

# Why it's never been a better time to look for a new job: companies set to ramp up hiring

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More than a third of employers planning to expand their permanent headcount in the next six months as GDP jumps

Almost a quarter of companies expected to grow their contract teams

On average, 77% of companies plan to expand or maintain business-critical roles across permanent, contract and project-based jobs in the next six months

Hiring increase will add to worker confidence, which could make recruitment more challenging

Employers are planning to increase headcount in the next six months, however, growing skills gaps combined with increased worker confidence are set to impact these hiring intentions. That's according to new research from specialist recruiter, Robert Half.

The firm's latest data on the hiring intentions of UK's businesses revealed that over a third (39%) of employers are planning to expand permanent resources and almost a quarter (24%) intend to hire more contractors in the next six months. On average, 77% are planning to expand or maintain business-critical permanent, contract and project-based roles in the next six months.

According to the study, the top functional areas with the highest levels of planned recruitment are; customer service, AI / automation / machine learning, administration and compliance / regulatory / governance.

Hiring increase will add to worker confidence

According to Robert Half, this latest data will be a boost to the fortunes for UK employees and job seekers, however this will only further underpin job confidence that has been rising across the country. Other research from the brand, the Robert Half Jobs Confidence Index (JCI) – produced in conjunction with the Centre for economics and business research (Cebr) – shows that the job confidence in the UK has seen a steady increase throughout 2024.

Built on four core pillars of confidence, the JCI increased to 51.6 in the latest iteration of the report, marking the fifteenth consecutive quarter that it remained in positive territory. For context, a score between -30 and 30 is considered average rates of confidence.

This boost was largely driven by improvements in pay and job security confidence, with the latter standing at 152.1, the second highest reading recorded for this pillar since records began in 2009. As a result of rising job confidence, Robert Half predicts that ambitious workers may be ready to move for the right packages and opportunities.

As Chris Lawton, Vice President of Permanent Placements UK & Ireland at Robert Half explained, this increase in job security combined with growing skills shortages could put hiring plans at risk:

“The fact that we are seeing firms planning to increase their headcount in the next six months is promising. In Finance and Accounting, for example, our latest research shows that 95% of companies plan to make permanent hires and 83% on a project-management basis in the next six months. While this is clearly good news for jobseekers, employers could still be in for a turbulent time due to ongoing challenges attracting and retaining talent amidst widespread skills shortages and rising worker confidence.

“As worker confidence continues to show no signs of abating, employees clearly hold the power. With higher salaries an unsustainable option for most firms given low consumer demand and more choice for candidates on the cards, businesses are going to have to work harder if they are to attract the people they intend to hire over the next six months and beyond. That will mean developing more robust employment packages that encompass everything from culture and DEI, flexible working practices to tailored perks and benefits that make a difference to the employer proposition.”

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About the research

In partnership with the Centre for Economics and Business Research, the quarterly Robert Half Jobs Confidence Index is the most authoritative report on the key socio-economic factors influencing confidence in the UK labour market.

The Jobs Confidence Index (JCI) is made up of four equally weighted pillars, each measuring a factor which contributes to jobs confidence. These are:

1. Job security confidence
2. Pay confidence
3. Job search and progression confidence
4. Macroeconomic confidence

The JCI takes a positive or negative number, where numbers above zero signal that jobs confidence is higher than the long-term average, and numbers below zero show it is lower. The JCI can take any number, but it usually stands between -30 and 30, showing that confidence is close to a normal level when it is within this range.

About Robert Half

Robert Half (NYSE: RHI) is the world's first and largest specialised talent solutions and business consulting firm, connecting highly skilled job seekers with rewarding opportunities at great companies. We offer contract talent and permanent placement solutions in the fields of finance and accounting,

technology, marketing and creative, legal, and administrative and customer support, and we also provide executive search services. Robert Half is the parent company of Protiviti, a global consulting firm that delivers internal audit, risk, business and technology consulting solutions. In the past 12 months, Robert Half, including Protiviti, has been named one of the Fortune® Most Admired Companies™ and 100 Best Companies to Work For and a Forbes Best Employer for Diversity. Explore talent solutions, research and insights at [www.roberthalf.com/gb/en](http://www.roberthalf.com/gb/en).