent last year) had not worked in CSR prior to their current job: however, there was a much greater prevalence of 'career switchers' (those moving to CSR from another field) among in-house respondents; 60 per cent — compared to a third of consultants.

Of these career switchers, for in-house roles, four out of ten people had worked in other corporate functions (for example, marketing). Most of the rest came from NGOs/charities and consultancies (together accounting for another 30 per cent). Of the remainder, previous experience had included public relations and the media, environmental management, government and academia. Of the consultants who switched, a third had previously worked in-house in a non-CSR role.

#### Participants' previous experience



**Peter Lambert**  
Deputy Chief Executive,  
Business in the  
Community

*The current tough business climate reinforces the need for companies to integrate responsible business practice throughout their operations.*

*This adds visibility to the importance of the role of the CR professional to business and society, and emphasises the need for a highly professional and strategic approach.*

*And yet the survey identifies that 43 per cent of respondents are without prior experience in CR and that only 11 per cent have felt they need to study a professional qualification. For those coming into CR afresh they need to get an oversight of what is expected of a CR practitioner and there are courses and forums that will help. In fact, we at BITC run our own Introduction to Corporate Responsibility – so help is at hand. Rather than professional qualifications not being seen as being useful by companies, it may reflect a lack of appropriate qualifications that can help support and develop core skills, knowledge and competencies required to be a CR practitioner.*



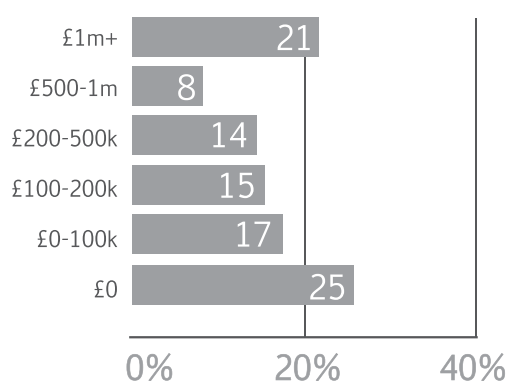
## 4. CSR in Companies

### Budgets

In this year's survey we included clearer questions about the size of budgets controlled by CSR professionals. Notwithstanding this slight change in categorisation, some trends have become clear. It would appear that respondents are – on average – controlling smaller budgets this year than last.

Around a fifth of respondents controlled budgets of £1m or more – half of them worked for FTSE 100 companies and the vast majority (80 per cent) were based in London and the South East.

**Budgets directly controlled by respondents**



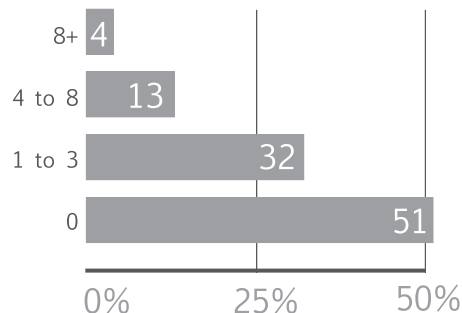
### Team Sizes

Based on this year's data, it would appear that the respondents have fewer people reporting to them compared to last year.

It would be easy to draw the conclusion that this is evidence of the recession beginning to bite. However, it may also be explained by differences in this year's and last year's sample (for instance a slight reduction in the overall seniority of respondents' and the increased prevalence of respondents from small consultancies).

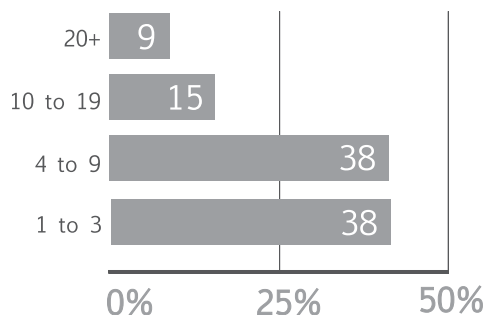
Alternatively it may be a sign that more responsibilities typically associated with CSR are being passed to line-management and other business functions.

**Number of people reporting to respondents**



Three quarters of in-house CSR teams contain nine people or less, while less than ten per cent have 20 or more. Just under two thirds of respondents said their team was a separate function within a company. Of the remainder, around a third said they were part of a larger corporate affairs/communication function.

Team size



Rory Sullivan  
Head of Investor  
Responsibility,  
Insight



*Perhaps the most interesting part of the study is where and how CSR professionals are spending their time.*

*While community involvement and reporting are clearly important parts of companies' overall corporate responsibility efforts, it is striking that climate change is so low on the list of things of where respondents spend their time. It suggests that CSR professionals – or indeed CSR more generally – is still trapped in the ghetto of good works and public image management rather than engaging with the strategic issues that are likely to be the key long-term drivers of business value.*

# 5. Job Function: What do People do?

Top 5 Activities for Corporates

1	Community Involvement
2	Reporting
3	Environment
4	Internal Marketing
5	Climate Change

An important part of our survey is to analyse the activities and areas of focus of CSR professionals, and to track how they change over time. Is climate change a big issue for CSR professionals for example? How has the credit crunch affected charitable giving? We're able (at least in part) to shed some light on these questions.

To identify where people spend the bulk of their working day, we analysed what respondents selected as their primary focus areas, giving particular weight to their first three selections.

Top 5 Activities for Consultancies

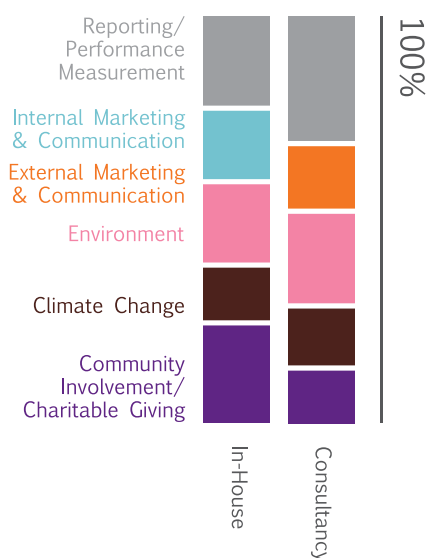
1	Reporting
2	Environment
3	External Marketing
4	Climate Change
5	Community Involvement

For those working in-house, there was no change from last year in the top five activities, saving only that climate change – which we have included as a separate category this time round – replaces stakeholder dialogue. A major surprise was that community involvement was far and away the most popular first choice – selected by nearly a third of respondents – hence its first place in our ranking.

While climate change is clearly a huge strategic issue for many organisations there is little evidence, as yet, that it is attracting a commensurate level of attention and/or resources – at least amongst CSR teams. It may also be that climate change is an issue managed by entirely different people outside of CSR itself.

Given that consultants are supposed to serve the needs of their clients, we expected to see reporting and environmental management feature highly – and weren't disappointed. Consultants appear to devote more of their time to reporting, suggesting there is a continuing requirement to tap into their knowledge and expertise. Marketing (to external audiences) has also risen up the hierarchy – perhaps reflecting the increasing importance that organisations place on ensuring that their CSR approach and performance is communicated effectively. The survey data also suggests that consultants are spending far less of their time on community involvement compared to those in-house. This could indicate the growing confidence of companies in managing this area and the much greater degree of resource they are devoting to it.

Top five activities – comparison



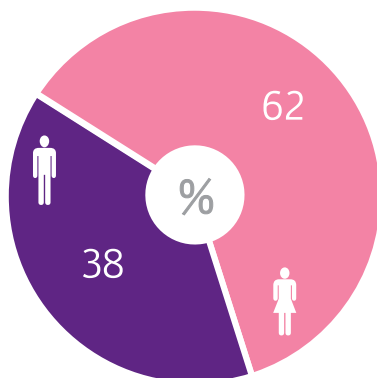
Mike Nightingale  
Head of Corporate  
Social Responsibility,  
BAT



*I'm surprised to see that stakeholder engagement has fallen out of the top five. We see it as a key part of our approach and dedicate a lot of our time to it. Otherwise, it's reassuring to see that we are pretty much in line with other companies when it comes to where we focus our resources. I think we face the same frustrations as other practitioners - reporting can sometimes get in the way of 'doing' and it can impact on the time within the year we have available to drive forward our sustainability agenda. However, we still see it as a worthwhile exercise, most importantly because external reporting can stimulate thinking around change within the business.*

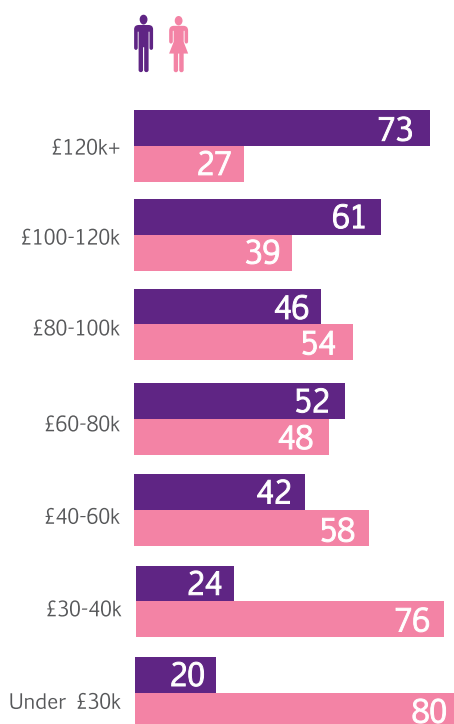
# 6. Gender

Overall gender split



As highlighted above, the gender split of survey respondents has moved decisively in favour of women – 62 per cent of respondents were female and 38 per cent male. Last year's results were close to 50/50.

Salary distribution by gender

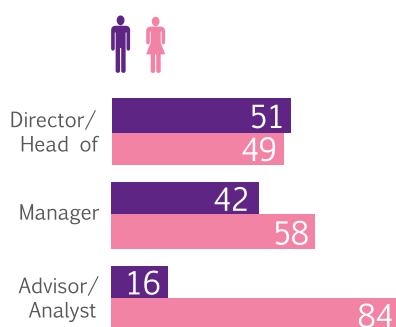


While the gender split has moved in favour of women, if anything, the imbalance in salaries has increased. Given the low proportion of part-timers and job sharers among female respondents, we feel safe in saying that this pay gap has very little, if anything, to do with differing work patterns.

Women continue to be excessively represented among the lower salary levels and under-represented at the higher salary levels. Although the gender gap has narrowed in some salary bands – for example from £100k onwards – it is noticeable that in the middle bands (£40-100k) the male/female balance does not reflect the overall gender split in this year's survey. Furthermore, within the middle bands, salaries of women tend to be towards the lower figure in the range.

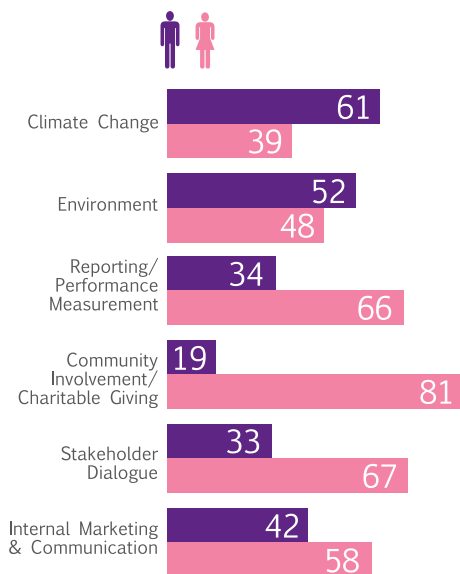
The picture is even starker in relation to corporate job levels, where men – despite their lesser numbers – continue to hold a majority of Director/Head roles while women predominate in the Advisor/Analyst positions.

Gender distribution by job title



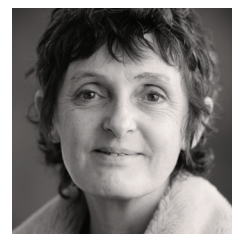
Even more pronounced this year than last is the fact that women are much more likely to be found working in community involvement than men (by a factor of four) while men continue to dominate the more technical fields such as climate change and environmental management.

## Activity by gender



Whether it is the case that companies value certain CSR activities and the attendant roles more highly than others is a question outside the scope of this research. Even if this were so, there could be justifiable reasons for their decision. Similarly, we are not in a position to determine whether the prevalence of women dealing with community involvement is because this area holds a particular attraction to them, is regarded as a normal entry route to a broader CSR career, or is due to this being an area with a high number of jobs and usually no requirement for a particular degree subject. However, as with other professions, until the middle and senior levels replicate wider society – and the work force – strong suspicions that the sector is affected by gender bias will remain.

Sue Slipman  
Director,  
Foundation Trust  
Network



*How depressing that the 'walk the talk' ethos of corporate social responsibility doesn't reflect in the gender division of either seniority or pay levels of practitioners.*

*The survey's key message is that CSR is still not established at the strategic levels of FTSE businesses. Consequently CSR as a culture, set of practices and behaviours is not yet embedded within organisations as an engine for real change. So perhaps it's not surprising that women remain essentially handmaidens to more powerful male colleagues, albeit better placed in corporates than consultancies.*

*Then there's what they actually do. The female/male split on climate change is 39/61, reversing dramatically in the community sphere to 81/19, with a slightly less dramatic but still significant split on stakeholder dialogue at 67/34 and reporting at 63/34. So men stride around climate change in big boots saving the planet, while women stay home, communicate with people, do the 'soft' community stuff and write about it afterwards. You couldn't make it up.*

*How to change this? Incorporating gender into reporting is a good idea. So is actively promoting equal opportunities in the CSR world. Then there's self-help and mutual support: so while we're at it please stop calling yourselves chicks. Post-modern irony may be intended, but how you brand yourself matters.*

# 7. Job Satisfaction and Job Security

## Job satisfaction

There was a very high figure for overall job satisfaction – 80 per cent of all respondents. This appears to bear out both our personal observations and anecdotal evidence that those working in the sector are, overwhelmingly, happy with their lot.

We suspect this may be partly due to the fact that those working in the sector have a deep personal interest in and commitment to CSR and the opportunity to ‘make a difference’.

If the scores for job satisfaction were high, then those for recommending CSR as a career to others were remarkable. Overall (and again there was no difference between in-house CSR practitioners and consultants), more than 97 per cent of respondents said they would do so.

## Job security

Just under a third of respondents (with no real difference between those working in-house and consultants) felt less secure in their job this year than last. Even those working in-house in the financial services sector were only slightly less positive about their prospects, with 37 per cent feeling less secure – compared with 36 per cent of those working for large consultancies who believed their job security had deteriorated.

Job satisfaction

	In-House	Consultants
Less Secure	29%	30%
Same	55%	56%
More Secure	16%	14%

# Conclusions

Paul Burke  
Senior Partner, Acona  
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This year's results confirmed three things about the sector and its inhabitants that I have suspected for a while: first, and reiterating a point I made last year, considerable differences remain between the resources that organisations devote to CSR. While it would be ridiculous to advocate a mechanistic approach to calculating the 'right' team size or budget for in-house CSR teams, one cannot help but feel the current situation owes more to precedent and happenstance than to any rigorous assessment of need. It will be interesting to see whether – in light of the unfavourable economic climate – companies see CSR teams as essential to helping the business recover or simply another corporate support function to be cut as part of the retrenchment process.

Secondly, I wonder if the continued focus on reporting – in all its forms – is limiting the time that CSR practitioners can devote to securing real improvements in social and environmental performance. This is clearly less of a problem if responsibility for driving the agenda forward has been successfully embedded elsewhere – for example, with other business functions or line managers. However, if this is not the case then we run the risk that the advances of the past year may stall and, potentially, go into reverse.

Thirdly, and despite all the constraints we work under, it would appear that people in the sector genuinely enjoy what they do and see CSR as a viable career. My own experience suggests this is partly due to the deep interest many practitioners have in the subject matter of their jobs and the close alignment between personal values and the CSR/sustainability agenda. While this is something we should celebrate, all of those in managerial positions need to consider what impact any slackening in the pace at which this agenda is driven forward may have on employee satisfaction, motivation and retention. ■

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A second year of robust results has allowed us to confirm the veracity of most of last year's observations, including our fears of a substantial gender pay gap.

But the new questions we asked in 2008 have also revealed a fascinating picture of a profession that appears at ease with itself and confident of its future. The happy-in-the job data is indisputably high – and compares more than favourably with any of the statistics on employee satisfaction that CSR professionals routinely collect to put in their sustainability reports. That virtually all respondents would recommend a career in the field is an impressive indication of the feel-good factor that being a CSR practitioner engenders. And although there appears to be a consensus that CSR has become more, not less, relevant in a global downturn, it is still surprising to find such a degree of confidence in job security, with the majority feeling their jobs are as safe, or even safer, than in the recent past.

This is especially eyebrow-raising given that respondents filled out the questionnaire at the very end of last year, when the recessionary news was especially black. It could be that CSR professionals are guilty of being deeply unrealistic, and of looking at their profession through rose tinted spectacles. But more likely the figures reflect their feeling that the corporate responsibility brief is now part and parcel of corporate life.

Such a confident view bodes well for a line of work that is, after all, a young one. It would be depressing if uncertainty and cynicism had already begun to infect the profession at such an early stage in its life. For the time being, optimism is the watchword. ■



It's hard not to look at the results of our survey without considering the impact of the credit crunch, and a major global recession. For those working in this sector, there are some pressing concerns. How secure are jobs in CSR? What will CSR look like in what may well turn out to be a very different business landscape in the years ahead? The results do go some way in addressing these questions.

Overall, the evidence suggests a positive outlook. Unlike in many sectors, recruitment in CSR & sustainability hasn't seen a significant slowdown – this is certainly our experience in the last six months. We've observed relative stability in the CSR and broader sustainability space, with few redundancies and even continued hiring (with banking and finance an exception). Indeed, many corporate clients have reported to us that CSR budgets have increased over the past six months – particularly in comparison to other divisions.

What does seem to be changing is the type of people that companies are looking to hire. As accountability and transparency becomes even more key in all areas of business (not just CSR), companies are demanding firm commercial rationales from their corporate responsibility strategists. A clear focus on the 'need to do', along with a move away from less measurable activities, appears to be favouring professionals with a strong commercial background. This survey supports that anecdotal evidence, and also highlights some other interesting trends.

One of the most notable differences from last year's results is the change in job function. Broadly speaking, this is reflected in what we see from our clients' job requirements. Whilst climate change is a top five activity for both consultants and their in-house counterparts, it is relatively far down the list when considering the scale of the issue and the attention that it has received over the past couple of years. Our experience suggests that while many CSR professionals have this

activity as part of their remit, climate change is becoming a career path in its own right - with links to the CSR team but often sitting in quite separate parts of the business.

Looking forward to the 2009/10 report, we'll be able to analyse much more clearly the impact of the economic downturn on salaries and job security. While we're sure to see some changes, I'm confident of stability and even growth within the sector; particularly in companies where CSR has sound commercial foundations. ■

# About the authors



**Acona Ltd** is an independent employee owned CSR consultancy and part of Acona CMG risk consultancy. 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.

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