



KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs

Caution around permanent staff hiring persists in October amid economic uncertainty

45.8

PERMANENT PLACEMENTS INDEX OCT '23

50.9

TEMPORARY BILLINGS **INDEX** OCT '23

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.

Softer, but sustained fall in permanent staff appointments

Temp billings rise for second straight month

Candidate availability expands at sharper pace

Commenting on the latest results, Claire Warnes, Partner, Skills and Productivity at KPMG UK, said:

"The jobs market is facing a cyclical challenge—there are people out there who want to work, and there's a decent availability of candidates, but they often do not have the right skills for the roles on offer. This means higher starting salaries are still being offered as businesses compete in the ongoing battle for talent.

"And while the rate of decline in permanent placements is the weakest since June – this follows more than a year of cautious hiring due to economic uncertainty and means many businesse are unable to commit to long-term strategies and instead are having to focus on the here and now, by employing temps. The sharper rise in available candidates is good news for recruiters, but this comes at the expense of employers who are making more redundancies as they tighten budgets due to ongoing high inflation. ongoing high inflation.

"Looking across sectors, healthcare as ever is experiencing a mismatch in supply and demand-there are fewer clinical professionals available to manage a very busy service as we head into winter. While permanent workers are the panacea, this is where temporary contracts continue to provide the means to deploy skilled staff at short notice, but at a higher cost a higher cost.

"With a weak economic outlook for the months ahead, employers will be hoping next year will bring the expected easing of inflation so they can focus on delivering growth for their businesses." Neil Carberry, REC Chief Executive, said:

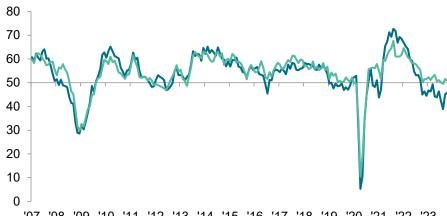
"In many ways, the labour market is marking time waiting for the brakes to be taken off growth by the Bank of England. While permanent hiring is now declining more softly, temporary hiring continues to pick up the slack – with billings gently growing for most of this year on the back of rising wages. While the rate of pay growth has now returned to more normal parameters, it is still strong, especially in sectors where staff remain in short supply. That sectoral split is ever more pronounced, with challenging sectors like construction and IT sitting in a very different place to hospitality and healthcare, which continue to be affected by shortages. Looking to the Autumn Statement, businesses and Government need to be aware that the return of growth will reveal shortages more widely – action on skills, welfare-to-work programmes and immigration reform will be needed to prevent a return to growth being squandered."

Neil Carberry added:

"Healthcare providers are ramping up their hiring ahead of the winter, but candidate supply is short. Agency medical staff are keeping wards open and getting patients treated - they need a bit more support from Government. Reforming capped onframework agency rates so pay for temps working on-framework can rise for the first time in four years will save Government money as they will end up using far fewer emergency shifts, and it will reward a part of the NHS workforce that is too often overlooked." overlooked.



sa, >50 = growth since previous month



'07 '08 '09 '10 '11 '12 '13 '14 '15 '16 '17 '18 '19 '20 '21 '22 '23





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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 October are:

Permanent placements fall at softest pace since June

The latest recruitment survey signalled that a cautious hiring environment persisted across the UK during October. Notably, uncertainty around the economic outlook contributed to the thirteenth successive monthly reduction in permanent staff hires, albeit with the rate of decline easing to the weakest since June. At the same time, there was a back-to-back rise in temp billings as some employers preferred the flexibility of short-term staff in the current climate.

Sharper rise in overall candidate supply

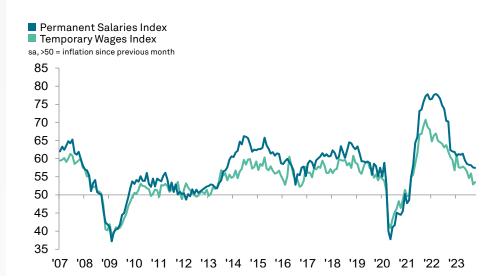
The availability of candidates improved for the eighth straight month in October, and at a much sharper rate than in September. This was due to an accelerated upturn in permanent candidate numbers, as temp staff supply rose at a slightly softer (but still marked) pace. There were frequent reports that redundancies and subdued hiring activity had contributed to the latest increase in staff availability.

Starting salary inflation slips to 31-month low

Permanent starters' pay remained on an upward trend in October, though the rate of increase moderated to the weakest in just over two-and-a-half years. Nevertheless, the rate of salary inflation remained sharp and was in line with the series average. Recruiters often mentioned that employers had to up pay offers to secure suitably-skilled staff and to reflect the higher cost of living. Temp wages also increased, though the rate of growth held close to September's recent low.

Demand for staff stabilises in October

Following a slight reduction in September, overall demand for staff stabilised in October. Underlying data highlighted that permanent vacancies fell only fractionally, while the number of temp positions increased modestly. That said, the latter marked the second-softest improvement in demand for short-term workers since January 2021.





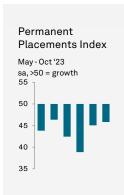




2 Staff Appointments

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 placements decline at softest rate in four months

Adjusted for seasonal variance, the Permanent Placements Index signalled a reduction in the number of people placed into permanent job roles across the UK for the thirteenth successive month. Though solid overall, the rate of contraction eased further from August's more than three-year record and was the softest since June. The latest drop in permanent staff hiring was frequently linked to caution around the economic outlook, with recruitment freezes, delays to hiring decisions and fewer vacancies all cited by panellists.

On a regional basis, London saw an accelerated and rapid decline in permanent placements that was the sharpest of all four English areas. Falls were also seen in the South and North of England, but a fractional rise was recorded in 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
May '23	43.8	40.4	40.5	49.5	42.1
Jun '23	46.4	36.6	43.3	46.8	52.6
Jul '23	42.4	35.6	38.6	46.4	46.0
Aug '23	38.9	39.8	39.0	37.3	38.0
Sep '23	45.1	47.7	40.2	45.7	45.5
Oct '23	45.8	37.1	46.9	50.2	45.7

Temporary Billings Index May-Oct '23 sa, >50 = growth

45

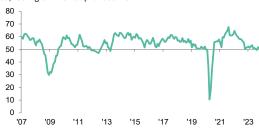
Marginal increase in temp billings

Latest survey data signalled back-to-back increases in temporary billings during October. That said, the rate of expansion moderated from September and was only marginal overall. Recruiters often mentioned that firmer demand for short-term staff due to its greater flexibility supported the latest upturn in billings. However, others indicated that budgetary pressures and fewer than anticipated projects at clients had dampened overall growth.

Three of the four monitored English regions registered higher temp billings at the start of the fourth quarter, led by London. The North of England bucked the wider UK trend and recorded a modest reduction.

Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '23	50.7	55.5	55.2	46.5	48.6
Jun '23	51.1	53.1	52.5	51.5	46.5
Jul '23	50.2	51.4	48.6	54.5	47.2
Aug '23	49.5	47.8	49.1	51.4	49.7
Sep '23	51.6	54.6	47.2	53.3	52.9
Oct '23	50.9	54.0	50.7	51.5	47.5





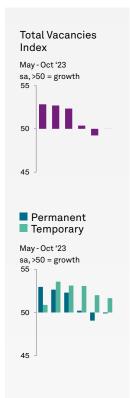


'19

'21

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.



Overall vacancies stabilise in October

After declining slightly for the first time since February 2021 during September, overall demand for staff stabilised at the start of the fourth quarter. This was signalled by the seasonally adjusted Total Vacancies Index rising from 49.2 to the neutral level of 50.0 in October

Permanent and temporary vacancies

Permanent staff vacancies fell for the second successive month in October, albeit with the rate of decline easing to a fractional pace. Growth of demand for temporary workers meanwhile slowed to a modest pace that was the least pronounced since May.

Public & private sector vacancies

A slight increase in demand for permanent staff in the private sector helped to offset a further reduction across the public sector at the start of the final quarter of the year.

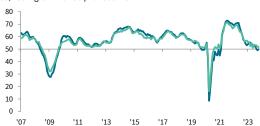
Temporary vacancies continued to rise in the private sector, with the rate of growth picking up slightly from September. In contrast, demand for short-term staff in the public sector fell solidly and to the greatest extent in over three years.

Total Vacancies Index



Permanent Vacancies Index Temporary Vacancies Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Vacancy Index summary

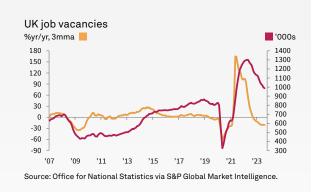
sa, >50 = growth since previous month. *Not seasonally adjusted.

		Permanent			Temporary		
	Total	Total	Private*	Public*	Total	Private*	Public*
May '23	52.8	53.0	53.1	52.5	50.9	50.2	54.1
Jun '23	52.7	52.6	51.8	56.5	53.6	53.4	54.4
Jul '23	52.3	52.3	52.4	51.8	53.1	53.6	50.8
Aug '23	50.4	50.2	49.9	51.7	53.1	53.6	50.8
Sep '23	49.2	49.1	49.8	45.8	52.0	52.6	49.0
Oct '23	50.0	49.9	50.7	46.2	51.7	52.8	46.2

Official data: UK job vacancies

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that total vacancies remained on a downward trend over the third quarter of 2023. At 988,000, the number of open roles was 43,000 below that recorded over the second quarter of 2023 and the lowest since the three months to July 2021.

Nevertheless, the number of overall job opportunities was nearly 20% above that seen just prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (826,000 in the three months to February 2020).







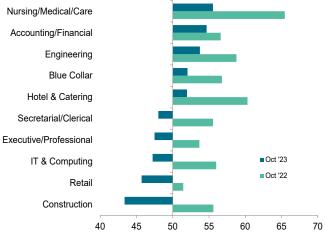
4 Vacancies by sector

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

Permanent vacancies

Half of the ten monitored employment categories registered stronger demand for permanent workers at the start of the fourth quarter, led by Nursing/Medical/Care. The Construction and Retail sectors meanwhile saw the quickest drops in permanent staff vacancies.

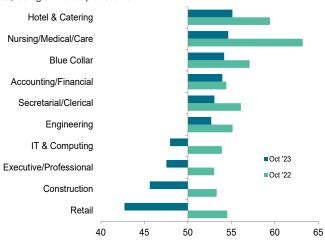
Permanent Vacancies Index sa, >50 = growth since previous month. Nursing/Medical/Care

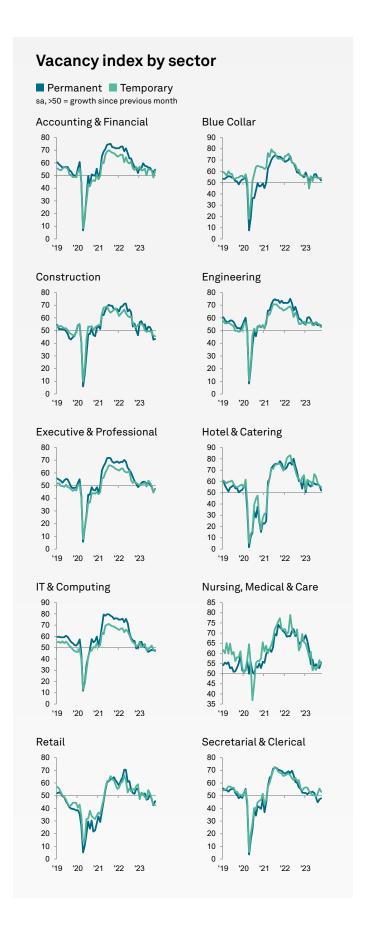


Temporary vacancies

Temporary staff vacancies expanded in six of the ten monitored employment sectors during October. The Hotel & Catering and Nursing/Medical/Care categories saw the strongest rates of growth. The sharpest reduction in demand was meanwhile seen for temporary Retail staff.

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











Staff availability

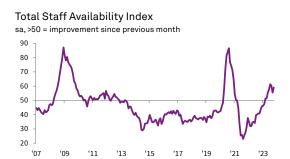
Recruitment consultants are asked to report whether availability of permanent and temporary staff has changed on the previous month. An overall indicator of staff availability is also calculated.



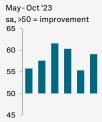
Stronger rise in overall candidate numbers

October survey data signalled that the overall availability of candidates increased for the eighth successive month. Notably, the respective seasonally adjusted index picked up from 55.5 in September to 59.0 in October, to indicate a sharp and accelerated rate of expansion.

Data broken down by candidate type showed that both permanent and temporary worker availability improved sharply.



Permanent Staff Availability Index



Permanent staff supply expands

All four monitored English regions registered steep upturns in permanent labour supply in October, with rates of expansion accelerating in all areas bar the North of England.

sharply in October

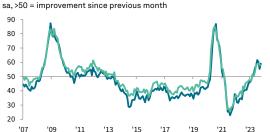
As has been the case since March, the availability of staff to fill permanent positions across the UK increased during October. Notably, the rate of expansion quickened to a rapid pace that was the third-sharpest since December 2020. Recruiters frequently mentioned that staff supply had risen due to companies restructuring workforces and redundancies. There were also reports of some people seeking new roles due to concerns over job security or to source better-paid positions.

Further marked increase in availability of temp workers

Latest data pointed to a sustained rise in the number of temporary candidates across the UK at the start of the fourth quarter. Although the rate of increase edged down further from August's 32-month record, it remained sharp overall. Where higher temporary labour supply was reported, panel members often linked this to company layoffs and fewer projects, partly due to pressure on client budgets.

The rise in temporary candidate numbers was broad-based by English region, with the South of England noting the steepest rate of growth.

Permanent Staff Availability Index Temporary Staff Availability Index



Permanent Staff Availability Index

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '23	55.8	66.4	53.6	56.4	55.9
Jun '23	57.6	66.8	58.1	55.7	57.5
Jul '23	61.6	74.3	60.8	60.7	63.3
Aug '23	60.3	68.5	57.2	61.4	63.6
Sep '23	55.3	55.3	53.9	55.7	57.1
Oct '23	59.1	63.7	59.5	61.3	56.6

Temporary Staff Availability Index

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '23	52.9	56.8	51.3	51.2	58.3
Jun '23	58.0	58.1	57.7	59.2	58.6
Jul '23	58.8	62.9	55.9	59.5	60.5
Aug '23	59.1	69.1	59.3	57.6	56.8
Sep '23	58.2	54.6	64.8	52.0	57.1
Oct '23	57.8	59.1	61.0	57.2	56.9









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 Auditors **Book Keepers** Credit Controllers Estimators Finance Finance Manager Financial Controllers Financial Planners Management Accountants Paraplanners Part Qualified Finance Payroll Taxation Blue Collar Automotive Cleaners

Drivers Electricians **HVAC** LGV Drivers Manufacturing Mechanics Refrigeration Semi-skilled Industrial Site Managers Unskilled Labour Warehouse Welders

Construction Architectural Tech Construction

Construction Professionals Planners Quantity Surveyors Surveyors

Engineering

Electrical Engineers **Engineering Directors** Engineering Management Engineers Fire & Security Engineers Industrial Engineers Maintenance Engineers Mechanical Engineers Technicians

Validation Engineers Executive/Professional

Business Analysts Business Development Business Development Managers

Compliance Executives Human Resources

Legal Management Marketing

Mid-senior Management Procurement Professional

Project Managers Recruitment Consultants Technical Business Development

Hotel/Catering

Catering Chefs Hospitality

IT/Computing

Analysts Automation Testers CAD Cyber Security Data Engineers Developers Digital Senior IT Engineers

Software Design

Software Engineers

Technical Sales Technology

Nursing/Medical/Care

Carers Doctors Healthcare Communications Mental Health Nurses Occupational Therapist

Optometrists Paramedics Pharmacy Managers Physiotherapist Psychologist Social Care Workers Social Workers

Retail

E-commerce

Secretarial/Clerical

Administration HR Administration

Call Centre Customer Service Domestic Workers Entry Level European Speakers Life Sciences Logistics National Account Managers Property Sales Public Practice Quality Control Sales Skilled Supply Chain

Transport Planning

Skills in short supply: Temporary staff

Accounting/Financial

Accountants

Auditors **Book Keepers** Credit Controllers Finance Management Accountants

Payroll Purchase Ledger

Blue Collar

Blue Collar Carpenters Coating Inspectors Coded Welders Drivers Forklift Drivers **HGV** Mechanic Industrials Manufacturing Materials Controller Operatives Security Guards Semi-skilled Industrial Trades Warehouse

Construction

Architectural Tech Bricklayers Drainage Specialists Labourers Structural Staff

Engineering

Engineers Fire & Security Engineers Industrial Engineers Installation Engineers Service Engineers

Executive/Professional

Business Analysts Legal Secretarial

Hotel/Catering

Chefs Hospitality Housekeeping

IT/Computing

Automation Testers Cloud Engineers Cyber Security Data Engineers Data Professionals Developers Digital Full-stack Developer

Software Architects Software Engineers

Technology Nursing/Medical/Care

Carers Pharmacists

Secretarial/Clerical

Administration HR Administration Receptionist Transport Administrators

Consultancy Customer Service Entry Level General Operatives Remote Workers Skilled Supervisors Teachers

Skills in excess supply: Permanent staff

Accounting/Financial ACCA

CFOs Finance Finance Directors Finance Manager Management Accountants

Blue Collar

Blue Collar Industrials Rail Site Managers

Engineering

Service Engineers

Executive/Professional

Account Executives **Business Analysts** Corporate Affairs C-suite

Directors Human Resources Management Marketing Project Managers Recruitment Consultants

Senior-level Management IT/Computing Data Scientists

Infrastructure Analysts IT Directors IT Infrastructure Software Software Engineers

Nursing/Medical/Care

Carers Social Care Workers

Retail

Secretarial/Clerical

Administration **Executive Assistants** Personal Assistant

Content Writers Customer Service Graduates Insurance Specialists Overseas Candidates Part-time Workers Public Practice Remote Workers Sales Students Supervisors

Team Leaders

variation as well as the possibility of candidates with particular skills being concentrated in certain areas.

Accounting/Financial

Finance Finance Manager Management Accountants

Blue Collar

Decorators Industrials Paint & Blasting Site Managers Unskilled Labour

Construction Labourers

Engineering Engineers

Industrial Engineers Executive/Professional

Business Analysts

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

Senior-level Management

Hotel/Catering Hospitality

Skills in excess supply: Temporary staff

IT/Computing

CAD Developers IT Directors

IT Helpdesk Support Software Engineers Nursing/Medical/Care

Nurses Retail

Secretarial/Clerical Personal Assistant

Other

Project Managers Consultancy



Customer Service

Traffic Marshall

Graduates

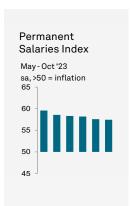
Testers





7 Pay pressures

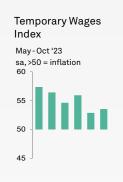
The recruitment industry survey tracks both the average salaries awarded to people placed in permanent jobs each month, as well as average hourly rates of pay for temp/contract staff.



Starting salary inflation softens slightly again in October

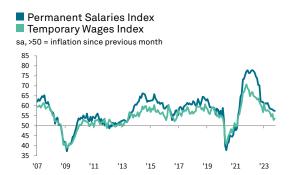
Average starting pay for permanent staff continued to increase at the start of the final quarter of 2023. Though sharp and in line with the series average, the rate of inflation was the softest recorded in 31 months. Recruiters widely cited that competition for suitably-skilled staff and the higher cost of living had placed further upward pressure on pay.

The quickest increase in starting salaries was seen in London, while the softest was registered in the South of England.



Temp pay growth holds close to September's 31-month low

Recruitment consultants signalled a sustained rise in average hourly pay rates for short-term staff in October. Although solid, the rate of wage growth was only slightly stronger than September's 31-month low and weaker than the series average. According to anecdotal evidence, employers had increased temp pay to attract and secure suitable candidates. However, greater pressure on client budgets had weighed on overall growth. All four monitored English regions noted higher temp wages, led by the North of England.



Permanent Salaries Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '23	59.6	55.4	56.3	63.7	66.3
Jun '23	58.6	56.7	54.9	55.2	63.5
Jul '23	58.3	56.5	57.2	58.4	58.9
Aug '23	58.2	55.9	55.4	59.9	60.9
Sep '23	57.6	59.4	54.8	55.9	58.2
Oct '23	57.4	60.1	53.0	57.2	57.5

Temporary Wages Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '23	57.4	55.0	57.5	55.6	62.1
Jun '23	56.4	59.0	55.4	54.3	56.3
Jul '23	54.6	52.3	55.9	54.1	56.6
Aug '23	55.9	60.7	52.1	56.5	55.5
Sep '23	52.9	55.7	51.4	54.2	50.7
Oct '23	53.5	53.9	53.0	52.9	55.5

Official data: UK average weekly earnings

Latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicated that employee earnings (including bonuses) rose +8.1% in the three months to August 2023. This marked one of the quickest rates of pay growth on record.

Underlying data showed that public sector earnings continued to expand at a faster rate than that seen for the private sector (+12.5% versus +7.1%). However, the former was impacted by one-off payments across the NHS and civil service in recent months, according to the ONS.







8 Special feature

This section features data from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation

Labour Shortages in Healthcare

UK healthcare is already facing a workforce crisis, likely to be exacerbated as we head into the peak winter period. This means labour shortages of doctors and nurses, among other roles, are a significant challenge to the sector's ability to run a safe, reliable and efficient service for patients.

Recent statistics show the scale of the problem.

According to <u>NHS Digital General Practice Workforce Statistics</u>, there was a 2.9% decline in September 2023 in the number of all qualified GPs, as compared to the pre-pandemic level (December 2019). Moreover, if we compare it with September 2015 data, the decline was 7%.

In addition, the NHS workforce statistics show a 6.9% reduction in all fully qualified GPs for Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts per 100,000 patients, and a 3.3% reduction in all nurses (FTE per 100,000 patients), between December 2019 to September 2023. This is a concern because the total number of patients increased by 4.3% overall and 12.6% per GP practice in the same period.

We are seeing a decline in the number of medical professionals and a deteriorating ratio between patients and doctors. Interestingly, <u>British Medical Association</u> research shows that in comparison to other European nations, the UK has a relatively low proportion of doctors relative to the population. The average for Europe is four doctors per 1000 people, whereas England has just 2.9 and it is even lower than that for the UK overall.

This mismatch in supply has been coupled with huge demand. REC's Labour Market Tracker data shows that job postings for medical practitioners and nurses grew by 38.5% in 2023, as compared to pre-pandemic (February 2020) job postings.

There is a high demand for permanent employees to mitigate this labour shortage. But we frequently hear that it is challenging for the NHS to find people for these substantive posts who are not put off by high work pressure, work-related stress, the lack of flexibility, increased living costs that cannot be matched with salary, and all this in a period of wider scarcity of skilled healthcare labour. While government have committed to funding the training for more medical staff – none of these individuals will graduate and be ready to take the jobs that are available and going unfilled right now. This leads to a significant increase in the demand for temporary workers – which has grown more than 70% in 2023 since December 2019.

Agency workers, locums and contingent staff provide the flexibility to allow NHS trusts to respond swiftly to changing demands and unforeseen circumstances. What's more many of the people working this way are choosing this option – many actively state they do not want permanent roles. Agencies provide highly skilled, compliant-checked and experienced workers on short notice, to ensure continuity of care and reduce the burden on permanent staff. As the demand for healthcare services continues to rise, finding a place for temporary staffing while addressing the wider labour shortages, is crucial to maintaining and improving healthcare in the UK.







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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 12-25 October 2023.

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The REC is the voice of the recruitment industry, speaking up for great recruiters. We drive standards and empower recruitment businesses to build better futures for their candidates and themselves. We are champions of an industry which is fundamental to the strength of the UK economy. Find out more about the Recruitment & Employment Confederation at www.rec.uk.com.

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