

**Retail Opticians**

# **Salary Survey 2011**

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## Introduction to Hunter Human Capital...

Hunter Human Capital specialises in recruiting **Optometrists, Dispensing Opticians and Managers for retail opticians throughout the UK.**

We are the market-leading provider of professional headhunting services in the sector and **we produce results that are consistently superior to advertising or using recruitment agencies.**

What headhunting will do for you:

- Provide a **wider choice of candidates** so you can make a closer match between the requirements of the job and the capabilities of the person you hire.
- Give you access to **higher calibre candidates** – people who can help you achieve specific business objectives such as increasing conversion rates and dispense values, delivering exceptional customer service and building high-performing practice teams.
- Enable you to recruit people who are **genuinely motivated** to join your practice and genuinely motivated to do the job you're hiring them to do – people who will work harder and stay longer.
- Enable you to fill jobs in areas of the country where demand for good people outweighs supply.

What Hunter Human Capital will do for you:

- Work on a **'no result, no fee'** basis (so if we don't do what we say we'll do you'll pay us nothing).
- Give you **complete control** over exactly which individuals we headhunt for you.
- Project-manage the hiring exercise for you from start to finish and provide you with **expert advice** at every stage of the process.
- Introduce candidates to you on an **exclusive basis** so that you won't need to get into a bidding war with other firms to hire your first choice candidate.

We're happy to talk with anyone who isn't totally familiar with headhunting on a no-obligation basis, answer any questions you may have and provide advice about whether headhunting is appropriate to your recruitment needs. Please **call 01423 874696 and ask for David Colley, Client Services Manager**

## What our clients say about us...

"Having never used a headhunting firm before, I was slightly sceptical about the benefits. I must say that although more expensive than standard advertising, the difference in quality of the applicants was absolutely amazing!"

**SCOTTS OPTICIANS**

"I simply cannot over-emphasise the difference in the quality and quantity of candidates produced by headhunting over advertising. From struggling to find anyone barely acceptable, we were genuinely spoilt for choice following Hunter's involvement."

**ROGER MEREDITH OPTICIANS**

"We are convinced you must be miracle workers to be able to fill our seemingly impossible-to-fill vacancies, especially with the excellent calibre of staff you find for us."

**BLACK & LIZARS**

"By the time one has paid for very expensive and often unsuccessful advertising, or engaged costly employment agencies with absolutely no interest or ability in recruitment, it really leaves only one sensible recruiting option – Hunter Human Capital."

**JOHN BIDDLE OPTICIANS**

"I was a major sceptic but not any more. Hunter Human Capital not only performed a small miracle but also found the people with the perfect credentials for my business."

**VISION CENTRE GROUP**

"Using Hunter Human Capital was the best decision we made and I have no hesitation in highly recommending their use to other practices."

**ENDERBYS OF BOSTON**

"In the end, we had a very difficult decision to choose which of our shortlist to select, as they were all so good."

**MORGAN WHITE OPTOMETRISTS**

"I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending Hunter Human Capital to anyone who needs to recruit quality staff to fill a position within their organisation; I now use their services in preference to any other method of recruiting Optometrists."

**HEALTHCALL OPTICAL SERVICES**

"We would very much recommend the Hunter Human Capital style of headhunting as a stress free way to recruit good quality staff."

**DAVID SPICER OPTOMETRISTS**

"It's rare to find a business partner that's capable of delivering time and time again. Hunter Human Capital has managed to do this over several years now, and throughout this time has become an increasingly valuable business partner."

**SPECSAVERS**

"Initially we were a little sceptical about headhunting but thanks to the dedicated team at Human Hunter Capital we now have an excellent, experienced and caring Optom in our company and business is going from strength to strength."

**STIRLING OPTICAL**

"I was very sceptical at first about this process but actually it turned out to be a great decision. Thank you!"

**EYEWORKS OPTICIANS**

"I am very aware that headhunting is widely employed in other fields in order to contact the very best potential employees. I am surprised that it is so little used in optics!"

**PHILIP & MARY THOMPSON OPTICIANS**

"The candidates were sought on my behalf in the most professional manner, and this became apparent when I carried out the interviews."

**EYEWISE OPTOMETRISTS**

"The whole project was professionally handled by your colleagues with help and advice as required and excellent documentation. Many thanks again."

**CLIFFORD BENJAMIN OPTICIANS**

"I had not used a headhunting agency before, but found Hunter Human Capital filled my staff vacancy in an efficient and confidential manner."

**S.H. HARROLD LTD**

If you have any questions or would like to explore the possibility of working with us, please call **David Colley, Client Services Manager on 01423 874696**. We're very happy to arrange a time to speak with you outside normal working hours if that's more convenient.

## Our knowledge of salaries...

Hunter Human Capital handles in the region of 200 headhunting exercises every year for clients seeking to recruit Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians. This level of activity brings us into contact with around 8,000 different candidates on an annual basis and we systematically gather and record salary & benefits information as we work.

At the beginning of each year we analyse all the information gathered during the previous calendar year and publish it in our annual salary survey, in order to provide general guidance on salaries and other factors that employers should take into consideration when:

- a) deciding what kind of remuneration package to offer prospective new employees
- b) conducting salary reviews with existing employees

The salary information provided should be used only as a general guide, as there's no way for us to take relative ability/competence into account, yet that's probably the most critical factor in any decision on remuneration.

The majority of salaries in our data samples tend to vary approximately 10% either side of the benchmark figures provided. Much of the variance is due to relative ability/competence, which is something that employers should bear in mind when seeking to hire or retain high-calibre employees.

## Optometrists...

All figures stated are average actual earnings for Optometrists (including bonuses earned) during the 2010 calendar year. The figures include all cash remuneration, whether called basic salary, car allowance, location allowance, mobile allowance or bonus.

- These figures are the average earnings of employed Optometrists working for multiples, franchises and independent firms.
- **Our data sample does not include locums, directors or partners of any firm type, since this is intended as a guide for recruiting and retaining Optometrists on an employed basis.**
- We have provided figures for Optometrists working in England, Scotland and Wales only, as the data we hold for people working in Northern Ireland is limited and we do not recruit outside the UK.
- **Bonus earnings have been included** on the basis that some firms remunerate Optometrists in the form of a full cash package, whilst others offer a lower basic salary and pay bonus on top. Not including bonus earnings would give a false impression of actual earnings. Where Optometrists were paid bonus, we included only actual bonus earnings (as opposed to what people were told they 'could' or 'should' earn).
- All figures have been rounded to the nearest £100.
- Our data sample does not include Optometrists working for either domiciliary firms or supermarkets, on the basis that their salaries aren't generally reflective of those paid by most firms (most domiciliary firms and supermarkets pay a premium to compensate for travel, working environment/conditions and working hours).
- The 2010 data sample is 1,577 Optometrists.
- The smallest data sample used to produce a single average earnings figure was 8 and the largest was 34.

## 2010 EARNINGS (OPTOMETRISTS)

<b>LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE →</b> <b>↓ REGION</b>	<b>0-12 MONTHS</b>	<b>12-24 MONTHS</b>	<b>24-36 MONTHS</b>	<b>3-6 YEARS</b>	<b>6-10 YEARS</b>	<b>10+ YEARS</b>
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>	38100	41000	41400	47900	51400	52700
<b>SOUTH EAST</b>	37700	39500	42900	48800	51800	53200
<b>GREATER LONDON</b>	35500	37900	40100	46200	48300	50900
<b>EAST ANGLIA</b>	39700	43100	44200	49800	53200	53100
<b>MIDLANDS</b>	34500	37000	38100	44100	46200	47800
<b>YORKSHIRE &amp; HUMBERSIDE</b>	35800	38400	39900	44800	48500	47100
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	36800	39600	39900	44600	46800	47000
<b>NORTH EAST</b>	36600	40000	42700	44200	45800	47900
<b>NORTHERN</b>	35800	38400	39800	45200	46900	49800
<b>WALES – SOUTH</b>	33100	35300	39100	42300	45500	47700
<b>WALES – OTHER</b>	34600	36800	39200	41100	45600	46900
<b>SCOTLAND – CENTRAL BELT</b>	33700	37200	39400	44200	47000	47300
<b>SCOTLAND – OTHER</b>	35000	38400	40700	44600	48200	48400

## 2009 – 2010 % EARNINGS CHANGE

We note that 2010 earnings for Optometrists increased by just less than 1% across the board, which is a positive change from the decline seen between 2008 and 2009 but still isn't keeping pace with inflation.

## BENEFITS

The majority of Optometrists were provided with additional 'benefits' on top of the cash earnings stated above and on the previous page. The 5 most common benefits provided in 2010 were as follows (2009 figures shown in brackets):

<b>STAFF DISCOUNT</b>	66% (68%)
<b>PROFESSIONAL FEES PAID</b>	64% (66%)
<b>TRAINING COURSES PAID</b>	54% (55%)
<b>PENSION CONTRIBUTION</b>	52% (52%)
<b>PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE</b>	33% (38%)

## CHANGING JOBS

The 7 most important factors for Optometrists:

☆☆☆☆	Location
☆☆☆☆	Remuneration package (cash + benefits)
☆☆☆	Working environment
☆☆☆	Identity/reputation of employer
☆☆	Flexibility of working hours
☆☆	Job security
☆☆	Opportunity for professional/clinical development

## HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAYS	PERCENTAGE OF OPTOMETRISTS
<25 DAYS + STATUTORY HOLIDAYS	4%
25 DAYS + STATUTORY HOLIDAYS	86%
26-30 DAYS + STATUTORY HOLIDAYS	10%

## How accurate is the Optometrist survey?

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year that we have published the Retail Opticians Salary Survey and we believe it to be the most accurate measure of UK Optometrist salaries that exists.

However, from time-to-time independent practice owners do make subtle comments along the lines of “your figures are wrong”, so this year we thought it might be helpful to explain a bit more about where the data comes from and how we analyse and present it.

First things first, our data sample this year is 1,577 Optometrists. That means that over the last 12 months we have recorded the *actual earnings* of 1,577 Optometrists throughout the UK and that’s the information we’ve used to produce this salary survey. The information we record for each person is a) number of months post-qualifying experience, b) earnings and c) work location.

You’ll notice that the table in which we present our Optometrist salary findings contains 78 different cells (13 geographical regions and 6 levels of experience within each region). This means we use the recorded data from an average of 20 individual Optometrists to produce a single average earnings figure. In some cases it’s more, in others it’s less (the smallest data sample used this year to calculate a single average earnings figure was 8 and the highest was 34).

We believe that 1,577 is the biggest data sample used to produce any UK Optometrist salary survey, which basically means it’s the most accurate survey. Why then, when a practice-owner comments that neither they nor their practice-owning friend are paying their Optometrists the figures we’ve quoted, do we wholeheartedly believe them?

The first potential for misunderstanding the figures lies in the fact that we include bonus earnings in our data. This has always been mentioned in the notes that accompany the salary surveys but busy practice owners probably don’t always have time to read all of the notes so it’s likely that this point is often overlooked.

The reason we include bonus earnings is because some firms remunerate their Optometrists in the form of a full cash package, whilst others offer a lower basic salary and pay bonus on top. Not including bonus earnings would therefore give a false impression of actual earnings. Where Optometrists are paid bonus, we include only *actual* bonus earnings (as opposed to what people are told they ‘could’ or ‘should’ earn).

We also include any 'allowances' that are paid in cash alongside the basic salary. For example, an Optometrist whose earnings comprise a £38,000 basic salary + £6,000 'location allowance' + £4,000 'car allowance' is being paid £48,000 a year, whichever way you look at it, even though an employer could technically argue that the person's salary is £38,000 (perhaps in order to justify paying someone else in the firm with the same level of experience a salary of £38,000).

However the biggest area for potential misunderstanding of the figures relates to the geographical analysis. There's a limit to how many times you can sub-divide 1,577 Optometrists, especially when we need to sub-divide it 6 times to begin with in order to base the figures on levels of experience.

Our geographical analysis is based on the European Union map of 11 UK regions. We exclude Northern Ireland (not enough data) and we break 3 of the remaining regions down into 2 sub-regions each (Wales becomes 'Wales South' and 'Wales Other', Scotland becomes 'Scotland Central Belt' and 'Scotland Other' and we separate Greater London out from the rest of the South East), which gives us a total of 13 regions. We can't break it down any further than that or the data samples would become too small to provide meaningful figures.

What that then means is that in the South West, for example, the data sample includes Optometrists working both in large towns like Bristol (where there's a fairly good supply of Optometrists and salaries are quite reasonable) and in rural areas like Cornwall (where an acute shortage of Optometrists escalates earnings quite considerably). The earnings figures you're therefore looking at for the South West are averages across a whole region, not figures that are necessarily going to reflect Optometrist earnings in the specific town where your own practice is located.

Finally, it's also worth bearing in mind that even when two Optometrists have the same amount of experience and both work in the same town, their earnings can vary quite significantly, depending on the employer they work for. The nature of a salary survey means that only average earnings are presented, so again this can sometimes cause a bit of misunderstanding.

In summary, we believe this is the most accurate measure of UK Optometrist salaries that can be published in the form of a salary survey but we're always happy to try and come up with more accurate data for individual practice owners based on our knowledge of variations that exist in different regions of the UK.

## Dispensing Opticians (non-management)...

All figures stated are average actual earnings for Dispensing Opticians (including bonuses earned) during the 2010 calendar year. The figures include all cash remuneration, whether called basic salary, car allowance, location allowance, mobile allowance or bonus.

- These figures are the earnings of employed Dispensing Opticians working for multiples, franchises and independent firms.
- **Our data sample does not include locums, directors or partners, since this is intended as a guide for recruiting and retaining Dispensing Opticians on an employed basis.**
- We have provided figures for Dispensing Opticians working in England, Scotland and Wales only, as the data we hold for people working in Northern Ireland is limited and we do not recruit outside the UK.
- **Bonus earnings have been included** on the basis that some firms remunerate Dispensing Opticians in the form of a full cash package, whilst others offer a lower basic salary and pay bonus on top. Not including bonus earnings would give a false impression of actual earnings. Where Dispensing Opticians were paid bonus, we included only actual bonus earnings (as opposed to what people were told they 'could' or 'should' earn).
- All figures have been rounded to the nearest £100.
- The data sample is 422 Dispensing Opticians.
- The smallest data sample used to produce a single average earnings figure was 9 and the largest was 25.

### 2010 EARNINGS (DISPENSING OPTICIANS)

↓ REGION	LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE →			
	0-1 YEARS	1-3 YEARS	3-5 YEARS	5+ YEARS
<b>SOUTH WEST &amp; SOUTH EAST (INC. GREATER LONDON)</b>	21600	25700	28900	32700
<b>EAST ANGLIA</b>	21800	26400	29500	33800
<b>MIDLANDS</b>	21400	24500	27800	28900
<b>YORKSHIRE &amp; HUMBERSIDE, N.W., N.E. &amp; NORTHERN</b>	21700	25100	27600	29200
<b>WALES</b>	19800	24600	26700	29000
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	19900	24100	25900	28800

## 2009 – 2010 % EARNINGS CHANGE

As with Optometrists, we note that 2010 earnings for Dispensing Opticians increased, by just over 1.5% across the board. This is a positive change from the decline seen between 2008 and 2009 but still isn't keeping pace with inflation.

## BENEFITS

The majority of Dispensing Opticians were provided with additional 'benefits' on top of the cash earnings stated on the previous page. The 5 most common benefits provided in 2010 were as follows (2009 figures shown in brackets):

<b>STAFF DISCOUNT</b>	62% (64%)
<b>PROFESSIONAL FEES PAID</b>	59% (57%)
<b>TRAINING COURSES PAID</b>	42% (35%)
<b>PENSION CONTRIBUTION</b>	38% (35%)
<b>PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE</b>	22% (24%)

## CHANGING JOBS

The 10 most important factors for Dispensing Opticians:

☆☆☆☆	Remuneration package (cash + benefits)
☆☆☆☆	Location
☆☆☆	Working environment
☆☆☆	Job description
☆☆☆	Job security
☆☆	Type of firm (multiple versus independent etc.)
☆☆	Identity/reputation of employer
☆☆	Opportunity for career development
☆	Opportunity for professional/clinical development
☆	Flexibility of working hours

## HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAYS	PERCENTAGE OF DISPENSING OPTICIANS
<25 DAYS + STATUTORY HOLIDAYS	22%
25 DAYS + STATUTORY HOLIDAYS	72%
26-30 DAYS + STATUTORY HOLIDAYS	6%

## Summary...

The following 3 factors have the greatest affect on salaries:

- Supply & demand – this is largely down to geography and whether or not you're based in an area of the country where demand for good people outweighs supply.
- Experience – it goes without saying that e.g. a highly experienced candidate will command a much higher salary than a less experienced one.
- Calibre – you can't determine a salary by looking at a CV. Two individuals with near-identical CVs may be worlds apart in terms of their respective levels of competence and 'worth'.

Multiplied together, these 3 factors create significant variances and on that basis, the figures quoted in this salary survey should be used as no more than a rough guide.

If your aim as an employer is to retain a member of your staff, the main questions you need to be asking yourself are:

- Am I paying this person not just what they might be worth on the open market but what they're worth to my business?
- If I lost this person, could I reasonably expect to find a replacement of equal or higher calibre and commitment?
- What would be the cost to my business of losing this person, once I've taken everything into account, including lost opportunity costs and hiring and training a new member of staff?

If you're looking to hire someone, the questions are similar:

- Is the package I'm offering competitive?
- If I don't manage to hire this person, can I reasonably expect to be able to find someone else of equal or higher calibre and commitment?
- What is this person really worth to my business?
- What will it cost me if I don't get them on board?

If you go about recruiting in the right way, then at some stage you'll be sitting in front of your preferred candidate with a view to offering them a job. The skills, abilities, experience and financial demands of that specific individual are, at the end of the day, the only things that will determine the remuneration package you'll need to offer.

Whilst we believe this salary survey is the most accurate measure of UK Optometrist and Dispensing Optician salaries that can be published in this format, we're always happy to try and come up with more accurate data for individual practice owners based on our knowledge of variations that exist in different regions of the UK. **Please feel free to ring us on 01423 874696.**

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