

# Talent Trends Report

## September 2025

Latest Hiring Insights from the REC / KPMG “UK Report on Jobs” - August 2025

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# Hiring headlines

## September 2025 - latest recruiting environment

The UK hiring market remains subdued, but August's data reveals important shifts that business leaders should note. Permanent hiring continues to contract, yet at the **slowest rate in months**, and temporary staffing is proving resilient as firms look for flexibility. At the same time, **candidate availability has surged to its highest level since the pandemic**, creating an abundant talent pool across professional sectors, including insurance and financial services.

While overall demand for new roles is still soft, **starting salaries and contract rates are cooling**, giving employers a rare opportunity to secure specialist talent at more manageable cost levels. With the **Autumn Budget** approaching and economic conditions still mixed, **this is a moment to plan for the next cycle rather than pause**: those who act now can strengthen teams and avoid future bottlenecks.

### Quick glance

**Hiring slowdown is easing.** The decline in permanent recruitment is becoming less severe, and temporary demand remains steady. Employers are cautious but no longer cutting back at the same pace.

**Candidate supply is booming.** Redundancies and job-security concerns are driving the strongest rise in available talent since 2020, creating deep pools of skilled professionals.

**Pay growth is cooling.** With salaries and temp rates rising only marginally, employers have a short window to hire critical talent at more predictable costs.

**Vacancies remain muted.** Overall demand for new roles is still subdued, which means competition for talent is less intense, *for now*.

"The business trading environment remains complex and it is still a mixed picture when it comes to reported business confidence... it's unlikely we'll see a significant shift in recruitment patterns in the near term as businesses evaluate their investment strategies."

**Jon Holt, Chief Executive and Senior Partner of KPMG in the UK**

"Employers need a shot of confidence along with their seasonal flu jabs this autumn... There is certainly potential out there – but with fewer vacancies and more candidates, the overall picture is still subdued."

**Neil Carberry, REC Chief Executive**

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# What this means for your business

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## Hiring slowdown is easing

The hiring drop is starting to level off. That doesn't mean it's time to relax. When the market does pick up, it will move quickly and companies that treat this lull as "business as usual" risk being left behind. Use this breathing space to get ready for growth rather than waiting for perfect conditions.

Business risk

**Plans on pause:** expansion, new product launches or key transformation projects may lose momentum if roles stay unfilled now. Hiring under pressure later almost always costs more and delivers less

**Team drift:** when staff don't see a clear plan or hear regular updates, they can lose confidence and start looking elsewhere, creating avoidable turnover

**Budget lock-in:** holding off too long can mean next year's headcount and pay budgets are set too low, forcing emergency approvals or rushed hiring at premium rates

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## Candidate supply is booming

There are more skilled people on the market than we've seen in years. But this window won't stay open for long. As confidence returns, the best candidates will quickly find homes. Acting now means you can bring in great people while competition is low.

Business risk

**Too much noise:** a surge in applications can overwhelm recruiters and managers, leading to slower shortlists and missing the best talent

**Fast-moving rivals:** competitors who have streamlined processes can move from first interview to offer in days, leaving slower organisations empty-handed

**Fit first:** pressure to act quickly can tempt quick hires without proper culture and values checks, increasing the risk of costly early leavers.

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## Pay growth is cooling

Salary and day-rate growth has eased, giving businesses a rare chance to hire without breaking the budget. But this is temporary. When the market turns, wages could jump again. Make the most of the current calm, while building a pay and benefits story that stands up when conditions change.

Business risk

**Fairness tension:** bringing in new people on lower or different pay structures can create resentment among existing staff, damaging morale and productivity

**Short-term thinking:** focusing only on headline salaries can leave benefits, career paths and wellbeing offers underdeveloped, weakening retention once competition returns

**Future pay shock:** when demand rebounds, you may face sharp wage hikes or counter-offers to keep critical talent, wiping out early savings

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## Vacancies remain muted

Right now there are fewer new roles being advertised, which can feel like a pause button. But demand isn't gone, it's delayed. Strategic projects and new initiatives will still need people when investment picks up. Use this quieter period to get ahead, not stand still.

Business risk

**Project delays:** vital upgrades or product launches can miss key deadlines if the right people aren't already identified and lined up

**Skill drain:** experienced employees leaving now may not be replaced in time, leaving knowledge gaps that take years to rebuild

**Competitive catch-up:** organisations that quietly strengthen their teams today will be ready to move fast and win market share while slower competitors are still hiring

# Business risks if you wait...

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## There are potentially significant business risks if you continue to wait to hire:

1. **Higher costs later:** delaying hiring means you could face higher salaries demands, recruitment & hiring costs or higher agency fees when demand returns
2. **Best people snapped up:** the strongest candidates won't wait; competitors with faster offers will secure them first
3. **Teams under strain:** short staffing leads to burnout, slower service, mistakes and missed deadlines
4. **Falling behind competitors:** those that are hiring now will enter the next growth phase stronger and faster
5. **Leadership gaps:** key senior or specialist roles left vacant weaken decision-making and succession planning
6. **Customer experience dip:** understaffed, overstretched customer-facing teams may deliver a poorer service, risking reputation and loyalty
7. **Innovation slowdown:** lack of fresh skills and ideas can stall new products, digital projects or efficiency gains
8. **Higher contractor spend:** waiting can force you to plug gaps with more expensive temporary or contract workers
9. **Compliance risk:** delays in hiring critical regulatory or technical roles can lead to audit findings or penalties





# Secure your talent advantage now

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## Why wait and risk higher costs or talent loss when our recruitment specialists can help you move first?

Gerrard White partners with you to:

- **Prioritise critical hires:** Identify the key Insurance, Technology and Legal roles you need to fill before market confidence returns
- **Accelerate hiring processes:** Our streamlined shortlisting and interview scheduling cut time-to-offer dramatically
- **Deploy skilled contractors & interims**  
Need immediate impact or project cover? Our pre-vetted contractor and interim networks mean you can plug skill gaps fast, without long-term cost commitments.
- **Shape competitive packages:** Use our live market data to set salaries and benefits that attract talent while costs remain stable
- **Strengthen your employer brand:** We craft job descriptions and candidate messaging that resonate with high-calibre professionals
- **Build ready-to-hire pipelines:** From underwriters and claims specialists to software engineers and commercial lawyers, we keep warm the talent you'll need next quarter



## Secure your talent advantage today...

Speak to Gerrard White for more insights into how you can secure the talent you need tomorrow, today.

**01892 553355 | [info@gerrardwhite.com](mailto:info@gerrardwhite.com)**

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At Gerrard White (part of the GWV Group), we are redefining recruitment by prioritising genuine relationships and personalised engagement over transactional processes. Going the extra mile is in our DNA. Our expert recruiters go above and beyond what clients and candidates expect from a traditional recruitment agency. Through our transparent and reliable approach, we build relationships that last. With vast expertise in the insurance and financial service sectors and across the legal, data and tech job market, our consultants excel in understanding market dynamics, building networks, and delivering innovative solutions.

For clients, we quickly source and select the very best talent from our vast network of candidates, ensuring cultural and skills fit within your time and budget constraints. For candidates, we open doors to diverse opportunities, matching aspirations with roles that align with their needs and expectations.

We believe in a consultative approach, working in partnership with our clients to deliver exceptional talent time and again. Our dedication to understanding industry challenges, coupled with our compliance expertise, ensures comprehensive workforce solutions for clients and candidates alike.

At Gerrard White, people come first. We thrive on building genuine relationships, continuous communication and personalised engagement. Choose us as your partner for legal, tech, SAP, and insurance talent needs across the UK, Europe, and the US.

**Find the talent you need for tomorrow, **today.****

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