

COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

UK REGIONAL

MARKET & SALARY GUIDE

**MARKS
SATTIN**

Gi Group Holding



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 15th edition of our Market Insight & Salary Guide, where we share our expertise on key trends within finance, tech, transformation, legal and specialist markets for 2025.

This year our research is based upon a robust sample size of 1,823 respondents, and is referred to by 100k+ professionals across our nine offices in the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

The recruitment landscape continues to evolve, shaped by economic, political & geopolitical challenges, rising operational costs, fast paced technological advancements, and an uneven market recovery. While these hurdles persist, businesses are demonstrating greater strategic agility. In particular, the finance and tech sectors are leading the way, adapting to new realities with renewed focus and determination.

There is a clear shift in sentiment: organisations are no longer merely reacting to change; they are preparing for it. The rapid pace of technological advancement and shifting workforce expectations have ushered in a new era where it's no longer '*business as usual*' - it's '*transformation as usual*' and traditional approaches to hiring and workforce planning are being replaced with more agile, skills-focused strategies.

In this context, investing in people is more critical than ever. Skills, rather than experience, are emerging as the primary currency for hiring managers. The pace of change has never been faster, and employers are seeking professionals who can adapt, innovate, and thrive. As one industry leader put it: "Your performance tells me what you've done in the past, your skills tell me what you can do in the future."

Age inclusion is also rising up the talent agenda. With 47% of the UK workforce projected to be over 50 by 2030, businesses are increasingly recognising the need to value experience alongside innovation. Age diversity is no longer a 'nice to have' - it's a strategic imperative. Organisations that harness the full breadth of workforce demographics will be better positioned to meet evolving market demands and foster sustainable growth.

Another prevalent trend is the growing influence of AI across sectors. Businesses are making significant investments in advanced technologies to maintain a competitive edge and spur innovation. However, adopting these technologies alone is not sufficient, it is crucial for organisations to ensure their workforce possess the necessary skills to fully leverage these tools. Without the right expertise, even the most sophisticated technologies may not deliver the desired outcomes. To achieve sustained growth and stay ahead of the curve, businesses must prioritise the integration of skilled talent capable of effectively utilising these innovations to drive change and maximise value. This shift places greater emphasis on upskilling and digital readiness as key elements of workforce strategy.

In our fast-moving environment, competition for talent is intense. Companies are offering more attractive salary packages, enhanced benefits, and flexible working models in a bid to secure top professionals. Beyond pay, professionals are increasingly prioritising wellbeing, autonomy, and alignment with company values when considering new roles. These factors are becoming critical differentiators in today's market.

This annual report explores these developments in detail. From emerging hiring trends to salary benchmarks and workforce expectations, we provide comprehensive insight to support both employers and jobseekers. Whether you're refining your talent strategy or planning your next career move, our goal is to equip you with the knowledge needed to navigate a complex and competitive market with confidence.

A sincere thank you to the 1,823 professionals who gave their valuable time to participate in our survey. We have partnered with Ecologi again this year to plant a tree for each survey response we received!

MATTHEW WILCOX

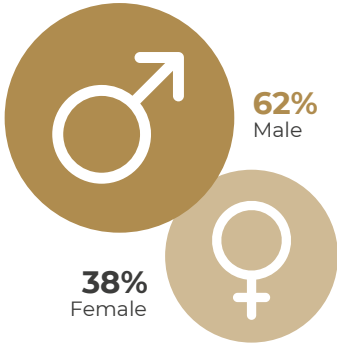
Managing Director

matthew.wilcox@markssattin.com

DEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

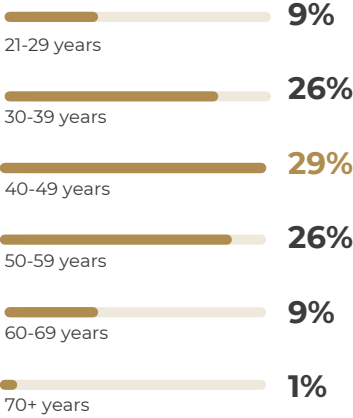
Here we outline the demographics of our survey respondents. Please note this is not a representation of our candidate and client community, rather a demographic overview of our research participants this year.

GENDER

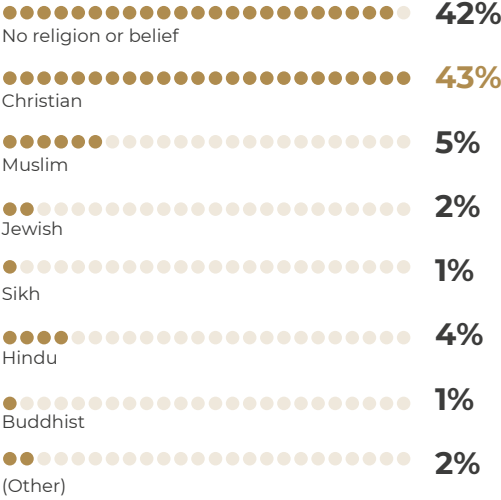


11 respondents chose non-binary

AGE



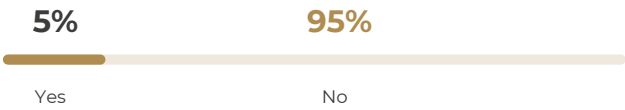
RELIGION OR BELIEF



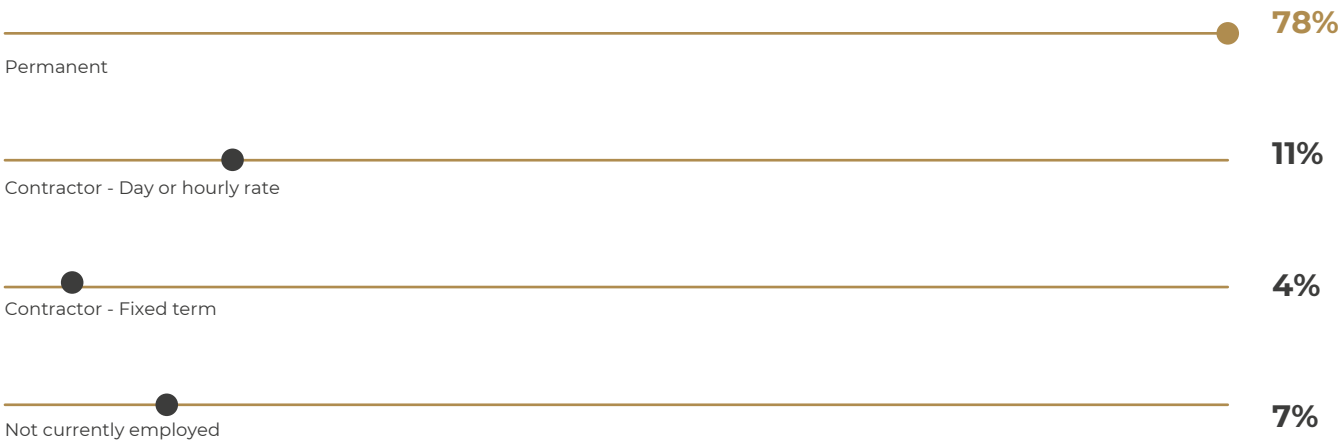
DO YOU HAVE A DISABILITY UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010?

In the Act, a person has a disability if:

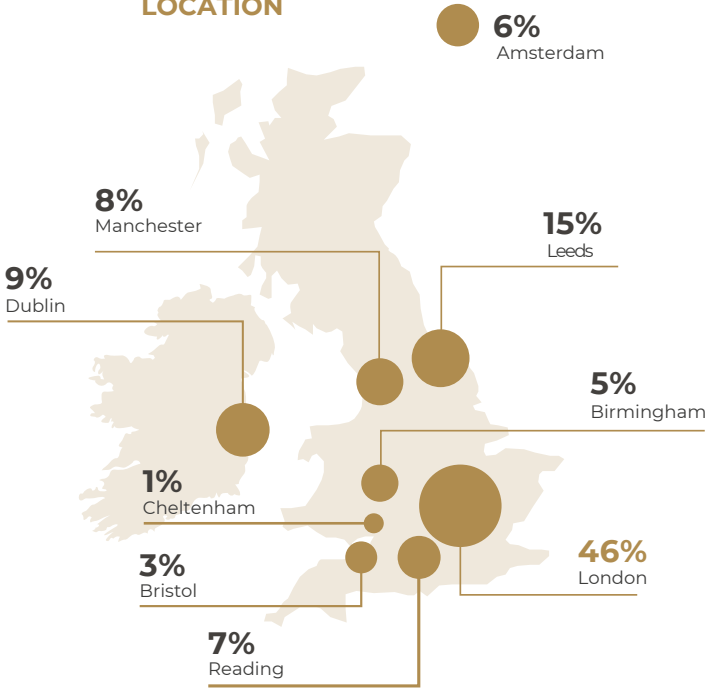
- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.



CONTRACT TYPE



LOCATION



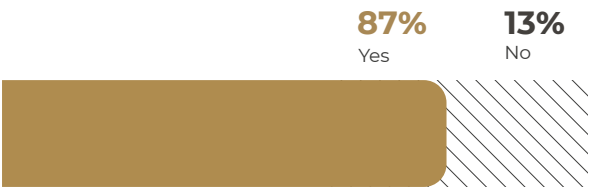
FUTURE OF WORK

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

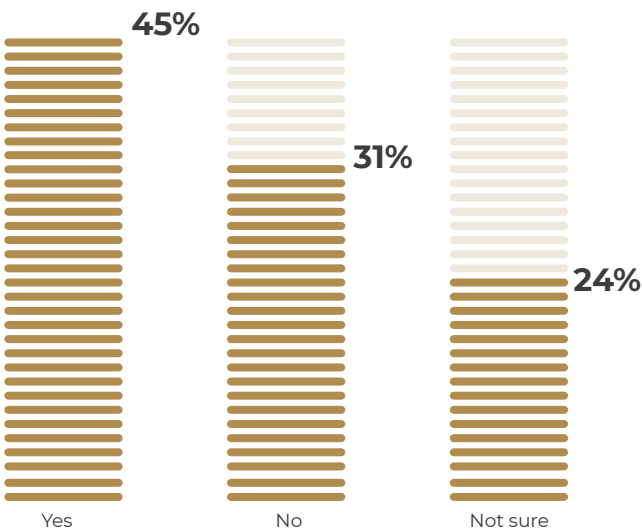
Do you think your leadership team is sufficiently diverse?



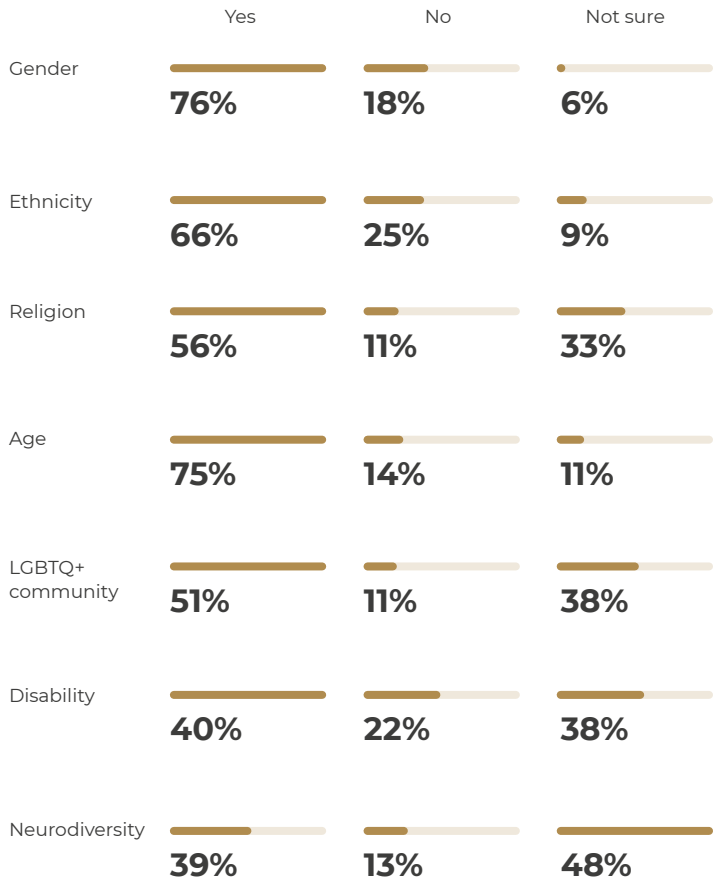
Do you feel your (or most recent) organisation, supports and encourages diversity in the workplace?



Does your company publish information on their gender pay gap?



In your opinion, do you believe your organisation is sufficiently diverse in the following areas?



OUR DIVERSITY PROMISE

As a talent consultancy, we have an unwavering responsibility to represent everyone in our network in a fair and ethical manner. We commit to providing the same high level service to every professional we work with regardless of their age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and ethnicity.

We recognise and advocate that a diverse workforce contributes positively to a company's success and growth. It's not just about the service we provide, true appreciation for diversity, equality, and inclusion needs to be at our core. We pledge to keep embedding these values in our culture, so that as advisors, we feel empowered to afford the same opportunities we receive, to the professionals we represent.



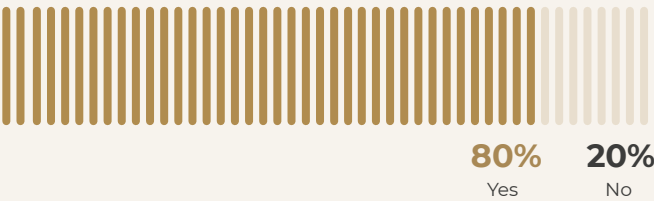
Visit our dedicated Equality, Diversity & Inclusion hub:
www.markssattin.co.uk/diversity-and-inclusion

ESG

How important is it for you to work for an organisation that has a robust ESG Strategy?

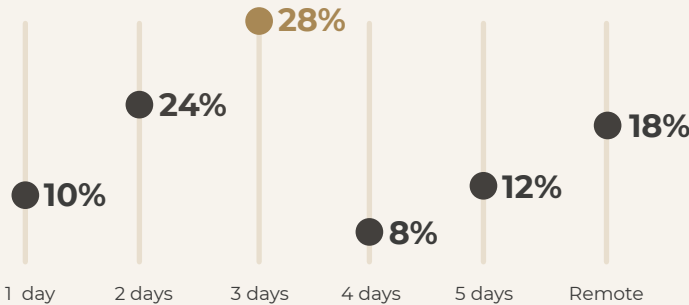


Are you satisfied with the effort your company makes to improve ESG challenges?

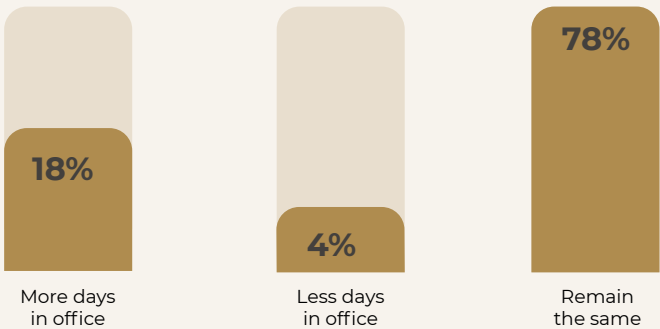


WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

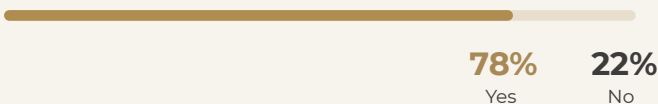
How many days per week are you expected to be in the office?



Do you anticipate this changing in 2025?

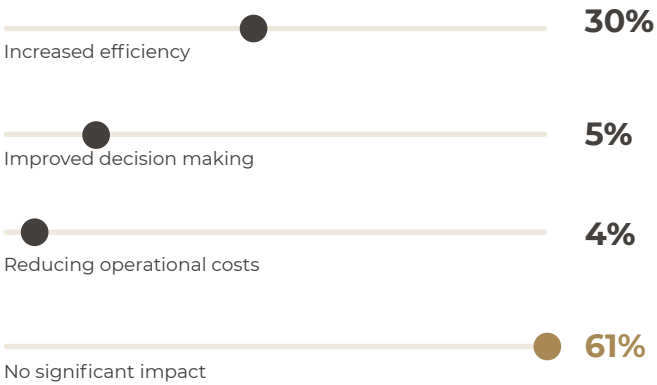


Does your organisation allow you to work flexible hours?

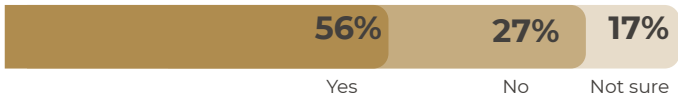


AI

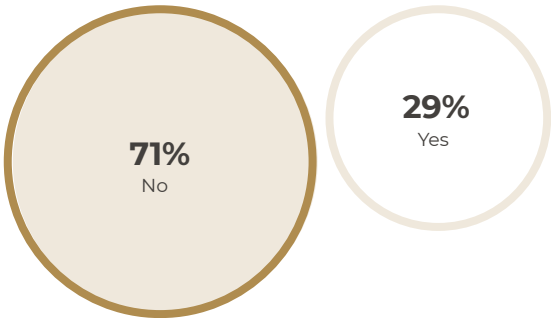
How has AI impacted your current role?



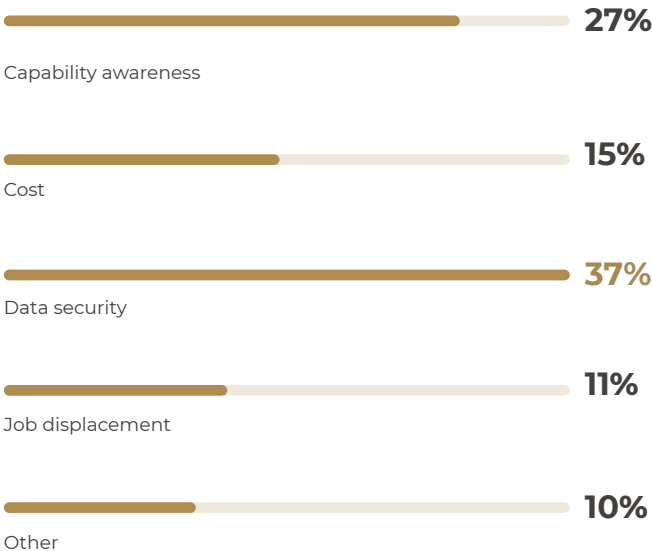
Is your company investing in AI tools?



Does your company offer training on AI?



What concerns, if any, does your business have regarding AI implementation?



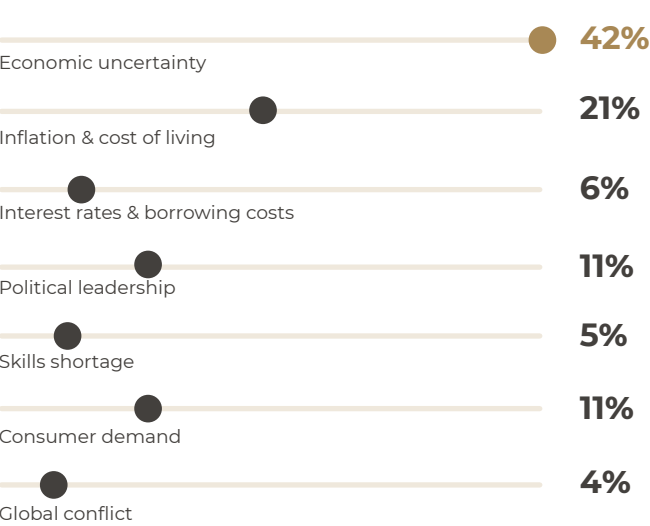
BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

To gain a deeper understanding of how economic conditions are affecting recruitment and talent strategy, we incorporated market confidence questions in this year’s survey. With over 1,800 respondents sharing their perspectives, here are some valuable insights into hiring outlooks and market sentiment for the remainder of the year.

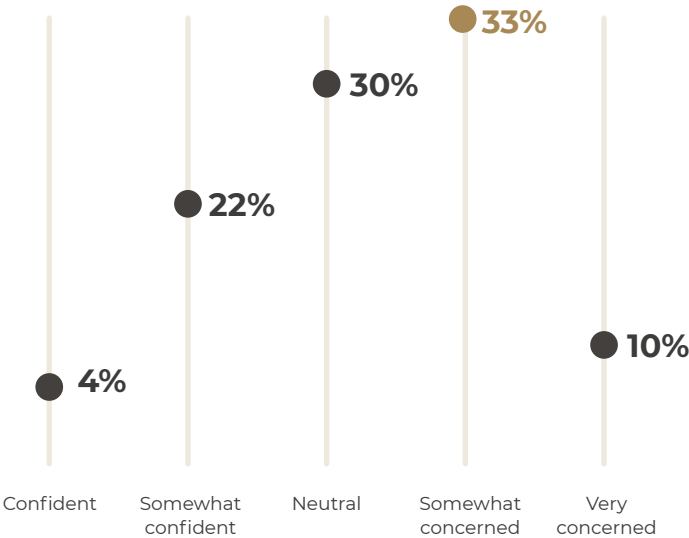
The results of our 2025 Business Confidence Survey highlight that companies are taking a measured approach to recruitment, focusing on selective hiring and investing in strategic areas like digital transformation, technology, and regulatory compliance. Businesses are adapting to the changing economic climate by prioritising resilience, innovation, and cost control. While some

are embarking on major transformation initiatives, others are maintaining stability and carefully navigating uncertainty. This strategic focus on transformation is expected to drive demand for specialised talent, particularly in technology and legal sectors. Overall, while there are concerns about the long-term impact of economic conditions, businesses are staying agile, leveraging opportunities for growth in high-demand sectors. The trend toward stability, coupled with a clear preference for flexible work and cautious relocation decisions, reflects the broader sentiment of managing risk in an unpredictable environment. As we move forward through 2025, the outlook remains one of adaptability and strategic investment in the face of ongoing change.

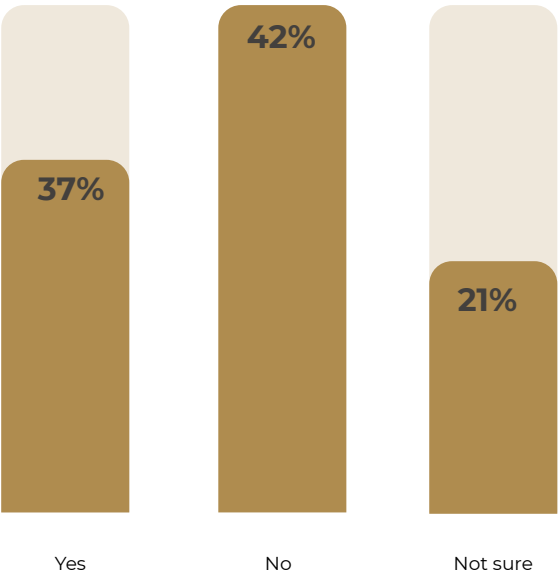
What factors are currently impacting your business confidence the most?



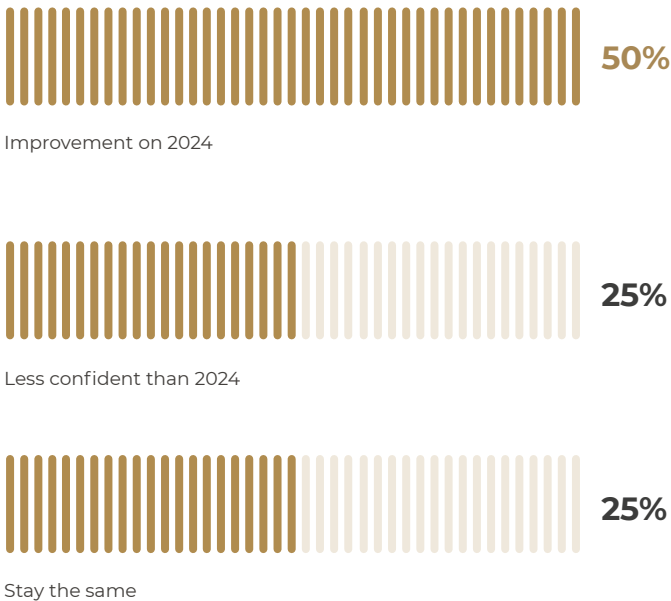
How optimistic are you regarding the UK & Ireland's economy?



Is your current (or recent) business embarking on any significant Change Programmes in 2025?



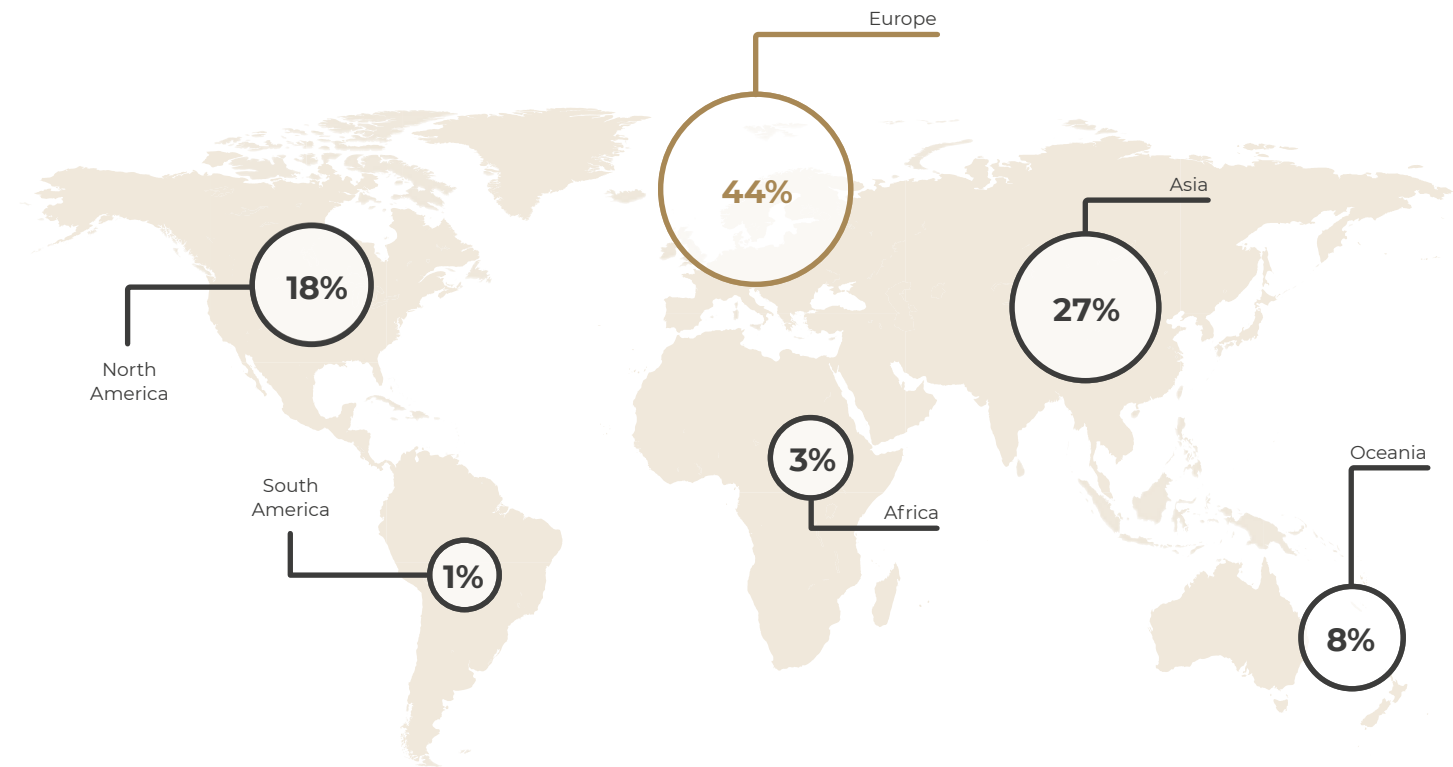
How do you expect your current (or recent) company to perform over the next 12 months?



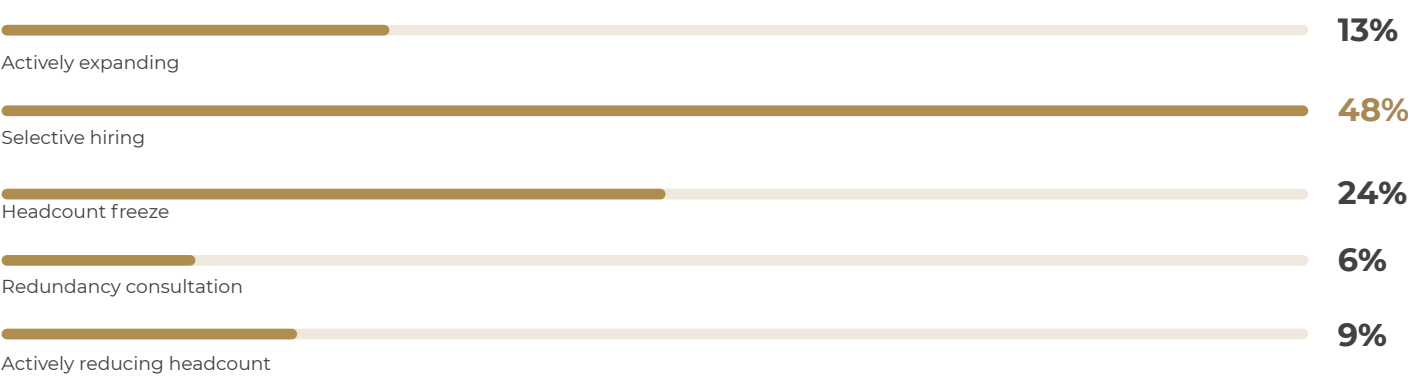
Would you relocate in the next 12 months?



Which international location would you relocate to?

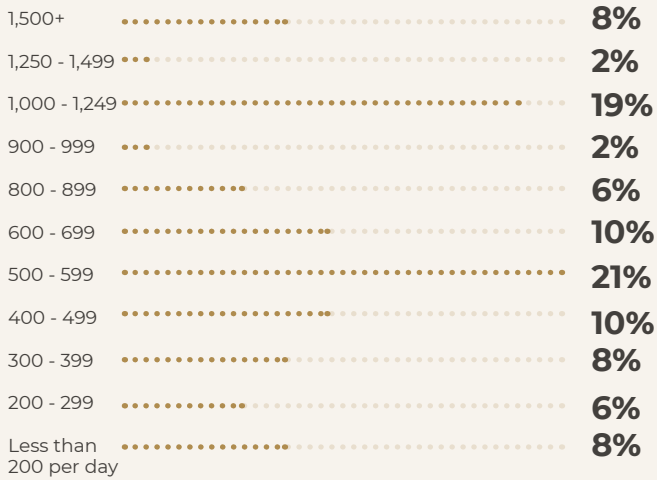


What is your business's current hiring outlook?



KEY FINDINGS

What is your current (or most recent) daily rate? CONTRACT

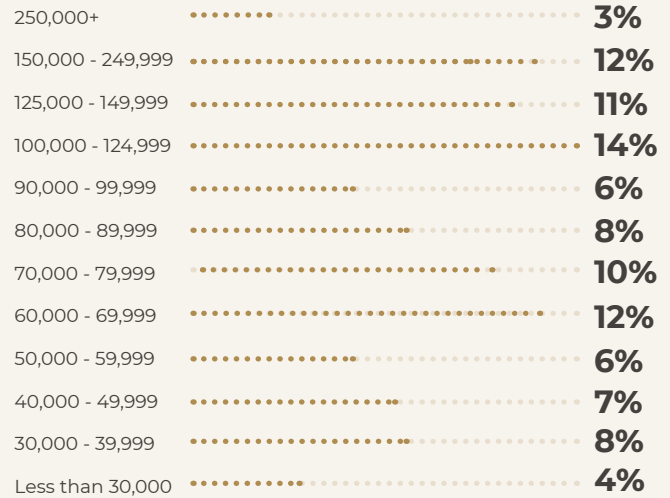


Are you satisfied with your current rate?

65%
Yes

35%
No

What is your current (or most recent) basic salary? PERMANENT / FTC

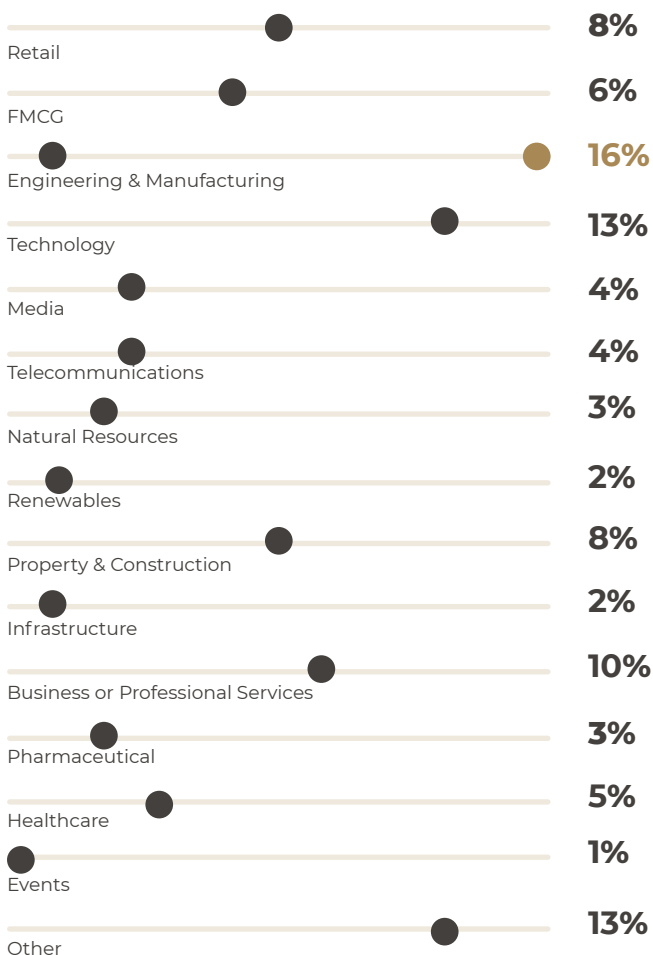


Are you satisfied with your current pay?

56%
Yes

44%
No

Which Commercial or Industrial subsector does your current (or most recent) company operate in?



Top 3 reasons for leaving last role

1

Career advancement

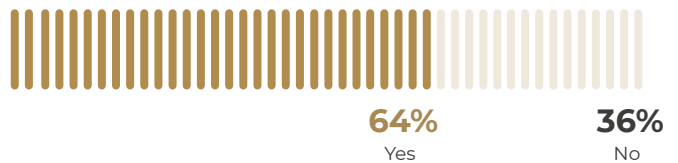
2

Increased remuneration

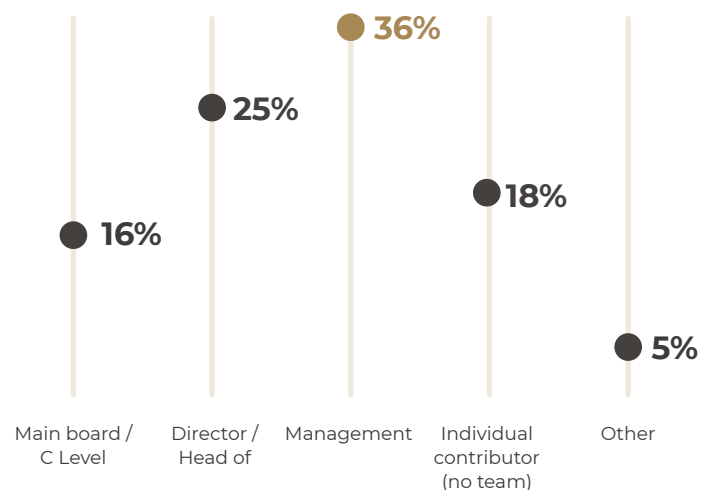
3

Better work / life balance

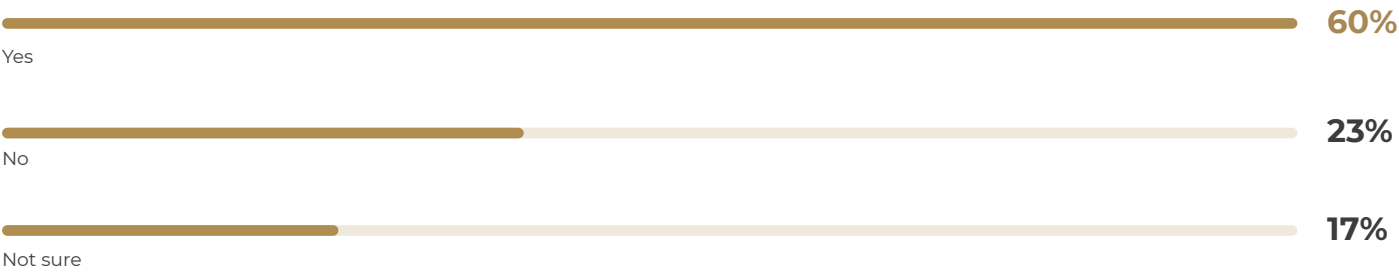
Are you satisfied in your current role?



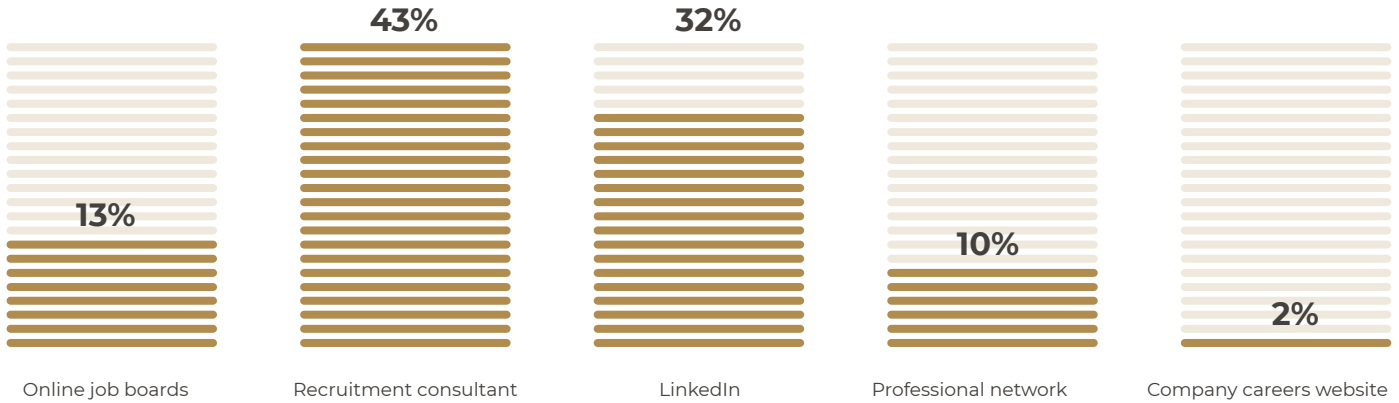
What level is your current (or most recent) position?



Do you feel your job is secure in 2025?



When looking for a role, which of the below would you use?



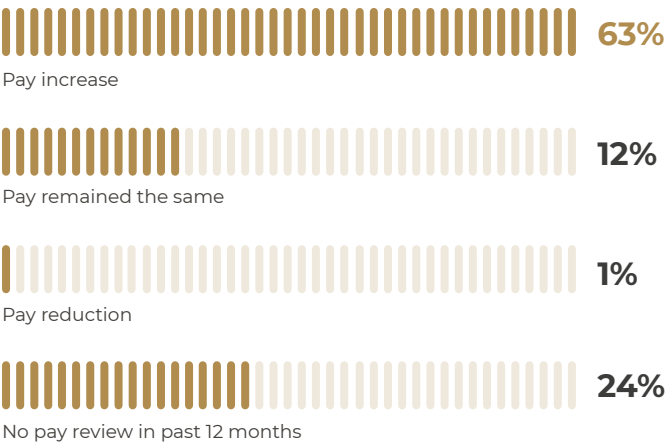
Top 5 benefits



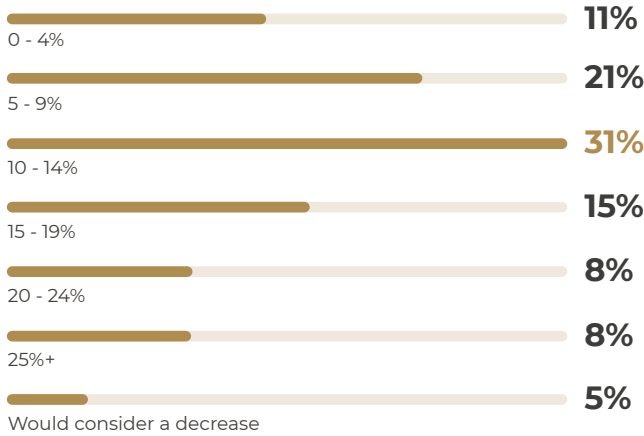
Are you happy with your current benefits?



What was the outcome of your last pay review?



When looking for a new position, what salary increase would you target?



MARKET INSIGHT

The employment market for commercial finance professionals in the UK regions (outside London) has been marked by steady demand in 2025, with many companies actively hiring, albeit within a climate of caution and competition. Despite broader economic uncertainties, the demand for skilled accountants and finance managers remains robust, particularly in the manufacturing and technology sectors.

Companies are becoming more strategic in their hiring decisions, focusing on roles that promise a strong return on investment. The need for finance professionals is driven by regulatory changes and digital transformation, ensuring that hiring remains steady, even in a cautious economic climate. Finance teams are at the forefront of helping companies control costs and find efficiencies in 2025's high inflation environment, which is prompting continued investment in finance talent. We can expect hiring for business-critical roles (e.g. financial controllers, plant accountants, FP&A analysts) to remain a priority for firms.

REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN HIRING

While London continues to lead in job creation, regional markets such as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and Reading are catching up. The absence of a recession and a resilient business environment have enabled these regions to maintain active hiring, particularly in manufacturing and technology. However, the pace of growth varies, with some areas experiencing more measured expansion.

Manufacturing firms are investing in efficiency improvements and sustainability, driving demand for finance talent to support these initiatives. Similarly, the technology sector, optimistic about growth, is adding finance roles to aid business expansion and investor reporting. Despite the global tech slowdown in previous years, selective hiring continues, prioritising roles that enhance business value.

A DUAL APPROACH TO HIRING

A dual approach to recruitment has emerged, with a focus on both permanent positions and interim contract roles. While most new hires are permanent, reflecting a desire to build long-term finance capabilities, there is also a significant increase in contract hiring. This trend sees companies bringing in interim professionals for short-term projects like system implementations and compliance initiatives. The flexibility provided by contract roles is especially appealing in uncertain times, allowing businesses to fill gaps quickly and efficiently.

ONGOING NEED FOR FLEXIBLE FINANCE TALENT

Demand for interim and contract finance professionals is set to remain strong, as companies increasingly rely on project-

based specialists to maintain agility in a shifting market. This approach allows businesses to respond swiftly to evolving conditions without the long-term commitment of permanent hires.

Accountants, finance analysts, and interim finance directors will continue to be in high demand throughout 2025, especially if organisations delay permanent recruitment amid economic uncertainty. Meanwhile, the rise of “fractional” executives is gaining traction, with SMEs across regions choosing part-time seasoned Finance Directors or CFOs to provide strategic leadership cost-effectively, without the expense of full-time appointments.

IN-DEMAND ROLES AND SKILLS

Roles such as Management Accountants, Finance Managers, and Financial Controllers are in high demand. These professionals play crucial roles in bridging financial data with business strategy, ensuring accurate reporting, and leading financial governance. Senior finance leaders like Finance Directors and CFOs are in demand to guide digital transformations, M&A, and restructuring efforts, with many SMEs opting for flexible, interim CFO arrangements. On the transactional side, roles such as Credit Controllers and Payroll Administrators remain vital, with credit control expertise especially valued for managing cash flow in uncertain economic climates.

Key skills driving demand include strong digital and analytical capabilities, such as proficiency in AI, data analytics, automation, and business intelligence tools. Strategic business acumen is equally important; finance professionals who understand their industry's specific operations can offer more insightful guidance and improve margin management. Regulatory knowledge, particularly around compliance and emerging areas like ESG reporting, is increasingly crucial. Alongside technical skills, employers emphasise soft skills such as communication, leadership, and adaptability to effectively collaborate across teams and manage change. Overall, the most in-demand finance talent combines advanced technical expertise with strategic insight and strong interpersonal abilities.

TALENT AVAILABILITY AND CHALLENGES

In 2025, the finance sector faces a significant talent shortage across all levels, from credit controllers to CFOs. This shortage stems from an aging workforce, fewer new entrants, and growing demand from business expansion, creating a highly competitive market where skilled professionals have multiple options. However, candidates are increasingly cautious about changing jobs due to economic uncertainty, making recruitment challenging despite the high number

of vacancies. Employers must offer strong incentives beyond salary, including job security, career growth, and work-life balance, to attract and retain talent.

Salary pressures are rising as companies adjust compensation packages and add bonuses, benefits, and flexible working to stay competitive, while counteroffers have become common. Hybrid work has become a baseline expectation, with many firms adopting flexible models to attract talent from wider regions and meet employee preferences. Skills gaps remain a concern, particularly in financial planning, analysis, and digital expertise, prompting employers to invest in training and interim specialists. Retention efforts focus on career development and highlighting regional benefits like lower living costs and quality of life, especially in cities like Manchester. Overall, employers who adapt with competitive offers, flexibility, and upskilling will be best positioned in the ongoing finance talent war.

Flexible and hybrid working arrangements remain a key expectation among candidates. Employers who fail to offer such flexibility risk losing potential hires to competitors. The shift towards hybrid models not only meets candidate preferences but also allows companies to widen their talent pool by attracting candidates from different regions.

UK REGIONAL SUMMARIES

North West: As a thriving finance hub, Manchester continues to see robust hiring activity across all levels. The city's growing economy, bolstered by manufacturing and tech sectors, contributes to a vibrant job market.

Yorkshire: The market here is characterised by resilience and steady progress. While hiring remains focused on business-critical roles, the region benefits from a diverse economy and a growing digital scene.

West Midlands: With a strong manufacturing heritage, Birmingham offers opportunities across various industries. The finance job market is expected to grow steadily, supported by large corporate employers and investments in advanced manufacturing, logistics and professional services.

Thames Valley: Known for its tech cluster, Reading's finance job market is driven by demand from global tech companies. The region offers a fast-paced and competitive environment with numerous opportunities for finance professionals.

H2 2025 OUTLOOK

The regional finance job markets outside London are set for a solid H2 with companies in manufacturing and technology actively seeking finance professionals to drive efficiency, compliance, and growth. Employers that adapt to the talent

challenges by offering flexible work arrangements and attractive career opportunities will be best positioned to secure the skills they need. The outlook remains one of resilient demand amid a transforming economic backdrop, promising a wealth of opportunities for finance professionals and a competitive arena for employers.

Regional economies expected to grow modestly. Greater Manchester, the West Midlands, and the South-East are projected to see steady job creation, supporting continued hiring in commercial sectors. Manufacturing firms anticipate improved performance as supply chain conditions improve, spurring recruitment in the latter half of the year. The tech sector remains buoyant, with regions like Reading and Manchester poised for ongoing finance hiring.

Sources:

Financial IT, Sharp Consultancy (Yorkshire), Accountancy Age / Personiv, EY Regional Economic Forecast, Mancunian Matters, techUK / Public First



BECKY HUGHES

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SALARY GUIDE

SW / MIDLANDS

NORTH

	SALARY RANGE	DAY RATE	SALARY RANGE	DAY RATE
QUALIFIED & EXECUTIVE				
Qualified 2 Years PQE	£50,000 - £60,000	£300 - £400	£70,000 - £75,000	£350 - £450
Qualified 3 Years PQE	£60,000 - £75,000	£350 - £500	£75,000 - £80,000	£400 - £500
Qualified 4 Years PQE	£70,000 - £85,000	£400 - £500	£75,000 - £90,000	£400 - £500
Finance Manager	£60,000 - £70,000	£350 - £450	£65,000 - £75,000	£375 - £475
Commercial Finance / Finance Business Partner	£60,000 - £80,000	£400 - £500	£60,000 - £90,000	£400 - £550
FP&A	£60,000 - £75,000	£350 - £500	£65,000 - £90,000	£400 - £500
Head of FP&A	£80,000 - £120,000	£500 - £750	£90,000 - £140,000	£600 - £800
Financial Controller	£70,000 - £100,000	£400 - £700	£80,000 - £110,000	£500 - £800
Group Financial Controller	£80,000 - £120,000	£500 - £800	£90,000 - £140,000	£600 - £900
Finance Director (SME)	£100,000 - £150,000	£700 - £1,000	£100,000 - £150,000	£700 - £1,000
Finance Director (Listed)	£150,000 - £180,000	£900 - £1,200	£150,000 - £200,000	£900 - £1,200
CFO (SME)	£130,000 - £200,000	£1,000 - £2,000	£150,000 - £250,000	£1,000 - £2,000

SW / MIDLANDS

NORTH

	SALARY RANGE	DAY RATE	SALARY RANGE	DAY RATE
NEWLY QUALIFIED (UP TO ONE YEAR PQE)				
ACA first time mover	£50,000 - £57,000	£350 - £400	£50,000 - £60,000	£400 - £450
Financial Accountant	£45,000 - £55,000	£350 - £400	£55,000 - £65,000	£375 - £450
Management Accountant	£45,000 - £65,000	£300 - £400	£55,000 - £65,000	£375 - £500
Finance Analyst	£45,000 - £55,000	£300 - £400	£55,000 - £65,000	£300 - £450
Finance Business Partner	£55,000 - £65,000	£350 - £400	£55,000 - £70,000	£400 - £600
Finance Manager	£60,000 - £70,000	£350 - £450	£55,000 - £70,000	£400 - £500
Group Reporting	£55,000 - £65,000	£400 - £600	£55,000 - £70,000	£600 - £800
Internal Audit	£50,000 - £65,000	£350 - £500	£55,000 - £70,000	£500 - £800

SW / MIDLANDS

NORTH

	SALARY RANGE	DAY RATE	SALARY RANGE	DAY RATE
PART QUALIFIED & TRANSACTIONAL				
Graduate / Trainee Accountant	£23,000 - £30,000	£130 - £150	£23,000 - £30,000	£150 - £250
Accounts Payable / Receivable	£25,000 - £32,000	£140 - £175	£28,000 - £35,000	£120 - £175
Accounts Assistant	£28,000 - £33,000	£150 - £175	£25,000 - £32,000	£120 - £175
Senior AP / AR	£32,000 - £37,000	£175 - £225	£35,000 - £40,000	£150 - £250
Revenue / Billings Manager	£28,000 - £55,000	£200 - £300	£45,000 - £65,000	£200 - £300
AP / AR Manager	£40,000 - £65,000	£250 - £350	£35,000 - £60,000	£150 - £300
Credit Controller	£30,000 - £40,000	£150 - £200	£30,000 - £40,000	£120 - £175
Senior Credit Controller	£35,000 - £45,000	£175 - £225	£35,000 - £45,000	£150 - £225
Credit Control Supervisor	£37,000 - £50,000	£200 - £275	£40,000 - £50,000	£200 - £275
Credit Control Manager	£40,000 - £65,000	£250 - £325	£45,000 - £65,000	£200 - £300
Payroll Administrator	£28,000 - £38,000	£150 - £200	£28,000 - £40,000	£120 - £175
Senior Payroll	£33,000 - £40,000	£200 - £250	£35,000 - £50,000	£150 - £225
Payroll Manager	£40,000 - £70,000	£250 - £350	£50,000 - £70,000	£175 - £250
Assistant Accountant	£28,000 - £38,000	£175 - £200	£28,000 - £36,000	£120 - £200
Financial Accountant	£40,000 - £48,000	£200 - £300	£40,000 - £55,000	£375 - £500
Assistant Management Accountant	£30,000 - £42,000	£175 - £225	£35,000 - £45,000	£150 - £300
Management Accountant	£35,000 - £55,000	£200 - £275	£40,000 - £55,000	£200 - £300
Junior Finance Analyst	£30,000 - £40,000	£150 - £200	£30,000 - £45,000	£120 - £175
Finance Analyst	£35,000 - £50,000	£200 - £275	£40,000 - £55,000	£200 - £300
Finance Manager	£45,000 - £60,000	£250 - £325	£50,000 - £70,000	£250 - £350

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