
# NATIONAL SALARY FRAMEWORK

## 2022 RECOMMENDATIONS

GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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**00**

# FOREWORD

## ELEVATING GROUNDS MANAGEMENT FOR ALL.

**This year marks three years since the Grounds Management Association (GMA) launched its Grounds For Sport campaign which has been educating the wider public and employers about grounds management, its value, and the crucial role it plays for sport or physical wellbeing.**

In 2020, we found that 68% of people in the UK misunderstood the role of grounds staff or managers. Badged a ‘secret profession’, we asked grounds staff to share publicly what they do – and why it’s important in the aim to professionalise the sector and help raise standards of pay.

The GMA’s is working to elevate the sector and its perception so that, in turn, grounds staff get increased recognition and reward – such as salaries that meet the level of skill or demand.

With a stagnant economy riding the pressures of COVID-19, many industries are facing economic challenges, but our National Salary Framework is imperative to shaping the future of grounds management.

But we can’t do this alone, we must all work together to educate those outside of our sector to help understand it’s value. You can visit our website to find out more about the practical ways this salary framework can support your role or recruitment.

Visit thegma.org.uk/news/salarysurvey2021 for more details.

**Geoff Webb, CEO**

# ABOUT THE GMA

The Grounds Management Association (GMA) is the leading not-for-profit membership organisation that advocates industry best practice through its education, information, networks and support. We help professional and volunteer groundspeople succeed in what they do, whilst setting industry standards through our Grounds Management Framework.

GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

# 01
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Following what was the largest recession on record, the UK economy has seen faster than anticipated growth in 2021. The effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out, combined with consumers' and businesses' surprising degree of adaptability to public health restrictions, has seen output recover faster than projected, boosting tax revenues in the process. It was anticipated that the economy would grow by 6.5% in 2021, and a further 6% in 2022.**

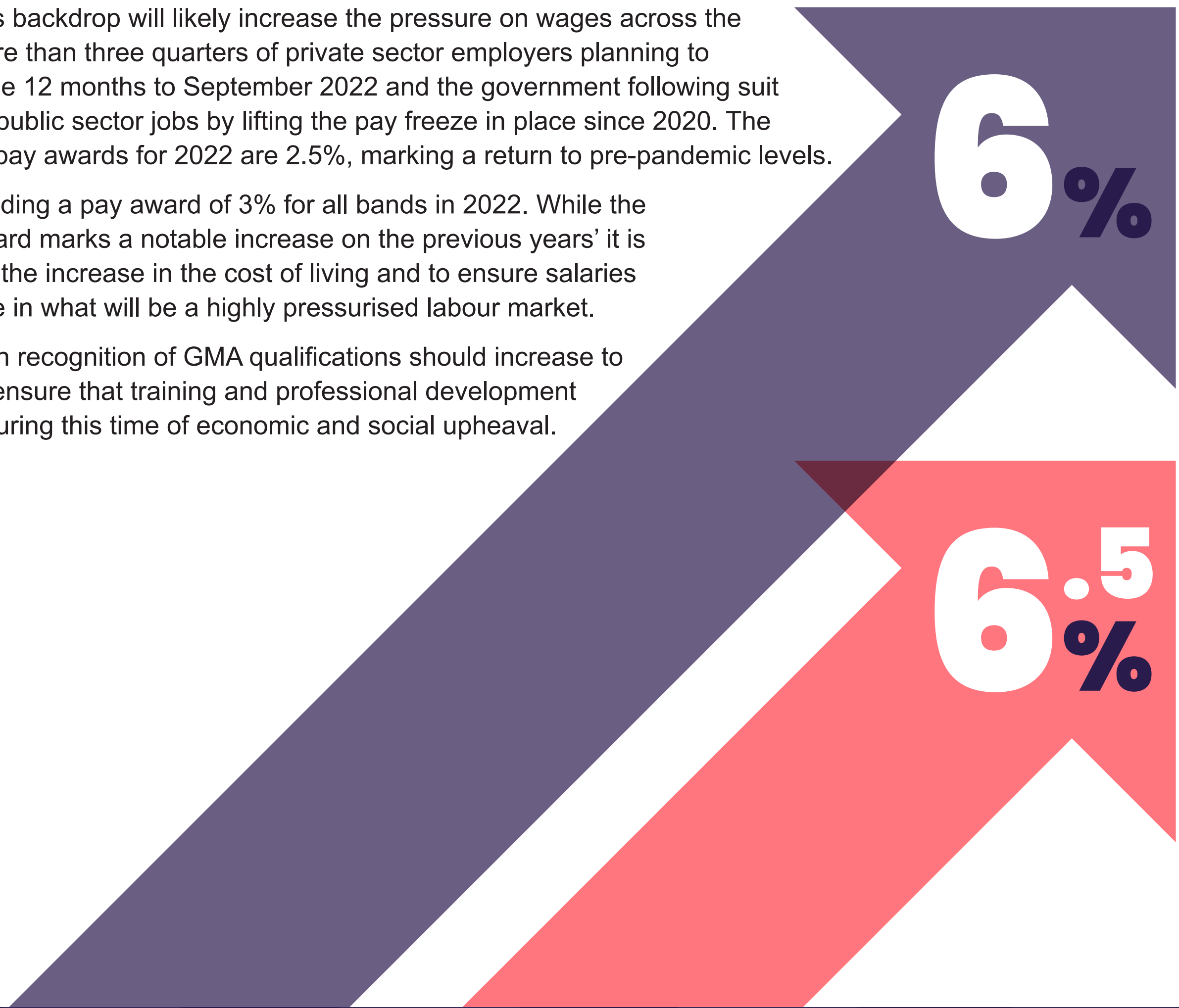
However, the strength of the rebound in demand in the UK (and internationally) has resulted in supply constraints in several markets. These supply bottlenecks have been exacerbated by changes in the migration and trading regimes following Brexit. Energy prices have soared, labour shortages have emerged in some occupations, and there have been blockages in some supply chains, causing shortages and prices increases. These can be expected to hold back output growth in 2022, while continuing to raise prices and put pressure on wages.

The implications for inflation are significant – both Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation forecasts for 2022 have been upgraded (with forecasts for CPI peaking at 4.4% in the second quarter of 2022) and inflation is not expected to return to target levels until 2024 at the earliest. Indeed, greater pressure in product markets and a tighter labour market could feasibly see inflation levels increase to the highest rate seen in the UK for three decades.

Unsurprisingly, this backdrop will likely increase the pressure on wages across the economy, with more than three quarters of private sector employers planning to increase pay for the 12 months to September 2022 and the government following suit for the majority of public sector jobs by lifting the pay freeze in place since 2020. The median projected pay awards for 2022 are 2.5%, marking a return to pre-pandemic levels.

We are recommending a pay award of 3% for all bands in 2022. While the recommended award marks a notable increase on the previous years' it is intended to reflect the increase in the cost of living and to ensure salaries remain competitive in what will be a highly pressurised labour market.

The amount paid in recognition of GMA qualifications should increase to £675 per band to ensure that training and professional development remain a priority during this time of economic and social upheaval.



# 02
# BACKGROUND

**Following the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting recession (the largest on record) the UK economy has seen faster than anticipated growth in 2021, with similar forecast for 2022. However, the strength of the rebound in demand in the UK (and internationally) has resulted in supply constraints in several markets. These supply bottlenecks have been exacerbated in the UK by changes in the migration and trading regimes following Brexit. Energy prices have soared, labour shortages have emerged in some occupations, and there have been blockages in some supply chains.**

These factors can be expected to hold back output growth in 2022, while raising prices and putting pressure on wages. The implications for inflation are significant – both CPI and RPI inflation forecasts for 2022 have been upgraded and levels of inflation are not expected to return to target levels until 2024 at the earliest. This will likely increase the pressure on wages across the economy, with more than three quarters of private sector employers planning to increase pay for the 12 months to September 2022 and the government following suit for the majority of public sector jobs by lifting the pay freeze in place since 2020.

Though the economic recovery is forecast to continue (albeit at a slower rate than this year), there is still significant uncertainty, not least around the cost of living and wages. Much will depend on: the continued efficacy of the vaccine; the level and severity of necessary public health restrictions; the reabsorption of furloughed workers and leavers into employment; levels of migration; and the severity of supply bottlenecks, particularly in relation to oil and gas prices.

The GMA's 2019 industry-wide survey 'Groundsmanship – Sports Vital Profession' recommended a review of pay, job descriptions, and career progression.[1] Due to the ongoing economic and social uncertainty resulting from the pandemic it was previously decided to delay this review and use the existing roles for at least another two years. This report is focused on inflation, wage growth and predicted pay awards to ensure the pay award accurately reflects market rates and predicted rises in the cost of living.

**...this report is focused on inflation, wage growth and predicted pay awards...**

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# 03
# INFLATION

**In line with Office of National Statistics (ONS) recommendations, CPIH is the key inflation figure. It is the most comprehensive (inflation) measure as it includes housing costs for homeowners. Unfortunately, the OBR has not yet adopted CPIH as a measure of inflation as it does not affect public finances, so only CPI and RPI projections are available for the inflation time series.**

CPIH inflation for the year to October 2021 was 3.8%.[2] The projected CPI inflation figure for 2021 is 2.3%, with RPI projected to be 3.6%. In 2022, CPI is projected to be 4.0% and RPI 5.0%.[3]

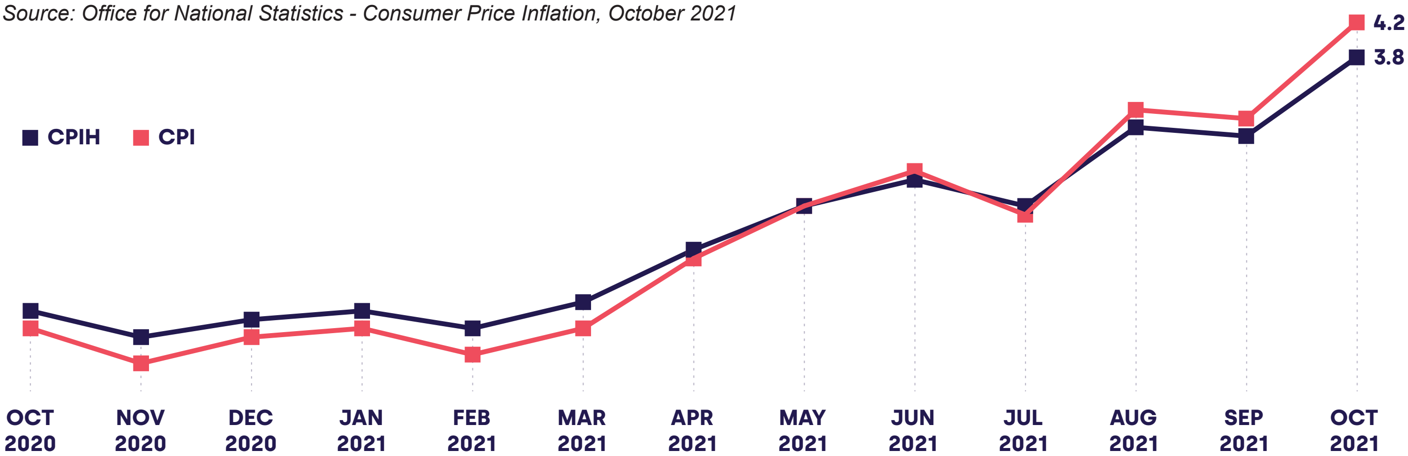
The OBR expects CPI inflation to rise further in the coming months, peaking at 4.4% in the second quarter of 2022 and do not predict a return to target levels until the second half of 2024.[4]

After remaining well below the Bank of England's 2% target during most of the pandemic, CPI inflation has risen sharply in recent months. It reached 3.1% in September 2021, up from a low of 0.3% in November 2020. Part of the recent increase can simply be attributed to the unusually low prices a year earlier. However, the rise also reflects increases in global commodity prices, which have raised fuel price inflation in particular. In addition, bottlenecks have emerged in global product markets and there have been signs of excess demand in the domestic economy, leading to higher consumer price inflation. Data for the three months to September 2021 reveals that price increases have originated mainly in sectors subject to product market bottlenecks (such as industrial and durable goods, and vehicles). But inflation increases have been broadly based across subsectors, and, as noted, inflation is expected to rise further, as recent energy price rises and labour market shortages add to input cost pressures.

Though CPIH inflation forecasts are not available, when compared with CPI inflation over the past 12 months, the CPIH inflation rate tracked at a consistently higher level than CPI inflation through key periods of the pandemic *(see Figure 1)*. However, since May 2021, the relationship has been inconsistent with the CPI inflation more often higher than CPIH inflation. This makes predictions for CPIH inflation difficult though if CPI continues to increase as expected CPIH inflation for 2022 would be marginally lower than 4.0%. Difference between the two is largely driven by the owner occupiers' housing costs component of CPIH, which accounts for around 16% of the measurement.

**Figure 1: Comparison of CPIH and CPI 12-month inflation rates since the Covid-19 pandemic.**[5]

*Source: Office for National Statistics - Consumer Price Inflation, October 2021*




The uncertainty surrounding inflation rates cannot be overstated. While the OBR's central forecast sees inflation rise well above the 2% target, there is a significant risk that this may rise even higher and be more persistent. As noted, greater pressures originating in product markets (most notably oil and gas prices) or stronger wage pressures from a tighter labour market could result in inflation peaking at 5.4% (the highest rate in three decades) rather than the 4.4% predicted.[6]

The Living Wage Foundation independently calculates the voluntary Living Wage, which is an hourly rate of pay set to reflect the basic cost of living in the UK. The 2021/22 UK Real Living Wage rate - as set on Monday 15th November 2021 - is £9.90, 40p more than the 2020/21 rate, equivalent to a 4.2% increase. The London Living Wage has increased by 20p to £11.05, equivalent to a 1.8% increase.[7]

The government increased the National Living Wage (affecting those aged 23 years and over) to £9.50 from April 2022, an increase of 6.6%.[8]

# 04 EMPLOYMENT

**The labour market has proved more resilient than expected since the pandemic, exceeding previous projections on many metrics, including:**

- Payroll employees reached record levels at 29 million in September 2021. Total employment in 2022 is projected to reach 32.2 million.
- The latest estimate for the unemployment rate covering the three months to August 2021 has fallen to 4.5%, well below the 5.2% forecast in March.
- Demand for labour remains buoyant, with record levels of vacancies – over 1.1 million in the three months to September 2021.[9]

The reopening of the economy has drawn 3.2 million workers off furlough since March 2021, leaving only 1.3 million on the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS) at its closure in September 2021, 0.7 million fewer than anticipated by the OBR in March. Of those remaining on the scheme in September, the majority were concentrated in high-vacancy sectors suggesting that many will either remain with their existing employer or will be able to find alternative work quite easily now that the scheme has closed. Although there remains a good deal of uncertainty, the OBR expect the numbers moving into unemployment after closure to be rather lower than forecast in March (180,000 compared to 310,000).

The faster recovery in output and employment together with the record levels of vacancies have led the OBR to lower their forecast for near-term unemployment. Expectation is now for the unemployment rate to peak at 5.2% in the fourth quarter of 2021, falling to 4.8% in 2022 (1.6 million people). Following that, the present combination of high vacancies and relatively low redundancies suggests that unemployment may fall back quite quickly; over the medium term the unemployment rate is expected to settle at 4.2% from 2024 onwards.

Labour shortages have arisen due to a combination of shocks to labour supply and mismatch between labour supply and demand, notoriously most evident in the market for heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers. Vacancies have risen rapidly compared to unemployment across the economy, indicating a “tighter” labour market, though labour market conditions in the coming year will depend on what proportion of those on furlough in August return to their jobs.

In summary, the available labour force has shrunk, as those with serious health conditions were forced to ‘shield’, some ‘discouraged’ workers stopped looking for work, an unusually large cohort of students entered higher education, and net migration fell. These factors combined with the strong recovery in output since the spring has led to a notable rise in the demand for labour and growing evidence of shortages in parts of the labour market.

**The reopening of the economy has drawn 3.2 million workers off furlough since March 2021**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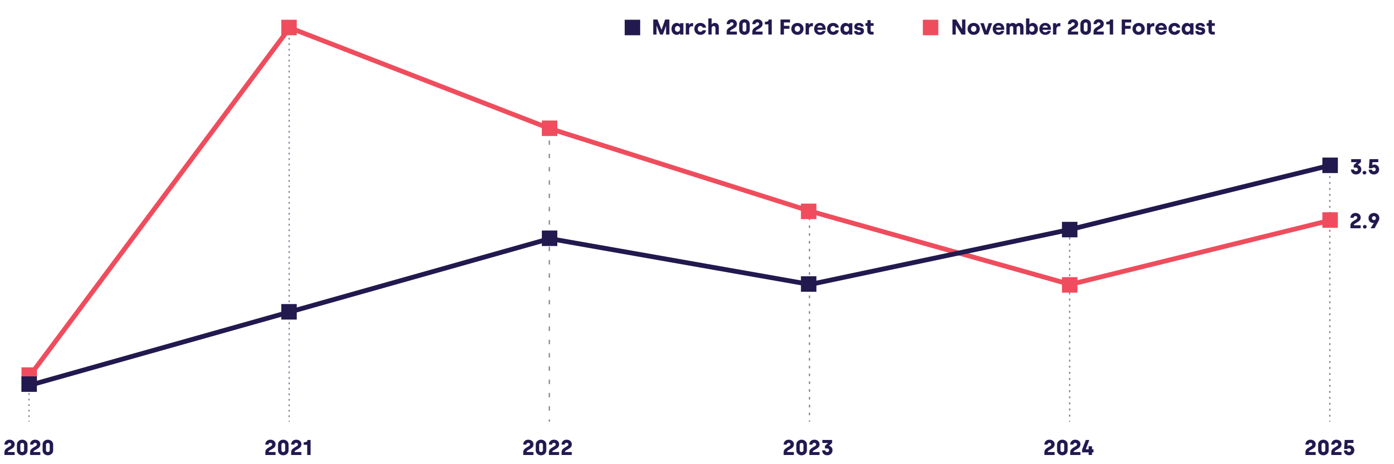
# 05
# WAGE GROWTH

**The average earnings growth for 2021 of 5.0% as forecast in November is considerably higher than the 1.9% forecast in March, as shown in *Figure 2*. Though forecast to fall to 3.9% in 2022, growth in earnings remains robust and exceeds pre-pandemic levels.**

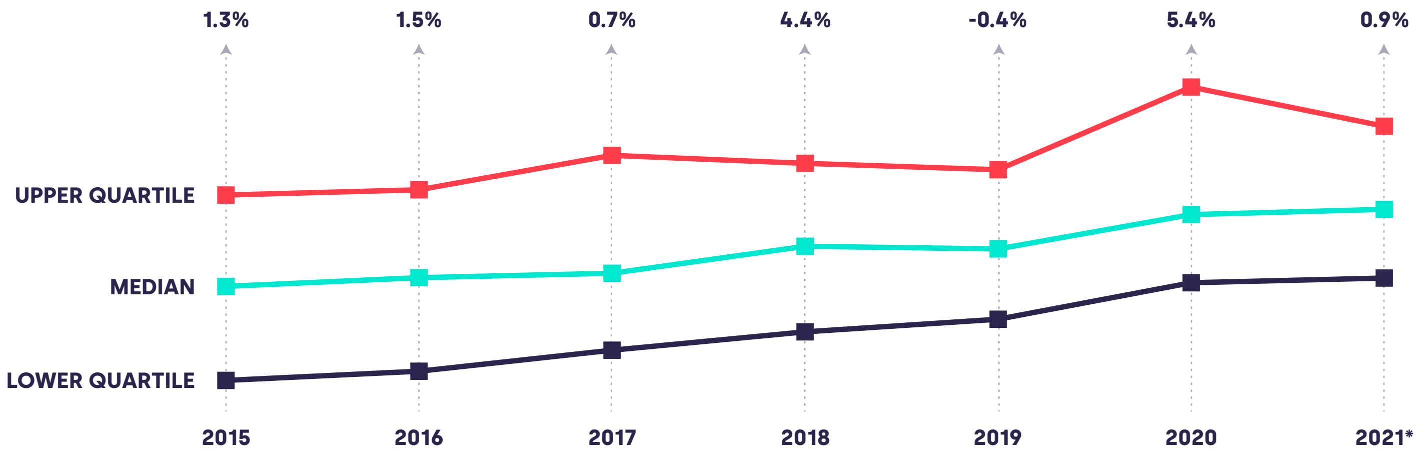
Average weekly earnings growth was 7.2 per cent in the three months to August 2021 and by the second quarter of 2021 average earnings were 4.9% above pre-pandemic levels. In part, this simply reflects a recovery from the unusually depressed wages a year earlier alongside the ending of CJRS, which had been weighing on earnings during 2020. However, earnings growth has also been stoked by the tightening in labour market conditions, which, as previously noted has pushed vacancies to record levels and driven labour shortages in areas. In addition, supply bottlenecks have contributed to rising wages in occupations where workers are in short supply.[10]

**Figure 2: Comparison of Forecast average earnings growth 2020-2025**[11]




Provisional data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings show that median gross pay for full-time Grounds Managers and greenkeepers increased by 0.9% in 2020. In 2021, the gross median pay for full-time groundsmen and greenkeepers was £21,151, as shown in *Figure 3*. This increase in gross median pay follows a 5.4% increase in 2020 (although the irregularity of these changes possibly reflects fluctuations due to sampling rather than tangible changes in the median).

**Figure 3: Interquartile range of groundsmen and greenkeepers 2015-2021**[12]





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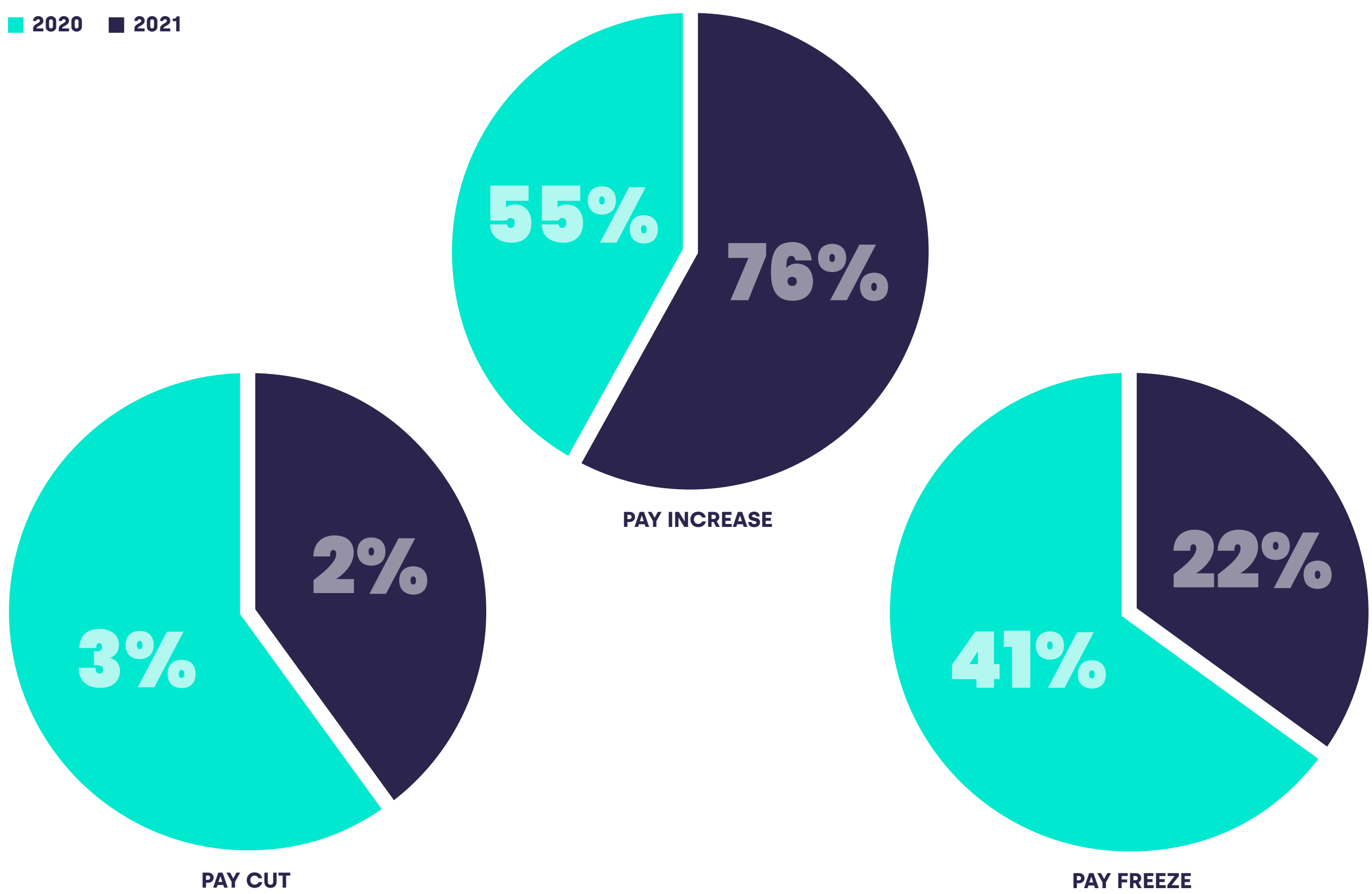
# 06
# PREDICTED PAY AWARDS

**In a CIPD survey of public and private sector employers, the median expected pay award in the twelve months to September 2022 will be 2%, although almost half (48%) of employers say they cannot yet specify the outcome of their next pay award.[13] Pay expectations in the private sector were 2.5%, up from 2.2% three months earlier. The report also anticipated a 1.0% median increase in pay for public sector employees, down from 1.5% in the summer. Some caution should be applied in the interpretation of this data because the fieldwork took place before the Chancellor's more recent announcement that public sector workers will see higher pay rises over the next three years.[14]**

*Figure 4* shows the direction of employers expected pay award in the next 12 months, with 76% of respondents expecting a pay increase, 22% a pay freeze and only 2% a pay cut. This is in stark contrast to the previous 12 months to September 2021, in which just 55% of employers expected a pay increase and 41% expected a pay freeze.

**Figure 4: Comparison of employers expected direction of pay award in 2020 and 2021 (CIPD)[15]**



In an XpertHR survey of employers, the median basic pay award in both the private and public sectors over the year to August 2021 was 1.7%.[16] This is down from 2% in the year to the end of August 2020 and below the 2% to 2.5% figures seen through most of the decade before that.

The median forecast pay award for private sector employees for the year to August 2022 is 2.5%, up from the 1.6% recorded over the past year and marks a return to pre-pandemic levels. As shown in *Figure 5*, almost a quarter (24%) of pay award forecasts for next year are exactly 2%, followed by a 3% predicted increase (20%). A pay freeze was cited by just 8% of employers, down from 45% in the previous year.

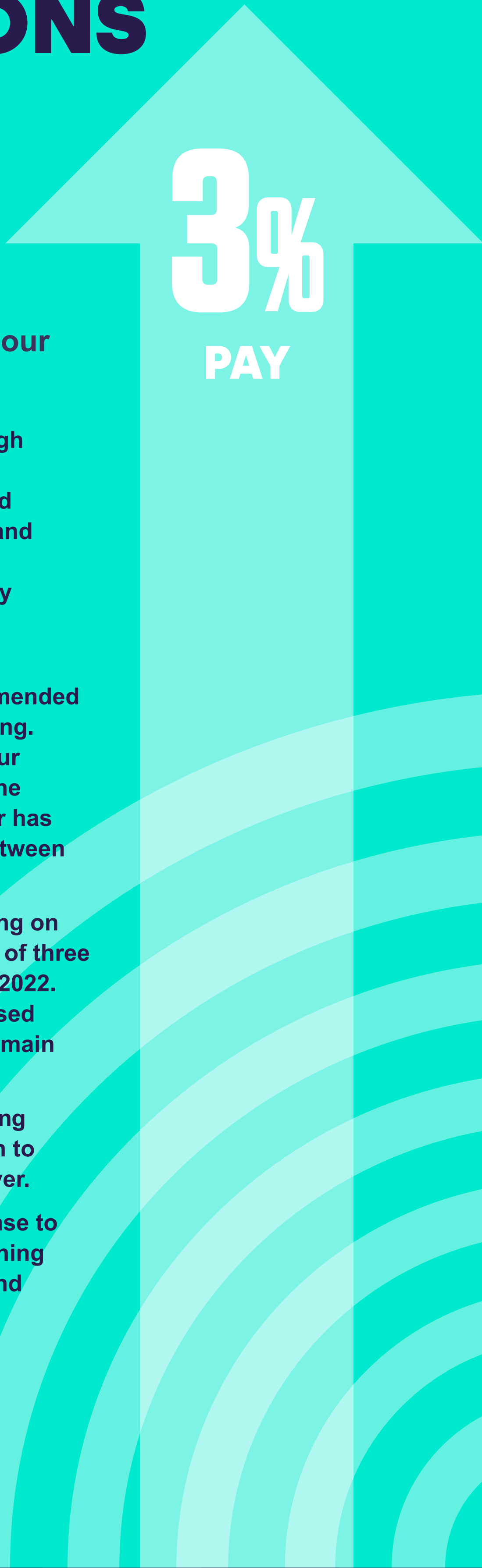
The median basic pay award among public sector organisations for the 12 months to August 2021 was 2%. Whilst this was higher than the 1.6% award recorded in the private sector it is unlikely that any 2022 award will keep up with inflation as no new money was earmarked to fund the rise in the recent Budget announcement.

**Figure 5: Forecasted forward-looking basic pay settlements for private sector employers (XpertHR)**[17]


The committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) has moved away from providing a single annual uprate figure for all roles and has instead designed an online salary calculator which takes account of the details of an individual role (including experience, responsibilities and qualifications) to provide minimum salary rates.[18] The salary calculator has not yet been updated with the agreed changes for 2021.

# 07 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Based upon a continuation of the GMA's six generic job descriptions we recommend a pay award of 3% for all bands in 2022. While the recommended award marks a notable increase on the previous years' it is intended to reflect the increase in the cost of living and ensure salaries remain competitive in what will be a pressurised labour market while remaining affordable to employers.**




The economic impact of the pandemic is still being keenly felt though perhaps in unexpected ways. Most indicators point to a very strong recovery and continued growth in the future. Strong demand has led to supply constraints which, exacerbated by changes in migration and trading regimes following Brexit, have resulted in historically high inflation, tightened labour market and increasing wages. Uncertainty around the extent and length of these trends makes identifying the appropriate pay award for 2022 difficult.

The projected CPI figure for 2020 of 4.0% is in excess of the recommended uprating and as such it may fall short of increases in the cost of living. Given this fact, in combination with record vacancy levels and labour shortages in many areas, there is an argument for uprating above the 3% recommended. However, we are equally aware that the past year has been difficult for employers and a balance should be maintained between competitiveness and affordability.

The forecasted pay awards for 2022 range between 2%-3% depending on the source, equivalent to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, upwards of three quarters of private sector employers are looking to increase pay in 2022. The National Living Wage will be increase by 6.6% in April 2022. Based on this data, the recommended uprating should ensure pay rates remain competitive.

We encourage employers to become a Living Wage Employer by gaining accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation. This has been shown to enhance job satisfaction and improves the reputation of the employer.

The amount paid in recognition of GMA qualifications should increase to £675 per band (a 3.8% increase) to ensure an ongoing focus on training and professional development even during this time of economic and social upheaval.

**We encourage employers to become a Living Wage Employer by gaining accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation.**

**This has been shown to enhance job satisfaction and improves the reputation of the employer**

# APPENDIX 1:
# GMA SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS 2022

**The 3% band uplift for 2022 is based on extensive pay and labour market research. Strong economic growth, ongoing economic uncertainty and expected levels of inflation were the main considerations when setting the award rate.**

To accompany the Recommended Salary Bands the GMA publishes a set of Position Descriptions that reflect the typical job responsibilities and experience required for each level within the industry career hierarchy. It is not possible however to have single position descriptions that encompass all individual situations. “Standard” position descriptions are provided by the GMA, against which employers can evaluate the varying responsibilities and circumstances that are to be found in their individual positions.

Such variables will include:

- TOTAL ACREAGE MANAGED
- THE LEVEL OF SPORT
- THE NUMBER OF SPORTS BEING PLAYED
- INTENSITY OF USE
- BUDGETARY RESPONSIBILITIES
- JOB HOLDERS PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING CAPABILITY
- STAFFING LEVELS
- QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

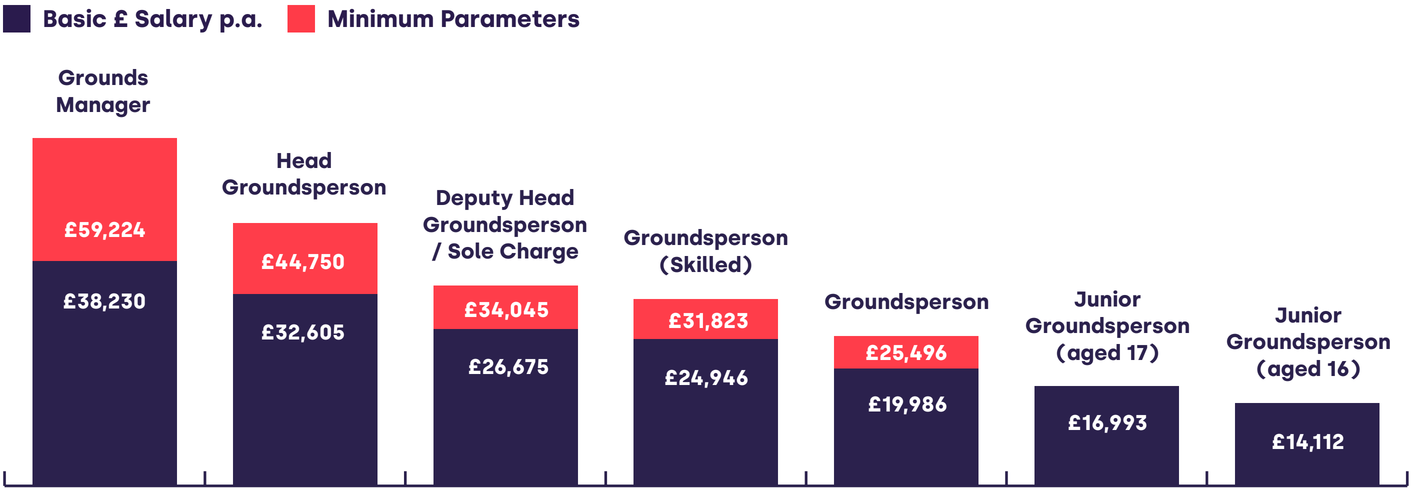
The salary bands relate to the “standard” Position Descriptions. Positioning within the salary band should therefore take into account the above factors and any significant variances in job content.

Each salary band has a minimum and maximum figure based on a percentage spread either side of the mid-point for all positions. Head Groundsperson and Grounds Manager positions have wider bands to reflect the responsibility level and market demand typically found with these position titles.

The Association recommends that competent and effective job performers whose job content relates closely to the “standard” position description should be paid at the mid-point and upper pay levels of the bands. Progression up a salary band can be achieved by awarding individual salary merit payments over and above the GMA recommended annual basic salary payment.

Copies of the “standard” Position Descriptions are available on request from the Grounds Management Association.

The following bands reflect minimum recommended basic salary payment with effect from 1st January 2022 and are based upon a 37.5 hour week. ***Please note these ranges relate to the minimum basic salary and are not "salary ranges". There is no maximum salary specified for grounds staff as experienced staff in some sectors (notably professional sports) would be expected to earn well above the average in other sectors. If this is the case, these recommendations can be used purely as a recommendation for annual uplift.***



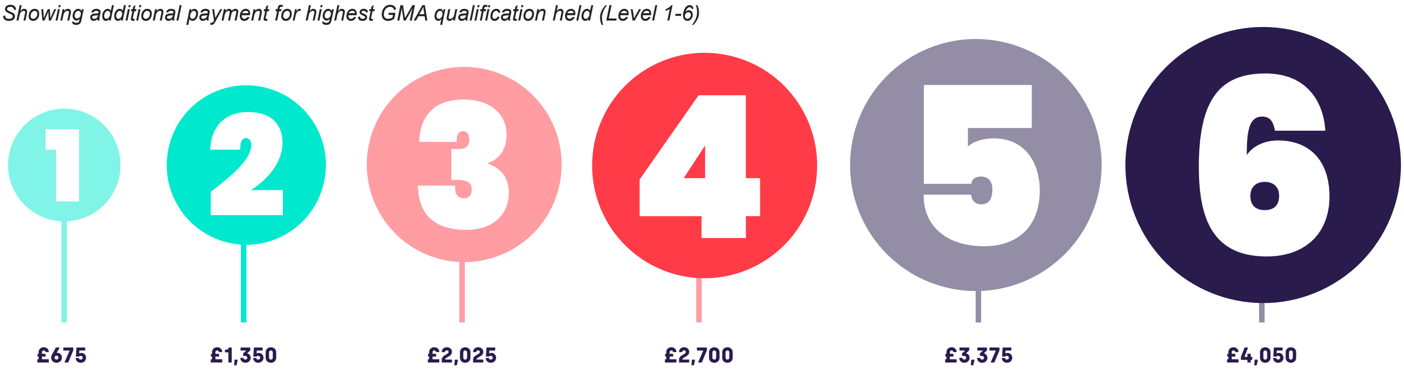

Bonuses, overtime and subsistence payments have not been included in the salary bands and are therefore additional. Employers should ensure they meet their obligations in terms of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and ensuring fair payment for overtime worked. This can be done in partnership with employees with agreements reached about the balance between overtime pay, time off in lieu and flexible working. The benefit value of any accommodation provided has not been included and should be negotiated separately.

Regional pay variations have been taken into account within the bands. Higher cost areas of the country would expect to make salary awards at the upper levels of the appropriate band. Regional differentials are: London Inner £4,108, London Outer £2,453 and Fringe Areas £734 - £1,473. The recommended minimum pay rate for a groundsperson in London should be set at £21,500 (Outer) and £23,000 (inner). We would also encourage employers to become a Living Wage Employer by gaining accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation.

It is recommended that all Grounds staff receive financial recognition within the salary scale for successful completion of a relevant professional qualification. The total amount received should be directly linked to the highest level of qualification attained as shown below.

**Minimum Remuneration for GMA qualifications 2022**

*Showing additional payment for highest GMA qualification held (Level 1-6)*




It should be noted that these are recommended annual salary bands and individual negotiations are conducted between an employer and employee. We recommend that consideration is given to the extent of overtime typically worked to ensure fair remuneration. Individual employee merit increases in addition to the recommended GMA annual salary band adjustment are also determined at the local level. Employers can award additional salary award to reflect merit worthy individual performance or the achievement of employee competencies.

# CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Conditions of employment for all ground staff should be detailed in a written Statement of Employment Particulars, see attached, What the written terms must include: What must be written in an employment contract – https://www.acas.org.uk/search?keys=statement+of+employment+particulars
with particular focus on the following in addition to basic salary:

- A minimum of 28 days holiday including the 8 public/bank holidays for those working a 5-day week. Part time employees are entitled to a pro rata period. Employees must be allowed to use their leave allowance within the holiday year
- Basic overtime weekends and Bank Holidays and time off in lieu are not statutory requirements and should be discussed and agreed with employers
- To comply with 1998 Working Time Regulations employers are to take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees do not work more than an average of 48 hours per week averaged over 17 weeks. The averaging period may be extended to up to 52 weeks if agreement is reached between the employer and employee. Those aged 18 years and under may only work a 40-hour week which is 8 hours a day maximum. There are no opt outs to the Working Time Regulation for those under the age of 18
- The abolition of the default retirement age in the UK means that since 1st October 2011 no employee who turned 65 after this date can be retired under the default retirement age. If an employer wants to operate a compulsory retirement age it will need to objectively justify it
- Compliance with Employment Regulations e.g. minimum national wage. The National Minimum Wage for adults over the age of 23 (“National Living Wage”) is £9.50 per hour as at 1st April 2022. The National Minimum Wage for 21-22 year olds is £9.18 per hour. The rate for 18-20 year olds is £6.83 and the rate for 16 and 17 year olds is £4.81
- The Government minimum wage for an apprentice is £4.81 per hour. This rate is for apprentices under 19 or those in their first year. If you’re 19 or over and past your first year you get the rate that applies to your age
- Compliance with Health and Safety Act requirements
- Death in service benefit
- It is recommended all employees over the age of 18 be given access to a pension fund. On 1st October 2012 the Government changes to workplace pension, including auto-enrolment for large employers, were introduced. The current rate is 3% employer minimum contribution and a 5% staff contribution
- Provision for continuous development of grounds care skills and knowledge, which may include time off to attend GMA training programmes
- Effective October 1st 2011 - The Agency Workers Regulations requires that agency workers are treated equally to an employer’s directly recruited employees on basic employment conditions after they have worked in a role for 12 weeks. Agency workers will have the right to the same employment conditions such as pay, holidays and performance-related bonuses after the 12-week qualifying period. In addition, from the first day of their temporary assignments, agency workers will be entitled to the same access as permanent members of staff to job vacancies and collective facilities e.g. canteen

# APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES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# APPENDIX 3: NOTES

[1] Previously called the Institute of Groundsmanship (IoG).

[2] ONS (2021a) Page 2

[3] OBR (2021a) Table 2.7 Page 80

[4] OBR (2021a) Pages 67-68

[5] ONS (2021a) Page 3

[6] OBR (2021a) Pages 68-70

[7] LWF (2021)

[8] https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

[9] OBR (2021a) Pages 61-63

[10] OBR (2021a) Pages 62-63

[11] OBR (2021a) Table 2.7 Page 80 and OBR (2021b Table 2.9 Page 80

[12] ONS (2021b) – S02010 code 5114 – Table 14.7a Annual pay – Gross 2021 – Provisional figures

[13] CIPD (2021) Page 10

[14] HM Treasury 2021

[15] CIPD (2020) Page 12 & CIPD (2021) Page 10

[16] XHR (2021) para 3

[17] XHR (2021) Chart 2 Forecasts for pay awards in 12 months to August 2022

[18] https://golfclubsalaries.org.uk/salary-calculators/

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# FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CAREER PROGRESSION VISIT

**THEGMA.ORG.UK/LEARNING**