

UK Jobs Market Review

April 2026



Permanent placements fall at quickest pace since January

Permanent



The number of people placed into permanent job roles across the UK declined during April. Whilst steeper than in Feb and March, the pace of reduction remained weaker than the average seen over 2025. Staff recruitment was dampened by relatively subdued economic conditions and low business confidence - which have been exacerbated by the war in Iran. Rising inflation and higher staff costs are also having an impact.



Temporary

After falling modestly in the prior two months, temp billings across the UK increase at the start of the second quarter. Although marginal, it marked the strongest uplift in two-and-a-half years. Some employers took on extra staff to assist with business development and expansion plans, with a preference for short-term staff amid prevailing economic and geopolitical uncertainty.

Downturn in vacancies eases slightly



Permanent job vacancies declined at a rate that, though solid, was the softest recorded since May 2025. Meanwhile, the downturn in temporary staff demand eased notably, with short-term vacancies falling at a modest rate that was the weakest in two months.

The latest official vacancies data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that the overall number of job opportunities continued to decline across the UK over the first quarter of the year. Total vacancies fell by 29,000 (3.9%) over this period to 711,000, to signal the lowest level of staff demand in nearly five years.

Growth in overall candidate numbers eases slightly

The availability of permanent candidates continued to rise in April, with this frequently being linked to the upturn in redundancies and lower demand for staff. The rate at which permanent labour supply increased remained historically sharp, despite easing from March.

There was an increase in the number of people seeking short-term jobs in April, thereby stretching the current period of growth to 38 months. The rate of expansion eased only fractionally from March's three-month high and remained sharp in the context of historical data. According to anecdotal evidence, company layoffs and fewer job opportunities pushed up candidate numbers.



Starting salary inflation picks up only slightly in April

Permanent



Recruiters across the UK signalled a sustained rise in starting pay for permanent workers in April. The rate of pay growth quickened slightly on the month, but was nevertheless weak in the context of the last five years. Employers are offering higher pay due to competition for particular skills. However relatively subdued demand for staff and tighter budgets weighed on growth.



Temporary

Average hourly rates of pay for short-term staff increased again in April. Some firms linked the rises to stronger than average increases in the national minimum and living wage rates. The rate of inflation accelerated from March's recent low, but was mild overall and well below the historical trend.