

# Almost half of workers would turn down a job if flexible working wasn't offered

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A lack of flexible working options is driving almost half of UK workers to reject jobs at a time when employers are increasingly concerned about talent attraction and retention. That's according to new research by specialist recruitment firm Robert Half.

The firm's 2024 Salary Guide (<https://www.roberthalf.co.uk/salary-guide>) - which analyses and reports on market salaries, hiring trends, and skills requirements across the UK - revealed that while pay remains a key driver of job moves – with 63% of workers citing salary as a reason to reject an offer – flexible working and development opportunities are also significant motivators. Almost half (47%) of the workforce would reject a new job if the company didn't offer flexible working. A further 43% would do so if career development opportunities weren't suitable.

The report also revealed that 75% of employers are very or somewhat concerned about staff attraction and retention, with almost a third (29%) of workers indicating that they are apprehensive about the impact of heavy and increased workloads on peer retention.

Kris Harris, Regional Director – UK Technology Solutions, at Robert Half, commented:

“It's an incredibly complex hiring landscape at the moment and while salaries remain a significant driver of career moves, candidates are looking for a broader package that gives them more than just a good pay packet. As the debate around flexible working grows and news reports continue to highlight those brands that are enforcing office returns, the fact that almost half of workers would turn down a job due to a lack of flexible working options is a concern.

“With such a significant proportion of the UK's employers concerned about their ability to recruit and retain talent, what candidates want needs to take precedence over what employers would prefer to some degree at least. Inflated salaries aren't feasible long term – indeed the study also showed that 22% of businesses don't plan to offer pay increases – but flexible working is. Although the recruitment market is slowing, with the labour market data from the Office for National Statistics showing sustained falls in jobs over recent months, skills shortages still remain. In this environment, candidates continue to be able to command more, and right now that includes flexibility.

“The figures around excessive workloads are also an issue if firms are to retain the key talent that has been so difficult to attract. Burnout is a real issue in the workforce and these latest statistics suggest this isn't going to go away on its own. While there does need to be a longer-term solution to excessive workloads, in the interim, the flexible labour market can play a significant role in managing workloads and employers should seriously consider where it may be best to invest in contract staff to retain full time employees.”

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#### Notes to editor

##### About the Research

Robert Half experts analysed internal data for 12 months to 1 March 2022, comprising more than 4,000 data points, relating to 200 roles across the finance and accounting, financial services, technology, HR and marketing sectors. Six-month comparisons were made against data that was validated on 1 September 2021.

Robert Half also commissioned Rigour Research to conduct a survey amongst 300 C-suite level senior leaders between 17-28 February 2022. This is the source of the data point on business confidence. The C-suite level senior leaders operate with hiring responsibilities across small (50-249 employees), medium (250-499) and large (500+ employees) from the public sector, private, and publicly listed businesses across the UK.

##### About Robert Half

Founded in 1948, Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised talent solutions consultancy, working to fill professional services roles at all levels within the finance and accounting, banking, technology, HR, marketing and legal sectors. The company has more than 300 staffing locations worldwide and offers hiring and job search services at [www.roberthalf.co.uk](http://www.roberthalf.co.uk)

Robert Half understands that it takes time and effort to evaluate the best talent strategy for different businesses. For further independent advice to assist with your recruitment and workforce planning efforts, visit [www.roberthalf.co.uk/advice](http://www.roberthalf.co.uk/advice).