Pure Executive

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An insight into non-executive director appointments across the Eastern Region

_eading executive search specialists



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Foreword

Pure Executive is pleased to present this report to support organisations and individuals with their board and non-executive appointments. While we operate UK-wide and beyond, the Eastern Region, with its rich and diverse business community, is our heartland. It is dominated by SMEs including private, familyowned, private equity backed and start-ups with a small number of listed businesses.

Over the past 3 years, the proportion of our mandates for non-executive director (NED) and chair appointments has increased considerably and there is a noticeable trend amongst privately owned businesses, to strengthen their boards through NED appointments. They are benefitting from independent counsel, richer strategic debate and improved governance and their expectations from these appointments have increased, both in terms of time and contribution within the boardroom.

These trends reflect a growing awareness that NEDs have an important role to play in guiding an organisation in an increasingly complex world, alongside the burgeoning pressures on, and expectations of, businesses. Appointing NEDs is seen as an achievable way for organisations to bring an independent viewpoint, strategic guidance, greater diversity of thinking and breadth of experience to their boardrooms without disrupting the organisation's momentum having or to restructure the whole board.

In light of the growing demands placed on NEDs, we have seen a marked increase in the request for remuneration benchmarking to ensure companies remain aligned to market trends and are rewarding their NEDs fairly and credibly for their contribution.

A large proportion of our clients are privatelyowned businesses (and often family-owned), some of which either haven't recruited for a their first or are making lona period independent NED appointment. lt is encouraging to observe their willingness to look outside their own network to appoint in a very considered way and they are often surprised (and delighted) at the quality of candidates available when using a reputable search firm.

The insights contained in this report will help shape and inform the appointment process that boards adopt, whilst providing useful insight to prospective and experienced NEDs. It offers thought-provoking observations on the evolving nature of NED and chair appointments within private businesses and provides some context alongside the role of listed company NEDs.

Readers will hear from experienced NEDs and chairs, who provide an overview of their contribution; receive insights into what to consider when hiring or taking on a NED role; and gain access to remuneration benchmarking across the region.

The knowledge contained in this report is a distillation of our expertise in the appointment of NEDs, which we hope will prove a useful resource for both boards and candidates alike.

We'd like to thank the non-executives who shared their insights and time with us, that support the significance of the themes being raised by this research.

Lynn Walters

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What makes an effective non-executive director?

A rewarding and challenging role

The world of corporate governance has undergone a sea-change in recent years, with an ever-greater emphasis on transparency, accountability and responsibility. Priorities and challenges for boards are heavily focused on the agenda, strengthening leadership people capability, financial performance, new technologies and business transformation, ESG strategic and improving debate in the boardroom. In this context, non-executive directors have a crucial role to play, adding value by serving as an independent voice that challenges and guides the board in its strategic decision-making. It is a demanding role that requires extensive experience and a particular skill set.

When there is good chemistry around the board table and the various personalities, values and intentions are aligned, serving as a NED can be a highly fulfillina and mutually beneficial The combination of experience. strategic influence, professional development and the ability to make a meaningful impact on a company's performance makes the role of a NED very rewarding. Yet there is strong competition for each board vacancy, with the number of applicants currently far outweighing number of high-quality opportunities the available.

Balancing time commitment and reward

Many NEDs share that the time they spend on the role is greater than they expected at the outset. The time commitment undoubtedly fluctuates over the course of a year, with the varying demands of business activities and events such as financial reporting cycles, strategy planning, M&A, performance reviews and succession planning often requiring greater input. A typical NED will contribute at least 18 to 24 days a year per appointment, but it can often be much more than this.

The remuneration typically stays the same no matter what happens throughout the year, and in periods of crisis or change, NEDs will often spend more time fulfilling their responsibilities, utilising their experience to guide and support the executive team.

It may sound obvious, but being an effective NED is very different to being a great executive director. The transition from leading a business with ultimate decision-making authority, to an advisory role where influence is achieved through active listening and insightful questions, is often underestimated.

The fact that someone has had a highly successful career running a company doesn't always guarantee them success as a NED and it can require patience and investment in developing this very different skill set.



Key characteristics

According to research conducted by the peerto-peer board community Critical Eye, the characteristics that most organisations value in a NED, in addition to breadth of experience, include the ability to be a collaborative, supportive team player. They should also be able to constructively challenge, truly listen, avoid interfering with day-to-day operations, and help the board stay focused on strategic business objectives.

Effective NEDs respect their legal duties and have strong principles. They will influence and add value without undermining the board's Providing high level strategic executives. quidance without detailed operational involvement can be difficult. NEDs need to be highly skilled communicators, able to articulate a message succinctly, as well as being adept listeners who can engage with and take on board other people's point of view. It takes time to learn the craft of being an effective NED. One of the ways that candidates can prepare themselves is through specialist NED courses, and spending time with experienced NEDs.

Organisations have higher expectations of their non-executives, and the last few years have seen more debate and research into how NEDs' contributions should be evaluated and remunerated. Long gone are the days when NEDs could simply turn up to a board meeting without doing anything more to prepare than reading the papers. Some of the most effective work performed by NEDs is outside of meetings, and includes mentoring and advising; discussing change, challenges and opportunities; sharing one's networks; and acting as an ambassador for the respective organisation.

The responsibilities can vary considerably, but either way, it tends to be less about the board meetings. NEDs need to be curious, committed and prepared, and willing to lean in when the organisation requires it.



Ultimately, NEDs are there for the benefit of the organisation. its shareholders and its stakeholders - in some ways, it is a selfless role that requires commitment and a willingness to leave one's own ego at the door in order to help guide the board in making good decisions. An effective NED serves an organisation as a critical friend, providing support and an impartial perspective, whilst holding it accountable and ensuring good corporate governance.

Bronagh Kennedy

Bronagh is an experienced independent nonexecutive director and has carried out a wealth of executive and non-executive roles in listed companies across a number of sectors. She serves as a NED on three boards, including Treatt plc, which Pure Executive introduced her to in January 2023. Lynn spoke to Bronagh about her experience as NED on her different Boards.



What appealed to you about becoming a NED?

"With a background as General Counsel to listed businesses and having served on two boards as a NED whilst in my executive roles, I saw the difference that a good NED can make. I decided that I would like to help other organisations through the good and more difficult times, and I enjoy working across a range of different sectors."

Where do you believe that you add the most value?

"My breadth of experience across different sectors and in General Counsel and HR roles is quite unusual. This gives me an opportunity to look at problems from different perspectives. "I approach decisions from an ethical as well as a financial and commercial perspective. I like to look at the wider impact of decisions, not just the financial gain."

What are the qualities that you observe in outstanding NEDs?

"A shared sense of mission. You can see when the NEDs are there to help the business succeed and help the executives make the right decisions. You have got to be brave to voice a different opinion, and that is where you get the most interesting and valuable debate."

How much value do you place on board diversity?

"Diversity is important for challenge and to enable the board to make good decisions. There are many types of diversity, be it social backgrounds, ethnicity, gender and age. Each party will bring a different lived experience that you just cannot get if everyone has a similar background."

Do you have any advice to organisations that are considering introducing NEDs for the first time?

"Firstly, ask yourself why do you want to recruit a NED – what is your objective? What do you want out of it, and what are you asking them to do?"

"Secondly, really listen to what your NEDs say and don't ignore their advice. This doesn't mean that you need to act on everything they say, but do listen to them."

Nick Culley

Nick is an experienced former director of Midwich, a multi-award-winning, audio visual and document solutions technology distributor. He has been non-executive director at TMJ Interiors in Bildeston, Suffolk since January 2022, supporting the board of directors with business growth and succession planning. Jodie and Nick discussed the transition from executive into a non-executive role.



What appealed to you about becoming a NED?

"Fundamentally I was looking for a new challenge after finishing my executive career when we sold Midwich, and wanted to use my business experience to support and make a difference to another company, but in a non-executive capacity. I love personal growth and to stretch and challenge myself – I didn't want to just 'retire'."

What advice would you give anyone considering a first-time NED role?

"Do something that interests and stimulates you, that you are aligned to and where you feel you can really make a difference - so it doesn't feel like a 'commitment'. Know what your boundaries are and what time you are prepared to put in - be aware that it is likely to be more than you originally thought it would be."

"Choose your position well - do your due diligence on the business and its people, the financials as well as its reputation both locally and in the sector. It's important to understand what's going on in the sector and where it is heading; understand what their values and culture are like."

"Dare to be different and be prepared for the change from executive to NED. It can be a very rewarding and fulfilling role and I have really enjoyed working in a different sector and with a new team. A fresh perspective and challenging the norm is healthy for any business, and that's what a NED should deliver."

Do you have any advice to organisations that are considering introducing NEDs for the first time?

"Finding the right NED to support you and the business will bring a different perspective and different point of view, which can be hugely valuable. Even if your business is financially very successful, it is still beneficial to gain an independent view on how it can be run better in terms of people, process and overheads.

"It can be lonely as a founder/CEO - there can be really dark times, so having a NED as a sounding board to lean on can really help. Be prepared for it to be a bit uncomfortable initially as you all get used to each other, and for there being independent challenge."

Considerations for non-executive board appointments

A strategically aligned recruitment process

It's important to ensure any board changes are underpinned and guided by the business strategy. For non-executive appointments, the most effective hires are made when the organisation steps back to ask itself some fundamental questions.

Where will the organisation most benefit from an independent perspective? Is there a particular skill set missing in the boardroom? What is the fundamental objective of appointing a NED, and what is the organisation expecting them to bring to the board table? How will a non-executive support the business

to achieve its strategic goals?

This will help shape the role and enable clear expectations to be set from the start and will determine whether a NED is the best way to achieve this. It's worth investing time at this stage, involving existing board members, shareholders and advisors, to refine the brief and ensure everyone is aligned in the approach.

Following the appointment process, a good induction – during which NEDs are exposed to all areas of the business, its people and its culture, and are encouraged to listen, observe and not rush in – will pay dividends.

A focus on diversity and chemistry

One of the key advantages that organisations stand to gain from appointing a NED is to achieve diversity within the boardroom. The term 'diversity' means many different things. It's important to consider gender balance, race and age, but also the diversity of different perspectives. This can be achieved through backgrounds, different experiences, and outlooks that may reflect the wider organisation and its customer base. This breaks up any homogeneity of thought by bringing different life experiences to the table, whilst obtaining an outsider's more objective view of the organisation and the way that it operates.

However, the primary deciding factor should still be what is best for the business, which is why chemistry is so important when choosing a NED. No matter how exceptional a candidate may be in theory, they must still be able to collaborate and work cohesively alongside other board members. Whilst healthy challenge and debate is critical for an effective board, it can be very hard work if there are underlying personality clashes.

Effective boards pay close attention to this aspect and will often spend time together outside of meetings. For example, in the case of boards with more than one NED, combining board meetings with a dinner can be a good way to build relationships and discuss relevant issues in a less formal setting.



Fair and credible remuneration

Remuneration for NED roles is a big topic in itself. On the face of it, the reward may seem generous when working just a few days per month on average; however, the reality is often very different. The legal and reputational risks have gone up, as well as the time commitment.

Few people choose to become NEDs purely for the financial reward. Instead, they tend to do it for the opportunity to give back, mentor and help shape the fortunes of the organisation. It enables them to stay current, connected and involved in the business world.

It provides an opportunity for ongoing professional development and sometimes an opportunity to work in a new sector, with many reporting that they enjoy the intellectual challenge and stimulation that building a portfolio NED career brings.

Either way, most experienced NEDs could be earning significantly more through offering consultancy services or through their wider business interests. It is therefore important that the remuneration they are offered is both fair and credible.

Shaping the recruitment experience

The recruitment experience for NEDs is different to that of executive hires and it is important to remember it is a two-way decision. A professional well-run appointment process will reflect well on the organisation and ensures that the best hiring outcome is achieved. It is good practice to involve the whole board and seek consensus as much as possible. This way everyone collectively owns the decision and understands the reason for appointing the chosen candidate.

Historically, many privately owned organisations have relied on their own networks for their NED hires. Whilst there are many examples of where this has worked well, there is a strong likelihood that the appointed individual will have very similar backgrounds and experiences, missing the opportunity for diversity.

By working with an independent search firm such as Pure Executive, organisations will gain access to a far broader network of candidates, who have been carefully assessed and where due diligence has been completed.

Adopting a well thought through, robust appointment process helps organisations shape what they want from their NEDs, and results in a far richer appointment than if they had relied on their own network.

Sarah Evans

Sarah is a qualified chartered accountant and former partner at Ernst & Young London, where she specialised in forensic accounting. She has a wealth of NED experience, including serving on the boards of The Wine Society, AF Group and Herongate Capital. Pure Executive worked with Sarah in her role as Chair of the East Anglian Air Ambulance, to appoint two trustees. Lynn and Sarah spoke about the qualities that an effective NED can bring to a board.



What did you do to prepare to transition from an executive to a NED role?

"Having an 'executive career' in an advisory role provides very good preparation. A career as a Partner means that I am used to offering ideas and providing challenge. I would advise anyone taking on a new role to just observe during the first few meetings. Talk to the experienced NEDs, particularly if they have corporate experience themselves. The best boards have members that reach out to one another in between meetings, and the NEDs on any of my boards have always been very helpful and supportive."

Where do you believe you add most value?

"In supporting and mentoring the CEO and helping them to do their job better. Ensuring the board works collaboratively with the executive team and identifying and recruiting good board members, so that the board works well together and is collegiate whilst still bringing the necessary challenge."

What are the qualities that you observe in outstanding NEDs?

"Outstanding NEDs are people that have the ability to listen, think and ask questions without trying to dominate the conversation. They don't come into meetings with too many assumptions; and they have broad experience with scars and empathy. If you've had to deal with a crisis, it is likely to be a valuable experience you can draw on."

"Another key quality is to be non-judgemental. The best NEDs are those that don't presume, but instead ask, listen, take things at face value and suspend judgement."

Do you have any advice to organisations that are considering introducing NEDs for the first time?

"Be very clear about the experience that you want to bring into the business so that you have a balanced board with different skills. Cast the net wide. Use a valued search partner, and try not to just go to your existing network."

Paul Hooper

Paul is the CEO of AIM-listed Alumasc Group plc. His earlier career was with BTR plc, Williams Holdings and Rexam plc. Pure Executive introduced Paul to the board of AIM-listed Titon Holdings Plc as a NED in 2022. Paul is now Senior Independent Director at Titon plc. He and Lynn spoke about securing his first NED appointment.



What appealed about becoming a NED?

"Through my own experience, I've seen both great and not-so-great NEDs, and felt I had something to offer. At present, I am still working in a busy CEO role for an AIM-listed business, and when I eventually retire, I hope to have a portfolio of non-executive roles. I am told that securing your first NED role can be the most challenging and this role has helped me plan for my future. Business is my passion, I want to keep my brain busy, and I feel that I have a lot to contribute."

Where do you believe you add most value?

"There is a good synergy between Alumasc and Titon, and my knowledge of the sector, manufacturing operations, and health and safety are all very relevant. In addition, I share my connections, bring a focus on results and mentor the CEO. The board has been involved in succession and the appointment of a new CEO, which has been an important part of the role over the past year.

"Alumasc has a very similar manufacturing plant to the facility at Titon, and I was able to bring the Titon directors to one of our newer facilities to share ideas."

How do you stay connected to the business without interfering?

"It is important not to undermine the CEO, particularly if the business is facing some challenges. The most important thing is to be well-prepared for meetings – read the papers. Be considerate. And don't come across as a 'know it all'."

What are the qualities that you most admire in outstanding NEDS?

"The best NEDs that I have encountered have valuable business knowledge and are prepared to share their experience without telling anyone what they should do. They are fun to be around, and willing to meet outside of meetings. They are bright, interested in the business, and very loyal to the organisation."

Do you have any advice to organisations that are considering introducing NEDs for the first time?

"Be clear about your objectives. Don't recruit someone that you know without considering others first of all. Think about the mix of backgrounds and experiences you have on your board. An NED that has run an organisation, and knows what it's like to be in your shoes will be extremely beneficial."

Remuneration benchmarking Private businesses in the Eastern Region

Company	NED Remuneration	Chair Remuneration	Time Commitment
Food/Beverage manufacturer Large company Suffolk	£44,000	Not disclosed - post held by family member.	24 days per year including 8 Board meetings
Services Group Large company Suffolk	£30,000 Committee Chair: +£5000	Unknown	24 days a year
Agriculture Large company Cambridgeshire	£42,000	Not disclosed - post held by family member.	20 days a year
Niche retail and distribution Large Cambridgeshire	£35,000	Not disclosed - post held by family member.	18 days a year
Niche service sector Large Cambridgeshire	£36,000	Not disclosed - post held by family member.	20 days annually (11 board, 2 strategy days and ad hoc commitments)
Specialist services Large Norfolk	£30,000	£65,000	16 days a year
Retail Medium company Norfolk	£20,000	Unknown	12 days a year including quarterly Board meetings
Property Medium company Cambridgeshire	£36,000	Not disclosed - post held by family member.	10 board meetings, strategy days and ad hoc commitments
Retail Medium company Suffolk	£38,000	£65,000	18 days a year (likely 22 with additional commitments)
Manufacturer Medium company Suffolk	£1,200 per day	No Chair	1 day a week + annual strategy day
Retail Medium Norfolk	£40,000	Not disclosed - post held by family member.	24 days per year including 6 board meetings + 2-day strategy session
Specialist distribution Medium company Cambridgeshire	No NEDs	£80,000	4 days a month
Facilities Management Medium Essex	£1,500 a day	None	4.5 days a month
Construction Medium Suffolk	£36,000	None	c18 days a year, 11 board, 1 strategy + ad hoc
Renewable Energy Medium Suffolk	£34,000	None	18 days a year
Niche service and logistics Medium Norfolk	None	£52,000	18-20 days a year
Specialist distribution and retail, Medium company Cambridgeshire	None	£50,000	3 days a month
Financial Services Small/Medium Suffolk	£24,000	£50,000	24 days per year

Remuneration benchmarking FTSE AIM listed companies in the Eastern Region

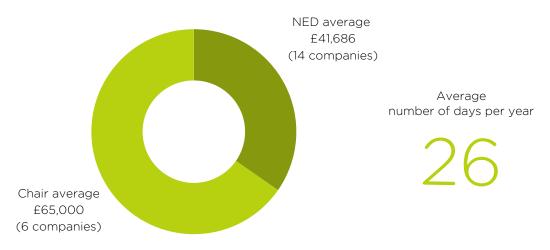
Company	NED Remuneration	Chair Remuneration	Time Commitment
Midwich Group PLC Norfolk £1.3b turnover	£46,000 - £48,000	£90,000	10 Board meetings 3 Nomination Committee meetings 3 Remuneration Committee meetings 3 Audit Committee meetings
CVS Group PLC Norfolk £608.3m turnover	£48,000 - £51,000	£125,000	11 Board meetings 3 Audit Committee meetings 4 Remuneration Committee meetings 4 Nomination Committee meetings
Naked Wines PLC Norfolk £354m turnover	NED: £40,000 Committee Chair: +£5,000	£100,000	18 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 3 Remuneration Committee meetings 3 Nomination Committee meetings
Avingtrans Plc Cambridgeshire £116.4m turnover	£39,000 - £42,000	£82,000	Minimum 10 Board meetings per year
Angling Direct PLC Norfolk £81.7m turnover	£39,000	£54,780	8 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 5 Remuneration Committee meetings
SDI Group plc Cambridgeshire £67.6m turnover	£39,000	£69,000	11 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 5 Remuneration Committee meetings 2 Nomination Committee meetings
Virgin Wines UK PLC Norfolk £59m turnover	£52,000	£72,800	11 Board meetings 3 Remuneration Committee meetings 3 Audit Committee meetings
Aferian plc Cambridgeshire \$47.8m turnover	£55,763	£123,917	13 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 2 Nomination Committee meetings
Tristel plc Cambridgeshire £36m turnover	£40,000	£80,000	8 Board meetings 4 Committee meetings
1Spatial Plc Cambridgeshire £32.3m turnover	£46,000	£81,000	11 Board meetings 2 Audit Committee meetings 3 Remuneration Committee meetings
Concurrent Technologies Plc Essex £31.7m turnover	£32,749	£55,673	9 Board meetings 5 Audit Committee meetings 4 Remuneration Committee meetings 1 Nomination Committee meetings
Quartix Technologies plc Cambridgeshire £29.9m turnover	£44,000	£80,000	11 Board meetings 2 Audit Committee meetings 1 Remuneration Committee meeting
LPA Group PLC Essex £21.7m turnover	£35,000 - £37,000	£60,000	9 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 2 Remuneration Committee meetings 1 AGM
Checkit Plc Cambridgeshire £12m turnover	£41,000	£102,000	8 Board meetings 3 Audit Committee meetings 6 Remuneration Committee meetings

Remuneration benchmarking FTSE listed companies in the Eastern Region

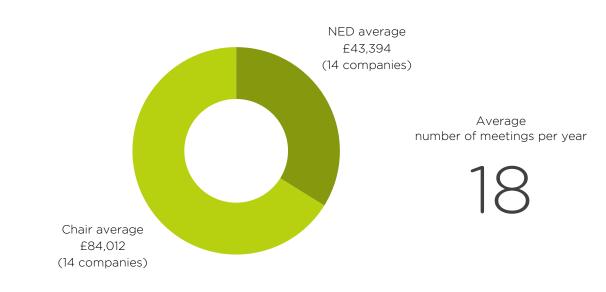
Company	NED Remuneration	Chair Remuneration	Number of Board meetings
AstraZeneca plc Cambridgeshire, \$46b turnover LSE Main Market	NED: £95,000 SID or RemCo Chair: +£40,000 Audit Chair: +£45,000 Audit member: +£25,000 RemCo member: +£20,000	£800,000	 8 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 6 Remuneration Committee meetings 6 Nomination Committee meetings 9 Science Committee meetings 2 Sustainability Committee meetings
Hilton Food Group plc Cambridgeshire, £4b turnover LSE Main Market	NED: £58,000 SID: +£10,000 Sustainability member: +£10,000 Audit and RemCo Chair: +£12,000	£280,000 rising 5% in 2024	9 Board meetings
Synthomer plc Essex, £1.97b turnover LSE Main Market	NED: £46,597 SID: +£10,000 Committee member: +£15,000 Committee Chair: +£10,000	£244,400	14 Board meetings6 Audit Committee meetings4 Remuneration Committee meetings6 Nomination Committee meetings8 Disclosure Committee meetings
Darktrace plc Cambridgeshire, \$545.4m turnover LSE Main Market	NED: £60,000 Committee member: +£7,500 Audit or Remuneration Chair +£7,500 Nomination Committee Chair: +£3,750 Employee Engagement NED: +£5,000	£215,000	6 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 4 Remuneration Committee meetings 3 Nomination Committee meetings
Porvair plc Norfolk, £176m turnover LSE Main Market	£44,000 Committee Chair: +£7,500	£106,000	6 arranged meetings + ad hoc
Treatt plc Suffolk, £147m turnover LSE Main market	NED: £51,000 Main Committee Chair: +£10,000 Chair of ESG Panel: +£5,000 US Advisor: +£5,000	£124,000	7 Board meetings 4 Audit Committee meetings 4 Nomination Committee meetings 4 Audit committee meetings
Xaar plc Cambridgeshire, £70.6m turnover LSE Main Market	£50,148	£131,223	11 scheduled meetings
Ecofin Global Utilities and Infrastructure Trust plc Essex, £11.8m income LSE Main Market	NED: £29,000 Audit Chair: £33,000	£40,000	4 Board meetings 3 Audit Committee meetings 1 Management Engagement meeting 2 Remuneration Committee meetings
Rights and Issues Investment Trust plc Essex, £4m income LSE Main Market	NED: £28,500 Committee Chair: £32,750	£38,000	7 Board meetings 6 Committee meetings

Data analysis

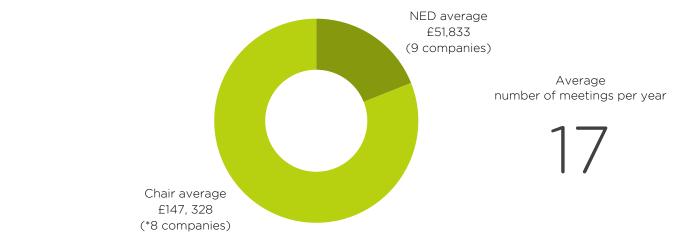
Remuneration benchmarking Private businesses in the Eastern Region



Remuneration benchmarking FTSE AIM listed companies in the Eastern Region



Remuneration benchmarking FTSE listed companies in the Eastern Region



*FTSE listed companies chair average excludes Astrazeneca *average number of meetings includes Committee meetings *average NED fees excludes additional uplift for chairing committees

About Pure Executive

Pure Executive, the executive search division of Pure, is a leading boutique recruitment specialist founded in 2002. Our experienced team delivers executive and non-executive appointments across the UK and beyond for interim and permanent roles.

Over the last four years, we've completed 150 executive, non-executive director, and chair appointments. Our portfolio includes family-owned businesses, FTSE-listed companies, fast-growth firms, private equity-backed enterprises, and public sector organisations. We create balanced and diverse shortlists that offer exceptional leadership talent.

Our team places chairs, non-executive directors, and executives in roles such as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, managing director, chief financial officer, chief people officer, operations director, procurement/supply chain director, chief marketing officer, chief commercial officer and chief technology officer.

For over 20 years, we have helped clients build diverse, high-performing boards and inclusive cultures. Trusted to deliver top appointments, we innovate to find hidden gems in our network and the market.

Our holistic approach blends rigorous search, individual assessment, and consultancy to help clients make confident hiring decisions and build outstanding teams. Our bespoke leadership development and executive coaching support clients and candidates in creating sustainable workplaces.

Nurturing lasting relationships with clients and candidates is central to our ethos, providing a positive, insightful, and supportive executive search experience. If you would like to discuss board appointments, we would love to hear from you.

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