



British Archaeological Jobs and Resources

September 2022

Poverty Impact Report:

Comments

Was sacked by XXXXXXXXX due to ill health and taking too much time off XXXXXXXXXXXXX. Have been freelance ever since, but now relying on Universal Credit and PIP.

Unable to afford fuel for work as I have to commute to find work. I'm only a year into archaeology after having a master's and undergraduate degree but I genuinely can't afford fuel and the low pay for such hard labour. I don't depend on my partner's income so it makes me feel sick to think about how I will afford to live.

I think unless there is a serious change in terms of pay within commercial archaeology then I don't see the point of offering it as a career option quite frankly. The pay has been terrible for a while but this is beyond a joke.

Currently having to dip into my savings to get by month by month. As such it is likely that I will leave the industry within the next year and retrain/find alternative employment. Living in London on my current salary is completely unsustainable and low prospects of career progression or salary increases don't offer much hope of improvement.

The pay is causing me such severe anxiety I wake up in the last two weeks of the month before payday with anxiety attacks, I am looking for other jobs.

Living alone, but in a multiple occupancy household of single young professionals (5 sharers)

Although my current financial situation is stable, it is very close to being upturned by escalating costs. I am privileged enough to devote a lot of energy to budgeting as much as possible, but this leaves little resources to save towards future goals such as buying a house, creating an emergency fund, providing financial security for my family. If I want to achieve any of those goals I will have to leave archaeology. The archaeological industry preys on our love of the past to deprive us of a future.

Fuel bill to travel to office (1hr commute) is now a third of my salary. Mileage for site work offsets this on site days but as my career progresses I find myself in the office more and more. It does make you consider alternatives...

There are so many expenditures that I have to make to ensure I can be available and get into work (child care, petrol etc) that the wage I have worked 15 years to increase is actually looking unsustainable. The possibility of taking my skills outside of archaeology for a larger wage is becoming a real possibility, I certainly don't want to leave archaeology but may not have an option.

The major obstacle to continuing in archaeology is the low pay and the lack of security - only a small proportion of site staff get permanent contracts and the majority are left with frequent periods of unemployment between jobs.

I am a single parent with 2 children. Freelance specialist work has been slow for over a year. I am living off savings from better years which cannot continue. I have taken on a second part time job at a school, but this is seasonal and not enough. I have now applied for Universal Credit and am considering applying for new jobs. I don't want to give up my established freelance career though.

I live with my partner and 2 kids (2 and 4), in a house we own. Recently I've had to change roles from fieldwork (which I absolutely love), to an office based planning role (which I find incredibly boring), because we simply can't survive on my previous salary. I'm 9 years into my career and only on 23k. There's little to no career structure in our industry, and I genuinely have to consider whether I can continue as an archaeologist.

Though the household combined income is high because of my partner earning 45k (I'm on 24k) I receive no financial help from them & utilities/rent/experiences are split 50/50, and this is something I see in many young archaeologists living with other professions/partners. To cope with the energy bills crisis they have offered to pay a higher share in line with our salary differences, but this adds a level of financial dependency usually unseen in unmarried couples.

I can survive each month and have some enjoyment, but have no opportunity to grow savings, meaningfully contribute to their want to buy a home together, or plan experiences/holidays which their salary permits.

Change and improvements in pay are needed ASAP. There is clearly a demand for and shortage of archaeologists currently, and yet we are paid a significantly low wage for what we do as well as the qualifications we are expected to have.

I am very fortunate that my husband is paid very well so there is less chance of us struggling but if I lived alone or both incomes were at my level we would struggle

Single parent, struggling

I'm lucky as I'm senior management so don't have the usual worry of temp contracts but I have the worry that with salaries remaining low things will be tight for me but the company I work for won't be able to retain staff and it will become working in this industry even tougher.

It is impossible to make savings on an archaeology salary. Food, petrol, rent and bills soak up my entire salary. Living alone is particularly hard. I am looking elsewhere for better paid employment. It is incredibly depressing. I fear I will rarely be able to go on holiday or ever have a nice house. How will I ever afford to be able to have children.

I'm a student in a student share and it's hard to pay bills when we're relying on a loan that we have to live on for everything.

Very lucky to be on a fixed tariff for two years from August 2021- but very worried about the financial shock if things are still the same next year. That's compounded by having a baby on the way and, with my employer favouring infrastructure work over local, it looks like I'll be faced with either having to take a drastic pay cut for SPL to stay and bond with my child/ support my partner, or work and be sent away for months at a time- missing those important early years. Overall, depressed, and scared, in spite of being currently financially secure.

I am a PhD Archaeology student so in essence have no choice but to continue with my studies on my stipend. Not to do so will put me back further in terms of jobs I can apply for in the future. So by taking a dramatic paycut for a few years is designed to further my archaeological career (and pay!) in the long run. Just didn't envisage COVID, Brexit, and Cost of Living Crisis at the same time as making a decision to have a paycut - which was made at the time knowing I could meet my bills etc. in September 2020. Now, like everyone else, severe cuts and compromises have to be made but I feel I have to continue with PhD on low income against everything for a better future even if it means the next few years are quite a struggle financially.

I work in local government at xxxxxxxx, my contract length has been reduced and I have 1 year left. I'm concerned funding for continuing the post will not be available due to current financial conditions.

3x children, makes work options very limited. Recently separated and can't afford to split assets so things are very difficult.

Prospect is not doing its job. No one should settle for below inflation pay rises. The value change in salary over the last 10 years is disgusting. BAJR should raise its standards too. Trainee £22k, arch £26k, supervisor £30k, PO £35k, PM £50k.

Part time archaeologist, part time masters student. Supposed to be studying full time but need to work to supplement student loans. Archaeology job is part time and we are still going to struggle with costs rising.

Lots of general anxiety in relation to possible redundancy if the sector falls into trouble.

Single parent

The recommended salaries by our Chartered Institute are way low and that definitely affects salaries offered by private companies. I struggle to comprehend why an electrician/labourer or other tradesman in construction gets paid significantly more than an archaeologist who also is a certified professional with bachelors and masters and is one of the professions with the most manual handling involved in their work. A physically demanding profession that at the same time requires the application of expertise knowledge....

Partner in a non-archaeological career (the only way to survive).

Pay rates for archaeology in the U.K. are shockingly low.
Living with parents which should h have been an option
The lack/transparency regarding pay rises, the uneasiness regarding job security and contract lengths in archaeology as well as the rising costs of living on an archaeologist's salary are the three main things that are continuously on my mind and I know for certain that I am not the only archaeologist who is dealing with this.
However, I support a family of four on my salary + my partner's meagre benefits. An enforced 100% plus energy bill rise and the rise in food prices is hitting hard.
We will probably manage to cope with the financial crisis – just -.
I am so worn out and disillusioned with the commercial archaeological profession, but also the selfish political ethos that's reigned supreme in the UK for so many years.
I suspect the current financial crisis will eventually be averted, after much hardship, and our commercial units will continue to trundle along their inept merry way.
I don't see signs of concrete improvement in either sphere. The future continues to look somewhat bleak.
If I wasn't fortunate enough to have an additional income, (occupational pension) I could not afford to continue in archaeology.
I'm very fortunate to be in a secure, well paid job. Many are not –(and its depressing).
I am in the rare position of being (for an archaeologist at least) financially secure, as my wife and I (another archaeologist) are in full time employment and I was lucky enough to buy a house 9 years ago- since which time house prices in my area have almost tripled. While in the past I encouraged people into archaeology, I would now advise anyone contemplating a career in archaeology to only do so if they are absolutely prepared to suffer financial hardship and accept that they will likely never own their own home and may have to leave the profession down the line for reasons of job/financial security. I also don't believe that archaeology as a profession offers anything like the same degree of social, emotional, intellectual or professional fulfilment as it did when I came into it c 20 years ago.
Live with 4 flatmates - no option available on form to do this.
Career as an archaeologist is unsustainable. Even though I enjoy it, I am leaving the industry to be able to get by
The only reason I don't struggle with money is my partner makes a lot more than me. If it was just my income we would be in trouble!

For a job that virtually demands a minimum of a degree, job security and salary payments are low. Having worked in several companies, there is limited career development and lack of payment for the skills we process and are required to learn. My university class of between 20-30 people currently has 2 people working in archaeology related fields and only 1 within a digging role, and this is solely down to the financial aspect and lack of career development within the industry at this time.

Those at supervisor or above are just managing, anything below has become a struggle.

I'm only in a reasonable financial position as my partner is a part time proper doctor.

I'm concerned that my savings (house deposit) will have to be used as my Project Officer salary is insufficient to cover daily life on the basic level. I cannot imagine how hard it is for those starting out in our sector.

I am fortunate to have (just come into a) family inheritance, but the situation is dire. I could not afford to live on my current salary.

Financially, I'm in a better position than the majority of Field Archaeologists in the UK, largely due to longevity with one organisation.

I'm concerned that we are still in the 'phony war' period of the cost of living crisis. Given the frequent long lead times on most commercial archaeological monitoring/excavation it would be extremely helpful if a realistic judgement on the level of pay increase that will be needed were to be made soon. This would give companies a chance to start costing appropriately (if they so choose) and raise wages/contract rates accordingly over the coming months. This profession has a low-level cost of living crisis at the best of times; once this new fiscal reality bites anxious hand-wringing on the part of either archaeologists or their employers is going to fall far short of the solution that as a sector needs to be found.

I must add that the only reason I have managed to get some savings during my time as an early-mid career was by living with family, otherwise I would be struggling much more now I believe

Both my husband and I are archaeologists but we are lucky as we are older and have been able to accrue some savings as started in the profession many years ago when the general financial situation was not as bleak. Although we had our ups and downs financially we have always got through. This is the first time we have been really worried about the future. We were hoping to retire in the next few years but now realise this is a pipe dream and will have to continue working probably well past our mid 60s to survive.

I'm a reasonably well-paid (£24k fixed term ending next May) single university archaeological researcher with no mortgage/rent to pay and some savings. I'm terrified of the future, so it doesn't bear thinking how parents, younger people with no safety net etc. must feel. I'm privileged and still scared.

The pay for archaeologists is so low and the cost of living crisis is hitting so badly that I and many archaeologists I know are considering leaving the industry in search of pay that is appropriate for our experience and skills.

Our pay is now the worst in the construction field, we are treated no better than disposable staff to be paid as little as possible.

My spendings are well below average: I have no car, no children, no smartphone (my old pre-paid mobile costs about £5 a month due to little use), I cut my hair myself, I only wear second-hand-clothes (seldom over £10 a piece), holiday is usually hiking and camping. This why I can cope so far and why I don't struggle usually. With "normal grown up spendings" that would not be the case.

We live in studio flat of 18 square meters, as a couple.

Obviously as a manager with adult children and paid off mortgage the crisis does not affect me as much as the bulk of staff who are on the appalling general archaeological paybands for whom I fear the present situation will become intolerable.

Eating on my savings each month owing to soaring costs of basic necessities. Cutting grocery budget and pet food budget (worse quality food).

Coming up to retirement, but the SMALL nest egg saved for retirement is being whittled away before I reach retirement age

For me, worries aren't in 1 year but in 3 or 4 years time, when I might not be able to afford heating. In mid- to long-term, that could be life threatening my younger colleagues are unaware of range of advice available, eg Toynbee Hall. However, even with good advice, increasing poverty is on the cards. Supervisor/ Senior Arch jobs should benchmarked with teachers as minimum

I am very fortunate that my partner has a "real job" with a good salary - had we relied on mine it would be a very different picture. As it is we have always joked that my salary pays for our social activities, it would be a very different matter if I was alone - or if we both worked in the heritage sector.

My partner and I are both Archaeologists living in xxxxxx and we are both looking for work in other sectors because we can no longer afford rents combined with council tax in London or in commuter towns.

Self-employed specialist, haven't put my rates up for ages. If I put in a quote which truly reflects my time and expertise (or frankly, even half of it) I get asked if I can reduce it. I would seriously get paid more shelf-stacking and it's increasingly looking like an option. We are not doing too bad at the moment but we're extremely concerned about the next year.

I'm buying a flat so while I have a buffer now, I'm very concerned that once I've purchased the flat I will no longer have the buffer and may have increased living costs associated with home ownership

I am seriously considering a career change because of the change in cost of living, and the low salaries in the industry.

Single parent – its tough

Only (able to survive) because my husband is on a good wage

After training for years and completing a PhD I am now on a salary of 22k. I'm out earned easily by my wife who manages a restaurant (she in fact does the same job at the same place I worked when I was 20). We have a child on the way. I love my job but this is unsustainable and if there is no promotion or significant pay rise in the next couple of years I'll have no choice but to leave the profession I've worked so hard to be a part of.

After years of diminishing returns and unhappiness in archaeology, I am in a secure, well paid job. I am acutely aware of how precarious my situation would have been in the current climate at any point in my career prior to my current role.

This is a nationwide cross services crisis

The answers provided here are based on one salary and a partner's pension. There is a high degrees of certainty that I will be redundant in 6 months time.

Month to month we are managing to meet bills and rent but only just and we are having to economise dramatically. If we can't afford energy this winter, we may be in the position of moving in with family. Though we have managed to stay out of debt this is largely because I have taken on a second job in hospitality and generally work 55-60 hours a week between the two jobs. That does not include trying to keep on top of archaeological research and publishing commitments.

My wife and I are British archaeologists, but live and work in Australia - we are better off by far

No hope within archaeology. Awful prospects. Have PhD. Am planning to leave.

I'm worried that I won't be able to start a family if I stay in my profession for much longer

Live with my parents they earn £36k a year I do not get any, I pay rent to live with them. I am unsure how to stay in archaeology as the pay does not cover my costs with enough to save any money. I am worried and stressed which is causing me to feel ill- awaiting a drs appointment. There's is a shortage of archaeologists so why aren't wages increasing to actually encourage people to join the career?

I have started a job as a PO which is better but it's still a bit short every month. Expenses are being hit especially milage which isn't being paid by using all manner of tricks like the old *'there was a broken down/undriveable van in the yard you were told to take'*. They want you to work in the office which costs £64 in fuel every week and they frown on home working.

Currently unemployed and looking for work, have moved back in with family so that I can save on my own costs and use my savings to contribute to keeping the household afloat. I personally will somewhat be able to continue with an archaeological salary once I'm earning but would struggle if extra costs cropped up. It is only through relying on a strong support network that my family and I have not ended up in major financial hardship, and my mother has had a horrific time applying for benefits throughout the past decade.

I made the shift from purely archaeological work into a broader heritage position 4 years ago. Pay is similar but employment conditions improved. From the perspective of someone working closely with the archaeological profession it seems that a fair amount of the blame for the current difficulties that archaeological staff face must be attributed to the transient employment opportunities offered by the larger employers and the leaders within the Sector HE, CIfA etc. It is within their gift to make significant changes and to refuse to continue to underpay workers. Developers are dependent on contractors to fulfill planning conditions. Until the larger organisations recognise and respond to this. Take a stand and start to pay their workers better, the archaeological sector will continue to decline.

Joint household with 2 young children. Archaeologist salary £24.6k pro rata - part time. Partner works in Medical Physics, so is paid £38k full time.

I am only able to continue a career in archaeology because of my partners wage

We don't have children and only have one car to save costs. We haven't been abroad for four years and holiday in the UK off season. I'm on a manager's salary as a head of department so can make cuts to my outgoings to compensate for the cost-of-living crisis. If you had children or were long term sick I don't how you would survive on an archaeologists wage. Doing stay away work was always how I supplemented my digging wage to make it go further but this was a miserable existence being away from home so much. The only reason we are ok at the moment is that we have been putting away savings for years at the cost of being able to go abroad/go out socially regularly. We also were able to work throughout the pandemic with no furlough. We have both been lucky to still be in good health and to have progressed to management. Those around me with families and long term health issues are feeling the squeeze most of all.

The only reason I can afford to be an archaeologist is because my partner has a secure well paid job

I rely a lot on my partner's income. Previously we could manage. Our letting agent has asked for a 35% rent increase this year. I have been precarious or unemployed for 10 years, and don't think it will be possible for me to pursue archaeology anymore.

Live at home with parents or I'd be well and truly screwed
I have financial security due to my husband's job and the fact that I moved to consultancy. When starting a family I did not see it as financially viable to stay in fieldwork.
It's not just the salary it's the uncertainty of the availability of work. Voluntary layoff when no work is available, is used all too often and happened to me just before Xmas last year. Disaster !! Also benefits are the minimum protected by law. No travel time and unpaid lunchtime are not benefits to be sold as incentives at an interview. Staff retention is at an all time low. There were labourers on some of the building sites I was working on earning substantially more and with better contracts than me currently holding an MSc.
I'm poor and I'm in debt and I'm considering working a regular local retail job because it's the same pay but less mental and physical exhaustion. I wouldn't have to pay for fuel for my car either.
My predicted pension will not cover my current rent. Not worried while I am working, but am very worried about the future / retirement.
I'm an academic. Double income, one child – but still having to budget
Only due to overtime and driving pay can a monthly budget be a comfortable financial option. Without that extra pay, I doubt I could stay in this profession from solely the financial view in the long term
I am currently considering moving out of the sector due to poor pay mainly and for me personally a lack of professional growth which could lead to more pay. Feel like I'm at a dead end at the moment. Feel like as a whole our industry isn't as appreciated as it should be.
Although financially stable we are making cut backs (kids activities, food bills, holidays and days out. We can't afford to eat out or socialise out) and I'm concerned about what would happen if either one of us lost our jobs. Quite frankly we would have to move somewhere cheaper, though I'm not sure where that is. We are public sector and charity sector so vulnerable under current govt. In real terms we have seen significant cuts through having frozen salaries for past years. I am very aware we are the lucky ones, our cut backs are on luxuries many can't afford but I have no idea how people on less stable incomes and lower salaries are coping or will cope.
I'm in the highest range on this survey, late career and still struggling when unexpected expenses come up (vet bills, car repair, appliance breakdown all happened this year and emptied my savings and banked hours). Early career archaeologists essentially subsidize our company's work by using employment insurance during the winters and living at low quality of life because they're students. The pay rate for the level of education is ridiculous and no one is ever home with their families. No one wants to have this job anymore.

As archaeologists go I am very well paid (I work in consultancy). Filled this in to help the survey. But as a single person it's still pretty tough at the moment. Hope the survey helps raise awareness with managements

An archaeological salary = precarity. There's no chance to save, no chance to be able to buy a house (and temporary contracts contribute to this), which means you're stuck renting whatever you can afford. What you can afford to rent then affects your energy bills, and what you have left to spend on food. It's a vicious circle.

One child – means cutbacks

It's not the cost of living yet, being mid-career we can just about cope with that, it's the precarity of working for an organisation with a reputation for sacking staff as soon as there's a hint of a downturn that's most stressful right now, and the few specialist opportunities that would be available elsewhere should they do their usual. It could be a long hard unemployed recession.

I feel utterly underappreciated as an archaeologist in my early 30s. Enough experience to warrant heavy responsibility, but not enough to warrant the wages.

I'm sick of working in a profession that undervalues both its services and its staff. I feel like the majority of the time, the conversation is driven by people 50+, who are in positions of power and privilege, even when they mean well.

I only take fixed term contracts and am living exclusively in the 7 day accommodation provided by my employer; my stuff is in storage. I am able to save money and am insulated from the effects of the economic crisis because my bills are being paid by someone else. Recommend.

My living situation at the moment has meant I've had to move back to my parents temporarily until I can afford to rent somewhere again

I know how lucky I am. Main concern at the moment is return to office work while there is still a pandemic.

I am lucky; my spouse earns twice what I do. I couldn't afford to live in my own house if I had to survive on my income alone.

Coming up to another recession is worrying especially after going through the bank-induced recession 12 years ago. I just managed to hang on to my job then but many didn't. I fear the same sweeping cuts to archaeologists may be about to happen again.

7 years as commercial field archaeologist and just over £21,500 pa

Without my partner's wage my situation would be untenable. I would not be able to afford to stay as an archaeologist.

It's not the low pay that's worrying, it's the impending cull of jobs that's going to have me on the dole at age 60.

I left UK archaeology to move to Canada, where I also do archaeology. I am have much more work insecurity here, but make 3-4X what I did in the UK. I'm probably going to skew your results.

It was always a struggle. Now it is getting harder to survive on the wages.

1 baby, this is hard

I had a good redundancy package from my last job but working as an archaeologist for the last year has used up most of it. I don't know how much longer I can keep going.

Still on short term contracts for projects with no potential for perm post.

The rise in fuel costs and prices would severely affect us and if we're both on an 'archaeology' wage we would very likely be faced with 'heat or eat'. The company I work for has put wages up considerably to try and protect its staff from the cost of living increase but the most recent predictions suggest this won't be sufficient if rents also rise.

I've recently left my job as a specialist in a mid-sized unit, partly because I was stuck on a supervisor grade with no prospect of progression, despite doing the work of a senior specialist. My part-time salary was just going less and less far, and I couldn't afford to stay. I've gone freelance, which is a big gamble (and a worry with children to feed), but at least I have more control over my working patterns. I've got a couple of months living expenses in savings, so am much better off than others, but money is a constant worry.

The thing I've found going freelance is that big companies are so slow to pay, and that's really hurting my cash flow. To them, it's peanuts, but to me it's my food shop or my energy bill.

My current position ends in December and I have no idea if I'll get a similar paying position or if I'll have to leave the country (I'm a migrant worker).

I'm lucky, I know that. I've just hit a good point in my career and my partner has similar earnings. I'd hate to be a field tech in this economic environment.

My company requires me to drive my own car to site but they do not cover my mileage or fuel except in exceptional cases. For the past 5 months I have been spending at least £200 a month on fuel alone just to get to work.

I answered truthfully as my partner has a job in tech and is on double what I earn. If I were single or if we were both on a similar wage to mine, we would have no savings, would use credit more, would have no holidays etc.

Ridiculous that I am a PO with 20 years archaeological experience, at a reputable company and a week after payday, I literally have no money left. After mortgage, bills, food shop, paying for my children's activities etc I am flat broke. If it wasn't for a company vehicle and fuel card I would not be able to afford the fuel to get to work. If I worked in construction, something I have seriously considered, I would earn a lot more. I am proficient in survey, CAD etc, write reports and run complex operations sometimes looking after over 30 staff as well as plant operators. A skill set like mine, in proper construction, would easily be bringing me in 60k plus a year, and if probably have a nice car thrown in as well. I earn over £27,000 a year. It TAKES THE PISS!

Archaeology needs to grow a pair & institute industry wide standards

The only reason I can stay in archaeology is because I asked for and was given a pay rise to reflect my skill set and years of experience.

I have savings from a previous career so I am OK, but I cannot pay my bills without using my savings at the moment. Due to this I have just quit commercial fieldwork for a better paid job with better career prospects.

Due to husband's well paid job – I can work in archaeology

I feel I am not the norm in our sector & I feel slightly ashamed that I earn more than others in my current role. However, my pay is not comparable to friends in similar level jobs in other sectors - they earn considerably more than I do, for the same or less responsibility.

I count myself lucky, as I've been seconded to a position where I earn more. Even though I earn more, I still am nervous about housing costs and being able to support myself to a relatively decent standard, especially with rising Cost of Living. If I were still on a field arch salary, there's no way to put it except...I'd be fucked. I struggled in years past living in tenuous housing and buying food at cheap markets, but rarely able to save. With real salary cuts due to below inflation pay rises, I think I'd be much worse off, including emotionally/psychologically.

Disproportionate impact by region and marital status. My wife and I live in a cheap area and do well, not all of our friends are so lucky. Managers earn well, regular archaeologists earn badly and it's abhorrent. Pay and conditions wouldn't fly in construction.

Money is a constant worry and we have no buffer left for if anything breaks. It feels like living on a knife edge. Fuel costs are particularly crippling as we need our vehicle to get to work/site/children's schooling so have no option to "cut down" use.

Thank you for this survey, for highlighting the crisis and for all the work you do to bring us together. I may be doing ok but many colleagues aren't, we need solidarity, responsibility, awareness and action on low wages and precarious contracts.

We are comfortable currently but are on jobs with little chance of pay rises. With low inflation this wasn't such a worry but if rates stay high we would have to consider changing careers as it is tricky to find roles that would provide a pay increase

I am in FT academic work with a FT employed spouse at a senior academic level so cost of living crisis has yet to fully hit our household, but I have had to go into savings for the first time to pay power bills and am in credit card debt partly because my individual pay packet does not last the month now. I have it a lot better than a lot of people.

I realise that I am extremely fortunate to be on an above average wage now, but have certainly relied on credit, lacked savings, and worried about debt in the very recent past.

Two archaeologists with two kids – yep!

We all have degrees. Why on earth are we having to struggle to live??? It's not a new thing though, just made worse by the cost-of-living crisis! We have always been underpaid! I'm truly sick of it! Pay us based on our experience, abilities, EDUCATION! SICK. OF. IT

Honestly, it's a joke!

Salaries in the fieldwork industry are too low. I can get by each month, but have nothing to spare or put away in my savings. I am looking to save for a deposit for a house but have realised recently that this will not happen on my current salary, so I have just moved jobs and negotiated higher pay. It's a shame because this industry thrives on employees' passion for archaeology, and I often feel that employers take advantage of this by not paying fairly.

My partner and I are both commercial field archaeologists in a small unit. I have a permanent contract. He is on a short-term rolling contract. We only survive thanks to my inheritance from both my deceased parents – which is slowly diminishing, otherwise one of us would have had to find a better paying job outside of archaeology.

I am a self-employed finds officer so my pay fluctuates and I have no security.

I've left fieldwork but my time in the field particularly after becoming a parent has left me financially crippled in a way I struggle to recover from even now earning a reasonable wage.

Only able to work in archaeology as my partner doesn't. He has an IT job. It's really tough and to see folk in early careers low to mid skill jobs in different industries paid more when I have almost 20years xp.

There needs to be a reassessment of how companies hire archaeologists, the expectations are far too unreasonable, especially seeing as many of us now can't travel. Needs to be better paid and more accessible

I had to leave archaeology this month due to the appalling wages in the face of a cost of living emergency - especially when faced with unpaid travelling time that can take up a

further 4-5 hours of my day and might better be out towards a second job. When I can earn more working at the local Tesco, it makes no sense to continue in archaeology

If I wasn't with my partner who has a stable and well paid role in a tech firm I would be in a lot of trouble.

We are trying very hard to save for a wedding and a future and both my partner (healthcare) and myself (archaeologist) are anxious about how we can finance that on our current wages. I have already been looking to leave commercial archaeology after 8 years to be able to better afford to live comfortably.

My salary may be high Vs average wage, but with living alone and taking the brunt of all increases solely, even my 41k salary leaves me on £2.97 for the final week of the month after all bills and fuel have been paid for. What is it like for others on 20k?

My partner earns well, so I am spared much hardship. Without him, I would be completely broke. I am lucky he supports me and the kids, but it makes me question whether I can stay in archaeology long term without putting all the pressure to keep us going on him. He's also older than me and would like to retire at some point, so decisions will have to be made then too.

I'm currently looking for work but am a parent of a small child

Manager at middling unit, so better off than most. Notable that a 5 minute search of a local area job website shows my wage is entry level or lower in more than 50% of graduate careers I looked at. I am not struggling due to advantageous family circumstances, rather than a good wage (wage is at lower end, or below, of manager wages currently advertised on BAJR).

My situation has been made much worse by having Long Covid for over 2 yrs. Living off savings but these are rapidly running out. I don't have any family to help. Very worrying and frightening.

Both my partner and I work in the public sector and are subject to pay restrictions considerably below inflation, we are okay financially right now but it won't be long before things get tight. He's the non-archaeologist of the pair and currently seeking better paid employment.

If low wages is something that gets recognised time and time again in archaeology, who can do anything about it? Is it up to Cifa to raise the minimum threshold? This conversation has been on going for years, but there never seems to be an answer.

I am worried that I won't be able to afford to start a family if I continue working as an archaeologist.

Only because of my partners job do we survive, but his job is not secure.

Archaeology is terribly paid compared with other entry level graduate jobs (yes, there are *some* non graduate schemes now, but very few. Most non grads have been digging for decades). It's classed as 'skilled work' according to the government's shortage occupation list. Higher demand should mean higher salaries. It is also terribly paid when compared with other 'skilled' jobs in construction (especially when you take into account any unpaid company time eg be at the office for 7, but you aren't paid until 8, stop work at 4, but don't get back to the office until 5). This makes a 7.5 hour day into a 9.5 hour day, and reduces the hourly rate accordingly. I am only not struggling due to my own privilege/background, but not everyone is so lucky and it should not be a barrier to employment.

I'm very lucky that my husband earns quite a lot in comparison. Therefore we're not reliant on my salary.

Living in a flatshare at +30, counting every penny, regularly dipping into your savings, and just trying to get by is becoming increasingly difficult as inflation soars but our pay stays low. It is pushing many of my fellow archaeologist and myself to start looking into other careers that offer more financial stability.

I am planning to leave archaeology due to lack of financial stability.

While our combined income can be seen as 'good', our position is strong but brittle. We have not gone without food, but I do not have room in my budget for a haircut at a barbershop (I cut it myself now) and I have been unable to schedule my NHS dental appointments because I'm not sure I'd be able to pay back the savings in order to maintain our own emergency fund for if things do get worse for us.

We are severely underpaid for our jobs and qualifications. I have to have a strict budget to be able to afford my housing. It's ridiculous

I'm a single parent looking after 2 children

I'm used to having minimal outgoings beyond bills. I might not save money every month (dependant on overtime) but I find I have enough to live on and be pretty comfortable. My main worry is if rent goes further up but I'd be able to shoulder the burden of that for a few years. My answers would totally change if I had dependants though as childcare costs are through the roof.

Low pay means even senior staff can't properly plan for the future without significant risk should something happen. This is simply ridiculous in a country like the UK where the construction industry we support makes so much. I doubt I could afford children if I had them, and if I have them in the future i suspect I will be in dire financial straights

The physical labour and toll (and general ridiculous conditions we have to work in) it has on our bodies in the field is in no way reflected in the salaries we receive.

Lone parent, mid career commercial but early career researcher... only reason I'm not using food banks is because my parents give me money... AHRC is getting slammed on social media for their lack of action and their affiliates recently sending tone deaf advice. Hardship loan was from uni and I don't have to repay. My dad has pointed out that financial concerns are negatively affecting my research

Considering leaving the industry in order to survive

£1200 a month is no longer liveable, but that's for all areas of employment.

Imagine if you have a masters/PhD... And getting the basic level of salary as someone who only has a bachelor degree.

No.

Archaeology is a horrific career path. I love it. But what's the point in loving it, when I cannot afford to live anymore.

Also, in Northern Ireland, there is no significant level of training. Its almost like the companies try to gatekeep their knowledge to keep their jobs.

I will never work in the North after this dig is completed, and will hopefully move to the Republic of Ireland for a liveable wage, and where they care about their workers.

Just about breaking even, can't build up savings and definitely can't afford an unexpected bill.

Currently in a good place, but I'm constantly aware of how quickly that could all change. I'm experiencing an upcoming lull in my workload and terrified that if it continues I will be laid off. My partner (different industry) is on a fixed contract based on funding, so things could change for them too once their current contract is up. I have severe anxiety and depression and constantly worry that I would be unable to find work in the industry if made redundant and worry about trying to find jobs in other fields instead.

The fact that I run sites and have been in this industry for almost ten years and am earning 23k is disgusting when I look at my friends in their industries on 50k, they started on my wage! I used to love archaeology but now the stress and worry is killing it for me. Unsure I'll stay in for another year.

Although our combined income appears high we have historical debt accrued when we were being paid significantly less than we are now. This means much of our income goes to paying these debts (and interest), so we can stay afloat but can't get ahead. This is also compounded by paying childcare. Over the past three and half years we have paid out c. 30k on nursery fees to allow us to continue in full time posts.

Late into archaeology and fortunate to have a military pension as a second income. I could not survive on an archaeologist's salary alone.

I am strongly considering seeking employment outside of archaeology for more income and better company benefits. I am a young married woman who wants to have kids soon and my company doesn't offer anything above statutory maternity pay. I also have a PhD and am only making 22k. I would absolutely stay in archaeology if the salaries and company benefits were better. (Also I work in post ex).

I am in an unusual situation in that I don't have a mortgage or rent. If I did, it wouldn't be possible for me to be in archaeology or work part time. We don't have holidays and we are struggling with the cost of fuel and food rises.

I'm only able to survive because I don't have to pay for my own rent as I get accommodation via the company I'm with.

I live at home with my parents and see no way of moving out without a second income (a partner) my salary would never allow me to buy a house at this point. I constantly worry about whether I can afford the food each month and I have no treats or things to look forward to as all my money is spent on fuel and food.

I wouldn't be able to continue in archaeology if we didn't have my husbands wages. While I may be financially ok at the moment, I have no savings and cannot save anything due to the cost-of-living crisis. If prices continue to rise I may need to leave archaeology and seek employment with better wages, terms and conditions.

Although I haven't had to borrow money, I have been breaking even every month consistently and I am worried that I will have to borrow money soon, since prices are going up but my wages remain the same. No opportunity for progression in my company, so no pay increase.

I am a supervisor and on 23 grand a year and it is not sustainable at all to continue in this career. I love month by month. All 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 get litter to nothing to show for it.

My answers are only so positive because my partner works in a decent paying industry. If I were not living with my partner I would be really struggling to afford to pay rent and live in Edinburgh where I am employed.

Had years of this financial insecurity, mostly due to being self employed on short term contracts. Having been in permanent and secure employment for the last six years I thought things would improve. Now, however, although my job would be recognised as important and, arguably, prestigious, and although it has been one of the few steady, permanent jobs in Scottish archaeology for the last twenty years or so, I cannot afford to take a holiday, unless I give up the luxury of eating every day.

I don't know if I can continue in this job despite loving it. For all that we do, the pay is not high enough and hasn't been for years.

We are lucky to not be experiencing hardship, but we are definitely seeing financial pressures now.

I am a retired archaeologist.

This survey does not take into consideration those at the beginning of their careers still living with parents/carers, and saving to buy a house, which is near to impossible on an early careers archaeologist wage

No pay progression past a year. Thought there are BAJR pay grades these aren't adhered to,

As sure as everyone else in this career, we legally, have to be on a construction site. With mine and my partners both postgraduate degrees, it's a shame that such high qualifications with lawfully being mandatory receive so little in pay. Other countries pay according to your education level and thus, can be higher. Additionally, most are not on a permanent contract...shouldn't we receive more in these kind of conditions?

I am lucky to be in a low tier managerial role. I delayed my career in commercial archaeology for a long time to build up relevant experience in academia because I could not afford to be a digger after my undergraduate degree. I stayed in academia to the detriment of my mental health because I could not land a well enough paid commercial role coming out of my PhD. It took major life events (including a series of familial bereavements) for me to be able to afford to jump to commercial archaeology. I count myself lucky rather than hard working.

With the increase in fuel costs, it is making it increasingly difficult to commute to sites and I feel one day I will have to choose between going to work and paying for fuel.

there by the grace of God go i ...

Studied archaeology at university, graduated 2020. Been in commercial since (coming up to 2 years), worked for one smaller and one big unit. I'm returning to university in September to study construction project management, with the idea I can use skills learnt in a different role. I love the subject but if there's any chance of being financially independent and comfortable by the time I'm 30 I have to leave this sector. There is such a bad connotation with commercial, just treated as diggers and that's all we know. When all of us have spent years studying. We really deserve more.

I don't think my generation and people just graduating are going to stand for it much longer. It is not a sustainable career.

Financially I am stable but affording to buy a house is very difficult and is taking years of cutting back and saving. I will never truly feel comfortable while having to live in a house I could be evicted from with short notice

As a self employed archaeologist, we get fleeced, we sometimes don't get paid for weeks, are expected to work over a month in hand. People often try to change how much they agreed to pay us after we've started the job. If we do work for Units or companies either we turn up on site and they haven't even provided wheelbarrows or there equipment is so bad that the first few weeks of work we have to spending chunks of our own pay cheques for something we were told would be provided.

For now, but will see when my contract is up and if there are better opportunities elsewhere.

I'm only financially stable because I'm lucky enough to go back to my parents spare bedroom in between 7 day accommodation away work on a PO wage. I'm saving on rent, but when I previously rented it was a struggle

Luckily my husband is in a stable, well paid job, but personally I struggle to make it to the end of the month without asking for him to lend me money. I feel guilty about not being able to contribute financially, and personally afford thing like the dentist, petrol, or hair cuts. It's making me so unhappy that although I love the job I have and have wanted for so many year in post ex, I am actively looking for jobs outside of archaeology.

lucky to be with a partner who earns a decent salary

I barely break even each month as an early career archaeologist, luckily I live with a partner who can help but not everyone is that lucky and I'd like to not have to rely on them

I'm in a very privileged position as I'm currently living with my partner in his family home. We don't pay rent so have more of our wages free to us

Increase the bloody wages for archaeologists! Its simple

I have over £300,000 of students debt as a foreign student having to pay full price for my education here. Not only is it almost impossible to get a job now, the jobs pay such an incredibly low amount. It's insane that even the MCIfA qualification has a recommended salary less than the national average. It's absurd and every organization should be embarrassed they aren't doing more to raise prices. Shouting 'join a union' isn't going to help if we don't have any standards.

Partner not in Archaeology. Would not cope without that income. Would be renting a room in a house vs owning a house and much of the privilege I have come from being in a relationship. We are on combined income of 60k+ and certainly have struggled a little at times over the last year or so (living circumstances changed and lightened the load) but if

they lost their job and couldn't find another for a few months we'd be heavily leaning on family in addition to making heavy cuts

My career in archaeology is propped up by my wife who's job pays more than double my salary for less responsibility and stress. We both have the same level of education and graduated from university at about the same time. She and her colleagues think archaeology as an industry pays a laughable salary for what we have to do and endure and cant understand why anyone stays in it for longer than a couple of years. You could double the salary for diggers, supervisors, POs, project managers and curators and it still wouldnt come close to what they are worth. Oh and construction/ development companies laugh at how cheap we are and know all they have to do is whine a bit to get all our experience and skills at a cheap as chips rate thanks to spineless tendering. At this rate there won't be an industry in 10 years... just look at how few graduates are coming through the system now and who the fuck can blame them for not wanting a career in this shit show of an industry.

I can only maintain my archaeological career due to my husbands salary. My salary is not enough to support our family.

The wage of archaeologists isn't keeping up with increasing living costs. This is particularly highlighted on larger infrastructure projects where those working for other subcontracted companies- as supervisors, groundworkers, engineers- are earning close to double the wage of the archaeologists. Like work is not receiving like pay.

My partner is unemployed and I am underpaid for my grade in terms of comparing my job responsibilities to comparable jobs in other sectors. My wage covers my own expenses, the bills and my partner's. We have wanted to start a family for the last five years but haven't been able to the find financial security to do this responsibly given job insecurity and poor pay. Even before Covid and the financial crisis, we were starting to struggle to develop a secure career path and it felt like things were going bad. We probably won't have a family now. Financial instability is a major worry and is making us look for alternative incomes. I appreciate that we are luckier than a lot of people as this is only impacting us in a serious way now, but things are getting harder and I worry our limited financial resources may impact my ability to do my current job in terms of travel costs, running a car, buying suitable work clothes etc.

I've been bloody lucky, I know so many who haven't.

Worried about current costs of living with inflation, uncertainty about future workflow in unit

Long Covid victim in month 28 (more than 2 years); Govt do not recognise as a disability.

Having to use savings (cashed in endowments that were supposed to pay off mortgage in 3 yrs) mean no eligibility for any benefits (UC, PIP, ESA, Council Tax, Energy).

Have to sell house and move, may have to cash in tiny pension fund.

Whilst I understand that “it is what it is” most sure assistants can only survive but having rich parents. Or generous ones. The next generation of archaeologists will suffer even more. There is no way I could help my hypothetical kids like my parents could help me, I don’t think I could even have kids on my salary.

I recently left archaeology altogether to take up a management position for National Highways. If I stayed the course as a Project Officer on 23k, we as a 2 person household would have been in dire straits.

Commercial Archaeology as a career is a joke. It is appalling that companies have the cheek to offer 21k salaries to people with degrees to complete hard manual labour in most weather conditions. Over 75% of sites I have been on have lacked appropriate welfare. Commercial Archaeology is on a race to the bottom, undercutting each other for tenders and passing the cuts on to the staff who are typically offered temporary contracts and pitiful wages. I plan to leave Commercial Archaeology as there is no tenable path for anyone in their right mind to walk down. Completely unsustainable financially

shameful how little we get paid

Probably have to move out of town, though

The increase in childcare costs mean its now nearly pointless for me to work.

This was worse when I was early career, Working away is the most financially draining thing to do.

Although we are currently financially stable the increasing cost of living has already outstripped my “cost of living” pay rise for this year and I worry about getting into debt in the future.

My partner is not an archaeologist, so we are relying on his wages to make ends meet as mine don't go as far anymore

Wages need to increase across the whole sector to recognise the role of archaeologists within the wider construction industry. For too long we have been paid too little.

I’m late career and reasonably well off, but 10-15 years ago the answers woul have been very different

A year ago I was saving £100 per month to cover emergencies, Christmas etc. Now, despite economising in every part of my life, I can't even save £20 a month. I'm not starving... yet ...but I am getting very close to loosing money with every paycheque

I am in a project management position and have what I would describe as a good salary. Even in that position I have some fear about the future and how increases in costs of living will affect me.

CifA has imposed minimums on certain accreditation levels for payment but there appears to be little oversight or correction of CifA registered organisations who still do not pay those minimums. This undermines the staff of such firms when they request fair pay. There needs to be a rigorous system of punitive measures against firms who don't pay proper wages.

I have recently left commercial archaeology to work as a consultant. I am now on an ok salary and I am mid career but I am not in any way living an extravagant lifestyle. I have a tiny flat, a tiny car and am in a double income no kids situation. Even with this, my husband and I are desperate to be paid at the end of the month and I'm really dreading winter fuel bills. I cannot believe we are still fighting for decent wages. Five years ago HS2 was brought to our door with the promise of better conditions and salaries for all of us but it's just as bad if not worse as it has ever been. I cannot in good faith encourage anyone to study archaeology with the view to having a career in it. I am frankly disgusted with the status quo.

Yes I can continue, but can not grow.

Archaeology is doable as my husband has a reasonable job and we are very thrifty

My sister more or less subsidises my career, which is the only way I can pay for food sometimes. And this is a privilege few have. If I didn't have it, I'd be screwed.

While the salary for an archaeologist is low from a graduate perspective it is still far more than I have ever earned before. I do resent paying rent and bills at a property I get to visit once a month if I'm lucky though as I am not at the stage in my life where I can coast between company provided accommodation

Can afford bills & some savings each month, but no "fun" money (eg, pub trips, cinema, holidays). Hence no spontaneity, which can strain relationships. No kids - cannot afford 2-bed home so unlikely to start family. Definitely not struggling as much as some people are (we can pay our bills, & my contract is now permanent), but incredibly tight. Pay is outrageously low, & costs are only increasing (eg, fuel to get to site, which is hard to budget for as deployment is done weekly). Enjoy the job as it is low-stress while working, but realistically the low pay will drive me out of the field in the next 12 months.

As an archaeologist and a carer for my wife (not eligible for benefits help), my main worry is where I'll be financially within the next 5-6 months when bills, etc increase, and my savings run out which is paying the rent.

That is the only reason I can just about afford things right now.

I'm a PO on nearly £26,000. My union (Unison) counts salaries UNDER £26k pa as being in in-work poverty. I was entitled to (and got) a winter fuel payment and school uniform grant both from Unison. I am dismayed that after 25 years in archaeology, and with only some minor progression (staying local, shorter progression ladder), that wages are that suppressed that I am entitled to either of the above. It is disgraceful.

I feel I earn 'enough', but as everyone else, I am uncomfortable discussing my pay with people outside archaeology, when stacking shelves would pay me better and offer a clear career progression.

Not hitting yes to these questions, but I am not far away! Struggling is an understatement. I have to work weekends in hospitality industry to help keep afloat, by which time Monday I'm knackered. Am considering leaving the archaeological industry unless there are visible signs of improvement this year.

I am more financially secure because I have a partner who is not an archaeologist. We're definitely a lot more comfortable than a lot of people but things like inflation and especially the increase in energy bills is exceedingly worrying. By the end of this year we will likely have very little in the way of disposable income.

I currently pay for nursery care for my 2 year old costing £1213.66 per month, for 4 days a week. this leaves me with £60 a month. I rely on my partner (also an archaeologist) to pay household outgoings. It isn't really worth me working in archaeology as I feel I work for nothing each month.

While I can continue on an archaeological salary for a year, combined with my partner on a non-archaeological salary of a similar amount, they are not permanently employed so there is a chance that we have to rely entirely on my salary, and we could then start to have issues.

I have confidence only because I have been living on a strict budget for a few years while paying off training related debt. My debt will finally be paid off, but I will need to continue living very frugally. Disappointing, as I'd been looking forward to a few comforts. I'm strongly considering leaving the sector as I'm not sure whether the stress and pressure of my job is worth it.

We get by living frugally, but I am incredibly frustrated that although we have done everything we were meant to (university and worked in profession for 7 years) as archaeologists we have essentially taken a vow of poverty. This is a profession that required us to get into educational debt, and it despite the hard work, adverse working conditions and effort people put in, we are appallingly treated, appallingly paid, and have little to no chance of structured progression or a guarantee of it paying off in the long term. 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?

I have been doing this for eight years. I have two archaeology degrees and two professional specialisms. I rent a very small one bed flat with my partner. We cannot afford to properly heat or cool the flat. We cannot save month to month. We rely on my parents for a car. We can't afford takeaways or the pub more than once every couple of months.

All wages in archaeology should get a 30% rise up or this sector will be dead in a decade

Having to work part-time because of illness doesn't help financially, but can't fault the support received from the unit or colleagues. A unit Crisis fund is also available, should it be needed.

I have progressed as far as a digging salary will take me - a supervisor post would be the only way for me to increase my salary and stay in the field. Living in one of the most expensive cities in the country outside of London as a couple of archaeologists on digging salaries necessitates shared accommodation - we're both in our early thirties and have to live with a housemate; lack of any kind of financial security makes it feel as if our lives are on hold. If we get a below inflation pay deal again this year I simply will not be able to stay afloat.

Whilst on paper I look extremely fortunate compared to many in the industry, I'm only financially comfortable atm because I am able to live rent/bill free/minor contributions to family. However, this isn't a long term solution and need to move out for my mental health.

When I do move out, I won't be able to save money anymore due to the drastic increase in rent, bills etc. So for my long term financial well being and mental health, I am currently looking at grad schemes as the starting salaries are generally much higher than archaeology early career salaries + long term better pay (though I'm guessing my mental health will deteriorate by doing a job I ultimately don't enjoy)

Definitely makes a difference that my husband has a larger income than myself. We also worked very hard in the beginning to make sure we had a buffer in case of financial hardship.

My only money worry is trying to save enough to buy a house and start a family while doing archaeology. Not possible when my partner is also an archaeologist.

Living arrangements - no option for living with parents still. Unable to move out due to rent costs vs wages

It's not fair that we get paid so little for what we actually do

We have not had to use any of the above resources or have the above worries as of yet, but we stress over what will happen in October. Companies are getting stingier with expenses, especially mileage.

We are a very frugal couple (my fiancé is also an archaeologist), and have always focused on accruing savings for a rainy day. We have a mortgage, but we have budgeted so that the repayments are never at risk.