

AstraZeneca's CEO is the highest paid executive in the FTSE 100

AstraZeneca's CEO was the highest paid executive in the FTSE 100 in 2020, earning £15.45 million for his part in delivering a coronavirus vaccine that has been administered tens of millions of times already this year.

New analysis by the High Pay Centre think tank shows that the median FTSE 100 CEO was paid £2.69m in 2020, 86 times the median full-time worker in the UK

The pharmaceutical company's boss Pascal Soriot has presided over a remarkable turnaround since joining [AstraZeneca](#) in 2012.

The Frenchman, who is trained as a veterinarian, helped revive the company's reputation for research and development, while rebuffing a \$118bn takeover attempt by rival [Pfizer](#) to keep the company independent.

AstraZeneca – which has committed to produce 1 billion doses for low and middle income countries – is the only company selling their [COVID-19](#) vaccine for no profit.

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The next highest paid CEO was Brian Cassin of Experian who made £10.3m.

Both packages are dwarfed by the £421m for Bet 365 boss Denise Coates that was [revealed earlier this year](#) – but is not included on the list as the gambling firm is held privately and therefore not a member of the FTSE 100.

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Separately, the High Pay Centre also found that at nine different FTSE 100 companies that claimed government assistance through the furlough scheme last year, the average CEO pay at each was £2.39m.

“Very high CEO pay reflects a wider gap between rich and poor in the UK than in most other European countries,” said Luke Hildyard, director of the High Pay Centre.

“The inequalities exposed by the pandemic and the volume of public money used to protect large businesses could strengthen the argument for measures to contain top pay and re-balance extreme income differences,” he said.

Nevertheless, on the whole CEO pay fell last year when compared to 2019, reflecting the damage inflicted by the pandemic.

The median FTSE 100 CEO was paid £2.69m in 2020, representing a 17% fall from median CEO pay of £3.25m recorded in 2019.

The average bonus size fell from £1.1m to £828,000, while the average long term incentive plan (LTIP) payment decreased from £2.4m to £1.38m.