



British Archaeological Jobs and Resources

September 2022

Poverty Impact Report: Front Matter

In July 2022, British Archaeological Jobs and Resources (BAJR) conducted an anonymous survey on the net income of archaeologists and their household to identify the impacts of financial difficulty on mental health, lifestyle and debt.

We would like to thank everyone who responded to the survey. Without you, there would be no report.

This report outlines the headline quantitative figures and thematic qualitative data collected from the survey. 755 responses were recorded, representing just over 10% of the workforce.

A full data appendix is available separately and a data dictionary and respondent demographic split are provided at the end of the document. The survey comments have been redacted to remove any identifying remarks and are available separately as supporting context. The order in which they appear does not match the data file in order to protect respondents' identities.

This report may be cited using the appropriate credit to the authors, and the data appendix is considered to be open access.

Trigger Warnings: Financial difficulty, mental health, suicide

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Poverty Impact Report: Support and Signposting

If you or someone you know are struggling with the cost of living and need help with debt, benefits entitlement, hardship funds, budgeting or self-employment financial advice, the below organisations offer these services for **free**:

- StepChange Debt Charity (www.stepchange.org)*
- National DebtLine (www.nationaldebtline.org)
- Christians Against Poverty (www.capuk.org)
- Citizen's Advice (www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- Lightning Reach (www.lightningreach.org)

For specific support on housing, homelessness and tenancy advice:

- Shelter (www.shelter.org)

If you or someone you know are experiencing an impact on your wellbeing or mental health, or are supporting someone who is, the below organisations offer support for **free**:

- Mind (www.mind.org.uk)
- Shout (www.giveusashout.org, or text SHOUT to 85258)
- Samaritans (www.samaritans.org)
- Rethink (www.rethink.org)
- SANEline (www.sane.org.uk)

If you need help to locate your nearest foodbank:

- The Trussell Trust (www.trusselltrust.org)

*Disclosure: Lu Stanton-Greenwood is an employee of StepChange Debt Charity as of 2022, but receives no benefit, compensation or commission for signposting to the charity



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Poverty Impact Report: Average Household Income

"How long can people stay in a profession they love, when they cannot afford to put the heating on or have a hot shower after a long day working outside in the snow?"

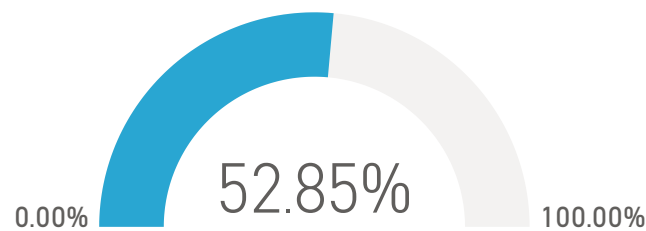


£21,820

is the average net household income
for respondents living alone

The average rent (excluding Greater London) per month in August 2022 was £961, representing 52% of the average net household income for respondents living alone (HomeLet 2022).

Indicative Percentage of Income Spent on Rent*

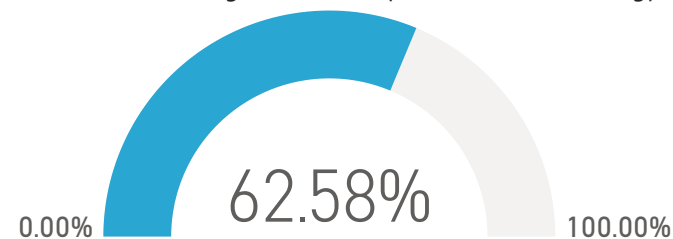


The average household energy bill in 2021 was £769 per year.

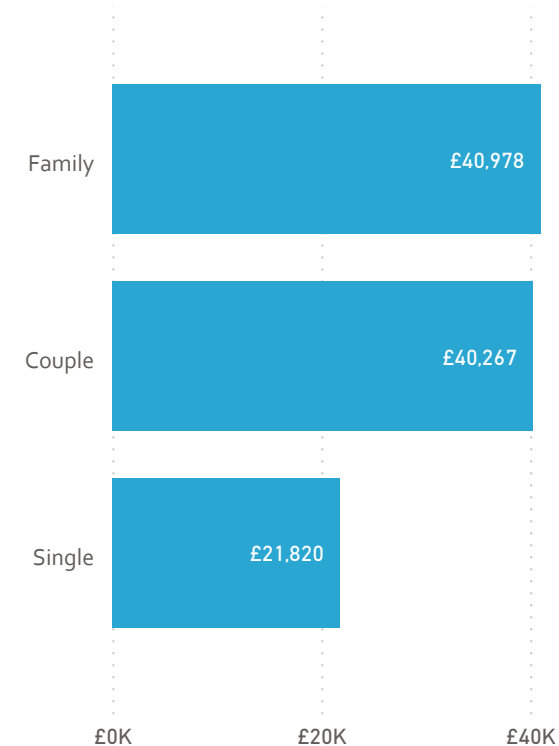
A 54% increase in April 2022, followed by an anticipated increase in October 2022, will bring the average monthly expenditure on energy to £177 per calendar month; this represents 9.7% of the average net household income for respondents living alone (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy 2022).

This means that the typical renting respondent in a single household will reach the required 60% of household cost expenditure to be considered on the poverty line after only their rent and energy bills are paid (Trust for London 2020).

Indicative Percentage of Income Spent on Rent and Energy*



Average Net Income by Household Type





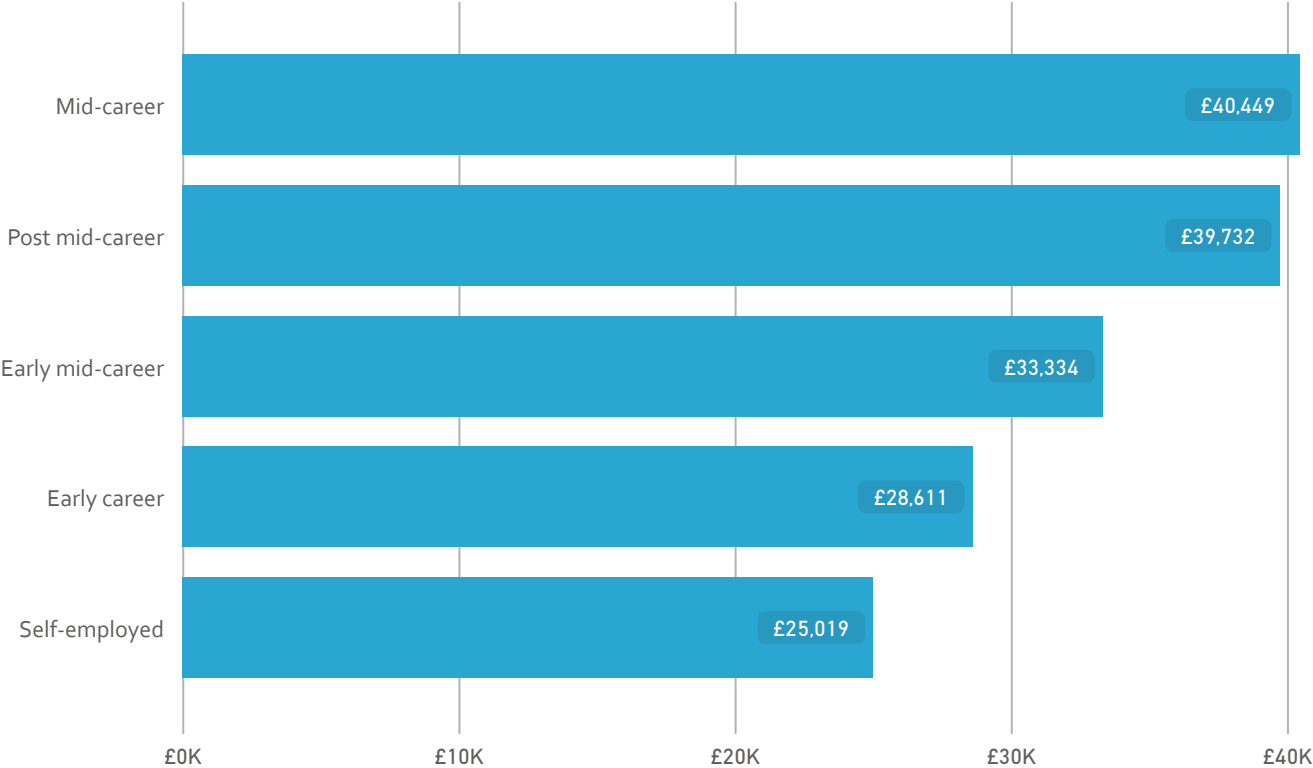
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Poverty Impact Report: Average Household Income

"Luckily, I live with a partner who can help, but not everyone is that lucky."

Average Net Income by Career Level



Average Net Household Income* as Compared to the National Average

Career Level	Couple	Family	Single
Early career	£36,349	£31,711	£18,690
Early mid-career	£39,854	£34,714	£21,202
Mid-career	£44,968	£45,386	£25,447
Post mid-career	£41,363	£46,338	£25,929
Self-employed	£28,429	£26,885	£17,250

The median net household income in 2021 was £31,400 (Office for National Statistics 2022).

The average income for company-employed single households surveyed falls beneath the national median by a maximum of £12,710 (40.48%) and an average of £8,583 (27.33%).

When considered in the context of respondents' supporting comments, many archaeologists expressed that their partner's wage was higher than theirs, and that their continued professional capacity in archaeology was reliant upon this financial support.

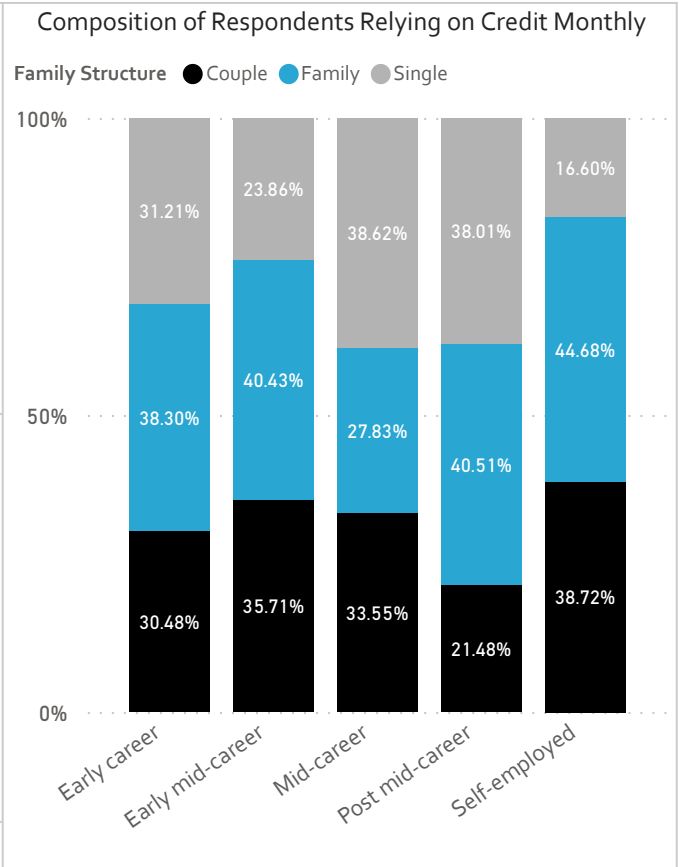
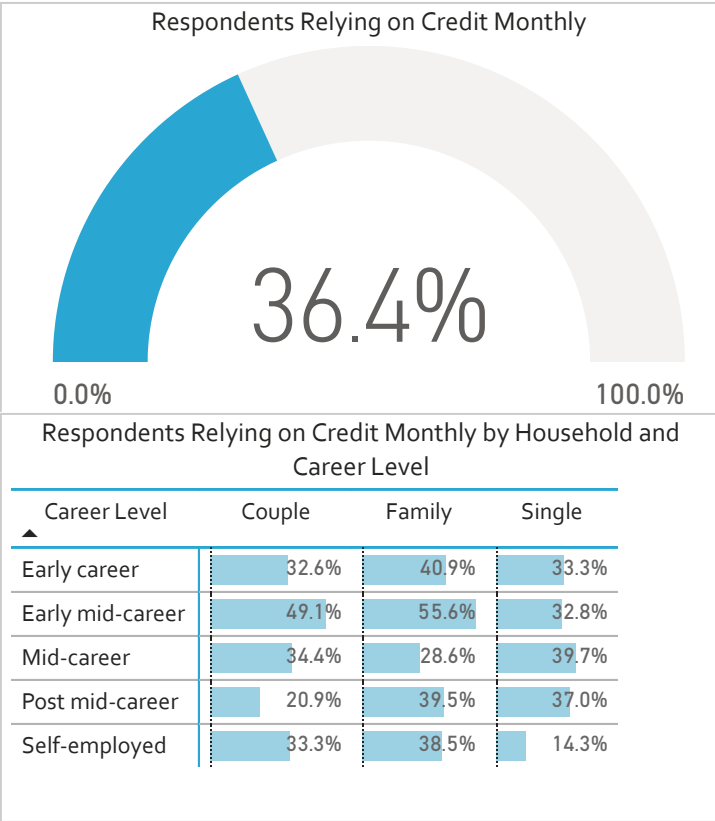


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Poverty Impact Report: Monthly Credit Use

"All of my money goes to bills and debt that I can't afford to get out of. It is heart wrenching that I have worked so hard for 9 years and have little to nothing to show for it."



Over a third of responding archaeologists reported monthly reliance on credit products. Whilst monthly credit use itself is not necessarily an indicator of financial difficulty, reliance suggests that a third of surveyed households fall into a financial deficit each month.

These households are in an unsustainable financial position of having more going out than they have coming in. Without remedy, this will lead to financial crisis.

The ongoing cost of living increase, including projected inflation and utility prices, will only worsen this problem, forcing more households into crisis.

The most impacted respondent households are couples and those with children. Archaeologists are facing the very real prospect of economic deprivation, with the outlook for their families looking bleak if there is no change.

This will force them to decide between their career and the available prospects for their children and families.



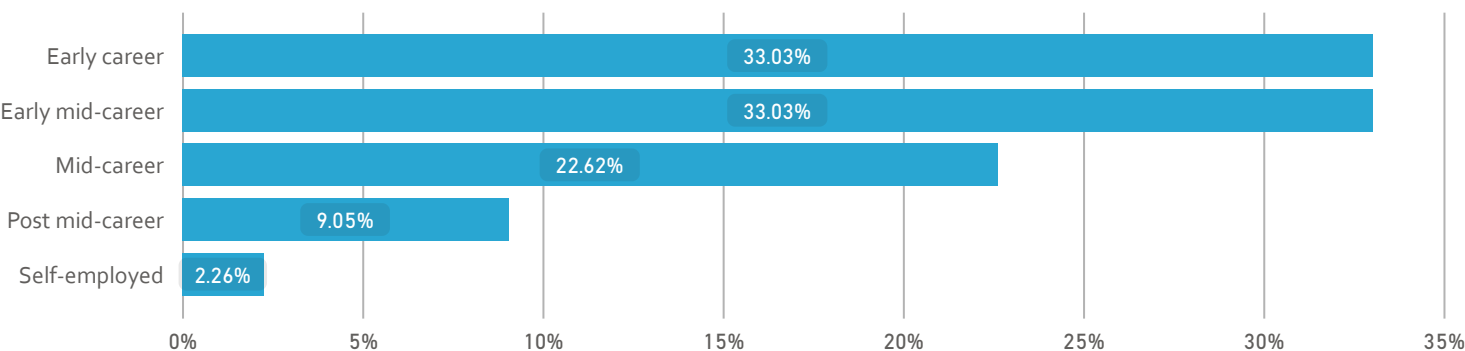
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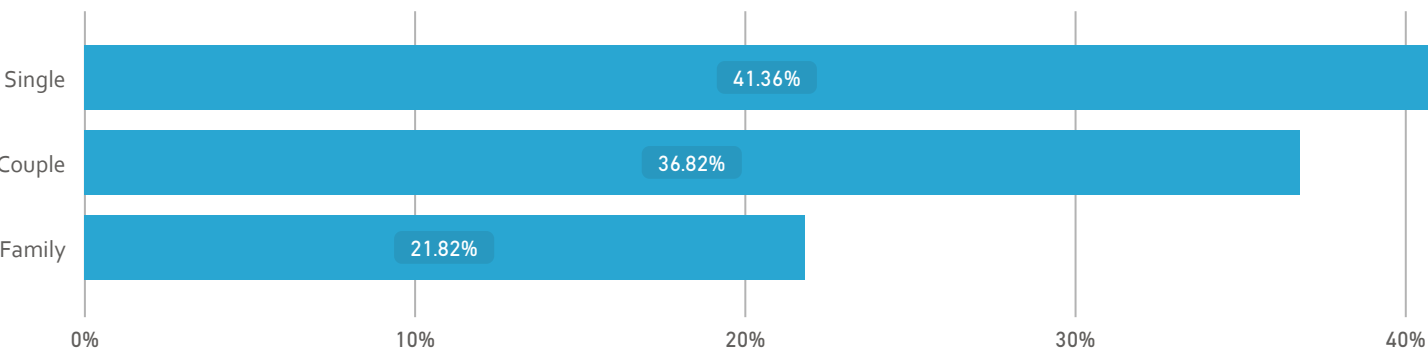
Poverty Impact Report: Food Poverty

"I constantly worry about whether I can afford food each month."

Composition of Respondents in Food Poverty by Career Level



Composition of Respondents in Food Poverty by Household



Respondent Households Reporting Food Poverty

Career Level	Couple	Family	Single
Early career	30.23%	50.00%	48.61%
Early mid-career	26.85%	55.56%	47.54%
Mid-career	17.78%	16.67%	32.76%
Post mid-career	20.93%	13.16%	22.22%
Self-employed	11.11%	23.08%	14.29%

This survey defines food poverty as skipping meals or using food banks in order to cope financially. The most impacted group of respondents are early and early-mid career archaeologists, particularly those with children or in single households.

Around half of these respondents reported food poverty.

Our data correlates with international studies on the use of food banks in nutritionally impoverished households, which indicates low usage despite availability (Public Health Scotland 2021). Poverty already imposes considerable psychological and emotional pressure, and lack of adequate access to food compounds reduced physical and mental health. The volume of respondents reporting feelings of shame surrounding their financial circumstances may be a contributing factor to the limited use of food banks.



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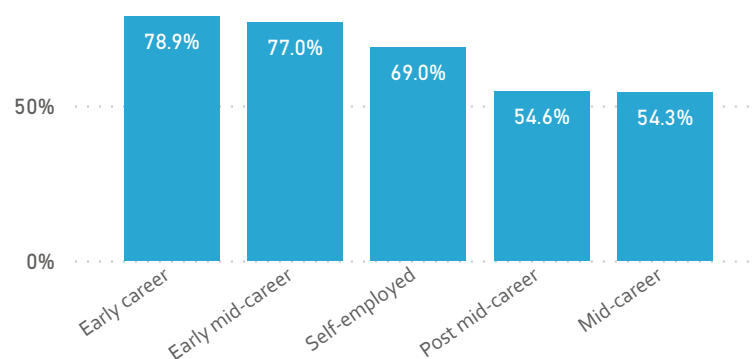
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Poverty Impact Report: Mental Health

"Overall, depressed and scared."

Percentage of Respondents Experiencing Mental Health Impact

Career Level	Couple	Family	Single
Early career	80.2%	77.3%	77.8%
Early mid-career	73.1%	88.9%	78.7%
Mid-career	57.8%	47.6%	58.6%
Post mid-career	46.5%	52.6%	70.4%
Self-employed	44.4%	76.9%	85.7%



66.6%

of respondents' mental health has been impacted by financial difficulty

55.8%

of respondents feel shame when discussing financial matters

72.72%

of respondents reported negative emotional impact from their financial situation

Over half of mid-to-late career archaeologists reported that their financial situation has negatively impacted their mental health, rising to three quarters for early-to-mid career respondents. The results of this survey indicate a deeply impacted workforce with the greatest distress falling on those in the earlier phases of their career.

Financial crisis is a considerable contributing factor to poor mental health, and there is a direct correlation between financial deprivation and higher risk of suicide; 1 in 4 people who attempted suicide in 2018 were experiencing problem debt (Bond and Holkar 2018, 4).

Financial difficulty has a trifold effect on mental health; it exacerbates emotional stress, it isolates a person from seeking help and it delays recovery from existing mental health conditions. Emotional stress can lead to making less effective financial decisions due to distress impacting cognitive function (Money and Mental Health Policy Institute 2019), compounding the persistence of poor mental health in economically deprived communities and workforces.



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Poverty Impact Report: Future Security

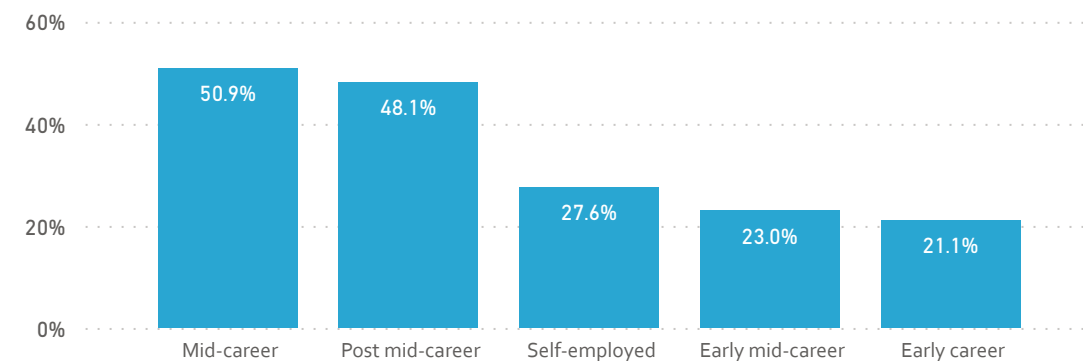
"When I can earn more working at the local Tesco, it makes no sense to continue in archaeology."

35.1%

of respondents feel confident that they can continue in archaeology

Percentage of Respondents Confident They Can Continue in Archaeology

Career Level	Couple	Family	Single
Early career	24.4%	27.3%	15.3%
Early mid-career	25.9%	22.2%	18.0%
Mid-career	43.3%	61.9%	46.6%
Post mid-career	41.9%	63.2%	37.0%
Self-employed	55.6%	15.4%	14.3%

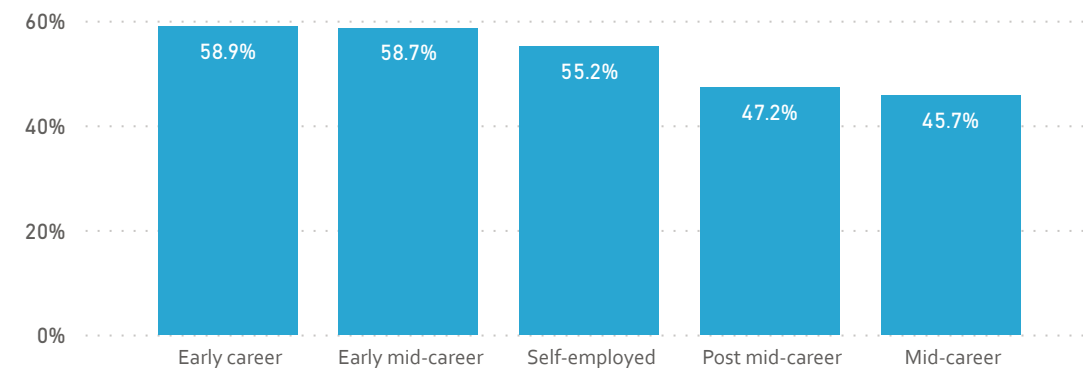


52.8%

of respondents don't have enough savings to cover 3 months' unemployment

Percentage of Respondents Without 3 Months' Savings

Career Level	Couple	Family	Single
Early career	64.0%	59.1%	52.8%
Early mid-career	60.2%	63.0%	54.1%
Mid-career	41.1%	48.8%	48.3%
Post mid-career	34.9%	60.5%	48.1%
Self-employed	33.3%	76.9%	42.9%

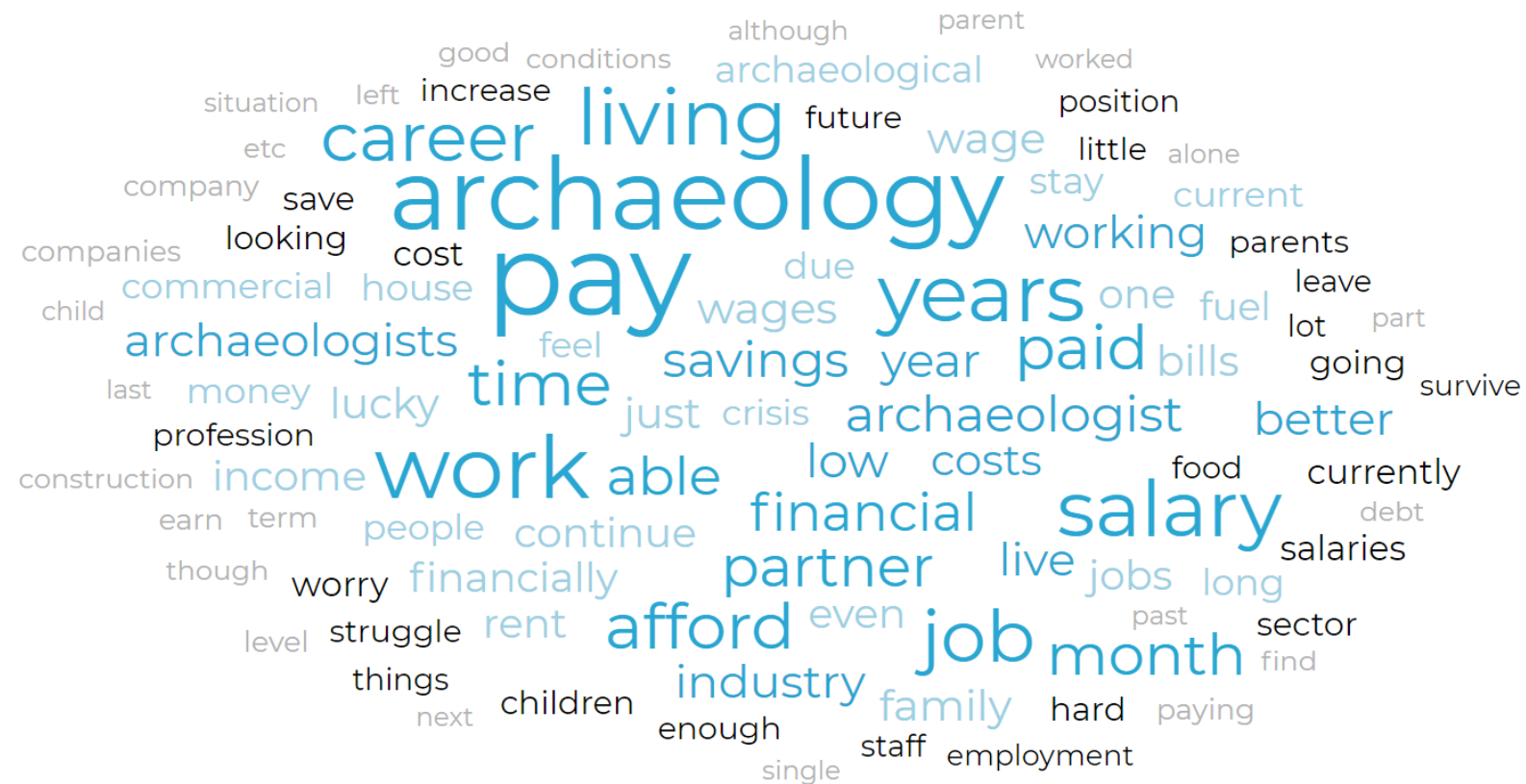




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Poverty Impact Report: In Their Own Words



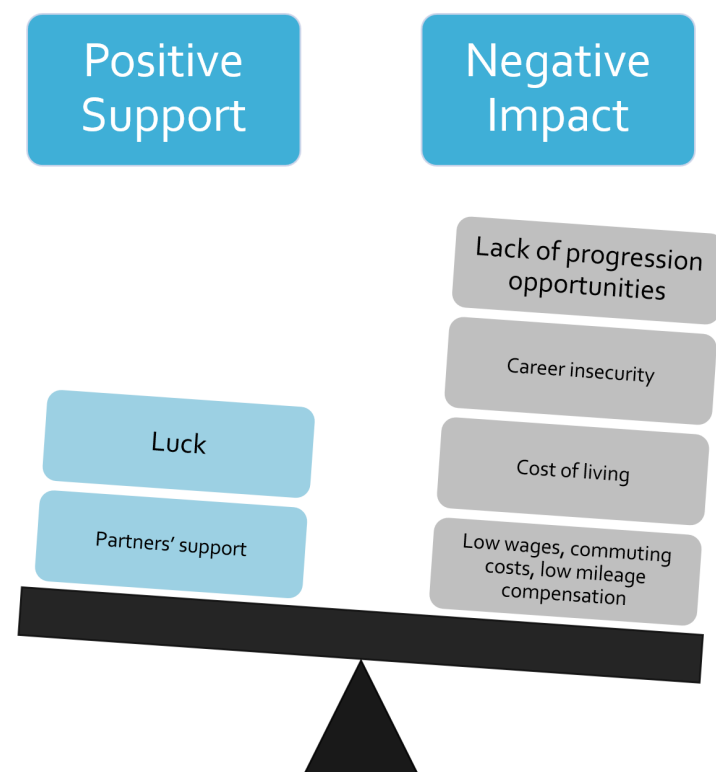


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Poverty Impact Report: Thematic Review

"The archaeological industry preys on our love of the past to deprive us of a future."



The survey included a comments section for respondents to put their situation into their own words. These comments provide thematic context for the results. Respondent archaeologists' experiences of working in the sector cited several critical and consistent aspects of their working and financial lives that have contributed to their difficulties:

- Low wages and lack of career progression opportunities leading to household income stagnation, compounded by the cost of living crisis
- Short-term contracts creating economic and emotional insecurity
- The cost of commuting and low mileage compensation for getting to work are having a considerable impact on household finances
- Reduced prospects for being able to afford housing and starting a family, leading to very real loss of opportunities and achievable aspirations, and an inability to plan for the future
- Mid-to-late career archaeologists are reporting that their better financial position is of little benefit due to debts accrued in their earlier career, when their income was less than it is now
- An inability to afford basic household expenditures, such as heating and food, and needing to live very frugally with no comforts to relieve the demands of physical labour

One of the enduring themes throughout the provided comments is the thorough concern of archaeologists in better paid, self-professed 'lucky' positions for their struggling colleagues. A number expressed feeling very fortunate for their position, whilst being acutely aware of the problems facing the wider archaeological community. More broadly, many of these respondents felt that they had achieved stability through luck, a sentiment echoed by those whose partner is able to financially support the household.

The comments reflect an industry that is overbalancing on the negative impacts on the workforce. The thematic data produced by the survey expresses an emotionally taxed, fiscally drained and aspirationally impaired workforce with little to no feelings of hope for change in the industry.



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Poverty Impact Report: Impacted Industry

"I love it. But what's the point in loving it, when I cannot afford to live anymore?"

Only 16.95% of respondents reported not being impacted both financially and psychologically.

We often talk about archaeology as a profession, with reduced focus on the people who make up that profession. It becomes important to consider how the composition of the workforce is having an impact on both the short- and long-term prospects for the industry as a whole.

If archaeologists are in unsustainable positions within their career, then the industry itself is also in an unsustainable position. A final recap of the summarised data suggests that individual archaeologists are being pushed past the poverty line, with just over a third of respondents having the confidence that they can continue to choose archaeology over their families and future prospects. This presents the very real possibility of a critical shortage of staff in the profession.

Concerted, united action on improving the working lives of archaeologists is not only required, but necessary in order for the profession to survive. This action must include the consideration of appropriate living wages, reimbursement, contract stability and greater provision for supporting mental health and flexible working.

The wealth of practical considerations as to why these changes are difficult to enact are valid, however that validity cannot stand up to the scrutiny of the realities of an impending crisis within the profession. If archaeologists fall into extreme adversity, the sector will follow.

The decision to do nothing is a decision in favour of industrial crisis.





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Poverty Impact Report: BAJR Commentary

*"This report is based on the responses of 755 individuals in UK archaeology. It was never going to be an easy read, and there is no sugar-coating the statistics that have been collected, analysed and collated by Lu Stanton-Greenwood. The concept was first proposed by Liz Tideswell, David Connolly created the survey questions and poll, and Gwilym Williams offered professional support and opinion. Without all of us, and **those who responded to this survey**, there would be no report.*

There is no simple solution, nor is there any simple way out, and sadly, things could be worse and are heading that way rapidly. We wanted to know the truth, and now we do; British Archaeology is slowly suffocating itself, depriving itself of talent and dedication for the sake of expedience. It provides little vestige of hope to make enough money to break even, let alone thrive. Too often, we have heard the excuse that wages are low because the margins are too slim, that other companies will undercut, or that company benefits more than make up for lower rates of pay. This is a security blanket to hide from and ignore the reality.

As for benefits, you can't pay for food with 50% off gym membership, you can't turn on heating this winter with a Cycle to Work scheme or a free eye test. The fact is that this report's findings are a final wake up call to our industry. People are struggling at all levels, in all parts of the profession. People are going hungry, people are unable to save, people are at the limits of surviving. Mental health issues are also now endemic in archaeology, and frequent reports come to us of self-medication, with both physical and mental distress now seen as normal.

There is some hope, though; recently, Cotswolds Archaeology raised all their rates with trainees starting on £22,222 and experienced archaeologists from £24,052. I single them out, as they obviously saw how the crushing cost of living was impacting their staff and responded decisively. One has to ask the question, how is it that they can now pay field staff more than many companies pay their supervisors? After two decades of building a sector heavily reliant on European workers attracted here by better job security, and insufficient investment in the future, it is unsurprising that we are at a crunch-point.

If we can't staff sites in the coming 12-18 months, how long will it be before developers and infrastructure consortiums start crying out to be released from those historic environment requirements which are now delaying essential projects?

*If there is one thing that we can urge, it is that this key report acts as the catalyst for all of us to work together to make a profession that is worth the time, effort and money that each person has invested into becoming an archaeologist. PROSPECT, ClfA, FAME, ALGAO, companies, national organisations, universities and all other stakeholders, the time has never been more pressing, and we must all accept that change is needed **now.**"*



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Poverty Impact Report: Data Dictionary

Measure	Filter	Calculation	Caveats
Average Net Income	None	The average mid-point of the selected net household income range	Of 755 responses, 638 included a net household income range
Indicative Percentage of Income Spent on Rent	Single households only	Average monthly rent / (the average mid-point of the selected net household income range/12 months)	Of 755 responses, 638 included a net household income range
Indicative Percentage of Income Spent on Rent and Utilities	Single households only	Average monthly rent + utilities spend / (the average mid-point of the selected net household income range/12 months)	Of 755 responses, 638 included a net household income range
Respondent Households Reporting Food Poverty	None	The distinct number of respondents who answered 'yes' to either 'have you had to skip meals in the last year?' or 'have you had to use a food bank in the last year?' / the total number of respondents	None
Respondents Relying on Credit Monthly	None	The number of respondents selecting 'yes' to the question 'do you have to use credit every month recently?' / the total number of respondents	None
Respondents Reporting Feeling Shame When Discussing Finances	None	The distinct number of respondents who answered 'yes' to 'do you feel shame when discussing financial matters?' / the total number of respondents	None
Respondents Reporting Some Emotional Impact	None	The distinct number of respondents who answered 'yes' to either 'is your mental health being affected by worries over current or future debt?' or 'do you feel shame when discussing financial matters?' / the total number of respondents	None
Respondents Who Feel Confident They Can Continue in Archaeology	None	The distinct number of respondents who answered 'yes' to 'do you have confidence that you can continue on an archaeological salary for another year?' / the total number of respondents	None
Respondents Who Reported No Impact	None	The distinct number of respondents who did not answer any question in the affirmative to the impact statement / total number of respondents	None
Respondents Whose Mental Health Has Been Impacted	None	The distinct number of respondents who answered 'yes' to 'is your mental health being affected by worries over current or future debt?' / the total number of respondents	None
Respondents With 3 Months' Savings	None	The distinct number of respondents who answered 'no' to 'do you have any savings as a buffer for unexpected costs or in case of unemployment? (over 3 months)' / total number of respondents	None
Post-mid career	None	None	Later career archaeologists



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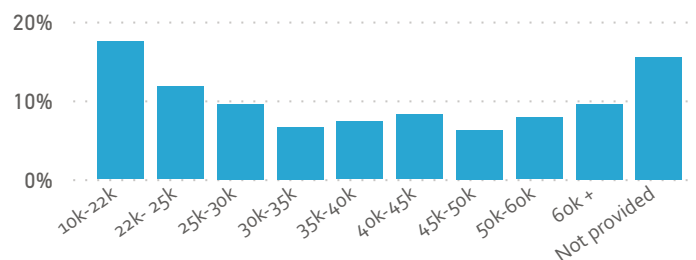
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Poverty Impact Report: Respondent Demographics

The split of respondents by primary demographic questions, designed to provide insight into the spread of responses across the sector. Where an average is provided in the report, this is of completed responses only, with the 'not provided' figures excluded from the calculations.

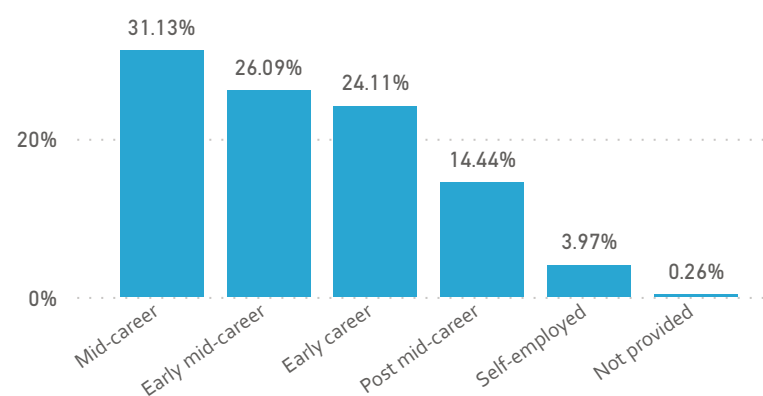
Respondents by Annual Net Household Income

Annual Net Income (Household)	Respondents	Composition
10k-22k	132	17.48%
22k- 25k	89	11.79%
25k-30k	72	9.54%
30k-35k	50	6.62%
35k-40k	55	7.28%
40k-45k	62	8.21%
45k-50k	47	6.23%
50k-60k	59	7.81%
60k +	72	9.54%
Not provided	117	15.50%
Total	755	100.00%



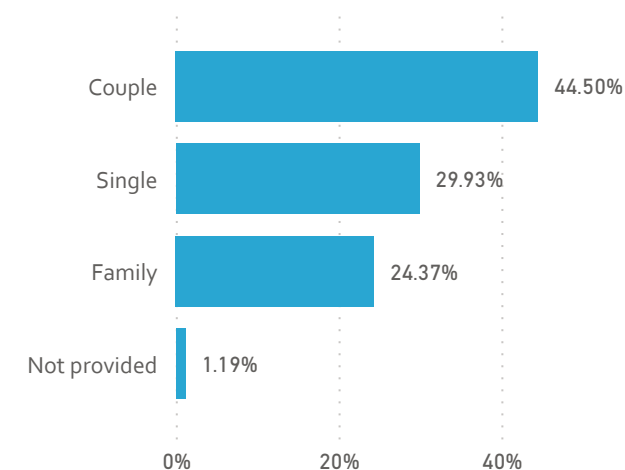
Respondents by Career Level

Career Level	Respondents	Composition
Mid-career	235	31.13%
Early mid-career	197	26.09%
Early career	182	24.11%
Post mid-career	109	14.44%
Self-employed	30	3.97%
Not provided	2	0.26%
Total	755	100.00%



Respondents by Household Type

Household	Respondents	Composition
Couple	336	44.50%
Single	226	29.93%
Family	184	24.37%
Not provided	9	1.19%
Total	755	100.00%





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Poverty Impact Report: Bibliography

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