



carrington west

Nuclear 2025 Salary Survey & Guide

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Nuclear

2024 Market Overview

The nuclear market in 2024 experienced a steady rate of growth, particularly as projects in the new build and defence sectors began to ramp up. The ongoing skills shortage, especially for mid-level engineers has intensified, allowing experienced engineers with critical expertise to command significantly higher rates. As demand for this specialised talent continues to rise, these engineers have become increasingly valuable, and we have seen a notable shift, with many opting for contract roles. Contract rates have proven far more attractive compared with permanent salaries, incentivising this migration.

The defence sector, bolstered by substantial funding announcements, saw an influx of high-quality candidates looking to re-enter the field. Projects at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) gained momentum, and activity at Devonport and Rosyth increased considerably, driving an urgent need for security-cleared candidates who can step into roles quickly. The competition for these professionals, particularly those with Security Check (SC) clearance, became extremely high.

Design work has emerged as a major focal point, driven by key projects such as Sizewell C and ongoing Small Modular Reactor (SMR) developments. Uranium enrichment plants also saw a rise in work, necessitating candidates with the highest levels of security clearance. The demand for Electrical, Control, and Instrumentation (EC&I) specialists was fierce, with competition at an all-time high. Additionally, rates for safety specialists, including safety and hazard engineers and safety case authors, surged, reflecting the premium placed on professionals with nuclear or defence safety backgrounds.

The UK nuclear industry still faces a critical skills shortage, estimated at around 40,000 workers. This gap continues to put pressure on companies to attract and retain talent.

2025 Outlook

Looking ahead to 2025, the industry is bracing for a significant shift when generators at Hinkley Point C (HPC) are activated.

A large portion of the current workforce, reportedly around 10,000 out of 12,000, may have to leave if they do not secure Security Check (SC) clearance. While these numbers are unconfirmed, feedback from industry events like the “Meet the Buyer” conference suggests that this transition could have a profound impact on staffing.

The coming year will also see a heightened demand for mechanical, electrical, and EC&I design professionals, as more projects progress from planning to execution. The global push for green energy, with nuclear playing a significant role, will continue to drive the market.

As countries increasingly invest in nuclear power to meet sustainability goals.

A significant resource pull is anticipated with Sizewell C gearing up for major activity, which will place further strain on an already skill-short market. The need for design engineers and specialists across various disciplines will remain critical, and organisations must prepare to offer competitive compensation packages to secure the talent needed to meet project demands.



2025 Salary Ranges

Job Title	Experience	Permanent Salary (Per Annum)		
		Min. Salary	Max. Salary	Average*
Entry Level Mechanical Engineer (Design)	0 - 3 years	£30,000	£45,000	£33,000
Mechanical Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£45,000	£60,000	£58,000
Senior Mechanical Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£60,000	£80,000	£74,000
Principal Mechanical Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£80,000	£95,000	£88,000
Entry Level Electrical Engineer (Design)	0 - 3 years	£30,000	£45,000	£32,000
Electrical Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£45,000	£60,000	£58,000
Senior Electrical Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£60,000	£80,000	£75,000
Principal Electrical Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£80,000	£95,000	£87,000
Entry Level EC+I Engineer (Design)	0 - 3 years	£30,000	£50,000	£34,000
EC+I Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£50,000	£60,000	£55,000
Senior EC+I Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£60,000	£80,000	£78,000
Principal EC+I Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£80,000	£95,000	£90,000
Entry Level Civil Engineer (Design)	0 - 3 years	£30,000	£40,000	£31,000
Civil Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£40,000	£50,000	£45,000
Senior Civil Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£50,000	£65,000	£61,000
Principal Civil Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£65,000	£80,000	£70,000
Entry Level Structural Engineer (Design)	0 - 3 years	£30,000	£40,000	£32,000
Structural Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£40,000	£50,000	£44,000
Senior Structural Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£50,000	£65,000	£62,000
Principal Structural Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£65,000	£80,000	£69,000

*Mode

2025 Salary Ranges

Job Title	Experience	Permanent Salary (Per Annum)		
		Min. Salary	Max. Salary	Average*
Project Manager	3 - 6 years	£45,000	£65,000	£57,00
Senior Project Manager	5 - 8 years	£65,000	£80,000	£72,000
Principal Project Manager	8+ years	£80,000	£100,000	£90,000
Project Director	10+ years	£100,000	£150,000	£120,000**
Project Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£30,000	£45,000	£39,000
Senior Project Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£45,000	£60,000	£56,000
Principle Project Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£60,000	£75,000	£70,000
Safety Case Engineer	3 - 6 years	£40,000	£55,000	£45,000
Senior Safety Case Engineer	5 - 8 years	£55,000	£70,000	£67,000
Principal Safety Case Engineer	8+ years	£70,000	£90,000	£85,000
Safety Case Author	8+ years	£90,000	£120,000	£103,000**

*Mode

** Often made up to top end with performance bonuses

2025 Salary Ranges

Job Title	Experience	Contract Rates (Per Hour)		
		Min. Rate	Max. Rate	Average*
Senior Mechanical Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£50.00	£60.00	£54.00
Principal Mechanical Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£60.00	£75.00	£69.00
Chief Mechanical Engineer (Design)	10+ years	£75.00	£93.00**	£84.00
Senior Electrical Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£50.00	£60.00	£55.00
Principal Electrical Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£60.00	£75.00	£67.00
Chief Electrical Engineer (Design)	10+ years	£75.00	£93.00**	£86.00
Senior EC+I Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£60.00	£70.00	£58.00
Principal EC+I Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£70.00	£80.00	£76.00
Chief EC+I Engineer (Design)	10+ years	£80.00	£93.00**	£88.00
Senior Civil Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£45.00	£55.00	£48.00
Principal Civil Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£55.00	£70.00	£60.00
Chief Civil Engineer (Design)	10+ years	£70.00	£87.00**	£80.00
Senior Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£45.00	£55.00	£47.00
Principal Structural Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£55.00	£70.00	£60.00
Chief Structural Engineer (Design)	10+ years	£70.00	£87.00**	£78.00
Project Director	10+ years	£100.00	120.00**	£113.00
Project Engineer (Design)	3 - 6 years	£50.00	£60.00	£53.00
Senior Project Engineer (Design)	5 - 8 years	£60.00	£70.00	£64.00
Principle Project Engineer (Design)	8+ years	£70.00	£85.00**	£80.00

*Mode

** Dependent on experiences and role regarding team management

2025 Salary Ranges

Job Title	Experience	Contract Rates (Per Hour)		
		Min. Rate	Max. Rate	Average*
Senior Safety Case Engineer	5 - 8 years	£60.00	£75.00	£73.00
Principal Safety Case Engineer	8+ years	£75.00	£100.00	£90.00
Safety Case Author	8+ years	£100.00	£130.00**	£120.00

*Mode

** Dependent on experiences and role regarding team management



The Carrington West 2025 Salary Survey details salary information and recruiting trends in the regions and business sectors we cover. Our information has been researched and collated with the help of our clients and candidates and from our working knowledge of the marketplace. Our consultants have extensive expertise in their practice area and the information reported is based on extensive interaction with hiring managers, HR professionals and in-house recruiters as well as data extracted from our own database and internal research resources. As with all reports that detail salary information and trends, we represent the mainstream view and we recognise there will be individual situations that fall outside the data published. This survey is therefore a guide to general movement in the sector. Please contact us for further information or for clarification on any of the compensation trends detailed in this report.

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