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**2026** Barclay Simpson  
Salary & Bonus Trends

**Internal Audit, Assurance & Controls**

## Overview

Despite a broadly flat year for internal audit recruitment, salary growth remained remarkably resilient for candidates who secured a new role in 2025.

Starting salary increases typically began in the 10–15% range, with 15–20% standard across much of the market. Uplifts above 20% were also not unusual, especially for IT auditors with particular skillsets and experience in key areas, such as cyber security or infrastructure.

"Salary uplifts were quite restrained in 2024, but we have seen them return to historic averages over the last 12 months," said David Hornsby, Director at Barclay Simpson.

"For the right candidates, especially at the senior end of the market, the uplifts have been quite good."

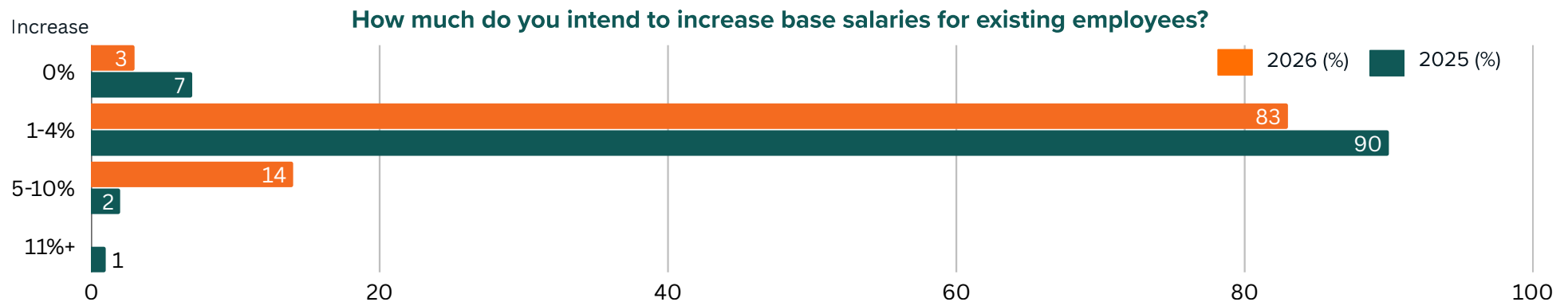
Professionals moving out of consultancy roles and into higher-paying sectors like financial services often saw the biggest

starting salary rises. That said, salary growth was solid up and down the UK and across many industries, including the public sector and commerce and industry.

This growth has been tempered by fewer vacancies hitting the market overall. Ultimately, for those willing and able to move, the rewards are clear; for others, conditions have been less certain. Indeed, while internal audit jobs are usually well protected, particularly within financial services, teams were not immune from redundancies in 2025.

Looking ahead, salary growth for those who stay in their current role is likely to remain somewhat muted in 2026, albeit marginally more favourable than last year.

Our annual Employer Survey shows 83% of organisations plan to increase employee salaries by an average of 1-4% over the next 12 months, with a further 14% opting for rises of between 5% and 10%. However, only 6% of employers expect employee bonuses to be higher in 2026.



## Career development becomes top priority

Every year, we ask people in internal audit or internal controls jobs to rank the reasons why they would look for a new role in order of importance. In most years, our Candidate Survey reveals that better remuneration is the biggest priority.

In 2025, however, career development took the top spot with 35% of professionals citing it as their number one concern, nearly double the proportion who said the same in last year's report (19%). Remuneration still ranked second, with 27% of candidates saying it is their most important consideration—a significant drop from 51% in 2024.

The shift towards career development may reflect greater caution in the broader jobs market. This is supported by a sharp rise in job security as candidates' top priority (up from 6% to 14% year on year), indicating people are currently more focused on long-term stability than immediate salary bumps.

### What is your main priority when considering a new role?

	2025	2024
Career development	35%	19%
Remuneration	27%	51%
Work-life balance	16%	16%
Job security	14%	6%
Remote working	8%	6%
Better benefits	3%	1%

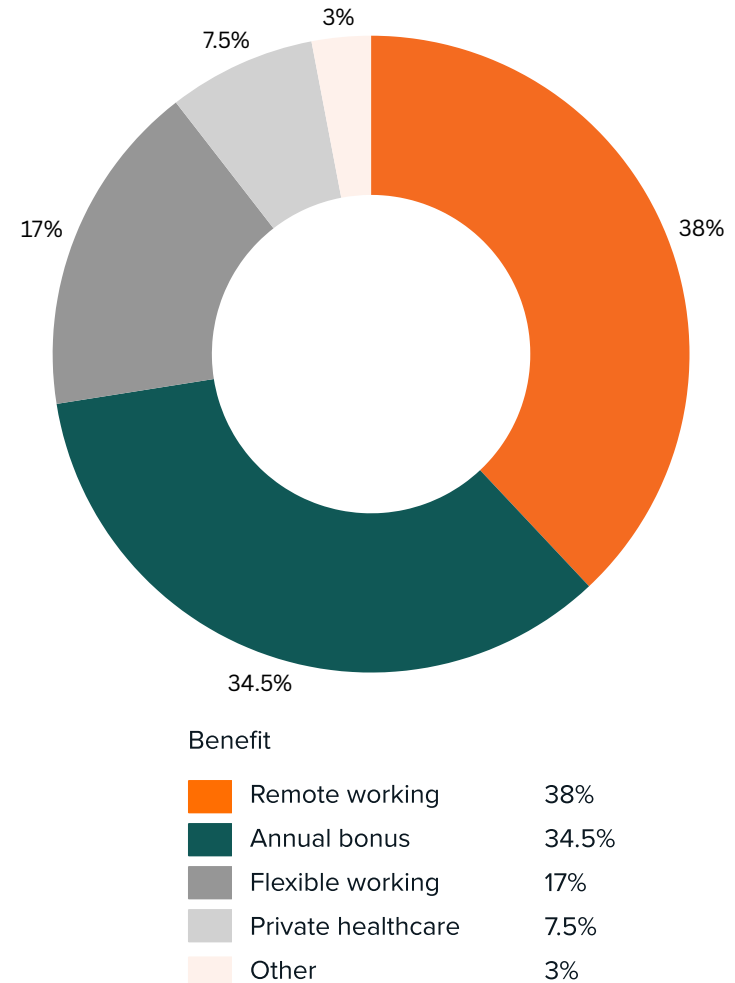
Remote working and a healthy work-life balance are largely unchanged as priorities, with 16% and 8% of candidates ranking them most important, respectively. This is despite our consultants reporting that employers are expecting more time in the office from employees as flexible and hybrid working policies are scaled back.

Nevertheless, our survey suggests that most organisations are striking the right balance on this issue. Two-thirds of professionals believe working from home two or three days a week is ideal, with a similar proportion saying this reflects their current arrangement.

Employers should be cautious about further restrictions to hybrid working models though. Remote working is viewed as the most valued job benefit by 38% of internal audit and controls professionals, ranking it ahead of even an annual bonus (34.5%).

Six out of 10 candidates also said they would consider switching jobs if they weren't happy with the hybrid working set-up available to them in their role.

**Which job benefits do internal auditors value the most?**



## Internal Audit, Assurance and Controls Salaries

The following tables provide an overview of current salary benchmarks for key roles across internal audit, assurance & controls. Figures reflect average base salaries and day rates for professionals across the UK, as well as those working remotely

### Internal Audit – Banking and Financial Services Salaries

Area	London	South East	Wales & West	Midlands	North & Scotland
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£40k—£60k	£35k—£55k	£30k—£45k	£35k—£55k	£39k—£50k
Senior Auditor	£60k—£85k	£55k—£75k	£50k—£70k	£55k—£68k	£47k—£65k
Audit Manager	£75k—£105k	£70k—£100k	£65k—£85k	£65k—£80k	£65k—£90k
Senior Manager / Portfolio Head	£90k—£140k	£80k—£120k	£80k—£100k	£75k—£120k	£85k—£100k
Head of Audit / Chief Auditor (SMF5 etc)	£120k—£250k+	£100k—£200k+	£90k—£150k+	£100k—£200k+	£90k—£160k+

## Internal Audit — Asset and Wealth Management Salaries

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£40k—£70k	£35k—£50k	£35k—£55k
Senior Auditor	£60k—£85k	£50k—£70k	£42k—£65k
Audit Manager	£75k—£105k	£60k—£100k	£52k—£72k
Senior Manager / Portfolio Head	£85k—£140k	£75k—£115k	£70k—£100k
Head of Audit / Chief Auditor (SMF5 etc)	£130k—£250k+	£115k—£180k+	£100k—£150k+

## Internal Audit – Insurance Salaries

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£35k—£60k	£32k—£45k	£30k—£45k
Senior Auditor	£60k—£80k	£48k—£65k	£42k—£65k
Audit Manager	£75k—£100k	£60k—£80k	£52k—£72k
Senior Manager / Portfolio Head	£80k—£125k	£75k—£110k	£70k—£100k
Head of Audit / Chief Auditor (SMF5 etc)	£120k—£250k+	£90k—£180k+	£90k—£150k+

## Internal Audit – Commerce and Industry Salaries

Area	London	South East	Wales & West	Midlands	North & Scotland
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£35k—£55k	£34k—£50k	£30k—£45k	£34k—£48k	£32k—£47k
Senior Auditor	£55k—£70k	£50k—£65k	£48k—£65k	£48k—£65k	£48k—£65k
Audit Manager	£65k—£90k	£60k—£80k	£55k—£80k	£55k—£80k	£55k—£80k
Senior Manager	£85k—£120k	£75k—£110k	£70k—£100k	£70k—£100k	£70k—£100k
Head of Audit / Chief Auditor	£100k—£250k+	£90k—£170k+	£90k—£150k+	£90k—£150k+	£90k—£150k+

## Internal Audit — Public Sector and Not for Profit Salaries

Area	London	South East	Wales & West	Midlands	North & Scotland
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£32k—£45k	£30k—£45k	£28k—£42k	£30k—£42k	£28k—£42k
Senior Auditor	£48k—£60k	£45k—£60k	£38k—£50k	£40k—£52k	£38k—£52k
Audit Manager	£55k—£70k	£50k—£60k	£50k—£60k	£50k—£60k	£50k—£60k
Senior Manager	£60k—£90k	£55k—£80k	£55k—£80k	£55k—£80k	£55k—£80k
Head of Audit	£85k—£120k+	£75k—£110k+	£75k—£100k+	£75k—£110k+	£75k—£90k+

## Internal Audit – Practice (Big 4, Top 10 etc) and Consultancy Salaries

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£30k—£50k	£27k—£45k	£28k—£38k
Senior Auditor	£50k—£62k	£43k—£58k	£42k—£52k
Audit Manager	£60k—£80k	£55k—£70k	£50k—£65k
Senior Manager	£75k—£115k	£70k—£100k	£65k—£90k
Director	£100k—£200k+	£90k—£140k+	£90k—£120k+

## IT Audit – Financial Services Salaries

Area	London	South East	Regional
IT Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£38k—£55k	£30k—£55k	£28k—£55k
Senior IT Auditor	£60k—£75k	£50k—£70k	£50k—£62k
IT Audit Manager	£72k—£100k	£60k—£80k	£60k—£72k
Senior IT Audit Manager	£85k—£120k+	£65k—£100k	£65k—£90k
Head of IT Audit	£100k—£200k+	£90k—£140k+	£90k—£120k+

## IT Audit – Commerce and Industry Salaries

Area	London	South East	Regional
IT Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£30k—£52k	£27k—£50k	£25k—£50k
Senior IT Auditor	£50k—£65k	£44k—£60k	£42k—£50k
IT Audit Manager	£60k—£80k	£55k—£70k	£50k—£65k
Senior IT Audit Manager	£75k—£110k	£65k—£100k	£65k—£90k
Head of IT Audit	£100k—£150k+	£90k—£140k+	£90k—£120k+

## Internal Controls — Commerce and Financial Services Salaries

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Controller (1-3 yrs' exp)	£30k—£50k	£27k—£45k	£25k—£42k
Senior Internal Controller	£50k—£65k	£44k—£60k	£42k—£50k
Internal Control Manager	£60k—£100k	£55k—£85k	£50k—£78k
Head of Internal Controls	£100k—£160k+	£90k—£140k+	£90k—£120k+

## Contract/Interim – Financial Services Rates (per day)

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£200—£400	£200—£400	£150—£300
Senior Auditor	£300—£500	£300—£500	£250—£450
Audit Manager	£350—£650	£350—£650	£350—£600
Senior Manager / Portfolio Head	£500—£800	£500—£800	£450—£700
Director / Head of Audit (SMF5 etc)	£750—£2,000+	£750—£2,000+	£700—£1,800+

## Contract/Interim — Commerce and Industry Rates (per day)

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£200—£400	£250—£400	£150—£300
Senior Auditor	£300—£500	£300—£500	£250—£450
Audit Manager	£350—£650	£350—£650	£350—£600
Senior Manager / Portfolio Head	£500—£800	£500—£800	£450—£700
Director / Head of Audit	£750—£1,800+	£750—£1,600+	£700—£1,500+

## Contract/Interim — Public Sector Rates (per day)

Area	London	South East	Regional
Internal Auditor (1-3 yrs' exp)	£200—£400	£200—£400	£150—£300
Senior Auditor	£300—£500	£300—£500	£250—£450
Audit Manager	£350—£650	£350—£650	£350—£600
Senior Manager	£500—£800	£500—£800	£450—£700
Head of Audit	£750—£1,200+	£700—£1,100+	£700—£1,100+



## **Attract and retain the internal audit, assurance and controls professionals you need with Barclay Simpson**

Barclay Simpson has been the leading recruitment agency for internal auditors and IT auditors since 1989.

We have a deep understanding of and extensive network in this specialist market. Within our audit recruitment team, we have specialist consultants working in banking, asset management, insurance, commerce and industry, professional services and the not-for-profit sectors. We can help you create a talent attraction strategy with competitive salary offerings or find a role that aligns with your skills and long-term career goals, supporting you from interview through to starting your new role.

Arrange a consultation today to see how Barclay Simpson can support you as you build an internal audit function that delivers the assurance your organisation needs.

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