

SALARY REPORT 2026 AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR



PIE

Data in this report has been taken from circa 1000 commercially focused automotive professionals registered by PIE. Additional information has also come from a survey of salary and benefits carried out in December 2025 in order to give the most up to date picture of what's happening in this sector.

The candidates surveyed operate in a wide range of businesses covering the breadth of the industry at a variety of operating levels - from startups and scaleups to big corporates and blue chips.

The team at PIE are always happy to give you individually tailored salary advice according to your own growth stage. Should you require something more bespoke please don't hesitate to get in touch.



INTRODUCTION & SURVEY INSIGHTS

Salary still matters to candidates. But it's far from the whole story.

Our latest candidate research shows that sales and marketing professionals in the Automotive market are increasingly making decisions based on the total package on offer, not just basic salary and OTE. This isn't new or revolutionary but there is no doubt that there is a greater than ever concern from potential employees for overall wellbeing and future-proofing from their working environment.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 82% of candidates now rank an annual bonus as one of their top five most important benefits but over half place pension and healthcare in that same top tier which is perhaps less anticipated. Benefits that were once seen as "nice to have" are rapidly becoming standard expectations.

The ever-thorny issue of flexibility is still putting some employees at odds with employers. In our survey nearly 90% of respondents now work in hybrid or fully remote models and around two-thirds say they would not consider a role that requires them to be office-based full time. Notably even those respondents currently working in fully office-based roles said that they would not consider such roles in the future. Businesses who are trying to force this issue with return to office mandates risk losing key ground in the ability to attract talent to their businesses. Flexibility here could be a major win.

Quality-of-life benefits are now acting as potential deal-breakers too. 40% of our survey said they would reject a role if the holiday allowance does not meet their expectations and demand for options such as buying additional leave continues to rise.

And it's not all about the offer on the table right now. Candidates are also thinking much more about what happens next, not just the starting number. Nearly 80% surveyed have a formal annual salary review and every single one of those expects a pay increase at their next review. Most are realistic - the majority anticipate increases in the 2-5% range - but the expectation of clear, structured progression is now firmly embedded in how roles are evaluated.

In a market where Automotive businesses are competing not just with each other, but with SaaS, mobility and technology companies for the same commercial talent, the strength and balance of your benefits package is more than ever a deciding factor in whether you win or lose the people you want.

BENEFITS GUIDE

BONUS/COMMISSION

The single most important benefit in the market.

82% of candidates rank bonus as a top-five benefit, making it the #1 most important benefit overall in our research.

This reinforces that performance-based rewards are still a major motivator in automotive commercial sales roles but they are now judged in the context of the whole package, not in isolation.

INSIGHT: BONUS/COMMISSION OPENS DOORS. THE REST OF THE PACKAGE DECIDES WHETHER CANDIDATES WALK THROUGH THEM.

CAR/ALLOWANCE

Still a cornerstone benefit but flexibility now matters

A company car or allowance remains one of the highest-ranked benefits overall. For field-based & senior commercial roles, it's still seen as a core part of the package.

However, candidates are increasingly looking for choice: car, allowance, or alternative arrangements, rather than a one-size-fits-all scheme.

INSIGHT: THE CAR BENEFIT HASN'T LOST IMPORTANCE. BUT RIGID SCHEMES HAVE.

HOLIDAY

A genuine deal-breaker.

Over 50% of candidates say they would reject a role if the holiday allowance does not meet their expectations.

25+ days is now the perceived baseline, and the option to buy additional leave is becoming increasingly important in offer decisions.

INSIGHT: HOLIDAY ALLOWANCE NOW SITS FIRMLY IN THE "ACCEPT/REJECT" CATEGORY, NOT THE "NICE TO HAVE" COLUMN.

HEALTHCARE

Now part of the baseline package.

Healthcare (individual and family) sits firmly in the top tier of valued benefits. Many candidates now assume it will be included.

Where employers can differentiate is through family cover, dental, critical illness and wider wellbeing support.

INSIGHT: HEALTHCARE GETS YOU TO PARITY. THE QUALITY OF IT SETS YOU APART.

REMOTE WORKING

Now a filter, not a perk

-87% of professionals now work hybrid or fully remote.
-66% would not consider a full-time office-based role.

Office-only roles dramatically reduce the available talent pool and are increasingly seen as outdated, even in traditionally field-based sectors.

INSIGHT: FLEXIBILITY IS NO LONGER A DIFFERENTIATOR. IT'S AN ENTRY REQUIREMENT.

PENSION

Long-term security is back in focus.

Enhanced pension provision is now one of the most frequently selected top-tier benefits in the entire survey.

Candidates are becoming far more conscious of long-term financial security and are actively judging employers on how seriously they take this.

INSIGHT: PENSION IS NO LONGER BACKGROUND NOISE. IT'S PART OF THE DECISION.

PAY PROGRESSION & REVIEWS

Candidates expect momentum, not stagnation.

Nearly 80% of professionals now have a formal annual salary review, and 100% of those expect a pay increase at their next review. While most anticipate sensible 2–5% rises, the key shift is this: clear, structured progression is now part of the offer, not a vague promise.

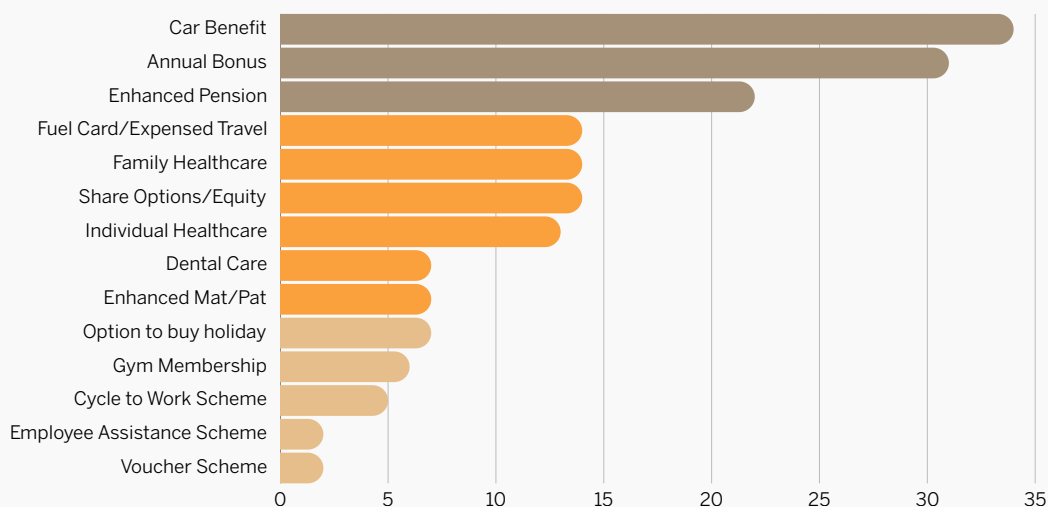
INSIGHT: IF YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENS TO SOMEONE'S PAY OVER THE NEXT 2–3 YEARS, YOUR OFFER & OVERALL PACKAGE WILL FEEL INCOMPLETE.

When evaluating a job opportunity, the data shows a very clear hierarchy of priorities.

At the top of the stack sits the leading practical benefit, which reflects the realities of many commercial roles. Car allowance or company car, along with fuel or expensed travel, feature prominently in candidates' top priorities. In a sector where roles are often field-based, hybrid or multi-site, these benefits are not seen as perks, they are seen as essential tools to do the job. Closely following behind this we see core financial and security-led benefits. Bonus is consistently ranked as one of the most important elements of any package. This reinforces a key theme where candidates are not just optimising their short term earnings but seeking stability and sustainability as well.

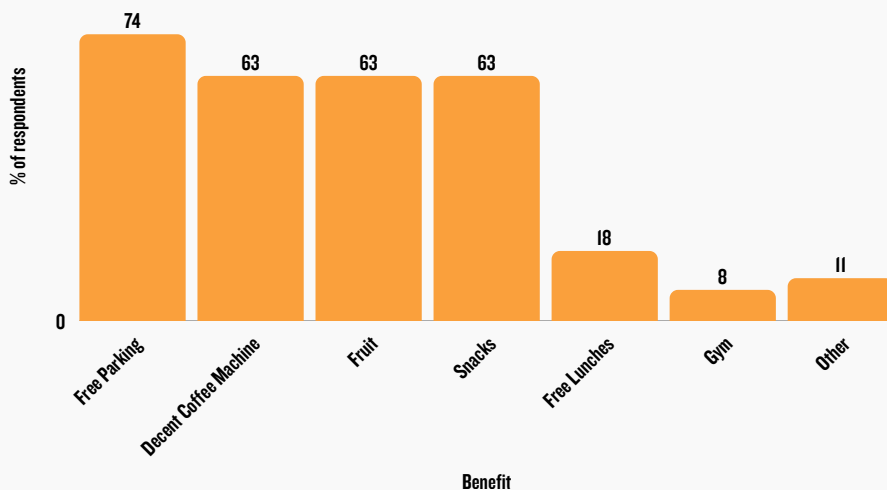
Beyond this sits a second tier of benefits focused on protection, flexibility and quality of life. Healthcare enhancements, equity participation and parental benefits all play a meaningful role in shaping how attractive an offer feels. Meanwhile, lifestyle and "soft perks" such as gym membership, cycle-to-work schemes and the option to buy additional holiday are valued, but tend to act more as tie-breakers between similar offers rather than primary decision drivers, sitting comfortably down in the third tier of our graph.

The overall picture is clear - candidates are making considered, long-term decisions. A competitive basic salary may open the conversation, but it is the balance and credibility of the total package that ultimately determines whether an offer feels compelling or incomplete.



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Soft perks are still overwhelmingly focused on low-cost, in-office convenience rather than genuinely lifestyle-changing benefits. Free parking, coffee and snacks are common; things like extra holiday, gym or meaningful wellbeing perks are still the exception rather than the rule.



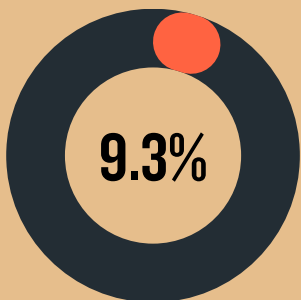
SALES & COMMERCIAL ROLES



18% FEMALE / 82% MALE TALENT POOL



2.1 YEARS MEDIAN TENURE



**9.3% OF TALENT POOL (C. 104K PROFESSIONALS)
HAVE CHANGED ROLES IN LAST 12 MONTHS**

EV, MOBILITY & TECH

	BASIC - LOW TO HIGH		OTE/COMMISSION
INTERNAL ACCOUNT MANAGER	£30,000 - £45,000	+	£10,000 - £25,000
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	£45,000 - £70,000	+	£20,000 - £80,000
ACCOUNT MANAGER	£40,000 - £70,000	+	£10,000 - £30,000
KEY ACCOUNT / STRATEGIC ACCOUNT MANAGER	£45,000 - £80,000	+	£15,000 - £40,000
CORPORATE SALES MANAGER / SENIOR BDM	£50,000 - £70,000	+	£30,000 - £80,000
HEAD OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT / HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT / SALES DIRECTOR	£80,000 - £150,000	+	£30,000 - £60,000

The electric and mobility sector is now large and dynamic enough to warrant its own salary benchmarks, sitting separately from traditional automotive. With the global EV market sized at roughly GBP 338 billion in 2026 and EV registrations expected to continue growing rapidly in the UK, demand for commercial talent in EV sales, partnerships and fleet electrification continues to strengthen.

This competitive environment has contributed to meaningful wage increases across engineering, commercial roles and sales professionals with EV market expertise are increasingly attracting premium total reward packages.

EVEN IF HEADLINE BASE SALARIES IN EV SALES ARE COMPARABLE TO TRADITIONAL AUTOMOTIVE, THE TOTAL REWARD PACKAGE CAN BE MARKEDLY DIFFERENT & OFTEN STRUCTURED AROUND GROWTH TARGETS RATHER THAN STATIC OTE ALONE.

- OLLY WOODALL, MANAGING CONSULTANT



FLEET & LEASING

	BASIC - LOW TO HIGH		OTE/COMMISSION
INTERNAL ACCOUNT MANAGER	£25,000 - £35,000	+	£5,000 - £20,000
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	£35,000 - £60,000	+	£20,000 - £70,000
ACCOUNT MANAGER	£30,000 - £50,000	+	£5,000 - £20,000
KEY ACCOUNT / STRATEGIC ACCOUNT MANAGER	£45,000 - £70,000	+	£10,000 - £30,000
CORPORATE SALES MANAGER / SENIOR BDM	£45,000 - £85,000	+	£30,000 - £70,000
HEAD OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT / HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT / SALES DIRECTOR	£60,000 - £100,000	+	£30,000 - £60,000

The UK fleet and leasing sector continues to grow in 2026, with the leased fleet nearing two million vehicles and salary sacrifice arrangements driving strong demand. Business contract hire remains the dominant fleet segment, creating sustained demand for commercial and sales professionals. Salary data shows typical Fleet Sales roles in the UK span broadly from roughly £25k to £70k base pay, with higher earnings aligned to experience and incentive-linked packages. These market dynamics, together with the expanding role of EV leasing and tax-efficient salary sacrifice deals, make the sector a competitive market for sales talent in 2026.



"IN FLEET AND LEASING, SALARY IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY NOW. THE STRONGEST CANDIDATES ARE LOOKING AT PROGRESSION, STABILITY AND LONG-TERM EARNING POTENTIAL, NOT JUST THE HEADLINE OTE. THAT'S FORCING EMPLOYERS TO THINK MUCH MORE CAREFULLY ABOUT HOW COMPETITIVE AND CREDIBLE THEIR OVERALL PROPOSITION REALLY IS."

- OLLIE CHURCH, DIRECTOR AUTOMOTIVE

DEALER SERVICES

	BASIC - LOW TO HIGH		OTE/COMMISSION
INTERNAL ACCOUNT MANAGER	£25,000 - £35,000	+	£2,500 - £15,000
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER	£32,000 - £55,000	+	£10,000 - £40,000
ACCOUNT MANAGER	£35,000 - £55,000	+	£2,500 - £15,000
KEY ACCOUNT / STRATEGIC ACCOUNT MANAGER	£45,000 - £65,000	+	£10,000 - £20,000
CORPORATE SALES MANAGER / SENIOR BDM	£45,000 - £70,000	+	£15,000 - £40,000
HEAD OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT / HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT / SALES DIRECTOR	£60,000 - £100,000	+	£30,000 - £60,000

Dealer Services selling into the automotive retail channel continues to evolve into a highly commercial, subscription-led market. Because many roles involve consultative selling of software, services or long-term solutions, compensation in this sector often mirrors that of the broader B2B tech and SaaS sales markets in the UK. Typical base salaries for mid-level commercial roles sit in the £45k–£65k range, with total OTE for quota-bearing roles frequently extending into the £70k–£120k+ area for high performers. Senior or enterprise sales professionals, especially those selling into multi-dealer groups or delivering digital transformation solutions, can command total packages well above this, supported by uncapped commissions and structured pay progression. This reflects strong demand, cross-sector competition for talent and the strategic importance dealers place on services that enable revenue, retention and digital customer experiences.

“COMPETITION FROM TECH AND MOBILITY SECTORS CONTINUES TO PUSH BASE SALARIES AND COMMISSIONS HIGHER FOR EXPERIENCED SALES PROFESSIONALS.”
- CHLOE SMYTH, SENIOR CONSULTANT

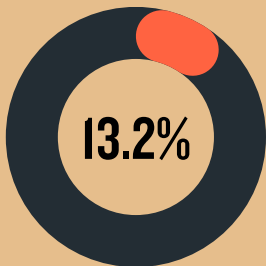
MARKETING ROLES



46% FEMALE / 54% MALE TALENT POOL



1.8 YEARS MEDIAN TENURE



**13.2% OF TALENT POOL (C.5350 PROFESSIONALS)
HAVE CHANGED ROLES IN LAST 12 MONTHS**

	BASIC - LOW TO HIGH		BONUS
MARKETING EXECUTIVE	£30,000 - £50,000	+	5-10%
MARKETING MANAGER	£40,000 - £70,000	+	5-10%
CRM MANAGER	£45,000 - £70,000	+	5-10%
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER	£35,000 - £60,000	+	5-10%
DEMAND GENERATION MANAGER	£40,000 - £70,000	+	5-10%
DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER	£40,000 - £60,000+	+	5-10%
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER / MARKETING DIRECTOR	£100,000 - £180,000	+	10-25%

In the automotive sector, marketing functions have evolved significantly, moving beyond traditional brand and communications activity to take a measurable commercial role in driving demand, lead generation and dealer engagement. As a result, many employers are structuring remuneration to include performance-linked bonuses that reward impactful contribution, not just tenure.

Across the broader UK marketing landscape, bonuses remain a meaningful part of total rewards. Recent salary survey data indicates that around 43 % of marketing employers awarded performance-related bonuses over the past 12 months. This is a slight decline from previous years but still substantial given current economic pressures and cost-management strategies within budgets.

Where bonuses are offered, they are most commonly aligned with individual performance metrics, team objectives or company results. Industry benchmarking suggests that for many marketing professionals, bonuses tend to range between approximately 1% and 10% of base salary, with a portion of employers in high-demand or agency settings structuring targets closer to the 10% mark when tied to clear KPIs such as lead quality, campaign ROI, or commercial growth outcomes.

In practical terms within automotive marketing teams, this means a mid-level Marketing Manager

earning around £40k–£60k (typical UK range) might see a bonus that boosts total earnings by a modest but meaningful percentage when agreed targets are met. For senior roles, particularly those with commercial KPIs linked to dealer performance, market penetration or product launch impact bonus structures are often more substantial and sometimes tiered, recognising the heightened contribution these roles deliver.

Importantly, automotive marketing professionals increasingly view bonus potential as part of the total package and a signal of how an employer values performance and the importance they place on the marketing function of a business. Employers that clearly define and communicate bonus and measurement criteria tend to secure stronger candidate and incumbent engagement, particularly in competitive markets.

GET IN TOUCH



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