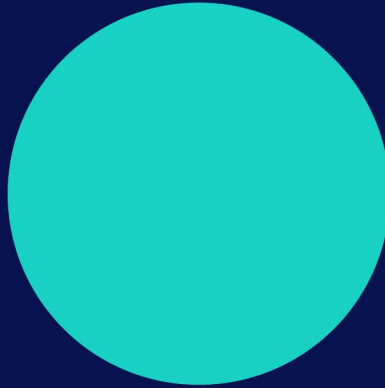
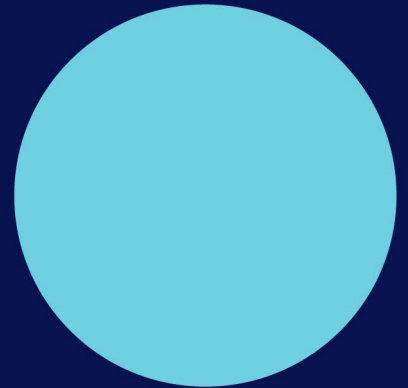
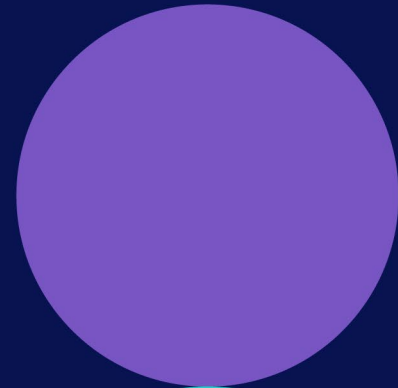


**Reed**  
...



# Salary guide 2026

**Human resources**

# Navigating the new jobs landscape



**James Reed CBE**  
Chairman and CEO, Reed

Welcome to our 2026 salary guides. As we look ahead, it is clear that the UK labour market is navigating one of the most profound transformations in living memory. In my four decades in recruitment, I have never witnessed a period of such rapid and fundamental change.

Our economic landscape has defied traditional expectations. Historically, periods of economic growth have aligned with rising job vacancies, but that relationship is no longer guaranteed. Recent trends suggest a structural shift in the labour market, where vacancy levels can decline even as the economy expands. This disconnect signals deeper changes in how businesses approach hiring and workforce planning. For employers and jobseekers alike, understanding these dynamics is critical - because the old assumption that growth equals more jobs is increasingly outdated.

## The AI revolution: A white-collar recession

One of the primary drivers behind this permanent change to the jobs market, alongside policy, regulation, changing worker expectations, globalisation and supply chain pressures, I believe is artificial intelligence. The advancement and adoption of AI technologies have been breathtakingly fast, and its appetite for consuming tasks, particularly in white-collar professions, is the biggest story of our time.

AI is incredibly effective at reducing costs for employers, and it achieves this primarily by reducing the number of employees required. This is not a distant, future threat; it is happening right now. A recent survey we conducted of 500 companies revealed that 15%

were already reducing their hiring plans specifically because of the arrival of AI. Combined with other pressures, such as National Insurance increases and general hiring freezes, the overall impact on job creation has been noticeable.

We are witnessing what I term a 'white-collar recession,' which mirrors the blue-collar recession of the 1980s when automation hollowed out many industrial and manufacturing jobs. Today, it is entry-level and process-driven roles in sectors like administration, finance, and even law that are being consumed. These are the traditional gateways for many professionals starting their careers, and their rapid decline poses a significant threat to social mobility and future workforce development. The very nature of what constitutes a 'good job' is being redefined before our eyes. Roles that once seemed secure and promised a stable career path are now vulnerable to automation. This forces us, as employers and as a society, to rethink our approach to education, skills, and career progression.



The advancement and adoption of AI technologies have been breathtakingly fast, and its appetite for consuming tasks, particularly in white-collar professions, is the biggest story of our time.



## The graduate dilemma: A shrinking horizon

Nowhere is this shift more acutely felt than among our young people and recent graduates. The data is deeply concerning. Our own figures at Reed show that the number of graduate jobs advertised on Reed.co.uk has plummeted from around 180,000 just a few years ago to a mere 50,000 at the end of 2025. This represents a staggering two-thirds reduction in opportunities for those leaving higher education. Other job sites are reporting similar, sobering figures. This is not just a dip; it is a collapse in the entry-level market.

This 'graduate crunch' is creating a generation of highly educated individuals who are struggling to find a foothold in the professional world. Nearly half of all jobs lost since mid-2024 have been among those under 25, and youth unemployment has soared to its highest level in a decade, excluding the pandemic period standing at 15.3%. The UK's top 100 employers reduced their graduate hiring by 14.6% in 2024, the steepest fall since the 2009 recession.

For those who do manage to secure a role, the rewards are often diminished. We are seeing entry-level graduate jobs offering salaries that are perilously close to the minimum wage, especially when factoring in the long hours often expected of new recruits. This situation challenges the long-held assumption that a university degree is a guaranteed ticket to a prosperous career. We must encourage aspiring families and young people to broaden their horizons. While a degree remains valuable, it is no longer the only path.

The jobs that are proving most resilient to the AI wave are those that require a human touch, creativity, and manual dexterity. Roles in skilled trades, hospitality, and healthcare, for example, involve a level of nuanced interaction and physical skill that AI is far from replicating. We must guide the next generation towards developing practical, hands-on skills. Learning to do things with your hands, whether in a highly educated field like osteopathy or a skilled trade, is becoming an increasingly wise career strategy.

## Thriving through purpose: The PhilCo advantage

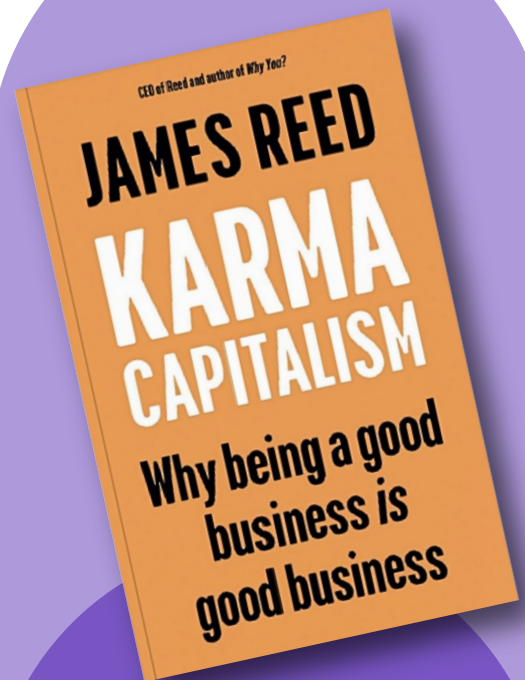
In this challenging environment, how can businesses not only survive but thrive? How can you attract and retain the talent you need when the market is so volatile? The answer, I believe, lies in purpose. Today's employees, especially the younger generation, are not just looking for a salary; they are seeking meaning and a sense of contribution from their work. This is where the concept of a philanthropic company, or PhilCo, becomes a powerful competitive advantage.

A **PhilCo** is a business that has committed a significant portion of its ownership - typically 10% or more - to a charitable foundation. At Reed, we are proud to be a PhilCo, with 18% of our company owned by the Reed Foundation. This is not just a footnote in our corporate structure; it is a

fundamental part of our identity. It means that a portion of our success is directly channelled back into the community. Our dividends help fund a wide array of good causes, many through our partnership with the Big Give, which has raised hundreds of millions for thousands of charities.

Being a PhilCo has a tangible and profound impact on our business. It is a cornerstone of our employee engagement strategy. Our team members - known as co-members - know that their hard work contributes to something larger than the bottom line. This shared purpose fosters a culture of responsibility, collaboration, and pride. It creates a powerful reason for people to join us and, just as importantly, to stay with us.

As hyper-capitalism has created vast inequalities - with the top one per cent in the UK holding more wealth than the bottom 70% - models like the PhilCo movement offer a way to transform business for good. It aligns profit with people and the planet, ensuring that corporate success contributes to societal wellbeing. This is not just corporate social responsibility; it is a sustainable and highly impactful business model for the 21st century.



Find out more about being a PhilCo in James' book 'Karma Capitalism, Why being a good business is good business'

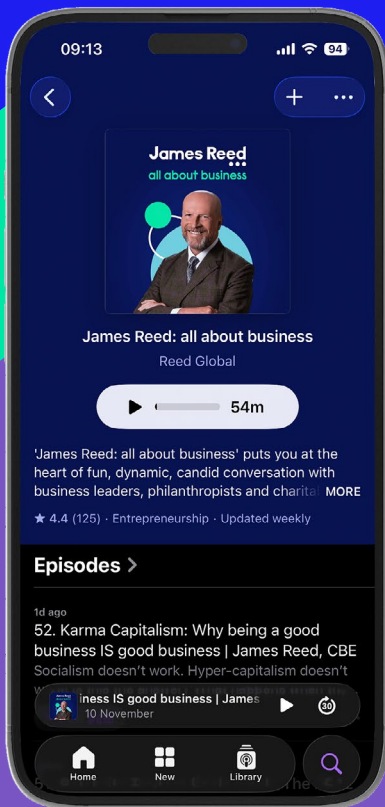
## A look to the future

The road ahead is undoubtedly challenging. The forces of AI, economic uncertainty, and shifting market dynamics require us all to be more agile, more innovative, and more people centric than ever before. For employers, this means rethinking recruitment strategies. You must look beyond traditional qualifications and focus on skills, adaptability, resilience and potential. It means investing in upskilling and reskilling your existing workforce to meet the demands of the new economy. And it means building a strong employer brand rooted in a genuine purpose that will attract the best people.

For individuals, the message is clear: continuous learning is no longer optional. Developing a diverse skill set, particularly one that blends technical knowledge with people-centric abilities like communication, empathy, and critical thinking, will be crucial. We must all become lifelong learners to stay relevant and valuable in this evolving landscape.

These salary guides are designed to provide you with the data and insights you need to navigate this complex environment. They offer a benchmark for compensation in a time of great flux, helping you make informed decisions to attract and retain the talent that will drive your organisation forward. While the headlines may be daunting, there is always opportunity in disruption. By understanding these trends and adapting proactively, we can build a more resilient, skilled, and purposeful workforce for the future.

**James Reed CBE**  
Chairman and CEO, Reed



## Listen to James Reed's podcast 'all about business'.

Hosted by **James Reed CBE**, the Chairman and CEO of Reed Group, you'll hear the highs and lows of what it means to be a true business leader to empower you to implement smarter, more meaningful strategy in your business or career.

[Listen here](#)

# Why use Reed's human resources salary guide?

For both jobseekers and employers alike, Reed's salary guide stands as an invaluable resource, offering unparalleled insights to keep you well-informed and ahead of the curve in 2026.



## Unmatched data insights

This comprehensive guide draws upon a vast dataset derived from over 18 million jobs posted on [Reed.co.uk](https://www.reed.co.uk) since 2017, solidifying its status as the most trusted salary guide in existence. The analysis of such an extensive volume of data offers an unparalleled view of the sector, ensuring accuracy and reliability.



## Local and national expertise

Our specialism experts provide key insight into the sector, with Reed's regional directors discussing the local job landscape. This distinctive perspective, not available elsewhere, enhances the guide's richness and relevance.



## Evolving landscapes and emerging trends

Delving into the intricacies of roles across 12 UK regions, our guide highlights noteworthy developments using graphics to depict key salary changes over the past year. With a robust dataset spanning four years, it includes salary projections for the upcoming year and average salary data dating back to 2017.

## Contents

Introduction	06	Is your package winning top talent?	29
Our survey says...	10	Northern Ireland	30
Why Reed?	16	Scotland	32
Leadership	17	South East	34
East Anglia	19	South West	36
East Midlands	21	Wales	38
London	23	West Midlands	40
North East	25	Yorkshire & Humberside	42
North West	27	Looking for employee screening?	44

# Navigating the shift: insights into the private sector HR market

Alexia Catt

Private Sector HR Expert, Reed



**In a landscape shaped by economic pressures and evolving workplace expectations, human resources teams are at the forefront of organisational change. HR professionals are not just managing personnel - they are strategic partners navigating complexity, justifying costs, and championing culture.**

The current climate demands that HR functions are more agile and cost-effective than ever. As organisations grapple with increased outgoings, HR teams are tasked with finding efficiencies and ensuring every decision adds value. This has led to a cautious approach to hiring, with prolonged recruitment processes becoming the norm. Businesses are taking their time to find the right person, understanding that a mis-hire is a costly mistake they can't afford.

## **Evolving strategies in an uncertain economy**

Economic uncertainty is compelling HR teams to adapt. Many professionals report feeling stretched, taking on broader responsibilities as budgets tighten and team resources are limited. HR directors are often pulled into day-to-day operational tasks, leaving less time for strategic planning.

To counteract this, organisations are looking to become savvier with their systems and processes. There's a push to implement more efficient HR metrics and monitoring tools to track key areas like sickness absence, which directly impacts their bottom line. This focus on cost-effectiveness underscores the critical role HR plays in maintaining business stability during challenging times.

Despite the caution, there are positive signs. A recent uptick in hiring for talent acquisition roles suggests that companies are gearing up for future growth, preparing to be in a solid position as the economic climate improves.

## **In-demand skills and shifting priorities**

While no single 'radically new' skill has emerged, the demand for core HR competencies has intensified. HR generalists and

employee relations roles have remained strong as employers look to improve efficiency as they navigate through the upcoming changes to employment legislation. Additionally, those with technical skills are always in demand.

Expertise in handling restructures, redundancies, and consultations is highly valued. Professionals with a solid, broad understanding of the operational and legal aspects of HR are also essential.

We are also seeing a resurgence in certain specialisms, including:

- **Learning and development (L&D):** An increase in L&D openings indicates that companies are reinvesting in their employees. This focus on internal development is a key strategy for talent retention and succession planning, signalling a commitment to long-term growth.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I):** Despite some headlines suggesting a cutback, ED&I remains firmly on the agenda for many HR professionals. They recognise its importance in building a robust and equitable workplace culture and are actively looking to implement more effective ED&I strategies.

## **The hybrid working debate and its impact on policy**

The conversation around hybrid working, flexible hours, and wellbeing continues to shape HR policy. However, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The approach often depends on the nature of the business and its workforce.

In sectors like manufacturing or those with a large operational, on-site employees, the expectation is often for HR to be visible and present. In contrast, professional services and other office-based environments are more likely to offer hybrid arrangements. The core principle seems to be that HR's working model should align with that of the employees it supports.

For HR professionals themselves, flexibility is a top priority. A healthy work-life balance is now a primary motivator, often ranking above salary and other benefits. Companies that fail to offer some form of flexibility find it significantly harder to attract and retain top HR talent. The days of a mandatory five-day office week are a difficult sell for professionals who have experienced the benefits of a more balanced approach.

### The crucial role of culture and values

An organisation's culture and values are paramount in attracting and retaining HR talent. Many professionals leave roles because of a misalignment with their personal and professional ethics. This can happen when a company's practices are not in line with legal procedures or when the HR function itself is not valued by the senior leadership team.

HR professionals want to work in environments where they can make a genuine impact and feel their contribution is respected. They seek cultures that are supportive, ethical, and aligned with their own values. This makes a strong, positive culture one of the most powerful retention tools a business has.

### Competing with the public sector

The private sector faces stiff competition from the public and third sectors, which often offer more generous benefits, particularly annual leave and pensions. To compete, private sector companies must leverage other advantages.

While public sector roles provide stability and excellent benefits, they can also come with significant red tape, which can frustrate HR professionals who want to make a swift impact. The private sector can offer a more dynamic, commercial environment where individuals can implement change more freely. Consequently, private companies often attract talent by offering higher salaries and the opportunity to have a more direct influence on business strategy.

### Salary trends and jobseeker expectations

Salaries in the HR sector saw a significant inflation spike around 2023 but have since levelled off, and in some cases, dropped. This has created a challenging dynamic. We are seeing roles for experienced HR directors advertised at salaries that are misaligned with market rates, making it difficult to attract professionals with the required level of expertise.

This mismatch between what companies are willing to offer and what individuals expect, is a major point of friction. Businesses that are highly selective about who they hire must also be realistic about their compensation packages. If you want the best talent, you must be prepared to offer a competitive salary and attractive benefits, including the much-desired flexibility.

### The future of HR: technology and regulation

Digital tools and AI are gradually reshaping HR, but perhaps not in the way many predicted. The consensus among many HR professionals is that AI is more likely to augment their roles rather than replace them. Its greatest potential lies in automating administrative tasks, freeing up HR teams to focus on more strategic, people-focused initiatives like improving the candidate experience. The human element of HR remains irreplaceable.

Upcoming changes to employment law will have significant impact, and HR professionals will be essential in navigating these changes. Companies will need HR expertise to review and overhaul their policies and procedures, potentially driving an increased demand for skilled professionals over the next couple of years.

Finally, the voice of HR is growing stronger at board level. Senior HR leaders are increasingly part of a company's senior leadership team, where their influence on key business decisions is valued. This recognition is crucial, as HR strategy is fundamental to shaping policies, managing talent, and ultimately driving the entire organisation forward. This environment presents a chance to develop new skills, leverage technology, and play a critical role in guiding organisations through an era of transformation.

# From specialists to strategic leaders: the evolution of public sector HR

**Daniel Barber**

Public Sector HR Expert, Reed



**In the face of economic uncertainty and a transforming workforce, the public sector human resources landscape is undergoing a significant evolution. Rather than slowing down, HR teams are demonstrating remarkable resilience and adaptability. They are finding innovative ways to attract, retain, and develop talent by focusing on what truly matters: people, culture, and long-term value.**

This shift isn't just about managing change; it's about leading it. By prioritising internal growth, embracing flexibility, and leveraging technology, public sector organisations are building stronger, more engaged workforces.

## **The evolving role of HR: from specialist to strategic generalist**

A significant shift in the public sector is redefining the HR landscape, moving away from hyper-specialisation towards a more comprehensive, generalist approach. While traditionally HR departments might have siloed functions like recruitment, learning and development (L&D), or organisational development (OD), organisations are now seeking HR professionals with a broader skillset.

This change is driven by the need for agility and efficiency. Instead of hiring numerous specialists for every HR function, businesses are empowering existing HR staff to manage diverse responsibilities. For instance, a head of HR might now oversee L&D and OD alongside traditional HR duties. This approach not only streamlines operations and optimises resources but also offers clear paths for career progression within the HR function. Ambitious HR professionals are given the chance to expand their expertise, fostering loyalty and reducing the 'job-hopping' trend often seen in more rigid structures. This strategic pivot ensures HR teams are more adaptable and capable of addressing a wider range of organisational needs effectively.

## **The power of purpose: culture and values as a USP**

When high salaries are off the table, what attracts top HR talent to the public sector? The answer lies in culture, values, and work-life balance. Today's HR professionals are increasingly prioritising job satisfaction over financial reward. They are looking for workplaces that align with their personal values and offer a supportive, collaborative environment.

Public sector organisations are uniquely positioned to meet this demand. Many are described as 'family-orientated,' with a less hierarchical structure that encourages open communication and gives every team member a voice. This collaborative culture is a powerful unique selling point.

Furthermore, the public sector often excels at providing a genuine work-life balance. Flexible working arrangements, such as later start times or hybrid models, are significant attractions. This flexibility, combined with generous pension contributions and holiday allowances, creates a comprehensive benefits package that appeals to professionals at all stages of their careers. For businesses looking to attract talent, promoting this culture of flexibility and support is the most effective strategy.

## **Technology and essential skills**

Technology is becoming a cornerstone of modern HR. As organisations modernise, proficiency with up-to-date HR systems is an essential skill. Professionals with experience in implementing and managing these systems are in high demand, as they can help streamline processes and improve efficiency across the business.

Alongside technical skills, professional qualifications remain highly valued. A CIPD qualification, particularly at level 5 or above, is seen as a significant asset. It demonstrates a deep understanding of UK employment law, which is crucial in the current climate of restructuring and redundancies. Organisations need knowledgeable experts who can navigate complex employee relations cases and provide sound advice to senior stakeholders.

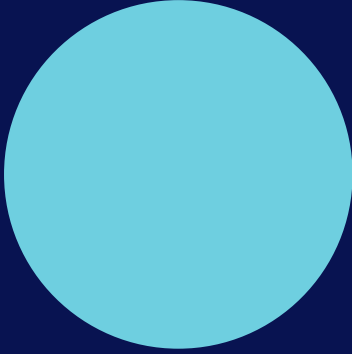
For individuals looking to make themselves more competitive, investing in both their technical knowledge and formal qualifications is a clear path to success.

### Attracting and retaining professionals

For public sector bodies, attracting and retaining the best talent this year requires a focus on your non-financial offer. Employers should actively promote their culture, showcasing a supportive, flexible, and collaborative work environment as their biggest asset. It's also important to offer clear progression by creating and communicating clear pathways for internal career development, demonstrating investment in employees' futures. Furthermore, flexibility is the most sought-after benefit, so where possible, offering hybrid work models and adaptable hours will attract a wider pool of candidates.

Over the past year, the public sector HR market has demonstrated resilience, adapting with intelligence and purpose. Looking ahead, the next 12 months present an opportunity to accelerate growth by cultivating a positive culture and embracing emerging skills. These strategies are laying the groundwork for a stronger, more agile future. The challenges are undeniable, but for organisations ready to evolve, the opportunities are even greater.





# Our survey says...

At the end of 2025, Reed conducted its annual snap survey of 5,000 professionals. The research asked UK workers about their current and preferred salary and benefits, their organisation's performance and priorities, how they rated their job satisfaction and career prospects, as well as the key recruitment and skills trends they're witnessing.

Here are the top trends that the survey revealed:

## 1. Financial strain is widespread

The overwhelming reason for salary dissatisfaction (52% of unhappy respondents) is that pay hasn't kept pace with the cost of living. This far outweighs other factors, such as workload or industry pay.

- **Declining affordability:** Only a quarter of the population (25%) feels they're earning more in terms of what they can afford compared to four years ago, before the cost-of-living crisis.

- **Limited disposable income:** A concerning 26% of respondents have **£100 or less leftover** each month after essential bills, with seven per cent stating their entire salary goes to essentials. This highlights a struggle for many to save or enjoy non-essential spending.

## 2. The growing 'comfort gap'

There is a stark **£11,110.38 gap** between what people are currently earning and what they say is their comfortable living wage.

- **Desired vs. current earnings:** Our research found the average current annual salary is **£40,638.35**. However, the average income people believe they need to live comfortably is **£51,748.73**.

## 3. Salary remains the dominant job motivator

To switch jobs, individuals expect a substantial average pay increase of **£12,139.55**. This is significantly higher than the average **£3,923.62** pay rise that would satisfy them at their current employer, indicating a clear financial incentive is needed to overcome the inertia of changing roles.

- **Increased importance:** A vast majority (73%) report that salary is more important now when considering new job opportunities than it was before the cost-of-living crisis – 40% even say it’s “significantly more important”.
- **Higher progression expectations:** Nearly half of the 5,000 people surveyed (44%) have increased their expectations for salary progression within their current role over the last four years.

#### 4. Benefits are secondary to cash

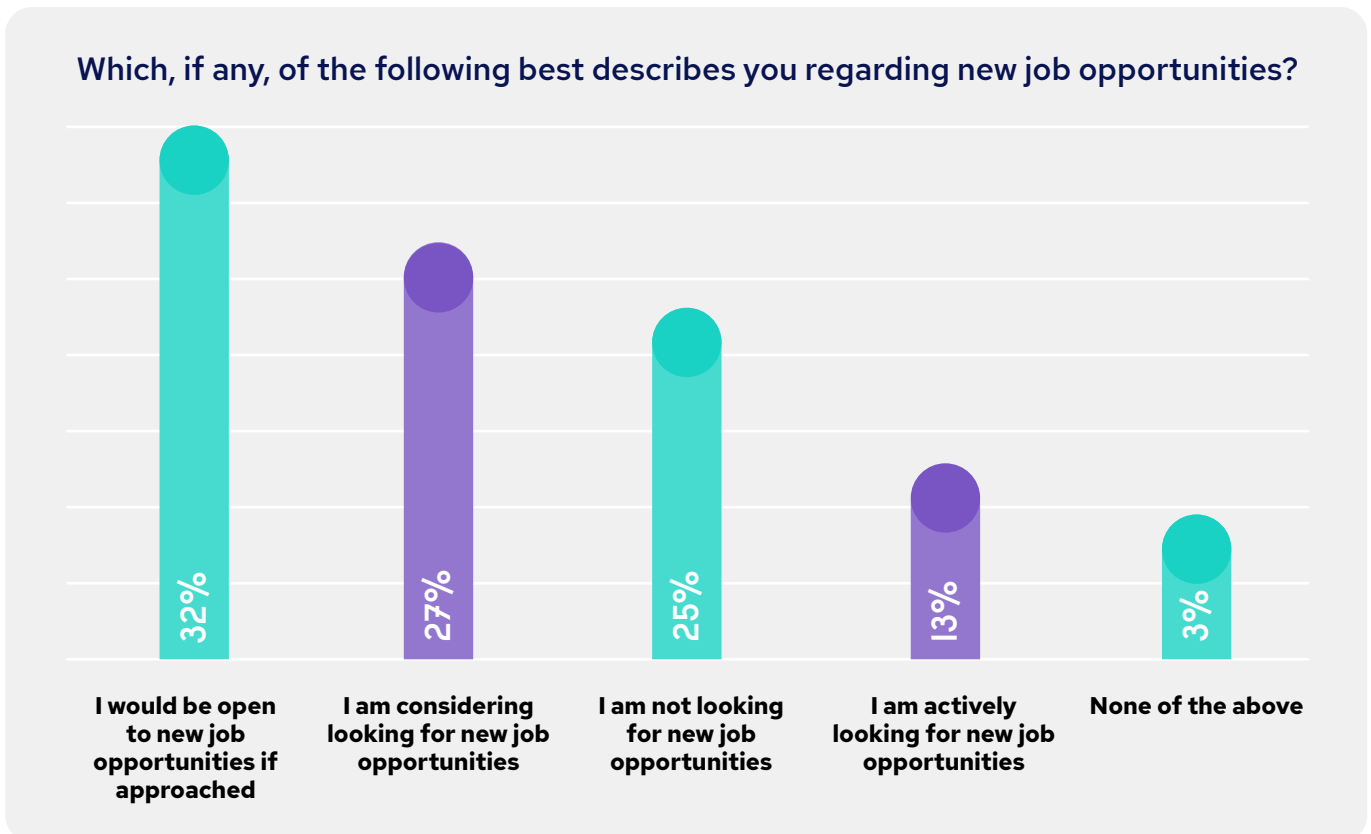
Many employees are willing to sacrifice ‘soft’ benefits like free refreshments (11%), cycle-to-work schemes (11%), onsite parking (eight per cent), and wellness programmes (seven per cent) for higher pay. Even some ‘harder’ benefits like health insurance are on the table for six per cent of those who took part.

- **Underutilised benefits:** Some commonly offered benefits, such as cycle-to-work schemes (11% unused) and the ability to purchase additional annual leave (seven per cent unused), are not being fully utilised by employees. This suggests that while benefits are appreciated, their perceived value can be lower than direct cash compensation, especially in the current financial climate.
- **Prevalence of benefits:** Common benefits include onsite parking (27%), hybrid working (23%), and Christmas shutdown (21%). However, 15% of respondents receive no benefits at all.

#### 5. A highly mobile workforce

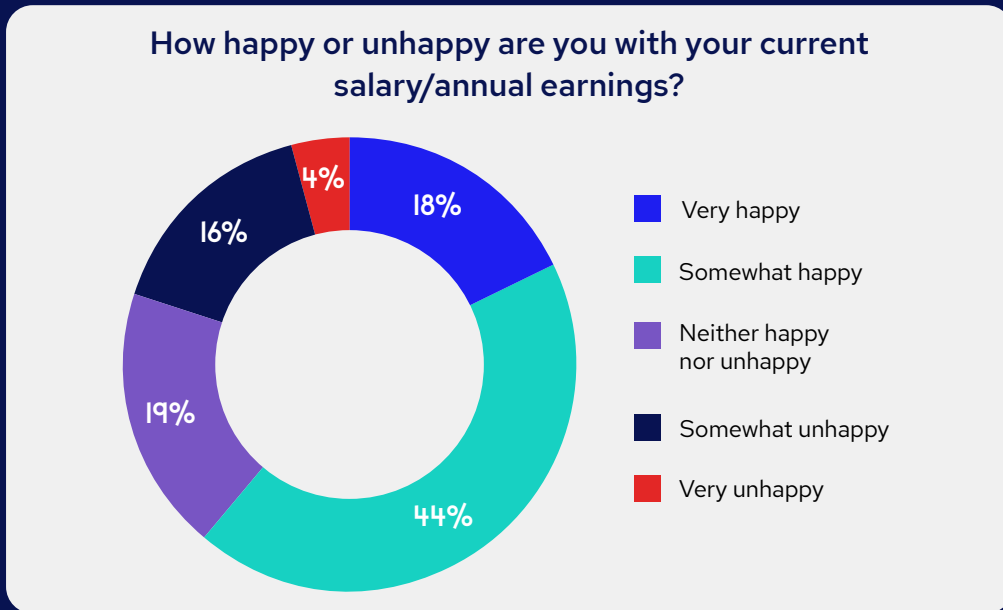
While the **average tenure is 8.54 years**, the high openness to new roles suggests that even long-serving employees are not immune to the pull of better compensation.

- **Open to new opportunities:** A significant majority (72%) of the workforce is considering a new role. A third (32%) are open to new job opportunities if approached, 27% are considering looking and 13% are actively looking. Only a quarter of employees (25%) are not looking for a new job opportunity at all.



# Money, money, money

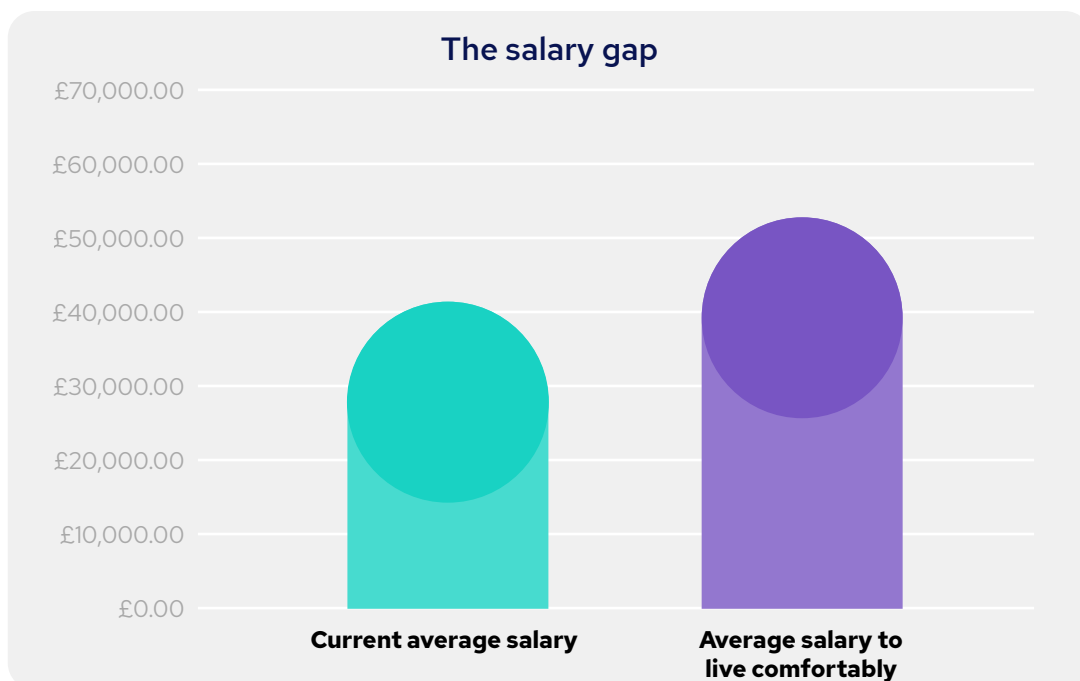
With ongoing cost-of-living challenges, salaries continue to be a huge area of discussion in the employment market, for both professionals and businesses. The data reveals the UK workforce is under significant financial pressure, with a clear and growing emphasis on salary as a primary driver of job satisfaction and career decisions.



Currently, over half (61%) of workers are happy with the pay they receive. However, that leaves a significant 20% of professionals feeling unhappy with their current salary, and another 19% feeling ambivalent (“neither happy nor unhappy”).

Of those who are unhappy, the overwhelming reason, cited by over half (52%), is that their pay hasn’t risen with the cost of living. Other key reasons include feeling they “do so much more than my job role” (39%), being “unable to save enough to meet my financial goals” (37%), and their salary “not being enough to live the lifestyle I want” (35%).

The disparity between the average current wage and the salary people would be comfortable with remains substantial. This year, the average current salary for survey respondents stands at **£40,638.35**. However, the average income people believe they need to live comfortably is **£51,748.73**, representing an average **£11,110.38 gap**. This ‘comfort gap’ indicates a widespread desire for higher earnings.



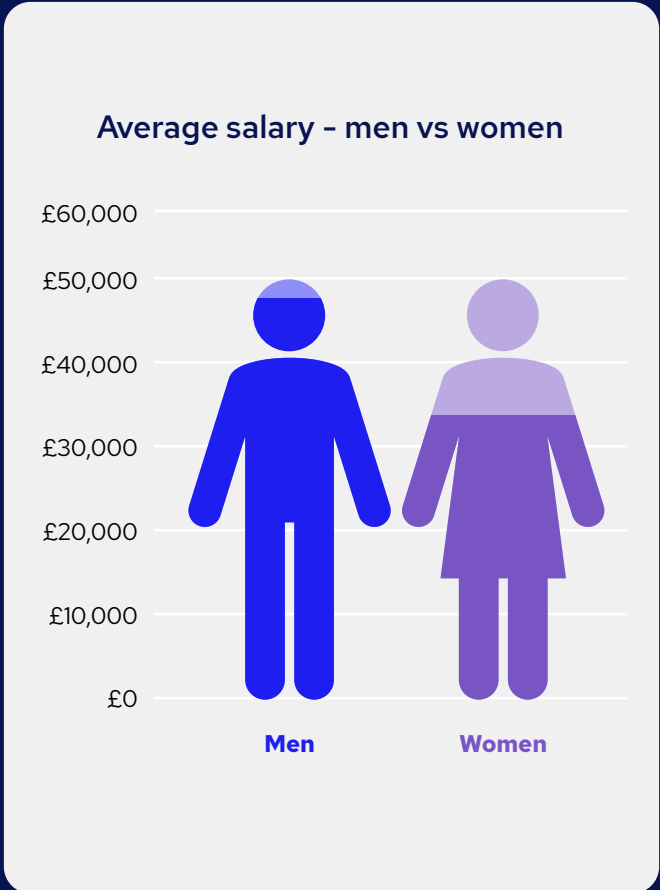
The financial strain is evident in monthly disposable income. A concerning **seven per cent of respondents have £0 leftover** each month after essential bills, with their entire salary going towards necessities. Overall, **26% have £100 or less remaining** for non-essential spending, savings, or leisure.



As a direct consequence of the financial climate as we enter 2026, 73% of professionals state that salary is more important now than it was before the cost-of-living crisis began in 2021, with 40% saying it is "significantly more important." Expectations for salary progression within the same role have also increased for 44% of workers. **To switch jobs, individuals expect a substantial average pay increase of £12,139.55.**

## A deeper dive...

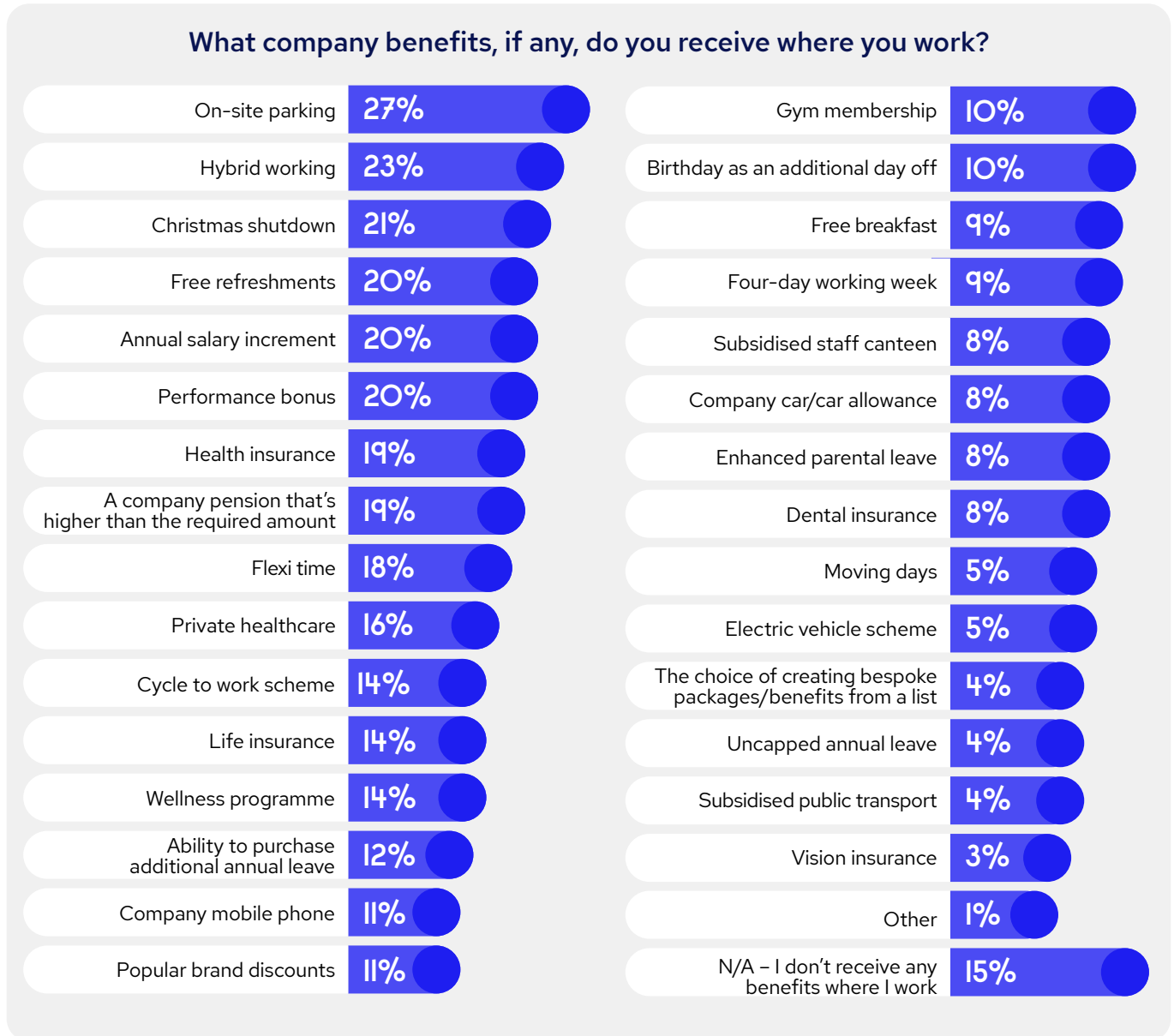
- Gender pay gap:** There remains a significant gender pay gap. The survey found that on average, men earn £48,367.15, while women earn £33,852.12, **a difference of over £14,500**. This disparity extends to satisfaction: 66% of men are happy with their salary compared to 57% of women, and women are more unhappy (24%) than men (16%). Men also perceive a higher comfortable salary (£59,688.07) than women (£44,707.25).
- Disposable income gap:** Women have significantly less disposable income, with an average of £626.61 left over monthly compared to £983.38 for men. Women are also twice as likely to have £0 leftover.
- Age and earnings:** Current salaries peak in the 25-34 age group (£49,853.43), while the desired comfortable income peaks in the 25-34 age group (£65,341.10). Salary satisfaction is highest for younger workers (18-34) and lowest for the 45-54 age group, where only 51% are happy with their pay. This 45-54 age group also reports the highest percentage (nine per cent) with £0 leftover monthly.
- Job mobility:** Younger workers (18-34) are most willing to change jobs for salary increases, while older workers (55+) are significantly less likely to change jobs for more money, indicating that other factors become more important with age.



# All about the benefits

While offering a higher salary remains the most direct way to attract and retain employees, the benefits package also plays a role, especially for businesses unable to match top-tier salaries. **However, 15% of respondents currently say they receive no workplace benefits at all.**

Commonly offered benefits include onsite parking (27%), hybrid working (23%), and Christmas shutdown (21%). However, there's a noticeable disconnect between offered and desired benefits, and also a willingness to sacrifice many perks for higher pay.



## A deeper dive...

- Sacrificing perks for pay:** Many employees are willing to sacrifice 'soft' benefits for higher pay. Free refreshments (11%) and cycle to work schemes (11%) are the benefits most employees would be willing to give up.
- Age and benefits:** Younger workers (25-34) are most willing to sacrifice benefits for higher pay, while older workers (55+) are significantly less willing to do so, suggesting they value their existing benefits more.
- Gender benefit gap:** Women are more likely to receive no benefits (17% vs. 12% for men) and, on average, men report receiving more benefits overall.

# Key takeaways for businesses:

Over two-thirds of professionals (72%) are currently looking or open to looking for a new job – highlighting a critical need for businesses to audit what they are offering their current and future talent. The primary drivers for this job market engagement are financial, with the cost-of-living crisis acting as a significant catalyst.



**Address the 'comfort gap':** The £11,110.38 gap between current and desired comfortable income is a major source of dissatisfaction and a driver of job mobility. Competitive salaries are no longer just about attracting talent but retaining it.



**Targeted retention:** Mid-career professionals (25-44) are a high-risk group, demanding the largest pay increases to switch jobs and showing the highest increase in salary progression expectations. Retention strategies must be robust for this segment.



**Acknowledge gender disparities:** The significant gender pay gap, lower salary satisfaction, and reduced financial flexibility for women are critical issues. Businesses must address these disparities to foster equity and retain female talent.

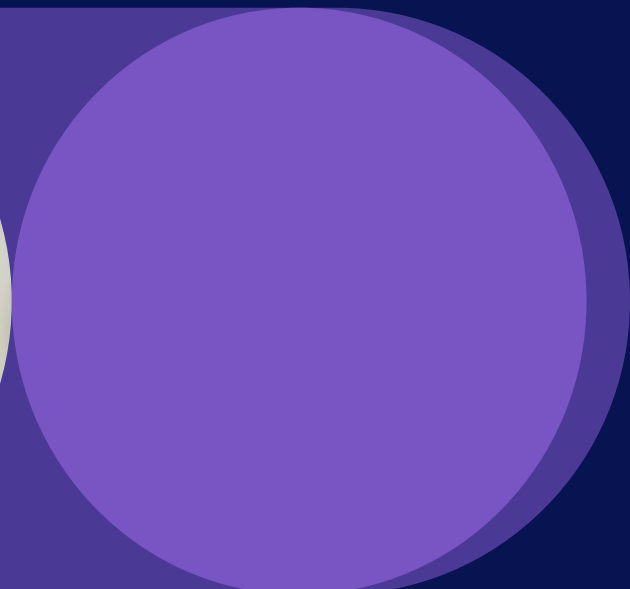


**Strategic benefits offerings:** While salary is king, benefits can still make a difference. However, businesses should evaluate the relevance and perceived value of their benefits packages. Many employees are willing to sacrifice less-valued benefits for higher pay, suggesting that resources might be better allocated to more impactful perks or direct compensation.



**Prioritise financial wellbeing:** The struggle to meet financial obligations and save for goals is widespread. Benefits that directly support financial wellbeing (e.g., better pensions, performance bonuses) are likely to be highly valued, especially when employees are willing to trade other perks for them.

The current economic climate has made salary a paramount concern for the majority of the UK workforce. Businesses that fail to recognise and adapt to these heightened financial expectations and disparities risk losing valuable talent in a highly mobile job market.





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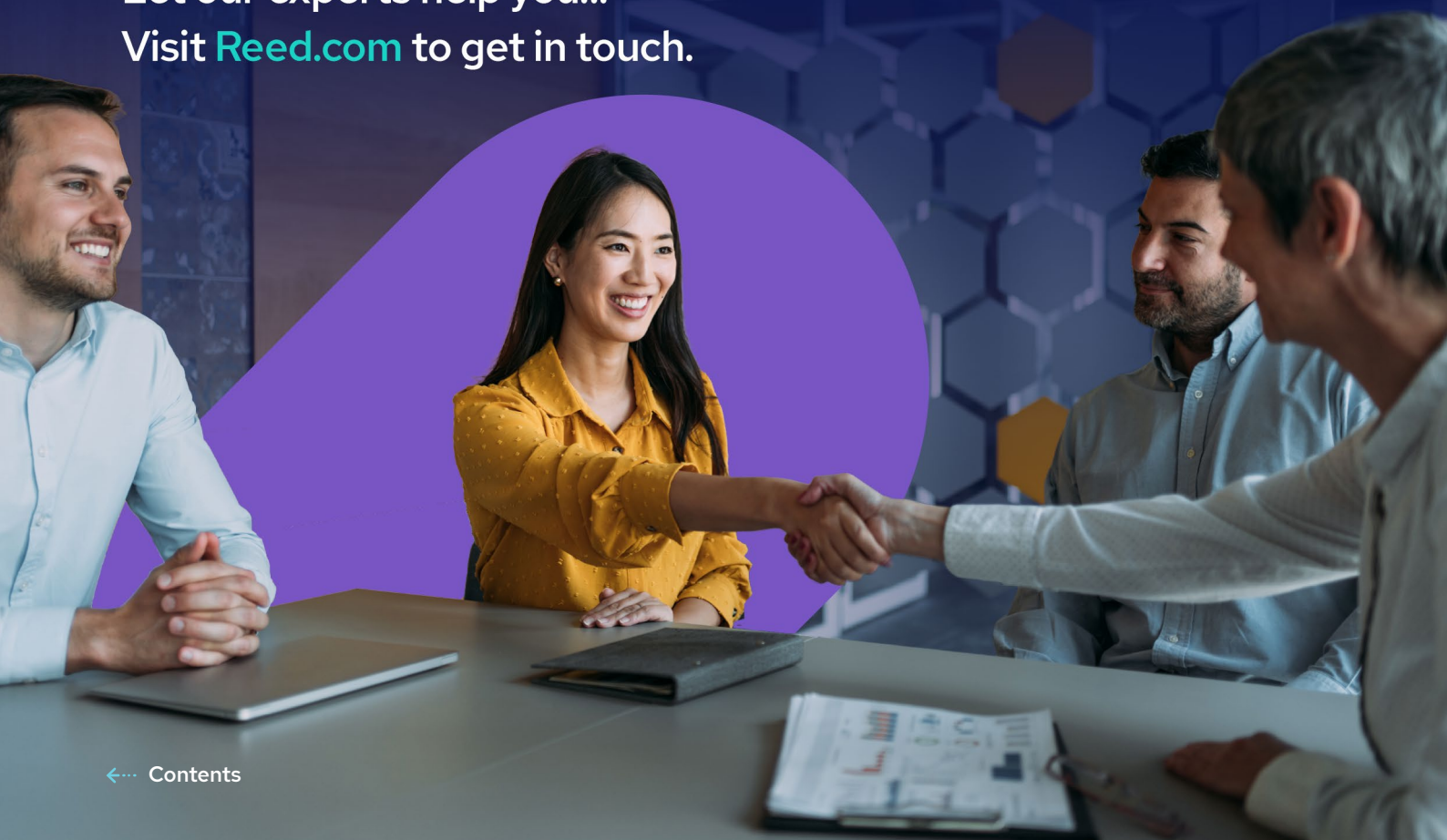


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# Leadership



## Chief People Officer

### Private sector

Average salary			
Employees	<1000	1000-5000	5000+
London	£174,300	£194,700	£250,000
Midlands and East	£135,800	£151,900	£166,800
North	£133,700	£149,700	£164,700
Scotland	£132,600	£148,700	£162,600
South	£143,300	£159,400	£195,400
Wales	£130,500	£146,500	£160,400
Northern Ireland	£129,400	£144,400	£158,300

### Public sector

Min	Average	Max
£153,900	£162,500	£189,400
£120,600	£127,000	£147,500
£118,400	£124,900	£145,300
£117,300	£123,800	£143,200
£127,000	£133,500	£155,000
£115,200	£121,600	£142,100
£114,100	£120,600	£139,900

## HR Director

### Private sector

Average salary			
Employees	<1000	1000-5000	5000+
London	£134,800	£157,200	£180,000
Midlands and East	£104,800	£121,900	£133,700
North	£103,700	£120,900	£132,600
Scotland	£102,700	£118,700	£130,500
South	£110,200	£128,300	£141,200
Wales	£100,500	£117,600	£128,300
Northern Ireland	£99,500	£116,600	£127,300

### Public sector

Min	Average	Max
£100,100	£117,300	£132,400
£77,500	£91,500	£103,300
£76,400	£90,400	£102,300
£75,300	£89,300	£100,100
£81,800	£95,800	£108,700
£75,300	£88,300	£99,000
£74,300	£87,200	£97,900

## Head of HR

### Private sector

Average salary			
Employees	<1000	1000-5000	5000+
London	£86,600	£113,400	£150,000
Midlands and East	£67,400	£88,800	£94,100
North	£66,300	£87,700	£93,000
Scotland	£65,200	£86,600	£92,000
South	£70,600	£93,000	£98,400
Wales	£64,200	£85,600	£90,900
Northern Ireland	£64,200	£84,500	£88,800

### Public sector

Min	Average	Max
£90,400	£96,900	£107,600
£70,000	£75,300	£84,000
£68,900	£74,300	£82,900
£68,900	£73,200	£81,800
£74,300	£79,700	£88,300
£67,800	£72,100	£80,700
£66,700	£72,100	£79,700

# Leadership insight

**Paul Heard**

Human Resources Leadership Expert, Reed



“ As organisations adapt to ongoing economic shifts, the spotlight is firmly on HR leaders who can do more than manage operations. The modern HR leader is expected to drive meaningful change, deliver measurable business impact, and quickly adapt to evolving industry needs.

Businesses are increasingly seeking HR leaders with strong commercial acumen. The role has evolved beyond the traditional nuts and bolts of HR, with a clear focus on value-add activities. Employers are looking for individuals who can demonstrate tangible impact on the bottom line, whether that means saving costs, improving performance, or driving revenue through effective talent management. Key skills like stakeholder management and the ability to influence decision-makers at the c-suite level are now considered essential.

Experience in navigating change management, leading transformation initiatives, and driving organisational design has also become more critical. As companies undertake restructures to become leaner and more efficient, they need HR leaders capable of overseeing complex processes such as mergers and acquisitions, workforce planning, and implementing strategies that empower streamlined teams to achieve greater results.

Alongside these capabilities, there is a pronounced preference for sector-specific experience. While HR expertise is largely transferable, the current market has heightened the demand for professionals who can quickly adapt and deliver within a particular industry. Employers look for professionals who already grasp the unique challenges and regulations – be it the compliance demands within financial services or the distinct workforce characteristics found in retail.

Attracting and securing top HR professionals has become one of the biggest challenges for businesses today. While senior roles often receive a high volume of applications, employers face the time-consuming task of sifting through countless CVs to identify the standout applicants. Competition for these top performers is intense, and speed is critical, as any delay can result in sought-after professionals weighing up multiple offers and moving elsewhere.

For professionals choosing between organisations, motivations often extend far beyond financial reward. While competitive salary and benefits matter, many are seeking roles that offer genuine involvement in strategic, value-add work rather than just day-to-day employee relations. Perhaps most importantly, they want to feel their contributions are valued at the highest level, with a real voice at the leadership table and the chance to shape strategies that drive the organisation's success. ”



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£78,200	£87,100 ↘	£96,000	£110,900	£90,500	£91,000
Employee Relations Advisor	£31,900	£34,100 ↗	£36,300	£31,800	£32,900	£35,700
Employee Relations Manager	£49,600	£52,600 ↗	£55,700	£47,200	£51,800	£55,100
Health and Safety Advisor	£33,100	£37,300 —	£41,500	£37,300	£36,000	£39,000
Health and Safety Manager	£48,500	£55,800 ↗	£63,100	£48,200	£52,000	£58,500
HR Administrator	£26,800	£27,900 ↗	£29,000	£27,300	£25,100	£29,200
HR Advisor	£33,700	£35,800 ↗	£37,800	£33,400	£33,100	£37,500
HR Analyst	£42,400	£46,500 ↗	£50,600	£42,800	£42,500	£48,700
HR Business Partner	£47,400	£50,500 ↘	£53,500	£51,000	£46,800	£52,900
HR Manager	£44,800	£50,100 ↘	£55,500	£50,300	£47,500	£52,400
Internal Recruiter	£28,500	£30,700 ↗	£33,000	£27,600	£28,800	£32,200
Learning Development Manager	£34,300	£44,900 ↘	£55,500	£47,800	£46,200	£47,000

↗ **11.4%** increase in **Employee Relations Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **8.6%** increase in **HR Analyst** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£44,900	£49,000 ↗	£53,000	£47,500	£48,500	£51,300
Organisational Development Specialist	£48,100	£52,000 ↗	£55,800	£49,500	£44,500	£54,500
Project Manager	£54,000	£60,500 ↘	£67,000	£63,700	£65,100	£63,300
Recruitment Coordinator	£25,100	£26,700 ↗	£28,400	£25,800	£24,100	£28,000
Recruitment Manager	£32,900	£39,300 ↗	£45,600	£32,800	£36,600	£41,200
Recruitment Officer	£26,000	£28,300 ↗	£30,500	£26,800	£26,400	£29,600
Reward Manager	£57,100	£61,200 ↘	£65,400	£63,300	£58,700	£64,000
Shared Services Manager	£51,300	£54,800 ↘	£58,200	£57,100	£48,600	£57,400
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£29,800	£32,600 ↗	£35,000	£32,500	£32,400	£33,900
Talent Acquisition Manager	£41,000	£43,800 ↘	£46,500	£44,200	£46,800	£45,800
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£31,200	£34,200 ↘	£37,200	£35,700	£33,300	£35,800
Training Manager	£44,500	£47,900 ↗	£51,300	£45,000	£44,600	£50,200

↗ **19.8%** increase in **Recruitment Manager** average salaries this year.

↘ **4%** decrease in **Shared Services Manager** average salaries this year.



# 0.4%

salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



## Regional insight

**Melanie Marjoram**  
Regional Director, Reed

“ While the broader economic climate remains uncertain, East Anglia is experiencing a steady flow of job opportunities in HR. Interestingly, this demand is met by a high volume of jobseekers actively looking for work, creating a competitive environment for individuals and a distinct advantage for employers who know what they are looking for.

A defining characteristic of the East Anglian market is the significant volume of public sector work available. As noted in wider sector trends, public sector organisations are evolving from specialist silos to strategic generalist models. This shift allows for greater agility - a crucial trait for the region’s employers.

However, compensation remains a talking point. Salaries in Norfolk, for instance, tend to be lower compared to neighbouring counties. This presents a challenge for local businesses competing for talent. To bridge this gap, organisations must lean heavily on their culture and values. Offering genuine flexibility and a supportive environment often matches, if not outweighs, financial incentives for modern HR professionals. If you cannot match the highest salaries, you must offer a work-life balance that competitors cannot.

Towards the end of 2025, we saw a significant increase in the need for HR advisors. This surge is not accidental; it’s directly linked to the upcoming changes to employment legislation, which has become a major topic of conversation among local business leaders and HR professionals.

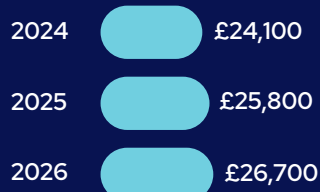
Organisations are actively seeking advisors who can interpret these new regulations and implement necessary changes swiftly. This aligns with the private sector’s intensified focus on core competencies and employee relations. Companies need professionals who can handle restructures and compliance with confidence. The demand is for ‘boots on the ground’ HR staff who can operationalise strategy and ensure businesses are legally robust ahead of legislative changes. ”

### Roles on the rise

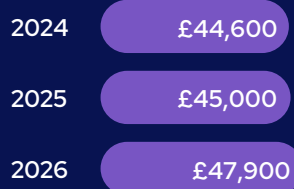
#### Organisational Development Specialist



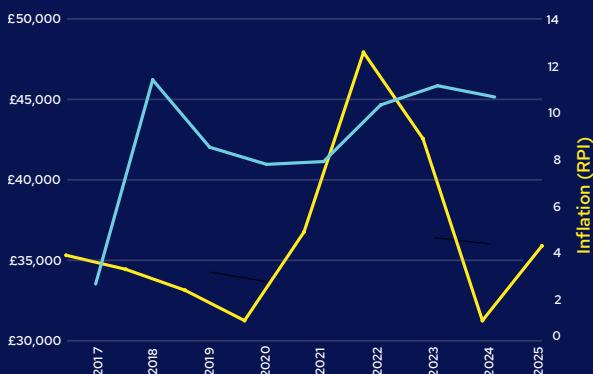
#### Recruitment Coordinator



#### Training Manager



### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# East Midlands



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£80,700	£90,800 ↘	£100,900	£121,300	£90,500	£94,900
Employee Relations Advisor	£32,900	£35,500 ↗	£38,100	£34,900	£32,900	£37,200
Employee Relations Manager	£51,200	£54,900 ↗	£58,600	£51,600	£51,800	£57,500
Health Safety Advisor	£35,900	£42,800 ↗	£49,600	£40,900	£37,200	£44,800
Health Safety Manager	£49,100	£52,700 ↗	£56,200	£51,000	£48,200	£55,200
HR Administrator	£26,100	£27,500 ↗	£28,900	£26,800	£24,400	£28,800
HR Advisor	£33,400	£35,800 ↗	£38,200	£34,200	£32,900	£37,500
HR Analyst	£42,700	£46,400 ↗	£50,100	£43,600	£38,400	£48,600
HR Business Partner	£46,600	£50,800 ↗	£55,000	£48,000	£50,400	£53,200
HR Manager	£46,100	£51,900 ↗	£57,600	£50,700	£48,600	£54,300
Internal Recruiter	£35,000	£35,000 ↗	£35,000	£28,400	£32,200	£36,700
Learning Development Manager	£35,400	£46,800 ↘	£58,400	£52,300	£46,200	£49,000

↗ **6.4%** increase in **Employee Relations Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **5.8%** increase in **HR Business Partner** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£44,900	£49,000 ↘	£55,700	£51,900	£48,500	£53,400
Organisational Development Specialist	£48,100	£52,000 —	£58,600	£54,200	£44,500	£56,800
Project Manager	£54,000	£60,500 ↘	£70,400	£69,700	£65,100	£65,900
Recruitment Coordinator	£25,100	£26,700 ↘	£29,800	£28,200	£24,100	£29,200
Recruitment Manager	£32,900	£39,300 ↘	£46,100	£41,600	£38,000	£42,500
Recruitment Officer	£26,000	£28,300 ↗	£32,100	£29,300	£26,400	£30,900
Reward Manager	£59,000	£63,900 ↘	£68,700	£69,300	£58,700	£66,900
Shared Services Manager	£53,000	£57,100 ↘	£61,200	£62,500	£48,600	£59,800
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£35,400	£36,900 ↗	£39,900	£35,600	£32,400	£37,700
Talent Acquisition Manager	£42,400	£45,600 ↘	£48,900	£48,300	£46,800	£47,700
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£32,200	£35,600 ↘	£39,100	£39,100	£33,300	£37,200
Training Manager	£45,900	£49,900 ↗	£53,900	£49,300	£44,600	£52,200

↘ **7.8%** decrease in **Reward Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **3.7%** increase in **Talent Acquisition Consultant** average salaries this year.



# 3.2%

salary decline  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



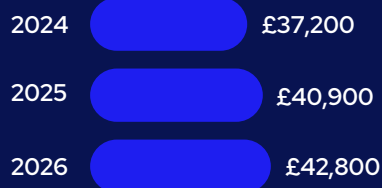
## Regional insight

**Chris Willsher**

Regional Director, Reed

### Roles on the rise

#### Health and Safety Advisor



#### HR Advisor



#### HR Manager



“ The HR market in the East Midlands remains strong, with plenty of opportunities available across a range of sectors. However, it is currently very candidate-rich, meaning there are more professionals looking for roles than there are positions to fill. This surplus is largely due to recent redundancies and organisational restructures, which have released experienced HR talent into the market. At the same time, shifting business needs – such as a growing preference for versatile HR generalists – has reduced the number of highly specialised roles available. These dynamics have created a competitive environment where employers can be highly selective, and professionals need to align closely with role requirements to stand out.

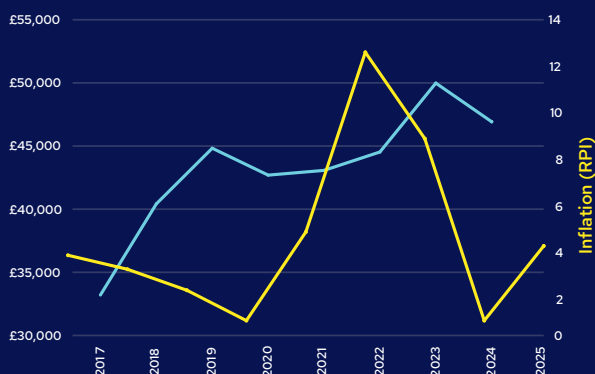
One of the most significant trends is the growing demand for ‘allrounders’. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are frequently seeking HR generalists who can manage everything from setting up policies and procedures to handling day-to-day administration and employee grievances. Stand-alone HR managers and regional HR business partners willing to travel between sites are also in demand, as larger companies consolidate their HR functions.

However, a key point of friction has emerged between employers and professionals regarding flexible working. Many jobseekers are looking for hybrid or remote roles, but a large number of businesses, particularly in manufacturing and engineering, require HR teams to be onsite five days a week. This disconnect has become a major barrier to hiring, with organisations prepared to wait for the ideal applicant who meets every requirement rather than compromise. In today’s cautious market, companies are prioritising quality over speed, taking their time to find individuals who not only fit the role but also align with their long-term strategic goals.

Looking ahead, upcoming legislative changes will present new challenges. Businesses will need HR professionals who are not only CIPD qualified, but up to date on employment law to navigate such changes. This emphasis on knowledge and qualifications will be critical for organisations to remain compliant and effectively supported.

Overall, the market is strong, but success for both professionals and employers will depend on adaptability and aligning expectations. ”

### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# London



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£112,500	£125,400 ↓	£138,300	£156,900	£126,700	£131,100
Employee Relations Advisor	£45,900	£49,100 ↑	£52,300	£45,100	£46,000	£51,400
Employee Relations Manager	£71,400	£75,800 ↑	£80,300	£66,700	£72,500	£79,400
Health Safety Advisor	£44,700	£48,000 ↑	£51,400	£43,400	£45,200	£50,300
Health Safety Manager	£55,100	£60,000 ↓	£64,900	£67,900	£59,000	£62,800
HR Administrator	£31,200	£33,100 ↑	£35,000	£31,600	£29,600	£34,700
HR Advisor	£41,200	£44,400 ↑	£47,700	£41,400	£40,900	£46,500
HR Analyst	£56,400	£61,900 ↑	£67,500	£59,300	£53,600	£64,800
HR Business Partner	£57,900	£62,100 ↓	£66,300	£63,900	£61,400	£65,000
HR Manager	£60,400	£66,400 ↑	£72,400	£65,400	£63,800	£69,500
Internal Recruiter	£41,500	£45,000 ↑	£48,600	£31,000	£36,700	£47,300
Learning Development Manager	£46,800	£59,000 ↓	£71,200	£60,500	£61,400	£61,700

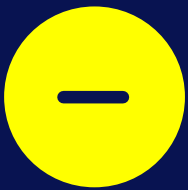
↑ **4.7%** increase in HR Administrator average salaries this year.

↓ **2.8%** decrease in HR Business Partner average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£59,300	£64,400 ↑	£69,500	£60,000	£60,800	£67,400
Organisational Development Specialist	£69,300	£74,900 ↑	£80,400	£70,100	£62,300	£78,500
Project Manager	£80,800	£90,300 ↓	£99,700	£100,300	£88,200	£94,500
Recruitment Coordinator	£36,100	£38,500 ↑	£40,900	£36,500	£33,700	£40,300
Recruitment Manager	£50,400	£58,700 ↑	£67,100	£53,500	£50,500	£61,500
Recruitment Officer	£34,200	£37,200 ↑	£40,200	£36,700	£33,900	£38,900
Reward Manager	£68,600	£73,800 ↓	£78,900	£82,200	£75,600	£77,200
Shared Services Manager	£73,800	£78,900 ↓	£83,900	£80,800	£68,000	£82,600
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£40,400	£45,900 ↓	£51,400	£46,000	£45,300	£46,100
Talent Acquisition Manager	£55,000	£59,500 ↑	£64,100	£56,700	£54,600	£62,300
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£38,800	£42,700 ↓	£46,600	£44,000	£38,100	£44,700
Training Manager	£64,000	£69,000 ↑	£73,900	£63,700	£62,400	£72,300

↑ **9.7%** increase in Recruitment Manager average salaries this year.

↑ **8.3%** increase in Training Manager average salaries this year.



# 0%

salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



## Regional insight

**Sharmini Byrne**  
Regional Director, Reed

“ In the second half of 2025, London’s HR market demonstrated clear signs of recovery, marked by a notable increase in hiring activity. Alongside permanent roles, there has been a rise in fixed-term contracts and interim opportunities, reflecting businesses’ need for flexibility as they navigate changing economic conditions.

While the number of HR professionals actively seeking new roles keeps competition high, this uptick in demand signals renewed confidence from employers. Compensation remains a strong draw as London continues to offer highly competitive salaries, reinforcing its position as a leading destination for those working in HR.

A key trend shaping the market is the shift in demand toward specialist skills. Organisations are prioritising experienced HR business partners and employee relations (ER) experts, driven in part by the incoming changes to employment legislation, which is set to reshape the HR landscape. Professionals who are adept at managing complex ER casework, coaching managers, and driving performance are in high demand. At senior levels, expertise in change management, transformation, and mergers and acquisitions is critical as businesses adapt to evolving economic pressures.

Hybrid working has become the norm, with most employers adopting structured policies that balance flexibility with collaboration. Many organisations now require three to four days in the office, reflecting a move toward clearer expectations while maintaining work-life balance.

Overall, London’s HR market is entering a phase of growth and opportunity, particularly for professionals with the skills and experience to navigate complexity and deliver strategic impact. ”

### Roles on the rise

#### HR Administrator

2024	£29,600
2025	£31,600
2026	£33,100

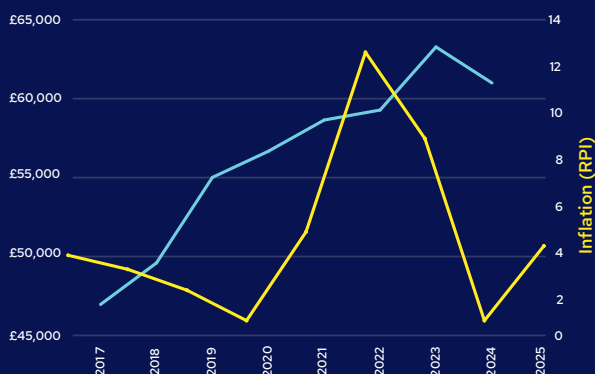
#### HR Advisor

2024	£40,900
2025	£41,400
2026	£44,400

#### Recruitment Manager

2024	£50,500
2025	£53,500
2026	£58,700

### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# North East



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£87,500	£90,000 ↗	£95,200	£88,000	£85,000	£92,100
Employee Relations Advisor	£32,800	£35,200 ↗	£37,500	£35,100	£32,000	£36,800
Employee Relations Manager	£51,000	£54,300 ↗	£57,600	£52,000	£50,400	£56,800
Health Safety Advisor	£34,100	£38,500 ↘	£42,900	£41,100	£35,000	£40,300
Health Safety Manager	£43,100	£47,000 ↘	£50,900	£48,800	£43,700	£49,200
HR Administrator	£26,300	£27,400 ↘	£28,500	£28,800	£23,600	£28,700
HR Advisor	£33,100	£36,300 ↗	£39,400	£34,900	£33,100	£38,000
HR Analyst	£43,600	£48,000 ↗	£52,400	£47,200	£41,400	£50,300
HR Business Partner	£50,500	£54,700 ↗	£59,000	£47,800	£46,500	£57,300
HR Manager	£42,200	£45,800 ↘	£49,400	£49,500	£46,300	£47,900
Internal Recruiter	£29,300	£31,700 ↗	£34,100	£30,400	£28,100	£33,200
Learning Development Manager	£35,300	£46,300 ↘	£57,400	£52,700	£45,000	£48,400

↗ **2.3%** increase in Chief Operating Officer average salaries this year.

↘ **6.3%** decrease in Health Safety Advisor average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£46,200	£50,500 ↘	£54,800	£52,300	£47,200	£52,900
Organisational Development Specialist	£49,500	£53,600 ↘	£57,700	£54,600	£43,300	£56,100
Project Manager	£55,500	£62,400 ↘	£69,300	£70,200	£63,400	£65,300
Recruitment Coordinator	£25,800	£27,600 ↘	£29,400	£28,400	£23,400	£28,900
Recruitment Manager	£35,200	£39,200 ↗	£43,200	£39,000	£35,300	£41,000
Recruitment Officer	£26,700	£29,200 ↘	£31,600	£29,600	£25,700	£30,600
Reward Manager	£58,700	£63,200 ↘	£67,600	£69,800	£57,200	£66,100
Shared Services Manager	£52,800	£56,500 ↘	£60,200	£62,900	£47,300	£59,200
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£31,600	£35,000 ↘	£37,800	£35,800	£31,500	£35,400
Talent Acquisition Manager	£42,200	£45,200 ↘	£38,500	£48,700	£45,500	£47,300
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£32,100	£35,300 ↘	£53,100	£39,400	£32,400	£36,900
Training Manager	£45,700	£49,400 ↘	£53,100	£49,600	£43,400	£51,700

↘ **11.1%** decrease in Project Manager average salaries this year.

↗ **0.5%** increase in Recruitment Manager average salaries this year.



# 0.2%

salary decline  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



## Regional insight

**Charlotte Rickwood**  
Regional Manager, Reed

“ While vacancies have dipped slightly, there’s still a demand for HR professionals in the North East. A significant issue in the region is the noticeable skill gaps in the HR talent pool. Expertise in HR analytics, digital HR, and human resources information system (HRIS) platforms are particularly sought after and employers are struggling to find people with the necessary skills for data-driven workforce planning, highlighting a critical need for upskilling in these areas.

Over the past six –to-12 months, there has been an increase in the availability of experienced HR generalists, likely due to the slowdown in vacancies. However, this has not alleviated the challenges in recruiting for specialist roles. Compounding the issue, local businesses have reduced salaries and benefits, making it harder to compete with neighbouring regions or national averages. This lack of competitive compensation, combined with a failure to offer hybrid or flexible working arrangements, is causing organisations to lose out on the best HR professionals.

Remote and hybrid working have become pivotal in talent attraction and retention. Companies that embrace this flexibility will continue to gain a competitive edge. For niche or interim roles, expanding searches beyond the region is helping businesses secure the expertise they need, demonstrating agility in a changing market.

Looking ahead, HR teams in the North East have an opportunity to lead through adaptability. Balancing rising costs with employee satisfaction, embracing hybrid work models, and preparing for legislative changes will strengthen resilience and position HR as a strategic partner in business success. ”

### Roles on the rise

#### Employee Relations Manager

2024	£50,400
2025	£52,000
2026	£54,300

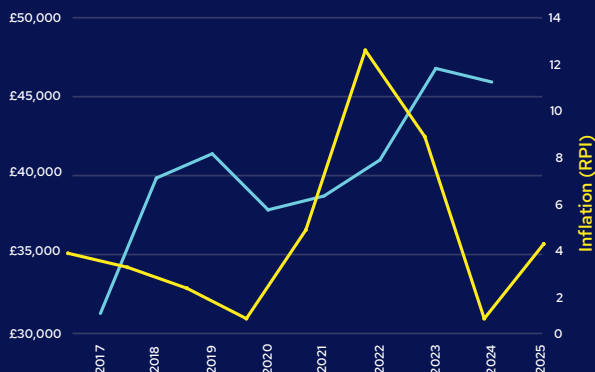
#### HR Advisor

2024	£33,100
2025	£34,900
2026	£36,300

#### HR Business Partner

2024	£46,500
2025	£47,800
2026	£54,700

### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# North West



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£80,000	£90,000 ↗	£100,000	£90,000	£93,000	£91,500
Employee Relations Advisor	£34,300	£36,900 —	£39,500	£34,900	£33,400	£38,600
Employee Relations Manager	£53,300	£57,000 ↗	£60,700	£51,600	£52,700	£59,700
Health Safety Advisor	£37,600	£42,100 ↗	£46,500	£38,500	£37,700	£44,100
Health Safety Manager	£52,200	£57,400 ↗	£62,600	£50,200	£48,700	£60,200
HR Administrator	£26,900	£28,500 ↗	£30,200	£26,900	£24,500	£29,900
HR Advisor	£33,300	£35,200 ↗	£37,200	£33,800	£32,700	£36,900
HR Analyst	£44,000	£47,600 ↗	£51,300	£41,000	£43,800	£49,900
HR Business Partner	£48,600	£51,500 ↗	£54,500	£49,900	£47,200	£53,900
HR Manager	£44,100	£49,100 ↘	£54,100	£52,200	£48,800	£51,400
Internal Recruiter	£28,100	£29,400 ↘	£30,800	£30,600	£31,400	£30,700
Learning Development Manager	£36,900	£48,600 ↘	£60,400	£52,300	£47,000	£50,800

↗ **10.5%** increase in **Employee Relations Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **16.1%** increase in **HR Analyst** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£49,700	£55,300 ↗	£61,000	£55,200	£51,000	£57,900
Organisational Development Specialist	£51,800	£56,300 ↗	£60,800	£54,200	£45,300	£59,000
Project Manager	£43,500	£49,500 ↘	£55,500	£68,200	£59,300	£51,700
Recruitment Coordinator	£27,000	£29,000 ↗	£30,900	£28,200	£24,500	£30,400
Recruitment Manager	£36,700	£42,700 ↘	£48,700	£47,100	£38,700	£44,700
Recruitment Officer	£27,900	£30,600 ↗	£33,300	£29,400	£26,900	£32,000
Reward Manager	£61,400	£66,300 ↘	£71,200	£69,300	£59,700	£69,400
Shared Services Manager	£55,100	£59,300 ↘	£63,400	£62,500	£49,400	£62,100
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£35,700	£37,400 ↗	£40,000	£35,600	£32,900	£38,500
Talent Acquisition Manager	£45,900	£50,200 ↗	£54,400	£49,700	£45,000	£52,600
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£32,000	£33,800 ↗	£35,700	£33,300	£36,100	£35,400
Training Manager	£47,800	£51,800 ↗	£55,800	£49,300	£45,400	£54,200

↘ **9.3%** decrease in **Recruitment Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **5.1%** increase in **Talent Acquisition Consultant** average salaries this year.



# 0.2%

salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



## Regional insight

**Douglas Turkington**  
Regional Director, Reed

“ The human resources landscape in the North West is currently a hive of activity, characterised by growth, internal development, and a strong regional talent pool.

One of the most significant trends is the increasing demand for HR business partners. As companies expand, they are creating these positions to bridge the gap between HR advisors and HR managers. This indicates a move towards more strategic HR functions that are deeply integrated with business operations. Alongside this, there is a noticeable surge in the need for employee relations (ER) specialists across all industries, highlighting a focus on managing complex workforce issues effectively.

Rather than looking externally, many businesses in the North West are turning their attention inward. There is a strong emphasis on upskilling and reskilling existing employees. Companies are proactively identifying internal skills gaps and leveraging regional training provisions to develop their own talent. This approach demonstrates a commitment to workforce development and suggests that employers value loyalty and internal progression.

Location plays a crucial role in determining remuneration. For similar roles, salaries can vary significantly, with positions outside central Manchester often paying £2,000 to £5,000 less than those within the city centre.

Hybrid working remains a common offering in the profession, with an average of two-to-three days in the office being the standard. But, industries such as manufacturing and construction naturally require a greater onsite presence – which means they must be more strategic when it comes to the salary and benefits package they offer.

As we progress further into 2026, the focus on internal skill development will likely make workforce planning experience a desirable trait. At the same time, rising minimum wages, the increased national insurance rates, and the introduction of the Employment Rights Act will continue to shape the HR landscape, presenting both challenges and opportunities for businesses to navigate. ”

### Roles on the rise

#### Organisational Development Specialist

2024	£45,300
2025	£54,200
2026	£56,300

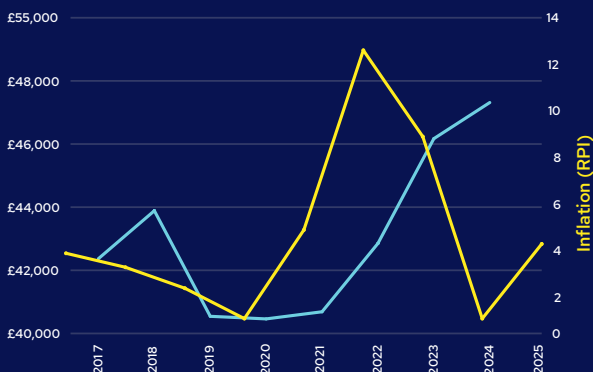
#### Recruitment Officer

2024	£26,900
2025	£29,400
2026	£30,600

#### Training Manager

2024	£45,400
2025	£49,300
2026	£51,800

### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)







# Does your salary and benefits package help you attract and retain critical talent?

With access to data from over 18 million jobs and market-leading talent analytics tools, our talent advisory team helps you assess your rewards against data insights and real-time salary and benefits expectations for any role, in any sector.

We go beyond just benchmarking, ensuring your reward proposition supports your organisational strategy. Our salary benchmarking services provide comprehensive support to build a reward structure that attracts, retains, and motivates employees.

## We deliver:

-  Bespoke salary benchmarking reports tailored to your roles and sectors, helping with critical talent planning.
-  Salary and benefits analysis to uncover gaps and opportunities, futureproof your structures, and inform future organisational design.
-  Analysis of reward challenges to understand and address attraction and retention barrier.
-  Tailored recommendations and implementation support to strengthen your strategy.

Make sure your reward structure is fit for the future.

 [Find out more about our benchmarking services here](#)



# Northern Ireland



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£85,000	£88,200 ↓	£96,700	£89,400	£90,000	£90,100
Employee Relations Advisor	£31,400	£33,500 ↑	£35,600	£31,900	£30,400	£35,100
Employee Relations Manager	£48,800	£51,700 ↑	£54,700	£46,600	£47,700	£54,100
Health Safety Advisor	£32,600	£36,700 ↓	£40,700	£36,800	£33,300	£38,400
Health Safety Manager	£41,300	£44,800 ↓	£48,300	£46,200	£41,400	£46,900
HR Administrator	£24,800	£25,000 ↑	£25,900	£24,000	£21,100	£25,800
HR Advisor	£29,800	£31,900 ↑	£33,900	£30,600	£28,900	£33,400
HR Analyst	£41,700	£45,700 ↑	£49,700	£42,300	£39,200	£47,900
HR Business Partner	£42,800	£46,000 ↑	£49,200	£44,500	£42,600	£48,200
HR Manager	£42,700	£46,900 ↓	£51,200	£47,400	£44,300	£49,100
Internal Recruiter	£28,100	£30,200 ↑	£32,300	£27,200	£26,500	£31,600
Learning Development Manager	£33,800	£44,100 ↓	£54,500	£47,200	£42,600	£46,100

↑ **5%** increase in **Employee Relations Advisor** average salaries this year.

↑ **3.4%** increase in **HR Business Partner** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£44,200	£48,100 ↑	£52,000	£46,900	£44,800	£50,400
Organisational Development Specialist	£47,400	£51,100 ↑	£54,800	£48,900	£41,100	£53,500
Project Manager	£53,100	£59,400 ↓	£65,700	£62,900	£60,500	£62,100
Recruitment Coordinator	£24,800	£26,300 ↑	£27,900	£25,800	£22,200	£27,500
Recruitment Manager	£33,500	£38,300 ↑	£43,000	£37,500	£35,100	£40,100
Recruitment Officer	£25,600	£27,800 ↑	£30,000	£26,500	£24,400	£29,100
Reward Manager	£56,200	£60,200 ↓	£64,200	£62,500	£54,000	£63,000
Shared Services Manager	£50,500	£53,800 ↓	£57,100	£56,400	£44,800	£56,300
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£30,800	£32,100 ↑	£35,600	£32,100	£29,700	£33,900
Talent Acquisition Manager	£40,400	£43,000 ↓	£45,600	£43,600	£43,200	£45,000
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£30,700	£33,600 ↓	£36,500	£35,300	£30,400	£35,200
Training Manager	£43,800	£47,000 ↑	£50,300	£44,500	£41,100	£49,200

↓ **4.6%** decrease in **Shared Services Manager** average salaries this year.

↑ **5.6%** increase in **Training Manager** average salaries this year.



# 0.7%

salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth

## Roles on the rise

### HR Advisor

2024	£28,900
2025	£30,600
2026	£31,900

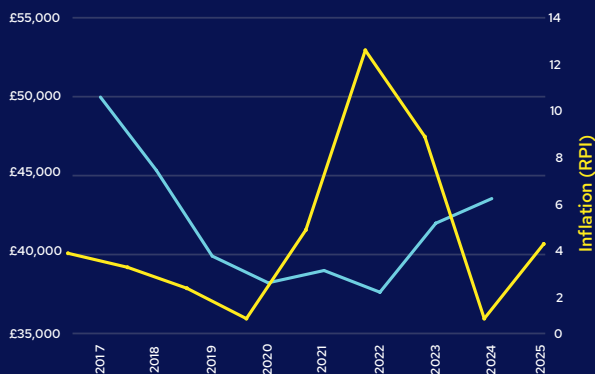
### Operations Manager

2024	£44,800
2025	£46,900
2026	£48,100

### Recruitment Manager

2024	£35,100
2025	£37,500
2026	£38,300

## Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# Regional insight

**Paula Gallagher**  
Regional Director, Reed

“ While the HR market in Northern Ireland remains active, employers are taking longer to hire, with some recruitment processes extending over several weeks. The high volume of professionals actively looking for a work has created a more competitive and complex environment.

A key trend we have seen over the past year, is the growing demand for technical expertise within HR roles. Beyond the consistently valued CIPD qualifications, employers are now seeking those with skills in data analytics and project management methodologies like PRINCE2. This reflects a move towards more specialised, project-based work, particularly in areas like organisational development (OD) and in projects that involve large-scale data analysis.

Salaries have seen a notable increase, with rises of up to 20% over the past 18 months. This upward trend has brought Northern Ireland’s compensation levels much closer to those seen across the UK, reducing historic disparities.

There is a strong push for a return to the office, with around 90% of new vacancies requiring full-time, in-office presence. Hybrid arrangements, if considered at all, are generally considered after a successful probation period. This is a significant challenge for jobseekers whose expectations for good work-life balance, enhanced pensions, and comprehensive healthcare benefits have become standard.

For HR professionals, the opportunity this year lies in adapting to these changes. Upskilling in data analytics and project management can provide a distinct advantage. While the market presents challenges with its slow pace and high competition, those who align their skills and expectations with current employer demands will find significant opportunities for career growth. //

# Scotland



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£87,600	£94,500 ↘	£101,700	£95,000	£91,200	£95,800
Employee Relations Advisor	£36,000	£39,000 ↗	£41,900	£36,900	£34,600	£40,800
Employee Relations Manager	£56,100	£60,200 ↗	£64,400	£54,700	£54,600	£63,100
Health Safety Advisor	£37,500	£42,700 ↗	£47,900	£43,200	£37,900	£44,700
Health Safety Manager	£47,400	£52,100 ↗	£56,800	£51,300	£47,300	£54,500
HR Administrator	£27,800	£29,600 ↗	£31,400	£28,300	£24,300	£31,000
HR Advisor	£33,800	£38,200 ↗	£42,500	£36,100	£35,800	£40,000
HR Analyst	£47,900	£53,200 ↗	£58,500	£49,600	£44,800	£55,700
HR Business Partner	£49,800	£55,800 ↗	£61,800	£50,100	£51,100	£58,400
HR Manager	£43,600	£49,200 ↘	£54,700	£57,200	£50,000	£51,400
Internal Recruiter	£32,300	£35,200 ↗	£38,100	£32,000	£30,400	£36,900
Learning Development Manager	£38,800	£51,400 ↘	£64,100	£55,500	£48,700	£53,800

↗ **11.4%** increase in HR Business Partner average salaries this year.

↘ **7.4%** decrease in Learning Development Manager average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£50,800	£56,000 ↗	£61,200	£55,000	£51,100	£58,600
Organisational Development Specialist	£54,500	£59,500 ↗	£64,500	£57,400	£46,900	£62,300
Project Manager	£61,100	£69,200 ↘	£77,400	£73,900	£68,600	£72,400
Recruitment Coordinator	£28,400	£30,600 ↗	£32,800	£29,900	£25,300	£32,100
Recruitment Manager	£38,500	£44,600 ↗	£50,700	£44,100	£40,100	£46,700
Recruitment Officer	£29,400	£32,300 ↗	£35,300	£31,100	£27,800	£33,800
Reward Manager	£64,600	£70,100 ↘	£75,600	£73,400	£61,900	£73,400
Shared Services Manager	£58,000	£62,700 ↘	£67,300	£66,200	£51,200	£65,700
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£36,900	£41,900 ↗	£48,700	£37,700	£34,100	£70,600
Talent Acquisition Manager	£46,400	£50,100 ↘	£53,700	£51,200	£49,300	£52,400
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£35,300	£39,100 ↘	£42,900	£41,500	£35,100	£40,900
Training Manager	£50,300	£54,800 ↗	£59,300	£52,200	£47,000	£57,400

↗ **2.3%** increase in Recruitment Coordinator average salaries this year.

↗ **11.1%** increase in Talent Acquisition Consultant average salaries this year.



# 0.8%

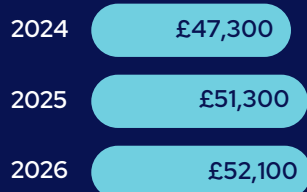
salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth

## Roles on the rise

### Employee Relations Advisor



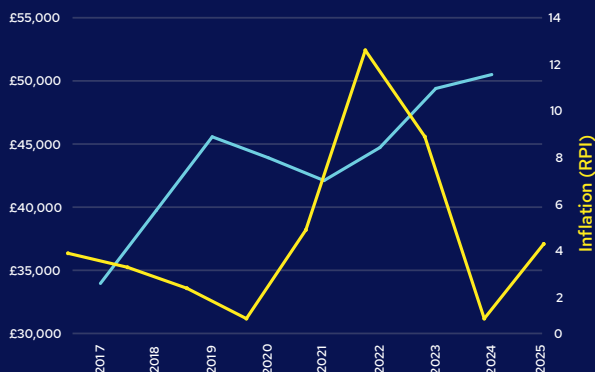
### Health and Safety Manager



### Recruitment Officer



## Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# Regional insight

**Gillian Dolan**  
Regional Director, Reed

“ Following a wave of redundancies across sectors like higher education, manufacturing, and the third sector, the HR market in Scotland is rich with experienced junior to mid-level HR professionals.

As we enter 2026 the demand for junior roles is relatively low, but there is still a consistent need for senior HR talent, such as HR business partners. There is also a notable demand for professionals with strong employee relations (ER) experience. This presents a challenge, as many mid-career HR generalists are actively seeking to move away from ER-heavy workloads, desiring a broader, more strategic range of responsibilities to keep their roles varied and engaging.

To attract and retain HR talent, employers must present a compelling package. Flexibility isn't seen as a perk anymore, but rather an expectation; the standard model is now a hybrid arrangement with two days in the office. Organisations insisting on full-time, onsite work will struggle to attract people. That's why competitive salaries are also crucial. While some employers may be tempted to offer lower salaries due to the large number of people looking for work, HR professionals know their worth and are unwilling to accept undervalued offers.

One piece of advice I would give to employers this year is: if you want the best talent, you must offer the best conditions. This includes robust benefits packages, genuine flexibility, and clear pathways for career progression and funded qualifications, such as CIPD certifications.

For HR professionals, the 2026 job market, while competitive, offers the chance to find a role that truly aligns with their career goals. By focusing on employers who offer flexibility, professional development, and a varied, strategic workload, those looking for new opportunities can secure positions that are both rewarding and future focused. ”

# South East



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£89,200	£95,300 ↘	£100,200	£115,000	£114,700	£96,100
Employee Relations Advisor	£36,800	£39,100 ↗	£41,300	£37,900	£36,600	£40,900
Employee Relations Manager	£55,400	£58,500 ↗	£61,600	£51,400	£55,600	£61,300
Health Safety Advisor	£39,000	£45,000 ↘	£51,000	£46,400	£42,500	£47,100
Health Safety Manager	£47,000	£50,600 ↗	£54,300	£49,900	£49,600	£53,000
HR Administrator	£27,500	£29,200 ↗	£30,800	£28,400	£26,100	£30,600
HR Advisor	£36,100	£38,500 ↗	£40,800	£36,500	£35,600	£40,300
HR Analyst	£43,900	£48,200 ↗	£52,600	£43,300	£44,400	£50,500
HR Business Partner	£49,800	£53,700 ↗	£57,600	£50,800	£51,800	£56,200
HR Manager	£50,500	£54,800 ↗	£59,200	£53,500	£52,300	£57,400
Internal Recruiter	£30,100	£32,800 ↗	£35,500	£32,600	£33,100	£34,300
Learning Development Manager	£48,800	£52,400 ↘	£56,100	£55,700	£48,000	£54,800

↗ **13.8%** increase in **Employee Relations Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **2.4%** increase in **HR Manager** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£51,200	£54,600 ↗	£58,000	£51,900	£52,200	£57,200
Organisational Development Specialist	£53,900	£57,800 ↗	£61,700	£54,000	£47,800	£60,600
Project Manager	£63,300	£68,700 ↘	£74,200	£69,600	£71,100	£71,900
Recruitment Coordinator	£28,100	£29,700 ↗	£31,400	£28,100	£25,800	£31,100
Recruitment Manager	£37,500	£42,100 ↘	£46,800	£44,000	£42,100	£44,000
Recruitment Officer	£31,200	£34,400 ↗	£37,700	£30,000	£30,000	£36,000
Reward Manager	£63,900	£68,100 ↘	£72,300	£69,000	£63,100	£71,300
Shared Services Manager	£57,400	£60,900 ↘	£64,400	£62,200	£52,200	£63,800
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£33,300	£36,200 ↗	£39,900	£35,400	£34,800	£37,400
Talent Acquisition Manager	£48,100	£50,500 ↗	£52,800	£50,000	£55,900	£52,800
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£36,000	£41,000 ↘	£45,900	£43,000	£37,300	£42,900
Training Manager	£49,700	£53,200 ↗	£56,700	£49,000	£47,900	£55,700

↗ **7%** increase in **Organisational Development Specialist** average salaries this year.

↘ **2.1%** decrease in **Shared Services Manager** average salaries this year.



# 0.6%

salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth

## Roles on the rise

### Employee Relations Advisor

2024	£36,600
2025	£37,900
2026	£39,100

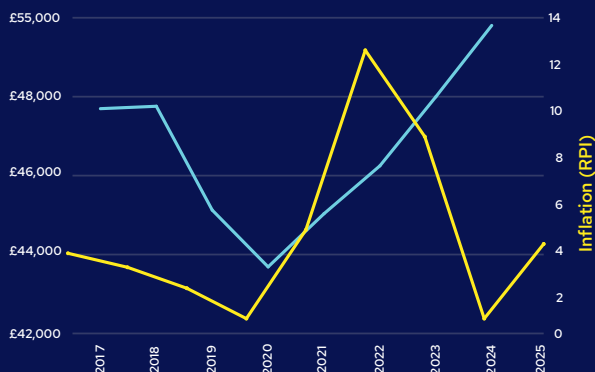
### HR Administrator

2024	£26,100
2025	£28,400
2026	£29,200

### Recruitment Coordinator

2024	£25,800
2025	£28,100
2026	£29,700

## Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# Regional insight

**Grant Rigler**

Regional Director, Reed

“ Companies in the South East are increasingly looking beyond administrative support, creating a surge in demand for senior, strategic HR professionals to help shape their future.

A key driver of this change is the evolving legislative environment. Uncertainty around employee rights has placed a premium on expertise in employment law. This has led to a notable trend where businesses are actively seeking HR advisors and even law graduates with a strong grasp of legal frameworks, sometimes funding their CIPD qualifications to secure this specialised skill set. This focus on compliance and risk management highlights a move towards safeguarding business operations in a fluctuating economic climate. Other niche areas, such as health and safety policy, are also seeing increased demand. Conversely, roles in learning and development, internal recruitment, and diversity, equity and inclusion have become less of a priority for many organisations.

Despite the demand for technical and legal skills, salary growth has largely plateaued across the region. This presents a challenge for employers, who are finding it difficult to attract people without adjusting their compensation packages. There is a growing need for businesses to re-evaluate salary benchmarks to secure the talent they require. Furthermore, many companies are pushing for a return-to-office based working for their HR teams, creating a potential disconnect with HR professionals who have grown accustomed to hybrid or remote arrangements.

Looking ahead, the regional outlook is optimistic. The approved expansion of Gatwick Airport is expected to be a major catalyst for economic growth, potentially attracting new businesses back to areas like Crawley and creating a ripple effect of job opportunities across various sectors. This anticipated economic boost, combined with the ongoing demand for strategic HR leadership, suggests that 2026 will be a dynamic year for the HR profession in the South East, with a continued emphasis on strategic planning and specialist knowledge. ”



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£97,600	£101,500 ↓	£108,900	£118,700	£102,700	£103,000
Employee Relations Advisor	£34,800	£37,700 ↑	£40,700	£35,700	£35,000	£39,500
Employee Relations Manager	£54,100	£58,300 ↑	£62,400	£52,900	£55,100	£61,100
Health Safety Advisor	£37,500	£45,200 ↑	£53,000	£44,300	£37,700	£47,300
Health Safety Manager	£50,400	£55,100 ↑	£59,800	£51,000	£53,500	£57,700
HR Administrator	£26,600	£27,700 ↑	£28,900	£26,900	£24,400	£29,000
HR Advisor	£35,800	£37,900 ↑	£40,000	£35,600	£34,900	£39,700
HR Analyst	£50,400	£54,800 ↑	£59,200	£49,600	£42,000	£57,400
HR Business Partner	£49,100	£53,300 ↑	£57,400	£49,300	£54,200	£55,800
HR Manager	£47,600	£52,600 ↓	£57,600	£54,200	£50,700	£55,000
Internal Recruiter	£36,300	£38,300 ↑	£40,300	£33,900	£29,500	£40,200
Learning Development Manager	£37,500	£49,700 ↓	£62,200	£53,700	£49,200	£52,000

↓ **14.5%** decrease in Chief Operating Officer average salaries this year.

↑ **8%** increase in Health Safety Manager average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£49,000	£54,200 ↑	£59,400	£53,300	£51,600	£56,700
Organisational Development Specialist	£52,600	£57,600 ↑	£62,500	£55,600	£47,400	£60,300
Project Manager	£58,900	£67,000 ↓	£75,000	£71,500	£69,300	£70,100
Recruitment Coordinator	£27,400	£29,600 ↑	£31,800	£28,900	£25,600	£31,000
Recruitment Manager	£36,200	£39,500 ↑	£42,900	£39,100	£42,900	£41,300
Recruitment Officer	£28,400	£31,300 ↑	£34,200	£30,100	£28,100	£32,800
Reward Manager	£62,300	£67,800 ↓	£73,300	£71,100	£62,500	£71,000
Shared Services Manager	£56,000	£60,700 ↓	£65,300	£64,100	£51,700	£63,600
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£32,900	£37,600 ↑	£41,000	£36,500	£34,500	£38,700
Talent Acquisition Manager	£44,800	£48,500 ↓	£52,100	£49,600	£49,800	£50,700
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£36,200	£37,400 ↓	£38,600	£41,700	£34,800	£39,100
Training Manager	£48,500	£53,000 ↑	£57,500	£50,500	£47,500	£55,500

↓ **6.3%** decrease in Project Manager average salaries this year.

↑ **3%** increase in Talent Acquisition Consultant average salaries this year.



# 0.2%

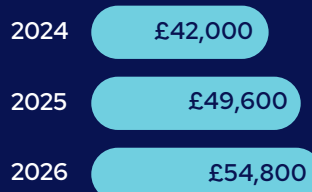
salary decline  
versus 1% UK  
average growth

## Roles on the rise

### HR Administrator



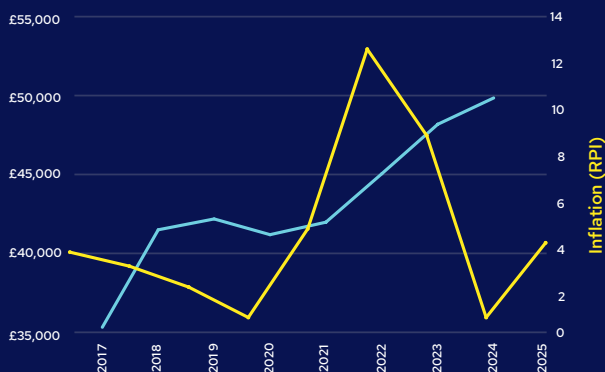
### HR Analyst



### Organisational Development Specialist



## Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# Regional insight

**Katie Cartner**

Regional Director, Reed

“ Towards the end of 2025 we saw a sharp rise in HR recruitment across the South West, driven by a renewed confidence among SMEs. On top of this, long-standing HR professionals are now seeking new opportunities, creating new vacancies.

Two distinct areas of demand are shaping the current landscape: HR systems implementation and employee relations (ER). As businesses invest in technology to automate processes, there’s a growing need for people with project management skills to lead long-term system rollouts, such as Workday. These are often complex, long-term contract roles requiring a blend of HR and technical understanding.

The high volume of changes to employment law, workforce policies and regulations is placing HR teams under considerable pressure, driving a need for dedicated ER support. While junior professionals seek ER exposure to build their careers, many experienced HR practitioners prefer to move away from the often demanding and negative aspects of ER, creating a significant talent gap in this area.

Salaries in the region have seen notable shifts. Employers who haven’t recruited for several years are often surprised by the current market rates, especially at the entry-level, where salaries have jumped significantly. However, for many HR professionals, compensation is not the only driver. There is a strong emphasis on finding a business with a positive culture and values that align with their own. Flexibility also remains a key expectation. Hybrid working, typically two to three days in the office, is now standard practice for most professional services businesses. We are also seeing a greater willingness from employers to consider four-day work weeks.

At the senior end of the market, an interesting trend has emerged: the rise of the fractional HR leader. This model provides businesses with access to high-level expertise without the cost of a full-time director, while offering senior leaders a flexible and rewarding career path. //

# Wales



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£77,800	£81,900 ↓	£90,200	£85,600	£90,300	£84,400
Employee Relations Advisor	£32,900	£34,300 ↓	£35,800	£35,600	£31,600	£35,900
Employee Relations Manager	£51,200	£53,000 ↑	£54,900	£52,700	£49,800	£55,500
Health Safety Advisor	£34,200	£37,600 ↓	£40,900	£41,600	£34,600	£39,300
Health Safety Manager	£45,900	£49,700 ↑	£53,500	£47,600	£45,800	£52,000
HR Administrator	£26,000	£27,300 ↑	£28,600	£26,300	£23,800	£28,600
HR Advisor	£31,300	£33,200 ↓	£35,100	£35,500	£32,400	£34,700
HR Analyst	£43,800	£46,800 ↓	£49,900	£47,800	£40,900	£49,000
HR Business Partner	£44,100	£47,100 ↑	£50,200	£46,400	£45,200	£49,300
HR Manager	£42,200	£45,300 ↓	£48,300	£48,400	£45,500	£47,400
Internal Recruiter	£29,500	£31,000 ↑	£32,500	£30,800	£27,700	£32,500
Learning Development Manager	£35,400	£45,200 ↓	£54,700	£53,400	£44,400	£47,300

↑ **4.4%** increase in Health Safety Manager average salaries this year.

↑ **3.8%** increase in HR Administrator average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£46,400	£49,300 ↓	£52,300	£53,000	£46,600	£51,600
Organisational Development Specialist	£49,700	£52,400 ↓	£55,000	£55,300	£42,800	£54,900
Project Manager	£55,800	£60,900 ↓	£66,000	£71,200	£62,600	£63,700
Recruitment Coordinator	£25,900	£26,900 ↓	£28,000	£28,800	£23,100	£28,200
Recruitment Manager	£35,900	£42,900 ↓	£50,000	£45,800	£39,200	£44,900
Recruitment Officer	£26,800	£28,500 ↓	£30,100	£30,000	£25,400	£29,800
Reward Manager	£59,000	£61,700 ↓	£64,500	£70,800	£56,400	£64,600
Shared Services Manager	£53,000	£55,200 ↓	£57,400	£63,800	£46,700	£57,800
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£30,200	£35,700 ↓	£38,100	£36,300	£31,100	£36,000
Talent Acquisition Manager	£42,400	£44,100 ↓	£45,900	£49,400	£44,900	£46,100
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£32,200	£34,400 ↓	£36,700	£39,900	£32,000	£36,000
Training Manager	£45,900	£48,200 ↓	£50,600	£50,300	£42,900	£50,500

↓ **14.5%** decrease in Project Manager average salaries this year.

↓ **4.2%** decrease in Training Manager average salaries this year.



# 6.9%

salary decline  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



## Regional insight

**Becky Hole**

Regional Director, Reed

### Roles on the rise

#### Employee Relations Manager

2024 £49,800

2025 £52,700

2026 £53,000

#### Health and Safety Manager

2024 £45,800

2025 £47,600

2026 £49,700

#### HR Business Partner

2024 £45,200

2025 £46,400

2026 £47,100

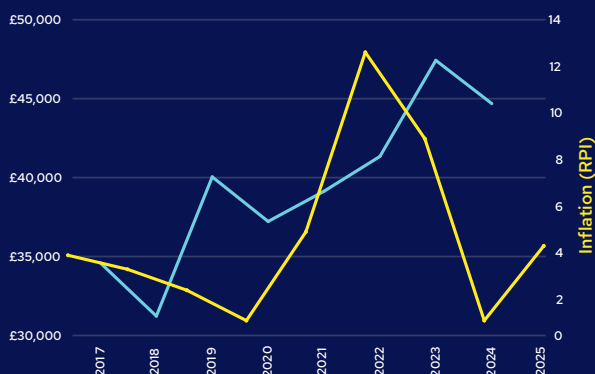
“ Towards the end of 2025, we saw a consistent trend across both public and private sectors where jobseekers in secure positions were waiting for significant incentives before making a move. Similarly, employers were carefully considering any staffing changes to maintain the stability of their established teams. Entering 2026, we are likely to see the dynamic shift. Following the Budget at the end of 2025, employers are likely to accelerate hiring plans, and professionals should feel more comfortable exploring new opportunities. This renewed optimism is likely to drive increased mobility, creating fresh openings and a more competitive landscape for HR talent across Wales.

One of the key challenges facing the sector is a lag in skills, particularly where artificial intelligence is concerned. While companies are beginning to explore how AI can enhance their recruitment and HR processes, the generalist HR talent pool has not yet caught up. Experience in managing and onboarding ethical AI use is starting to appear more commonly in job descriptions, but specialisation in this area is rare. This represents a significant opportunity for HR professionals to upskill and differentiate themselves in a competitive market.

We’re seeing a growing trend across sectors toward using temporary and interim workers to bring in specialist expertise and maintain flexibility. This shift is creating new opportunities for HR professionals, particularly those skilled in managing contingent workforces. Expertise in areas such as complex administrative processes, payroll for temporary staff, and integrating short-term hires into wider teams is increasingly valued as businesses adapt to more agile ways of working.

Salaries in Wales are competitive but sit a few percentage points below neighbouring Bristol and the South West. This is partly influenced by the region’s higher proportion of public sector employment, which typically offers generous employee benefits and a strong focus on work-life balance. For many professionals, this trade-off makes Wales an attractive option, balancing slightly lower pay with stability and quality of life. ”

### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# West Midlands



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£90,300	£101,500 <span>↗</span>	£118,700	£101,500	£98,700	£104,500
Employee Relations Advisor	£37,900	£40,200 <span>↔</span>	£42,600	£35,100	£35,200	£42,100
Employee Relations Manager	£58,900	£62,200 <span>↗</span>	£65,400	£51,900	£55,500	£65,200
Health Safety Advisor	£41,200	£44,200 <span>↗</span>	£47,100	£41,700	£39,800	£46,300
Health Safety Manager	£48,400	£52,200 <span>↗</span>	£55,900	£51,100	£48,500	£54,600
HR Administrator	£27,100	£28,500 <span>↗</span>	£29,800	£27,300	£24,400	£29,900
HR Advisor	£33,400	£36,100 <span>↗</span>	£38,700	£34,300	£33,500	£37,800
HR Analyst	£52,200	£58,300 <span>↗</span>	£64,400	£50,700	£48,100	£61,100
HR Business Partner	£50,800	£54,100 <span>↗</span>	£57,400	£51,500	£49,500	£56,600
HR Manager	£49,500	£54,600 <span>↗</span>	£59,700	£52,600	£51,800	£57,200
Internal Recruiter	£32,400	£35,200 <span>↗</span>	£38,000	£33,600	£30,200	£36,900
Learning Development Manager	£40,800	£53,000 <span>↗</span>	£65,200	£52,600	£49,600	£55,500

↗ **19.8%** increase in **Employee Relations Manager** average salaries this year.

↗ **4.8%** increase in **Internal Recruiter** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£53,300	£57,800 <span>↗</span>	£62,300	£52,300	£52,000	£60,500
Organisational Development Specialist	£57,200	£61,400 <span>↗</span>	£65,600	£54,500	£47,700	£64,400
Project Manager	£58,600	£60,900 <span>↘</span>	£63,100	£73,500	£59,200	£63,700
Recruitment Coordinator	£29,800	£31,600 <span>↗</span>	£33,400	£28,400	£25,800	£33,100
Recruitment Manager	£39,600	£44,300 <span>↗</span>	£49,100	£41,800	£41,100	£46,400
Recruitment Officer	£30,900	£33,400 <span>↗</span>	£35,900	£29,500	£28,300	£35,000
Reward Manager	£67,900	£72,300 <span>↗</span>	£76,800	£69,700	£63,000	£75,700
Shared Services Manager	£60,900	£64,700 <span>↗</span>	£68,400	£62,800	£52,100	£67,800
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£32,800	£36,800 <span>↗</span>	£40,500	£35,800	£34,700	£37,800
Talent Acquisition Manager	£48,700	£51,700 <span>↗</span>	£54,600	£48,600	£50,100	£54,100
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£37,100	£40,400 <span>↗</span>	£43,700	£39,400	£35,700	£42,300
Training Manager	£52,800	£56,500 <span>↗</span>	£60,300	£49,600	£47,800	£59,200

↗ **11.3%** increase in **Recruitment Coordinator** average salaries this year.

↗ **6.4%** increase in **Talent Acquisition Manager** average salaries this year.



# 5.1%

salary growth  
versus 1% UK  
average growth



## Regional insight

**Theresa Robinson**  
Regional Manager, Reed

“ HR in the West Midlands has faced a challenging past year, particularly for senior-level professionals, with a noticeable increase in redundancies in the second half of 2025. In times of economic uncertainty and pressure, companies downsizing often place less emphasis on strategic HR roles and focus instead on maintaining day-to-day operations. However, as the market recovers and businesses look to grow, there is likely to be a renewed demand for strategic HR expertise, presenting substantial opportunities for those with experience in shaping organisational direction.

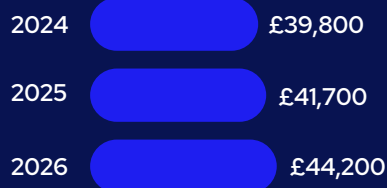
Despite these challenges, there are still great opportunities in the West Midlands. Many roles, regardless of their title, have a heavy focus on managing complex casework. This demand for ER expertise presents a clear path for those looking to align their skills with market needs. Furthermore, some organisations are amalgamating roles, combining specialist functions with director-level responsibilities, creating new, multifaceted positions.

Interestingly, while hybrid working has been the norm for the past few years, there is a growing trend of employers requiring employees to be onsite five days a week. This is particularly the case within the region’s prominent manufacturing sector, where businesses prefer HR teams to be present alongside the wider workforce.

Looking ahead, continued investment in Birmingham’s city centre and strong transport links, particularly to London, enhance the region’s appeal. This makes it an attractive location for professionals seeking a better work-life balance without sacrificing career opportunities, suggesting a resilient and adaptive future for the West Midlands’ HR market. ”

### Roles on the rise

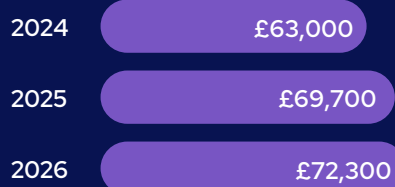
#### Health and Safety Advisor



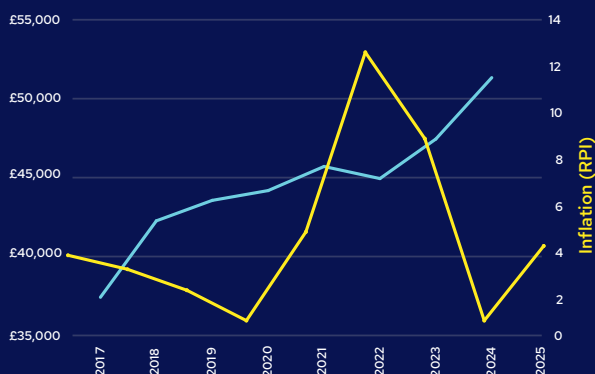
#### Internal Recruiter



#### Reward Manager



### Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# Yorkshire & Humberside



Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Chief Operating Officer	£83,600	£89,300 ↓	£95,000	£90,300	£52,600	£99,400
Employee Relations Advisor	£34,500	£36,400 ↑	£38,300	£35,400	£33,300	£38,100
Employee Relations Manager	£53,700	£56,200 ↑	£58,900	£52,400	£52,500	£58,800
Health Safety Advisor	£37,200	£40,800 ↑	£44,400	£38,900	£37,100	£42,700
Health Safety Manager	£48,400	£52,600 ↑	£56,700	£50,300	£47,900	£55,100
HR Administrator	£26,000	£27,000 ↑	£28,000	£26,500	£23,600	£28,300
HR Advisor	£33,200	£35,200 ↑	£37,200	£34,300	£33,200	£36,800
HR Analyst	£37,500	£39,700 ↓	£42,000	£44,400	£39,300	£41,500
HR Business Partner	£50,200	£54,300 ↑	£58,400	£50,400	£52,600	£56,800
HR Manager	£46,900	£51,600 ↑	£56,300	£50,800	£48,200	£54,000
Internal Recruiter	£27,000	£28,500 ↓	£30,000	£31,300	£32,300	£29,800
Learning Development Manager	£37,200	£48,000 ↓	£58,700	£53,200	£46,800	£50,200

↑ **7.3%** increase in **Employee Relations Manager** average salaries this year.

↑ **2.6%** increase in **HR Advisor** average salaries this year.

Role	2026			2025	2024	2027
	Min	Average	Max	Average	Average	Projection
Operations Manager	£47,700	£53,100 ↓	£58,400	£53,700	£51,300	£55,600
Organisational Development Specialist	£52,100	£55,500 ↑	£59,000	£55,100	£45,100	£58,100
Project Manager	£58,400	£64,600 ↓	£70,800	£70,800	£66,000	£67,600
Recruitment Coordinator	£27,200	£28,600 ↓	£30,000	£28,700	£24,400	£30,000
Recruitment Manager	£36,200	£42,000 ↓	£47,700	£42,200	£40,100	£44,000
Recruitment Officer	£28,100	£30,200 ↑	£32,300	£29,800	£26,800	£31,600
Reward Manager	£61,800	£65,400 ↓	£69,100	£70,400	£59,500	£68,400
Shared Services Manager	£55,500	£58,500 ↓	£61,500	£63,500	£49,200	£61,300
Talent Acquisition Consultant	£34,100	£36,800 ↑	£39,700	£36,100	£32,800	£37,500
Talent Acquisition Manager	£44,400	£46,800 ↓	£49,200	£49,100	£47,400	£49,000
Talent Acquisition Specialist	£33,800	£36,500 ↓	£39,300	£39,700	£33,700	£38,200
Training Manager	£48,100	£51,200 ↑	£54,200	£50,000	£45,200	£53,600

↓ **8.8%** decrease in **Project Manager** average salaries this year.

↑ **1.9%** increase in **Talent Acquisition Consultant** average salaries this year.



# 1.7%

salary decline

versus 1% UK average growth

## Roles on the rise

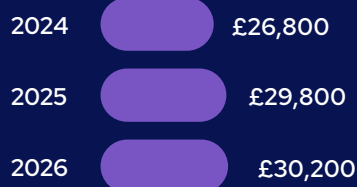
### Employee Relations Advisor



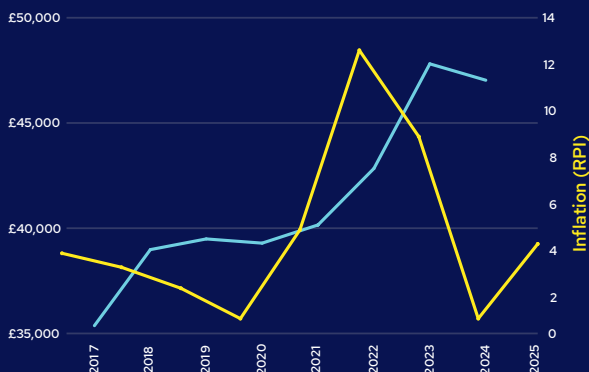
### HR Advisor



### Recruitment Officer



## Average salary in region vs UK inflation rate (RPI)



# Regional insight

**Helen Barber**

Regional Manager, Reed

“ The HR landscape in Yorkshire and Humberside is evolving rapidly as both private and public sector organisations respond to ongoing economic pressures and shifting workforce expectations. Employers across the region are demonstrating caution in their hiring strategies, with recruitment processes becoming more rigorous and deliberate. Justifying every hire is a key focus, leading to longer timelines and a greater emphasis on finding people who closely match organisational needs.

Salary expectations continue to be a hot topic for HR professionals at all levels. While the region saw salary inflation in previous years, more recently, pay has plateaued or, in some cases, decreased – particularly in the private sector, where some senior roles are being advertised below typical market rates. In contrast, public sector roles, while often offering more generous benefits packages and enhanced holiday allowances, remain bound by salary bandings and formal progression routes. This creates a complex dynamic, as jobseekers weigh salary against benefits and job security.

Organisations unable or unwilling to offer flexibility are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain people in the region, especially as work-life balance has become a top priority for many HR professionals. Full-time on-site roles are less attractive, pushing employers to review their policies if they want to remain competitive.

Despite these challenges, there are indicators of investment in workforce development, with an uptick in learning & development opportunities and continued focus on employee wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion. HR professionals with expertise in managing restructures, navigating regulatory change, and demonstrating strong commercial or organisational awareness are in high demand. ”

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