



British Archaeological Jobs and Resources

Poverty Impact Report:

Comments

2024

If you or someone you know are struggling with the cost of living and need help with debt, benefits entitlement, hardship funds, budgeting or self-employment financial advice, the below organisations offer these services for free:

- StepChange Debt Charity (www.stepchange.org)*
- National DebtLine (www.nationaldebtline.org)
- Christians Against Poverty (www.capuk.org)
- Citizen's Advice (www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- Lightning Reach (www.lightningreach.org)

For specific support on housing, homelessness and tenancy advice:

- Shelter (www.shelter.org)

If you or someone you know are experiencing an impact on your wellbeing or mental health, or are supporting someone who is, the below organisations offer support for free:

- Mind (www.mind.org.uk)
- Shout (www.giveusashout.org , or text **SHOUT** to **85258**)
- Samaritans (www.samaritans.org)
- Rethink (www.rethink.org)
- SANEline (www.sane.org.uk)

If you need help to locate your nearest foodbank:

- The Trussell Trust (www.trusselltrust.org)

Selected Comments

“ I am no longer able to add to my savings, so I'm sure things are significantly worse for younger colleagues.”

“ Low pay, long hours (including unpaid drive time over 2.5 hours a day), difficult working conditions, and stress are just some of the factors that make this a horrible profession to work in.”

“ Archaeology is so badly paid I imagine the vast majority of people including myself will simply be priced out of the profession. “

“ Both I and partner work for universities on fixed term contracts. We do lots of other jobs such as consultancy and leading archaeological tours to supplement our income. “

“ Despite the pay rises in 2022 money is getting tighter each month. “

“ Despite my current state financially being “okay”, the future is a massive stress to me. “

“ During the course of last year, I noticed increase in workload per employees while salaries stayed the same. “

“ I've never seen so much despair and sadness when looking at archaeology forums than I have in the last five years “

“ I am fortunate that I have a really great employer that is flexible with my disability, but I fear i wouldn't get this [with other companies] ”

“ For housing I sofa surf at weekends and live in work accommodation during the week. As such my financial situation is alright but I am [in reality] homeless. “

“ Forced into poverty because of the surge in food prices and still no raise from work “

“ Huge problem about money and progression. I currently can't progress because I can't drive but can't afford to learn. “

“ Forced into poverty because of the surge in food prices “

“ I find I'm coming to the bottom of my bank account during the month and sometimes using my credit card to pay for food. “

“ My company gave us a generous pay rise in April last year, which made life easier but I am noticing less and less money in my account at the end of each month “

“ I am EXCEPTIONALLY lucky that I sit in the 50-60k salary bracket. And yet I'm still clearing debt from the first 8 years of my career where credit sustained my ability to stay in archaeology. “

I moved from commercial (**REDACTED**) to consultancy.

If I had not left (**REDACTED**) I genuinely believe I would have ended up hospitalised for mental health issues. I still keep in contact with others in commercial and I am horrified that we are where we are. Is it absolutely disgusting to me that we are still having this conversation around pay. How anyone can be expected to survive on salaries entering this profession is beyond me and it is completely down to the directors who are utterly out of touch with reality.

I would never recommend this profession to anyone - **it's unsustainable financially and mentally** and I am just lucky that I have ended up in a consultancy where I am paid moderately well. I am a minority, and I am so aware of this.

Please keep up the good work BAJR. This survey is so important, and it makes me both incredibly proud to know others still keep up the fight but depressed that we still have to keep this going.

Know you are appreciated x

Partner is an NHS nurse. Also receive child benefit and DLA for eldest child. **Would struggle to manage on monthly salary without these.**

Actively considering leaving archaeology not just because of low earning now, but also poor future potential earnings compared to other areas of work.

Advisory council members who voted to remove min salary are all well paid consultants. This is clear by the minutes.

After the last survey I got a 10% increase in pay (now 27.5k pa) **but all of my bills have increased drastically**, and I don't find myself much better off financially. My husband (not an archaeologist) and I want to buy a house, start a family and he wants to return to education, but we wouldn't be able to cope financially if we did. I've been looking for other work that pays better but that makes me sad because I love archaeology.

Although I am a manager, and earning more than most in my office, it **is still insufficient to live as a single household in the area where my office is based**. I keep afloat with freelance work out of hours but only just break even. The company I work for has no pay bands or progression structure for management, meaning responsibilities pile up while pay and recognition remain static (or indeed go backwards in real terms).

Although I am relatively well-off compared with many archaeologists, I am noticing a reluctance in some of my clients to pay me on time, and I have **recently been overdrawn as a result. I am no longer able to add to my savings**, so I'm sure things are significantly worse for younger colleagues. I have a limited pension due to working in this sector since graduating and will not be able to retire for some time, assuming that I can still get self-employed work as I get older.

Although I feel comfortable, and I could **class myself as a lucky archaeologist**, I do feel the **pressures on my shopping bills and heating bills**, the cost of a new car, is for example a worry, having enough is not the same as having savings that I can rely on. + and I have no pension provision. So I do feel confident for the future, but only if we crack on and formalise the industry .

Am currently unemployed with the prospect of being rehired at my company at an unspecified time in the hopefully near future...

Archaeology is a dying field and those in control of pay have their finger on the trigger I. **I have been suffering for 4+ years in this job** because of passion waiting for things to get better financially. It is now untenable

Archaeology is a stagnant profession run by people who despite doing it themselves, relish in the fact that their employees are **struggling to survive** because that's the hustle of the job. Low pay, long hours (including unpaid drive time over 2.5 hours a day), difficult working conditions, and stress are just some of the factors that make this a horrible profession to work in from an objective point of view. If we weren't all so passionate about archaeology nobody would do these jobs and because of that we are taken advantage of.

Archaeology is so badly paid I imagine the vast majority of people including myself will simply be priced out of the profession. I am currently out the house around 12 hours a day and still cannot afford to even turn my heating on. To say it is depressing is an understatement. I spent longer commuting than I do awake in my own flat. As a career is it genuinely soul crushing most days and I wouldn't recommend it to my worst enemy. Once I've reached a certain grade I plan on escaping to a normal job as soon as possible. Shame on all the archaeology firms for forcing staff to live on poverty wages. This industry is doomed unless they actually pay and treat staff fairly.

The area of the country i live in makes it expensive so i think that's more the reason i stress about finances, rather than due to my job.

As a business director, 2023 was a terrible year. Energy prices crippled our business, we were unable to raise rates to cover the increased costs of energy, fuel, insurance and staff as we stopped winning work on price. We couldn't give the pay awards our team deserved. Clients (other archaeology businesses) paid late. **We borrowed money to pay wages**. We made one person redundant in 2023 and five in 2024.

We are absolutely broke after doing everything possible to keep our team in good, well paid jobs with all the resources and training needed to support progression. I didn't earn enough money to pay tax.

As an early career consultant, the thing that is the biggest issue is the expenses. If I'm away for work I pay out of pocket for expenses and then have to wait over a month to get this back. This includes things like accommodation, fuel, food etc and adds up very quickly. It isn't just an archaeology issue at my company, but we earn so little that it would seem it might impact us more than other teams.

Both I and partner work for universities on fixed term contracts. **We do lots of other jobs such as consultancy and leading archaeological tours to supplement our income.** It's also good to have other income streams for when the fixed term contacts end. He is not British so we worry about the impact of the proposed income bands for spousal visas if the government goes through with the implementation of this.

Both me & my partner will keep working as long as we can, due to pension uncertainties - we have both changed employers so much, that **it's been difficult to accumulate anything.** I am supposed to work till I am 66 and 8 months - why don't they just round it up to 67 and come clean? First, I was told I would retire at 60 (being female) then it was 65 (equal with males, fair enough) but nearly 67 is stupid. In a physical career like archaeology the government can sing for it! And it might be going up to 71 for younger ones - the government can sing a whole bloody opera for that one ... When your body tells you to stop, you ignore it till it screams at you to stop. Then you need the NHS - and it won't be there.

Both my partner and I are full time archaeologist. Although we earn enough to cover our expenses, **we can hardly save money and things like buying a house are at the moment impossible.** I have an MA and a doctorate and I feel my education is not recognised/appreciated enough in the commercial sector and consequently the salary does not reflect my qualifications.

Can only survive on archaeologist wages as **supported and subbed by other half!**

[I must] care for a partner who does not financially contribute

CiFA pulling the minimum wage is upsetting, angering and disheartening. If things are not improved by employers I feel a strike within archaeology is not far away at all.

Completed survey to give some indication that a secure, financially rewarding, full life career is (has been) possible in archaeology!

Currently expecting our first child. Unless something changes I am fairly certain I will have to leave my current job. I'd love to stay in archaeology, but **progression beyond my current position within my company seems to be an impossibility,** and I can't stay a field archaeologist (I'm a slightly senior site assistant) forever - especially as we both work in the industry. Field archaeology is not childcare friendly, nor well paid enough to deal with the incredibly high cost of childcare. We've both had to move away from family for work too, so asking grandparents for childcare help is also an impossibility.

A large part of my identity is tied up in archaeology - I've wanted to do this since I was eight and have been in the field for ten years. It feels as if I am being squeezed out slowly, and it's really quite painful to feel as if an industry I have cared about for so long cares so little about me.

Despite my answers **I do feel the situation has got worse for large parts of the sector.** I am very fortunate, so my situation is likely not reflective of what I see on a daily basis.

Despite my current state financially being “okay”, **the future is a massive stress** to me. As well, I have had to push within my company or transfer to a company that benefits me more in order to reach the current level of stability that I’m feeling now. It is with the small company now that I feel listened to and changes are made. Large companies left me feeling like a number with no power and no room for improvement financially and emotionally.

Despite pay rises in 2022 **money is getting tighter each month**. I have not putting any money in savings and I possibly won’t be able to pay to go on holiday this year. Cutting back on small luxuries such as food and cosmetics

Dog and a student loan! [both will cost me]

During the course of last year, I noticed increase in workload per employees while salaries stayed the same. My employer already announced there won’t be any pay increases either for 2023 or 2024. In addition, our company went through 2 rounds of large redundancies (over 50 people fired each time) within last 6 months making everyone feel very insecure about stability of our job.

We lost crucial people who were not replaced, and their work was just divided among the "survivors" with no extra compensation. In more than one occasion I needed to work my Saturdays and afternoons to stay on top of work while being told there will be no payment for overtime. Several of my other colleges experienced the same. Contract instability and increase in work without compensation caused even more people to look for jobs in other places as they couldn’t afford the risk of being laid off. Fear and stress of contract insecurity caused me many sleepless nights. I am one of the lucky ones since my partner is not an archaeologist and earns a decent salary so I do not have immediate financial worries unlike many of my peers. However it is depressing to think hard working archaeologists are in a way financially dependant on their non-archaeological spouses/ partners since our own salaries do not raise in accordance with the rise or rent/mortgage/bills in the Southern parts of England and our contracts are so unstable that even having full time contact doesn't mean you will have a job in 6 months.

Especially living in the south of England, close to London but not on a wage that reflects the area in which we live and **we cannot afford to purchase a house** in this area with our salaries

Even though I have a partner I am the one who deals with the childcare - he pays the mortgage as is not an archaeologist.!!! I have 2 children both now at school and I am worrying about the school holidays. **It will be cheaper for me to take unpaid leave than deal with childcare**. This is probably more of state of affair with the cost of childcare BUT if my salary was near anything which it should be given the title (of probably any other profession) then I wouldn't be stressing

Even though there has been a (very grateful for) slight increase in minimum wages, how can archaeology ever be beneficial for the workers when it its so competitive? **I’ve never seen so much despair and sadness when looking at archaeology forums** than I have in the last five years. I fear that because archaeologists want to truly do the best for the profession, archaeologists themselves have/will be used. I am fortunate that I have a really great employer that is flexible with my disability, but I fear i wouldn’t get this elsewhere. I am also fortunate that I don’t have children, because as a female I feel that I would likely struggle with childcare costs/flexibility and that I have seen so many women leave their jobs because of this. I don’t know what the answer is, but something truly needs to change.

Everyone is struggling.

Feel very lucky in managing to retain employment with the same company for over three years now, and earn a spinal point above most of the others at my level, but having looked it up my real pay has not improved since the nominal trainee wage I got when I started in 2020.

I am also very lucky in having family that I could go to if I ever desperately needed it, and a spouse that works outside of the industry and has a tiny bit higher salary, as well as no major debts aside our mortgage. I am looking at getting a new car soon, particularly due to a need for one with better ground clearance and suspension as I had to pay a large amount to get mine through its MOT recently as well as my spouse's car slowly dying, but the payments for this will **wipe out any real ability to save**. Indeed, it is only through a significant amount of overtime and away work this year that I have managed to save a decent amount of money, which would all go if we had to buy a new car in the immediate future.

Financial concerns from employment reduced with transition away from commercial field archaeology to heritage/archaeology consultancy over last 2 years. Higher salary, stable job, benefits that exist for site visits/commuting, TOIL, better working environment.

Fully certain no return to employment with commercial field archaeology units will occur due to nature of their role within the industry, which results in contract based employment predominantly, poor pay, poor benefits, long days with away work with no mileage, unrewarding career prospects and lack of motivation in role and poor mental health.

For housing I sofa surf between my sister's house and friends at weekends and live in work accommodation during the week. As such **my financial situation is alright but I am homeless** to some degree.

For the moment **I feel like I am financially stable** but I do not feel like I could have children on my current pay. I definitely feel like I do less activities with friends/days out etc as we cannot afford to.

Forced into poverty because of the surge in food prices and still no raise from work

Have seen a **notable increase in salaries over the last year, however prices are not keeping up**. Is this sustainable?

Huge problem about money and progression. I currently can't progress because I can't drive but can't afford to learn. No money I can borrow from family in any significant amount. Tried to do a masters to specialise but I've had to stop halfway through as the fees are unaffordable at UCL. I'm now back doing a digging job as it's the only work I can get but am desperately trying to get something else as I'm trying to branch out a bit.

Wages have definitely increased which is good but really I don't notice having any more money, all things considered.

I am 32 and currently live in an HMO with six other people and have done now for two years. I want to move out so I can have a proper separate space to work rather than living and working in one room, but my self-employed income (even with a current contract part time for the next 12 months) is not desirable to landlords in the same way as a salaried income. The same issue came up when I applied for a bank loan recently, the bank informed me it is their policy not to accept self employed income without three years evidence of earnings when considering loans and therefore I was not eligible for one. This meant I ended up taking a car on finance, which I needed for my work, with a much higher interest rate plus the worry of not owning the car outright and facing a large payment at the end of the contract. I feel really lucky to have my current contract, but **I do not have family or a partner who can help me** and so, even though it is a year away and I love what I am doing, **I live with a lot of fear** around what will happen to me if I don't get another contract in time before this one ends.

I am able to save and to live in an ok kind of rental house purely because myself and my husband both earn from full time jobs- one of them outside of archaeology. We struggle to make enough to buy a house/have a family and my pension looks grime. Not a great outlook!

Career progression in my company is almost nonexistent and they get away with the minimum they can on most counts with little training and lots of nifty penny pinching. So, I am blessed that I can live financially comfortably for an archaeologist but I don't have hope in the future of my career as it is either death by digging your back into the ground or death by the stress of supervising sites with no way out while remaining in the job and not a lot of money or leave to put towards a life. It's a shame when I still love archaeology!

I am aware that I am very financially secure, especially for my age, but **I am the one of a very small number of people in my company in these circumstances** despite the £5,000 rise in everyone's salary from London Allowance

I am **EXCEPTIONALLY lucky** that I sit in the 50-60k salary bracket. And yet I'm still clearing debt from the first 8 years of my career where credit sustained my ability to stay in archaeology.

I am fortunate to have made the jump to an SPO/junior management position after a long career in the field. I am concerned that others following my path will not manage to create the careers they desire, deserve and are capable of due to the financial penalty of working on site.

Every few years the profession bemoans the skills drain, yet the causes have been known for my entire career or longer (25 yrs+) and still senior industry seem to be surprised. This is the first time I have achieved wage parity with a bricklayer and its taken me half my working life, how can our new intakes survive?

I am fortunate to have recently secured a curatorial job with a public body that pays a fair wage and has a good work/life balance - having moved from a curatorial role with a public body that paid poorly with respect to the level of responsibility and was severely under resourced. I hope that this will finally help me live more comfortably while paying off the large amount of debt I accrued when studying and employed in commercial fieldwork/ post ex.

I am in a good financial position and **able to continue in archaeology only because my partner is making over three times my salary and is willing to carry most of our financial burden.** If he were to pass away, I would likely need to change careers.

I am in a relatively comfortable position because of buying a house etc years ago and **my wife left archaeology to go into a better rewarded career.**

Low wages within the profession are well understood to be a massive issue. However, I personally feel that the remote/circuit nature of working is as big a problem within the profession when it comes to stress/mental health etc.

I am in **an incredibly fortunate position** that I am mortgage free through inheritance. My husband is a pensioner though and we have noticed that money is not going as far as it used to. This is impacting on our life, we are questioning if we can remain members of the golf club and having to think twice before we buy little luxuries (such as a meal out at the local pub). We don't have an extravagant lifestyle, we haven't been on a foreign holiday for over 10 years, we only run one car. We can make further cuts without worrying about how we will pay the bills, but this is a new situation for us and saving has got harder for me.

If, in my lucky position, I am having to think more carefully about money I really wonder how my colleagues can make ends meet. The company I work for had a very difficult 2023 and whilst 2024 is supposed to be more promising the general trend in construction doesn't look promising. The last couple of years have been the most uncertain I've seen in just over a decade.

I am leaving archaeology for good.

I am luckier than many - **my partner earns a lot more than I do** and I am financially comfortable **ONLY** because of this.

I am lucky that **my partner earns enough money to sustain us both**, but if I was on my own, there is no way I would have the life I have now. I would definitely be in another career. This leads me to have constant feelings of guilt and stress that I am not financially independent or pulling my weight financially, and I am currently looking for jobs to leave the industry altogether, primarily in the hope of earning a higher salary, with better career progression. I have been working in archaeology for 5 years, and I earn about £367 more than I did when I started. With the increased cost of living that means I'm probably as well off/if not less well off than when I started. I have no savings, and often have to borrow money at the end of each month. Although I feel a valued member of staff, I don't feel that my salary reflects it.

I am lucky to be at PO level living in the north of England with no dependants. Still, **Getting a mortgage or having a family feels out of reach** despite being in my 30's. Any savings come from previously being on the circuit and not renting.

I am on a good salary however after years of being on poor archaeological salary for the first 15yrs of my career I am living with debt from that period. This means that even though take home wage now is ok much of it is spent on previous loan repayments.

I am still living at home as my employer gives me accommodation for working from home. There is no incentive to rent somewhere else as I am constantly on away jobs and wouldn't be able to afford it if I did.

I pay rent to my mum but am still able to put money into my savings instead of paying full rent and bills.

It's a weird situation. I know I am lucky to be able to live at home still and save money but I would also like to be able to move out and into my own place which I really can't do at the moment.

I am very fortunate. I have a loving partner, a good job, a good line manager in a good company. I share my home with my partner her two high functioning autistic children one of whom is disabled with severed ME. I support them financially in some ways (I pay for gas and electricity) but they support me too by paying for other things and emotionally. I see the services for disabled people like my step daughter cut to the bone or discontinued altogether. Fuel prices have hit us hard and **I am frankly, one pay cheque from bankruptcy.**

I am very lucky, my employer has been raised our salary and done what they can, we've even been able to get a mortgage in the last 6 months. But I still worry about debt, and job security, and don't want to stress my partner about it so we don't really talk about it, which carries its own weight on my own mental health.

Thing is, we're mid career and on reasonably good salaries now. **I can't begin to imagine how people starting out now deal with all of this.**

I am well in a well-paid position for our sector, which is still poor compared to other sectors. That said, **if my husband did not earn as well** he does in comparison to me (similar responsibilities as myself but in a different sector) **we would be struggling significantly** financially and I would have to leave the industry to contribute more to our income. I feel fortunate that I can keep my role, but I am aware that couples who are both in archaeology for example are far less fortunate with their income. It makes no sense to me that comparable roles in different sectors receive double or triple our worth. Our mortgage has just increased by £1000 a month and it will be a tough few years.

I believe the current wages for field archaeologists is **far too low for the conditions** and nature of the profession. The low wages may impact the industry in the long run due to the shortage of archaeologists currently.

I can do another 100 surveys **it won't change my situation**, but thank you

I can only afford to live well because my spouse earns a decent income. If I relied on my wage, I would find it difficult to meet all my outgoings .

I can support myself well enough while living in a house share but I feel **there is little chance of getting any further in life** than my current situation.

I can survive in my current wage, but **not enough to make meaningful savings** which causes me stress in my day to day life. I'm aware of how unstable archaeology can be and the low take home pay has not allowed me to build a healthy safety net to protect me against redundancy hardships.

I could not afford to live without sharing financial burden with my partner. We both work in archaeology. We earn enough to cover our expenses, but don't contribute much to savings and have to live quite frugally. I wish I could treat myself a little more often, especially since we both work full-time, but find that we need to be careful because we can easily spend more than we earn. We have not been on a proper holiday in years.

I couldn't survive without my husbands salary.

I currently get by only because my partner is full-time employed with a salary above mine and we own our house. However, I still retain my second, casual job and make sure to take shifts to keep on the payroll, because I never know if and when work will run out. More permanent contracts would be helpful as I could stop worrying about that and enjoy the small amount of time I have with my partner (as I am always away) and not have to work weekends too. The cost of food and energy bills has also eaten away at wages, especially now in the winter. We are also dreading insurance renewals, as we have heard that they have more than doubled for most people and sound like they will eat up a lot of the recent wage increase. Maintaining the house and vehicles has also jumped and we are expecting an expensive year as things need fixing, which will likely wipe out large chunks of small savings I have. At this point, we do not have children and do not believe we could afford one. We don't even think we could have the extra money for a pet.

I am always considering leaving the industry, or applying to a company that pays more even though I like my company.

I currently still live with my parents as I cannot afford to live elsewhere by my own means.

I despise commercial archaeology and the salary it entails. This industry traps us to think we cannot do anything more with our degrees and experience. Nothing is transferable. A 1001 curses be upon those who forced us to over work whilst being underpaid and overqualified.

I feel fortunate that I have a good job with a good organisation. My partner is not in the sector. Without him I would feel vulnerable and some of my answers would have been different. **Still even though this is the case our mortgage has gone far in excess of any pay rise and we have to be careful with our money. I don't know how those still in the field are managing.**

I would add that although I only have ACIfA I am, and have been eligible for MCIfA for 6 years but saw no value for the extra fees, which considering the wages in the sector, are in my opinion, too high.

I feel guilty that I do a job that I love but which - if me and my partner were on the same wage, would never allow us to have children and survive financially, or be able to save, or have anything above the most basic standard of living.

I feel i am in a very privileged position and not a typical example of many in the industry. I am a relatively well paid manager and because i (by choice) have no dependents i feel generally well off. My colleagues at the same level who have children and are in general the main money earner struggle far more than me.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have recently secured a curatorial role that has a salary commiserate with the responsibility and expectations. I don't think I've ever seen another like it. I have hopes that I can finally start to pay off the debt accrued in my early career years without living in worry that I can make ends meet at the end of the month, and even maybe enjoy a takeaway coffee every now and then. I hope that things continue to go in the right direction for others in the position I was in, but **am disheartened to see even the salary provided by the public body sector leaders to be on a downturn** and altogether inadequate for role expectations.

I feel like more senior people are preying on ECR's work to secure their own positions. Maybe desperation on their part, but there is no room for ECRs when the positions and funding are being cut. **We are the first to suffer even at the hands of our own.**

I feel that sometimes middle management whilst being more than acutely aware of field staff's worries (having lived those worries with perhaps less money, welfare etc) are doomed to be branded as them; when in reality we're caught in the middle. Yes we work in an office but our stress is made of field stress, upper management's desire for us to hit targets whilst on a salary that doesn't always make it to the end, especially with child care. And as someone from a council house background with parents who were on benefits seeing field staff who come from more privileged backgrounds bemoaning middle management can be a bitter pill. I want to make things better for the field teams but equally they do seem to have more than we did and perhaps benefit from the gains and moves we made and things we asked for.

I feel that the qualifications most archaeologists have and are required to have are not mirrored in pay. I have a Masters and 5+ years in commercial and am embarrassed to not even make 30k a year. This as well with the physical demands of the job make it appear that **archaeology isn't suitable for the long-term.**

I have 10+ years experience, a partner that works full time and yet **we cannot afford heating in all the rooms** of the house because I am underpaid for the level of work I do (Principal arch at £25.5k a year - waiting to upgrade ClfA) and consider the financial time. We cannot even think of a mortgage.

I have a long expensive commute which is imminently becoming more expensive and possibly impossible to pay. Changing companies would not make it easier. I have worked hard to get where I am now and I would have to start the climb again elsewhere, from experience. My husband is currently unemployed and **we are in increasing debt, with no way out.** I pay for my train ticket with my credit card, which I cannot pay back completely when I get paid. I need to get citizenship and can't afford it. It is all a bit shit really.

I have been continually doing tasks of the levels above me but refused promotion or increased pay

I have been in archaeology for the last 5.5 years. And I honestly while I love archaeology the commercial sector has been horrendously mismanaged and is an utter disaster, I do not believe that given the current rate of utter blindness that is prevalent in the management of the industry by individual companies and the now completely redundant ClfA organisation that this industry will survive. **People simply cannot afford to be taken advantage of** by a blind race to the bottom and by companies that care little for their staff and are happy being the poor man of the construction industry. **ClfAs decision to remove the minimum wage bracket is a betrayal of the industry** and all that work within it.

I have gone back to work full time recently despite not feeling ready to do so after having a child because I cannot afford to live on a reduced salary. This has had a detrimental effect on my mental health and an impact on my parenting.

I have grown up with a certain fear/respect of the finances and live a modest life well within my means. While this has spared me the anxiety of the never-ending problems of the recent years and my responses appear quite positive, it is **still hard to be particularly enthusiastic about the future.** Living a modest life in mid twenties is not the same as doing it in mid thirties. The frugality has an impact on the life outside the poverty and I would be very reluctant to have children on a wage that can't guarantee their healthy development.

I have just recently left an archaeology job as I could not afford a to live in London anymore as I **have trashed my savings paying the expensive rent and travel costs.** I am currently looking for work in any sector including archaeology.

I have left archaeology after being made redundant, I will be working with the local council. **It's a cut in responsibility, working hours and commuting, but with an increase in pay,** support and with the possibility of promotion and a pay rise in 6 months.

I have noticed my financial circumstance has improved since moving from fieldwork to consultancy, and felt like I had to make this move in order to be financially stable, even though I wished to continue in fieldwork. I am on an early careers wage of £27,500 in consultancy, which I can expect to increase with experience . In fieldwork/ commercial units it felt like there was no opportunity for growth and I was stuck on £23,000 and **was living pay check to pay check in a cost of living crisis.** I hope to return to fieldwork when the conditions of work (reasonable adjustments, better work hours, compensation for overtime, better base pay) improves. I see small improvements happening in the industry, but not enough for me to return to the field and break my body for 12 hours a day on £25k per annum. Not when I have £50k in debt for a degree and specialism I worked so hard on.

I have realised in the last year that I am starting to struggle to live on an Archaeologist wage. I am lucky to live with my partner, who has a high paying wage, I would likely still have to live with my parents if we didn't live together.

I have also noticed this year that I have been working above my pay grade, and in the past year, my employer has frequently refused pay rises to archaeologists despite the cost of living crisis. I feel like I am spending more money on fuel and other work expenses, as well as more of my time, and I am not seeing any benefit to myself and my career by working in archaeology. I would really hate to leave archaeology.

I have recently lost my home of 20 years due to the landlord increasing the rent by 400% when my nan (who I was the main carer for) had to go into a home. There is no way I could afford that increase being single and on a relatively low archaeologist wage. I have since been forced to move back in with my parents and take a job further north. This in turn has hugely increased my commuting costs which are now running into the hundreds per month as I'm not currently in a position to move closer to the new company, and at the moment even being on a slightly better wage I'm still going to struggle to cover all costs each month if I can find a suitable place to live. All of this coupled with other personal stress is having a huge effect on my mental health and I am seriously considering leaving archaeology just to try and bring a bit more home each month if things don't improve soon. For the amount of work and hours we're expected to do (both paid and unpaid), pay should be much higher and should afford a decent standard of living, for everyone regardless of being single or part of a couple. As it is I have struggled financially for my entire career and quite frankly I'm tired of it. I've got years of experience both on site and in post ex, I should be able to afford somewhere to live and not just have to scrape by. At this point, if I hadn't been able to move back home I'd be homeless.

I have recently moved into consultancy and in a very different position to what I was in a year ago, **I would be financially struggling if I had stayed working as a commercial field Archaeologist**

I have seen both positive and negative change in circumstances. My employer was able to adhere to ClfA recommended pay increases which really helped having the extra income however cost of living and bills combined with increased cost of running and repairing an old vehicle and prohibitively high cost of replacing a vehicle mean **I save less than a year ago and significantly less than several years ago**. Savings to cover a short term emergency are already in place but now being eroded rather than topped up due to these increased outgoings.

I have seen change - but its always on the edge

I have taken a full time permanent contract with a unit after being freelance for many years so that I have a regular income. **Last years heating costs and general inflation made it untenable to remain as a freelancer.** I have less control over the type of work I do but I know I will get paid every month and on on time.

I know my salary is really good for archaeology and, if I'm honest, I earn far more than I ever expected to. I was trying to work out why it still feels so hard and used a calculator to compare what my salary now would be in 2008 money and the difference was astonishing. **Inflation has been a killer and it can make us feel like we should be doing better with money or**, if we make decisions on others (I don't) that the rates are good, when really we need to check our frames of reference

I know so many of my peers in archaeology jobs around the UK, who have been passionate about archaeology since we were at University together, slowly be **worn down and dragged into ill health from stress from the poor financial situations** of our sector and from the workload due to the lack of people in these jobs. They are leaving one by one, shrinking our already small sector, for jobs they are far overqualified for, merely because its the same or better pay for less stressful and lower hour jobs. There isn't enough of us and yet we are paid poorly for highly technical work and companies don't seem to care about staff retention. It is time the sector asked clients to pay fairly for the work collectively instead of undercutting their employees, the archaeologists. Plainly, I am okay because of my partners wage; he can support me, but I cannot support him financially.

I live full time in accommodation provided by my employer, who always has away work with 7 day accommodation. I am able to save loads of money and have no financial worries as a result of this, but recognise that this is not a choice that would appeal to everyone.

I live with my parents and cannot afford to even think about moving out. I have savings but not a high enough income to even think about buying a house

I live with my parents and sister, I am reliant on my parents' pensions and my sister's teaching salary. I don't earn enough to move out, I don't earn enough to be able to rent near work. I earn less than a lot of trainee fieldwork staff in Kent and yet I'm a trainee specialist.

I live with my parents as this is the best way to **ease the financial burden** from being poorly paid during the cost of living crisis.

I live with my partner and one child who has just started school. Our only debt is our mortgage but repayments have increased from £550/month to £805/month due to coming off our previous low fixed rate. My wage increased by around 5% last year (despite inflation being 11%) and **I'm worried about how we can sustain repayments and any quality of life** including saving for home repairs and retirement

I love archaeology and wish I could stay and build a career in it. But **the poor pay is destroying my quality of life** and determining my life course (eg. Having children/buying a house), I am looking for a new job outside of the profession.

I managed to get a salary uplift by taking on more responsibility at work but **with the rises in the cost of rent, food, and utilities it is as if I've been demoted.** If I didn't have my adult son helping me pay rent, I do not know how I would manage. If he moves out, it will certainly change things for the worse.

I moved companies in 2023 for a much better wage, so my personal circumstances have improved. **However on an industry-wide basis I have seen no improvement whatsoever**, and have seen a decrease in many regards. My partner also works in archaeology and her wage has stagnated amidst the cost-of-living crisis, with the added blow of radio silence from her employer regarding any profit share bonuses etc for the year. If I hadn't moved into a role with an increased salary, then I would have left the sector (I was actively looking to leave the sector when I found my new role).

I received a £1000 increase from my company last year. In 2021 I was earning at the £21 benchmark and now in 2023/4 I'm earning over £25k. **My company deserves so much credit** for handling the UK's financial problems and not making a single person redundant. Despite the fact we are a unit of xx people we managed to succeed where other units, who are larger and more profitable, failed. Because of this my company has maintained high quality, consistent staff who will support the company.

I started a funded PhD in January 2021 in the hope of improving my career prospects, and because with self employed work the income is so variable we needed a fixed monthly income. The **cost of living has absolutely rocketed since then and the jobs market is bleaker** than ever. I can't afford to carry on but can't afford to stop. I have no idea how we will get through the coming recession

I started out in the job market with my friends from other professions (engineers, doctors, history graduates) and it is slightly embarrassing to know that while I'm equally capable and smart, a different skill set gives a significant economic blow. **I am sure that there are many in this profession that love their jobs but are underpaid and hence leave to switch careers.** If CifA could recommend a starting salary of 28-30k annually, that would give a good respectable position to archaeologists in modern society.

I think people in archaeology and heritage are better off than most factory, office, agricultural and domestic workers, ie - most workers

I think that wages have increased ok in archaeology and heritage over time. **I feel the bigger issue is a government that is squeezing every part of working peoples lives** to fund their own friends and rich corporations lifestyles. Making the issue about archaeology units or companies not paying their staff enough is short sighted, and misses the wider socio-economic picture that this country has been run down by vested interests and sharks.

I'm very lucky to have a stable archaeology job working for a government body, my results are unlikely to be typical of the industry. That said I had to strike to get my current wage after 10+ years of public sector pay restraints.

My Prospect membership is not with the Archaeology branch or with a heritage-body specific branch, I work as an archaeologist in the environment sector.

I was **made redundant and rehired many times** by a previous employer. This cost me 8k more than I was paid which thankfully I was able to pay from an inheritance but I have not been able to recoup that money from employment since.

If my partner didn't share bills and rent I don't know where or how I would live.

I'm not able to save money. I'm not able to afford holidays. I struggle to afford hobbies.

I wish archaeological companies would **take care of working mum** and not keep asking for work away and other stressful things

I work for a charity that **uses it's charity status to pay lower salaries** and relies on volunteers and goodwill to boost its staffing

I would be more comfortable financially except my job is located in an expensive area to live with no recognition of such in terms of pay.

I'm **currently on a short hourly-paid contract** with a set number of hours over the contract period. Without warning I was told that I might not be needed any more, despite having 'unused' hours remaining. There weren't a lot of hours in the contract but having been unemployed for a while, they were really making a difference. I know that my contract hours are just a possible maximum and not guaranteed, but I'm feeling pretty unvalued right now. I'm lucky to have savings which will keep me afloat for a while. I know many don't, and I don't know how they cope.

I'm tired of being an archaeologist with a degree and earning a similar wage to a supermarket employee with no qualifications. I would like to be able to have a holiday with my children or even take them out to restaurants, but on an archaeologists wage that just isn't possible, **I can't even afford to savings!** My partner calls it a hobby job since he earns the bulk of our combined household wages. I earn less now as an archaeologist, working full time than my full time job, pre uni. qualification. I honestly don't feel that it is worth staying on in this sector anymore, which is a shame because I really do love archaeology, but my hard work and qualifications are not reflected by my earnings.

I worked in contract archaeology in America for 3.5 years (for the (REDACTED)) and hold a MA (distinction) and PhD in British archaeology. Currently, there is no financial incentive to go into British contract archaeology, which is the alternative to HE, in which is extremely difficult to secure a position

My primary concern is education (9 years) and paid experience (3.5 years) count for nothing when it comes to breaking into contract archaeology. I am able to perform my duties more accurately and consistently because of my background, and my physical fitness is top notch for this work. However, I am still paid the same with no education or experience. I am not alone, and many of my colleagues also hold graduate degrees in archaeology. If education and experience outside the UK contract archaeology sector is perceived as irrelevant, why should anyone get a degree in archaeology? Furthermore, as I've experienced the doctorate level, there are insufficient jobs available to support the number of PhD students accepted into programmes each year. There are many, many issues that divide the academic and contract worlds and the system is doomed to fail if it's only looked at through the lens of capitalism and short term gains only--I'm stuck with my £225,000 of debt, but my University will proudly parade my research impact in their annual reviews and my contract company will boast my skills and expertise as part of the team. I'm on a 6 month contract, with a 6 month extension. It took me 18 months post PhD submission to get full-time work (at a cafe for 10 months before getting into contract archaeology on the third attempt).

I am not paid enough for the area I live in, which is notoriously expensive outside of London. I also have cats and landlords are hostile towards us. Therefore, we pay a lot more in rent and have extremely limited options for living (we don't own a car, it's too expensive)--this was literally the only place inside of a 10 mile radius.

I am a foreigner and I am here on a partner visa. I can't afford my visa renewal later this year, so I will need to take out a loan for it. My job being term based is very stressful and I have limited ability to plan beyond June 21, when my extension is due to end. If I lose my job, we will be homeless in a month. I can't get any financial support from family as I came from a working class family and I have been forced to be self-sufficient since I was 16, 24 years ago.

I work a side job selling handmade products on Etsy that directly pays my student loan debt in America. I do this during evenings and weekends, and when I don't, I end up sending 15% of my UK monthly income to America to pay it off. I am also connected with UK and International archaeological organisations who contact me directly for my expertise, and I give them a chunk of my limited time too. I am very dedicated to archaeology and textile studies and Britain, but the wages need to be addressed again.

After the 2022 review, many contract companies boosted minimum wages for trainees, some setting a higher minimum than others (Cotswold Archaeology, for instance). I'm concerned that we won't receive a salary increase when minimum wage increases in April. This will cause our salaries to degrade further, making 2024 harder to survive than 2023, which was difficult (we lived the whole year without any heat). Annually, I believe contract companies should gently increase the minimum salary YoY, so we have the potential to improve our affordability in life, not erode our accounts and force us to decide what else to live without. For example, if a 2% salary increase keeps up with inflation, perhaps contract minimums should go up by 2.25%/2.5%/etc. each year, increasing the overall percentage YoY. There must be a way to improve our minimum salaries to ensure that we improve our ability to pay bills, save money, and even get a mortgage, while being sympathetic to employers who might work on tight margins to stay afloat. Secondly, it would be useful for employers to recognise education and experience (I understand that this is an American strategy to reward merit, but might increase interest in contract work as an incentive, and supports those who transition into contract work so they're likely to stay due to better pay).

Archaeology should generally confer better salaries considering the expertise required and the physical load on our bodies. £28k starting salary in 2024 would provide the affordability I mentioned above. That's not feasible right now, but a gradual increase will help considerably over the next 5-10 years. £23,000 in 2023 would become £23,575 (2.5%) in 2024, and £24,233 in 2025 (2.75%). This is an example but hopefully my point is clear. In 2022, the bottom 1/5 of UK incomes eroded by 0.25-2%, meaning we were poorer by £500-1500 at the end of 2022 than we were in 2021. This is unacceptable and must be dealt with now.

I'm only more financially stable this year and have savings because my mum died leaving me and my brother her house in her will. My dad died over 10 years ago.

I'm very **lucky** in that **my husband earns a good wage, otherwise I would struggle**

If I didn't live with my partner who's making a good salary I probably wouldn't have been able to sustain myself unless I was very cautious with spending extra money (takeaways or outings with friends).

If I didn't share financial responsibilities with my partner, then I don't think I could continue to be an archaeologist as it would be too hard to live on the current wage. Basically, if I was single I'd probably have to change careers.

If I had not moved from commercial archaeology into consulting I **would be suffering financially.** I am comfortable now but I miss doing what I trained to do, be a field arch.

If I was not in a relationship with my partner earning a good salary I could not be able to afford to work in archaeology.

I'm in a fortunate position of having minimal outgoings. I would be in a far worse position if I had to pay rent on top of my bills/tax, etc. My biggest 'voluntary' expenditure is my dog, which is the only thing that has kept me going since I got him and in my view is essential. In my experience companies have a disgusting habit of actively sabotaging and **holding back the financial progression of staff up grades and steps until the last possible minute**, with staff constantly asked to work significantly above their pay grade without appropriate compensation.

I'm in a **lucky position** where my **partner earns considerably more than me** and doesn't resent my substantially smaller income, hence I was able to answer questions positively. I'm not sure that would be true if my family depended on my salary.

I'm not poor but I've just started a mortgage at 48 because i never could before then on a diggers wage. **Now I'm worried that i won't get til the end of the month.** Looking at pennies on the electricity meter.....

I'm now at the stage of leaving archaeology in September 2024 as graduate schemes are paying more/the same as an experienced arch salary and have significantly better long term salaries and promotions (e.g. I've been told that 3 years after my grad scheme starts, I'm going to be on a minimum of 40k). I've only been able to stay in archaeology for the last few years because I am staying with family thus have few outgoing costs. But this isn't a sustainable option.

My current company gave me a salary increase of ~£120ish pounds in April 2023 (so we could meet the CfA minimum). The firm works in other sectors, and all the other departments apart from archaeology got a 5% pay rise (as apparently the archaeology business was too slow/not enough). We were promised a review of our salaries 6 months after this announcement- no idea if this review even happened as nothing was ever communicated to us. While we understood that the arch jobs had been slow, we're the lowest paid discipline and people were already struggling financially. Now they're surprised by the number of staff who have left for other companies or switched careers entirely.

I'm trying to save for my future (further degrees, possible career change, a house) but that means sacrificing having my own home now and renting/lodging, plus cutting back on using heating etc. I don't even know if there's any point doing a masters course in archaeology as it won't likely lead to a higher paying salary or career in an area I am really interested in. Leaving the sector is becoming more and more likely as an option as pay combined with general treatment (having to fight for decent welfare, not being given adequate resources to do the job properly, made to do long commutes, very little job security) means **I cannot have a life outside of work and my mental and physical health is struggling.**

In the last 7 months my landlord has removed council tax and water rates from being included in my rent (without reducing the rent), doubled the cost of using the coin-operated washing machine and then increased the rent).

It sometimes feels like companies are waiting for the ClfA minima to come out so they can raise their **wages to the lowest bar** within that minima. Its always £10 over the minima and then they say "we've hit ClfA minima".

A lot of people have side hustles. A lot of people feel like they cannot take time off for medical appointments, and a lot of people have regularly over 60hours TOIL that is difficult to take because of site schedules.

It's **hard to see a future career in archaeology** due to pay. I don't see myself owning a house or ever being in a comfortable financial situation.

It's much **harder to save**, I find I'm coming to the bottom of my bank account during the month and sometimes using my credit card to pay for food.

I've only been made redundant once but when working at the County Council it used to be **threatened every year**. I've also been on fixed term contracts and had to work at reduced hours when the contractor I was working for had problems with getting paid. I now work for a Heritage charity and I'm very fortunate to be well paid but not everyone here is.

I've recently **left my relatively stable and secure archaeology job** to take up alternative employment **because the pay is so bad and hasn't kept up with inflation**. We were just not able to manage on the money we had coming in.

I've seen positive steps taken from some larger ROs to increase wages over the last 2 years, with starting salaries for staff in junior roles being comparable to other industries.

Life is significantly harder as a single parent. The only way I can survive financially is by letting out a room. This gives me an additional 6K a year and it is still really difficult. At one point I had one of my children living in the shed (adult child, nice shed) as I can't live without additional income. All archaeologists need to be paid better by at least 10k a year. **The miniature variations between grades mean that financial progress is slow.** I have left and returned to archaeology a number of times due to financial pressures and children. I love my job but yet again it is killing me financially. I want to afford a holiday, my car is nearly dead and needs replacing - most people in professional jobs can do these things.

Like many female archaeologist (which stay in profession) I can't have a children, just because is impossible...Very low salary (after 20 years on the field 28000...), long day at work (10- 11 hours with unpayment travel time), no chance to buy a house. **Make my life so stressful and depress..**

Like most single Archaeologists I live in a house share. But as I'm aroace (no romantic or sexual attraction) I'm unlikely to ever have a partner who I can share financial decisions with so I worry so much that I'm only ever going to be able to afford a houseshare. Rent is so high even for a room in a houseshare and rent for a 1 bedroom flat or studio is more than I can afford monthly if I also want to pay for bills and put some money away for future expenses. **I'm lucky in that my employer pays a London-fringe allowance which boosts my income as without it I wouldn't be able to afford to live** where I am at all and would likely be forced to move back with my family and leave the archaeology profession and work elsewhere.

Live at home- pay very little rent, no bills. Lucky to have inheritance

Live in a house share with sister and 2 others paying individual rents

Living with parents

Living with wife and 3 children (all under 4 years)

Living right on the edge, nearly every single 'luxury' has now been cut and **I'm not saving a penny.** It's not just effecting my mental health but my physical health - I feel old and tired.

I have no expectations that conditions in the Archaeological sector will in any way improve in the next 12 months given FAME have taken the ball and CIFA are too toothless to get it back and the sector is too fragmented for the unions to mount an effective challenge.

Long term careers in archaeology just don't seem possible. Life is too expensive and the job just cant keep up. it feels like you need a side hustle to try to earn extra money for a savings. The last few months I've had to **dip into my savings** just to last the last week of the month. I don't really know what else i can do to change it, or what corners are left to cut.

Low pay and low pay increases, in my opinion, is **THE** leading cause for staff retention issues and general lack of interest in archaeology as a long term career. It is talked about constantly and little results are seen across the industry. Very often it feels that those who have risen through the ranks and are now heads of companies/managers etc. are out of touch with those just starting in the profession and those who are in the low to middle ranks of their companies. Unless you come from a stable economic family background - archaeology can be a very difficult profession to enter and build a career in.

More Units should account for cost of living by county. Rent and cost of living vary wildly by county yet, besides London, there is little done to scale salaries and subsistence pay. Most units have blanket subsistence rates, but could vary them depending on location of work.

Most of my financial comfortability comes from a partner with a more financially secure job in a stable work environment that allows her to pay a mortgage by herself and for me to live with her. If this was not the case and I was single and renting, I would be much more financially insecure position, akin to before we met. The majority of my financial stability comes from factors not affected by the industry, and without those external factors I'd be in a financially insure position.

Move from low pay temporary (rolling-contract) job in commercial units to better paid temporary job in academia, which means that I have lived and worked in 4 countries in less than 4 years.
Equal unstable situations

My archaeology salary is supplemented by a pension in payment. Without it **I could not afford to work as an archaeologist.**

My **biggest issue is not progressing in my career regardless of my long experience** in the industry. This naturally affects my income but also my mental health. The constant feel of being undervalued is eating my professional confidence. I feel this situation has lot to do with the fact that I'm an older woman and not British and absolutely zero to do with my 30 years of experience in the industry. So there is a subtle racism, sexism and ageism going on that holds me back. This is also experience of many my non-British colleagues.

My circumstances may be a little different as I own and run a small company. The additional problems are a lack of help and advice when something like this happens. We need a body with teeth to help archaeology companies as well as employees. Fraud and corruption are a rising concern in today's economic climate post Brexit.

My **company gave us a generous pay rise** in April last year, which made life easier **but I am noticing less and less money in my account at the end of each month.** Whilst another pay increase would be greatly appreciated I also worry that our uptake in work is being affected, we have had many stale periods since early summer last year and little work on since Christmas

my **financial position just recently changed (uplift), but it still hasn't made up for the debt** i've accrued whilst on my lesser salary. i have been living in a cycle of overdraft for almost a year and just couldn't get out of it. i am now leaving a commercial unit for consultancy because of this.

My partner is not an archaeologist and so my lower level of financial concern relates at least partly to his much higher salary. Even so, sudden expenses can still cause major issues.

My partner makes significantly more than I do, which inflates our combined income. I would be much more worried about our financial situation if she lost her job than if I did.

My pay has increased since the last survey (£22k to £24k) **but with the rising prices, it has made little difference**. I can live comfortably on this wage but **I am unable to make any savings**. With the use of my car for work, putting lots of mileage on it, I will probably have to spend a lot of money on a new car soon. Which will mean that I can't save up for a house deposit. The cycle continues.

My salary does not allow me to live alone if I wanted to; I have to have a housemate. **If I wanted to settle down in the future, I would not be able to do this with my current salary**. I only have savings due to inheritance; my current salary does not allow me to put effective savings away. We do not get paid for travel time under 45 minutes, even though I fully consider myself to be at work in this time. I leave the house at 5:45am and can get home between 6-7pm, and I only get paid for 7.5 of those hours. This means my work literally consumes my life; I have no personal or social time, and my relationships with others and my mental health has completely deteriorated because of it. I have gone to bed at times having not eaten in the evenings due to exhaustion and poor mental health.

I was also injured on site -- I now have to have physio due to me forcing myself to work through the pain just to make ends meet.

Our company does not and will not recognise a union, and the way the field team are treated within this company seems completely unacceptable.

My salary has gone up in the last year, but not at the same rate as costs of living. Mortgage, child care, food, car etc all gone up and now every month I am in my overdraft by week 2. I have no savings, everything just goes on essentials. I have 12 years in archaeology and I am now looking seriously at getting out as I can't afford to stay within the profession.

My unit have been very flexible with me being a working mum of 5. **However the childcare costs involved are crippling** (I acknowledge that it is a wider gov. issue rather than my unit)

My wife and I are currently reliant on her parents for housing and are facing up to the impossibility of buying our own house. We are unlikely to be able to afford a family home on our current salaries and will probably have to opt for a rental property which won't allow us to save any money. There is very little salary progression in commercial archaeology and a lethargic reaction to inflation if inflation rises, our salaries don't rise in response

My wife works in a different industry than archaeology, if she worked in archaeology I think that we would be struggling financially.

I have been in the industry for over 15 years, having worked in a totally unrelated sector beforehand, and whilst I am very qualified, I do worry whether I will be able to keep my job due to constant employer cut-backs and unrealistic targets.

No jobs in archaeology other than commercial, **commercial archaeological is often underpaid with forced over time and poor career development**

Non-UK and non-EU national need a visa to be able to work in the UK, which costs over £1000 per year.

Not a great time to work in the industry. Little regard for how field work and the elements affects the body over time. Low moral. Also with the increase in minimum wage this year wages will have to increase. **Many will ask is it all worth it.** This is the reality.

On the face of it, we have a good joint income, I have a relatively secure job in archaeology but I think what is often not taken into account are your outgoings. Our childcare remains our biggest bill other than our mortgage and when the **economy remains unpredictable**, it is difficult to make long-term decisions about our life.

Only debt is student debt, and I'm currently not earning enough to pay it off.

Only financially ok because partner has a good job outside of archaeology. Childcare and salary pretty much cancel each other out so not sure what I'd do if he was also a low earner or if I was a single mother.

Our unit does not pay overtime for people below supervisor level, meaning alot of people are doing at least 7 hours unpaid overtime per week. Subsistence is never enough, and we are taxed on it as it comes through with our pay check.

Parents both experienced archs working part time to facilitate childcare. **Household earnings now 20% below outgoings**, lucky enough to be supported by savings for now...

Pay is vastly below the responsibility level of my job. Friends with similar levels of responsibility (working with clients and managing small projects, training people etc.) different fields are typically earning around £10k more than me.

Received CifA mandatory pay rise in April 2023 but no promotion opportunity despite working above my pay grade

Self employed but not working due to disability. **Pip and ESA pay more than my last archaeology contract so little incentive to go back to work!** Have lost my last 3 jobs due to illness (now know they are disabilities). My last job I was fired as I took too much time off to care for my dying mum and then to grieve.

Since the last survey, work place chose to give all other departments in the company (mining, hydrology, ecology etc) a 5% pay rise due to living crisis etc but exempted the archaeology department from the 5% pay rise as they decreed it hadn't produced enough profits to warrant it. As such **have received no pay increase since start of 2022.**

Please note: I **now have a high income but am paying off debts accrued by several years in higher education and in precarious employment** (university sector), and I was not in a position to contribute to a pension until the age of 36.

Some clarification - I have adult children and one lives separately but I support. Although I haven't been laid off and rehired I spent many years on a temporary contract with one weeks notice which **affected my financial status and it was stressful.**

Some of these questions are very difficult to answer as my family is not trying to survive on an archaeological salary, and **couldn't meet our financial commitments on my salary alone**, but we probably could survive on my salary if we'd made different financial choices.

Tax thresholds remaining the same mean any pay rises we receive are just pointless. I would not be able to work in field archaeology or at a commercial unit, or local authority, due to the enormous pay cut, which means I do feel trapped. But, I have to do this to be able to support my family. Luckily my employer allows homeworking, if they didn't I would have to work part time so that I could be there for my children. I did recently consider applying for a fieldwork role because I was so fed up with consultancy, but there would be absolutely no way in he'll that I could afford mortgage repayments, child care, car if I were to have gone through with it. Fieldwork is for the young and independently wealthy.

Thank you.

Thanks for doing this survey

The **bulk on my income is due to my husband.** As self-employed I make less than 1,000 pounds a year. This has been the case since I was made redundant in January 2023 (permanent contract). As a field archaeologist, I haven't been successful in any of my applications in one year.

The combined cost of rent, bills and child support/care covers most of my salary. **There is not enough left over to make any real attempt to clear debt or save.**

The commercial sector's low salaries are perpetuated by a corporate culture of charging low fees to undercut competitors. **There is a broken market** dominated by large charities who use the financial advantages of charitable status to depress wages. We would be in a better position as a sector is more private companies were competing equally.

The cost of living continually increases, pay and state benefits don't, the gap between myself and 'normal existence' gets wider every month

The fact that unskilled ground workers and other roles in the construction industry are paid much more handsomely and without the added risk to their body is shocking. We as field archaeologists are at the forefront of uncovering this island's rich history yet for the privilege we don't have any constants, **struggle to make any sort of money** and degrade our bodies.

The **financial state of commercial archaeology has done nothing but worsen** during my time in the profession. The removal of ClfA recommended minima will only exacerbate this. Unless the industry comes together as a whole to enforce minimum wages for a career that requires high levels of education and experience then we will continue to undervalue, under appreciate and under pay our staff. It is becoming despicable.

The **industry is stuck in a loop.** Our commercial unit pays above industry average and employees are offered a full time contract after probation period (as long as they turn up and try). Our boss admitted that he wants to do more but he cannot pay us more as higher tenders mean we're more likely to lose work and losing too many jobs would financially destabilise the company risking the full time contracts that he's proud to offer.

An agreement needs to be made across the industry to raise tenders so people can be paid closer to what would be expected for educated individuals.

The lack of care, consideration and understanding given by directors is unhelpful and demeaning. **There is a lack of understanding of the difficulties of younger generations living on current wages** in this cost of living crisis and responses of 'oh, well I paid my flat off years ago so I don't know the current situation' suggests a lack of awareness and willingness to research to understand the current financial situation most of their staff will be living in.

The maternity pay in commercial archaeology is shocking poor- it doesn't reflect people's expertise or long term impacts into companies

The new visa rules, alongside temporary contracts and **the increased cost of living, means I will likely have to leave Archaeology or risk deportation.** Even if I get a new contract before the visa rules change, I am wary that I won't be able to afford to continue in the profession.

The only reason I am now in a better position than I was last year is because I switched from the field into an office role at a smaller company which actually pays well. I know that my partner and friends in the field are still struggling with money and working conditions, especially those who have been with companies for a while as although **they advertise at a higher wage they don't put up the wage of those already employed** by them to match this. Basically loyalty to a company means you'll get paid less and your conditions get worse.

The only reason that my household is financially stable is because of my partners teachers salary. I am soon going to be getting married and soon after will be looking to start a family even with my partners wages it's unlikely that I will be able to stay in archaeology as I need the boost in wages to support my family when it comes time.

The question on the number of time I have been made redundant might be better worded if it asked how many short term contracts I had been on, before I got an open ended contract. In the majority of cases I was offered several weeks, or even months, work to have projects either cancelled, take significantly less time than stated, or not started, with employment ending with no notice. In one case this was at end of day on a Friday, with another month's work supposedly guaranteed.

Salaries and prospects in archaeology have been so poor for so long, I an unlikely to ever be in a position to have savings, be a home owner, or not worry about paying off debts, particularly with the current cost of living crisis. Saving for a pension is almost a joke, when there is little enough for now.

The reason I am able to continue in my field and look after my kids is because my partner has a higher salary than me.

The reason my household income is so high is due to living with both my parents and a parent as we cannot afford to move out.

The response to the previous survey had great benefit, but has not been maintained. Following the 2022 survey, we received a bonus and a pay rise, but this year have received no pay rise despite rising costs. The office has been requiring longer hours, typically 11-12 hour days including driving time, which makes dealing with finances harder, and often leads to greater expenditure on food as there is less time and energy to cook from scratch. I dread to take time off, as I cannot afford to do anything in that time. Sick pay is a concern, as it is hard to do any light duties in fieldwork, but equally the number of sick days is minimal, and can easily be used up due to work based strains, flu etc. This heightens worries about staying on top of bills, rent etc. Finances make me worry about my ability to have children, and I do not feel I could afford to have any pets. Most disposable money I have is not due to work but due to inheritance following bereavement. That cannot be the way we are expected to cope financially.

The **survey clearly had an effect last time.** Fingers crossed it does again. Archaeologists desperately need and deserve pay commensurate with both their experience/expertise & the (non-financial) hardships we all face as just a standard part of the job! (I.e. Physically demanding work, long hours, lack of stable workplace, lack of consistency, long commutes)

The starting salary for trainees at my employer is £13.22 per week over the living wage, a total of £2.64 over the living wage per day. This leads me to think **my employers does not seriously value my labour**, nor the effort and obstacles presented to budding archaeologists such as a necessary degree for trainee positions, CifA membership and CITB/CSCS qualifications/cards.

I am PCifA member I anticipated my employer to follow and exceed the CifA recommended rates. As of April 2023 the PCifA rate is set at £23,231. The 6 month probation period comes in at a gross £20,957.28 pa, and now on a field archaeologist wage at £22,786.56 pa gross. These pay rates fall below this recommendation and are frankly unacceptable. After deductions, the wage is dismal at best, with people leaving the profession for anything else.

All salaries, from trainee to Project Officer/Managers need to be increased dramatically. CifA and Prospect must recognize its role in appearing to keep wages at historic lows with its recommendations. I cannot be sure of CifA and Prospects ability to have its members best interests at heart at this time which is a real shame.

In discussions with colleagues, our wages at trainee/field archaeologist level appears dramatically out of date. In 2021, a 2 bed house rental in the postcode given in the form was £600 per month excluding bills. Now that same house has a rent of £1200, excluding bills.

Travel to a site is calculated in a manner that punishes workers. In discussions with colleagues, we think that anything other than the commute to our office should be paid. Be that car mileage or train, bus and taxi fares. Calculating the difference between a persons home, the office and site is not difficult.

There is an assumption by my employer that I cannot build a life outside of work due to the long travel time to sites that are unfairly compensated. It appears that one must not have dependants nor health issues to be an archaeologist on commercial sites due to the inflexibility of my companies policies.

The worst thing of all though is that I feel like I am being exploited for my passion for archaeological work. Working outside in a team, figuring feature relationships out and having the privilege of excavating and recording the remains of the past is a real pleasure. The pay, assumptions regarding reasonable travel time/expenditure, CifA and Prospects seeming complicity with companies in not increasing pay or benefits (particularly pension contributions) to appropriate levels **leaves this archaeologist with a bitter pill to swallow regarding his future in commercial archaeology.**

These reports need to be used to apply pressure to archaeological companies and the construction sector as a whole.

In the construction world the competitive tender market pushed the salary of workers up, unfortunately this market is pushing our salaries down as constructors ask for Archaeological work to cost less and less every year, this needs to change.

I was hoping to be able to move in with my partner and leave my parents house. On my current salary in London this will not be possible. I shouldn't have to make the choice between the person I am in a relationship with and having to live at home for the rest of my life because living is unaffordable.

Things improved for a lot of archaeological companies after the first survey, but my old employer (**REDACTED**) completely ignored any responsibility and instead took the opportunity to brag about how **the survey wasn't relevant to their company**. The financial issue is why most people quit archaeology within 2 years, yet companies spend a fortune on recruiting and training! But even at the companies where we have seen improvement, the archaeologists are still struggling, the only way to have a career in archaeology is to live with your parents or have a partner that works in an industry with decent pay. We need change or this industry will collapse in on itself, the word is spreading - don't become an archaeologist.

This winter has been a **particularly difficult period financially with increased food, fuel and utility costs being really noticeable**. My partner who works in health care has taken on extra shifts to help. I have a permanent curatorial role in local government - no meaningful pay increase. My position has improved slightly though as I have moved from an agency post to a permanent post

This year the company I work for did not give their archaeology sector a pay rise at all which has resulted in difficulties for some. **I am fortunate because of my partner's income**

To have a child nowadays is a privilege we can not afford as both in the couple are archaeologist

Unable to move out of parents home due to low salary and high tax

Using my overdraft every month, in order to cover my food, heating and Electricity bills, every month. My employer (**REDACTED**) does not recognise prospect, and we are suffering from one of the lowest wages for archaeology in the UK, in a very expensive area. Our department (archaeology) were singled out, in April when every other department e.g Heritage and Geology, all received a 5% pay rise, while the archaeology department got nothing.

Utility costs a real problem... **wear a coat, hat and gloves at all times in the house!**

Wage increases are not meeting the rate at which prices are increasing. **While we have received considerable pay increases at my company previously, they are now increasing at a below inflation rate.**

We are on significantly less pay than our construction worker counterparts. It shows and it hurts. We should be on a significantly better pay considering we are in specialist roles. Why do archaeology companies accept such low bids for their work.

We come off a fixed rate mortgage in September and **I am already failing to break even on a monthly basis one out of every 2-3 months.** Higher mortgage costs are likely to stretch us to the point of real difficulty and my physical and mental ill health are being damaged by working full time as it is. I am seriously considering leaving the sector for better pay, but also for a more professional working environment, with more skilled line management and proper HR policies and less general routine overtime and unreasonable pressure, as I think it is the only way I can sustain working full time, and cannot afford to be part time (especially in a sector where going 'part time' will likely not involve working less than what I am already contracted to do full time).

We do a lot of unpaid work, especially in the morning as we are at the office at 7 and drive about an hour to site. You get toil if you are a driver which is great but if you are a passenger you only get toil over 45 mins. Sometimes we leave the office at 7 and get back at 5:30 but only get paid for our 7.5hrs (plus toil). The toil is great if you are a driver but I think passengers should get compensation, **sometimes it feels as if our time is worth nothing.**

While I don't currently have debt simply due to personal circumstances, I still feel embarrassment during the working day with regards to my job and pay. Last job I attended the client only provided a portaloos for my welfare.

My wages are better than most - £200 above the ClfA minimum. It's not enough. If I didn't have my partners wages, I would not be able to afford to work in archaeology.

Holidays entitlement is 28 days but that includes bank holidays which are set by my employer plus they enforce some mandatory shut down days. That leaves me 17 days to call my own.

I am **considering leaving the profession** for stability, better pay, better holidays and some dignity.

While I haven't suffered in the last year I feel that going forward, unless some drastic improvements occur or I get promoted, **I don't see my financial position improving much.** I feel I am still only just able to get by, and any additional costs will deteriorate my financial situation.

Well done BAJR - this is an incredibly valuable service to our profession.

While I technically live alone it is in a share house as truly living alone in a flat by myself will ensure **I can have no savings as most of not all of my salary would go towards the basics of housing, food, and other utilities.** Further since I work in the field there is a lot of driving to and from sites which often means I am gone for 12 hours a day (between that travel and the commute). A lot of this travel is unpaid in fact as much as a full working days worth every week goes unpaid while in work vehicles.

Whilst I am not in debt I look forward to payday each month I have to carefully calculate expenses and **have spent my entire 10 year archaeological career saving up as much as possible** to get away from renting

Whilst it may be systematic relating to the current economic environment. It is embarrassing that I as a single woman in my mid-30s, **I live with my mother because I cannot afford to live on my own.**

Whilst mine and my partners salaries cover our month to month expenses any emergencies (boiler breaking, car repairs) completely wipe out any savings. **We are losing the ability to absorb these costs with rising costs mean we can put less away in savings.** We are both in our 30s and are having to borrow money from parents.

Without my partners salary I couldn't afford my rent and bills

Work stresses contributed heavily to mental health deterioration and then divorce. Have had repeated comments from site contractors remarking how poorly archaeologists are paid compared to those in the construction industry. No one company in the country pays poorly, they all do and it's haemorrhaging the sector as even university archaeology levels are dropping.

Work within the field of archaeology has become unsustainable due to rate of inflation and lack of pay keeping up with this, in addition to mismanagement and work conditions not being up to grade with other sectors. A hobby, not a career.

Working in archaeology on my current salary combined with my partner's salary is enough to pay all of our rent and bills each month, but **leaves very little for us to put away as savings**, which worries me as I would like to be able to buy a home in the future. I am lucky that I have been able to save in the past as a result of working in another sector and from money left to me by relatives, but we don't have the capacity to save.