

recruit  vets

LOCUM PAY RATE SURVEY





Recruit4vets conducted its 6th locum pay rate survey with the aim to understand pay trends in the locum veterinary sector

The last locum pay rate survey was conducted in 2022

497 locum vets and nurses responded to the survey



Phil Snowball

Author
21 Nov 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Locum Vets 4

Locum Nurses 8

Conclusion 13



Locum Vets

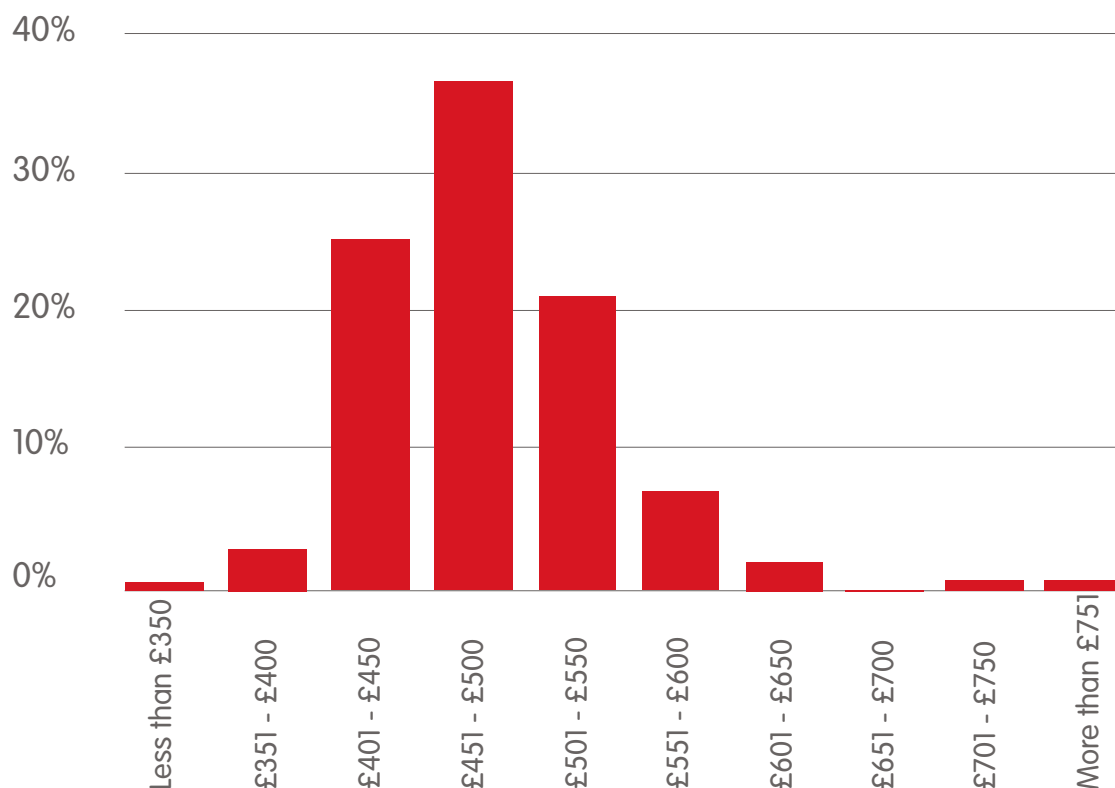
The number of respondents who work in Equine, Large Animal or Mixed positions was minimal, so we decided to exclude these respondents from this survey and base it solely on Small Animal Vets.

The majority of respondents (95.2%) to this survey had over 3 years experience with 78% of respondents having over 6 years of experience. There was no significant difference between pay rates in the different regions of the UK.

LOCUM DAILY PAY RATE

The mean (average) pay rate for locum vets is £494 per day. This represents a year on year increase of 5% on the 2022 pay rates where the average pay rate was £449 per day. Only 14.5% of respondents have seen their pay rate increase over the last 12 months. This represents a sharp decrease from the 15% year on year pay increases following Covid.

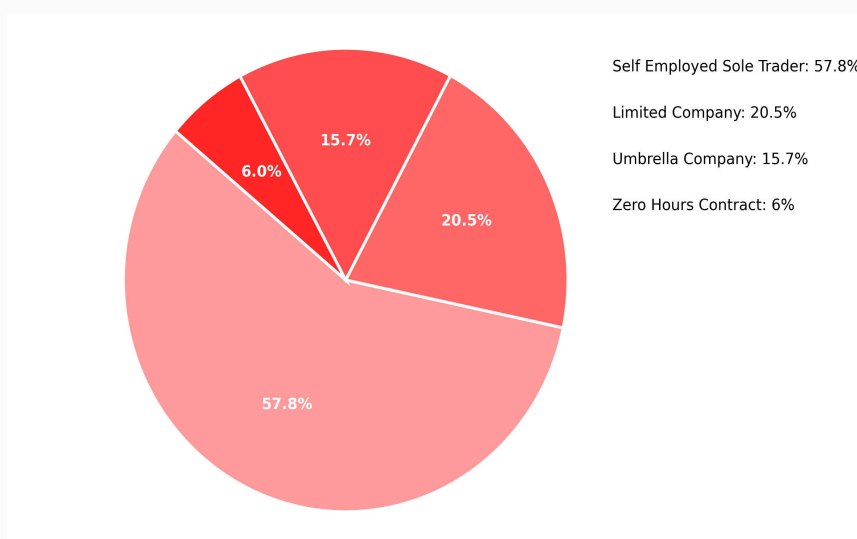
What is your current daily pay rate?



LOCUM PAYMENT VEHICLE

This year we looked at which payment vehicle locums were using and how this has changed since the changes to the IR35 legislation.

What is your current payment vehicle?



The survey highlights significant shifts in the payment vehicles used by veterinary professionals compared to our previous survey.

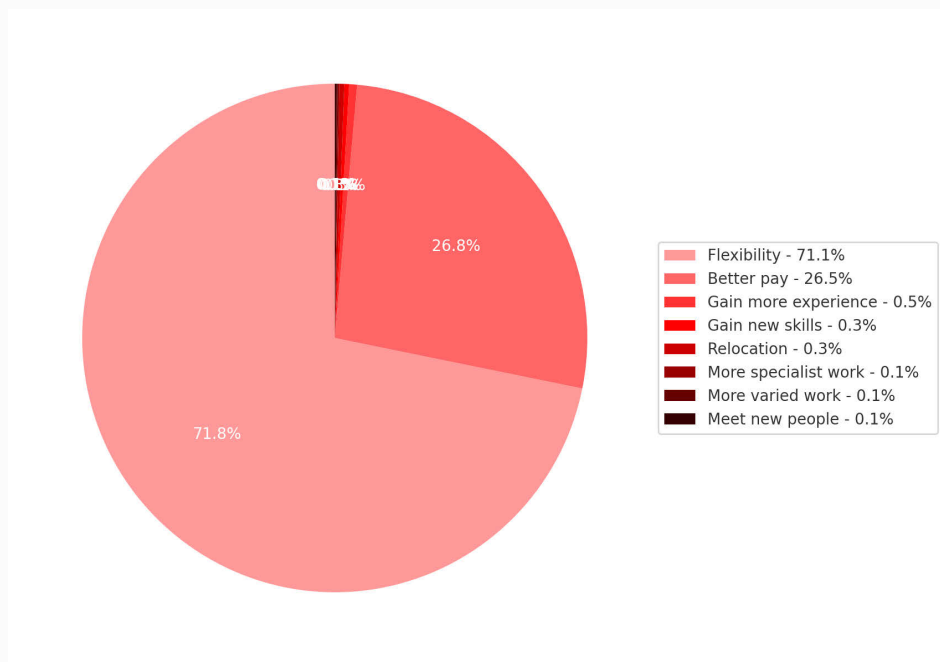
In the last survey, 31% of respondents operated through limited companies, 28% were sole traders, 24% used umbrella companies, and 12% were employed on zero-hours contracts. This year's results reveal a notable change:

58% now operate as sole traders, 21% use limited companies, 16% rely on umbrella companies, and just 6% are employed on zero-hours contracts.

WHY LOCUM?

Flexibility at 71% was overwhelmingly the main reason why vets locum, followed by better pay at 27%.

What is the main reason you Locom?

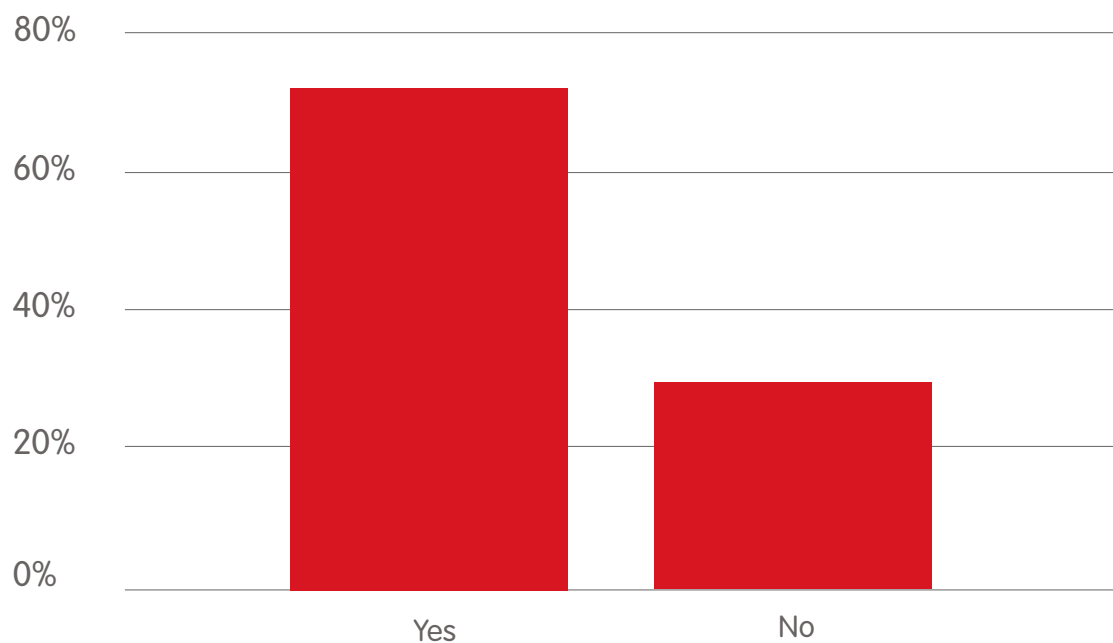


SKILLS BEING UTILISED AND VALUED

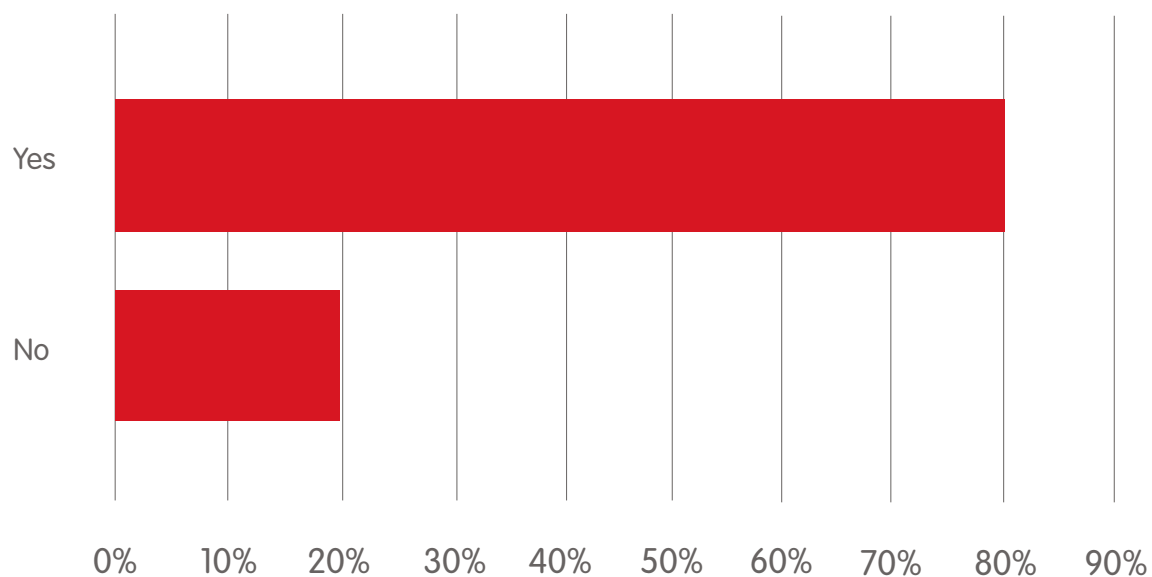
72% of respondents feel their skills were being utilised as a locum, this is the same as our last survey in 2022 but down from 82% in 2019.

80% of respondents feel valued by practices, this is down from 82% in 2022 and 86% in 2019.

Do you feel your skills are utilised at Locum?



Do you feel valued by practices?





Locum Nurses

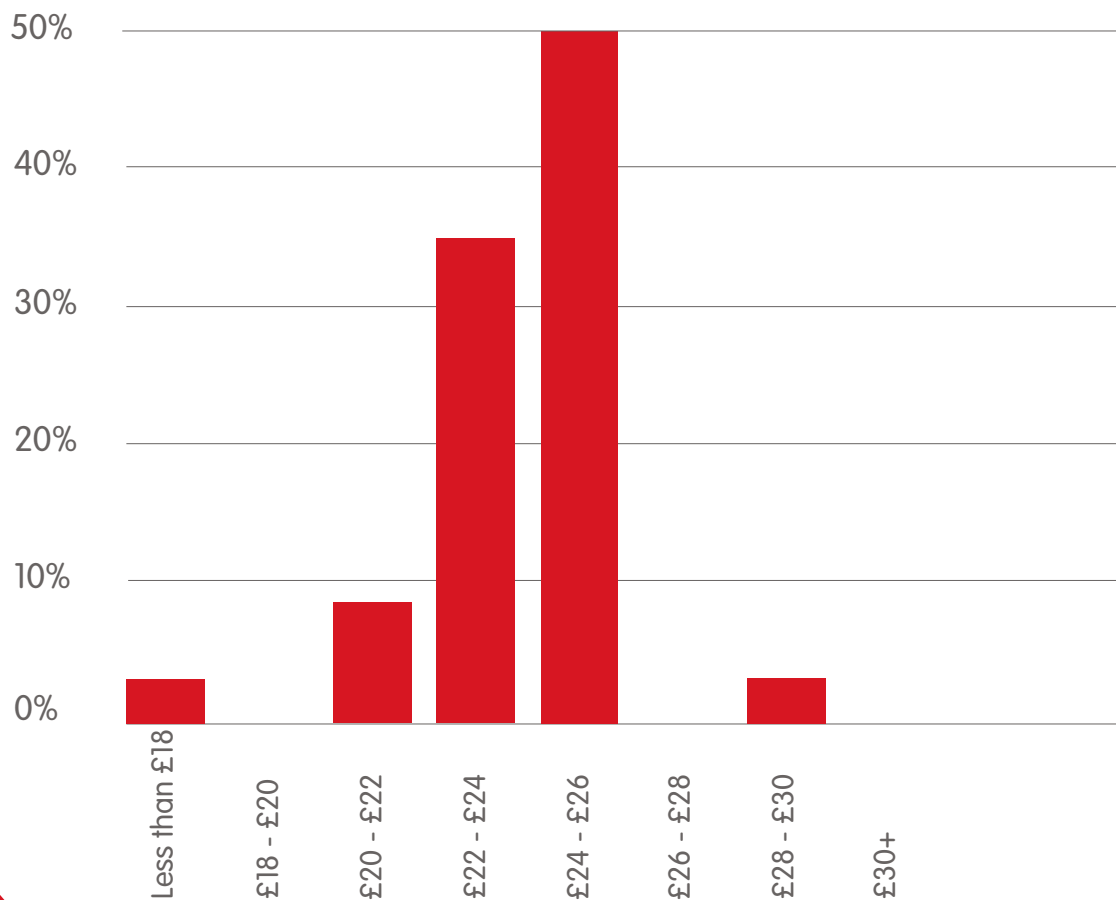
LOCUM HOURLY PAY RATE

The mean (average) pay rate for a locum nurse is £23.47 with no notable difference between pay and experience. This represents a 4% year on year increase on the 2022 rates where the average pay rates were £21.59 and a sharp decrease on the year on year 9% increases we saw following Covid.

Only 24% of respondents have seen an increase in pay over the last 12 months, with 59% remaining the same.

There was no significant difference in pay rates between the different regions of the UK.

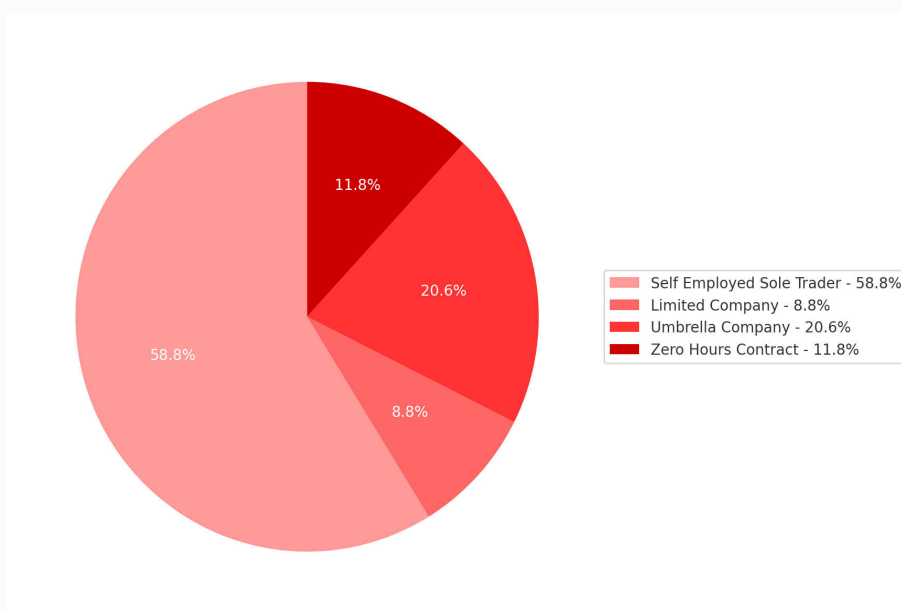
What is your current hour pay rate?



LOCUM PAYMENT VEHICLE

This year we looked at which payment vehicle locums were using and how this has changed since the changes to the IR35 legislation.

What is your current payment vehicle?



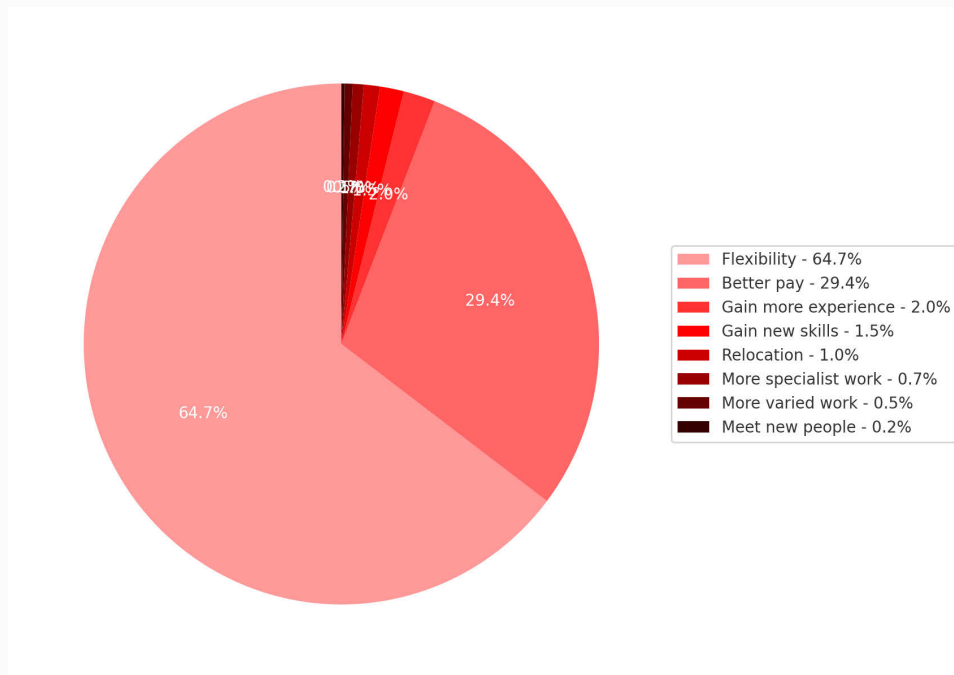
The survey reveals significant shifts in the payment methods used by veterinary professionals compared to previous results.

In the last survey, 46% of respondents used umbrella companies, 23% were sole traders, 20% were employed on zero-hours contracts, and only 6% operated through limited companies. This year, the landscape has changed dramatically: 59% now operate as sole traders, 21% use umbrella companies, 12% are employed on zero-hours contracts, and 9% rely on limited companies.

WHY LOCUM?

Flexibility (65%) and Better Pay (29%) were the main reasons why respondents locum.

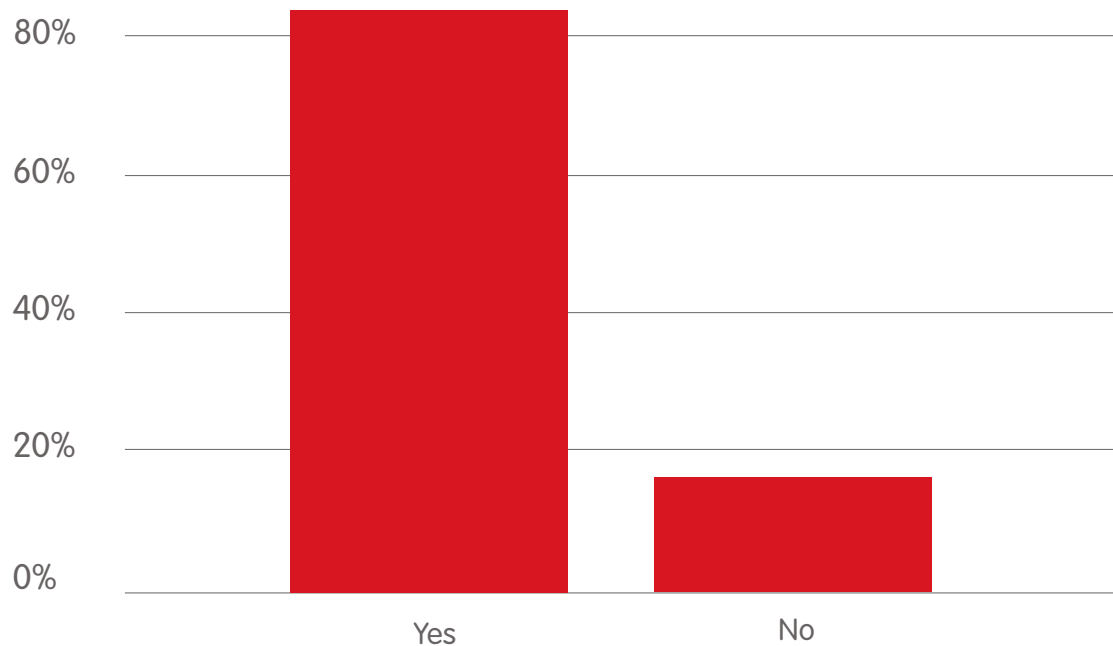
What is the main reason you Locum?



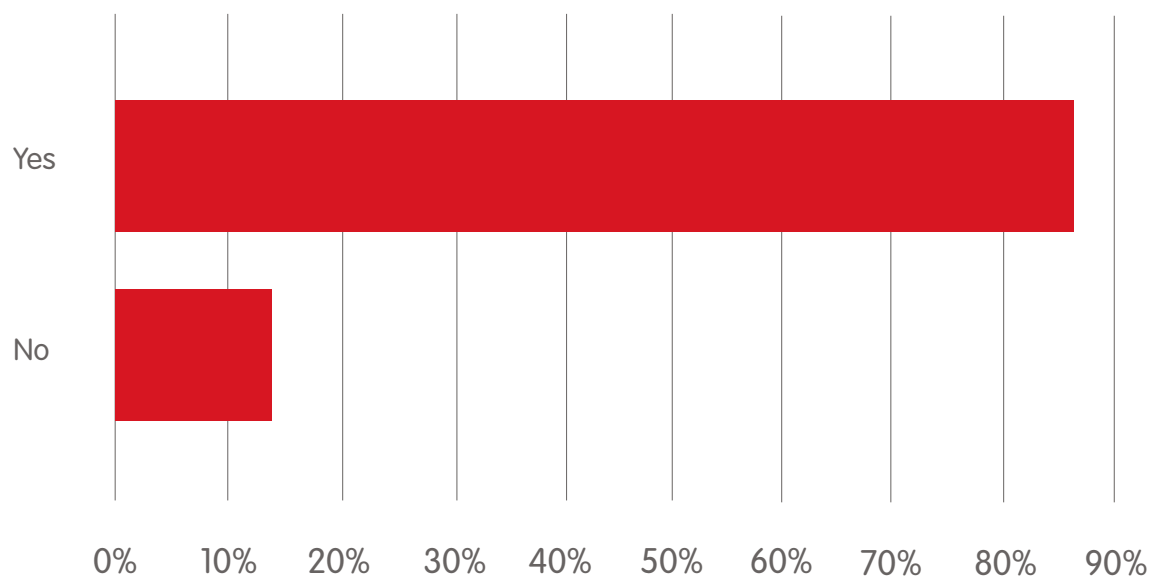
SKILLS BEING UTILISED AND VALUED

82% of respondents felt their skills were utilised by practices and 88% felt valued.

Do you feel your skills are utilised at Locum?



Do you feel valued by practices?



Conclusion

Our survey reveals a pivotal shift in locum pay trends, employment models, and payment methods within the veterinary profession, driven by economic pressures, regulatory changes, and evolving employment practices.

Locum pay rates have increased by less than 5% year-on-year—well below the rate of inflation and a stark contrast to the significant growth seen in previous years, where annual increases exceeded 15%. These earlier increases were largely fueled by a pronounced shortage of veterinary professionals in the aftermath of Brexit and Covid, which compelled employers to offer higher rates to attract locums.

However, the landscape has shifted in recent years. Many large corporate veterinary groups have scaled back their reliance on locums, implementing cost-saving measures and stricter controls on pay rates. This has tempered the upward momentum in locum pay, creating a more challenging financial environment for locum veterinary professionals.

In response to these pressures, locums are actively exploring ways to optimise their income through more tax-efficient payment structures, with this year's survey revealing a growing number of professionals registering as self-employed sole traders. This trend reflects the increasing appeal of minimising tax liabilities and maximising take-home pay, particularly as limited companies and umbrella companies have become less attractive due to changes in IR35 legislation. It also highlights a broader evolution in employment models across the veterinary sector, driven by regulatory changes, stagnating pay increases, and the need for professionals to adapt to a challenging financial landscape.

This data provides valuable insights for both employers and professionals, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities ahead as the veterinary profession continues to navigate economic, regulatory, and market shifts. While large employers are tightening budgets, locums remain an essential part of the workforce. Striking a balance between cost management for employers and fair compensation for locums will be critical in ensuring the sustainability of this vital workforce. Maintaining competitive pay and offering flexible working options will play a key role in attracting and retaining talent in the years to come.



Contact

RECRUIT4VETS LTD

1 CARDALE PARK

HARROGATE

HG3 1RY

TEL: +44 (0)1423 701 321

General Enquiries:

info@recruit4vets.co.uk

Get Social



recruit  vets