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Pay and Benefits  
 Training and Development  
 Career Development  
 Working Conditions  
 Company Culture



**Facts and Figures**

**Total Staff:** 585,000 worldwide (44,000 in the UK)  
**Locations:** 110 countries, with headquarters at Crawley, West Sussex  
**Sector:** Security  
**Annual Turnover:** £5.94 billion (2008)

**Biggest Plus**

Multiple business lines and 110 countries make for a world of opportunity

**Greatest Challenge**

Building up the capabilities required to support the move into strategic solutions

**Summary**

G4S is an international security solutions group, specialising in outsourced business processes in sectors where security and safety risks are considered a strategic threat. The group operates in 110 countries and employs 585,000 people (44,000 in the UK), making it the FTSE's largest employer. G4S is quoted on the London and Copenhagen stock exchanges and has its global headquarters at Crawley, near London's Gatwick Airport. Group turnover in 2008 was nearly £6 billion, up from £4.9 billion in 2007, while profits rose from £339m to £416m. The UK accounts for about 15% of group turnover.



G4S PLC

**About the Organisation**

G4S was the result of the 2004 merger of two security giants, Group 4 and Securicor. It is best known to the public for its helmeted security officers and black-windowed prison vans, but this belies the wide range of what G4S actually does. Manned security and event security are still a big slice of its business, but the company also conducts risk consultancy, develops and supplies innovative technology, tags offenders, builds and runs prisons and detention centres, screens baggage at airports from Heathrow to Baghdad, and even clears land mines from conflict zones.

When it talks about specialising in strategic security, it isn't joking: the group's major clients include high-security government locations across the world. And the armoured vans that collect and deliver wads of notes are just the tip of an iceberg of increasingly sophisticated cash management systems.

Increasing sophistication are the key watchwords at G4S, as it seeks to move away from traditional, low-margin, labour-intensive security operations towards higher-margin 'solutions' and long-term partnerships. The main focus is areas where security is of strategic importance, such as oil and gas, aviation and

seaports, with the company even running entire facilities on behalf of clients. "We want organisations to outsource their risk to us," says the group's CEO, Nick Buckles.

The group is always adding new capabilities, both via mergers and acquisitions (more than 100 since the 'big one' in 2004) and by recruiting individuals with relevant sector experience.

"It's good to see how our strategy is making us more attractive to people with a variety of skills and backgrounds who might not have considered a career in security five years ago because it wasn't 'sexy' enough," says G4S's group HR director, Irene Cowden. "A key challenge is to acquire or develop organically the capabilities needed to sustain our new strategic direction," Buckles adds.

**Company Culture**

G4S believes in giving people room to manoeuvre. "There are only just over 100 people at head office and that's deliberate, because too much centralisation stifles an organisation and slows it down," says Cowden. "Our managers are allowed considerable autonomy. We draw the box for people but within that there's a lot of freedom on how



to deliver, and the people who thrive at G4S are those who like to take accountability and responsibility.”

“There’s a very friendly culture in the organisation, and you get a very positive response wherever you go in the world,” says Buckles. “We’ve always been very open in terms of communication and there’s very little internal politics.” Cowden adds: “New recruits, often at senior levels, are pleasantly surprised by the warmth with which they – and their ideas – are welcomed. We’re not afraid of innovation and new ideas.”

Collaboration is a major focus. “One of the ways in which we add most to the business through our huge geographical reach is by

identifying best practice and sharing it across the group,” says Cowden. “This is a highly ‘networked’ organisation and ideas don’t necessarily have to reach the top in order to be shared effectively. It helps us to move very quickly and not be too bureaucratic.”

The company expects high performance from people, and plenty of commitment. “This is a 365-day, 24/7 industry, so there are sometimes unplanned requirements of our management teams, especially in front-line roles,” says Andy Hanscomb, G4S’s director of HR and resourcing. “But we’re not clock-watchers. We trust people and we try to be as flexible as possible.”

One of the most striking aspects of G4S



**“A lot of people come to work here because they care about the service we provide to the UK government and the community at large”**

**Nick Buckles, group CEO**

is the service ethos. “A lot of people come to work here because they care about the service we provide to the UK government and the community at large,” says Buckles.

### Innovation and Creativity

“We don’t believe any of our competitors are doing what we’re doing at the moment in terms of developing solutions and partnerships with customers, especially in high-risk sectors,” says Cowden. “It means our managers have to be far more innovative to adapt our solutions to the customer’s exact requirements.”

For example, the group had a major manned security contract with one of the largest banking groups in the US. Shortly before renewal time, G4S acquired a small technology company with some clever facilities management software that links into a building’s access control systems to provide real-time alerts for the client’s senior management. G4S’s local managers used this technology to create a unique and tailored solution for the bank. The clients loved it, and G4S was able to offer an improved service with less manpower.

“This kind of innovation can only be done on the ground, because the people there are talking direct to the customer,” says Hanscomb. “Our whole business planning process is bottom-up, and mergers and acquisitions often have their origins at local level.”

Even apparently mundane operations

such as cash handling are becoming highly sophisticated. G4S’s Cash 360 service enables retailers to bank their cash takings even before their money has been collected by G4S, thanks to some state-of-the-art central computing technology.

### Pay and Benefits

G4S pays average basic salaries for its sector, with a significant element of performance-related pay that can boost total remuneration into the top quartile. Salaries for particular roles are carefully benchmarked against direct competitors and the wider market.

In the UK a graduate with three years’ relevant experience could expect to start on around £30,000, which could rise to £50,000 after a further three years. Successful junior managers may receive an annual bonus of 20-30% of salary based on their own and their business unit’s performance. For more senior managers this can rise to 50%. Outstanding actions may receive special rewards and acknowledgment, not least for the personal bravery often shown by front-line staff.

Like most plcs, G4S offers a wide range of benefits, including private health insurance, life insurance, subsidised restaurants and gym membership, childcare vouchers, and discounted purchasing of anything from cars and computers to insurance and dental care. Company cars are provided to all senior

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**“A FTSE 100 company that has developed its people together with its business”**

“The culture is very ‘can do’ and I’ve been encouraged to challenge myself and those working with me and reporting to me to deliver the best, not only for the business but for us as individuals and teams.

“It’s great to work for a FTSE 100 company that has grown and developed its people together with its business. You can look throughout the organisation and see that there’s a real possibility for progression and career development all the way to the top.”

**Grant Stonell, group financial accountant  
Joined the group in October 2002**



**“There are only just over 100 people at head office and that’s deliberate, because too much centralisation stifles an organisation and slows it down”**

**Irene Cowden, group HR director**

managers and any junior managers who need one for their job. Everyone can join the contributory pension scheme from day one, with company contributions of up to 15% depending on seniority. Holiday allowance is 25 days for all.

The group is keen to welcome employees back after a break – whether maternity leave or an enforced absence due to illness or other factors – and tries to devise a tailored package that suits each individual. A nice touch is the employee trust fund, established as the result of a legacy, which provides grants to employees in case of hardship or personal catastrophe (many staff live in regions where typhoons, earthquakes and other natural disasters are all too common).

### Career Development

G4S does not rule out recruiting talented new graduates and school leavers, and offers work experience places to school pupils, undergraduates and young people taking gap years. However, most new hires tend to have relevant experience – although this may have been gained in a client sector rather than the security industry. Where possible the company likes to promote internally, and two-thirds of posts are filled this way.

A major career attraction at G4S is the opportunity to work abroad. “We actively encourage people to move around internationally, whether that’s a two-week job

swap or a permanent relocation,” says Cowden. “It’s a great way of stretching and developing people, and of sharing ideas and innovation.” Temporary job swaps within the UK are encouraged for the same reason, and G4S likes to move managers between disciplines and product areas to develop both the individual and the company.

Personal development is taken seriously. In the UK everyone has a personal training and development plan that stems from their appraisal, and managers can’t receive their bonus until they have completed everyone’s performance review. “There’s great buy-in from the senior management team, and the development process is very management-owned; it’s not just an HR thing,” says Hanscomb.

The group’s talent management process has recently been revised to improve the identification of potential high flyers from around the world, assisted by a newly recruited director of talent management. Every year G4S runs a global leadership development programme for around 20 of its brightest rising stars, in association with Manchester Business School.

All this attention obviously pays off, because annual staff turnover is low: 6-7% at senior management level and less than 15% for other management levels overall. The group’s top 18 managers have an average service of 23 years. “I’ve been here 30 years and I still look forward to coming to work!” says Cowden.

### Corporate Social Responsibility

The business units of G4S support community projects in almost every country in which the group operates, ranging from clearing landmines in Afghanistan to combating people-trafficking in the Czech Republic. Sport and youth are a major focus, with projects such as the G4S ‘4teen’ programme that supports aspiring young athletes from around the globe. In the UK the group works extensively with Business in the Community, and runs projects ranging from encouraging kids to take up judo to helping young offenders. Staff are also given volunteering leave, often for work in their local community.

There is a big focus at G4S on attracting more women into the industry (they currently

make up about 20% of the group’s UK workforce and 11% of executive management). Around 5% of staff and 4% of managers come from ethnic minorities.

The group has been working hard to measure and reduce its carbon footprint, especially from vehicles that account for the lion’s share of emissions. Measures include training staff to drive more safely and economically, and experimenting with lower-emission vehicles. Other green initiatives include using video conferencing to cut air travel and installing more energy-efficient lighting, heating and air conditioning. In the UK, G4S Cash Solutions quadrupled the proportion of waste recycled between 2007 and 2009.



**“The support network is really strong”**

“There’s a hard-working but relaxed atmosphere where everyone’s very friendly and completely approachable, including the very senior people. It’s never too much trouble when you ask a colleague for help, and the support network is really strong.

“G4S actively encourages progression for employees within their roles by providing training. When I started working here I mentioned that I’d like to study for a CIPD qualification. I’m now doing this with the company’s support.

“I really enjoy my job and can’t believe I’ve managed to come out of university into the role that I originally went to university to do! Some of my friends haven’t been so fortunate.”

**Jaimee Brown, corporate HR officer  
Joined G4S in May 2009**

