

UK Jobs Market Review

September 2026

Perm placements & temp billings increase marginally

Permanent

Temporary



September signalled a second successive monthly increase in the number of people placed into permanent jobs across the UK. In some areas, employers were taking on extra staff due to rising activity levels and company expansion plans amid improved confidence around the business outlook.



A further rise in temp billings was recorded during September, though the rate of expansion slowed on the month. Whilst some areas reports an increase in demand for short-term staff and new project starts, others had chosen to hire permanent workers and highlighted the impact of fewer overall vacancies on recruitment.

Vacancy numbers fall at softest rate since August 24



Permanent vacancies decreased in September, thereby extending the current period of reduction to just over three years. That said, the pace of contraction eased to a modest pace that was the slowest recorded since August 2024. For temp vacancies, a second successive monthly fall was recorded, albeit with the rate of decrease, little-changed from August and only mild.

The number of vacancies in the UK continued to decline in the three months to August. Overall, the number of job opportunities was down 8,000 compared to the three months to May, taking the total to 702,000. This marked the lowest level since the three months to April 2021.

Staff availability rises at weakest pace in three years

Permanent staff availability rose again in September, extending the current period of growth to 43 months. Although substantial overall, the pace of expansion eased from August to the weakest in three years. Redundancies and fewer work opportunities were widely reported to have led to growth in jobseekers.

As has been the case since March 2023, the availability of staff to fill temporary vacancies increased in September. The rate of expansion quickened slightly to a three-month high, but remained much weaker than levels typically seen since 2024. Fewer vacancies and more people out of work led to the increase in temp availability overall.



Permanent pay inflation softens in September

Permanent

Permanent starting salaries increase again during September, extending the current period of pay growth to just over five-and-a-half years. Competition for high-quality candidates reportedly placed upward pressure on salaries, whilst efforts to control costs and improved candidate numbers limited pay growth.



Temporary

Temp pay rates increased for the tenth month in a row at the end of the third quarter. Higher quality candidates were generally able to secure increased pay rates. However, the rate of inflation continued to slow from July's recent high and was the softest since May.

