

A QUESTION OF MONEY

Barry Whelan, CEO of Excel Recruitment, on getting yourself a good pay deal

We're all feeling the pinch from inflation, especially on grocery and energy prices. Has your salary kept pace with rising prices, and if not, how do you get a better pay deal? Barry Whelan, CEO of Excel Recruitment, has the answers.

Have pay rises across the board been keeping up with inflation?
Salaries have largely kept pace with inflation, but the soaring cost of accommodation – whether buying or renting – is a challenge. Over the past two years, the minimum wage has seen its two largest increases on record which has had a ripple effect, raising pay levels across the board. Combined with near-perfect employment levels, where virtually everyone who wants to work is working, and labour shortages in many sectors, employees are in a strong position to negotiate.

Which jobs have had the best and worst pay performances?
Pay performance varies significantly. For instance, in the hospitality sector, there have been

noticeable wage adjustments for entry-level and supervisory roles, while management salaries have remained largely unchanged. Although employers are offering modest pay increases and additional benefits to retain talent, these measures pose financial challenges in a highly service-oriented industry.

Which workers are most in demand right now?
There are labour shortages across hospitality, retail, healthcare, construction and engineering. Healthcare without a doubt faces a challenging outlook in 2025, marked by soaring demand from an aging population, persistent workforce shortages, significant wage increases across the private sector, as well as the increasing financial pressures that are being felt by long-term care facilities.

What's your advice for maximising pay in one's career?
It's about knowing your worth on the market and making sure that your package is in line with that. We conduct annual salary guides



where candidates and clients can keep an eye on the current rates for most roles. I'd also suggest making sure you are making your worth known – keeping track of your successes and achievements each year, so that when it comes to salary reviews you can highlight your worth to your employer. If your employer doesn't agree with your valuation, consider moving to an employer who does!

Any examples of this in action?

Recently, we helped a candidate who stayed with her employer for 15 years, receiving only small annual increases. Her salary was €10,000 below peers with similar experience. When she requested a modest €5,000 raise, her employer declined. After accepting a new role with better hours and a €12,000 increase, her previous employer attempted to match the offer, but it was too late – she now thrives in a role where she feels truly valued.

