

# KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs

## Candidate shortages and economic uncertainty weigh on permanent placements in November

# 46.4

PERMANENT PLACEMENTS INDEX  
NOV '22

# 51.5

TEMPORARY BILLINGS INDEX  
NOV '22

The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment consultancies.

Permanent placements fall, temp billings expand modestly

Softest increase in vacancies for 21 months

Pay pressures ease slightly amid softer drop in staff supply

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

*"Of particular note this month is the softer rise in permanent starters' salaries, with the rate of pay inflation easing to a 19-month low in November. This reflects the combined effects of employers reining in recruitment, candidate availability continuing to decline, and workers staying put for job security. So despite the cost of living pressures that households are enduring and the industrial relations impasse within many sectors, wage growth may well be trending down in the months ahead. Employers who are able to offer existing workers and candidates opportunities to upskill and reskill, rather than focusing solely on core pay, may well benefit most in this tight jobs market."*

Neil Carberry, Chief Executive of the REC, said:

*"This month's data emphasises that while employers are moderately more cautious in the face of economic uncertainty, this is not yet a major slowdown in hiring. While permanent recruitment activity has dropped from the very high levels of earlier in the year, the pace of that drop has tempered this month."*

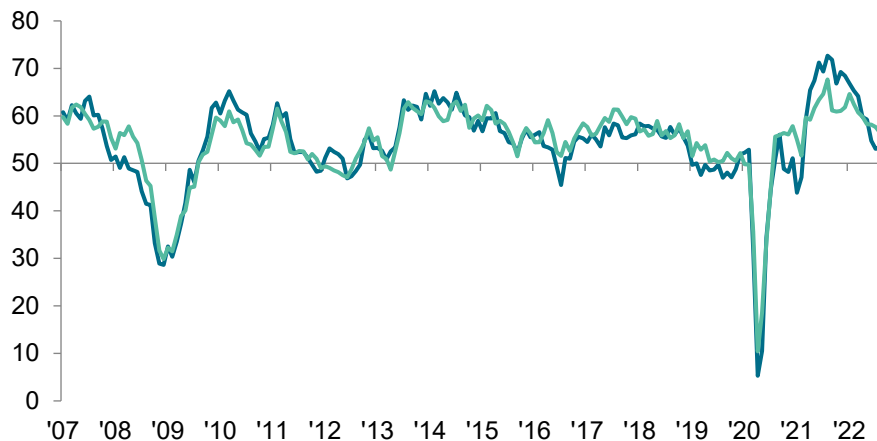
*"In contrast, temporary hiring has accelerated again in the run-up to Christmas. There are clearly some seasonal factors at work here, with retail and healthcare recruitment leading the way. But there may also be some switching to temporary going on, as firms maintain flexibility ahead of next year."*

*"As the economic outlook weakens, we can expect to see falls from historic highs across our measures, but it is notable that pay and vacancies are still growing, although at a much lower rate."*

*"A flatter period in the labour market is inevitable in this current economic climate, but demand is being supported by some major underlying factors, including labour shortages and technological change. The main way to boost performance is to unlock growth by businesses putting their people planning first, as a strategic way to enhance productivity. Government can help through skills and immigration reform. Boosting growth is the only way to ensure a prosperous country for all of us."*

■ Permanent Placements Index  
■ Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



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# 1 Executive summary

The Report on Jobs is unique in providing the most comprehensive guide to the UK labour market, drawing on original survey data provided by recruitment consultancies and employers to provide the first indication each month of labour market trends.

The main findings for November are:

### Permanent placements fall for second month in a row

Latest survey data indicated that candidate shortages and uncertainty around the economic outlook dampened recruitment during November. Permanent placements fell for the second successive month, albeit at a softer rate than that seen in October. Meanwhile, temp billings rose modestly after broadly stagnating in the previous month.

### Growth of demand for staff continues to moderate

Overall demand for workers expanded at the softest rate since February 2021 during November. While temporary vacancies continued to expand more sharply than that seen for permanent roles, in both cases the increases were the slowest seen for 21 months and below their respective long-run trends.

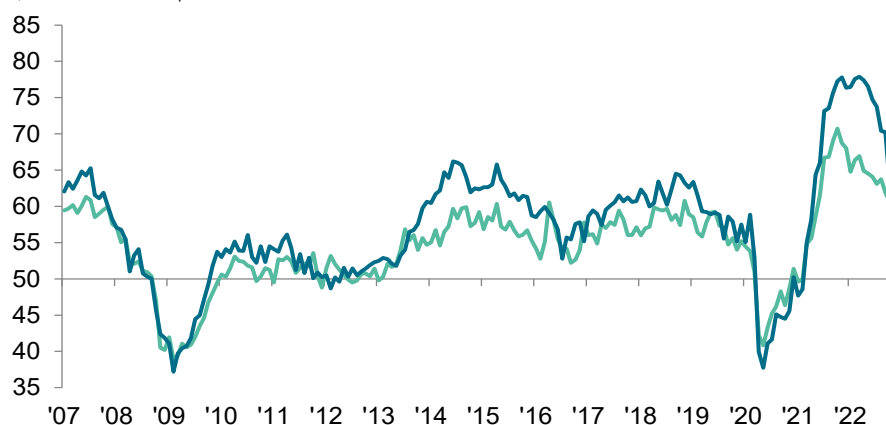
### Softest increase in permanent starters' salaries in 19 months

Although pay pressures remained historically elevated during November, the latest survey indicated that rates of inflation for both starting salaries and temp wages eased further. The latest increase in permanent starters' pay was the least marked since April 2021, while temp pay growth moderated to an 18-month low. Higher rates of pay were generally linked to competition for workers and the rising cost of living.

### Candidate supply declines at slowest rate since April 2021

The overall availability of workers continued to deteriorate during November, and at a steeper pace than seen on average since the survey began 25 years ago. Tight labour market conditions, fewer foreign workers and a greater hesitancy among people to take up new roles due to increased economic uncertainty all dampened candidate numbers, according to recruiters. However, the latest fall was the weakest recorded for just over a year-and-a-half amid softer declines in both permanent and temporary staff supply.

■ Permanent Salaries Index  
 ■ Temporary Wages Index  
 sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

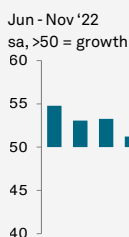


## 2 Staff Appointments

Recruitment consultancies report on the number of people placed in permanent jobs each month, and their revenues (billings) received from placing people in temporary or contract positions at employers.

An index reading above 50 signals a higher number of placements/billings than the previous month. Readings below 50 signal a decline compared with the previous month.

Permanent Placements Index



### Permanent placements decline again in November

November survey data signalled a second successive monthly reduction in permanent staff appointments across the UK. The rate of contraction softened from October's 21-month record, but was strong overall. Where lower permanent placements were reported, recruiters cited low candidate supply and greater caution around the economic outlook. The latter reportedly led clients to become more hesitant to hire and people more reluctant to take up new roles.

Three of the four monitored English regions registered lower permanent staff appointments in November, with the quickest reduction seen in London. The Midlands bucked the trend, and recorded a fresh rise in placements, albeit one that was modest.

Permanent Placements Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

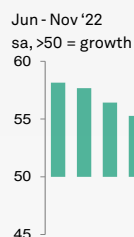


Permanent Placements Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Jun '22	54.8	57.0	53.0	57.0	50.1
Jul '22	53.1	52.1	52.6	54.1	52.3
Aug '22	53.3	58.6	51.4	59.4	47.1
Sep '22	51.2	55.1	48.1	50.6	51.8
Oct '22	45.0	41.5	48.9	43.5	45.5
Nov '22	46.4	44.4	45.8	52.5	45.7

Temporary Billings Index



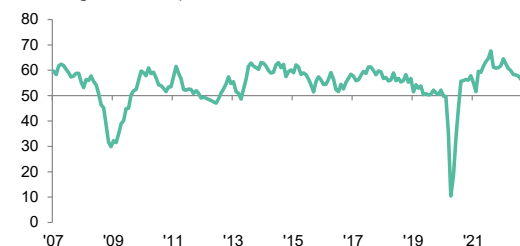
### Modest upturn in temp billings

After broadly stagnating at the start of the fourth quarter, temp billings rose in November. That said, the rate of expansion was mild and much slower than its long-run trend (55.2). According to panellists, a preference for temp staff and efforts to expand capacity at clients had driven the latest upturn in billings. That said, there were also reports that a slowdown in market activity and greater economic uncertainty had weighed on recruitment.

Temp billings continued to rise sharply in the South of England, and expanded modestly in London. Further declines were meanwhile registered in the Midlands and the North of England, with the latter seeing the steeper rate of contraction.

Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



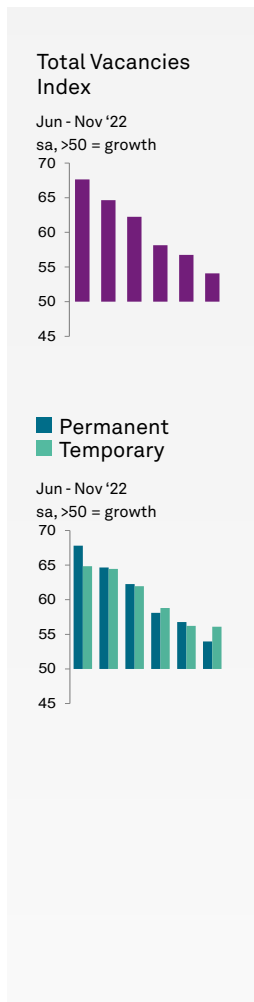
Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Jun '22	58.2	64.6	53.5	52.3	62.3
Jul '22	57.7	62.0	55.3	50.7	59.6
Aug '22	56.4	58.7	58.0	55.2	55.0
Sep '22	55.3	55.1	55.4	48.4	56.9
Oct '22	50.1	48.2	57.3	46.6	46.8
Nov '22	51.5	52.0	56.5	49.2	45.4

### 3 Vacancies

Recruitment consultants are asked to specify whether the demand for staff from employers has changed on the previous month, thereby providing an indicator of the number of job vacancies.



#### Vacancy growth edges down to 21-month low

The seasonally adjusted Total Vacancies Index remained above the neutral 50.0 level at 54.1 in November, to signal a sustained rise in demand for staff. However, the reading was down from 56.7 in October, and pointed to the weakest increase in overall vacancies for 21 months.

#### Permanent and temporary vacancies

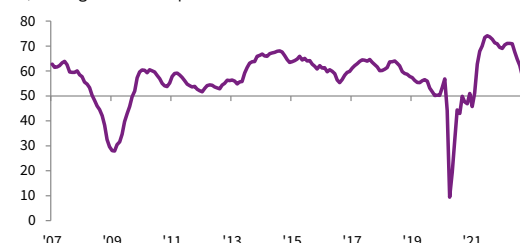
The slowdown in growth of overall demand for workers was largely driven by a softer upturn in permanent vacancies. November data indicated that permanent job roles expanded at the weakest rate since February 2021. Meanwhile, growth of demand for temp workers inched down to a 21-month low, but remained sharp overall.

#### Public & private sector vacancies

The steepest increase in demand for staff was signalled for temporary workers in the private sector, with the upturn quickening slightly since October. In contrast, temporary vacancies in the public sector fell for the first time since December 2020, albeit marginally. Growth of demand for permanent workers meanwhile moderated across both the private and public sectors, but remained strong overall.

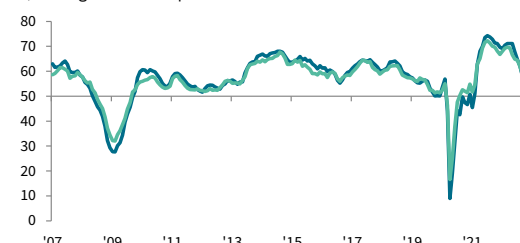
Total Vacancies Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Permanent Vacancies Index  
Temporary Vacancies Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



Vacancy Index summary

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

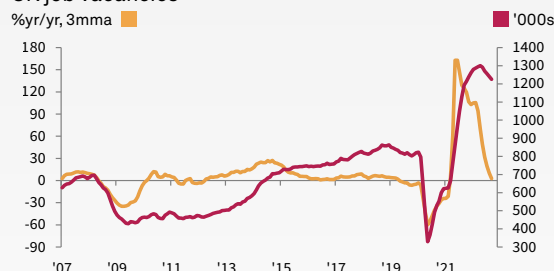
	Permanent				Temporary		
	Total	Total	Private*	Public*	Total	Private*	Public*
Jun '22	67.6	67.8	68.2	65.8	64.8	65.5	61.5
Jul '22	64.6	64.6	65.6	59.3	64.4	64.6	61.0
Aug '22	62.2	62.3	63.3	57.2	62.0	63.2	55.6
Sep '22	58.1	58.1	60.0	55.1	58.8	62.5	56.0
Oct '22	56.7	56.8	57.1	55.3	56.2	56.6	54.2
Nov '22	54.1	54.0	54.1	53.2	56.1	57.4	49.8

## Official data: UK job vacancies

Latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) signalled that total vacancies fell by 46,000 on a quarter-on-quarter basis, to stand at 1,225,000 in the three months to October. This marked the lowest figure since the three months to November 2021.

Nevertheless, vacancies remained elevated by historical standards, and were nearly 50% higher than the number recorded before the pandemic (823,000 in the three months to February 2020).

UK job vacancies



Source: Office for National Statistics.

# 4 Vacancies by sector

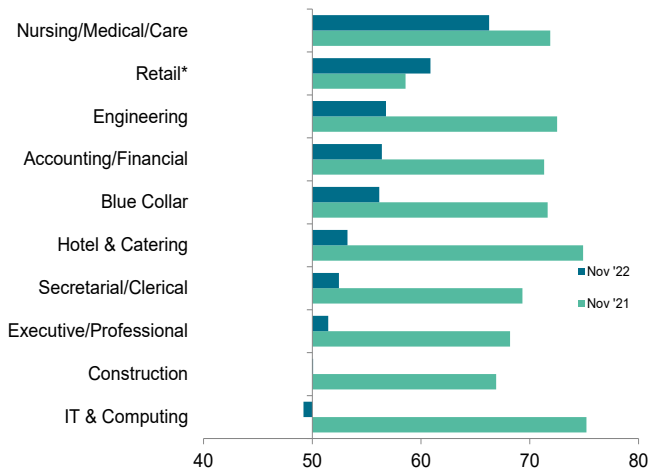
Recruitment consultancies are requested to compare the demand for staff according to sector with the situation one month ago.

## Permanent vacancies

Eight of the ten broad job categories registered increased demand for permanent staff during November, led by Nursing/Medical/Care. Vacancies were meanwhile broadly unchanged in Construction, while IT & Computing noted a slight reduction.

Permanent Vacancies Index

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

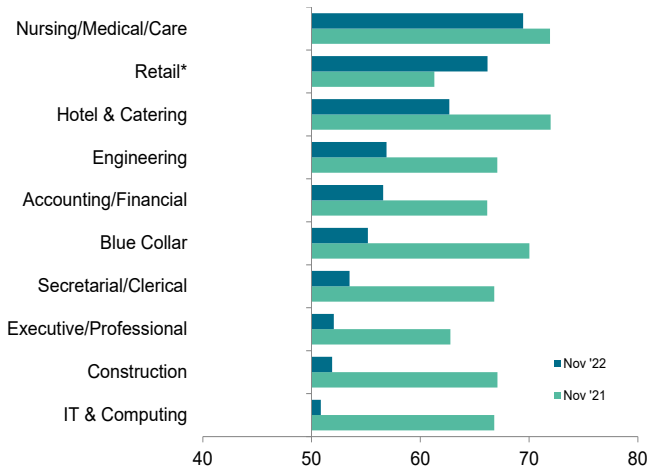


## Temporary vacancies

The upturn in demand for temporary workers remained broad-based across all ten employment categories in November. The quickest rise in vacancies was seen in Nursing/Medical/Care. IT/Computing slipped to the bottom of the rankings, and saw only a marginal uptick.

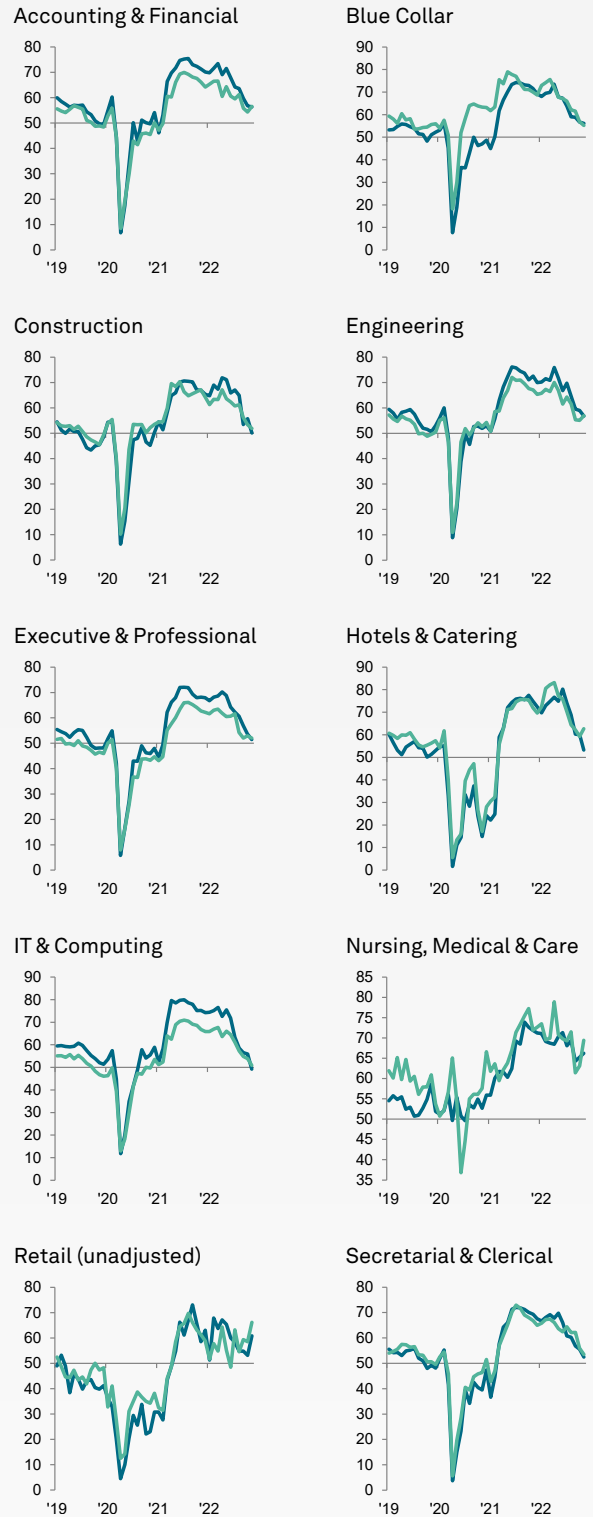
Temporary Vacancies Index

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



## Vacancy index by sector

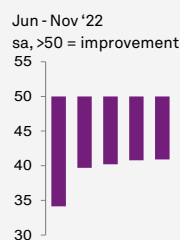
■ Permanent ■ Temporary  
sa, >50 = growth since previous month



## 5 Staff availability

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

**Total Staff Availability Index**



### Candidate supply falls at softest rate for 19 months

Adjusted for seasonal factors, the Total Staff Availability Index remained below the neutral 50.0 threshold at 43.8 in November, to signal a sharp drop in total labour supply across the UK. That said, the reading was up from 40.9 in October, and pointed to the softest reduction since April 2021.

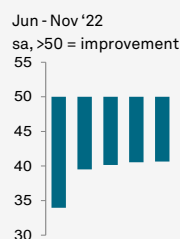
Underlying data indicated that both permanent and temporary candidate numbers fell at weaker rates midway through the fourth quarter.

**Total Staff Availability Index**

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month



**Permanent Staff Availability Index**



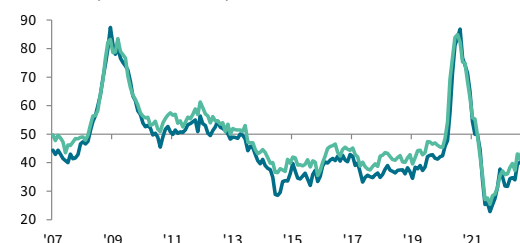
### Downturn in permanent labour supply eases in November

Recruitment consultancies signalled a further deterioration in permanent candidate availability during November, thereby stretching the current period of decline to 22 months. Though marked by historical standards, the rate of reduction was the least severe since April 2021. Panellists often linked lower permanent staff supply to a tight labour market, hesitancy among workers to seek or switch to new roles due to an uncertain economic climate, and fewer foreign workers. That said, there were also reports that redundancies had limited the overall decline.

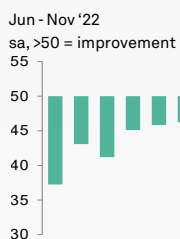
All four monitored English areas bar the Midlands noted lower permanent labour supply.

**Permanent Staff Availability Index**

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month



**Temporary Staff Availability Index**



### Weakest drop in temp candidate numbers since March 2021

Temporary candidate availability also remained on a downward trend during November. Though solid, the latest reduction in temp staff supply was the slowest seen since March 2021. When explaining the latest deterioration, recruiters often mentioned that candidates preferred permanent positions, while a generally low unemployment rate and fewer overseas workers had also squeezed candidate numbers.

Similarly solid falls in temp labour supply were seen across London, the South of England and the Midlands. In contrast, candidate numbers were broadly stable in the North of England.

**Permanent Staff Availability Index**

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Jun '22	34.0	34.7	35.0	32.6	31.2
Jul '22	39.5	37.6	41.1	40.5	39.0
Aug '22	40.1	43.3	40.2	39.9	37.0
Sep '22	40.5	42.8	40.3	43.6	36.3
Oct '22	40.6	43.0	40.9	43.1	36.9
Nov '22	43.6	49.7	48.1	50.4	33.2

**Temporary Staff Availability Index**

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Jun '22	37.3	42.1	36.0	37.3	35.2
Jul '22	43.1	41.0	45.1	43.8	40.9
Aug '22	41.2	38.1	44.2	39.1	39.2
Sep '22	45.1	46.1	48.8	44.5	41.9
Oct '22	45.8	52.4	45.7	46.1	45.0
Nov '22	46.2	46.3	46.6	46.4	50.1

## 6 Demand for skills

Recruitment consultancies are invited to specify any areas in which they have encountered skill shortages during the latest month.

### Skills in short supply: Permanent staff

<b>Accounting/Financial</b> Accountants Auditors Book Keepers Credit Controllers Estimators Finance Finance Directors Payroll Purchase Ledger Taxation	<b>Executive/Professional</b> Digital Marketing Executives Human Resources Legal Marketing Project Managers Recruitment Consultants	Optometrists Paramedics Pharmacists Social Workers
<b>Blue Collar</b> Blue Collar Cleaners Decorators Electricians HGV Drivers HVAC Labour Manufacturing Refrigeration Sewing Machinists Welders	<b>Hotel/Catering</b> Catering Chefs Hospitality	<b>Secretarial/Clerical</b> Administration Office Staff Secretary
<b>Construction</b> Architectural Tech Cladders Construction Quantity Surveyors	<b>IT/Computing</b> Automation Testers CAD Cyber Security Data Engineers Developers Digital Infrastructure Analysts IT Software Software Engineers Technical Sales Technology Web	<b>Other</b> All Types of Candidates Buyers Commercial Customer Service Education German Speakers Graduates Health & Safety Logistics Multilingual Sales Security Supply Chain Teachers Telemarketing Telesales Testers Unskilled
<b>Engineering</b> Design Engineers Electrical Engineers Engineers Mechanical Engineers Senior Electronic Engineers Technicians	<b>Nursing/Medical/Care</b> Carers Doctors Healthcare Assistants Hearing Aid Dispensers Nurses Occupational Therapist	

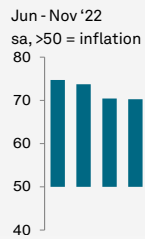
### Skills in short supply: Temporary staff

<b>Accounting/Financial</b> Accountants Credit Controllers Finance Payroll Taxation	<b>Hotel/Catering</b> Catering Chefs Hospitality	Security Skilled Teachers Unskilled
<b>Blue Collar</b> Blue Collar Carpenters Cleaners Decorators Drivers Forklift Drivers HGV Drivers Industrials Manufacturing Rail Security Guards Sewing Machinists Warehouse Welders	<b>IT/Computing</b> Cyber Security Developers Digital IT Software Software Engineers Technology	
<b>Construction</b> Bricklayers Labourers	<b>Nursing/Medical/Care</b> Carers Healthcare Assistants Nurses Social Workers	
<b>Engineering</b> Design Engineers Engineers	<b>Retail</b> Retail	
<b>Executive/Professional</b> Executive Human Resources Legal Secretarial Project Managers	<b>Secretarial/Clerical</b> Administration Clerical Office Staff Personal Assistant Receptionist	
	<b>Other</b> All Types of Candidates Customer Service Education Health & Safety Multilingual	

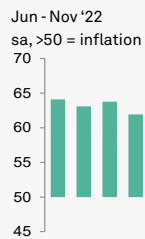
## 7 Pay pressures

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

### Permanent Salaries Index



### Temporary Wages Index



### Permanent starters' pay rises at softest rate for 19 months

As has been the case in each month since March 2021, permanent starting salaries increased during November. Although sharp, the rate of inflation softened for the eighth month in a row, and was the softest seen since April 2021. Higher rates of pay were often linked to efforts to attract and secure candidates as competition for staff remained intense. There were also reports that the higher cost of living had pushed up salaries.

The Midlands registered the steepest upturn in pay, and was the only area to see the rate of inflation quicken since October.

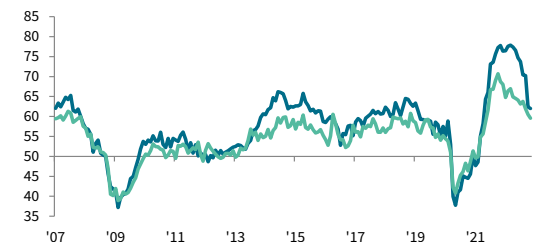
### Temp pay growth slips to 18-month low

The seasonally adjusted Temporary Wages Index pointed to an increase in average hourly pay for the twenty-first month running in November. Though sharp in the context of historical data, the rate of wage growth was the slowest seen for a year-and-a-half, having eased in each of the last three months. Anecdotal evidence suggested that candidate shortages and greater living costs had pushed up wages.

The North of England noted the quickest rise in temp pay, while the softest was seen in the South of England.

### Permanent Salaries Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month



### Permanent Salaries Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Jun '22	74.7	73.5	74.5	75.0	73.2
Jul '22	73.7	77.0	73.1	71.4	73.1
Aug '22	70.4	70.2	70.0	72.1	68.3
Sep '22	70.2	72.5	70.9	72.2	68.3
Oct '22	62.4	64.5	63.8	61.9	63.8
Nov '22	62.0	61.7	63.4	63.7	58.9

### Temporary Wages Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

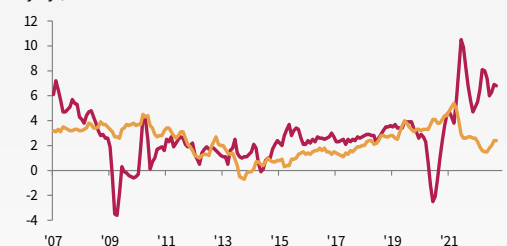
	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
Jun '22	64.1	61.3	66.3	62.0	65.5
Jul '22	63.1	61.5	66.5	61.0	61.4
Aug '22	63.8	62.0	63.1	67.4	60.0
Sep '22	61.9	57.4	63.3	61.5	63.2
Oct '22	60.5	61.2	60.6	58.5	59.1
Nov '22	59.6	59.5	56.2	57.3	62.6

## Official data: UK average weekly earnings

Latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that employee earnings (including bonuses) rose +6.0% year-on-year over the third quarter of 2022. Though softer than the upturns seen in the first half of the year, the rate of pay growth nevertheless remained among the highest seen over the past 15 years.

The private sector continued to register a much quicker increase in earnings than the public sector (+6.8% versus +2.4%).

### UK average weekly earnings



Source: Office for National Statistics.



## 8 Special feature

This section features data from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation

### Hiring intentions remain high, but candidate supply continues to fall

As we head into the end of 2022, high levels of job vacancies persist and candidate supply continues to shrink. Similar to last month, the UK unemployment rate continues to remain at record lows and skills shortages are still a key problem for the economy.

The latest data from the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) backs this up and continues to show signs of a tight labour market. The UK unemployment rate for July to September 2022 decreased by 0.2% on the quarter. At 3.6%, it remains close to record lows. Economic inactivity rate, however, rose again by 0.2% to 21.6% in the same period, despite high levels of unfilled vacancies. Between June and August 2022, around 2.5 million working-age adults are out of work because of long-term sickness, up from around 2 million in spring 2019. Candidate supply has continued to fall sharply, and businesses are still struggling to fill their vacancies.

According to the REC's latest [JobsOutlook](#), hiring intentions in August-October 2022 increased, despite economic confidence dropping. For both permanent and temporary recruitment in the short-term and medium-term, sentiment rose by at least 1% compared to the previous rolling quarter. Employers are still recruiting, but without available candidates, vacancies have been left open for longer. The [Resolution Foundation](#) found that on average, it is taking firms almost two months to fill vacancies.

As the [Institute for Employment Studies](#) points out, the UK is one of the only five developed economies where employment remains lower now than it was before the pandemic. Labour shortages are holding back growth, adding to inflationary pressures, and leading to lower living standards for more people. The competition for talent is not only affecting productivity, but also affecting pay.

The UK GDP is estimated to have fallen by 0.6% in September, after a fall of 0.1% in August 2022. The need for growth is evident. Businesses and Governments should work together to boost labour supply via a joined-up workforce strategy — to deliver the skills where they are needed and create the capacity for the economy to grow. Recruitment professionals are vital in this process, as they understand demand across sectors and know what skills are most sought after in a competitive market.

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### Methodology

The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment consultancies.

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted data series.

For further information on the survey methodology, please contact [economics@ihsmarkit.com](mailto:economics@ihsmarkit.com).

### Survey Dates

Data were collected 11-24 November 2022.

### About S&P Global

S&P Global (NYSE:SPGI) S&P Global provides essential intelligence. We enable governments, businesses and individuals with the right data, expertise and connected technology so that they can make decisions with conviction. From helping our customers assess new investments to guiding them through ESG and energy transition across supply chains, we unlock new opportunities, solve challenges and accelerate progress for the world.

We are widely sought after by many of the world's leading organizations to provide credit ratings, benchmarks, analytics and workflow solutions in the global capital, commodity and automotive markets. With every one of our offerings, we help the world's leading organizations plan for tomorrow, today. [www.spglobal.com](http://www.spglobal.com).

### About KPMG

KPMG LLP, a UK limited liability partnership, operates from 22 offices across the UK with approximately 15,300 partners and staff. The UK firm recorded a revenue of £2.43 billion in the year ended 30 September 2021.

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