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2026
Salary Guide

Technology & Change

Contents

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Welcome to our Salary & Hiring Guide for Technology & Change.

We're pleased to welcome you to our 2026 Salary & Hiring Guide for Technology and Change.

With rapid developments in AI, growing demand for transformation expertise, and a continued shortage of specialist skills, finding the right people is increasingly complex across the UK market.

This guide brings together insights from our consultants to help employers navigate these shifts with confidence. Whether you're hiring contract or permanent talent, looking to build leadership capability or scale technical teams, we hope the data and analysis shared here will support more informed, strategic hiring decisions in the year ahead.

If you'd like to explore anything in more detail, our teams are always happy to help.

Andrew Michael
CEO of US & UK Recruitment

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What's Shaping Tech & Change Recruitment in 2026?

Hiring across the Tech and Change sectors is being shaped by a powerful combination of economic caution, accelerating AI investment, and a growing mismatch between available talent and evolving business needs.

Uncertainty around economic policy is playing a major role in hiring decisions. High inflation and potential tax rises have prompted many UK organisations to make more selective hiring decisions. Many firms have paused permanent hiring, opting to focus on essential roles, and seek ways to reduce cost without compromising delivery.

In the public sector, constrained budgets and legacy infrastructure continue to influence hiring approaches. Recent research found that only 1% of public sector managers consider their hiring process "very effective", highlighting the urgency for streamlined, skills-based recruitment strategies.

Organisations are prioritising experienced professionals in AI, data and change roles, while leaning on contractors to maintain project momentum without long-term commitments. Despite this caution, demand for AI-related talent is growing fast. British AI companies now contribute £11.8 billion to the economy. Yet the skills shortage remains a significant challenge with firms struggling to hire for critical roles.

Candidate expectations are also changing. Flexibility is now considered essential, not optional. Hybrid working is standard in the UK, and flexibility and purpose rank highly as key decision drivers for candidates weighing multiple offers.
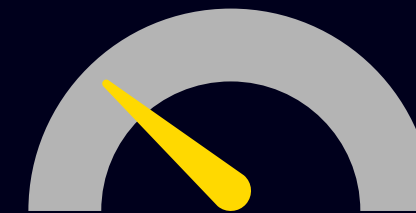
In short, hiring in 2026 is going to demand adaptability.

Key Statistics
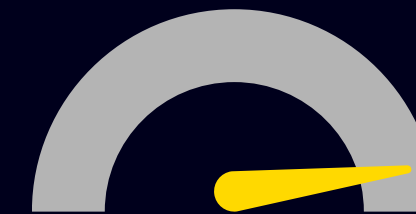
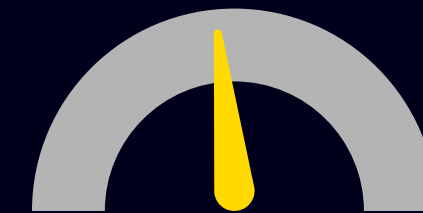**93%**

of UK organisations are facing tech skills shortages

25%

of tech leaders lack confidence that their talent pipeline can meet future needs

47%

of UK CEOs would like to see more investment in digital and AI infrastructure

Sources: PwC Pulse Survey, Node4 2025 Mid-Market Report, Deloitte 2025 UK CEO Survey

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UK Snapshot

Cautious Confidence and Skills-Driven Hiring

Economic pressures and high interest rates have slowed growth in the UK market, but easing rates are beginning to restore optimism, particularly in the private sector. That said, most organisations are still hiring selectively, focusing on skills over scale.

Permanent hiring is concentrated at the experienced end of the market. Employers are increasingly willing to pay apremium for talent that can lead transformation and deliver measurable outcomes. Junior hiring has dropped sharply, with demand focused on professionals who can deliver immediate impact.

Contract hiring is holding steady, particularly for transformation projects where organisations prefer flexibility. The public sector too, constrained by legacy systems and budget pressures, relies heavily on contractors for critical roles across cyber, data and digital change. However, limited internal hiring capability and outdated recruitment frameworks continue to impact the public sector's ability to compete for both permanent and interim talent.

Talent shortages remain most organisations' biggest barrier. Global hiring is increasing in both directions and combined with immigration changes have narrowed the supply of available professionals, increasing competition for UK-based professionals.

Demand is strongest for individuals who can combine technical capability with commercial awareness, particularly across AI, data, cloud and change delivery.
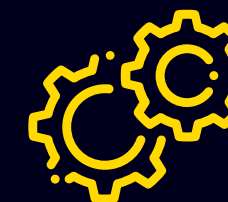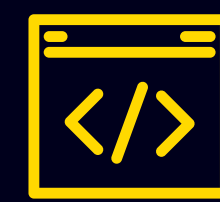
In Demand in 2026

Applied AI

Machine Learning Ops

Generative AI Integration

Cloud Security

Data Engineering

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Salaries

Salaries across the UK tech and change market remain resilient, with the strongest growth seen in roles linked to automation, AI adoption, and cloud transformation. London continues to lead on pay, though hybrid working has helped level the field for top regional talent.

Contract day rates are particularly strong in cloud, cyber and data engineering, where skills shortages persist. Permanent salaries are increasingly tied to demonstrable business impact, with premiums paid for professionals who combine technical expertise with leadership capability.

International hiring trends and visa threshold changes are also contributing to a rise in salary benchmarks for niche and high-impact roles.

Technology, Digital & Data

Cloud Infrastructure & Engineering	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Help Desk Support	£25,000 - £35,000	£180 - £300
Help Desk Manager	£40,000 - £60,000	£350 - £550
Deskop Support Engineer	£25,000 - £35,000	£200 - £350
Systems Analyst	£35,000 - £55,000	£400 - £700
Cloud Engineer	£40,000 - £60,000	£450 - £850
IT Support Manager	£45,000 - £60,000	£500 - £900
Service Delivery Manager	£45,000 - £60,000	£550 - £990
Network Administrator	£30,000 - £50,000	£400 - £650
Systems Administrator	£40,000 - £60,000	£450 - £700
Network Engineer	£40,000 - £60,000	£450 - £700
Network Manager	£55,000 - £80,000	£550 - £900
Infrastructure Manager	£55,000 - £80,000	£550 - £900

IT, Systems and Digital Transformation	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Business Analyst	£40,000 - £70,000	£400 - £800
Senior Business Analyst	£50,000 - £80,000	£450 - £850
Project Management Office (PMO) Analyst	£40,000 - £55,000	£250 - £400
Project Management Office (PMO) Manager	£65,000 - £85,000	£400 - £700
Project Manager	£45,000 - £75,000	£450 - £850
Programme Manager	£60,000 - £90,000	£600 - £1,000
Programme Director	£75,000 - £120,000	£650 - £1,200

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Compliance, Audit, Risk and Security	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Security Systems Administrator	£40,000 - £60,000	£400 - £600
Security Network Engineer	£55,000 - £80,000	£450 - £650
Information Security Manager	£55,000 - £80,000	£500 - £800
Security Architect	£70,000 - £100,000	£650 - £1,000

Software Development, Testing and Devops	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Test Analyst	£30,000 - £50,000	£400 - £600
Testing Manager	£50,000 - £70,000	£550 - £800
App Support Engineer	£35,000 - £65,000	£400 - £700
DevOps Engineer	£50,000 - £80,000	£550 -£900
DevOps Manager	£65,000 - £80,000	£750 - £1,000
Developer	£35,000 - £60,000	£400 - £700
Web Developer	£35,000 - £60,000	£450 - £750
Lead Developer	£55,000 - £80,000	£550 - £900

Business Intelligence & Data Analytics	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Database Administrator	£30,000 - £50,000	£300 - £550
Data Analyst	£30,000 - £50,000	£300 - £600
Database/ Business Intelligence Development	£35,000 - £65,000	£350 - £650
Business Intelligence Analyst	£35,000 - £65,000	£350 - £650
Business Intelligence Manager	£50,000 - £75,000	£450 -£ 800
Data Scientist	£40,000 - £80,000	£450 - £800
Head of Business Intelligence	£60,000 - £100,000	£500 - £900

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Architecture	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Enterprise Architect	£70,000 - £100,000	£650 - £1,000
Infrastructure Architect	£70,000 - £100,000	£650 - £1,000
Data Architect	£70,000 - £100,000	£650 - £1,000
Solution Architect	£70,000 - £100,000	£650 - £1,000

Leadership	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
IT Manager	£50,000 - £65,000	£400 - £800
Head of IT	£55,000 - £80,000	£500 - £900
IT Director	£70,000 - £120,000	£600 - £1,000
Chief Architect	£70,000 - £100,000	£600 - £1,000
Chief Information Security Officer	£70,000 - £100,000	£600 - £1,200
Chief Technology Officer	£80,000 - £150,000	£700 - £1,200
Chief Information Officer	£80,000 - £150,000	£700 - £1,200

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Change Management

Change Management	Annual Salary	Contract Day Rate
Junior Project Management Office	£50,000 - £70,000	£300 - £450+
Senior Project Management Office	£60,000 - £80,000	£500 - £650+
Project Manager	£70,000 - £90,000	£600 - £800+
Senior Project Manager	£75,000 - £100,000	£650 - £850+
Business Analyst	£50,000 - £70,000	£400 - £600+
Senior Business Analyst	£60,000 - £90,000	£600 - £750+
Programme Manager	£80,000 - £125,000	£700 - £1,000+

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Strategic Hiring in a Demanding Market

UK organisations hiring tech and change professionals in 2026 face high demand, low supply, and increasingly complex candidate expectations.

With AI, cloud, and data skills in short supply, it is no longer possible to rely on traditional hiring strategies. The shift toward value-driven hiring, where technical skills must be matched with leadership, adaptability and commercial understanding, means employers must invest more time in refining job briefs, candidate experience, and long-term workforce planning.

Contractors will remain a critical part of the talent mix, but retaining knowledge and continuity is key. Flexibility, upskilling opportunities, and meaningful work will remain central to attracting and retaining high performers.

Ultimately, successful hiring in 2026 will depend on a more agile, insight-led approach that balances speed with precision and short-term delivery with long-term growth.

Key Takeaways

Prioritise Organisational Impact

Focus hiring on professionals who can demonstrate value alongside technical delivery. Use structured interviews and stakeholder input to assess commercial awareness, leadership potential and ability to influence outcomes.

Invest in Flexibility

Offer the right mix of hybrid working, career development and autonomy. Build clear flexible work policies, create pathways for progression, and develop an organisation-wide culture of trust to support retention and engagement.

Plan for Specialist Roles

Roles in AI, data and change leadership are highly competitive. Talent pipelines must be built early. Start outreach before vacancies arise, nurture passive candidates, and strengthen employer branding in niche communities.

Use Contractors Strategically

Contractors are vital for transformation delivery but should be aligned with longer-term business objectives. Develop onboarding processes that embed contractors quickly and establish knowledge transfer plans to retain critical expertise.

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At Goodman Masson, our Technology & Change team in the UK specialise in connecting forward-thinking organisations across the public and private sectors with high-impact talent across AI, data, cloud, cybersecurity, and transformation. Whether you're scaling a team or delivering complex change, we provide permanent and contract solutions tailored to your needs.

To book a consultation or speak with our team, please use the contact details below.

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