



The Governance Market Survey 2026

The Reality of the Role

Produced by The Core Partnership



**Chartered
Governance
Institute
UK & Ireland**

in partnership with The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland

Covering team structures, reporting lines, workload, hybrid working, technology and AI, career development, remuneration and reward.

About Us

The Core Partnership is the UK's largest independent specialist recruitment consultancy focused on the company secretarial and governance profession. As a fully employee-owned business, every member of our team has a direct stake in delivering the best possible outcome for clients and candidates.

We recruit across the full governance market - from trainee and assistant-level company secretarial and governance positions through to Deputy Company Secretary, Head of Governance, Director of Governance and Group Company Secretary appointments, including senior roles where governance and legal responsibilities are combined.

We also support a more connected and inclusive governance profession through our wider community activity, including the UK Governance Forum, our LinkedIn community of over 4,000 governance professionals; our sponsorship of the Asian Corporate Governance Network CIC - whose Board includes our Managing Director, Jon Moores; and the Rainbow Governance Network, which we founded to support LGBTQ+ governance professionals.

This year's survey has been produced in partnership with The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland.

About CGI

The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland is the professional body for governance, supporting Chartered Secretaries and governance professionals working across listed companies, financial services, charities, public sector bodies, membership organisations and other organisations. Through qualifications, professional development, thought leadership and guidance, the Institute works to support high standards of governance and to champion the value of governance professionals in helping organisations make better decisions.

CGIUKI's involvement in this year's survey reflects its interest in supporting relevant insight into how the governance role is evolving in practice. The Governance Market Survey 2026 is a Core publication, produced by The Core Partnership with support from The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland. It combines survey findings with market commentary from The Core Partnership and is intended to inform discussion across the profession.



Meet the team



Jon Moores
(he/him)
Managing Director/
Recruitment Partner



Henrietta Hodgkiss
(she/her)
Director of
Operations



Mariza Dimaki
(she/her)
Director/
Recruitment Partner



Henry Rymer
(he/him)
Director/
Recruitment Partner



Lucy Packer
(she/her)
Recruitment Partner



Laura Wattiau
(she/her)
Recruitment Partner



Edd Cass
(he/him)
Recruitment Partner



Jessica Cannell
(she/her)
Recruitment Researcher

Foreword

The Governance Market Survey 2026 received an exceptional response, with 971 governance professionals taking part in the final anonymised dataset.

Salary benchmarking remains an important part of the report, but this year's survey also looks at the wider reality of governance work in 2026.

The data shows a profession with a wider remit and greater visibility. Governance teams are supporting Boards and Executives across a broader range of issues, while also managing heavier workloads, lean team structures and changing expectations around flexibility, technology, progression and reward.

The practical question is whether the structure, resource and recognition around the function have kept pace with what governance teams are now being asked to deliver.

For employers, the survey raises five very direct questions:

- **Are governance teams properly resourced?**
- **Are they close enough to the decisions being made?**
- **Are progression routes clear?**
- **Is reward keeping pace with the complexity of the work?**
- **Is flexibility still helping attract and retain talent?**

These are not theoretical questions. They reflect the conversations we are having every week with clients and candidates across the governance market.

Our aim is to make this report useful: for governance professionals benchmarking their own roles and reward, and for employers reviewing how they structure, support and retain their governance teams.

About the survey

The survey was conducted by The Core Partnership in partnership with The Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland.

The survey was open between 30 March and 31 May 2026 and received 971 responses from governance professionals across the UK market.

Respondents included Group Company Secretaries, General Counsel & Company Secretaries, Deputy Company Secretaries, Heads of Governance, Assistant Company Secretaries, Governance Managers, Governance Officers and Company Secretarial Assistants. In the final dataset, 69% of respondents held the Chartered Governance Institute qualification.

Responses came from a wide range of organisations, including FTSE 100, FTSE 250, FTSE SmallCap/AIM, private companies, financial services organisations, professional services firms, charities, regulators, membership bodies and other not-for-profit organisations.

The survey covered six core areas: team structures and reporting lines; workload and scope of responsibilities; hybrid working and flexibility; use of technology and AI; career progression and development; and remuneration and overall reward.

Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on the final anonymised dataset of 971 completed responses, with question-specific sample sizes varying depending on how many respondents answered each question.

Where salary ranges are shown, they represent the lower to upper quartile, rounded to the nearest thousand pounds. This shows the middle 50% of responses and reduces the impact of unusually high or low outliers. Median salary figures are also included.

Where sample sizes were too small, or where there were insufficient salary responses, no range has been shown. Some job titles have been grouped where appropriate to provide meaningful comparisons and maintain consistency with previous reports.

All responses have been treated anonymously. The report focuses on aggregated market insight rather than individual respondents or organisations.

EDI note: Optional EDI data was collected and provides a useful baseline. Some sub-samples are too small to draw robust conclusions on pay or progression, so detailed EDI pay comparisons have not been included.

How to read the salary tables:

Salary ranges show the middle 50% of responses, from lower quartile to upper quartile, rounded to the nearest thousand pounds. Median salaries are shown alongside the range.



Executive Summary

The reality of the role

The survey points to a profession that is becoming more influential, but also more stretched.

Salary benchmarking still matters, and remains one of the most useful parts of the report. But the wider findings show how team structure, workload, technology, progression, flexibility and reward now connect to the day-to-day reality of the role.

Governance professionals are being asked to advise, anticipate issues and support better decision-making across a wider range of areas. That visibility is positive for the profession, but it also creates pressure.

Respondent voice:

“Being seen as the key provider of governance advice to the board and wider organisation.”

Many teams remain lean, internal progression can be difficult, and reward has not always kept pace with the complexity of the work.

65%

Governance roles are gaining visibility and influence - 65% of respondents said the influence of the governance function is increasing.

74%

Workload and resource remain persistent pressure points - 74% reported increased workload, while 42% said their governance function is not adequately resourced.

34%

Structure matters, but there is no single right model - only 34% said the most senior governance professional is a full member of ExCo or equivalent.

93%

AI tools are already on the agenda - 93% said they are being used regularly, used occasionally or being explored, but adoption remains cautious.

42%

Progression, flexibility and reward need to reflect how the role is changing - 42% said they are likely or very likely to look for a new role in the next 12 months.

10 statistics that define the governance market in 2026

These figures provide a quick view of the main pressures and opportunities shaping the governance market in 2026.

Statistic	Finding
971	Governance professionals responded
69%	Held the Chartered Governance Institute qualification
65%	Said the influence of governance is increasing
74%	Reported increased workload over the past 12 months
42%	Said their governance function is not adequately resourced
88%	Of those not adequately resourced also reported increased workload
70%	Said increased responsibility had brought no meaningful change in recognition
46%	Of those with no meaningful recognition are likely or very likely to look for a new role
93%	Said AI is being used regularly, occasionally or explored
42%	Are likely or very likely to look for a new role in the next 12 months

The governance pressure equation



That does not mean governance professionals are disengaged. Many are highly committed to their organisations and to the standards they help protect. But when responsibility increases without a corresponding change in resource, reward, title, influence or progression, the balance becomes harder to sustain.

For employers, the message is simple: do not wait until someone resigns to review whether the role has outgrown the structure around it.

Workload and resource remain under pressure

Team structure is an important part of the story: team size, reporting line, whether the function is standalone or combined with legal or other functions, and how close the senior governance professional is to executive decision-making.

There is no single right model. Some governance teams sit within legal, some operate as standalone functions, and others sit within wider corporate, risk or compliance structures. The important question is whether the structure gives the function the access, visibility and support it needs.

Among respondents answering the ExCo question, 34% said the most senior governance professional is a full member of the Executive Committee or equivalent, 31% said they attend without being a formal member, and 31% said they have no formal ExCo involvement. Models vary, but governance needs to be close enough to the business to advise well.

Structure also affects capacity. Once team size, reporting line and organisational complexity are considered, the practical question becomes whether governance teams have enough resource to deliver the work now being asked of them.

This is particularly important where the remit has widened, the organisation has become more complex, or governance is expected to support a broader range of Board, Committee, regulatory, subsidiary governance, annual reporting and stakeholder-related work.

The pressure is about volume, pace and complexity

The pressure is not simply that governance teams are doing new things. Many of the areas covered in the data are familiar parts of the core remit. The issue is the volume, pace and complexity of the work, and whether teams have enough resource to deliver it well.

74% of respondents answering the workload question said their workload had increased over the past 12 months. At the same time, 42% said their governance function was not adequately resourced for its current responsibilities, while only 51% said it was adequately resourced.

Respondent voice:

“More being expected of you with no extra resources provided.”

Workload pressure is sharper where resource has not kept pace

The workload story becomes sharper when viewed alongside resourcing. Among respondents who said their governance function was not adequately resourced, 88% also said their workload had increased over the past 12 months, compared with 63% of those who felt their function was adequately resourced.

Resourcing view	% Reporting increased workload
Adequately resourced	63%
Not adequately resourced	88%
Unsure	64%

This suggests that workload pressure is not simply a general market trend. It is being felt most acutely where the structure and resource around the function have not kept pace.

Where responsibilities have increased, recognition has not always followed. Among respondents answering this question, 70% said there had been no meaningful change. Only 11% reported increased headcount, 13% increased remuneration, 12% greater influence and 8% title progression. This is explored in more detail in the reward and recognition section.

The practical message is straightforward: many teams are carrying more, without always seeing the structure around them change in response.

Reward and the bigger market message

Remuneration remains one of the most closely watched parts of the survey - and rightly so.

The final salary data will be covered in detail later in the report, but the early message is familiar: governance pay remains resilient, while pressure points vary by level, structure and organisation type.

Senior governance remuneration remains strongly influenced by remit, organisation size, type of organisation and sector. For some senior roles, reward will also reflect whether legal and governance responsibilities are combined. That makes it important not to read the top of the market as a single, simple benchmark.

The Deputy Company Secretary / Head of Governance population remains a particular pressure point, where strong candidates are highly valued and often difficult to replace.

The salary story is not simply that everything has moved up. The pressure points are more specific, and the later remuneration section should be read by level, sector and organisation type.

Salary matters, especially where governance professionals are carrying increasing responsibility.

But it is rarely the only factor. Candidates are also looking at flexibility, role content, reporting line, progression, culture, workload and the overall position of the governance function.

A competitive salary may get attention. It will not always be enough if the role is poorly structured, under-resourced or offers limited flexibility.

Employers relying on salary alone may miss what really drives people to move - or stay.

Overall message

The governance function is becoming more important. That is good for the profession, but it means employers need to think carefully about how the function is positioned, supported and rewarded.

If governance teams are expected to advise the Board, support senior decision-making and help organisations deal with regulation, risk, stakeholder pressure, change and the safe use of technology, they need the structure, resource and recognition to do that well.

Governance is central to good decision-making - but employers need to make sure teams can carry the weight being placed on them.

AI is on the agenda - but governance teams are right to be cautious

Technology is now part of everyday governance work, although many teams are still working with a mixed toolkit.

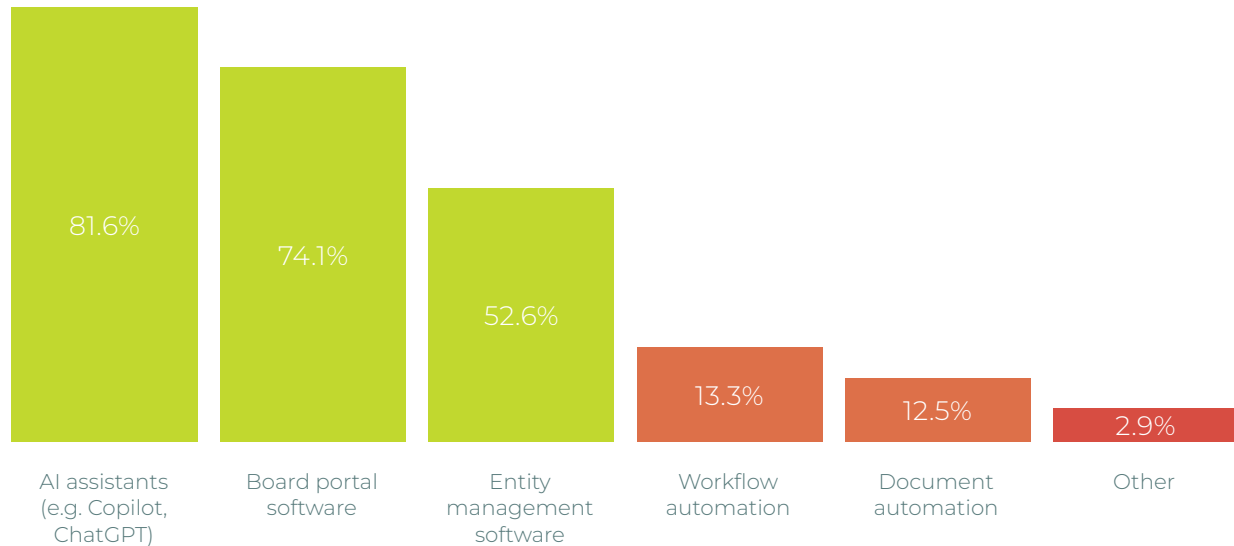
Board portals, entity management systems, electronic signatures, document automation, workflow tools and AI assistants are all now part of the conversation. In some teams these tools are helping to improve access to information, reduce paper, support version control and create a better audit trail.

But technology is not always joined up. Many teams still rely on spreadsheets, shared drives, inboxes, manual trackers and workarounds. For those teams, the issue is not a lack of technology altogether; it is that the technology does not remove enough of the administrative drag.

This becomes a resourcing issue because governance teams are already being asked to do more. As remits expand across Board and Committee support, subsidiary governance, listed company compliance, regulatory reporting, corporate transactions, annual reporting and broader governance projects, inefficient systems quickly create additional pressure.

A clunky process is not just irritating. It takes time away from higher-value governance work.

Technology currently used by governance teams



AI usage is emerging cautiously

AI is clearly on the agenda, but the market is not racing ahead in an uncritical way.

In this section, we are looking specifically at how governance professionals are using AI tools in their own work.

In governance teams, current use appears to be practical and day-to-day. Respondents are using, or considering using, AI for tasks such as drafting, summarising, research, horizon scanning, preparing briefing notes, simplifying language and reviewing large documents.

At the same time, caution is a very clear theme. That caution is understandable. Governance work often involves confidential Board papers, market-sensitive information, regulatory matters, legally significant records and sensitive internal discussions.

For many teams, the question is not whether AI could save time. It is whether it can be used safely, appropriately and within clear organisational rules.

The strongest theme is responsible adoption, not resistance.

Respondent voice:

“Using AI to enhance the capabilities of the function but not losing quality over speed.”

AI is not simply a large-company issue

Across every major organisation type, more than 90% of respondents said AI tools are being used regularly, used occasionally or being explored within their governance team.

Organisation type	Using regularly, occasionally or exploring AI
FTSE 100	97%
FTSE 250	93%
FTSE SmallCap / AIM / other listed	92%
Private company / group	93%
Financial services - non-listed	96%
Not-for-profit	91%

This suggests that AI has moved beyond early curiosity. The next challenge is how teams use AI safely and consistently, with proper boundaries.

Core insight:

Responsible adoption, not rapid adoption, is the real theme.



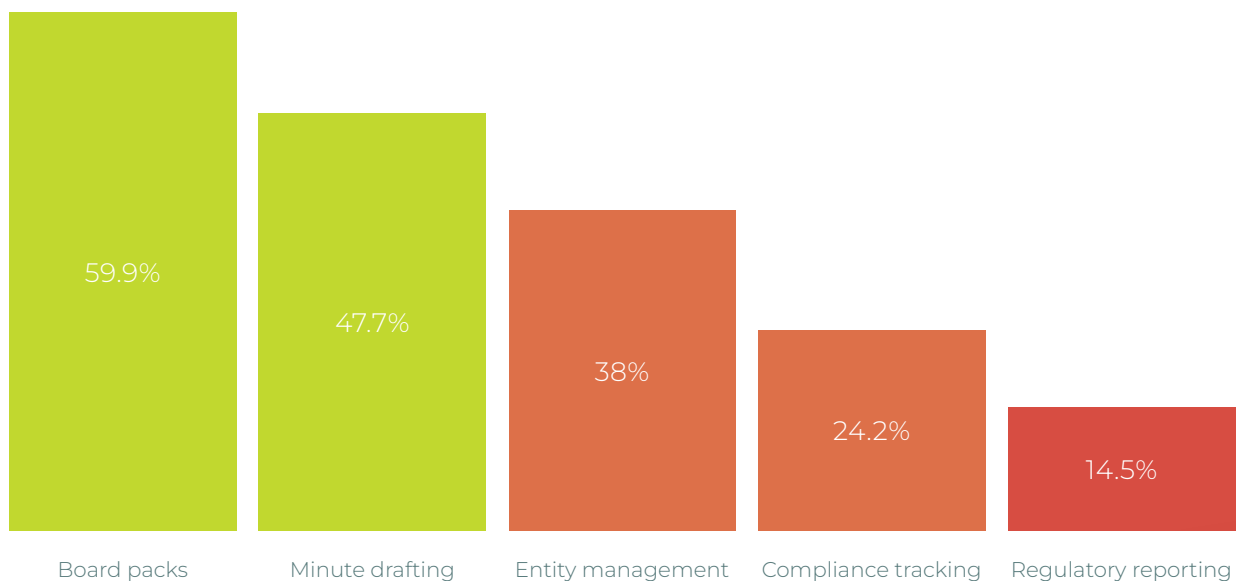
Where technology is helping

Technology appears to work best where it removes friction from regular, repeatable governance processes: Board packs, entity management, compliance tracking, approvals, filings and access to information.

These are not glamorous tasks, but they matter. When they work well, the governance team has better information, fewer manual steps and more time to focus on judgement and advice. When they work badly, the team spends too much time chasing documents, reconciling spreadsheets and finding workarounds.

Good technology does not make the governance function less human. It gives skilled people more time for judgement, advice and stakeholder engagement.

Where technology is helping most



Technology should reduce	So teams can spend more time on
Chasing papers	Advising Boards
Manual trackers	Horizon scanning
Re-keying data	Improving governance quality
Version control issues	Supporting better decisions
Repetitive filing / admin	Stakeholder engagement

Core view:

Technology will not replace skilled governance professionals. Used well, it should take friction out of the function and free up time for judgement and advice. Used badly, it becomes another system to maintain.



AI may help with first drafts, summaries and research, but it does not understand Board dynamics, regulatory nuance, shareholder sensitivities or the history behind a decision. Those remain human skills.

The talent pipeline problem: exposure is not the same as progression

Career progression remains a major pressure point in the governance profession.

The survey shows a committed and experienced profession, but not always one with clear routes forward. Many respondents value the breadth, variety and importance of their work, but there is frustration around limited promotion opportunities, unclear career paths and the lack of visible next steps.

This is particularly acute in smaller teams. A lean governance function can offer excellent exposure, but limited hierarchy. An Assistant Company Secretary or Senior Assistant Company Secretary may be doing high-quality Board, Committee, subsidiary, regulatory and annual report work, while still having nowhere obvious to progress internally.

That creates a retention risk. If someone cannot see how they move forward, they may need to leave to progress. That does not necessarily mean they are disengaged or disloyal; it may simply mean the structure gives them no other route.

Respondent voice:

“Reduced talent pipeline due to fewer junior roles will lead to critical succession issues.”

Progression is not only about title

Titles do matter. They affect salary, status, external perception and future marketability. But progression in governance is also about the quality of the work and the level of trust given to the individual.

Candidates increasingly look beyond the job title. They want to know whether they will get proper Board and Committee exposure, work with senior stakeholders, own meaningful projects, be involved in the Annual Report or AGM, manage people and be trusted to advise rather than simply administer.

This is where employers can be more creative. Not every team can offer immediate promotion, but many can offer broader ownership, better exposure, clearer development and more involvement in higher-value work.

Core insight:

The profession cannot simply hope that future governance leaders appear when needed. They have to be developed, exposed, stretched and trusted.

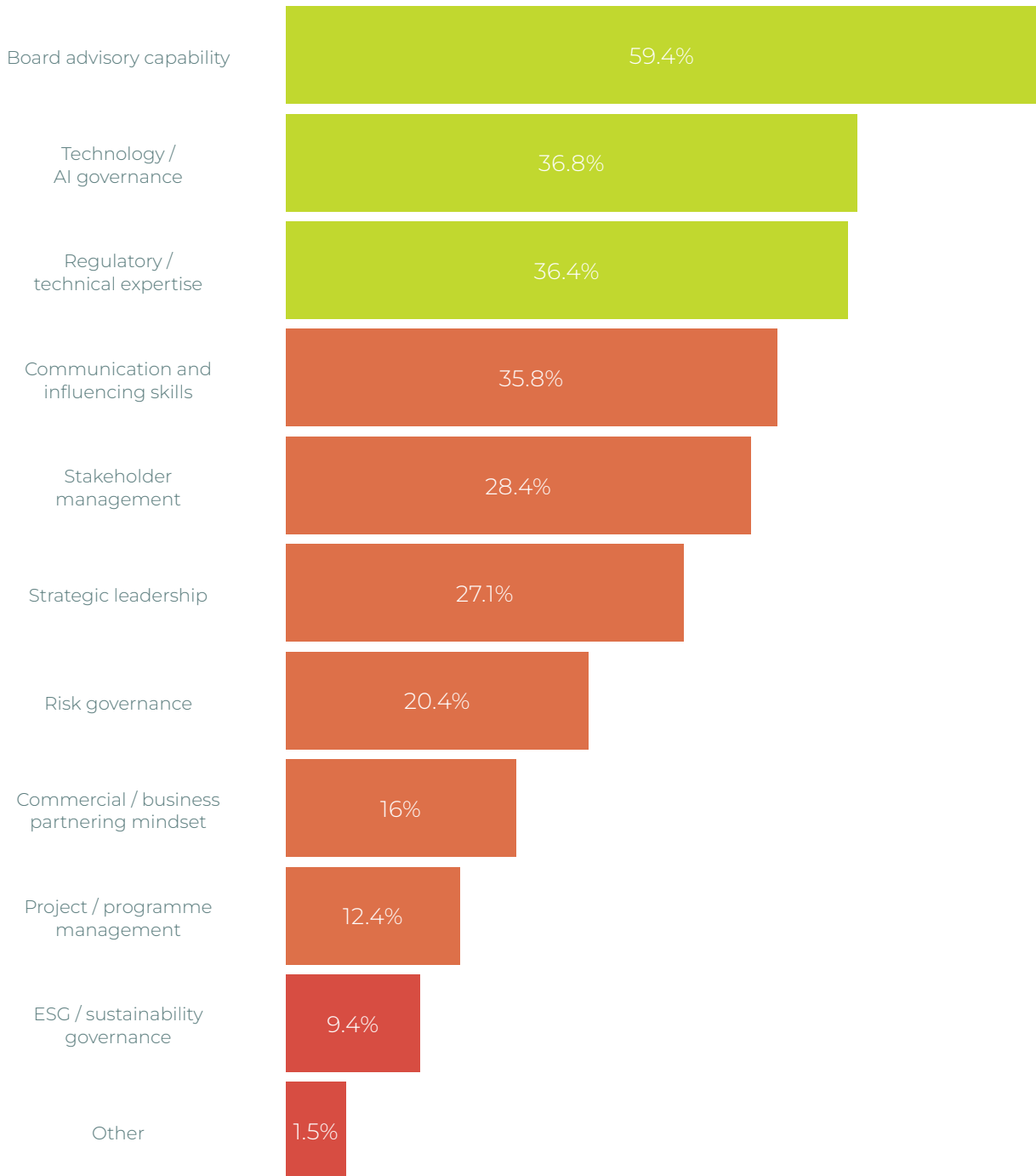


Skills that are becoming more important

The governance skillset continues to broaden. Technical knowledge remains vital, but respondents also pointed to the growing importance of judgement, communication, stakeholder management, Board confidence, commercial awareness, technology, and the ability to influence.

This reflects what we see in the market every day. The best governance professionals are not simply process experts. They are trusted advisers who can read the room, understand risk, communicate clearly and help Boards and Executives make better decisions.

Skills become more important



Core view:

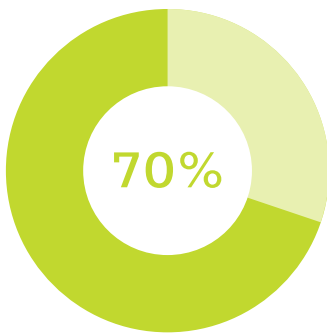
The governance profession needs to protect its talent pipeline. Future Group Company Secretaries, Heads of Governance and governance leaders are developed through exposure, trust, support and opportunity.



For employers, career progression is not just a nice-to-have. It is a practical retention issue. If talented people cannot see a future in the team, they are more likely to be open to opportunities elsewhere.

The recognition gap: more responsibility, but not always more reward

Headline finding



Where responsibilities have increased, **70% of respondents** said there had been **no meaningful change in recognition.**

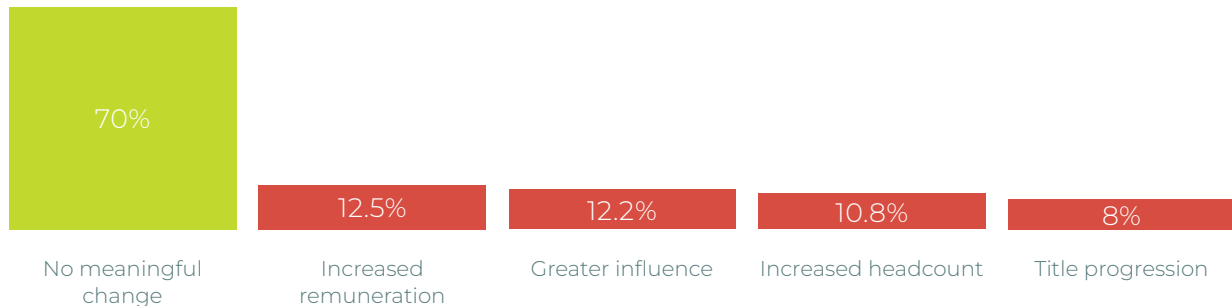
That is the recognition gap - and it is one of the clearest findings in this year's survey.

Reward remains an important test of whether the governance function is properly understood.

Across the market, governance professionals are supporting Boards, Committees, Executive teams, subsidiary structures, compliance obligations, annual reporting, regulatory change and wider governance projects. In many organisations, the work has become broader, more visible and more complex. The question is whether that increased responsibility is being recognised.

Salary is not the only thing that matters. Progression, culture, flexibility, workload, leadership and quality of work all play a major part in whether people stay. But reward and recognition still send a clear message about how the organisation values the function.

Where responsibilities have increased, how has this been recognised?



Responsibility has increased, but recognition has not always followed

Where respondents said responsibilities had increased, the most common answer by some distance was “No meaningful change”.

That captures something we hear frequently in the market: governance teams are absorbing more work, more complexity and more visibility, but the structure around them has not always moved with it. In some organisations, this may mean no additional remuneration. In others, it may mean no change in title, influence, headcount or support.

This is not about governance professionals asking for bells and whistles. It is about whether the organisation has noticed that the job has changed.

Recognition is broader than pay

Recognition can take different forms. It may be increased remuneration, a broader title, greater influence, more headcount, better access to the Board or Executive, or clearer progression. Not every increase in responsibility needs to result in the same response.

But where responsibility increases and nothing meaningful changes, frustration can build. People may feel trusted with more work, but not more valued.

That is a difficult position for employers. It can quietly increase retention risk, particularly where workload is also rising and progression routes are unclear.

Recognition is part of the retention equation

The recognition gap also appears to be a retention issue. Among respondents who said increased responsibility had brought no meaningful change in recognition, 46% said they were likely or very likely to look for a new role in the next 12 months. This compares with 32% of those who had received some form of positive recognition, such as increased remuneration, greater influence, title progression or additional headcount.

Recognition after increased responsibility	% likely or very likely to look for a new role
No meaningful change	46%
Any positive recognition	32%
Positive recognition only, with no "no meaningful change" selected	31%

Recognition is not just a reward issue. It is part of the retention equation.

Why this matters for retention

Governance professionals are often highly committed to their organisations. Many will keep going through busy periods because they care about the work, the Board, the team and the standards they are there to protect.

But goodwill is not a resourcing model. If responsibility, workload, reward and progression fall too far out of balance, people become more open to the market. They may not be actively applying, but they will listen when the right opportunity appears.

We see this in the market every week. People are not always unhappy. They are often busy, loyal and committed. But when responsibility keeps increasing and recognition does not follow, they become easier to approach and harder to retain.

This is especially important in governance because many of the strongest candidates are not visible on job boards. They are already employed, busy and performing well.

Detailed salary analysis follows later

The detailed salary benchmarks by level, sector and organisation type are covered later in this report. That is where pay data can be assessed properly and fairly.

This section is focused on the broader point: whether increased responsibility is being properly recognised.

Core view:

Reward is not just a pay issue. It is a value issue.

If organisations want governance professionals who can advise Boards, manage complexity, support regulatory obligations, protect good decision-making and keep pace with change, they need to recognise when the role has grown.

That does not always mean overpaying. It means looking honestly at the role, the workload, the level of influence, the title, the team structure and the package.

The best employers will not wait until someone resigns to discover they were carrying more responsibility than the organisation had properly acknowledged. They will review reward, recognition, workload and progression before retention becomes a problem.



Lean teams, broad remits: the resourcing reality

Headline finding

Governance teams remain lean: 57% of respondents work in teams of three people or fewer, including 21% who are the sole governance professional.

Commentary

Governance teams remain relatively small across much of the market. Among respondents answering the team size question, 21% said they were the sole governance professional in their organisation, while a further 36% worked in a team of 2-3 people. Only 20% worked in teams of seven or more.

That is important because the scope of the governance function is rarely narrow. Even smaller teams may be covering Board and Committee support, subsidiary governance, filings, annual reporting, regulatory work, governance projects and increasing expectations around technology, AI use, cyber oversight, risk and stakeholder scrutiny.

The data also shows how sharply team size varies by organisation type. FTSE 100 respondents were far more likely to sit within larger teams, while FTSE SmallCap / AIM, private company and not-for-profit respondents were much more likely to be operating with very small teams.

Organisation type	Sole governance professional	2-3 people	4-6 people	7-10 people	11+ people
FTSE 100	2%	11%	35%	20%	32%
FTSE 250	7%	49%	28%	7%	9%
FTSE SmallCap / AIM	29%	50%	10%	0%	12%
Financial Services - non-listed	19%	41%	22%	6%	11%
Private company / group	21%	42%	24%	5%	8%
Not-for-profit	36%	36%	22%	6%	1%

Percentages are calculated within each organisation type, so each row adds to 100%.

The resourcing picture becomes sharper when team size is viewed alongside workload. Among respondents who said their governance function was not adequately resourced, 88% also reported that their workload had increased over the past 12 months, compared with 63% of those who said their function was adequately resourced.

Core insight:

Governance teams remain lean across much of the market, with the smallest teams often carrying broad responsibilities.



What this means

Employers should look beyond headcount alone and consider what the team is being asked to cover, where pressure lands during peak periods, and whether the function has enough support to remain sustainable.

Outsourcing and External Support

Headline finding

Most organisations still keep governance work largely in-house, but 38% use some form of outsourcing or external governance support.

Commentary

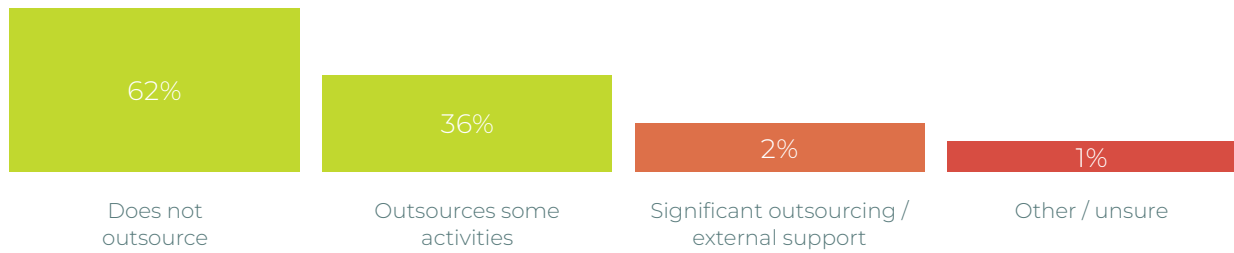
The survey suggests that outsourcing is part of the governance resourcing mix, but not the dominant model for most organisations.

Among respondents answering the outsourcing question, 62% said their organisation does not outsource governance or company secretarial activities. 36% said they outsource some activities, and 2% indicated more significant use of outsourcing or external support.

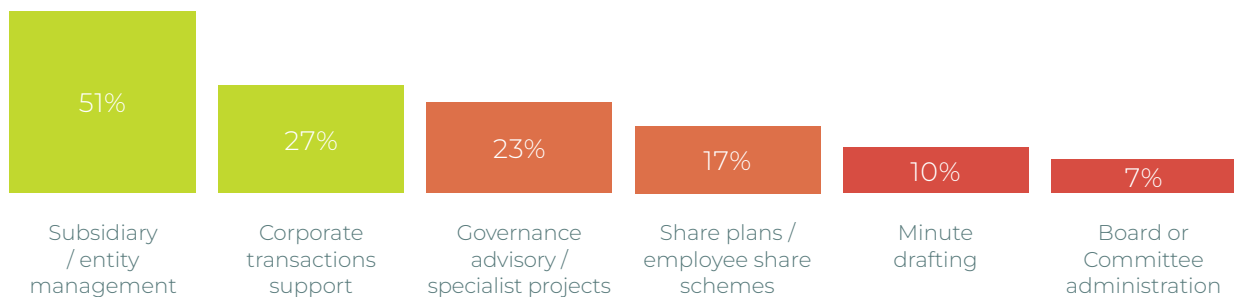
Where outsourcing is used, it is usually targeted. The most commonly outsourced activity is subsidiary or entity management, selected by 51% of those whose organisation uses outsourcing or external support. Corporate transactions support was selected by 27%, governance advisory or specialist projects by 23%, share plans or employee share schemes by 17%, minute drafting by 10%, and Board or Committee administration by 7%.

That points to a practical pattern. Outsourcing providers have become more sophisticated, with broader solutions now available for flexible resource, specialist expertise and top-up support. The survey suggests that organisations are using external support most often where they need additional capacity, technical knowledge, international support or help with specific projects and transactions.

Use of outsourcing or external support



Activities outsourced by organisations using external support



Percentages are of respondents whose organisations use outsourcing or external support. Multi-select totals exceed 100%.

Core insight:

Outsourcing is being used selectively, most often where organisations need specialist expertise, flexible resource, international support or additional capacity for defined projects.



What this means

External support can add capacity, flexibility and specialist expertise, particularly where internal teams are lean. The strongest arrangements have clear ownership, agreed quality standards and appropriate oversight, so that external support strengthens the function rather than blurring accountability.

Influence is increasing, but access remains uneven

Headline finding

Influence is increasing, but formal access to executive decision-making remains mixed.

Commentary

The data reinforces an important point: governance is becoming more influential, but access and positioning still vary significantly.

Among respondents answering the influence question, 65% said the influence of the governance function is increasing. Only 8% said it is decreasing. That is encouraging, but influence is not always matched by formal access.

Among respondents answering the ExCo question, 34% said the most senior governance professional is a full member of the Executive Committee or equivalent. A further 31% said they attend without being a formal member. But 31% said there is no formal ExCo involvement.

That distinction matters. Governance professionals do not necessarily need to be voting members of every executive forum. But if they are too far from the conversations where decisions are being shaped, advice may arrive late.

Board support priorities

The areas becoming more important in supporting Boards also show why access matters. Board information quality and decision-making support was selected by 66% of respondents, followed by Board and Executive succession planning at 59%, AI literacy for Boards at 50%, and director induction and ongoing development at 50%.

Area becoming more important in supporting Boards	%
Board information quality and decision-making support	66%
Succession planning - Board and Executive	59%
AI literacy for Boards	50%
Director induction and ongoing development	50%
Cyber governance and oversight	44%

Multi-select totals exceed 100%.

Core insight:

Governance influence is increasing, but formal access to executive decision-making remains mixed.



What this means

Governance professionals do not need to be in every room, but they do need timely access to the conversations where decisions are being shaped.

Career Progression and Succession

Headline finding

Career movement is already significant: 25% of respondents changed jobs in the past 12 months, and 42% are likely or very likely to look for a new role in the next 12 months.

Commentary

Career progression remains one of the clearest retention risks in the governance profession. Many governance professionals are ambitious and committed to developing their careers, but progression is not always straightforward.

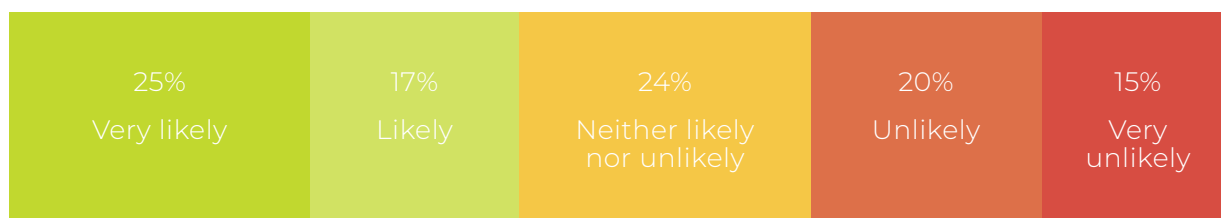
The tenure data supports this. Junior and mid-level governance professionals appear to move more quickly, with 63% of Company Secretarial Assistant respondents and 56% of Assistant / Senior Assistant CoSec respondents having been in their current role for less than two years.

That does not necessarily mean people are disengaged. It may simply mean the structure gives them limited room to progress internally. In small or flat teams, a move can become the most obvious route forward.

Current role tenure by level

Level	Estimated average time in current role	Median current-role tenure	% in role less than 2 years
Group CoSec	4.5 years	3-5 years	37%
Deputy CoSec / Head of Governance	3.2 years	2-3 years	42%
Assistant / Senior Assistant CoSec	2.7 years	1-2 years	56%
Company Secretarial Assistant	2.1 years	1-2 years	63%

Likelihood of looking for a new role in the next 12 months



Core insight:

Career progression is becoming a retention risk. If junior and mid-level governance professionals cannot see a route forward, they are more likely to move externally to progress.



What this means

Exposure is valuable, but it is not the same as a progression plan. Employers need to give junior and mid-level governance professionals clear opportunities to build Board confidence, lead meaningful projects, take on Committee responsibility and develop through mentoring and senior stakeholder exposure.

Recruitment, Retention and Market Movement

Headline finding

The external market remains one of the clearest routes to a meaningful career move, whether through increased salary, promotion or broader responsibility.

Commentary

The survey points to a governance market where many professionals are open to opportunity, but not necessarily looking to move at any cost.

The year-on-year salary movement data adds an important retention message. Respondents who stayed in the same job reported a median salary increase of 3.3%, while those who changed jobs reported a median increase of 3.9%. The median difference is modest. The more important finding is the spread: 37% of respondents who changed jobs reported a salary increase of 10% or more, compared with 13% of those who stayed in the same job.

This should not be read as a clean like-for-like pay rise comparison, because people who changed jobs may also have changed level, organisation type, sector or working pattern. But it does show that the external market can create a more meaningful shift for some governance professionals - particularly where the move also brings promotion, broader responsibility or a stronger market position.

Group	Median salary movement	Average movement	% receiving 10%+ increase
Stayed in same job	3.3%	4.9%	13%
Changed jobs	3.9%	9.9%	37%

Salary movement is calculated from respondents who provided valid 2025 and 2026 base salary figures.

External moves create the sharpest movement below senior level

The external market appears to create the clearest salary movement below the most senior level. Among Company Secretarial Assistants who changed jobs, 56% reported a salary increase of 10% or more, compared with 12% of those who stayed. Among Assistant / Governance Manager respondents, the equivalent figures were 45% and 13%.

Level	% of movers receiving 10%+ increase	% of stayers receiving 10%+ increase
Senior governance leaders	26%	14%
Deputy / Head of Governance	35%	10%
Assistant / Governance Manager	45%	13%
CoSec Assistant / Governance Officer	56%	12%

For employers, this is the retention warning: if people cannot see progression, recognition or reward where they are, the external market may offer the step-change they are looking for. This is particularly important because the strongest governance candidates are not always actively applying for roles. They may be busy, loyal and performing well, but still open to a compelling opportunity if progression, recognition or reward feels stuck.

Core insight:

Moving roles can bring a sharper increase in salary, title or responsibility. Employers can reduce avoidable attrition by addressing progression and recognition before people look elsewhere.

**What this means**

If talented governance professionals cannot see progression, recognition or broader opportunity internally, they are more likely to look externally.

Hybrid Working and Flexibility

Headline finding

Hybrid working continues to be the norm: 56% of respondents typically work in the office two or three days a week, and only 5% are in five days a week

Commentary

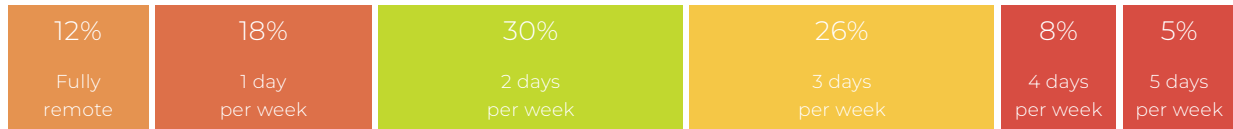
Hybrid working remains firmly embedded in the governance profession. Among respondents answering the office attendance question, 12% said they typically work fully remotely, 18% attend one day a week, 30% attend two days, 26% attend three days, 8% attend four days and only 5% attend five days a week.

The most common pattern is therefore not remote-only or office-only, but a structured middle ground. More than half of respondents are typically in the office two or three days a week. There is also evidence that expectations are tightening. 39% of respondents said office attendance expectations had increased compared with 12 months ago, while 55% said expectations had stayed broadly the same. Only 2% said expectations had decreased.

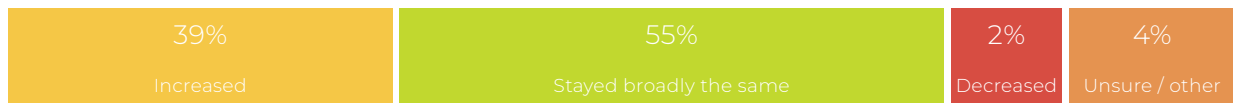
For governance roles, the reality is more practical than ideological. Flexibility remains important for attraction, retention and sustainability. At the same time, many governance professionals recognise that presence matters at key points: Board meetings, Committee meetings, AGM preparation, annual reporting, sensitive projects and relationship-building with senior stakeholders.

The strongest message is not that governance roles should be remote. It is that office attendance works best when it is connected to the rhythm of the role, rather than imposed as a blunt policy.

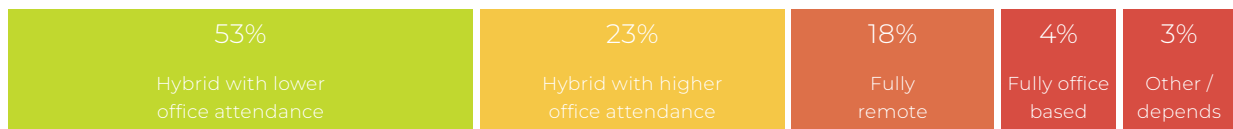
Actual office attendance



Change in office attendance expectations



Preferred working pattern



What this means

Flexibility is no longer a perk, but neither is office attendance just a policy lever. The best hybrid models recognise the rhythm of governance work - allowing for presence when it matters, particularly around Board meetings, Committee meetings, AGM preparation, annual reporting and senior stakeholder engagement, while still giving professionals the trust and space to do detailed work effectively.

Core insight:

Hybrid working is now the dominant model, but expectations are tightening. Most respondents work in the office two or three days a week, while 39% said office attendance expectations had increased over the past 12 months.



The Interim Governance Market

Headline finding

Interim governance support remains an important part of the resourcing mix, but pay and availability are highly role-specific and should be treated differently from permanent salary benchmarks.

Commentary

The interim governance market is relatively small and can move quickly. Availability at any given time depends heavily on a small number of experienced individuals, the nature of current projects and the timing of organisational need.

Interim appointments are often made for very specific reasons: parental leave, sudden vacancy cover, annual report and AGM pressure, governance transformation, listed-company requirements, regulatory projects or support while a permanent appointment is being made.

For that reason, interim reward cannot be compared directly with permanent salaries. Organisations will often choose to “overskill” an interim appointment because they need someone who can hit the ground running, operate with limited handover and bring confidence from day one.

That can justify a premium over the equivalent permanent role, particularly where the assignment requires senior judgement, Board confidence, listed-company experience or the ability to stabilise a function quickly. It also reflects the more precarious nature of interim work, the absence of permanent benefits, gaps between assignments and the need for immediate impact.

The survey data can provide useful context, particularly around employment basis and reported full-time equivalent earnings. However, interim pay should be read as indicative rather than as a firm day-rate benchmark. The market is too dependent on timing, availability, project scope and individual expertise for a simple table to tell the whole story.

Core insight:

The interim governance market is driven by availability, urgency and confidence. Employers are often paying for someone who can step in quickly, operate above the strict level of the role and bring immediate judgement with limited handover.



What this means

Employers should define the assignment carefully: what needs stabilising, what decisions need support, what experience is essential and where an interim needs to add value quickly. The key is not simply to compare day rates with permanent salaries, but to be clear about the risk, gap or pressure the interim is being brought in to solve.

Salary and Total Reward Benchmarks

Headline finding

Salary remains one of the clearest ways to see how governance responsibility, seniority and organisational complexity translate into reward - but base salary is only one part of the overall package.

Commentary

Salary data is always one of the most useful parts of the survey, but it needs careful treatment. Governance roles vary significantly by organisation type, size, listed status, reporting line and breadth of responsibility.

The tables below use lower-to-upper quartile ranges, with the median shown in brackets. This gives readers a practical range around the centre of the market, while reducing the impact of isolated outlier responses.

As in the previous survey, Group CoSec includes respondents who identified as Group Company Secretary or GC & CoSec. Assistant CoSec and Senior Assistant CoSec have also been grouped together, as have Deputy CoSec and Head of Secretariat / Governance.

Not-for-profit combines charity, regulator and membership body responses. FTSE SmallCap / AIM also includes Other listed companies responses to avoid thin sample distortion.

How to interpret the reward data

- Listed-company governance roles continue to carry a clear reward premium, particularly at senior levels.
- Deputy Company Secretary / Head of Governance remains one of the most competitive parts of the market.
- Bonus and LTIP participation materially change the total reward picture at senior listed-company level.
- Not-for-profit salaries are lower, but many roles still carry significant complexity and accountability.
- Salary should always be read alongside remit, reporting line, organisation complexity, Board exposure and team structure.

How to read this section:

Each cell shows lower-to-upper quartile, with the median in brackets. Salary figures are shown in full pounds. Bonus and LTIP figures are shown as a percentage of base salary. A dash (-) means there was insufficient data to show a reliable benchmark.



Base salary by title and in-house organisation type (£)

Base salary is shown first because it is the clearest starting point for reward benchmarking. Each cell should show the lower-to-upper quartile range, with the median in brackets, using full pounds.

Role / title	FTSE 100	FTSE 250	FTSE SmallCap / AIM	Financial Services - non-listed	Private company / group	Not for profit
Group CoSec	£171,000 - £241,000 (£218,000)	£165,000 - £201,000 (£185,000)	£136,000 - £184,000 (£163,000)	£94,000 - £176,000 (£109,000)	£118,000 - £158,000 (£140,000)	£63,000 - £91,000 (£75,000)
Deputy CoSec / Head of Secretariat	£130,000 - £178,000 (£158,000)	£120,000 - £169,000 (£135,000)	£100,000 - £132,000 (£123,000)	£93,000 - £127,000 (£110,000)	£105,000 - £142,000 (£122,000)	£58,000 - £80,000 (£68,000)
Assistant / Senior Assistant CoSec	£71,000 - £103,000 (£90,000)	£70,000 - £91,000 (£83,000)	£60,000 - £76,000 (£68,000)	£64,000 - £87,000 (£76,000)	£66,000 - £86,000 (£72,000)	£51,000 - £70,000 (£58,000)
Company Secretarial Assistant	£39,000 - £61,000 (£48,000)	£42,000 - £56,000 (£50,000)	-	£40,000 - £53,000 (£48,000)	£46,000 - £51,000 (£50,000)	£32,000 - £50,000 (£44,000)

Professional services salaries

Professional services has been analysed separately because job titles, team structures and operating models vary more significantly than in in-house governance teams. The sample includes a broad range of environments, from sole practitioners and smaller advisory businesses through to law firms, accountancy firms and larger governance services teams.

Professional services salaries by broad seniority level

Professional services level	Typical titles included	Basic salary range
Senior-level	Partner, Director, Head of Department, Senior Practitioner	£96,000 - £138,000 (£116,000)
Mid-level	Manager, Assistant Manager	£70,000 - £95,000 (£73,000)
Junior level	Consultant, Junior Consultant	£40,000 - £62,000 (£53,000)

Ranges represent the lower-to-upper quartile, with the median shown in brackets, rounded to the nearest £1,000.

Professional services salaries should be read with care. Remuneration can vary depending on seniority, the nature and complexity of the work, client exposure, team size and structure, business development or relationship management responsibility, and the type of firm or provider. For partners or owner-managed businesses, base salary may also not reflect the full economic value of the role, including profit share, drawings or other ownership-related income. These figures should therefore be viewed as broad market indications rather than direct role-for-role benchmarks.

Target annual bonus by title and in-house organisation type (% of base salary)

Bonus opportunity varies significantly by organisation type. The table below shows target bonus ranges, again using lower-to-upper quartile with the median in brackets.

Role / title	FTSE 100	FTSE 250	FTSE SmallCap / AIM	Financial Services - non-listed	Private company / group	Not for profit
Group CoSec	35%-60% (50%)	25%-50% (40%)	20%-50% (30%)	10%-29% (20%)	16%-30% (25%)	0%-0% (0%)
Deputy CoSec / Head of Secretariat	20%-45% (30%)	20%-30% (24%)	11%-28% (18%)	8%-20% (15%)	12%-28% (20%)	0%-0% (0%)
Assistant / Senior Assistant CoSec	14%-20% (15%)	10%-20% (13%)	4%-16% (8%)	5%-15% (10%)	10%-15% (10%)	0%-1% (0%)
Company Secretarial Assistant	10%-12% (10%)	5%-28% (15%)	-	5%-20% (8%)	7%-10% (8%)	0%-9% (0%)

Note: In the not-for-profit column, a median of 0% indicates that most respondents reported no bonus opportunity, although some responses included modest bonus arrangements.

Latest actual bonus by title and in-house organisation type (% of base salary)

Actual bonus outcomes can differ materially from target levels, particularly where business performance, market conditions or individual objectives affect pay-out. The table below shows the latest actual bonus reported by respondents.

Role / title	FTSE 100	FTSE 250	FTSE SmallCap / AIM	Financial Services - non-listed	Private company / group	Not for profit
Group CoSec	29%-62% (50%)	20%-47% (32%)	12%-33% (20%)	4%-28% (15%)	10%-30% (20%)	0%-0% (0%)
Deputy CoSec / Head of Secretariat	20%-46% (26%)	16%-32% (27%)	4%-15% (11%)	2%-20% (12%)	0%-17% (7%)	0%-0% (0%)
Assistant / Senior Assistant CoSec	8%-18% (14%)	5%-15% (10%)	2%-15% (10%)	4%-18% (11%)	0%-11% (5%)	0%-0% (0%)
Company Secretarial Assistant	6%-12% (10%)	3%-10% (4%)	-	1%-10% (4%)	7%-10% (8%)	0%-2% (0%)

Professional services target bonus by broad seniority level

Professional services level	Typical titles included	Target bonus range
Senior-level	Partner, Director, Head of Department, Senior Practitioner	0%-20% (10%)
Mid-level	Manager, Assistant Manager	5%-10% (10%)
Junior level	Consultant, Junior Consultant	0%-20% (8%)

Ranges represent the lower-to-upper quartile target bonus opportunity, with the median shown in brackets. The figures include respondents who reported no bonus opportunity. This is particularly relevant at senior level: when all senior professional services respondents are included, the median target bonus is 10%, but among those with a bonus opportunity, the median rises to 20%. This underlines how uneven bonus eligibility can be across professional services, particularly where firm structure, ownership model and profit-sharing arrangements vary.

LTIP participation and value - Group CoSec listed-company roles only

LTIP data is most meaningful at the most senior listed-company level. For that reason, the table below focuses on Group CoSec respondents in listed organisations, rather than trying to force LTIP comparisons across roles where participation is limited or inconsistent.

Organisation type	LTIP participation	LTIP value range (% of base salary)
FTSE 100	100%	29%-78% (40%)
FTSE 250	88%	30%-66% (40%)
FTSE SmallCap / AIM	63%	29%-66% (50%)

Core insight:

Salary and reward vary significantly by level, organisation type and role scope, so benchmarks need to be read in context.



What this means

Employers should assess reward in the round. Base salary, bonus opportunity, LTIP, flexibility, Board exposure, team support and progression all form part of the proposition.

Final Reflections

Headline finding

The governance function is becoming more important - but the support around it has not always kept pace.

Commentary

Taken together, the findings point to a profession that is continuing to evolve. Governance professionals are working across wider agendas, supporting more complex organisations and operating closer to senior decision-making.

There is much to be positive about. The profession is valued, the work is important and many governance professionals are gaining broader exposure than ever before. At its best, the role combines technical expertise, judgement, influence and a deep understanding of how decisions are made.

But the survey also highlights areas that employers cannot ignore. Resourcing needs to match expectations. Reward needs to reflect complexity. Progression needs to be clearer. Flexibility needs to be handled thoughtfully. Technology needs to be adopted sensibly. And governance needs timely access to the right conversations.

For governance leaders, the challenge is to keep shaping the function with confidence. That means being clear about what the team does, what support it needs and where it can add the greatest value.

For employers, the conclusion is straightforward: strong governance does not happen by accident. It requires investment, visibility, access and trust.

Core insight:

Good governance depends on good people, properly supported by the right structure, resource and recognition.

**Respondent voice:**

“Sufficient resources to undertake the role meaningfully.”

What this means

The organisations that recognise the increasing demands on governance teams - and respond thoughtfully on structure, resource, progression, flexibility and reward - will be better placed to attract, retain and develop the governance talent they need.

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core-partnership.co.uk
team@core-partnership.co.uk | 020 3589 0333