Salary Rates Report

Survey conducted between 10/2023 - 12/2023

SHE DREW THAT SALARY REPORT 2023

Snapshot of Animation Professionals Salaries rates 2023

DISCLAIMER: *Although the survey responses have risen from 171 in 2022 to 504 in 2023, the size and nature of the sample (not a randomised sample) still needs caution in the interpretation of the survey's findings. Data collected in this survey remains confidential and the data analysis was conducted by an experienced independent researcher.*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the survey

Following the success of the publication of the first She Drew That Salary Report 2022 (https://www.shedrewthat.com/_files/ugd/8da591_225fd2088ee848158ea2f02926fce6e4.pdf) and the interest and discussion it generated around UK animation salaries (https://open.spotify.com/episode/75UuafvDBhbLf0eFWZxWCA?si=b4cef143050d41dc), we became aware of the lack of available UK animation salary data. She Drew That made a commitment to carry out further salary surveys for the next two years to provide workers in the industry with more information about real time salary rates and use the findings to support any further analysis and discussion.

Aim

The main aim of this salary survey was to capture a snapshot of salary data reported by current animation workers as a basis for further/future discussion and exploration.

The Survey

The questions in the current questionnaire are very similar to the 2022 survey with minor revisions/additions to the format of questions to gain more insight from the responses and to enable the findings to serve as a basis for discussion on comparisons and trends.

The survey asked workers engaged in the animation industry information related to their salaries, the industry in which they work, their work role and seniority. Participants answered the salary questions based on their current or most recent employment to gain a more accurate snapshot of the current salary rates in UK animation industry.

Data collected over two months from 18th October to 1st December 2023 attracted a total of 504 responses. Participants identified their day rate/annual salary/project rate, work role, seniority and the industry sector in which they work. Additional questions were included about demographics and locations to understand the profile of the participants in the survey. All these data have been used for analysis and the findings are summarised in this report.

The Survey population

Participants identified themselves as female 293(58%), as male 182(36%) and as non-binary 21(4%), while 8(2%) preferred not to say. The average age was 32 ranging from 20 to 55, with years of work experience ranging from less than a year to 38 years, with an average 7.9 years. Respondents lived mostly in the UK - 79% in England, 4 % in Wales, 3% in Scotland and 3% in Northern Ireland. Eleven percent lived outside the UK. Ethnicity profiles as Asian/Asian British 51(10%),

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 8(2%), Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups 28 (6%), Other ethnic group 19 (4%), White 381(75%) while 17(3%) preferred not to say.

Of the 504 responses, 261(52%) identified their work role in 2D animation, 16(3%) in Motion Design, 128(25%) in 3D animation, 5(1%) Stop Motion, 51(10%) in Art Department and 43(9%) in Production. Self-identified seniority ranged from Junior 85(17%), Mid 186(37%) and Senior 233(46%). In regards of the industry sector, it is reported as Commercial 167(33%), Film 97(19%), TV 148(29%), Direct to Client 59(12%) and Independent Artist 33(7%), while only 27 (5%) belong to a work-related union.

RESULTS

Animation workers were asked information about their current or most recent employment such as where their company was based - 89% reporting that their company was based in the UK, with 6% identifying Europe and 4% the USA. Forty-nine % were paid by annual salary, 42% were paid by Day Rate and 9% by Project rate.

Forty eight percent of participants regarded their current salary as fair, while 43% said it was not and 9% preferred not to say. Fifty six percent of participants indicated they had increased their salary from last year, while 34% had the same pay as last year and 10% had experienced a decrease. In regards of the frequency of pay increase, more than half (60%) of the participants indicated that they increased their pay either every project or yearly, while 20% said increases occurred every two years, and 16% indicated that increases took more than two years or never.

A) Results on annual salary, day rate and project rate according to work role:

There were 66 job roles listed in the questionnaire and 2 addition roles (Motion Designer & Storyboard Artist) were added for analysis following the review of participants' responses/comments. It is also worth noting that to protect participants anonymity we are not able to carry out further salary breakdown analysis for the project rate (9%) and non-binary (4%) categories due to small sample size. We aim to present the results from the data of this survey wherever possible to provide an over view of the current salaries in the UK animation industry.

Table 1a Salary according to Work Role in 2D Animation:			
Role in 2D Animation	Annual salary	Day rate	Project rate
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Animation Assistant	*25,000	*220	
Animation Director	44,417(32,000-62,500)	298(175-400)	*325
Animator	36,532(23,000-85,000)	293(110-575)	207(20-375)
Cleaning up Artist	-	190(85-270)	*165
Compositor	38,533(26,000-63,000)	301(140-400)	-
Creative Director	61,900(25,200-99,000)	-	-
Director	64,250(40,000-100,000)	283(220-350)	234(46-525)
Editor	-	*400	-
Effect Animator	*41,500	238(45-400)	-
Key Animator	-	*250	-
Lead Animator	50,579(30,000-67,600)	285(140-450)	*250
Liberian	-	-	-
Rigger	41,725(32,000-49,400)	*430	-
Scene Build	*27,000	*180	-
Voice Director	-	*350	*150
*Job role number is <5 hence lowest & highest salary is not review to protect anonymity.			

Table 1b Salary according to Work Role in Motion Design:

Role in Motion Design:	Annual salary	Day rate	Project rate
Motion Designer	34,227(22,000-46,000)	344 (325-350)	-

Table 1c Salary according to Work Role in 3D Animation:

Role in 3D Animation:	Annual salary	Day rate	Project rate
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Animation Supervisor	*101,000	-	-
Animator	45,608(21,600-80,500)	266(125-400)	-
CFX Artist	*60,000	-	-
Compositor	*35,000	*200	-
Creative Director	*50,000	-	-
Crowd Artist	*25,000	-	-
Director	*72,600	*600	-
Editor	*71,500	-	-
FLO Final Layout	*50,000	-	-
FX Artist	*47,000	-	-
Generalist	39,283(25,000-55,000)	279(110-475)	-
Lead Animator	62,136(31,000-93,500)	-	-
Lightening Artist	*57,000	-	-
Matte Painter	*38,000	-	-
Modeller	*50,750	*198	-
Pre Vis	*60,000	*180	-
Rigger	*57,600	-	-
*Job role number is <5 hence lowest & highest salary is not review to protect anonymity.			

Table 1d Salary according to Work Role in Stop Motion

Role in Stop Motion:	Annual salary	Day rate	Project rate
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Animator	*24,000		*137
Director	-	*200	-
Model Maker	-	*88	-
*Job role number is <5 hence lowest & highest salary is not review to protect anonymity.			

Table 1e Salary according to Work Role in Art Department

Role in Art Department:	Annual salary	Day rate	Project rate
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Concept Artist	*41,500	*315	-
Layout Artist	*41,150	*225	-
Character Designer	36,820 (35,000-37,960)	170 (20-375)	-
Background Designer	*32,240	*163	*230
Prop Designer	*36,333	-	*130
Art Director	*45,050	323 (125-290)	*750
Storyboard Artist	*46,466	*213	*240
*Job role number is <5 hence lowest & highest salary is not review to protect anonymity.			

Table 1f Salary according to Work Role in Production

Role in Production:	Annual salary	Day rate	Project rate
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Production Manager	*49,225	213 (160-320)	-
Production Assistant	*23,770	*85	-
Production Coordinator	31,114 (23,350-36,000)	*125	*125
Line Manager	-	*250	-
Producer	46,193 (30000-67,000)	298 (150-350)	-
Executive Producer	*88,667	-	-
*Job role number is <5 hence lowest & highest salary is not review to protect anonymity.			

B) *Results on annual salary and day rate according to Work Role, Gender & Seniority:*

Table 2a Annual salary according to Work Role in 2D & 3D Animator & Gender

Work Role	Total	Female	Male
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
2D Animator	36,532 (23,000-85,000)	36,033 (23,000-85,000)	37,393 (24,000-59,000)
3D Animator	45,608 (21,600-80,500)	40,682 (30,000-58,000)	45,970 (21,600-80,500)
* The two job roles with the highest responses were selected for further analysis to present gender differences and only female & male categories were used; as the sample size is too small for the other gender categories.			

Table 2b Annual salary according to Work Role in 2D & 3D Animator & Seniority

Work Role	Junior	Mid	Senior
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
2D Animator	28,583 (23,000-47,000)	34,881 (24,000-50,000)	47,096 (31,000-85,000)
3D Animator	28,485 (21,600-48,000)	40,943 (26,000-58,000)	63,456 (37,600-80,500)
* The two job roles with the highest responses were selected for further analysis to present seniority differences.			

Table 2c Day rate according to Work Role in 2D & 3D Animator & Gender

Work Role	Total	Female	Male
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
2D Animator	293 (110-575)	271 (110-400)	352 (145-575)
3D Animator	266 (125-400)	261 (125-400)	274 (160-350)
* The two job roles with the highest responses were selected for further analysis to present gender differences and only female & male categories were used; as for the other gender categories their sample size is too small.			

Table 2d Day rate according to Work Role in 2D & 3D Animator & Seniority

Work Role	Junior	Mid	Senior
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
2D Animator	175 (115-350)	290 (110-450)	317 (120-575)
3D Animator	-	207 (125-295)	314 (245-400)
* The two job roles with the highest responses were selected for further analysis to present seniority differences.			

Results on annual salary and day rate according to Seniority and Gender:

Table 3a Annual Salary according to Seniority & Gender			
	Total	Female	Male
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Junior	28,214 (20,310-48,000)	28,709 (21,320-47,000)	27,596 (21,600-48,000)
Mid	39,350 (24,000-92,000)	39,255 (25,000-92,000)	39,747 (24,000-55,000)
Senior	58,315 (25,200-126,000)	54,284 (25,200-99,000)	62,667 (31,000-126,000)

Table 3b Day rate according to Seniority & Gender			
	Total	Female	Male
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Junior	136 (20-350)	138 (20-320)	-
Mid	252 (100-450)	243 (100-360)	286 (160-450)
Senior	312 (45-700)	290 (125-400)	350 (45-700)

Results on annual salary and day rate according to Industry sector, Gender & Seniority:

Table 4a Annual Salary according to Industry Sector & Gender			
	Total	Female	Male
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Commercial	43,562 (22,000-92,000)	43,245 (22,000-92,000)	45,185 (22,000-77,250)
Film	54,837 (22,500-126,000)	46,667 (25,000-84,000)	58,310 (22,500-126,000)
TV	41,097 (20,310-100,000)	41,074 (21,320-99,000)	41,743 (21,600-100,000)
Direct to Client	40,020 (23,000-85,000)	40,074 (23,000-85,000)	38,736 (24,000-68,000)
Independent Artist	-	-	-

Table 4b Annual Salary according to Industry Sector & Seniority			
	Junior	Mid	Senior
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Commercial	29,219 (22,000-47,000)	40,135 (24,000-92,000)	56,992 (32,000-90,000)
Film	29,544 (22,500-48,000)	42,340 (26,000-58,000)	70,445 (25,200-126,000)
TV	27,278 (20,310-38,000)	26,270 (27,300-55,000)	51,531 (26,000-100,000)
Direct to Client	26,479 (23,000-30,000)	37,360 (24,000-42,500)	48,335 (25,200-85,000)
Independent Artist	-	-	-

Table 4c Day rate according to Industry Sector & Gender			
	Total	Female	Male
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Commercial	327 (110-600)	307 (110-400)	369 (180-600)
Film	218 (96-400)	214 (120-400)	265 (160-350)
TV	192 (85-700)	173 (85-350)	257 (145-700)
Direct to Client	339 (200-450)	333 (200-400)	351 (260-450)
Independent Artist	257(20-450)	232 (20-350)	312 (45-450)

Table 4d Day rate according to Industry Sector & Seniority			
	Junior	Mid	Senior
	Average (lowest, highest) in £		
Commercial	186 (110-320)	286 (150-400)	380 (220-600)
Film	129 (96-150)	206 (120-360)	261 (160-400)
TV	125 (85-190)	190 (100-375)	226 (125-700)
Direct to Client	275 (200-350)	320 (300-350)	361 (260-450)
Independent Artist	70 (20-120)	274 (150-450)	279 (45-350)

The average day rate and annual salary for males is consistently higher than females for both 2D and 3D animators. This characteristic holds true across the industry sectors as a whole, and the seniority range - with the exception of the 'Junior' category and the salary in the Direct to Client category. Moreover, while average pay is higher for males in almost all categories there are occasional exceptions when it comes to highest pay – these are higher for females' annual salaries in Commercial and Direct to client categories, and Film day rate. Salary range for 2D animators and day rate for 3D animators also shows higher pay at the top end for females, but these exceptions only buck a trend in overall higher pay for males across the industry.

C) What is the relationship between 'Age' and 'Years of service' with salary rate reported in this survey?

Further analysis was done to examine the relationship between 'Age' and 'Years of service' with salary rates reported in this survey.

a)   Number of years of work experience:

Correlation analysis shows that there is a positive relationship between 'Years of experience' to Day Rate ($r=0.66$) & Annual salary ($r=0.43$). The results suggest that the higher the number of years of experience the higher of the Day Rate and Annual Salary earned. The results also suggest that 'Years of experience' has a strong relationship for Day Rate and a moderate relationship with Annual Salary.

b)   Age:

Correlation analysis shows that there is a positive relationship between 'Age' to Day Rate ($r=0.57$) and to Annual Salary ($r=0.36$), meaning that the older you are the higher the salary is likely to be for both Day rate and Annual salary. 'Age' has a stronger positive relationship with Day rate than Annual salary.

Not surprisingly the results show that increase in age and years of experience relate to higher salary.

D) Results of content analysis from participants' comments made on the reasons why they are not being paid fairly:

Table 5a: Please indicate your thoughts on the reasons that you are not getting a fair annual rate?		
Annual salary responses: Out of 247 salaried participants 100 made comments which are summarised into 5 themes below:		
Themes relating to:	No. of comments:	Examples of comments:
Low pay for my experience and skill set	13	- 'years mastering our skillset…' - 'production teams are more often than not undervalued…' - 'don't get recognition.. despite work shown worldwide'
Workload & responsibility increase	6	- 'workload increase but not their pay' - '48 hours per week ….. no overtime pay' - 'I'm overworked'
Inflation & cost of living increase	25	- 'Animator salaries, especially in TV… stagnated in recent years, and falling well behind inflation' - 'a shortage of work due to strikes, mass layoffs ..' - 'Pay freeze in place due to lack of work..'
Employer practice & approaches	33	- 'Company try.. to save money at the expense of the employees' wellbeing' - 'My employer doesn't seem to know what to pay' - 'Exploitation'- recruitment of graduates prepared to work for lower than average pay - 'I am HOD at a big company. I know the men are getting a lot more' - 'I believe the issue it's also the productions being badly managed… project lower than the production's needs.'
Individual experience & approaches	23	- 'I don't know enough people with my experience … to compare salaries with' - 'I didn't negotiate my salary when I first started with the company' - 'When negotiating I didn't push hard enough…. (later) I realised I could have pushed for a better deal but it was too late.'

Table 5b: Please indicate your thoughts on the reasons that you are not getting a fair day rate?

Day rate responses: Out of 214 salaried participants 99 made comments which are summarised into 5 themes below:

Themes relating to:	No. of comments:	Examples of comments:
Low budget	17	- 'Clients just don't have the budgets' - 'Low budget jobs - studios taking a larger cut' - 'smaller and smaller budgets and production thinking they can get away playing lower and lower rates' - 'I was asked to lower the day rate due to lack of funds' - Budgets keep lowering.
Less work available	16	- 'I was unable to raise my rate this year due to work scarcity.' - 'The uncertain nature of the animation industry at the moment …. I ended up unemployed for four months this year…' - 'Because there isn't any work and so only able to take what is offered.' - 'Market is dead, a lot of people cutting their prices to just get work'
Cost of living	7	- 'Prices of everything are increasing due to inflation, our daily rates should rise too for this reason.' - 'Cost of living is very high atm, and as a freelancer I don't get pension or sick leave' - 'inflation is soaring, but no changes for my day rate.'
Employer practice & approaches	24	- 'Dictated by hiring studio (what they can afford)' - 'companies bidding low budgets, meaning they negotiate (down) freelance day rates' - 'I feel certain studios that have more frequent work for freelancers are able to keep their wages low by refreshing the team…' - 'Often the studio tries to negotiate my rate down' - 'freelance culture of silence around rates empowers studios to keep rates low..'.
Individual experience & approaches	42	- 'I feel that clients will not hire me if I give them a higher rate.' - 'Previously undercharging, now slowly upping rates over 2-3 years with existing clients' - 'A generally tricky act to balance. I feel my day rate falls below my skill set, but I think this generally secures me more work throughout the year.' - 'I'm scared when I raise my rates, I will lose clients' - 'I've tired to negotiate for it to be higher' - 'I have no idea what a fair day rate is.' Comments related to being prepared to work for a lower rate: - 'if .. like the specific design/project ..' - for 'small studio with small budget ..'.

SUMMARY

This is the second SDT salary report. Far more respondents have completed this survey and a greater number of roles have been analysed. The overall pattern emerging shows that males are consistently being paid more than their female counterparts especially in the more senior roles, but there are occasions where females achieve greater pay than their male counterparts.

The correlation shows that Age has a stronger positive relationship with Day rate than Annual salary; and that 'Years of experience' also shows a stronger relationship for Day Rate than Annual Salary.

Around 40% of respondents provided thoughts on the reasons for unfair pay levels. While their commentary shows some level of stress from the economic conditions experienced this year, day rate workers faired worst in the face of lower salaries and a shortage of employment opportunities. Comments expressed concern at the lack of effective negotiating skills and absence of knowledge of others pay levels brought in this difficult time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To continue the survey next year to provide real time salary data for UK animation workers.
2. University animation courses need to reflect the importance of negotiating skills in their curriculum to better prepare animators to obtain appropriate pay in the industry.
3. Some animators could benefit from the availability of negotiating skill training or toolkit to support their pursuit of fair pay.
4. More studios/employers need to recognise the benefits of developing good relationships and trust with animators when negotiating pay.

Points of DISCUSSION:

- The overall pattern emerging shows that males are consistently being paid more than their female counterparts especially in the more senior roles, but there are occasions where females achieve greater pay than their male counterparts.

- Given the inflationary effects on living costs and poor economic performance it is not surprising that respondents commentary reflects the squeeze on wages.

- Both day rate and salaried respondents shared very similar concerns about the fairness of current pay rates.

  - Day rate employees have felt the economic downturn more sharply than those on annual salaries – with pressure on them to work for lower pay and facing fewer job opportunities.

  - Salaried staff experienced smaller pay rises or pay freezes and increased workload and higher levels of responsibilities than their pay grade justified.

- It is also evident that the need to be capable of effective negotiation is felt more keenly than ever, every time new work is entered into – and while this is less frequent for salaried staff it is very frequent for day rate employees. Respondents in all pay contexts felt that negotiation skills are crucial in this industry to secure a pay rate that feels fair and reflects their skills and ability.

- Studios/ Employer have an important role to play in handling expectations and developing trust when negotiating salary levels.

- General information on salary levels would be appreciated by animators and this survey is an attempt to contribute to this broader awareness and encourage more openness in the discussion of pay.