

HOSPITALITY HIRING INSIDER

Q1
25

Caterer.com
LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE



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Introduction

The Caterer.com Hospitality Hiring Insider gives you a clear view of what's happening in the hospitality job market, and how to respond.

We break down the latest data on job postings, candidate expectations, application patterns and pay benchmarks, alongside practical takeaways to help shape your recruitment strategy for the months ahead.

Here's what you'll find inside:

- A snapshot of the wider UK economy and its impact on hospitality hiring
- Key recruitment trends from Q1 2025
- Regional and sector-specific job posting data
- Insights into what today's talent is looking for
- Application and salary trends to help you compete with confidence

You'll also hear from hospitality employers including **Harts Group, The Lancaster Landmark Hotel Company and Jumeirah Hotels**, who share how they're attracting and retaining talent in a competitive market.

And in partnership with **Be Inclusive Hospitality**, we'll explore how businesses can build a more inclusive and representative workforce.

There's lots to unpack, **so let's dive in.**



Hospitality market overview

Here, we explore the current trends and activity across the hospitality market.

Hospitality sector overview

Hospitality hiring held firm in Q1 2025, with employers continuing to invest in people and prepare for a busy summer ahead.

At the end of 2024, the [Office for National Statistics](#) recorded **2.66 million people working in the sector-up 21,000 on the year before**. That steady rise in employment reflects the industry's ongoing resilience, even in the face of wider economic uncertainty.

Looking ahead, **the outlook is even more positive**.

The latest Totaljobs Hiring Trends Index revealed that **over a third of hospitality employers (35%) plan to increase hiring in Q2 2025-well ahead of the 24% average across all industries**. For businesses gearing up for seasonal peaks, that means increased competition for talent. But it also signals opportunity. Candidates are actively searching, employers are investing, and the sector is primed for continued growth.



Hiring challenges and opportunities

The good news? Candidates are searching, applying and ready to seize new opportunities. In fact, **Q1 2025 saw an average of 75.3 applications per vacancy on Caterer.com-up significantly from 51.7 in Q4 2024**, and the highest in over a year.

With this surge in interest, employers have a real opportunity to connect with motivated talent. In Q1, a quarter of hospitality businesses increased recruitment activity, and **21% brought in more temporary staff to meet growing demand***.

Of course, more applications can bring new challenges-from filtering candidates to competing on flexibility, pay and progression. But employers who are clear, inclusive and engaging in their approach are in a strong position to stand out.

With a highly active candidate pool and summer around the corner, now's the time to make your roles shine. Transparency on pay, clear development paths, and a compelling employer brand will help you attract the right people-and keep them.

*Totaljobs Hiring Trends Index Q1 2025

A snapshot of the UK economy and labour market - Spring 2025

Julius Probst, Labour Economist at The Stepstone Group.

Growth is picking up, but the labour market is stalling

While economic growth throughout 2024 has surprised on the upside with **the economy expanding by just a little over 1%**, the labour market has been stagnant with almost zero payroll job growth.

Even as **forecasters are anticipating about 1% GDP growth in 2025 for now**, the international economic outlook has become much more cloudy. Global economic uncertainty has reached a record high in recent months, mostly due to policies initiated by the Trump administration.

While the UK economy is somewhat more immune from the trade war since **more than 55% of all British exports are services instead of goods**, there is no doubt that slower global economic growth will also mean a deterioration of the UK economic outlook. It is therefore expected that the Bank of England will cut interest rates at a slightly faster pace, which will provide some modest support to growth and the labour market.

While the unemployment rate remains below 4.5% for now, there are some concerns about the data reliability: The low response rate to the household survey could mean that the ONS is mismeasuring unemployment. Despite reasonably strong economic growth last year, job growth has been basically stagnant.

The Autumn Budget from last year that the Labour government introduced continues to weigh heavily on the labour market in the short-run. The combination of **the large increase in the minimum wage together with the hike in the employers' national insurance contribution has led to some job losses** over the last six months and is hurting the hiring outlook. Especially low-margin sectors like retail and hospitality are being affected by the surge in employer costs.

But even as vacancies in food and accommodation have fallen significantly since 2022, they are only back to where they started in early 2020.

Unfilled vacancies: Accommodation & food service activities, SA



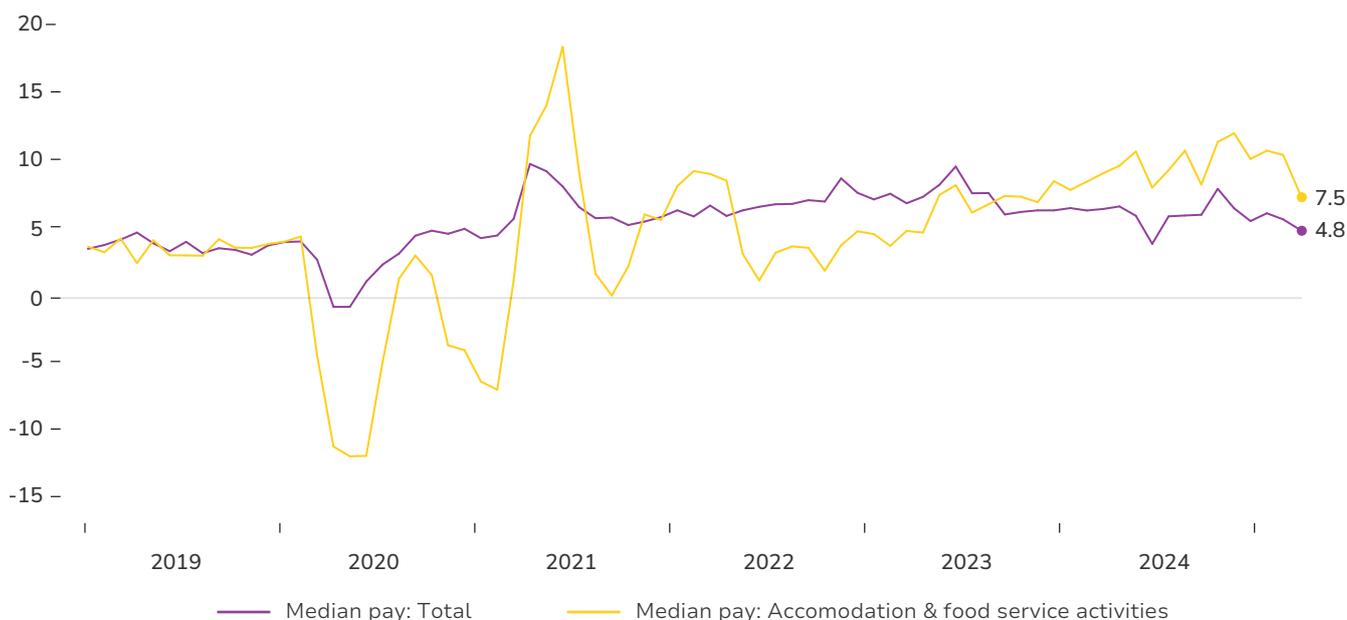
Wages continue to rise at a rapid pace, especially for blue-collar workers

Even though there are signs of a slowdown, wage growth continues to be quite elevated in the UK. Even as **inflation is about 2.5%, wage growth remains somewhere between 5% and 6%**, depending on the precise metric you look at.

The successive large **increases in the national minimum wage have increased salaries for low-wage workers by almost 75% since 2017** while wages in the middle of the income distribution have gone up far less. Employers are therefore facing significant cost pressures due to rapidly rising salaries at the lower end, which is predominantly affecting sectors like hospitality and food services, for example.

Besides the minimum wage hike, the Autumn Budget also made significant changes to the employer's national insurance (NI) contribution, **which increased from 13.8% to 15% on April 1st**. Meanwhile, the **threshold at which employers start paying NI was lowered to £5,000 from £9,100**. Not only does this significantly increase the cost of new hires, but it also raises the cost of current staff quite dramatically.

Nominal wage growth: Accommodation & food services vs. total



Source: ONS via Macrobond created on 24/4/2025

What's the outlook?

While the international outlook remains quite challenging this year, there are reasons to be hopeful that the economy will continue to grow. Being more service-oriented, the UK economy is slightly more immune from the trade war.

More rate cuts from the Bank of England will support economic growth and job creation. Nevertheless, the outlook in the hospitality industry will remain somewhat challenging in the short-run. Many businesses in the sector

are operating with very low profit margins as it is. Both the large increase in the minimum wage, together with the increase in the employer's national insurance contribution, have led to a massive rise in staffing costs. This has produced a substantial slowdown in hiring for now. While we expect labour demand to increase again, it might only be in the latter half of the year.

Hospitality hiring trends: Q1 2025

This section uncovers the key trends shaping hospitality hiring in Q1 2025, using Caterer.com and market-wide data to track shifts in job postings, candidate behaviour, pay benchmarks and sector-specific activity.

Market overview

Hospitality jobs postings UK - Q1 2025



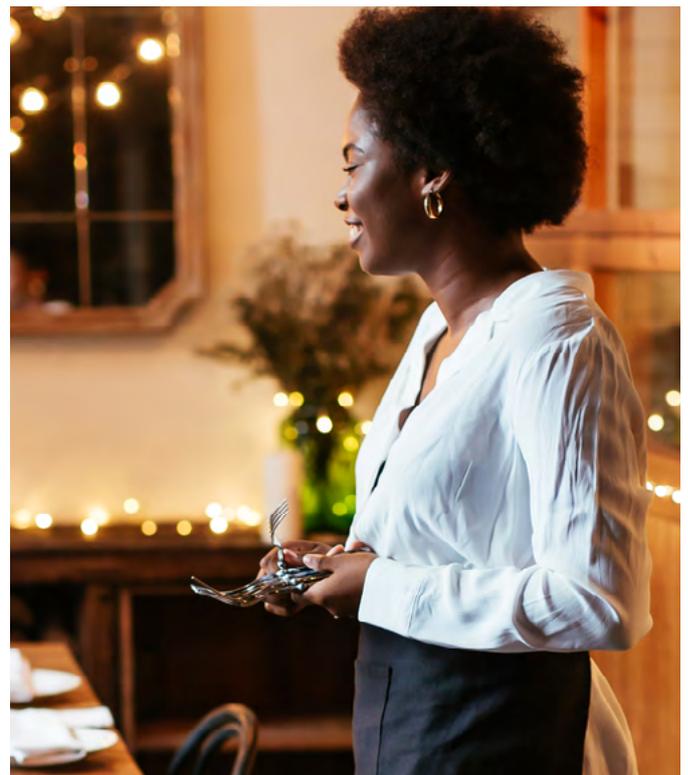
Following a busy end to 2024, hospitality hiring steadied in Q1 2025.

But while job volumes dipped slightly between January and March, **hospitality's share of the wider jobs market continued to climb from 8.7% in January to 10.15% in March.** That's a clear sign of the sector's resilience, especially compared to Q1 2024, **when it made up just 7.2% of vacancies in January.**

For employers, it means competition for talent remains high. With seasonal peaks on the horizon, now is the time to sharpen your offer and stand out with compelling pay, benefits and long-term development opportunities.

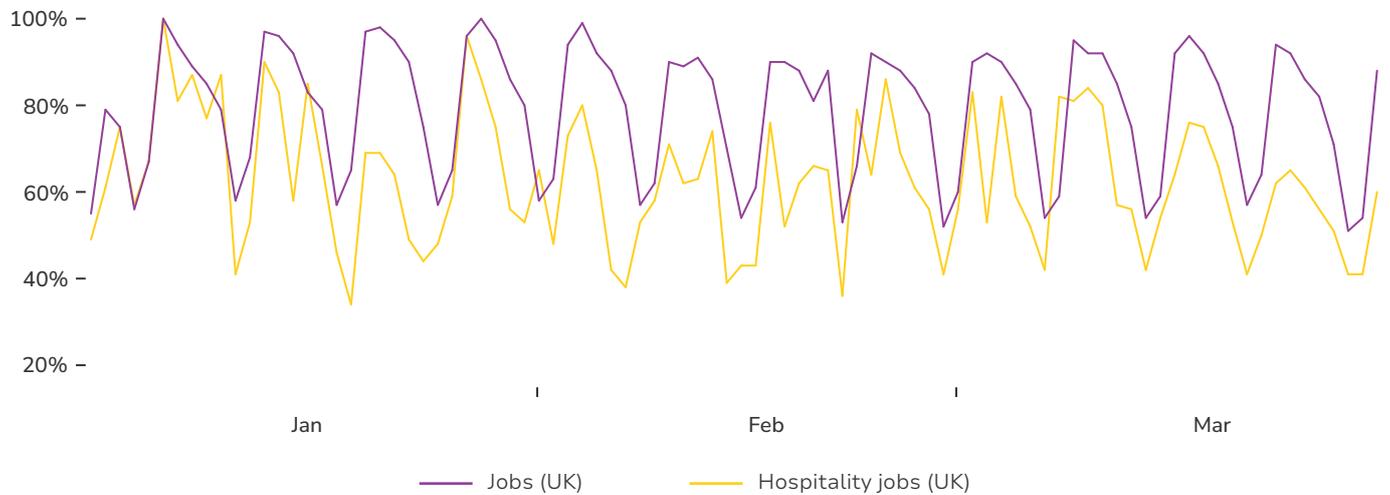
10%

of all UK job postings in March 2025 were in hospitality roles



Google search trends

Google searches: "Hospitality jobs" vs. "Jobs" Q1 2025*

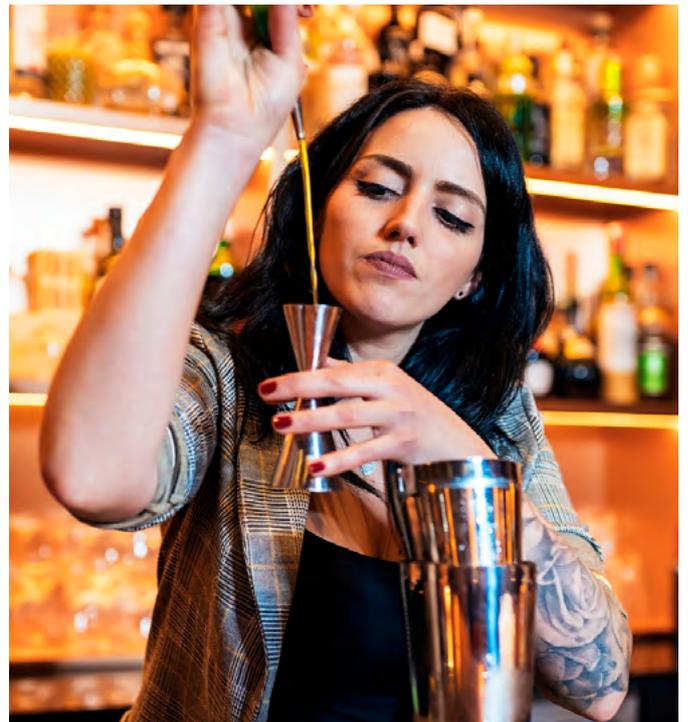


Commentary:

General job searches and those within hospitality roles remained steady throughout Q1 2025. While there were no dramatic shifts, **the highest levels of interest were recorded in early January**- particularly on 6 January, likely driven by New Year momentum.

Mondays consistently saw the highest search volumes, with interest tailing off as the week progressed. For employers, this pattern reinforces the importance of timing- **posting or boosting job ads earlier in the week could help you get in front of more active candidates.**

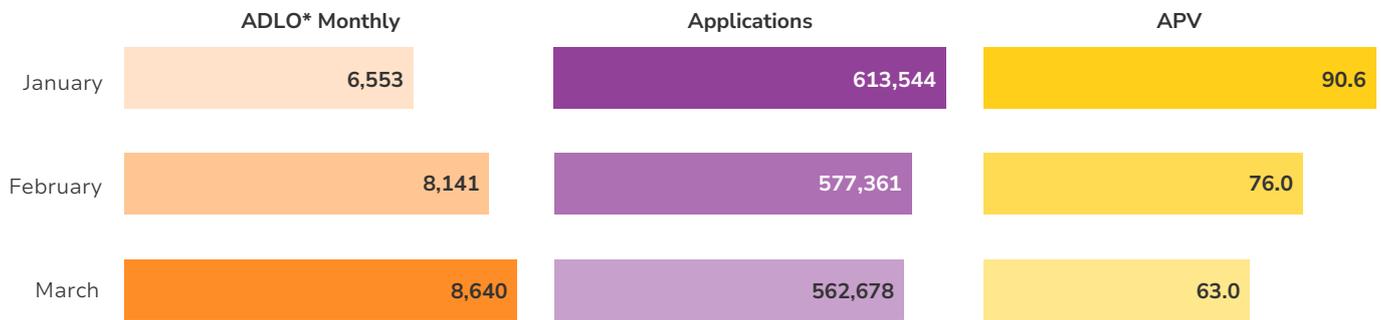
With interest holding strong and candidates still searching, now's a great time to ensure your roles are reaching the right audience. Our JobTech tools make it easy to stay front of mind with features like job alerts, smart targeting, and conversational AI.



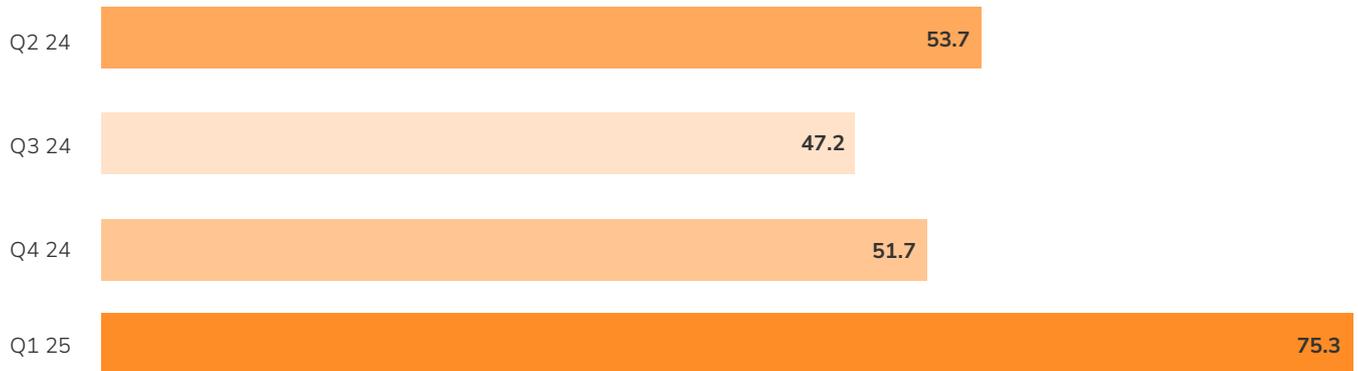
* As of 4.04.2025

Caterer.com postings and applications

ADLO, applications and APV on Caterer.com - Q1 2025



Average Quarterly APV**



Commentary:

In Q1 2025, the average number of applications per vacancy (APV) reached its highest level in over a year. **The average APV for the quarter stood at 75.3**, which was a significant jump from almost 51.7 in Q4 and well above the Q3 2024 figure of 47.2.

While the number of visible vacancies (ADLO) increased month-on-month, particularly from January to March, the real story lies in the sheer volume of candidate engagement. **The platform saw an**

average of 584,528 applications per month in Q1-15% more than in Q4, and 11% more than in Q3.

This sharp rise in APV signals a highly active candidate pool and strong intent to move, especially at the start of the year. For employers, it's a valuable window of opportunity to connect with motivated talent. But with high interest comes higher competition, making it all the more important to stand out with compelling job ads, competitive packages, and a strong employer brand.

*ADLO refers to the average number of listings candidates see on our platform at any given point in that month.

** All quarterly figures have been deduped.

Top roles on Caterer.com Q1 2025

Job Title	ADLO	APV	Listing Views	Applications
Waiter/Waitress	503	252.0	294,010	126,738
Kitchen Porter	327	257.2	221,299	84,090
Chef de Partie	1,909	28.3	195,981	54,079
Catering Assistant	882	44.2	153,818	38,968
Bartender	356	103.8	101,293	36,970
Head Chef	1,430	20.7	172,864	29,531
Sous Chef	1,388	18.3	115,876	25,443
Commis Chef	352	46.6	52,459	16,418
Chef	939	16.9	86,703	15,908
Restaurant Manager	323	45.5	52,639	14,702
Assistant Restaurant Manager	192	61.1	36,446	11,722
Junior Sous Chef	349	26.0	39,332	9,077
Chef Manager	566	11.1	42,972	6,286
Senior Sous Chef	217	23.7	22,811	5,148

Commentary:

The early part of the year saw exceptionally high candidate interest in several front and back-of-house roles, with a clear pattern emerging: **entry-level positions are generating the most interest.**

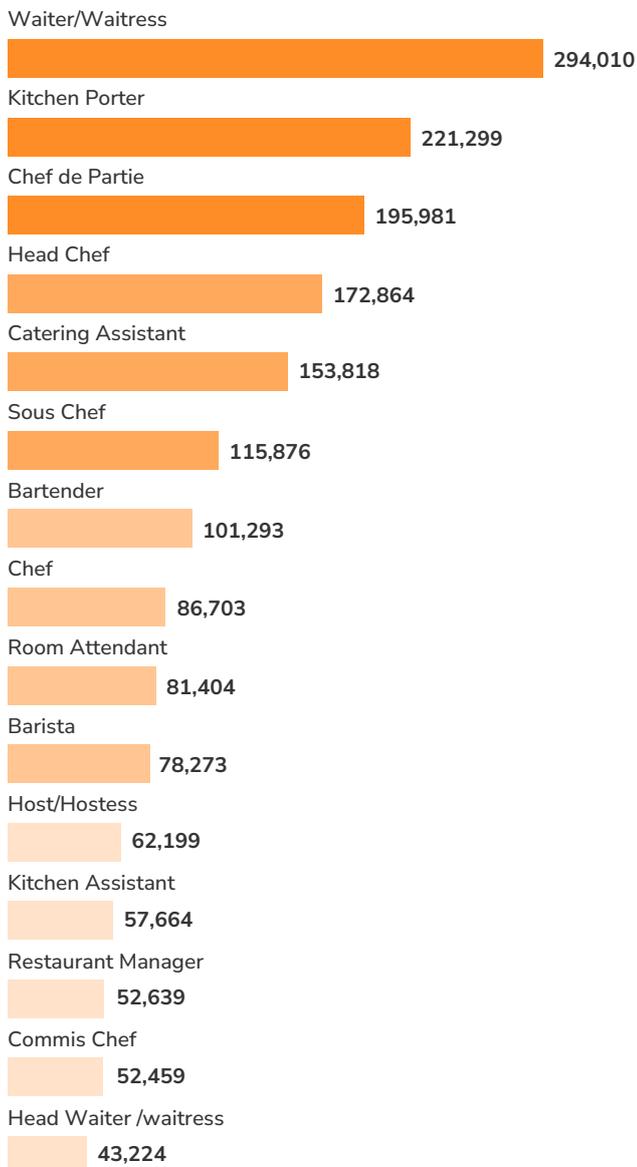
In Q1, Waiter/Waitress and Kitchen Porter roles dominated the charts with **more than 250 applications per vacancy each, far surpassing the Caterer.com average of 75.3 APV.** These roles also racked up hundreds of thousands of listing views, highlighting their appeal to a wide pool of candidates.

Skilled chef roles like Sous Chef, Head Chef, and Commis Chef all saw tens of thousands of applications too, suggesting that candidate appetite is not just strong at entry-level, but also among experienced hospitality professionals looking for their next move.

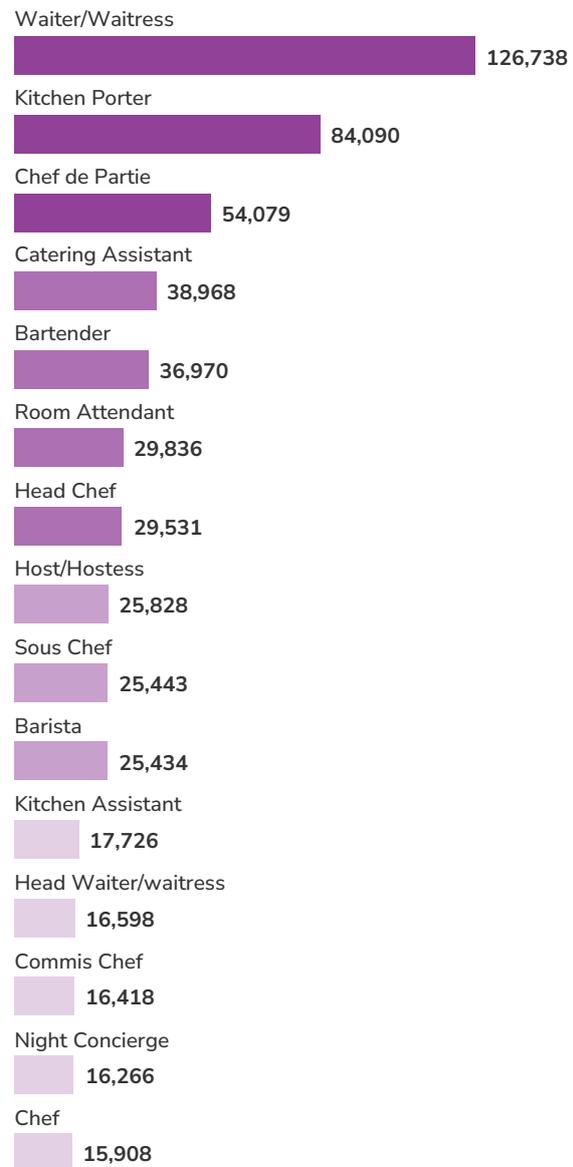
For employers, this presents a golden opportunity to connect with a large and active talent pool across multiple seniority levels. Whether you're hiring for seasonal support or seeking experienced staff, the market is primed for building a strong team.

Most viewed and applied to roles on Caterer.com

Most viewed Q1



Most applied Q1



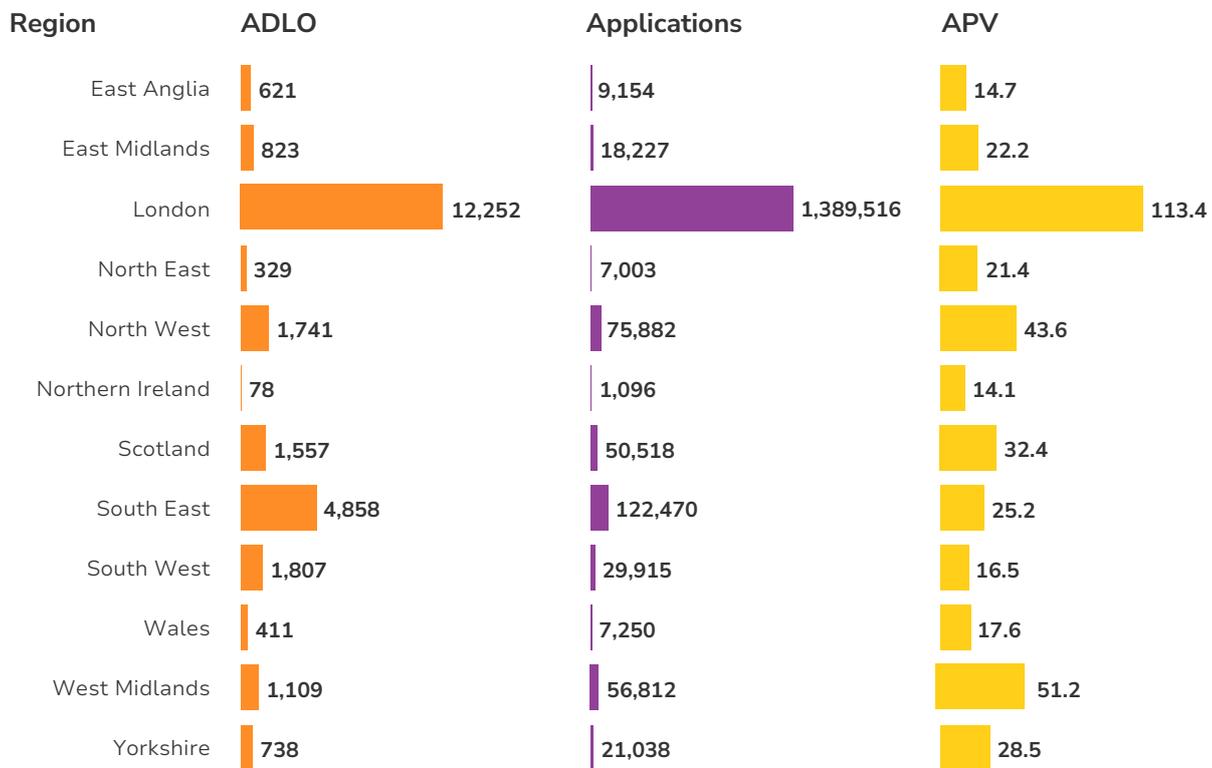
Commentary:

As we've touched upon, In Q1 2025, Waiter/Waitress roles once again topped the charts for both views and applications. While this continues a trend we've seen over several quarters, what's especially striking is the **71% jump in applications for these roles compared to Q3 2024.**

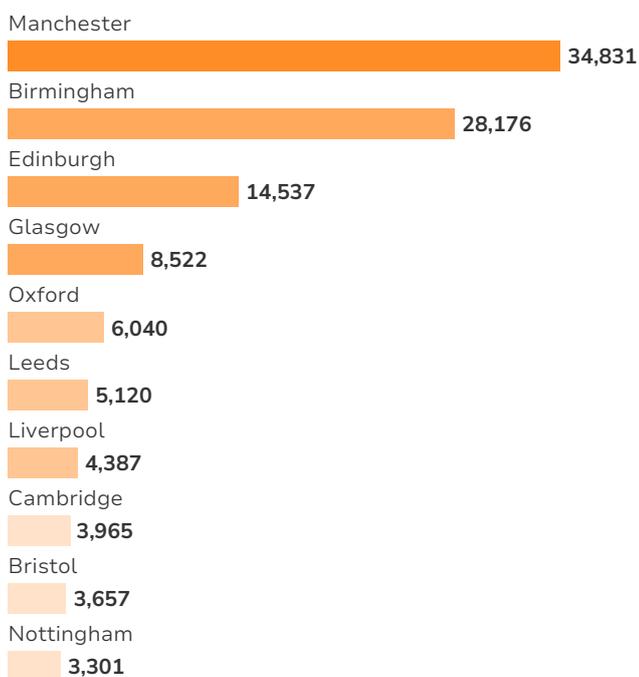
Meanwhile, Kitchen Porter, Catering Assistant, and Bartender roles continue to attract high volumes of interest. These figures highlight not just the accessibility of these jobs, but the **growing number of people actively considering hospitality as a long-term career.**

Spotlight on location

Job postings, applications and APV by region on Caterer.com in Q1 2025



Top 10 locations outside of London: applications in Q1 2025



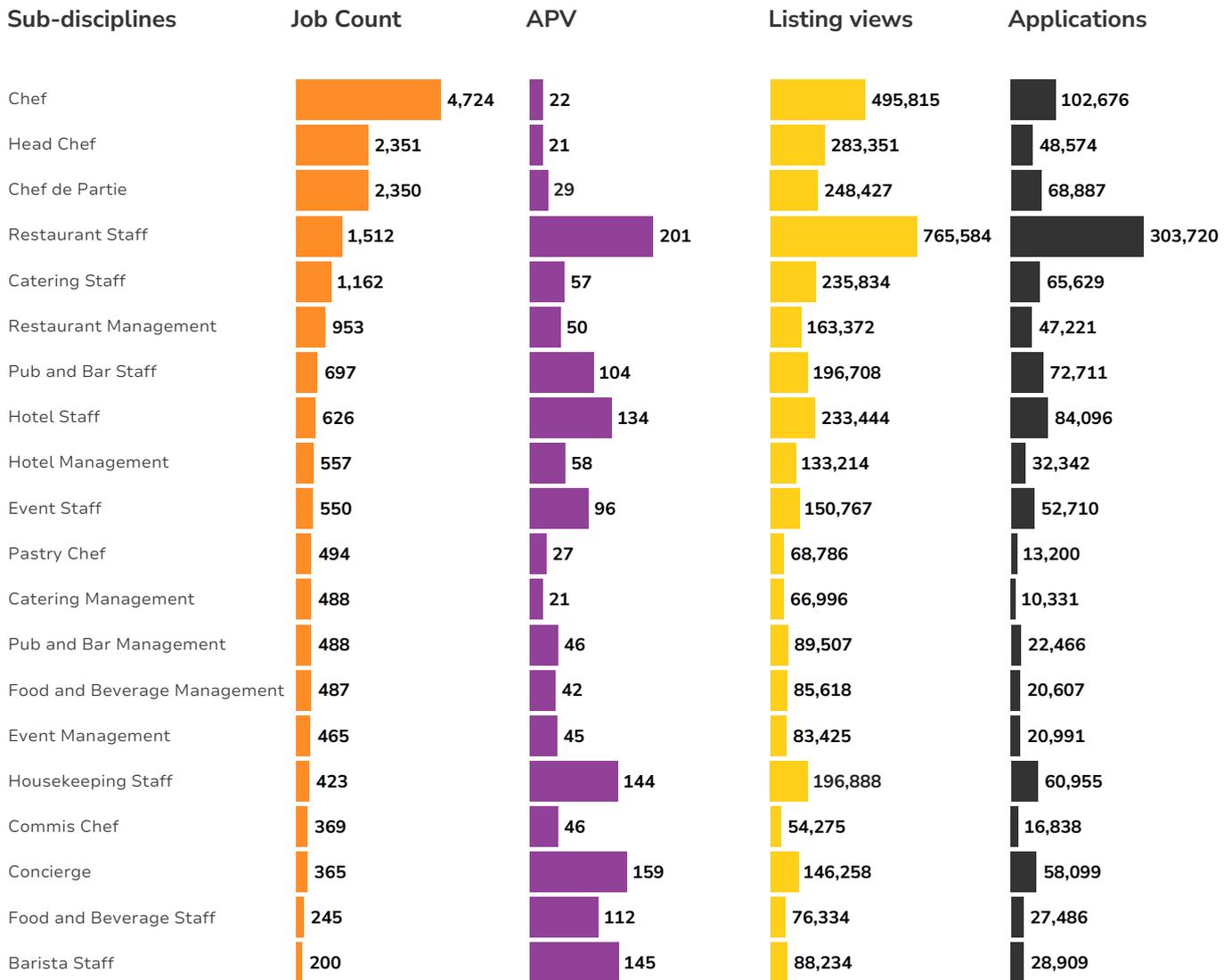
Commentary:

Unsurprisingly, London led the way again in Q1 2025, **with over 12,000 roles advertised (ADLO) and nearly 1.4 million applications resulting in an impressive APV of 113.** That's more than double the APV of any other region.

Elsewhere in the UK, Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh attracted the most applications outside of the capital, with **Manchester seeing nearly 35,000 applications.**

But it's not just about volume. Regions like the West Midlands (APV 51.2), North West (43.6), and Scotland (32.4) are showing strong applicant interest, suggesting employers here may find it slightly easier to fill roles compared to areas like the South West (16.5) or East Anglia (14.7). With Caterer.com research finding **that 30% of UK workers are open to relocating for the right opportunity**, businesses should highlight their location and offering to widen the talent pool, especially in regions with high competition.

Spotlight on sub-disciplines



Commentary:

In Q1, **Restaurant Staff** attracted the highest number of applications (over 300,000), followed by **Hotel Staff (84,096)** and **Pub and Bar Staff (72,711)**. Kitchen-based roles also remained popular, with Chef, Head Chef, and Chef de Partie listings collectively receiving more than 220,000 applications

As employers prepare for the busy months ahead, focusing on these high-traction areas could be key to building stronger, more resilient hospitality teams.

Top 20 brands advertising the most hospitality vacancies in Q1*

Compass Group	Sodexo	Barchester Healthcare	Premier Inn	
	3,900	3,600	3,300	
10,500	Lounge Café Bars	NHS Jobs	inploi	Loungers Plc
	3,000	3,000	2,800	2,400
Mitchells & Butlers PLC	Whitbread PLC	Baxterstorey	Beefeater	Gail's Bakery
	1,700	1,300		
8,000	One Retail	Haven Holidays	1,200	1,200
	1,600	1,300		
Costa Coffee	Burger King	Stonegate Group	Prezzo	
	1,500	1,200	1,100	
4,300			Travelodge Hotels	
			1,100	

Commentary:

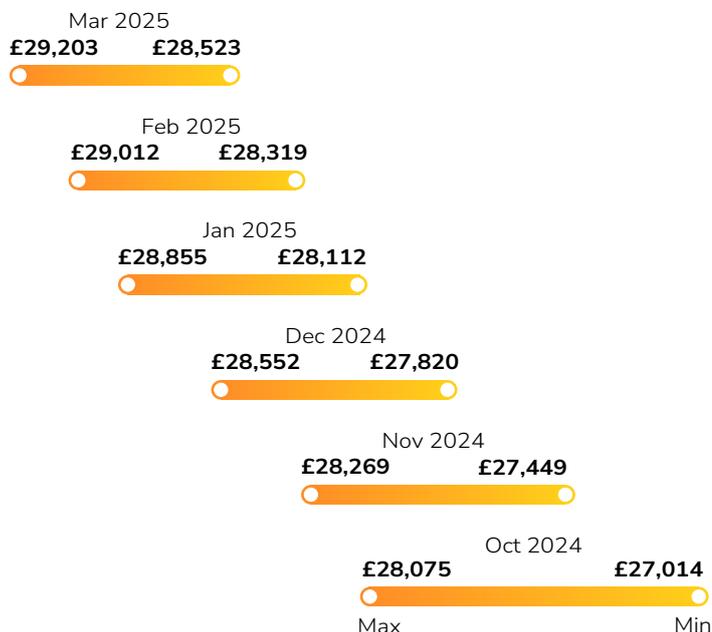
Compass Group advertised the most in Q1 2025, with over 10,500 vacancies, closely followed by Mitchells & Butlers. The list also reflects the sector's diversity, with brands like Barchester Healthcare, Premier Inn, and NHS Jobs among the top advertisers.

We also saw strong activity from well-known high street names such as Loungers, Burger King, and Gail's Bakery, showing continued demand for talent across casual dining and grab-and-go venues.

*Some of these companies may not include every sub-brand advertising.

Hospitality salary trends over the last 6 months

Average yearly minimum and maximum salary in Hospitality



Commentary:

Between October and March, hospitality has witnessed considerable salary growth. On average, **the minimum salaries on offer have risen by 6%, with the maximum increasing by 4%**. To put this into context, **this equates to around £1,300 more for each employee across the industry.**

For more detailed salary benchmarking, check out the 2025 Hospitality Salary Trends Report:

caterer.com/recruiters/hospitality-salary-trends



Salary benchmarking for the **most posted roles** on Caterer.com in Q1 2025

Average hourly salary



Commentary:

Offering a competitive salary and benefits package remains one of the most effective ways to attract and retain top talent. Highlighting this clearly in your job adverts can help you stand out from the crowd and drive more high-quality applications.

In the last 6 months, we've seen noticeable salary increases across several core hospitality roles.

Since Q3 2024, Waiting Staff have seen the biggest jump, with average hourly earnings rising by almost 89p. Kitchen Porters and Head Chefs have also seen significant increases-both up by 70p an hour-while bartender pay has climbed by 45p an hour.

* Some roles may appear to be under the minimum wage due to part time hours and hiring people under the age of 21

Salary by top 20 sub-disciplines

Development Chef	Sommelier	Leisure and Spa Management	Pub and Bar Management	Pastry Chef
£48,312				
Cruise Ship Management	£36,091	£34,730	£33,541	£33,404
	Restaurant Management	Chef Management	Catering Management	Food and Beverage Management
£42,500				
Head Chef	£33,331	£33,176	£33,017	£32,054
£39,951	Catering	Chef de Partie		Training
	£31,990			
Hotel Management	Chef	£29,774	£29,295	
	£29,950			
£37,077				
Event Management	Housekeeping Management	Leisure and Spa Staff	Event Staff	
	£29,892	£27,937	£27,410	
£36,688				

Commentary:

Salaries vary widely across the industry, with Development Chefs, Cruise Ship Manager, and Head Chefs commanding the highest average pay. Leadership and niche roles generally offer the most competitive salaries, while entry-level and support

roles sit lower on the scale-highlighting clear progression opportunities across the sector. For more detailed salary benchmarking, check out the 2025 Hospitality Salary Trends Report: caterer.com/recruiters/hospitality-salary-trends

Salary benchmarking by location - Q1 2025

When it comes to attracting top talent, location-specific salary insights can play a key role in shaping your offer. Below, we've highlighted salary benchmarks for key roles across the UK, giving you a clear idea of the competitive landscape in different regions.

Chef

Sunderland £36,257	Stoke-on-Trent £31,245	Glasgow £28,134	Bournemouth £23,584
Eastbourne £34,736	London £29,832	Southampton £27,428	Newbury £22,360
	Manchester £28,563	Portsmouth £24,968	

Waiting staff

Gould's Green £36,824	City of London £29,043	Belfast £24,273	Glasgow £23,219
Oxford £30,062	Bristol £26,870	Newcastle upon Tyne £24,106	Lancaster £16,000
	Birmingham £25,858	Cambridge £23,992	

Restaurant Manager

Ascot £47,857	Hounslow £43,571	Newcastle upon Tyne £39,000	City of Edinburgh £36,778
City of London £43,900	Stamford £42,500	Watford £38,000	Birmingham £35,417
	Whitehaven £39,000		Manchester £33,196

If you'd like more insight into specific cities, regions, or sub-disciplines, [please get in touch](#).

Top keywords

1.8 million

searches made on Caterer.com
in Q1 2025



Commentary:

In Q1 2025, search activity on Caterer.com remained strong, with nearly 1.8 million total searches—averaging over 590,000 per month. January led the charge, up 15% compared to the average month in Q4 2024, likely driven by people seeking fresh starts and new opportunities for the year ahead.

'Chef' continues to dominate as the most searched term by some distance, followed by 'Head Chef,' 'Hotel,' and 'General Manager.' Notably, interest in these search terms has surged in recent months. Compared to Q3 2024, there have been **22%** more searches for 'Chef', 35% more searches for 'Head Chef', **17%** more searches for 'Hotel', and a 13% increase in searches for 'General Manager' positions.

Interest in both kitchen and front-of-house roles remains high, with jobseekers also actively exploring opportunities requiring little or no experience.

Caterer.com industry insights

We conducted research across 1,000 UK HR decision makers including over 100 in hospitality to gain insights into their experiences, challenges and viewpoints. Find out what they had to say and how hospitality stacks up against other industries.

25%

of hospitality employers increased recruitment in Q1

35%

of hospitality employers expect to increase recruitment in Q2 (vs 24% across all industries)

3.5 weeks

is the average time to hire in hospitality (vs 4.5 weeks across all industries)

Employer sentiment and workforce trends

Totaljobs' latest Hiring Trends Index* revealed that hospitality employers saw a relatively stable start to 2025. **Just 19% reported any kind of restructure in Q1, compared to 25% across all industries**, suggesting that hospitality is more stable than other sectors in the current economic climate.

Better yet, **a quarter of hospitality businesses increased hiring in Q1, and 21% brought on more temporary staff or contractors** to meet demand.

Speed is another positive sign. **Over 4 in 10 (42%) hospitality employers made hires within just three weeks**. That's well ahead of the all-industry average of 4.6 weeks, with hospitality averaging just 3.5 weeks overall.

That said, hiring isn't without its challenges. With APV on the rise, the volume of applications can be overwhelming, with **83% of hospitality employers citing poor-quality applications as a top concern**. With more businesses hiring and competition for talent heating up, finding the right candidates quickly is more important than ever.

This is especially crucial when you consider the cost of getting it wrong. Onboarding and training account for the highest share of recruitment costs in hospitality (24% vs 20% across all industries). But **advertising**

and sourcing costs are also significantly higher-23% in hospitality, compared to just 14% overall. These figures reflect the reality of a high-turnover sector, but they also highlight the value of getting your recruitment right from the start.

Salary-related churn appears to be easing, with just 11% citing it as a key factor-slightly below the average across other industries (13%). Meanwhile, skills gaps (62%), budget constraints (51%) and growing demand for flexibility (50%) continue to shape hiring decisions.

Looking ahead, confidence is high. **Over half of hospitality employers (57%) feel optimistic about hiring in Q2**-and 35% expect to increase recruitment, outpacing the 24% average across all industries.

If you're planning to grow your team this summer, now's the time to act. With competition rising and recruitment costs adding up, a clear, proactive strategy will help you find the right candidates faster-and keep them. Caterer.com can help you cut through the noise, reach the right people, and build a team that lasts.

*Quarterly hiring trends based on insights from 1,000 HR leaders (including over 100 HR leaders in Hospitality) surveyed between 17th and 25th of March 2025



Exclusive insights from Be Inclusive Hospitality on how to build an inclusive hospitality workforce

We are proud to have strong and meaningful partnerships with industry bodies and organisations. These partnerships go far beyond paying a fee and displaying a logo.

We actively work with them on a wide range of initiatives that seek to elevate the sector as a great place to work, support hospitality people and attract the right candidates to jobs.

Caterer.com catches up with **Lorraine Copes**, the founder of **Be Inclusive Hospitality**, a not-for-profit organisation providing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion consultancy to hospitality operators, and delivering professional development programmes for ethnically diverse talent in hospitality.



Exclusive insights

Lorraine Copes
Founder of
Be Inclusive Hospitality

How can businesses build a **more inclusive** hospitality workforce?

Building an inclusive hospitality workforce requires consistent and deliberate action. Inclusion is not a one-off initiative or exercise - it is a culture rooted in behaviours, systems, and leadership. To embed inclusion, leaders must first understand their workforce, which is possible through open dialogue, feedback, and data collection.

This understanding is deepened by gathering both demographic and experiential data. This includes not only protected characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and disability status, but also insights into learning styles, caregiving responsibilities, religious observances, and general sentiments around diversity, inclusion and belonging.

It is crucial to communicate transparently how this data will be used before collecting it. Trust is built when employees understand that their input will help shape

improvements in workplace culture and conditions. It is not uncommon for initial participation rates to be low, but these typically increase when staff see their feedback result in tangible action.

Once this information is collected, businesses can begin to implement inclusive practices. This may include offering food options that cater to a wide range of dietary needs, accommodating religious observances such as Ramadan or Diwali, and providing uniforms and equipment that respect cultural and personal identity - such as appropriate head coverings for staff with locs or afro-textured hair.

Support for neurodiverse employees may involve adapting training materials or workspaces, while others may benefit from facilities such as gender-neutral toilets or private spaces for expressing milk. These adjustments signal that the business not only acknowledges but embraces the diverse needs of its workforce.

What are the benefits for businesses of enabling new, diverse talent pipelines into their workforce?

Creating diverse talent pipelines offers numerous advantages for hospitality businesses. A team that reflects its local community and customer base leads to improved customer satisfaction and stronger brand loyalty. The varied lived experiences within a diverse workforce foster creativity, innovation, and effective problem-solving - all essential in a dynamic, people-centric industry.

Diverse recruitment also expands access to talent and enhances employer branding. Organisations recognised for their commitment to inclusion are more likely to attract and retain high-performing staff. **Employees are more likely to remain with employers who offer fair access to development and progression.** In contrast, exclusion often leads to high turnover and low retention.



How do you ensure that diverse talent feels included and valued once hired, particularly in multicultural and multi-ethnic environments?

The principles and practices used to build an inclusive workforce benefit everyone - not just a select few groups. Using engagement data and carrying out high-quality analysis directly influences how well you can create an environment where inclusion and belonging are genuinely experienced.

In hospitality, front-line teams are often visibly diverse, yet this representation may not extend into leadership or decision-making roles. **Inclusive strategies must begin with listening - understanding the distinct needs of your workforce and actively addressing them.** Once these needs are clear, it's essential to ensure fair access to opportunities. Career progression pathways should be transparent and inclusive, with tailored development programmes to support underrepresented groups. True inclusion requires representation at every level of the organisation.

To support this, **leaders and managers must receive appropriate training to equip them to lead diverse teams respectfully and fairly.** Building a culture of openness, psychological safety, and regular feedback allows employees to express concerns and ideas without fear. It's also important to recognise that one-off training sessions are insufficient. **Inclusion training should be seen as essential and delivered regularly - at least once a year.**

Organisations should also continuously **evaluate the effectiveness of their inclusion strategies through ongoing data collection and analysis.** This process helps to identify gaps, celebrate progress, and refine practices that foster equity and belonging.

Can you share actionable steps organisations can take today to enhance DE&I in their recruitment process?

- Review job descriptions to ensure language is inclusive and jargon-free. Clearly distinguish between essential and desirable criteria to avoid excluding capable candidates.
- Include a short statement in job adverts affirming your organisation's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Broaden recruitment outreach by advertising roles through diverse platforms, community groups, and charities, increasing access for underrepresented candidates.
- Make application processes accessible - use plain language, compatible formats for assistive technologies, and alternative ways to apply where needed.
- Diversify interview panels to bring a range of perspectives to candidate evaluations.
- Provide recruitment and selection training to hiring managers and HR teams. Bias can only be addressed when those involved are aware and equipped to challenge it.
- Gather feedback from candidates, including those not selected, to improve recruitment processes.
- Ensure your workplace culture is genuinely inclusive before seeking to diversify your workforce.

Can you share examples of how hospitality businesses are addressing DE&I in recruitment?

- Partnering with charities and community groups supporting underrepresented communities, such as women, disabled people, neurodiverse individuals, and ethnic minorities.
- Encouraging employee referrals once an inclusive culture is in place - this builds trust and helps attract talent that may otherwise be overlooked.
- Using social media to spotlight staff stories and celebrate cultural events. When done authentically, this offers potential candidates a window into the business's values.
- Conducting internal pay audits and reviewing performance data to uncover inequities and make necessary adjustments.
- Setting clear success metrics - such as diversity at longlisting and shortlisting stages - to measure and manage progress.

Inclusion should be woven into every stage of the employee lifecycle. When businesses commit to long-term, systemic change, the benefits extend beyond underrepresented talent to the overall health, performance, and sustainability of the organisation.



Caterer.com – Exclusive insights with hospitality employers

At Caterer.com, we're proud to be at the heart of the hospitality community. Through our long-standing relationships with employers, candidates and sector partners, we're able to bring together industry voices to share real-life insights, challenges and solutions. Supporting the sector and giving people a platform to learn from one another is what we're all about.

In our **"Caterer.com Catch Up"** series, we speak directly with hospitality employers to hear how they're tackling key issues – from attracting and retaining talent to building benefits packages and shaping career development.





Case study

Cris Leone

Group Head of Talent Acquisition for Harts Group

What are your current **recruitment challenges** and how have you overcome them?

Over the past three years, **applications have grown by 414%**, which is incredible but also a challenge for our small team of three. Last year, **we received over 37,000 applications, and we still aim to respond to each one within three days.**

To manage this, we've strengthened our employer brand, introduced screening tools to handle volume, and worked to keep the process thoughtful and human, even at scale.

For me, it's all about making sure every candidate feels seen.

What do you value most in a recruiting partner and **how does Caterer.com help you in attracting talent?**

What I value most is transparency and peace of mind. With **Caterer.com**, we have that working relationship. They know what I need and what we're looking for.

But more than that, I think **Caterer.com** is a great portal for hospitality talent. In fact, **62% of all our hires last year came from searching within the Caterer.com CV Database.** It's a goldmine for talent.

How have you managed to **increase candidate attraction** by so much?

A lot of our work has been focused on strengthening our employer brand-**making sure job adverts are transparent and clear, particularly when it comes to pay.** We've also refined where we advertise, using screening questions to filter applications effectively.

But perhaps the biggest thing is how we communicate with candidates. Regular salary benchmarking helps us ensure we offer competitive, fair pay, and we offer a personalised, collaborative hiring process that candidates really appreciate. A lot of applicants aren't always sure what they're looking for, so we make time to guide them and help them find the right fit. That honest conversation is often the thing that sets us apart.

That's great to hear. Moving on, we'd love to know what you have put in place to **support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?**

Earlier this year, we worked with a company called Be the Riot, and they have impactful DE&I workshops that really helped us take meaningful steps towards inclusive hiring.

Since then, **we've implemented a new ATS that allows us to hide names, gender, race and age at the screening stage.** It's a small but powerful step that removes unconscious bias and helps us focus purely on skills, experience and personality.

What should the industry address to attract more talent?

People want stability, they want to feel valued, and they want opportunities to grow. And it's on us as an industry to provide that.

We all need to be transparent about pay, hours and career paths and give people what they need to make that decision.

Caterer's research has found that **even though hospitality is one of the lowest paid industries, the level of satisfaction in term of salary or in term of benefits is very similar to other sectors that have higher packages.**

So, it's not just about what people are getting paid. They need to feel appreciated. Hospitality has this naturally welcoming, people-first culture. We can make up for those differences by promoting the benefits of that culture.

Great, and with pay in mind, what have you done to lessen the impact of the rising cost of living on your employees?

I run a head of talent networking group where I regularly benchmark what's going on. That includes salary, benefits, work-life balance, average hours-everything.

I love collecting data and this gives my directors and operations team a real time insight into what the market is saying. It's about making sure that people feel valued and financially secure, and we've been quite proactive in raising wages because of that.

To me, it's incredible to see **kitchen porters now earning what chefs did** only a few years ago. It really raises the bar for the whole industry and helps to reinforce the view of hospitality as a career-a cause we're passionate about.



What are your top tips for recruitment and retention for the remainder of 2025?

#1 - Treat your team like your guests

Don't forget to bridge the gap between guest experience and candidate experience. When people feel welcomed and looked after from the start, they're far more likely to want to stay.

Ensure you're providing a welcoming, **attentive experience for both. It will help build a team that loves coming to work.**

#2 -Show people a future

Let your team members see a clear future within your company. A sense of progression and long-term potential is critical for both recruitment and retention. **Make sure career paths are clearly outlined, talked about, and realised by your star performers.**

#3 - Create an environment where people feel valued

Whether it's through **recognition, balance, or thoughtful benefits-people stay where they feel appreciated.**

One thing that's been hugely popular with our team is 50% off meals for themselves and three friends. It's wonderful to see our team enjoy great meals with their loved ones, and it's something they appreciate.



Case study

Timothy R. Andrews

Head of Talent for Jumeirah Carlton Tower and Jumeirah Lowndes

You've made big strides in **reducing turnover**. What's been key to that progress?

We've more than halved our turnover in less than a year, which we're really proud of. The key has been shifting our focus from simply hiring to genuinely developing people.

There are, of course, recruitment challenges like any hotel. One way to tackle it is by focusing on development and retention.

So, we're building an academy-style approach, where **entry-level chefs are supported through structured development and progression**. It's a three-to five-year vision, and we're already seeing early signs of impact.

Can you share a bit more about how you're **supporting long-term development**?

Everyone here has access to some kind of training-but **we've gone beyond the standard e-learning modules**. We bring in third-party trainers, encourage off-site learning, and create real pathways for growth. We want them to come back into the business having really learnt something new.

Our ambition is for today's entry-level talent to become tomorrow's supervisors, team leaders, even hotel managers. That's not just a nice soundbite-it's shaping our strategy.

Have you **changed your approach to talent attraction** in the past year?

Definitely. When I joined, attraction was mostly reactive: putting up job ads and waiting. Now, we're being much more proactive. We've built links with schools, culinary colleges, job centres, and organisations like **Only A Pavement Away**. **We're actively reaching out to people who have the passion and mindset for hospitality**-even if they don't have traditional experience.



Does the **Jumeirah brand** help in that outreach?

It absolutely helps. Having a strong luxury brand is a huge asset, but we also recognised we weren't doing enough to showcase what makes working here special. That's changing. **We're becoming more visible- especially on LinkedIn**-sharing our people stories and celebrating the work we do. The goal is to give people a real insight into the experience here, not just the job description.

What more can the industry do to **attract talent** right now?

We need to get better at storytelling. As an industry, we often lead with the problems, but don't talk enough about the positives. Hospitality careers can take you all over the world.

Some of the most senior leaders in the sector started in roles like glass collecting or kitchen porter. Why aren't we highlighting that more? The career paths are there, and in many cases, the pay is competitive. But we're not telling those stories loudly enough.

You've mentioned **using social media in new ways.** Can you tell us more?

We're working on building a more diverse and authentic social media presence. We wish to showcase real people that work here and their journeys. **We're focusing on representing a wide range of our team,** not just the young or 'Instagram-friendly' faces. We want people to look at our posts and say, "I can see myself there."

How are you creating a **sense of community** within the team?

Building a strong internal culture is just as important as recruitment. **We've got 26 nationalities in Jumeirah Carlton Tower alone-over 100 across Jumeirah-** so creating a sense of belonging matters. We've set up things like a football team, religious celebrations, wellness days, ping pong tournaments-anything that helps people connect.

It's especially important for younger staff or those new to London. It can be a busy, lonely city, so the workplace has to offer more than just a job.

What are your **top tips** for recruitment and retention for the remainder of 2025?

#1 - Hire for cultural fit, not just experience

Employers should prioritise attitude, adaptability, and alignment with company values over direct experience. It's easier to train skills than it is to teach someone passion. Prioritising personality, communication, and alignment with your values leads to better long-term hires.

#2 - Create clear paths for development

The hospitality industry faces high employee turnover; reducing this should be a top priority. Investing in ongoing training and development helps people grow with your business and makes them more likely to stay. This means not just a linear path, but across the whole business, across departments, wherever their future lies.

#3 - Build a strong company culture

A sense of belonging matters. Focus on engagement, recognition, and mentorship to help your team feel valued and supported. That's how you build loyalty. This can be religious celebrations, rewards, sports and activities. Anything that gets the team together outside of their usual duties.



Case study

Loren Parsons

Cluster Talent Acquisition Manager for
The Lancaster Landmark Hotel Company

What are the **biggest recruitment challenges** in hospitality today?

Talent shortages remain a major issue and most five-star hotels in London are competing for the same people, which makes retention more important than ever.

We've worked hard to keep salaries and benefits competitive, and over the past year and a half we've heavily invested in training and development. When I joined, there wasn't a Learning and Development Manager, so we brought one in and completely revamped our programmes.

Flexibility is another challenge. Candidates are asking for it more and more-but you can't be a chef and cook from home. We're exploring ways to build flexibility into shift patterns and even looking at the potential for a four-day working week.

How are you **attracting more people** to the industry?

We've built stronger links with schools, colleges and universities-and work with charities like **Springboard and Adopt a School**. When I was younger, hospitality wasn't promoted as a career. We want to change that by showing students what's possible from an early stage.

So, we're also **partnering with the Educational Development Trust to invite local teachers into the hotel**. The goal is for them to understand what we look for and then reflect that in their course content-better preparing students for real roles in the industry.

What changes have you made to your **hiring process**?

We've simplified our job ads to make them clearer and easier to read on mobile, working with Caterer.com to optimise the format, shorten the copy, and improve engagement.

We've also **streamlined interviews, especially at entry level**. Before, there were multiple rounds with HR, heads of department and GMs-plus a trial shift. But by then, candidates often had other offers. Now, operational managers can interview directly, any day of the week, as long as they're on shift.

We've also launched **recruitment training for hiring managers**, covering everything from legal compliance to reducing bias and making a great impression as an employer.

How are you **improving Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I)**?

We've made our recruitment and onboarding processes more structured and inclusive. **Every CV is reviewed by a person, not just AI, and managers go through DE&I training to help minimise bias.**

We also partner with **Unity Works**, which supports people with learning disabilities, and **Clink**, which provides opportunities for ex-offenders. Internally, we've established several task forces, one of which is dedicated to DE&I and we've introduced cultural awareness training, inclusive grooming policies, and regular initiatives like monthly cultural lunch events led by different departments.

What benefits are **most valued** by employees?

Some of the most appreciated perks are the ones people outside hospitality often overlook-like free meals and on-site laundry for uniforms. We also offer season ticket loans and cycle-to-work schemes to help with commuting costs.

Our VIP Perks platform is popular too. It offers discounts, cashback, and wellbeing and financial advice. We also run a **Golden Ticket programme**, where after passing probation, **team members get a free stay in the hotel with dinner and breakfast included.** If they're later promoted, they get to experience the same at our sister property. Although this a benefit for team members to experience the service we provide from the perspective of our guests and gain a better understanding of our product, it is also a good learning opportunity by receiving feedback from our own team to further improve the experience we provide our guests.

What are your **top recruitment and retention tips** for 2025 and beyond?

#1 - Offer flexibility where you can

Whether it's four-hour shift contracts or varied schedules, we try to support working parents, students and different age groups. It's not always easy in hospitality-but it matters to people, and it makes a difference.

#2 - Shout about your employer brand

You might offer great training, culture or benefits-but if you're not showcasing it, people won't know. We've made our brand more visible, sharing our culture and what makes working here special. It helps with attraction-and with internal engagement too.

#3 - Be transparent about pay and expectations

We've moved away from phrases like "competitive salary." In my view, that just makes people assume it isn't. Now we clearly list base salaries and outline total packages, including service charge-so candidates know exactly what to expect



Top tips for hospitality hiring success

Embrace flexibility: it matters more than ever

Whether it's shorter shifts, or varied working patterns, flexibility is fast becoming non-negotiable for candidates. Offering options that work for parents, students or older workers can help you reach wider talent pools and boost retention.

Speed up and simplify your hiring process

In a fast-moving market, timing is everything. Streamline interview stages, make decisions quickly, and keep candidates informed. Businesses that move faster are less likely to lose top talent to competitors.

Let your culture speak for itself

Don't just talk about your culture: show it. Use social media, employee stories and job ads to share what life's like at your business. Wellbeing support, inclusivity and team recognition all help you stand out.

Invest in long-term talent, not just quick hires

With strong interest in entry-level roles, there's a huge opportunity to build your future workforce. Prioritise training, mentorship and internal mobility to help people grow with you.

Show the path, not just the role

A job ad is the start-but what comes next? Candidates want to see training, progression and future opportunities. Highlight how people can grow with you, and back it up with real examples.

Be upfront about pay and perks

Today's candidates expect clarity. That means avoiding vague phrases like "competitive salary" and being transparent about total packages, including tips and benefits. This builds trust and helps attract the right applicants from the start.

Post at peak times

Job searches spike early in the week-especially Mondays. Posting or boosting your ads then can help you get in front of more active candidates.

Think beyond the contract

Similarly, with more businesses bringing in temporary staff, it's vital to remember that seasonal or temporary roles aren't just short-term fixes. They're also a pipeline for permanent talent. Invest time in onboarding and development, even for short-term hires, and you might just discover your next rising star.

Caterer.com – the hospitality industry’s hiring partner

Transform your hospitality hiring

We are Caterer.com. We partner with you to deliver the hospitality talent your business needs to succeed. Our extensive network of industry partners ensures we spotlight your roles to relevant hospitality candidates. Helping you secure the people you need faster; we provide you with hiring insights, dedicated customer support and the latest tools throughout your recruitment journey.

For hospitality hiring that delivers, we are the name you can trust.

- Innovative JobTech to reach & engage the right candidates to your roles, **reducing cost of hiring.**
- Aggregator partners that drive **greater reach for your roles.**
- Build your talent pipeline by reaching a vast hospitality specific audience now. We partner with key industry organisations such as The Institute of Hospitality, Springboard, HR in Hospitality, HIT Scotland, Hospitality Titans, Catering Scotland, Choose Hospitality and we deliver our jobs feed directly into some of their sites, ensuring your roles are seen amongst their extensive hospitality audiences.
- Dedicated Account Management and Customer Success support.
- We actively partner with industry bodies, charities and organisations to promote the industry as a great place to work and champion the fantastic people within it.
- Gain access to additional relevant candidate audiences, at no extra cost. All jobs on Caterer.com also appear on our sister site Totaljobs, expanding your reach into new talent pools across other sectors.
- Employer brand insights & support to help you elevate your brand.
- Regular sector insights & guidance through the Caterer.com Leadership Collaborative, an open community that pulls on joint forces to provide peer-to-peer support, insight and learning to help leaders navigate through challenge and drive team growth and development and business success.
- Access the largest specialist hospitality talent pool. With a database of **over 4.8 million profiles, each quarter an average 172k active jobseekers make over 1.7 million applications on Caterer.com, with over 4 million site visits.**

Become an **employer of choice**

Nearly half of candidates (45%) say an unclear salary is a dealbreaker. Others drop out if there's no mention of flexible working (24%) or if the job description is too vague (23%)*. So, how can you use this insight to attract the right talent? It starts with the right job ads.

Stand out with stronger employer branding:

- **Promote your brand with Premium Job Ads.** Spotlight a fair salary, showcase your benefits, and bring your company culture to life. Premium Jobs give candidates a more compelling view of your business-and help you attract people who align with your values.
- **Drive more applications with targeted E-shots.** Send your job directly to engaged candidates via a dedicated e-shot. This targeted approach can deliver **at least 72% more applications** than a standard job ad.

Whether you're hiring one role or building a long-term pipeline, clear, compelling communication is key to becoming an employer of choice-and Caterer.com gives you the tools to do just that.



*Caterer.com research The Future of Hospitality Recruitment January 2025

Hiring solutions

Enhance your hiring campaigns with our portfolio of end-to-end recruitment solutions:

Equality Boost

A diverse and inclusive workforce is key to strong business performance. Engage the right people for your roles in a diverse talent pool, by widening your hiring reach and taking new approaches to candidate targeting. Equality Boost can help you:

- Deliver a tangible impact on your DE&I strategy
- Extend your candidate reach into new and diverse talent pools
- Broaden the range of skills you attract to your business

Programmatic

Find who you want, faster with programmatic targeting for a more efficient use of your high-volume hiring budget. Our sophisticated technology uses rule-based algorithms to distribute jobs to the best places throughout the entire web so you can pin-point the best candidates, quickly.

- Effortless integration with your ATS
- Only pay for the number of completed applications you receive
- Track performance in real-time and gain valuable insights to enable your campaign to be optimised quickly

Visibility Solutions

It's crucial you reach the talent you need ahead of the competition. Reach the right candidates first and build your team by targeting and attracting relevant hires. Our innovative Visibility Solutions can help you:

- Broaden the reach of your message
- Enhance your potential to grow applications
- Increase the relevancy of applicants

CV Database

Take control of your hiring and find the ideal person quickly by using our CV Database to search over 4.8 million profiles. Using our intuitive search and filters, you can easily find and contact the most relevant people for your jobs.

- Save your searches and receive an email as soon as matching candidates register or update their profiles
- Get ahead of the competition and be the first to find candidates who may not have applied to your jobs
- Receive relevant candidates directly to your inbox

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Get in touch to find out more