



KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs

Permanent placements decline at slowest rate in a year

44.8

PERMANENT PLACEMENTS INDEX SEP '25

46.0

TEMPORARY BILLINGS **INDEX** SEP '25

Slower, but still marked fall in permanent placements

Starting salaries close to stagnation in September...

...as demand for staff falls and candidate supply rises rapidly

Commenting on the latest survey results, Jon Holt, Group Chief Executive and UK Senior Partner KPMG, said:

"With very little positive news out there on the economy in recent months, and lots of speculation about the Budget, it is understandable that employers are cautious with their hiring. But despite these headwinds, our annual CEO Outlook revealed this week that chief executives are more upbeat about future growth prospects for their industry and the UK economy than might be expected. They are resilient and responding to challenges by adapting their investment strategies to focus on AI adoption, managing cyber risk and upskilling their talent.

"The jobs market has not yet turned a corner and remains tough, but we saw stabilisation in some of the numbers last month. While the public finances provide little room for manoeuvre in November, some clear signals from the Chancellor that build on business confidence will hopefully support renewed hiring as we head into 2026."

Neil Carberry, REC Chief Executive,

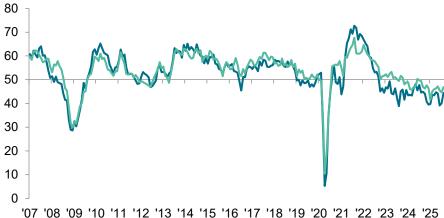
"Recruiters have been reporting a trend towards stabilisation in the permanent job market since the summer, and today's data back that up for September. The temporary market remains somewhat healthier, with growth in some regions. We can hope that the jobs market and the economy may be moving towards calmer waters, but falling vacancies is a reminder that what is really needed is a shot of confidence in the wider economy to get things going.

"Pay trends remain subdued where pay is set by the market rather than the Government. This suggests that pay growth should not be a drag on the Bank of England's upcoming interest rate decision.

"The economic picture is still challenging for employers, with pressures beyond their control. A genuinely pro-business, pro-growth Autumn Budget next month could provide much-needed relief, by avoiding unaffordable tax rises on business, committing to real practicality on the Employment Rights Bill, supporting flexible work and reforming public sector hiring."

sa, >50 = growth since previous month 80 70

Permanent Placements Index ■ Temporary Billings Index



The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment consultancies.





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1 Executive summary

The Report on Jobs is unique in providing the most comprehensive guide to the UK labour market, drawing on original survey data provided by recruitment consultancies and employers to provide the first indication each month of labour market trends.

The main findings for September are:

Downturn in permanent staff hiring eases in September

September survey data signalled a weaker drop in permanent staff appointments across the UK, with the latest reduction the softest seen for a year. That said, the rate of decline was sharp overall, with firms often noting that employers were hesitant to take on new workers due to weaker economic conditions and cost concerns. Temp billings meanwhile fell at a solid pace that was quicker than in August.

Starting salaries rise only fractionally...

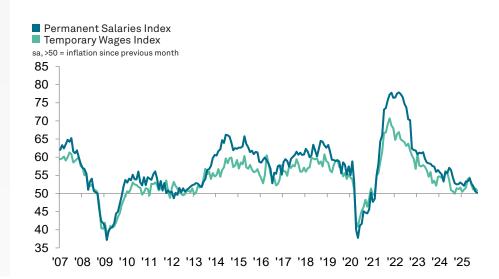
Starting pay for permanent workers rose negligibly in September, with the rate of growth the weakest seen since the current run of pay inflation began just over four-and-a-half years ago. The near-stagnation of salaries coincided with reports of weaker demand for workers and reduced hiring budgets. Temp pay growth also eased in September, with wages increasing only slightly overall.

...as demand for staff falls...

Overall vacancies across the UK continued to fall markedly at the end of the third quarter. Moreover, the rate of contraction eased only slightly from August's six-month record. Underlying data indicated that demand for permanent workers continued to decline at a steeper rate than for short-term staff.

...and candidate availability continues to rise sharply

Reduced recruitment activity and redundancies were linked by survey respondents to a further sharp increase in the availability of workers in September. This was despite the rate of expansion slowing from August's post-pandemic record. The supply of both permanent and temporary staff increased at softer, but similarly marked rates.









2 Staff Appointments

Recruitment consultancies report on the number of people placed in permanent jobs each month, and their revenues (billings) received from placing people in temporary or contract positions at employers.

An index reading above 50 signals a higher number of placements/billings than the previous month. Readings below 50 signal a decline compared with the previous month.



Permanent staff appointments fall at softest pace in a year

The number of people placed into permanent jobs across the UK continued to decline in September, thereby extending the current run of reduction to three years. Though sharp, the pace of contraction was however the softest seen over the past 12 months.

Reports from recruiters indicated that low employer confidence, often due to weak economic conditions, and higher staffing costs had led businesses to cut back or freeze recruitment.

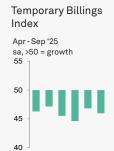
Regional data highlighted that placements fell at slower rates in the South and North of England, which offset steeper declines in London and the Midlands.

Permanent Placements Index sa, >50 = growth since previous month 80 70 60 40 30 20 10 0

Permanent Placements Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Apr '25	44.7	47.8	39.1	44.1	45.9
May '25	44.2	43.7	36.2	50.4	44.8
Jun '25	39.1	37.3	36.7	43.1	43.5
Jul '25	40.0	38.8	37.6	43.3	42.8
Aug '25	44.2	46.9	36.1	48.9	43.9
Sep '25	44.8	45.2	43.3	46.6	45.0



Temp billings decline solidly in September

Latest survey data indicated that temp billings across the UK fell for the fifteenth month running in September. The rate of reduction quickened slightly from August and was solid overall. Recruiters that recorded lower billings frequently attributed this to weaker demand for staff and a lack of new projects at clients.

Trends diverged by region, with billings falling markedly in the South of England and London, but increasing in the Midlands and North of England.

Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Apr '25	46.3	49.3	42.0	47.3	42.3
May '25	47.1	49.6	41.3	51.3	47.2
Jun '25	45.5	45.8	42.8	50.2	45.9
Jul '25	44.6	41.3	46.1	45.8	45.5
Aug '25	46.8	48.5	41.6	50.7	46.9
Sep '25	46.0	43.4	41.7	53.1	51.0

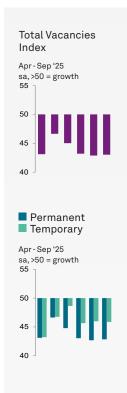






3 Vacancies

Recruitment consultants are asked to specify whether the demand for staff from employers has changed on the previous month, thereby providing an indicator of the number of job vacancies.



Vacancy numbers continue to decline sharply

Demand for staff weakened again at the end of the third quarter. This was signalled by the seasonally adjusted Total Vacancies Index posting below the neutral 50.0 value at 43.0 in September. The reading was little-changed from that seen in August (42.9), and consistent with a sharp reduction in vacancies overall. Demand for workers has now fallen in each month for nearly two years.

Permanent & temporary vacancies

Vacancies for permanent staff continued to decline more rapidly than for short-term positions. Demand for permanent workers fell at the second-quickest rate since February, while demand for temporary staff was down to a slightly quicker degree than in

Public & private sector vacancies

Latest data indicated that demand for workers continued to fall across both the private and public sectors.

The steepest reduction in vacancies was signalled for permanent staff in the public sector. Meanwhile, the weakest drop in demand was seen for temporary positions in the private sector.

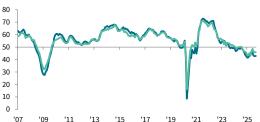
Total Vacancies Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Permanent Vacancies Index Temporary Vacancies Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Vacancy Index summary

sa, >50 = growth since previous month. *Not seasonally adjusted.

		Permanent				Temporary		
	Total	Total	Private*	Public*	Total	Private*	Public*	
Apr '25	43.1	43.1	44.7	35.7	43.2	43.4	42.5	
May '25	46.6	46.6	47.8	41.1	46.8	47.9	41.2	
Jun '25	45.0	44.8	46.1	38.5	48.6	49.5	44.5	
Jul '25	43.2	43.0	43.7	37.7	45.7	50.7	39.4	
Aug '25	42.9	42.7	42.6	42.7	46.0	46.6	41.8	
Sep '25	43.0	42.8	44.5	38.8	45.9	49.5	41.2	

Official data: UK job vacancies

The latest official labour market data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that total vacancies declined by 10,000 in the three months to August.

As a result, the number of unfilled positions (728,000) was among the lowest recorded since spring 2021.

Job opportunities have now fallen continuously for more than three years.







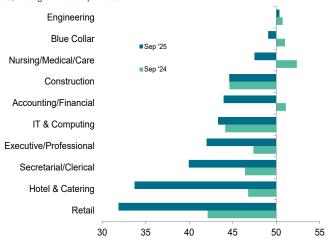
4 Vacancies by sector

Recruitment consultancies are requested to compare the demand for staff according to sector with the situation one

Permanent vacancies

Nine of the ten monitored job categories registered lower demand for permanent staff during September. The Retail and Hotel & Catering sectors saw by far the steepest rates of contraction. Meanwhile, demand for permanent workers rose slightly across the Engineering sector.

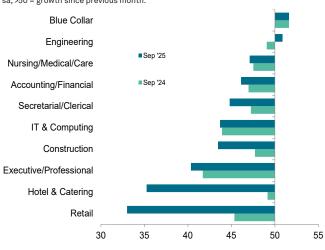
Permanent Vacancies Index sa, >50 = growth since previous month.



Temporary vacancies

Temporary vacancies declined across most monitored job sectors in September, with Retail seeing the most pronounced drop overall. At the same time, demand for short-term workers improved across the Blue Collar and Engineering categories.

Temporary Vacancies Index sa, >50 = growth since previous month.





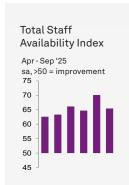






5 Staff availability

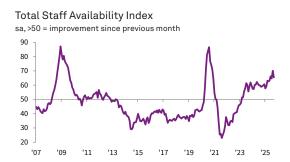
Recruitment consultants are asked to report whether availability of permanent and temporary staff has changed on the previous month. An overall indicator of staff availability is also calculated.



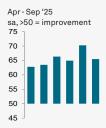
Softer, but still rapid increase in staff availability

The seasonally adjusted Total Staff Availability Index slipped from August's post-pandemic high of 70.1 to 65.4 in September. Nevertheless, the index continued to signal a historically sharp and rapid upturn in overall candidate supply, and stretched the current period of expansion to 31 months.

Softer, but still marked increases were signalled for both permanent and temporary labour availability.



Permanent Staff Availability Index



Permanent candidate availability up sharply again in September

Recruiters across the UK signalled another sharp rise in the number of candidates available for permanent jobs in September. Despite easing from August's recent record, and remaining a little lower than in June, the rate of growth was the third-sharpest since November 2020. Panel members frequently linked the upturn to a combination of redundancies and a reduction in hiring activity.

All four monitored English areas registered softer but still rapid increases in permanent labour supply.

Permanent Staff Availability Index Temporary Staff Availability Index sa, >50 = improvement since previous month



.....

Supply of temporary candidates expands markedly



Temporary Staff

Latest survey data signalled a softer rise in the number of people available for short-term jobs at the end of the third quarter. Nevertheless, the upturn was the second-steepest seen since November 2020. Nearly three times as many recruiters (35%) recorded an increase in temporary candidate supply than those that saw a reduction (12%). There were widespread reports that fewer short-term projects and company layoffs had pushed up the availability of workers.

The South of England recorded the sharpest increase in temp labour supply, while the softest was in London.

Permanent Staff Availability Index

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Apr '25	62.8	61.5	60.8	63.0	66.2
May '25	63.5	60.6	63.3	62.4	65.3
Jun '25	66.3	65.5	67.6	65.3	64.1
Jul '25	64.9	65.3	63.6	65.1	66.3
Aug '25	70.2	71.4	70.5	67.1	73.1
Sep '25	65.5	62.1	67.4	64.9	67.3

Temporary Staff Availability Index

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

		•			
	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Apr '25	59.6	60.2	61.0	57.8	61.1
May '25	61.3	63.0	62.6	60.2	58.0
Jun '25	63.2	62.8	67.0	62.5	56.1
Jul '25	61.3	61.7	60.2	59.9	62.0
Aug '25	67.9	70.2	66.5	61.0	69.4
Sep '25	65.2	62.3	67.6	63.3	65.2







6 Demand for skills

Recruitment consultancies are invited to specify any areas in which they have encountered skill shortages during the latest month.

Skills in short supply: Permanent staff

Accounting/Financial

Accountants Accounts Payable Actuaries Auditors Credit Controllers Estimators

Finance Finance Business Partner Finance Managers

Financial Accountant Financial Services Management Accountants Part Qualified Accountants

Pavroll Practice Accountant Taxation

Blue Collar

Assembly Technicians Automotive Blow Moulding Technician Blue Collar **CNC Roles** Drivers HVAC Labour LGV 2 Drivers LGV Drivers

Refrigeration Trades Construction

Architectural Tech Civil & Structural Engineers Civils Operatives Construction Professionals Construction Sales Floor Layer Part 2 Architect Asst. Quantity Surveyors Stress Engineer Surveyors

Engineering

Commissioning Engineers Design Engineers Design Engineers M&E

Electrical Engineers Electronics Design Engineer Engineers Field Service Engineers Gas Engineers Maintenance Engineers Project Engineers Senior Engineers Specialist Engineering Technical Administrator

Vending Engineers Executive/Professional

Business Development Energy & Renewables Human Resources Law Legal Support Management Mid-Management Mid-Senior Management Professional Roles Project Managers

Transformation Directors Hotel/Catering

Research

Chefs Hospitality

IT/Computing

AI/ML Engineers Automation Testers CAD CAD Modellers Cloud Computing Cyber Security Defence Technology Gaming IT Analysts IT Infrastructure LLM Engineers

Software Architects Software Developers Software Sales

Technical Leaders Technical Roles Technical Sales Technology

Nursing/Medical/Care

Carers Life Sciences Life Sciences (Sales) Medical Medical Retail Nurses Occupational Therapist Paramedics

Physiotherapist Social Workers Secretarial/Clerical

Administration Entry Level Administration Receptionist

Other

Buyers Commercial Customer Service European Languages German Speakers Languages Logistics New Home Sales Sales Transport Planners

Skills in short supply: Temporary staff

Accounting/Financial

Accountants Accounts Payable Auditors Credit Controllers Entry Level Accountancy

Pavroll Blue Collar

Assembly Technicians Blue Collar **CNC Machinist** Coded Welders Drivers Electricians FLT Operators Forklift Drivers Industrials LGV Drivers Machine Operators Manufacturing Operatives Mechanical Assemblers Paint Sprayers Plater Warehouse Operatives Welders

Construction

Architectural Tech Civil & Structural Engineers Construction Floor Layer Labourers Quantity Surveyors Site Supervisors Skilled Trades

Engineering

Commissioning Engineers Design Engineers Design Engineers M&E Electrical Engineers Engineers Gas Engineers Maintenance Engineers Mechanical Engineers Project Engineers

Senior Electronic Engineers Executive/Professional

Human Resources Quality Assurance

Hotel/Catering

Chefs

IT/Computing

Automation Testers Cyber Security Data Engineers Full-Stack Developer

IT Infrastructure IT Operations Management

IT Support Specialists Powerpoint Software Developers

Software Engineers Technology

Nursing/Medical/Care

Carers Life Sciences Nurses Pharmacists Social Workers

Secretarial/Clerical

Administration HR Administration Receptionist

Other

Buyers Customer Service Education Languages Logistics

SMT Engineers Skills in excess supply: Permanent staff

Security Cleared IT

Accounting/Financial

Accountants CFOs Finance Finance Directors

Blue Collar

Blue Collar Industrials Manufacturing Production Unskilled Labour Warehouse Operatives

Construction Construction Site Managers Site Supervisors Skilled Construction

Engineering

Engineers Graduate Engineers Technicians

Executive/Professional

Business Analysts Directors

HR Qualified Human Resources Legal Secretarial Marketing Patent Attorneys

Project Managers Recruitment Consultants Senior Level Management Senior Management Talent Acquisition

IT/Computing

AI/MI Developers BIM Modellers

Entry Level IT IT Administrators IT Analysts

IT Directors

Technology

IT Generalists IT Helpdesk IT Management Media Software Engineers Software Sales

Technical Support

Nursing/Medical/Care

Lab Scientists Pharma GMP Pharma QA Research Scientist

Retail

Secretarial/Clerical

Administration Clerical Legal Assistants Secretary

Sales

Other Creative Customer Service Data Analyst Designers Document Controller Entry Level Graduates Logistics Programme Manager Public Sector General

Skills in excess supply: Temporary staff

Blue Collar

Blue Collar Carpenters Industrials Manufacturing Operatives Production **Production Operators**

Scaffolders Trades Warehouse Operatives

Construction

Construction Site Supervisors Skilled Construction

Engineering

Engineering Draughtsperson Graduate Engineers Test Engineer

Executive/Professional

Business Analysts HR Manager Project Managers Senior Management

IT/Computing

CAD Technicians IT Directors Secretarial/Clerical

Administration

Personal Assistant Other

Entry Level Programme Manager

Note: Skills can be reported as being both in short supply and excess supply as we survey various recruitment agencies across the country, so there is geographical variation as well as the possibility of candidates with particular skills being concentrated in certain areas.

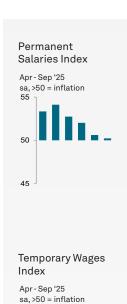






7 Pay pressures

The recruitment industry survey tracks both the average salaries awarded to people placed in permanent jobs each month, as well as average hourly rates of pay for temp/contract staff.



55

45

Starting salaries increase only fractionally in September

Recruitment consultancies across the UK signalled that permanent starters' salaries broadly stagnated in September. This was signalled by the respective seasonally adjusted index posting only fractionally above the neutral 50.0 value, to signal a marginal increase in pay that was the slowest since the current sequence of inflation began in March 2021. Anecdotal evidence suggested that budget constraints and reduced demand for staff had weighed on pay growth. Starting salaries rose in the Midlands and London, but fell in the North and South of England.

Temp pay growth dips to eightmonth low

Latest survey data signalled a further rise in average hourly pay for temporary workers across the UK at the end of the third quarter. However, the rate of wage inflation was the weakest recorded since January and only marginal. The respective seasonally adjusted index also remained well below the historical trend level of 55.2. Reports from panellists indicated that higher candidate numbers and weaker demand for staff had dampened wage growth. Solid increases in pay across the Midlands and London contrasted with declines in the North and South of England.



Permanent Salaries Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Apr '25	53.3	53.0	51.8	54.1	52.5
May '25	54.1	56.9	51.2	54.2	53.8
Jun '25	52.7	53.6	51.0	53.4	51.1
Jul '25	52.0	51.6	50.4	50.8	53.7
Aug '25	50.6	51.6	47.0	56.8	47.6
Sep '25	50.2	51.8	48.5	54.1	49.0

Temporary Wages Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Apr '25	53.9	53.3	55.2	53.5	54.0
May '25	54.4	52.8	54.4	55.8	56.2
Jun '25	52.3	52.7	52.8	51.0	48.1
Jul '25	51.1	52.9	48.1	50.6	52.3
Aug '25	51.5	57.5	48.6	51.7	49.5
Sep '25	50.8	52.8	49.4	53.7	48.6

Official data: UK average weekly earnings

Official data from the ONS signalled that annual growth in average weekly earnings (including bonuses) was 4.7% in the three months to July, little-changed from 4.6%. Consequently, the rate of growth was among the lowest seen over the past year.

Underlying data indicated that public sector pay rose at a slightly quicker pace that that seen for the private sector (5.1% versus 4.6%). Notably, this marked the slowest rate of earnings growth across the private sector since the three months to March 2021.







8 Special feature

This section features data from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation

The future recruiter: How can I stay ahead of the future of the profession?

The role of a recruiter is changing. Whilst the role has always been highly skilled, changes in technology and the wider labour market mean that different skills are taking the spotlight, even as it remains necessary to retain the human touch at the core of the role.

The latest data continues to show subdued recruitment activity, while skills in short supply remain complex and multi-variable, highly specific to sectoral ebbs and flows – from temporary Assembly Technicians to permanent LLM Engineers.

While demand remains soft, recruiters need the advisory skills and data literacy to act as trusted professional partners to clients, the knowledge to navigate complex labour market shifts, and the resilience to withstand volatility. That's why the REC is leading efforts to change the way recruitment is seen – by Government and by

Included with REC membership is the REC Academy - a dedicated platform packed with hundreds of recruitment-specific videos, offering flexible, accessible and engaging learning opportunities to help you and your staff thrive.

REC recruitment qualifications are designed to equip you with the tools and expertise to win more clients, build stronger relationships, and deliver an engaging, top-tier service that sets you apart.

Three practical ways to put professionalisation into practice:

- 1. Audit your skills regularly. Don't wait until annual reviews. Every quarter, take 30 minutes to list your core skills against the future-focused areas of recruitment: relationship management, market insight, digital literacy and advisory skills. Identify one area to strengthen immediately and set a target for how you'll do it.
- 2. Build CPD into your week. Treat learning time as a non-negotiable. Whether that's watching a 15-minute REC Academy video over coffee, listening to a recruitment podcast on your commute, or booking in a short webinar, the key is consistency.
- 3. Make training work for your career goals. If you want to move into leadership, focus on management and compliance modules. If you're growing as a client advisor, double down on commercial strategy and market intelligence. Don't collect qualifications for the sake of it, map them to the career path you want.

Continuing professional development is also about culture. Leaders should model learning by sharing what they've picked up, celebrating staff who invest in their development, and setting clear expectations that professional growth is part of the job.

It's easy for careers to flatline, for minds to close, for inertia to set in and for burn-out to occur. But continuing professional development boosts retention across junior and senior staff by increasing enjoyment and providing progression.

If you're not an REC member, you can access our legal advice, strategic guidance and labour market information by joining us at rec.uk.com/join.







9 Scotland's labour market

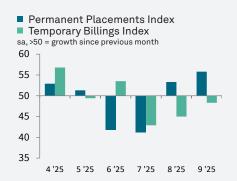
Stronger rise in permanent staff appointments

This section contains the latest data and findings from the Scottish companies participating in the UK Jobs survey.

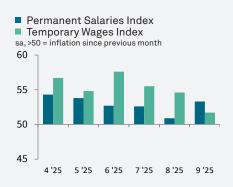
Permanent staff hiring across Scotland increased for the second straight month in September, and at a faster rate than in August. At the same time, the downturn in temp billings weakened further, with the latest reduction only modest overall.

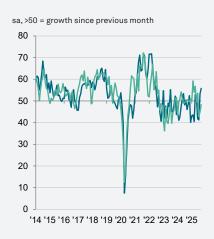
Turning to pay, Scottish recruiters signalled a stronger increase in permanent starting salaries. Notably, the rate of growth was the best recorded in four months. However, the rate of temp pay inflation eased to the slowest since February.

Latest data pointed to a sharp and accelerated rise in the availability of permanent candidates across Scotland. Furthermore, the latest increase was the most pronounced in three months. While the supply of temporary workers rose at the softest pace since May, the upturn remained rapid overall and quicker than that seen for permanent candidates.

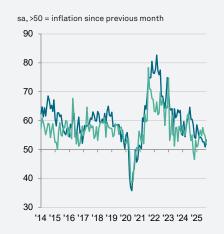












Scotland Jobs Index summary sa, 50 = no change over previous month

3	Permanent Placements	Temporary Billings	Permanent Availability	Temporary Availability	Permanent Salaries	Temporary Wages
04 '25	52.9	56.8	59.1	57.9	54.3	56.7
05 '25	51.3	49.4	62.1	60.0	53.8	54.8
06 '25	41.8	53.5	66.7	67.4	52.7	57.6
07 '25	41.2	42.9	56.5	67.7	52.6	55.5
08 '25	53.3	45.0	57.4	67.4	50.9	54.6
09 '25	55.8	48.3	58.7	64.9	53.3	51.7







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Methodology

The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted

For further information on the survey methodology, please contact

Survey Dates

Data were collected 11-24 September 2025.

About S&P Global

S&P Global (NYSE: SPGI) S&P Global provides essential intelligence. We enable governments, businesses and individuals with the right data, expertise and connected technology so that they can make decisions with conviction. From helping our customers assess new investments to guiding them through ESG and energy transition across supply chains, we unlock new opportunities, solve challenges and accelerate progress for the world.

We are widely sought after by many of the world's leading organizations to provide credit ratings, benchmarks, analytics and workflow solutions in the global capital, commodity and automotive markets. With every one of our offerings, we help the world's leading organizations plan for tomorrow, today. www.spglobal.com.

About KPMG UK

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