

NCB Wage Survey 2026 Summary Results

This year's NCB Wage Survey received **77** responses from butchers across England and Wales. Thank you to all members who took part. Your input helps provide valuable benchmarking information when reviewing pay and benefits packages.

While wage rates remain an important factor in attracting and retaining staff, the survey continues to show that employment benefits, workplace culture and staff wellbeing play a key role in helping businesses stand out as employers.

We're sharing the full results with you here. After the total information below you will also find Area and Location type breakdowns. Under each further breakdown you will find some information about how many results the average is based on to help you gauge the accuracy.

Key Findings

The total average hourly wage based on responses are:

Total	Manager	Butcher (over 25)	Butcher (under 25)	Counter Asst (over 25)	Counter Asst (under 25)	Apprentice (over 25)	Apprentice (under 25)
Average hourly wage	£17.18	£14.97	£13.96	£13.39	£12.65	£13.12	£11.22

The average hourly wage across all roles increased to £13.78 in 2026, compared with £13.06 in 2025. This represents an increase of **5.5%** year on year.

Workplace Pension

All respondents offering pension information provide at least the statutory workplace pension contribution of 3%.

Only one respondent reported offering an alternative arrangement, indicating that enhanced pension contributions remain relatively uncommon.

While pension contributions are often overlooked when advertising vacancies, they remain an important part of an overall employment package. Employers may wish to highlight pension provision as part of their recruitment messaging, particularly when competing for experienced staff.

Annual Leave

The majority of respondents continue to offer the statutory minimum holiday entitlement of 20 days plus bank holidays (pro rata for part-time employees).

However, around 16% of respondents offer additional holiday benefits beyond the statutory minimum. Examples include:

- Additional leave based on length of service
- Birthday leave

- 22 to 28 days annual leave plus bank holidays
- Additional holiday after five years' service

Although enhanced holiday entitlement is not widespread, those businesses that do offer additional leave are using it as a low cost way of rewarding loyalty and improving staff retention.

Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay remains the most common approach, with approximately 68% of respondents reporting that they offer SSP only.

However, around one quarter of respondents provide some form of enhanced sick pay arrangement. Examples include:

- Up to four weeks company sick pay
- Full pay at employer discretion
- Sliding scale company sick pay linked to length of service
- Enhanced support for short term absence

These arrangements can provide additional reassurance to employees while helping businesses maintain engagement and morale during periods of illness.

Other Benefits

Many respondents continue to offer benefits beyond pay and statutory requirements. Benefit offered by respondents include:

Benefit	Offered By (%)
Staff Discounts	92%
Health Care or Gym membership	7.2%
Death in Service Cover	6.0%
Meat Allowances	6%
Employee Discount Schemes	3.8%

In this year's survey, health care and death in service cover have almost doubled compared to last year's respondents. Whereas the number of respondents offering employee discounts has almost halved.

Additional benefits reported by respondents include:

- Meat or product allowances
- Staff food or subsistence schemes
- Weekly or performance bonuses
- Birthday leave
- Massage therapy sessions

Conclusion

The 2026 survey shows continued growth in wage rates across the independent butcher sector, with average hourly pay increasing by 5.5% compared with 2025.

However, the findings also reinforce that pay is only one part of attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. Many employers are strengthening their overall employment offering through enhanced holiday entitlement, sick pay arrangements, staff discounts and other practical benefits that support employee wellbeing and reward loyalty.

Recruitment and retention remain significant challenges for many businesses. Those employers who take a broader approach to employee benefits may be better placed to attract quality candidates, retain experienced staff and build engaged, long term teams.

Members are encouraged to use these results as a benchmark when reviewing their own pay rates and employment packages. While every business will have different circumstances based on location, size and local conditions, even small improvements can make a meaningful difference to employee satisfaction, retention and business performance.