



UK EDITION

# CASA UK COMMUNICATIONS & CORPORATE AFFAIRS TURNOVER REPORT

2025

ITHACA  
PARTNERS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



[WWW.ITHACAPARTNERS.CO.UK](http://WWW.ITHACAPARTNERS.CO.UK)

[WWW.CASA-PARTNERS.COM](http://WWW.CASA-PARTNERS.COM)

## ABOUT CASA

---

CASA (the Corporate Affairs Search Alliance) is the group of like-minded Corporate Affairs search firms which comes together in support of clients and candidates. Each CASA member is the number one or number two Corporate Affairs and Communications specialist search firm in their home market. We have very similar values, ethics and high professional standards, and we are friends who enjoy working together.

CASA members have businesses which are structured in different ways and are independent. What brings us together is our commitment to excellence in Corporate Affairs search, and the great outcomes we provide for those we work with.

All CASA member firms are dedicated to the promise of **'Making Corporate Affairs Better'** and as the name suggests, our vision is for CASA to be **'the home of Corporate Affairs'** for leaders of the profession, wherever in the world they are.

## CASA MEMBERS

---

### addison

Addison (Ireland)  
addison.ie



Exeter Search (France)  
exetersearch.com



Herman Rutgers Executive & Interim Search (Netherlands)  
hermanrutgers.nl

### ITHACA

PARTNERS

Ithaca Partners (UK)  
ithacapartners.co.uk



Patino Associates (US)  
patinoassociates.com



PRCC (Germany & the Dach region)  
prcc-personal.de

# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to the inaugural CASA annual survey of turnover amongst the Communications and Corporate Affairs leadership in the UK's top companies.

Communications and Corporate Affairs (CCA) functions have changed faster than any other corporate function in recent years. Developments in technology and communication practices among audiences and stakeholder groups show no signs of stabilising. Stakeholder activism has become more intrusive as news cycles have accelerated. Now any company can become a sudden focus of unexpected, often unwanted, attention.

Alongside that of the Chief Executive, no corporate role has been more affected than that of the top communications professional, the Corporate Affairs Director (though titles vary<sup>1</sup>). This research report is the start of a long-term effort to assess the impacts of these changes on the individuals appointed to Corporate Affairs roles in the UK. Initially we compare the UK with trends in other major national markets for CCA talent, as a starting point to building longitudinal UK comparisons over future years.

## WHY A CASA TURNOVER STUDY?

The Corporate Affairs Search Alliance (CASA) is a multi-national group of like-minded Corporate Affairs search firms in

Europe and the USA. Each CASA member – Ithaca Partners in the UK – is the number one or number two Corporate Affairs specialist search firm in its home market.

Every search brief increases our understanding of our clients' evolving needs, and the factors driving their recruitment decisions. Similarly, every conversation with director-level practitioners tells us more about the considerations which attract rising stars and established talent.

One year ago our US member, Patino Associates, launched a study of annual changes in the market for Chief Communications Officers in the USA. The response was overwhelmingly favourable, with clients and candidates alike appreciating information on their own professional field, complementing widely-available surveys covering the CEO and CFO markets.

Building on last year's learning from the US market, we have now progressed to monitoring the UK and other European markets, with the UK dominating numerically as the largest centre of CCA activity, due to its continuing scale as a centre for international financing alongside its substantial domestic economy. This year's UK report<sup>2</sup> covers the FTSE-100 companies.

1. For the US and multinational editions, CASA uses "Corporate Communications Officer / CCO" as the primary descriptor of the role, reflecting widespread US practice.

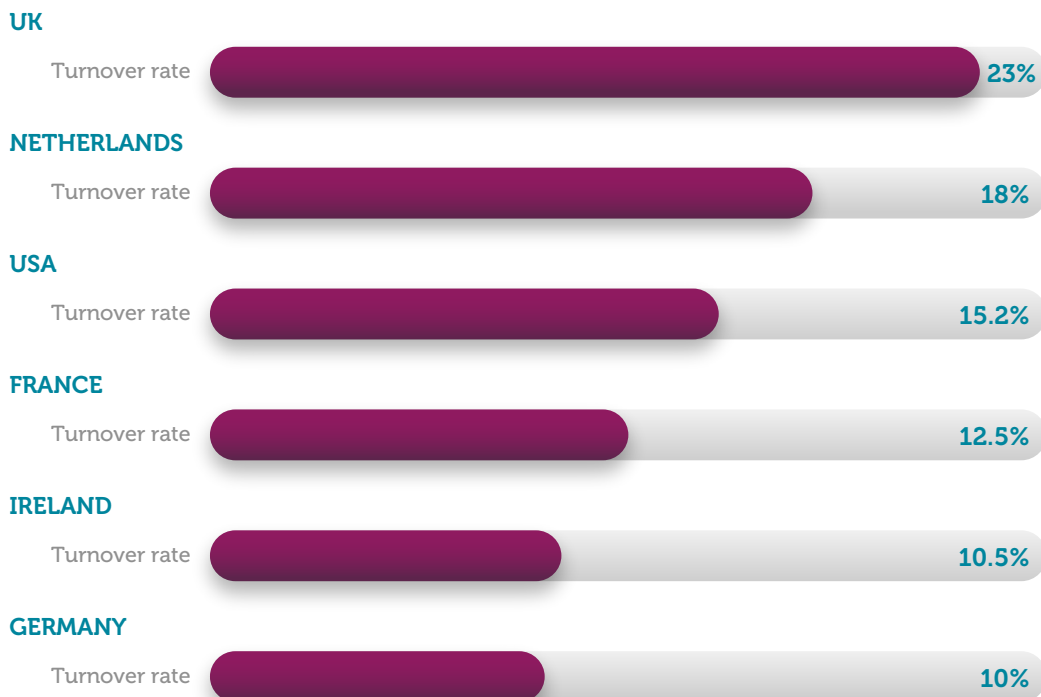
2. Comparative data in this report are drawn from the Fortune 500 companies in the USA, the CAC 40 in France, the DAX 40 in Germany, 19 of the ISEQ 20 companies in Ireland, and 17 of the AEX 25 companies in The Netherlands. Full CASA reports at Global, US and European levels are available on request.

# A TURBULENT YEAR FOR UK COMMUNICATORS

## UK Corporate Affairs leadership turnover outstrips the European average

2024 was a volatile year for Corporate Affairs leadership in the UK, with changes at nearly one in four Corporate Affairs Director positions, twice the rate of many other national markets. There were strong variations between national markets.

### Turnover



## VARIATIONS IN TENURE BROADLY REFLECT TURNOVER RATES

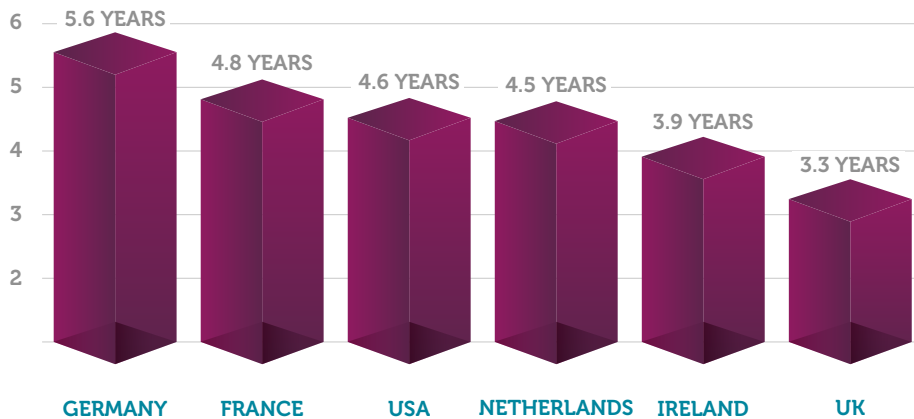
High turnover in the UK’s FTSE 100 can be seen in its low average length of tenure for Corporate Affairs Directors. At 3.3 years it is a year less than the European and US averages.

In the largest 20 FTSE-listed companies by revenue, tenure was worse still, averaging just 2.4 years, so from the Corporate Affairs perspective “bigger” is

not necessarily “better” when it comes to ‘stickability’ at companies.

At the more stable end of the spectrum, German communicators enjoy the longest tenure of any country surveyed, more than two years longer than those in the UK.

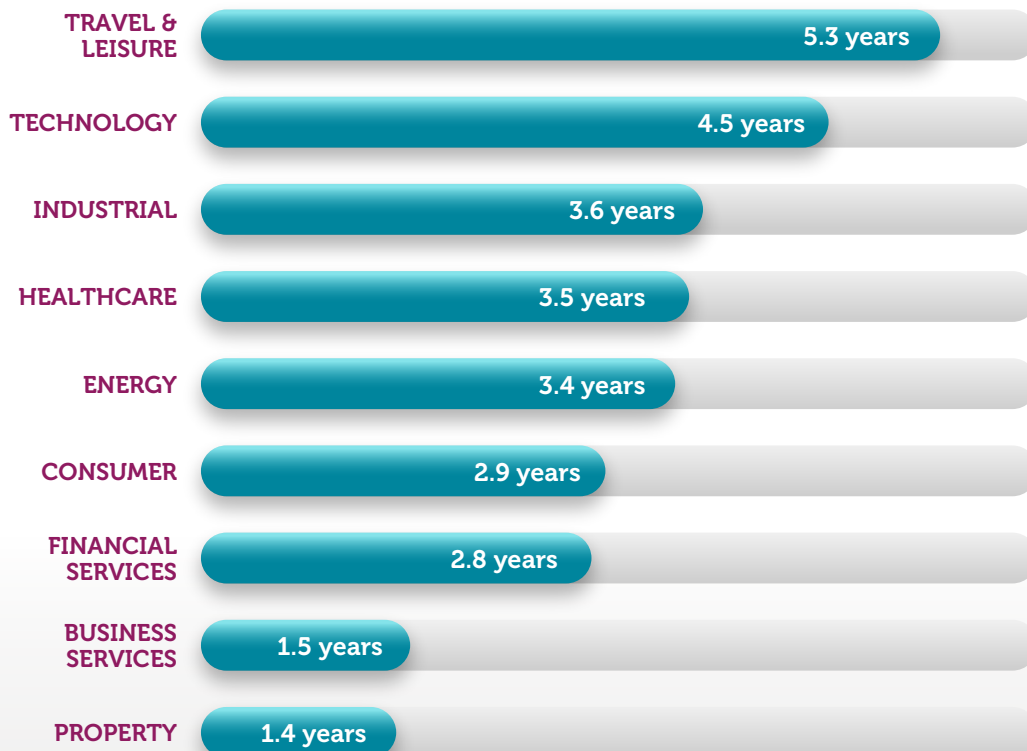
### Tenure



Within the UK, we found distinct variations in tenure amongst different sectors of the economy. Corporate Affairs directors in Travel & Leisure, Technology and Industrial companies have above-average tenure, while

in Financial Services, Business Services and Property there are higher rates of churn. While sample sizes are in some cases small, we shall continue to monitor this over time.

### Length of Tenure by Sector



## FACTORS DRIVING TURNOVER

A change in the overall leadership of a company is a classic catalyst for change in communications leadership. The UK's recent high rate of CEO turnover, which has been noted by several independent reports, is therefore likely to be one factor driving volatility for Corporate Affairs Directors.

We believe changes in the political climate are likely to have been an additional factor in UK market volatility in 2024, especially in cases where Public Affairs skills and relationships are embedded in the Corporate Affairs role. Following the summer 2024 election, in which Labour ended a 15-year sequence of Conservative-dominated governments, we anticipate that some further impact from that change may play out in the 2025 job market.

More broadly, in the UK as across all the national markets we cover, we are seeing changes in the skill sets desired by employers. Interlinked changes in technology, politics and financial markets are moving the goalposts on how companies are perceived, and how they can make themselves heard. The roadways of social media have bridged the oceans that once separated islands of neatly-segmented audiences. Formerly isolated stakeholder groups can now compare what they are being told, and can pool their efforts tactically. Successful corporate campaigning techniques must therefore now draw more from the worlds of politicians and NGOs than from classical corporate marketing techniques.

From this point of view it is perhaps significant that in the UK, while many of the new appointments were direct replacements for existing roles, nearly half (10 of the 23) were newly-created roles.

## WHO IS BEING HIRED?

The balance of successful external versus internal candidates was near-equilibrium, with a narrow majority of hires being from outside the employing company. We noted that every one of the external hires joined from a different industry, highlighting the portability of the Corporate Affairs skill-set across sectors. However, previous experience at the top level of corporate communication was seen as much more important, with around three

quarters of external appointees having previous experience at Corporate Affairs Director level before joining their new company.

A similar balance of internal versus external appointments is evident in mainland Europe, but by comparison, in the USA, 66% of hires during the year were external, which we see as a rising trend. As the top communications role has become elevated in seniority in the USA in recent times, many companies have had to look outside, finding it more difficult to bridge the capability gap between the person leaving and their leading deputy. We have also observed an increase in companies seeking to short-list both internal and external candidates, using the recruitment process to assess the capability gap between their internal talent and communications leaders at other companies.

## COMMS OUTSOURCING

One step beyond bringing in Corporate Affairs leadership candidates from other industries is outsourcing the whole role to an external supplier. While not uncommon, this practice is unevenly distributed by country. In the UK, 13 companies (13%) outsource their communications function to private consulting firms, these companies tending to be low-profile organisations with low engagement needs, such as investment trusts. Such a degree of outsourcing is not widely seen in the USA or elsewhere in Europe, apart from Ireland where a significant number of international holding companies in the ISEQ 20 place their main communications efforts in locations where they have more customers and financial stakeholders.

UK outsourcing suppliers at the time of research were: Brunswick/FGS Global (5), Teneo (2), FTI (2), Powerscourt (2), Novella (1), Rowbell (1), and Maitland (1).

## THE ZERO OPTION

A small minority of UK companies, 5%, take a different approach by distributing the traditional responsibilities of a Corporate Affairs Director among more junior communications staff reporting into commercial management, or in some cases going without specialised communications roles altogether. This proportion is broadly even across all countries in CASA's research.

## GENDER BALANCE IN EVIDENCE

The communications industry has been at the forefront of seeking diversity in its ranks at all levels, and the effects are noticeable in the UK’s most senior positions.

Ten of the UK Corporate Affairs directors placed in 2024 were women, while eight were men, fitting with the overall picture in which women narrowly lead men in their occupancy of the UK’s Corporate Affairs Director roles, much as they do across Europe as a whole.

In the UK, 53% of currently filled FTSE-100 positions are occupied by women, 47% by men. However, among the top 20 UK companies by revenue, men have a slight advantage, accounting for 63% of top level communications positions currently filled.

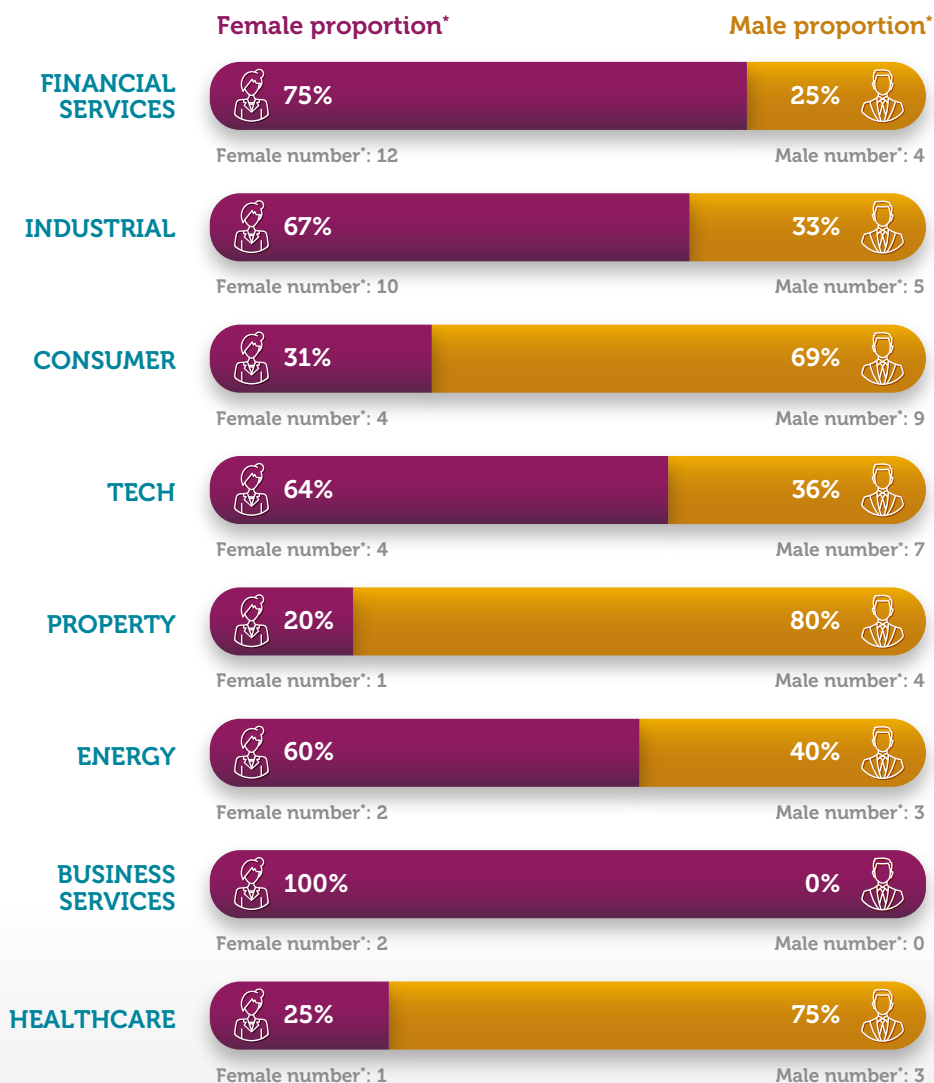
The same gender split is visible in the 177 occupied

European positions surveyed. Again, 53% are held by women and 47% by men (84). In Europe, in 2024 men were installed in the Corporate Affairs Director role at a higher rate than women, despite women occupying more such roles, but it remains to be seen whether this is a one-year outlier, and we will monitor it during 2025.

The UK and European gender pictures are distinctly more evenly balanced than that of the USA, where women occupy 68% of communications leadership positions in the Fortune 500.

We found marked sectoral differences between male and female occupancy of UK Corporate Affairs Director roles, with women strongly dominating in financial services firms, while men held a higher proportion of positions in consumer, healthcare and property categories.

### UK Male / Female sectoral occupancy



\*excludes positions vacant at time of survey

## PRESENTATION AND POSITIONING OF THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP ROLE

Only 32% of communications leaders in the FTSE 100 have “Communications” in their title, while “Corporate” (52%) and “Affairs” (44%) are far more common.

For some years we have informally noted companies reshaping the top communications role in large companies, to embrace additional responsibilities in a broader Corporate Affairs context. At present, to the extent that is reflected in job titles, FTSE-100 companies are evenly split. The job titles in 36 of 71 occupied positions (51%) are “Communications only” while 35 of 71 (49%) either have “Communications”

mentioned alongside some other responsibility, or do not mention the word “Communications” in their title at all, despite carrying the highest level of communications accountability in the company. Top non-Communication titles include: Corporate Affairs (16), Sustainability (4), Brand (3), IR (3), and External Affairs (2).

Anecdotally, we believe this proportion of broader responsibilities in job titles is increasing, making it a subject to which we shall return in future reports as we build up more data.

## SECTION 2

# PERSONAL INSIGHT



*The UK stakeholder universe is one of the toughest and most aggressive, making the UK home to some of the most capable Corporate Affairs and Communications talent in the world. Media and political attitudes to business can be cynical, and relationships with unions and NGOs are often fractious. The buoyancy of the Corporate Affairs market in 2024 reflects CEOs' very real appetite to upgrade their top talent in this area – it's tough out there and they need expert judgement within easy reach. Interestingly, Communications teams are under the same budget pressure as everyone else, but the number one role is usually too crucial for CEOs to think of doing without it.*

**Alex Gordon Shute**  
Ithaca Partners, UK



# CONCLUSION

The UK in 2024 was something of an outlier in terms of volatility for Corporate Affairs Directors, assessed against the comparative stability of both Europe and the USA.

**W**hen we revisit the research at the end of 2025 for next year's report we will be interested to see if that continues. With the world arguably in a period of reduced geopolitical and economic stability, we expect companies to continue to seek to refresh the balances of skills and experience in their corporate affairs leadership.

It may be that the recent changes of government in the UK and USA, upcoming elections in Europe, and current unpopularity of incumbent governments, are combining to make the timing of elections a driver of CCO turnover, but more longitudinal data will be needed to form a clearer picture.

Meanwhile, the stature of the Corporate Affairs role in the organization is being maintained at the high level it has achieved over the last five years in the UK. Within a company's top management this is the role most connected to the responsibility for understanding the impact of changes in the outside environment and helping the company stay in touch. As economic, politics and public attitudes influence the commercial context for business, Corporate Affairs practitioners keep having to lead adaptation and the acquisition of new skills.

## SECTION 4

# METHODOLOGY

The 2025 UK CCA Turnover Study measures the turnover of the senior-most Communications and Corporate Affairs executives while also evaluating the types of candidates coming to occupy these increasingly critical roles within a corporation's executive team.

The member firms of the Corporate Affairs Search Alliance (CASA) examined 217 companies in France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, noting personnel and organizational changes within the Communications/Corporate Affairs roles and structures.

Leveraging the proprietary databases of CASA-members firms, as well as publicly available information, we sought to quantitatively ascertain the following:

- Whether a company had changed its top corporate affairs professional during the calendar year of 2024. In each case, a change meant that a new individual occupied the most senior role. "Internal Hires" as discussed in the report are not the same person being promoted (e.g. VP, Communications to SVP, Communications)
- Whether the incoming Corporate Affairs director was an internal promotion or an external hire
- If the current role was either newly created or substantially different structurally (with either greater or lesser responsibility) than that of the predecessor
- If the incoming Corporate Affairs director had previously served in a comparable role as the head of corporate communications or corporate affairs for either a publicly traded or private company
- Whether the incoming Corporate Affairs director previously worked in the industry of his/ her current employer
- Rates of change amongst the above criteria by industry

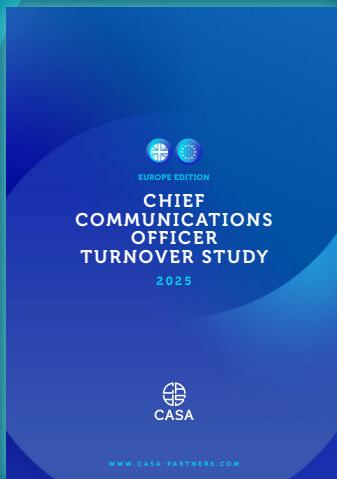
This data was then discussed among CASA member company principals, clients, and various industry executives. These conversations informed our qualitative commentary and insight included throughout the study. The 2025 CCA Turnover Study contains data running through to 31 December, 2024.

# ITHACA

PARTNERS

3rd Floor  
18 King William Street  
London EC4N 7BP, UK  
+44 (0)20 3411 8020

[enquiries@ithacapartners.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ithacapartners.co.uk)



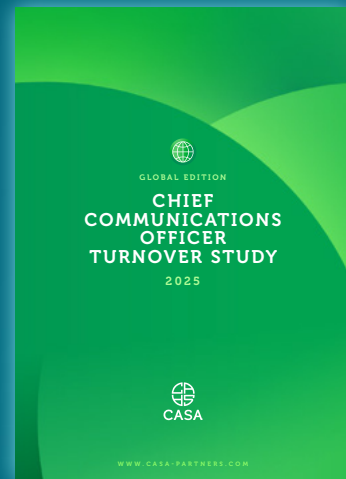
## CCO TURNOVER STUDY 2025 Europe Edition

A European report that covers all of the non-U.S. data.



## CCO TURNOVER STUDY 2025 US Edition

A US Report that builds on last year's research, with richer insights due to the increased number of companies.



## CCO TURNOVER STUDY 2025 Global Edition

A Global Report that looks at the full set of data.

To request a copy of either the Global, US or European edition of the CCO reports, contact CASA at [info@casapartners.com](mailto:info@casapartners.com)



[WWW.CASA-PARTNERS.COM](http://WWW.CASA-PARTNERS.COM)