



Quality Workforce

# Insights

What matters to professionals working in quality

2018

# 1.0 Introduction



“When we saw the results of this research, I was delighted to find that Quality Professionals are a really happy bunch! They get paid well, and those who are CQI members are more satisfied and better paid than those who aren’t members. What’s more, satisfaction and pay both increase throughout their careers, and they continue to be employed and highly paid well into their sixties.

Even better, Quality Professionals compare favourably in terms of satisfaction and salary versus other professions - even those that I might previously have put on a pedestal.

I do have concerns about the pay and opportunity gap for women in the field, so we encourage

employers to take note of this and put appropriate actions in place, and at the CQI we will continue to monitor this issue.

In summary, the results of this research speak to the fact that being a Quality Professional is a wonderful career choice and that satisfaction and high pay can, and do, coexist - especially if you are a member of the CQI.

I’ve been a Quality Professional for over thirty years, and a Fellow of the CQI for the past ten, and my feelings about my profession echo those of the research respondents.”

*Estelle Clark,  
Director of Policy, CQI*

# 2.0 Summary

## 72% Satisfaction

72% of respondents were satisfied with their current role in quality. This compares very favourably with other professionals, such as Engineers (51%), HR (64%) and Teaching (43%).

## Gender equality Women aged 16-34 earn more than men

While men earned more on average than women across the whole survey, women aged 16-34 in Europe working full-time earned more on average than men in the same category.

## Communication is no.1 skill

Communication skills and personality are the two most important factors for employers when recruiting for a new hire in a quality position.

## Long careers 40% more than 20 years

40% of the respondents had worked in quality for more than 20 years and 10% of the survey respondents were aged 65+ and still in work, demonstrating the opportunity to have a long career within quality.

## £57,677 Mean salary

The mean average salary in GBP was £57,677 with the highest region being the Americas and the lowest Africa. The UK average salary is higher than similar reports published for engineers, safety and environmental professionals.

## LinkedIn Most used for job searching

Searching on LinkedIn is the most used method to find a new position by respondents. This demonstrates how well the business network has been adopted by the profession.

# 3.0 High job satisfaction

72%  
Positive satisfaction

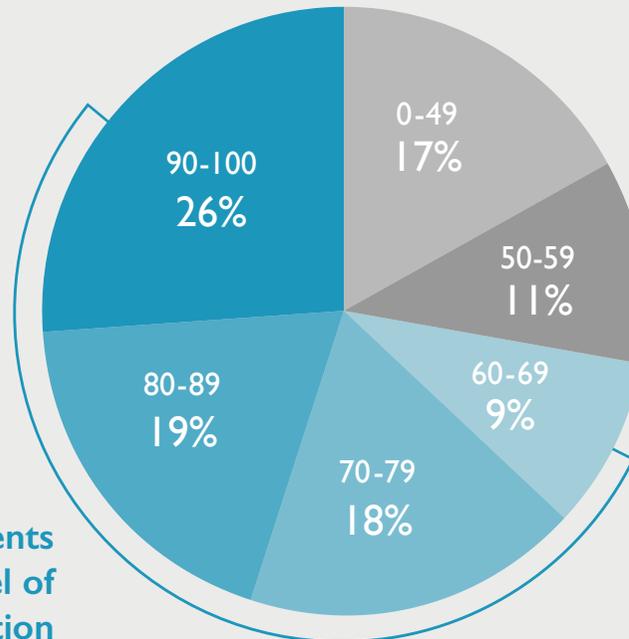
A very positive aspect of this research was the high level of job satisfaction within the quality sector. When asked to rate the level of satisfaction between 1 and 100, 72% selected a positive score of 60 or above and more than a quarter selected between 90 and 100. Just 12% selected less than 40.

The main reasons for this high level of satisfaction were:

- Sense of achievement
- Flexibility and variety
- Ability to share knowledge
- Embedded quality culture
- Development opportunities

72% of respondents had a high level of job satisfaction

Satisfaction wheel



“I have learned a lot about quality in the last 5 years since I took on my current role and I can see a big shift in culture in my company, for the better. It gives me great satisfaction that my job is making my company improve and all staff have benefited and are showing commitment.”

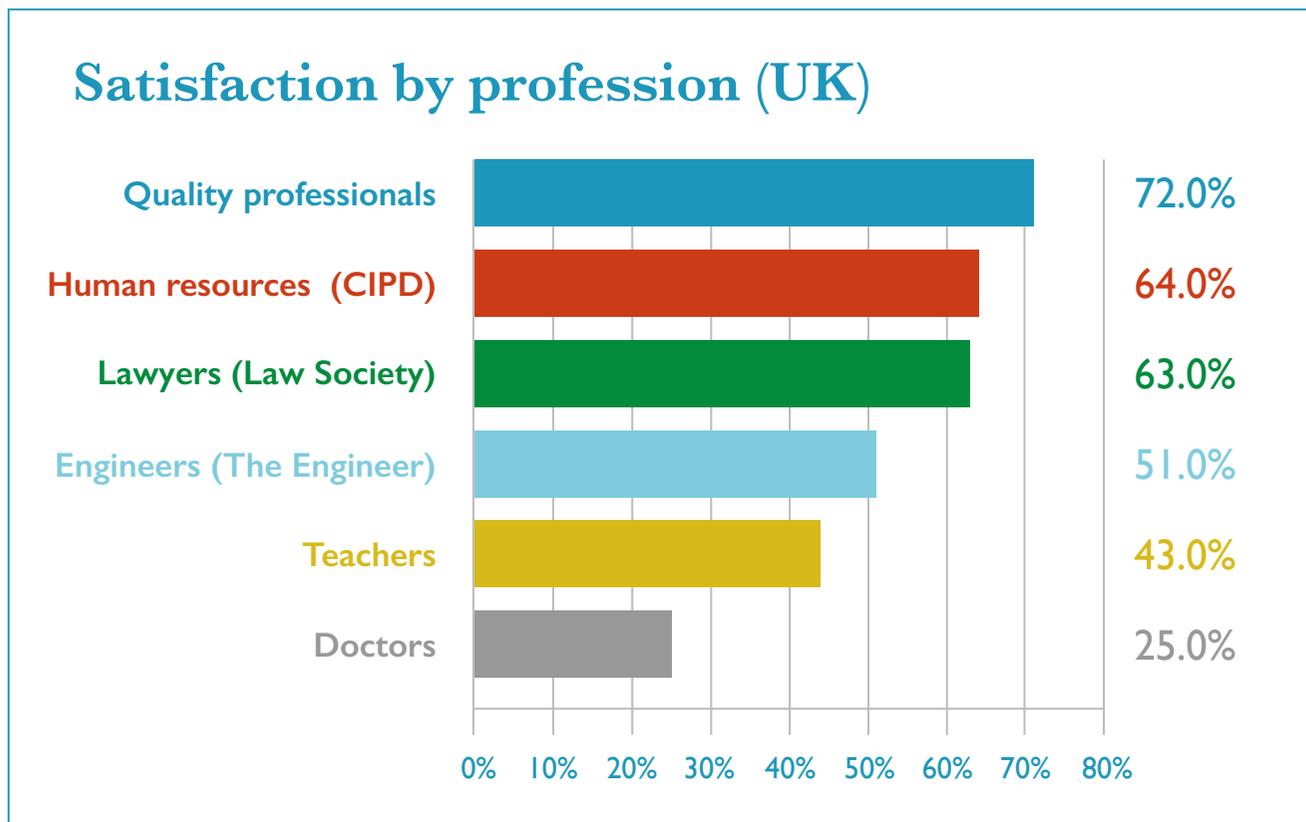
# 3.1 CQI and IRCA members more satisfied than others

When the job satisfaction score for survey completers is broken down by their professional membership, we can see that, on average, CQI members have a higher level of job satisfaction than members of other professional bodies and from those with no professional membership.



## 3.2 Higher satisfaction v other professions

Many other sector and industry organisations publish salary and satisfaction surveys. We have looked at the results of those most closely linked to the quality sector and have compared those to the results from this survey. We can see that the job satisfaction in the quality sector is higher than all other professions that publish a similar survey.



“My employer appreciates the requirement for a good QA system and is providing the support to help me succeed.”

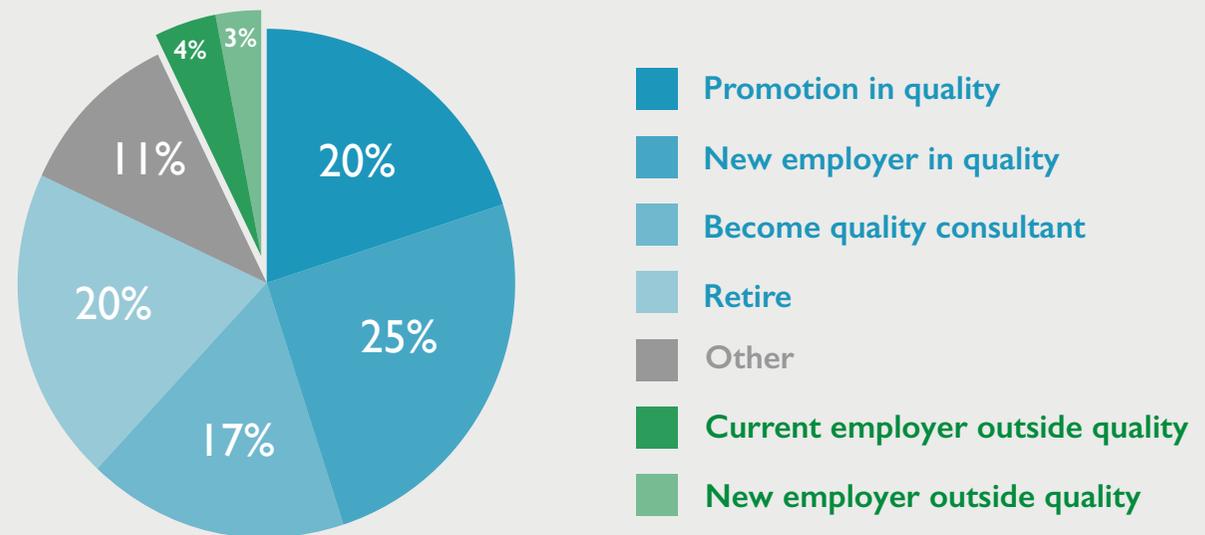
## 3.3 Leaving and dissatisfaction

The survey results showed a very high level of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, a small number of quality professionals expressed dissatisfaction and indicated that they planned to leave the quality sector in their next job move.

Among this small proportion of the survey, the following were the main reasons for dissatisfaction:

- Lack of career progression
- Poor satisfaction
- Negative management view of quality
- Different/new career
- Limited number of jobs

### Anticipated next career move



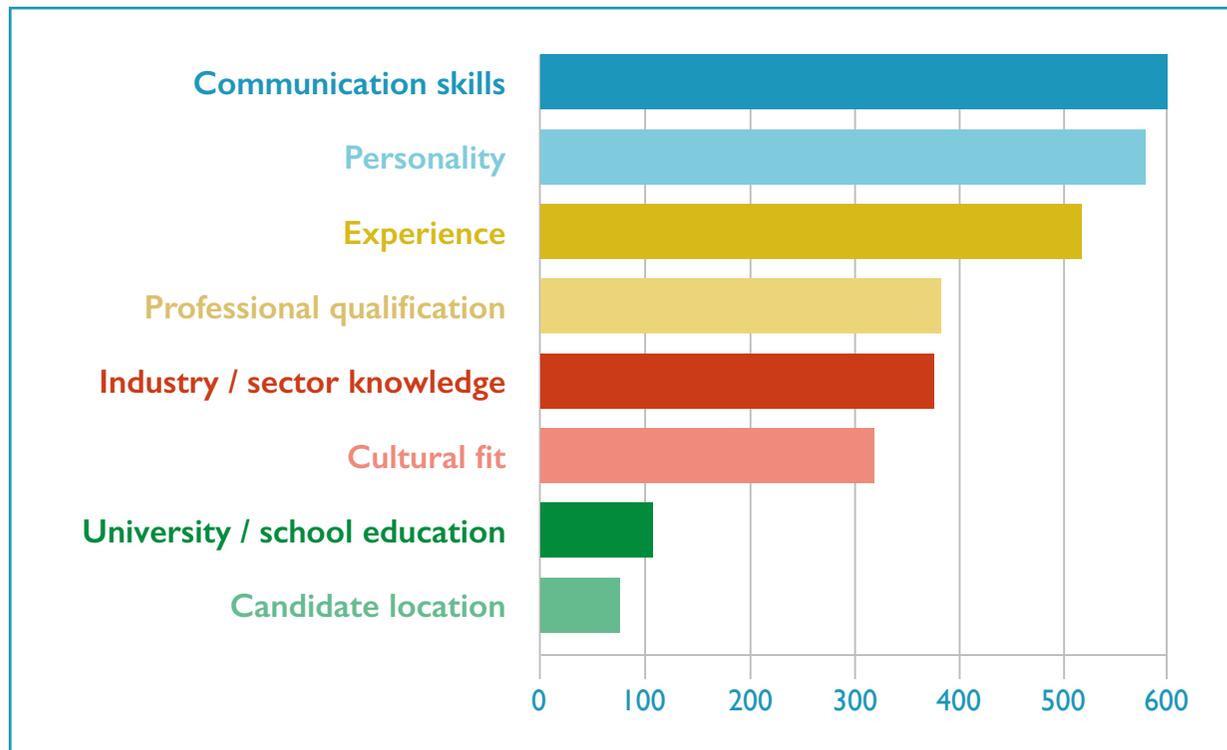
“Poor culture; lack of trust and autonomy. Quality is seen as a tick box.”

“Lack of challenge and no career path.”

# 4.0 Communication skills most wanted by employers

We surveyed those responsible for recruiting quality professionals into their organisations and asked what the most important attributes are when selecting candidates for new jobs.

Communication skills was the attribute rated as very important by most employers, followed by personality and experience. Professional qualification and sector knowledge were fourth and fifth.

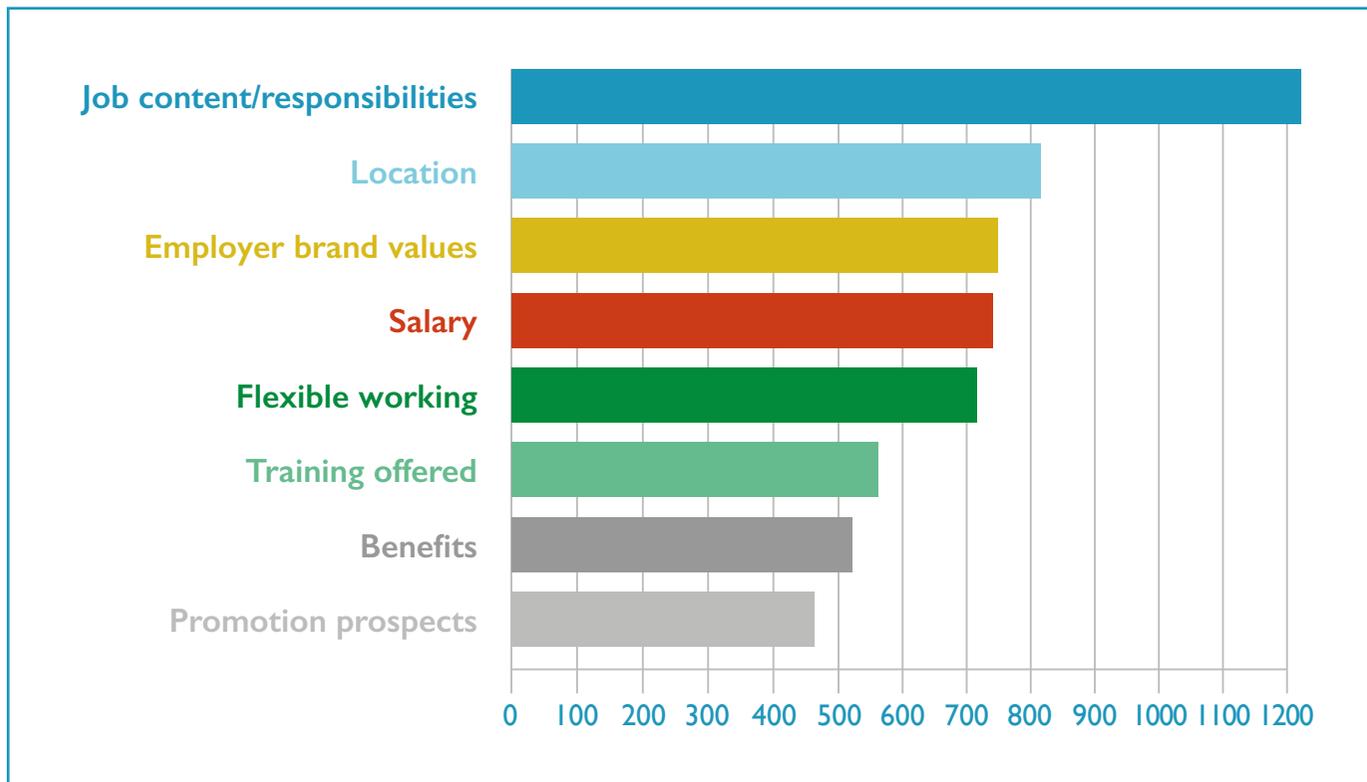


“While experience and qualifications are undoubtedly important, we really need to have candidates that show high energy and have a positive forward thinking approach to quality. They will also need to be great communicators in order to work successfully with colleagues throughout the business.”

# 4.1 Employees value job content first

Having asked employers what attributes they wanted from candidates, we then asked quality professionals what factors were important to them when looking for a new role.

The most important factor was the specific job content of the role, followed by location and the employer's brand values. Salary was only fourth on the list, with flexible working close behind.

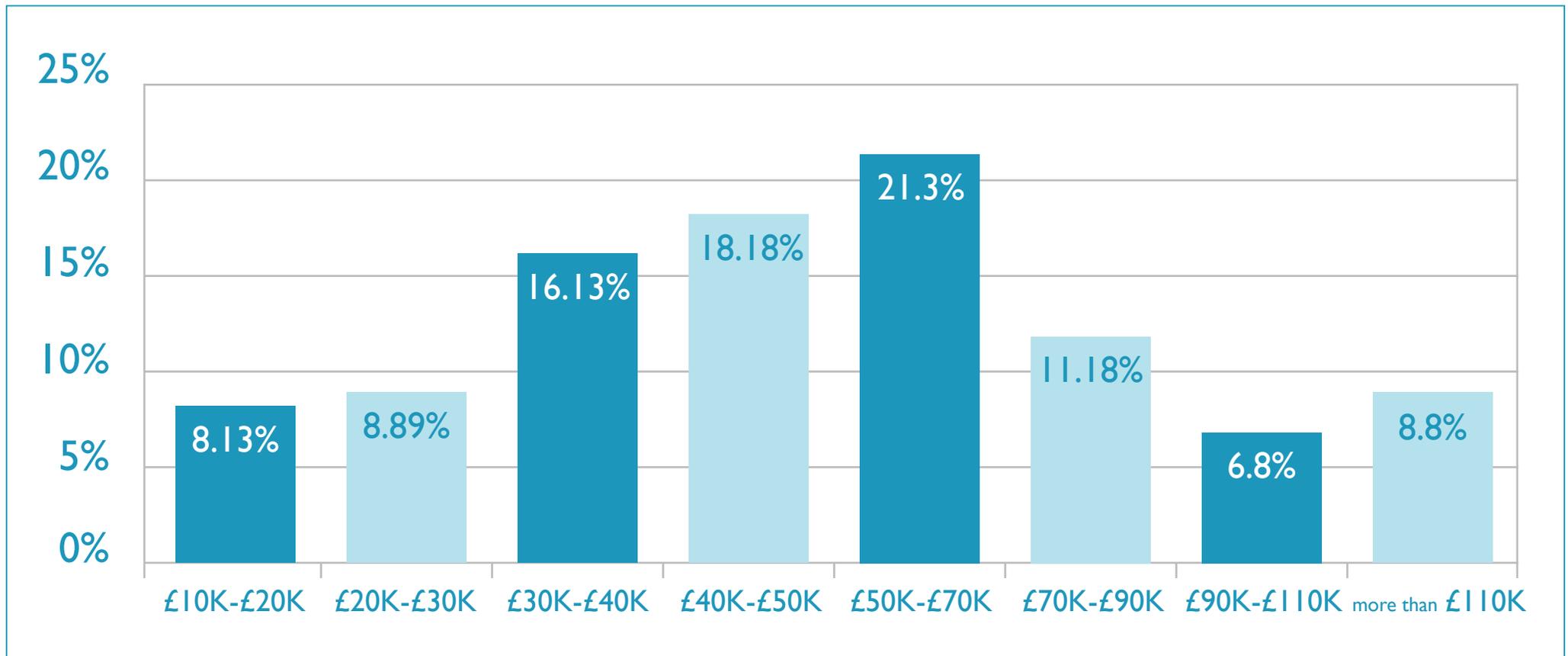


“It is clear that candidates within the quality sector are most interested in the work content and responsibilities that they will have in a new role. Employers need to ensure that job responsibilities are clearly defined and well communicated in job adverts and during interviews.”

# 5.0 Salaries

£57,677  
Average salary

We asked all respondents for their annual salary (in GBP). The mean average salary was £57,677 and the median salary was £49,125. 40% of the respondents earned within the £40-£70k range and nearly 9% earned in excess of £110k.



# 5.1 Salaries by region

When broken down by region, we can see that the highest salaries are earned in the Americas and the lowest in Africa. Asia is slightly higher than Europe.

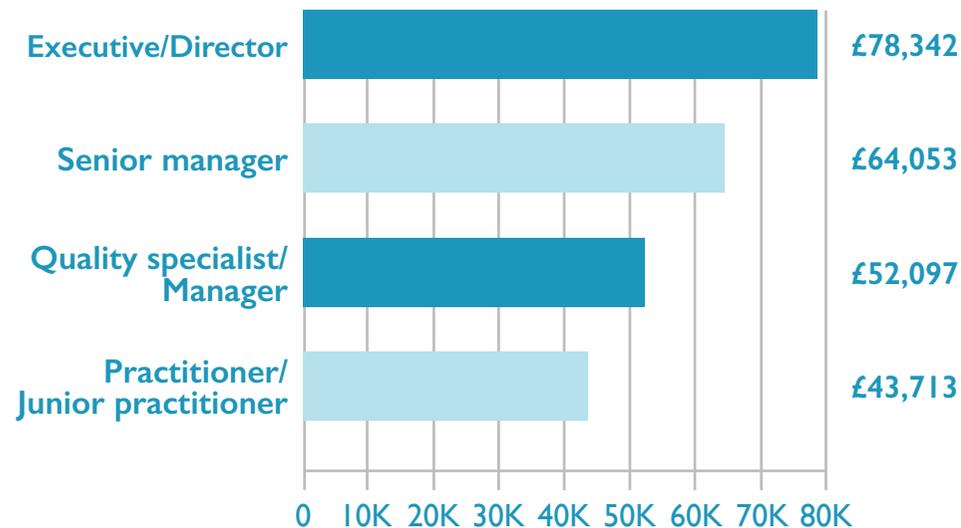


## 5.2 Salaries by role and membership

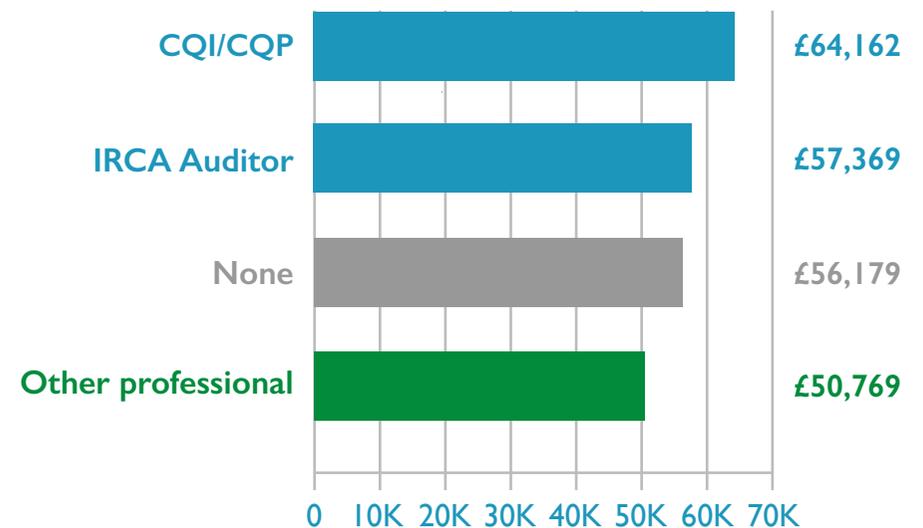
We asked all respondents for their role within quality and whether they were a member of a professional organisation. We then analysed the average salaries of each of the roles and membership statuses.

The average salary of an executive or director is £78,342 while the average salary of a quality practitioner is £43,713. Chartered Quality Professionals earned the highest on average of all the professional memberships - £64,162.

### Average salary by role



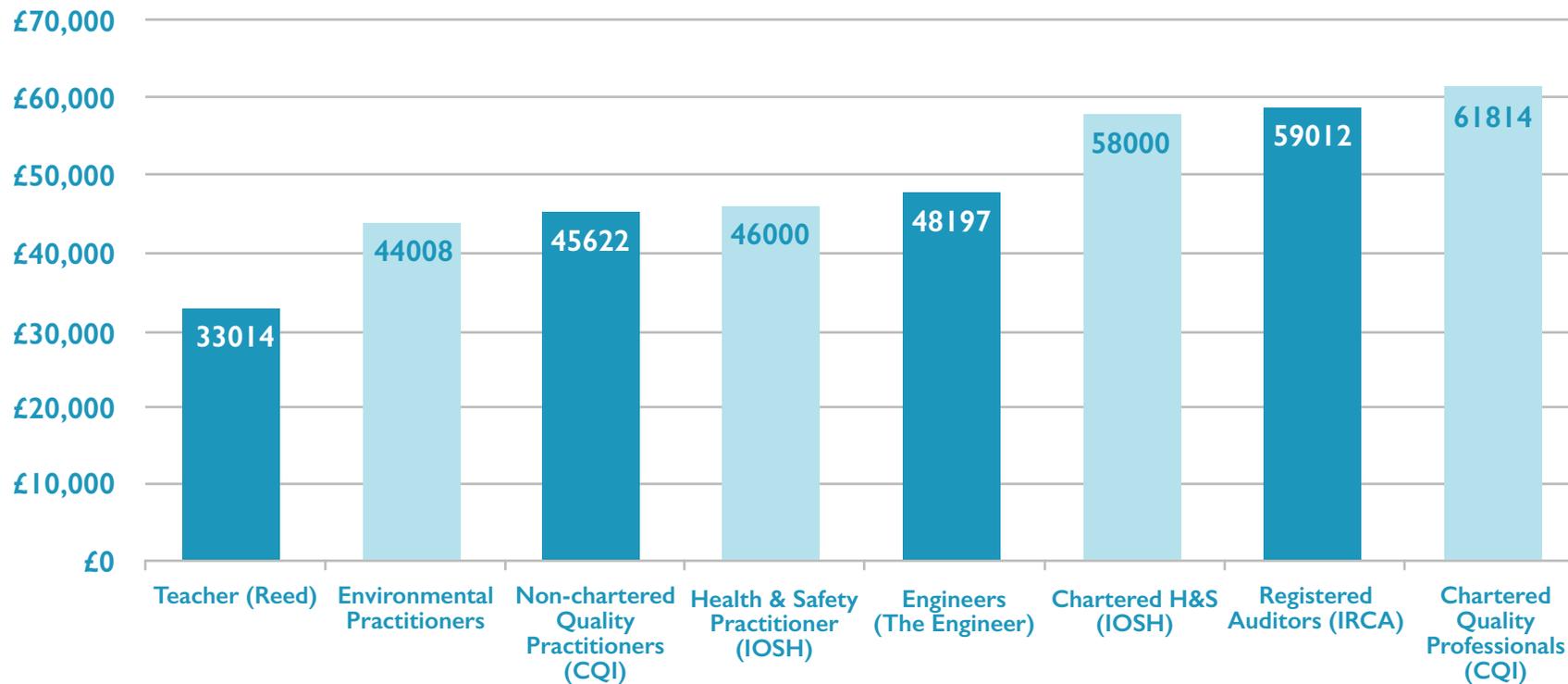
### Average salary by professional membership



## 5.3 Chartered CQI members and IRCA auditors earn more than other professions

We looked at other salary surveys published by similar professions within the UK to see how our survey results compared. We have endeavoured to compare “like with like” - so we have used the data for full-time quality professionals within the UK only.

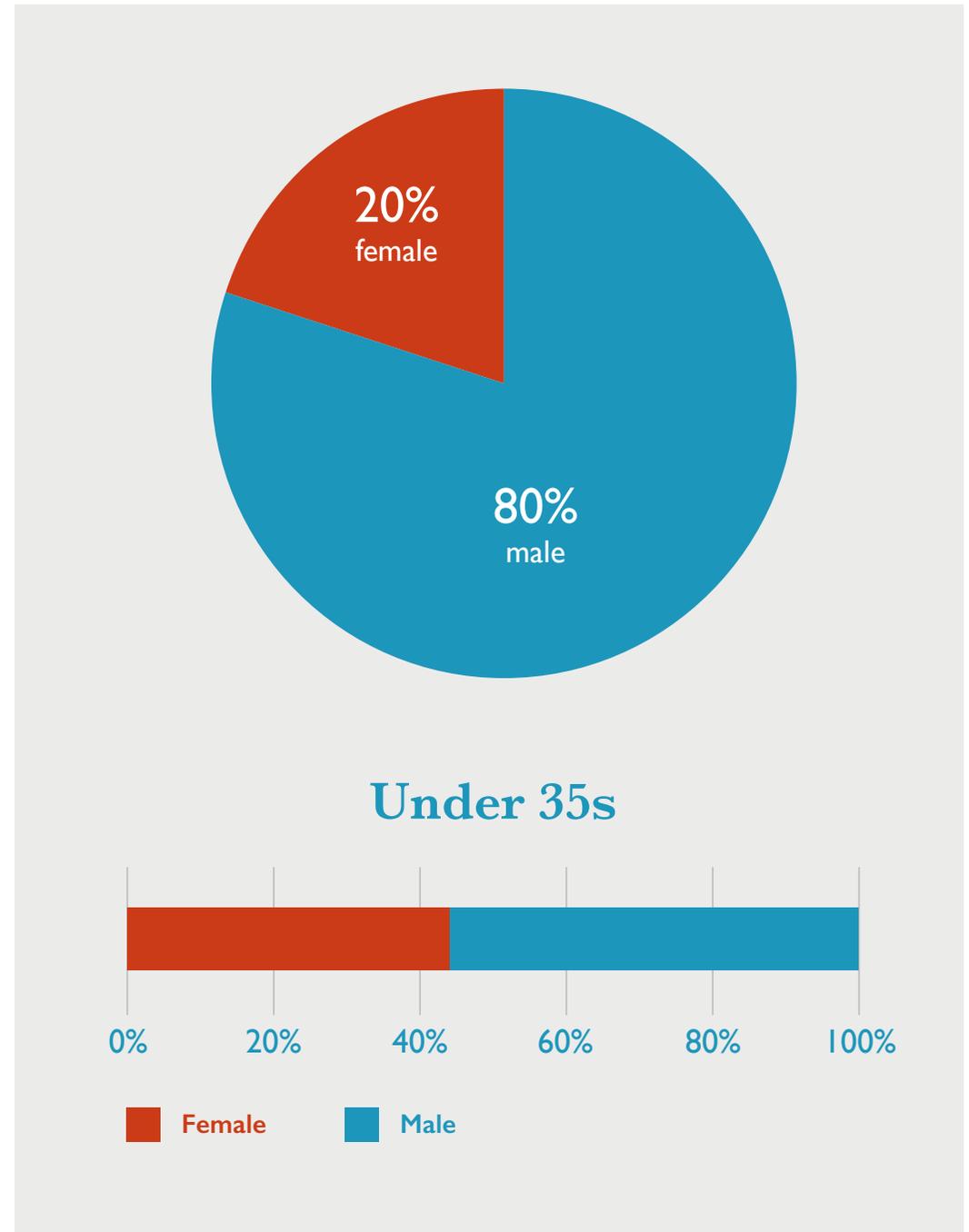
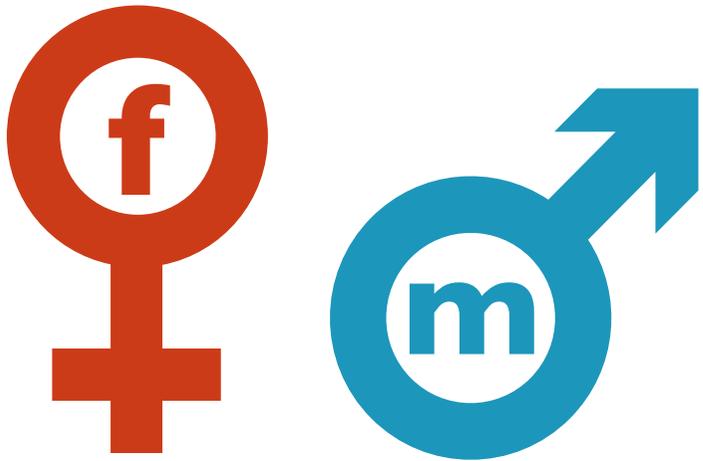
### Average salaries by profession (UK)



# 6.0 Gender

The respondents to our survey were 80% male and 20% female. We note that this is significantly higher than the ratio for the annual survey for “The Engineer” (9% female) but still under-represents females within our industry.

What is encouraging is that in the 16-34 age-group, nearly 45% of those taking the survey are female.



# 6.1 Gender pay parity at 16-34 age range

The average salary for men working full-time within the sector (£58,496) is 23% higher than the average for women (£47,365). However, this figure is significantly influenced by a higher proportion of men who have worked for longer within the profession and are at higher levels of seniority.

When we look at professionals in Europe working full-time in the 16-34 age old category (where the numbers of women and men are comparable), the average female salary is slightly higher than men.

This is very encouraging as it shows that where age and seniority are at similar levels, there is gender pay equality in the sector.



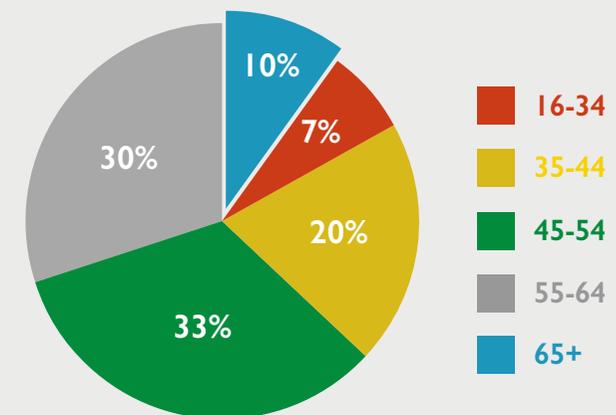
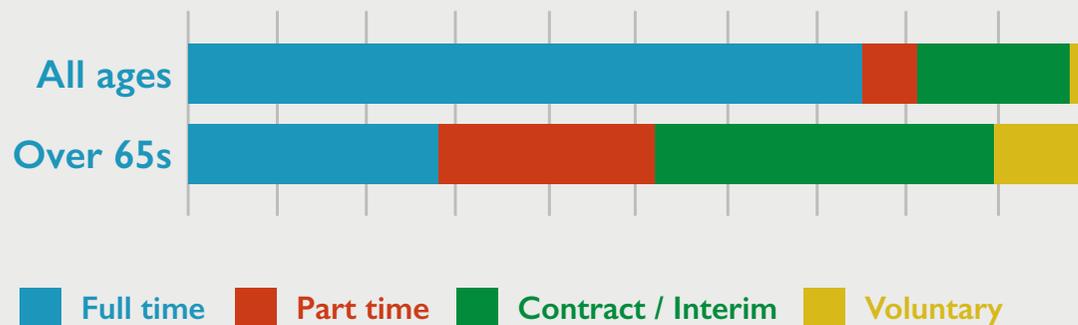
# 7.0 Extended careers

£58,571  
Average salary of 65+

More than 43% of the survey responders had worked within quality for more than 20 years. This demonstrated that the sector is able to provide a long (and satisfying) career for quality professionals.

What was also striking is that nearly 10% of the responders still actively working were aged 65 and above. The over-65s are predominately male and a healthy 28% still work full-time - although a larger percentage (37%) work on a contract or interim basis. There is also a sizeable number that work part time and on a voluntary basis.

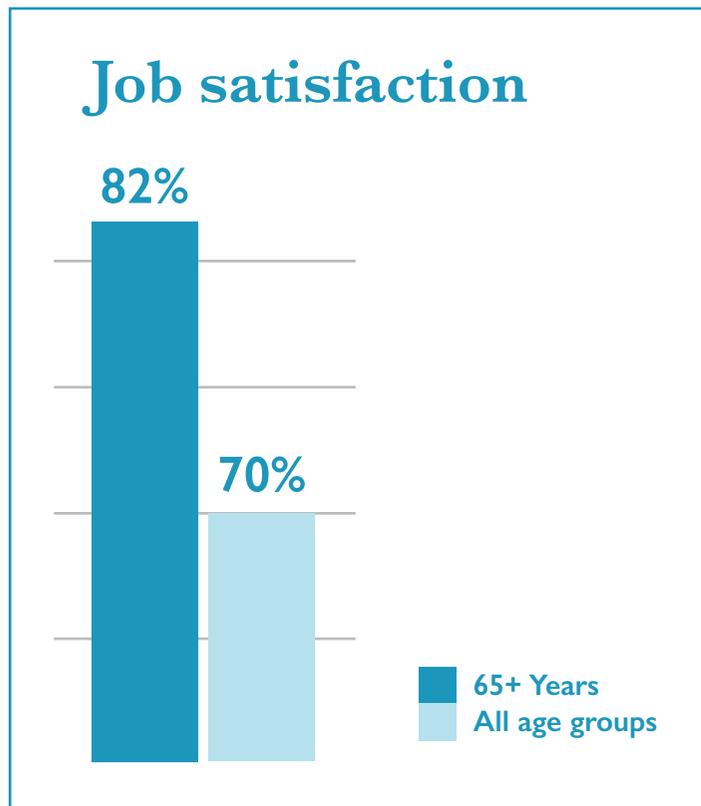
Average earnings for the over 65s is a very healthy £58,571.



# 7.1 Over 65 - Independent and satisfied

The over 65s are the most satisfied of all the age groups, with an average job satisfaction score of 82 out of 100.

A common thread among the over 65 responders is that they are able to continue to have a flexible and independent working career. Their expertise enables them to continue to work when they want to - and gives them the satisfaction of passing on experience to the next generation.



“I am semi-retired. I prefer working about 40% of full-time on interim projects or audits.”

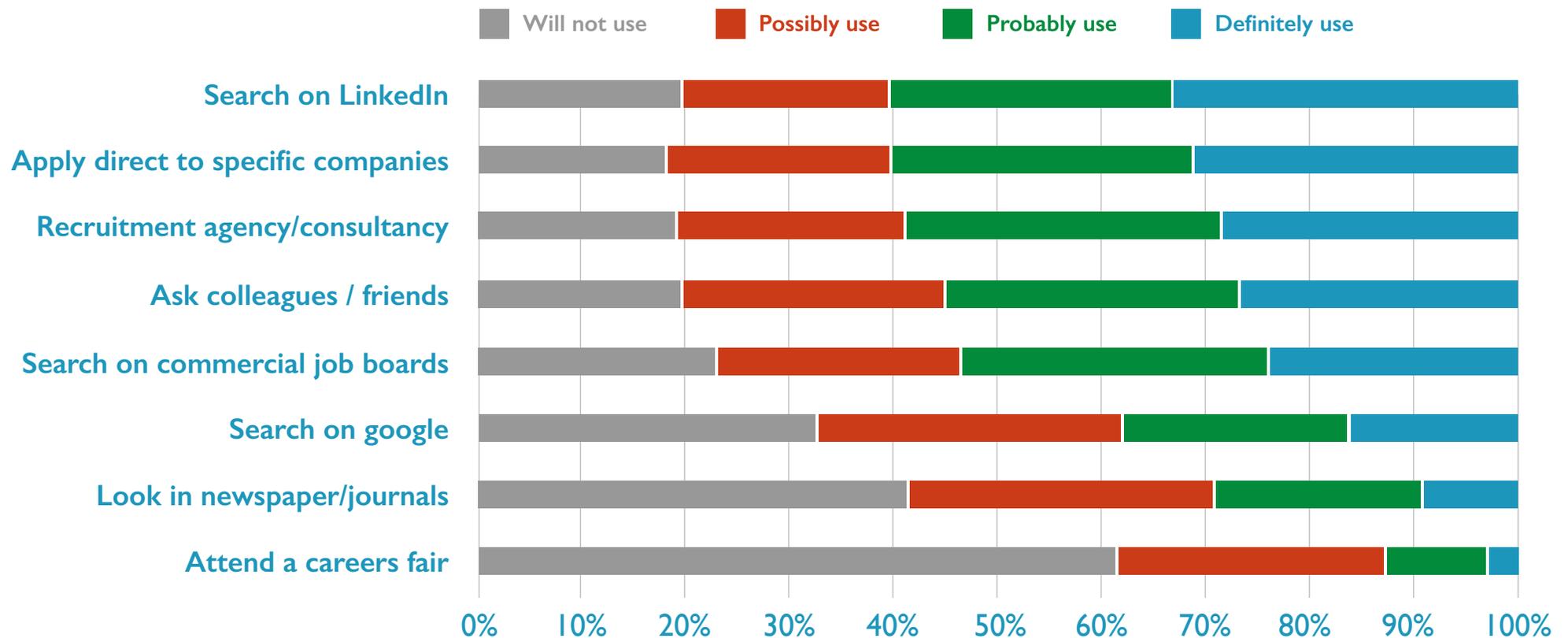
“I am an independent consultant, trainer and a contract auditor. I have been self-employed for over 20 years.”

“I have been in industry and quality management systems for 49 years. It is a good thing for me to transfer my experience and knowledge to the younger generation.”

# 8.0 LinkedIn for next job



When we asked the survey completers which methods they would use to find their next job, the most popular method was by searching the business networking site LinkedIn. Second most popular was applying direct to companies that they know and third was by using a recruitment consultancy.



# 9.0 Conclusion

This project has provided some excellent insight into the workplace within the global quality sector. The key conclusions that we draw from the project are:

## Satisfaction

72% of respondents were satisfied with their current role in quality. This compares very favourably with other professions such as Engineering, HR and Education.

## Communication

Communication skills and personality are the two most important factors for successful professionals within the quality sector.

## Reward

The mean average salary in GBP of £57,677 shows that quality professionals are well rewarded compared to other professions.

## Gender equality

While the average male salary was higher than females, in the 16-34 age bracket the salaries were very close, with females earning slightly more than males.

## Age positive

40% of the respondents had worked in quality for more than 20 years and 10% of the survey respondents were aged 65+.

# 10.0 About the research and contact

This project was undertaken by an independent market insight specialist commissioned by the CQI and Shirley Parsons.

The survey was completed under market research society guidelines over the autumn of 2017.

For more details about the project, please contact:  
CQI Marketing department

 [marketing@quality.org](mailto:marketing@quality.org)

 +44 (0)20 7245 8540

The CQI is the chartered body for quality professionals. We improve the performance of organisations by developing their capability in quality management.

In partnership with our stakeholders, we support the development of good governance, agile assurance and a culture of continuous improvement through membership services, training, learning and thought leadership.

---

[www.quality.org](http://www.quality.org)



Shirley Parsons are the global leaders in HSEQ recruitment. We are an ever-growing global quality talent network built on long-term relationships, industry knowledge, and geographic expansion.

We act as career agents to quality professionals and talent partners to organisations seeking to plan ahead and improve in all areas of quality.

---

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

