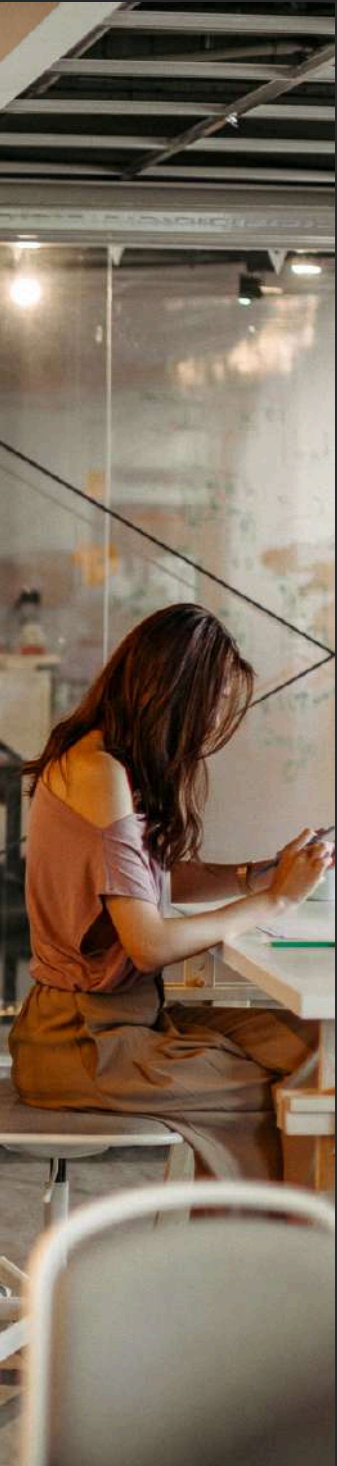




2026

UK QSR, HOSPITALITY & RETAIL SALARY GUIDE

Operations • Finance • HR • Marketing • IT • Supply Chain • Property
• Food • Technical • Franchise • C-Suite



CONTENTS.

- The UK QSR Talent Landscape
- Operations
- Finance
- HR & People
- Marketing & Digital
- IT & Technology
- Supply Chain & Procurement
- Property, Estates & Development
- Food Technical & Quality
- Franchise Department
- C-Suite & Board
- Bonus & Benefits
- About Bite Talent & Contact



THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE MARKET.

If you hire (or lead) in UK QSR and hospitality retail, you'll already feel it: the talent market is tight, candidates are sharper, and slow or unclear offers get rejected.

This guide pulls salary intelligence across ten core functions, based on live recruitment mandates, confirmed placements, and real candidate conversations across 40+ clients between Q4 2024 and Q1 2026.

One important point: salary is only one part of why people say yes.

In 2026, candidates are weighing up the full package, bonus clarity, flexibility, progression, and whether your growth story is believable. The operators winning are the ones who make the whole offer make sense.



THE VALUE YOU'LL GET FROM THIS GUIDE.

Confidence on what to pay

Low / median / high benchmarks across 10 functions, built from live mandates and confirmed hires.

A faster route to the right offer

Context on what's pushing salaries up (and where you can hold firm).

Fewer nasty surprises

Clear flags for pay compression and retention risk, so issues don't arise once hiring starts failing.

All figures are base salary in GBP unless stated. Bonus and benefits benchmarks are at the end.



DATA SOURCES

Live mandates, confirmed placements, and candidate salary data from Q4 2024 to Q1 2026. Data covers 40+ QSR and hospitality retail clients.

DISCLAIMER

All figures are indicative guidance only. Actual salaries vary by business size, location, experience, and candidate scarcity.

SCOPE

Permanent roles across QSR, fast casual, coffee, bakery, casual dining, pubs, food-to-go, and travel retail. All UK regions.

THE UK QSR TALENT LANDSCAPE.

Salary growth across QSR and hospitality retail has outpaced most other UK sectors over the past 24 months. Talent scarcity is still the driver, with inflation pressure and competition from retail, logistics, and fintech all pulling from the same pool.

At mid and senior levels, it's still a candidate-led market. Time-to-hire is stretched, and candidates are more willing to walk away from slow or underwhelming processes than they were even 18 months ago.

The businesses winning in 2026 tend to do three things well:

Move quickly.

Explain total reward early (not after three interviews).

Lead with a growth story people can believe in.



Indicator	Figure
Average year-on-year salary growth across all functions	6 to 12%
Average time-to-hire for senior specialist roles	14 to 16 weeks
Candidates receiving a counter-offer during process	60%

• Universal Trends Across All Functions

Pay compression between mid and senior levels is the most consistent retention risk across all ten functions in this guide. When the gap between a Technical Manager and their Head of Technical narrows to 15 to 20%, the promotional incentive disappears and candidates look externally. Proactive salary reviews cost less than replacement. Counter-offer activity is running at approximately 60% at mid-to-senior level. Roughly three in five candidates you make an offer to will receive a counter. Offers need to be compelling from the outset.

London premiums remain 15 to 25% above regional rates across all functions. South East and travel hub locations command 10 to 15% uplifts. Genuine hybrid flexibility is narrowing this gap. Businesses offering 2 to 3 days remote access a wider talent pool and face less salary pressure. Roles requiring five days on-site in a regional location are experiencing the sharpest candidate shortfalls.

THE UK QSR TALENT LANDSCAPE

- **Location Premiums Still Matter**

London remains 15 to 25% above regional rates.

South East and travel hubs often sit 10 to 15% above.

Hybrid working is narrowing the gap for roles that can genuinely flex.



Region	vs. National Median	Key Context
London	+15 to 25%	Highest cost of living and talent density. Premium applies across all levels and functions.
South East	+10 to 15%	Commuter belt pressure; travel hub locations (airports, stations) command upper end of range.
Scotland	Median to +5%	Edinburgh and Glasgow fastest growth in mid-tier; estate expansion creating new demand.
North, Midlands, Wales, NI	-5% to median	Lower cost of living enables competitive take-home. Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds at median.

- Salary Benchmarking

OPERATIONS.

Operations is the single most competitive hiring market in QSR and hospitality retail. Salaries have risen 6 to 8% year-on-year, driven by inflationary pressure, multi-site leadership shortages, and competition for proven General Managers in high-volume sites.

Expansion plans across the sector are outpacing the supply of candidates with 5+ site P&L experience. Candidates who have run 10+ sites are receiving multiple approaches every month.

Seven-day trading, late-night operations, travel hub locations, and multi-brand portfolio management all command salaries above standard benchmarks. Sites with £2m+ annual turnover typically require base packages 15 to 20% above benchmark to attract capable General Managers.

Assistant Manager turnover runs at 35 to 45% annually in high-pressure environments. The single biggest driver is the absence of a credible progression pathway to GM.



• What Pushes Packages Up?



Seven-day trading and late-night operations



Travel hub locations



Multi-brand portfolios



High-volume sites (£2m+ turnover)

Store & Site Leadership

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)	Typical Site Turnover (Month)
Shift Manager / Supervisor	27,000	28,000	32,000	£40k to 70k
Assistant Manager	28,000	32,000	37,000	£70k to 100k
General Manager / Store Manager	32,000	38,000	48,000	£100k to 200k
Senior General Manager	45,000	52,000	55,000	£200k to 600k

Multi-Site Leadership

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)	Typical Scope
Area Manager / Operations Manager (4 to 8 sites)	45,000	55,000	65,000	£2m to 15m portfolio
Area Manager / Operations Manager (9 to 12 sites)	55,000	65,000	75,000	£15m to 25m portfolio
Regional Operations Manager	65,000	70,000	85,000	20 to 50+ sites
Operations Director / Head of Ops	85,000	120,000	140,000	Full estate, board-level

- Pay Compression Risk**

The median gap between General Manager (£38k) and Area Manager (£55k) is £17k.


That uplift needs to cover multi-site accountability, travel, and a bigger P&L scope.


Strong GMs are declining Area Manager roles when the increase doesn't reflect the step change.


As a rule, if you're offering less than 20 to 25% to move from GM to AM, expect higher refusal rates.


WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

Live

 GMs with 3+ years in £400k turnover sites are commanding top-quartile packages and receiving multiple offers.

 Assistant Managers increasingly ask for GM progression timelines before they accept.

 Sign-on payments of £5k to £10k are now standard at Area Manager level when base salary is capped.

 Company-owned operators usually compete on structured bonus (often 10 to 25%). Franchise operators often compete on autonomy, profit-share, and faster progression.

- Salary Benchmarking

FINANCE.

The finance function in QSR and hospitality retail has shifted significantly in strategic importance over the past three years. As brands scale past 10 sites and pursue private equity interest, finance moves from back-office processing to operational backbone.

Strong finance teams reduce food cost variance through tighter period reporting, protect cash flow during expansion, and give leadership the data to make faster decisions. We have seen brands lose seven-figure funding opportunities because their management accounts were three months behind.

Finance salaries have risen 12 to 18% for mid-level roles over the past two years, a steeper increase than most functions. The driver is demand for candidates who understand multi-site hospitality P&Ls rather than generic accounting.

A Management Accountant from QSR or casual dining commands a meaningful premium over one without that background. The learning curve is steep and operators cannot carry it.



Transactional to Management

Role	Salary Range	Bonus	Typical Scope
Finance Assistant / Accounts Assistant	£24k to £32k	0 to 5%	Invoice processing, reconciliations, basic reporting
Management Accountant	£35k to £50k	5 to 10%	Monthly accounts, site P&Ls, variance analysis
Finance Business Partner	£45k to £60k	8 to 12%	Partnering operations, forecasting, performance insight
Financial Controller	£55k to £75k	10 to 15%	Month-end close, team management, statutory accounts, compliance

Leadership

Role	Salary Range	Bonus	Typical Scope
Head of Finance	£70k to £95k	15 to 25%	Full function oversight, board reporting, cash management
Finance Director	£90k to £130k	20 to 30%	Strategic leadership, investor relations, funding, M&A
CFO (£50M to 150M turnover)	£140k to £220k	25 to 40%	Capital allocation, PE reporting, audit committee
CFO (£150M to 300M turnover)	£200k to £320k	30 to 50%	Full C-suite accountability, investor interface, M&A

- Retention Risk**

Controllers with PE reporting experience or M&A track records are receiving 2 to 3 simultaneous offers as standard.

If your process takes more than three weeks from first interview to contract, you'll lose the best candidates. And if you benchmark against internal scales instead of the live market, we consistently see underpayment of 15 to 20%.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

Live



FP&A professionals with genuine multi-site hospitality experience are in acute shortage.



Pre-funding brands often stretch base slightly lower and compete with equity or upside.



Post-investment brands usually pay closer to market and compete on stability and progression.



The right Controller hire typically reduces period-end close time by 2 to 3 days and improves cost variance reporting within the first two quarters.

- Salary Benchmarking

HR & PEOPLE.

HR and People salaries have risen 8 to 10% over the past 18 months as operators face the real cost of under-investing in this function. Replacing a store manager costs £8K to 12K in recruitment, training, and lost productivity.

Multiply that across 20+ sites without proper retention support and it becomes a material business problem. Employment tribunal defence costs average £15K even when you win. At 25+ sites without a dedicated People function, brands are firefighting daily on compliance, culture drift, and retention.

The market for HR and People talent in QSR has shifted significantly. Candidates with genuine multi-site operational experience are in high demand, and brands are competing on mission, culture, and growth opportunities as much as salary.

Generic HR experience does not translate well to hospitality. Your best hires understand shift-based teams, high-volume recruitment, and the operational reality of running sites. These candidates are being hired within 2 to 3 weeks of starting their search.



Operational to HRBP

Role	Salary Range	Experience Level
HR Administrator / Coordinator	£28k to £35k	1 to 3 years
HR Advisor / People Advisor	£33k to £45k	3 to 5 years
L&D Coordinator / Trainer	£28k to £40k	2 to 4 years
HR Business Partner / People BP	£46k to £65k	5 to 8 years
Resourcing / Talent Acquisition Manager	£45k to £65k	4 to 7 years
L&D Manager	£45k to £60k	4 to 7 years

Leadership

Role	Salary Range	Experience Level
HR Manager	£45k to £68k	6 to 10 years
Head of People / Head of HR	£70k to £90k	8 to 12 years
People Director / HR Director	£90k to £130k+	12+ years

• **Underpayment Risk**

L&D specialists with hospitality-specific onboarding and management training experience are often underpaid relative to the market.

That cost shows up quickly: slower time-to-competency, higher early attrition, and inconsistent standards across sites.

At 20+ sites, a well-resourced L&D function typically pays for itself within two quarters through reduced replacement costs alone.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

● Live



Multi-site complexity often matters more than headcount.



HRBP demand is highest at 25 to 50 site brands hitting People complexity for the first time.



Brands with a real culture story and a clear progression framework win better talent at the same salary level.



Strong candidates increasingly expect equity or profit share at Head of People level in founder-led businesses.

- Salary Benchmarking

MARKETING & DIGITAL.

Marketing and digital salaries have risen 10 to 14% over the past 18 months, driven by demand for performance marketing, loyalty platform expertise, and CRM automation. All three are now baseline requirements for scaling QSR brands, not differentiators.

The best digital marketers are being courted by tech companies, D2C brands, and established retail players. QSR businesses are competing against sectors with deeper pockets and stronger employer brands. The offer needs to be about more than salary.

Digital is now the primary customer touchpoint. Mobile ordering, app-based loyalty, delivery platform management, and CRM automation are business-critical infrastructure. Brands that under-invest in digital leadership face fragmented customer data, inconsistent online experiences, and lost revenue to better-equipped competitors.

A mis-hire at Head of Digital level typically costs £60K to 80K in recruitment and onboarding, plus six months of lost momentum. Salary benchmarks should reflect that risk.



Salaries by Brand Growth Stage

Role	Early Stage (5 to 15 sites)	Growth Stage (15 to 40 sites)	Established (40+ sites)
Marketing Executive / Coordinator	£28k to £35k	£35k to £40k	£40k to £45k
Digital Marketing Manager	£45k to £50k	£50k to £55k	£55k to £65k
CRM / Loyalty Manager	£38k to £52k	£42k to £58k	£50k to £68k
Brand Manager	£38k to £50k	£42k to £55k	£55k to £60k
Performance Marketing Manager	£40k to £50k	£42k to £55k	£55k to £60k
Head of Digital / eCommerce	£65k to £80k	£65k to £80k	£80k to £100k
Head of Marketing	£55k to £65k	£65k to £85k	£85k to £95k
Marketing Director / CMO	£100k to £130k	£110k to £160k	£140k to £200k

- Salary Benchmarking

- **Key Scarcity Alert**

CRM and loyalty specialists with QSR or food delivery platform experience are the hardest marketing hire in the sector right now.

Brands are racing to build first-party data capability and reduce dependency on third-party aggregators. Expect to pay the upper end of benchmarks and expect counter-offers.

Growth trajectory matters too: a PE-backed 10-site brand planning aggressive expansion can justify higher salaries than a 30-site operator with flat growth.



WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

Live



Head of Digital roles are taking 8 to 12 weeks to fill.



A mis-hire at Head of Digital level typically costs £60K to 80K all-in and sets capability back 6 months.



Performance marketers with proven ROAS improvement are getting competing offers within days.



Brands leading with story, growth, and a modern stack win candidates over better-paying but less compelling competitors.

- Salary Benchmarking

IT & TECHNOLOGY.

IT salaries in QSR and hospitality retail continue to rise as businesses compete with retail, logistics, and fintech for the same technical talent.

Legacy EPOS platforms, often 10 to 15 years old, must integrate with modern digital ordering, loyalty apps, and delivery aggregators whilst maintaining near-100% uptime during peak trading.

Seven-day trading means field engineers respond to site outages during evenings and weekends as routine. Pay compression between senior engineers and first-line management is a significant retention risk, particularly in London.

Businesses treating IT as a cost centre find recruitment difficult even at the top of these ranges.



Support, Infrastructure & Data

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)
IT Support Analyst / Service Desk	24,000	28,000	34,000
Field Support Engineer	28,000	35,000	42,000
Infrastructure Engineer	38,000	48,000	58,000
Business Systems Analyst	35,000	45,000	55,000
Data Analyst / BI Analyst	38,000	42,000	54,000
IT Operations Manager	50,000	62,000	75,000

Applications, Security & Leadership

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)
EPOS / Retail Systems Manager	45,000	58,000	72,000
Information Security Manager	55,000	65,000	85,000
Cyber Security Lead	60,000	70,000	95,000
Head of IT	70,000	85,000	105,000
IT Director	95,000	120,000	150,000
CIO / CTO	120,000	145,000	180,000

WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

● Live



Infrastructure Engineers with Azure or AWS certifications command 10 to 15% premiums.



IT Directors often prioritise transformation scope and board access over base salary.



EPOS and Retail Systems Managers with genuine hospitality experience are extremely rare.



Field Support Engineers are the hardest infrastructure role to fill; candidates expect defined territories, vehicle provision, and on-call premiums of £100 to 150 per week.

- Salary Benchmarking

SUPPLY CHAIN & PROCUREMENT.

Supply chain and procurement salaries have risen 8 to 12% year-on-year, reflecting the function's shift from operational support to strategic priority. Short shelf life products, multi-temperature distribution, seven-day trading cycles, and high volume variability demand exceptional planning and supplier agility.

Recent market shocks, including labour shortages, energy cost inflation, and geopolitical supply disruption, have made the cost of under-investing here impossible to ignore. Businesses now seek leaders who can balance cost control with resilience while managing supplier consolidation without compromising service levels.

Career progression in hospitality supply chain is non-linear. Demand planning, logistics, and supplier quality specialists often command salaries comparable to generalist senior managers because the skills are scarce and the business impact is direct.

Sustainability and supplier risk specialisms are in growing demand but remain under-compensated at most operators. As ethical sourcing and carbon reporting face increasing regulatory scrutiny, that gap will become a retention problem.



Procurement

Role	Low (£)	High (£)	Typical Bonus	Key Responsibilities
Assistant / Junior Buyer	28,000	35,000	5 to 10%	Supplier liaison, data analysis, process adherence
Buyer / Category Manager	38,000	52,000	10 to 15%	3 to 5 categories, supplier negotiation, cost-saving targets of 2 to 5%
Senior Buyer / Senior Category Manager	50,000	68,000	15 to 20%	Multi-category leadership, cost-saving programmes
Head of Procurement	65,000	90,000	20 to 25%	Enterprise strategy, board reporting, risk mitigation
Procurement Director	90,000	130,000	25 to 30%	Cross-functional leadership, supply chain transformation

Supply Chain & Logistics

Role	Low (£)	High (£)	Typical Bonus	Key Responsibilities
Supply Chain Planner	32,000	42,000	5 to 10%	Demand forecasting, inventory management, supplier liaison
Demand Planner	42,000	58,000	10 to 15%	Forecast accuracy, promotional planning; salaries up 15% in 12 months
Logistics Manager	45,000	62,000	10 to 15%	Chilled/frozen distribution, carrier management, OTIF targets
Distribution Manager	50,000	70,000	15 to 20%	Multi-temperature network, depot operations, team management
Head of Supply Chain	75,000	110,000	20 to 30%	Enterprise-wide strategy, risk mitigation, board-level reporting

**WHAT WE'RE SEEING
IN LIVE HIRING.**

Live



London-based Buyers earn 15 to 25% above regional equivalents.



Operators with 300+ site estates pay 10 to 20% above those with under 50 sites.



Clear progression (Buyer to Senior Buyer within 18 to 24 months) improves acceptance rates



60% receive counter-offers.



Buyer and Category Manager roles are averaging 8 to 10 weeks to fill.



Demand Planner salaries have risen 15% in 12 months; candidates with forecasting accuracy above 90% and promo planning experience command 10 to 15% above benchmark.

- Salary Benchmarking

PROPERTY, ESTATES & DEVELOPMENT.

The property and estates function faces significant complexity in 2025. High street portfolios are undergoing strategic reset, travel retail is recovering and expanding, and sustainability mandates, particularly EPC compliance, are driving significant capital programmes.

Simultaneously, brands are executing rollout programmes that demand senior development professionals with experience managing 20+ annual openings without disrupting trading.

Remuneration has increased 8 to 12% at senior levels over the past 18 months, driven by competition for candidates with multi-site rollout experience and landlord negotiation expertise. Pay compression between mid-level Estates Managers and Heads of Estates is a real retention risk.

Senior Acquisitions Managers often earn only 25 to 30% more than the tier below, which can still feel modest given the step change in scope. Counter-offer activity is intense, particularly for candidates with franchise property governance experience.



Estates & Property Management

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)	Bonus	Typical Scope
Estates Administrator	24,000	28,000	32,000	0 to 5%	Lease docs, service charge, landlord correspondence
Acquisitions Manager	38,000	45,000	52,000	10 to 15%	30 to 80 locations, maintenance, lease renewals
Senior Acquisitions Manager	50,000	58,000	68,000	15 to 20%	80 to 150 sites, lease negotiations, dilapidations
Head of Property	70,000	85,000	105,000	20 to 25%	Full estate, board reporting, cost optimisation

Development & Construction

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)	Bonus	Typical Scope
Development Manager	45,000	55,000	65,000	15 to 20%	New site openings, refurbishments, contractor liaison
Construction Manager	48,000	58,000	68,000	15 to 20%	Build delivery, budget control, programme management
Senior Development Manager	65,000	78,000	92,000	20 to 25%	Pipeline of 20 to 50 openings annually
Head of Development	90,000	110,000	135,000	25 to 30%	Strategic pipeline, capital allocation, team leadership
Property / Development Director	100,000	125,000	165,000	30 to 40%	Board-level, full property P&L, franchise governance

**WHAT WE'RE SEEING
IN LIVE HIRING.**

Live



PE-backed businesses and high-growth franchisors often pay 10 to 15% above median ranges.



Estates Managers with franchise experience command 8 to 12% premiums.



Active rollout programmes (20+ annual openings) command 10 to 15% salary premiums.



Senior Development Managers delivering 30+ annual openings are among the most sought-after hires in the function.

- Salary Benchmarking

FOOD TECHNICAL & QUALITY.

Food Technical and Quality salaries have risen 12 to 18% at senior levels since 2023, the steepest increase of any specialist function in this guide.

The driver is risk. Natasha's Law, Prepacked for Direct Sale regulations, and heightened consumer litigation have elevated allergen control from operational hygiene to board-level governance. Technical leaders now need legal literacy, supplier negotiation skills, and crisis management experience alongside traditional food safety credentials.

Multi-site operators face continuous EHO inspections, third-party audits, and internal compliance reviews. Rapid menu innovation cycles, seasonal launches, and supplier switches add further pressure.

Technical Managers must balance speed-to-market with rigorous safety validation. A single food safety incident can trigger social media amplification, regulatory enforcement, and investor concern. The cost of under-investing in this function is not theoretical.



Technical & Quality

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)	Bonus
Quality Assurance Manager	32,000	40,000	50,000	0 to 8%
Food Safety Manager	36,000	45,000	55,000	5 to 10%
Technical Manager	40,000	50,000	62,000	8 to 12%
Supplier Assurance Manager	42,000	52,000	65,000	8 to 12%
Head of Quality	55,000	68,000	82,000	10 to 15%
Head of Technical	58,000	72,000	88,000	12 to 18%

Culinary, Food Development & Senior Leadership

Role	Low (£)	Median (£)	High (£)	Bonus
Food Development Manager	38,000	50,000	65,000	5 to 10%
Head of Food / Head of Culinary	65,000	70,000	90,000	10 to 15%
Culinary Director	85,000	95,000	130,000	15 to 20%
Technical Director	85,000	105,000	135,000	20 to 30%
Food & Technical Director (combined)	95,000	115,000	145,000	20 to 30%

- Pay Compression Alert**

The gap between Technical Manager (median £50K) and Head of Technical (median £72K) has narrowed to around £22K.

High-performing Technical Managers are receiving external counter-offers in the £58K to 62K range. That reduces the incentive to stay and creates real succession risk.

Head of Technical roles average 14 to 16 weeks to fill. The gap costs more than a proactive salary review.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

 Live



Culinary talent with technical literacy commands premium packages.



Operators increasingly look for leaders who can bridge innovation and compliance.



Allergen specialists with multi-site audit experience receive multiple offers; time-to-hire for this profile is 12 to 14 weeks.

- Salary Benchmarking

FRANCHISE DEPARTMENT.

- Franchise Remuneration Tends to be Shaped by Three Things:



Network size



Growth model



Whether the priority is expansion or performance

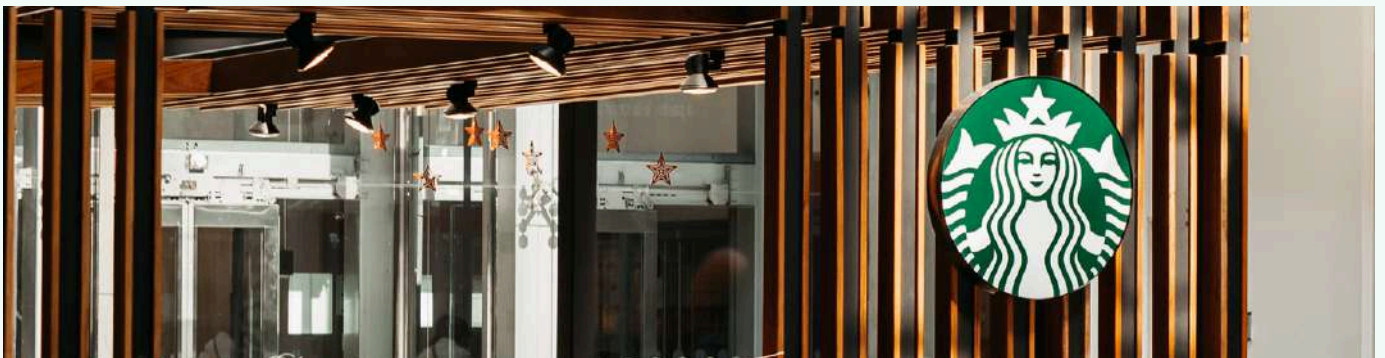
Development-led franchisors (new franchisee acquisition) typically offer higher variable pay with commission tied to franchise sales targets.

Operations-led models (like-for-like performance) usually lean on competitive base salaries with retention-focused incentives.

Two consistent underpayment risks show up in this function:

Compliance and Quality Managers (regulatory load is undervalued).

Franchise Business Managers in QSR (median is higher than many franchisors pay).



Senior Leadership by Network Size

Role	Emerging (10 to 50)	Scaling (50 to 150)	Established (150+)	Variable Pay
Head of Franchise Development	£60k to 75k	£75k to 95K	£90k to 120K	20 to 40% of base + commission
Head of Franchise Operations	£65k to 80k	£80k to 100K	£95k to 130K	15 to 25% of base
Franchise Director	£90K+	£100k to 115K	£115k to 145K	20 to 35% of base

Mid-level & Specialist Roles by Network Size

Role	Emerging (10 to 50)	Scaling (50 to 150)	Established (150+)	Variable Pay
Franchise Development Manager	£35k to 45k	£45k to 55k	£55k+	30 to 50% commission
Franchise Business Manager	£38k to 48k	£45k to 58k	£60k to 80k	10 to 20% of base
Compliance & Quality Manager	£42k to 52k	£48k to 58k	£55k to 62k	10 to 15%
Training & Onboarding Manager	£38k to 48k	£42k to 52k	£48k to 58k	5 to 10%
Franchise Marketing Manager	£40k to 50k	£44k to 54k	£50k to 60k	10 to 15%
Franchise Support Coordinator	£26k to 32k	£28k to 35k	£30k to 38k	0 to 5%

- Underpayment Risk Areas**

Franchise Business Managers in QSR: market median is £52k, but the franchisor average sits at £48k.

Compliance and Quality Managers: a premium of £5k+ is often justified by accountability, but not routinely paid.

Development Managers (retail): commission structures can lag B2B benchmarks, narrowing the talent pool.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING IN LIVE HIRING.

 Live



FBMs with genuine P&L coaching experience (not just compliance monitoring) are rare.



Emerging franchisors can often compete more effectively with equity than cash (consider LTIPs).



Development Managers who can sell, onboard, and manage territory agreements are among the most sought-after hires.

- Salary Benchmarking

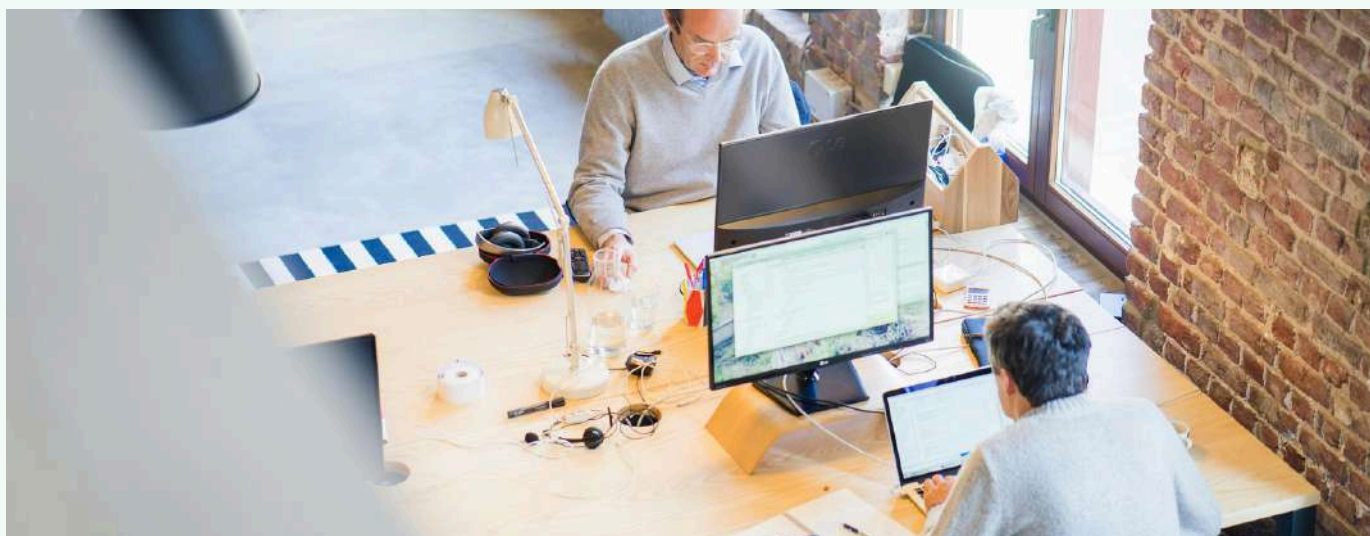
C-SUITE & BOARD.

Executive compensation in QSR and hospitality retail continues to evolve under heightened governance scrutiny and investor expectations. Remuneration committees face increasing pressure from institutional investors and proxy advisors to demonstrate clear pay-for-performance linkage.

Founder-led private businesses are now routinely benchmarking executive pay, documenting decision rationale, and ensuring compensation correlates to value creation rather than tenure.

C-suite appointment timelines have shortened, with particular pressure on CFO and COO roles. Businesses are navigating margin pressure, technology transformation, and the complexity of multi-format or international estates simultaneously.

PE-backed businesses typically offer equity participation through growth shares or sweet equity with 3 to 5 year vesting horizons. Corporate-owned structures favour strong base salaries and annual bonus schemes with clearly defined performance metrics.



C-Suite Base Salary by Business Scale

Role	£50m to 150M	£150m to 300M	£300m to 500M	£500M+ / International
CEO	£180k to 280k	£250k to 400k	£350k to 550k	£500k to 750k+
COO	£140k to 220k	£200k to 320k	£280k to 450k	£400k to 600k+
CFO	£140k to 220k	£200k to 320k	£280k to 450k	£400k to 600k+
CPO / CHRO	£100k to 160k	£130k to 200k	£160k to 250k	£200k to 320k+
CTO	£120k to 180k	£160k to 250k	£220k to 350k	£300k to 450k+
CMO	£110k to 170k	£150k to 230k	£200k to 320k	£280k to 400k+

Bonus, Incentives & Board Fees

Role	Typical Bonus Target	Structure Notes
CEO	40 to 100% of base	EBITDA, LFL growth, transformation delivery; LTIP and equity in PE-backed businesses
COO	30 to 75% of base	Estate EBITDA, operational KPIs, expansion milestones; often largest non-CEO package
CFO	30 to 75% of base	EBITDA, cash targets, funding milestones; significant uplift for M&A track record
CPO / CTO / CMO	25 to 50% of base	Function-specific KPIs alongside company-wide EBITDA contribution
Board Chair	£50k to 150k fee	Fixed annual retainer, 2 to 3 days per month plus ad hoc strategic input
Non-Executive Director	£25k to 60k fee	Fixed retainer; plus £5k to 15k for Audit, Remco, or ESG committee chair roles

**WHAT WE'RE SEEING
IN LIVE HIRING.**

● Live



Boards are taking longer on CEO appointments as they prioritise proven multi-site operators over sector generalists.



CFOs with M&A track records or PE reporting experience consistently command upper-quartile positioning.



CPO / CHRO positioning has strengthened as labour cost management, engagement measurement, and ESG reporting become board-level priorities.



Founder-led businesses often sit below median on base and offset with meaningful equity; the right candidates understand the trade.

- Benchmarking

BONUS & BENEFITS.

Base salary gets you into the conversation, total reward is what closes the hire and keeps them.

Candidates are looking for bonus clarity and achievability. Vague discretionary bonuses, unclear metrics, or targets that feel unrealistic are treated as warning signs.

Bonus Targets by Seniority

Level	Typical Bonus Target	Common Triggers	Payment Frequency
Store / Site Level	5 to 20% of base	Sales vs. target, labour cost %, mystery shopper, compliance scores	Quarterly
Area / Regional Management	15 to 30% of base	Portfolio EBITDA, LFL growth, talent development metrics	Annual (some quarterly)
Head of / Director Level	20 to 40% of base	Function KPIs, EBITDA contribution, project delivery milestones	Annual
C-Suite	30 to 100% of base	Company EBITDA, LFL, transformation delivery, exit multiples	Annual plus LTIP

Benefits Prevalence: Head Office & Management

Benefit	Prevalence	Typical Detail	Impact on Offer Acceptance
Pension contribution	90%	3 to 8% employer; 5 to 8% at senior levels	Baseline expectation; below 3% is a red flag
Hybrid working	80%	2 to 3 days office standard	Roles requiring 5 days face materially reduced candidate pools
Car allowance / company car	70%	£4k to 7k mid-level; £8 to 12k senior	Key expectation for multi-site and field roles
Private medical insurance	65%	Individual standard; family cover at director level	Significant pull at senior level
Sign-on payment	45%	£2k to 5K at GM+; £5k to 10k at Area Manager+	Increasingly essential to overcome counter-offers
Professional development budget	55%	£1k to 3k annually	Growing retention differentiator, especially mid-career
Enhanced maternity / paternity	45%	Above statutory; often 4 to 6 months enhanced	Baseline expectation for mid-career candidates

Company-owned vs. franchise package structures

	Company-Owned	Franchise Operator
Base salary positioning	Median to upper quartile; corporate resources and structured frameworks	Lower quartile to median; offset by variable pay and autonomy
Bonus structure	Formal, EBITDA-linked; 10 to 25% at site level, 20 to 40% at senior level	Variable or profit-share; potentially more generous in high-performing units but less predictable
Benefits	Comprehensive: private medical (senior roles), enhanced pension (4 to 8%), car allowance	More basic; but successful franchisees may offer competitive perks; mileage rather than car allowance
Hiring pitch	Lead with career framework, development investment, and stability	Lead with autonomy, impact, entrepreneurial culture, and profit-share upside

LET'S CHAT.

If any of this is useful, or if you want to talk through what you're seeing in the market, drop us a message.

We're always happy to have a conversation, whether you're hiring now or just thinking ahead.

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ABOUT BITE TALENT

If you're building a QSR, franchise, or retail estate, you already know the truth, scaling is never just "more sites". It's more people, more pressure, and more places where standards can slip.

Bite Talent helps operators across the UK, Europe and the Middle East hire the leadership and head office capability that keeps growth under control. We're relationship-led, but practical about it, we map the market, move fast, and keep the process sharp.

• What We Do

For Clients

- ✓ Leadership and specialist hiring across QSR, franchise and retail, from multi-site Ops through to functional heads and C-suite.
- ✓ Market mapping and targeted outreach, so you're not waiting for applicants when you need pace.
- ✓ A hiring process that qualifies, assesses, validates, then decides, without six rounds of diary Tetris.

For Candidates

- ✓ Roles with brands that are scaling, plus honest advice on scope, expectations, and what "good" looks like at this stage.