

# IT, TECHNICAL & DIGITAL WORKFORCE TRENDS AND SALARY SURVEY Q1 2025

BY **VIVO** TALENT SOLUTIONS



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## // FOREWORD

### Welcome to the 1st IT, Technical & Digital Workforce Trends and Salary Survey.

Over the last five years we have seen huge changes within Technology & Digital, with companies embarking on large transformations to capitalise upon the opportunities of new technologies, as well as safeguard against increased security risk.

Additionally, most companies have had to navigate both societal and legislative changes, such as:

- The rise of AI & automation
- Remote working
- Digital-first solutions & employee wellbeing initiatives
- Implementation of IR35
- Access to Global talent

As such, we feel it is a great time to dig into the data and look at how the Technology & Digital Workforce has evolved.

With new employment legislation coming into effect in April, it will be interesting to see how employers will adapt to these changes and hopefully we can provide unique insight to help employers engage, recruit and retain top talent.

**Richard Protherough**  
Vivo Talent Solutions CEO

## // BIOGRAPHY

Richard has over 27 years' experience in Recruitment, helping businesses attract, hire and retain the best technology and digital talent.

As one of the founders of Vivo Talent, Richard has helped develop innovative staffing models to offer new solutions to SME's, Scale-ups and Corporates.



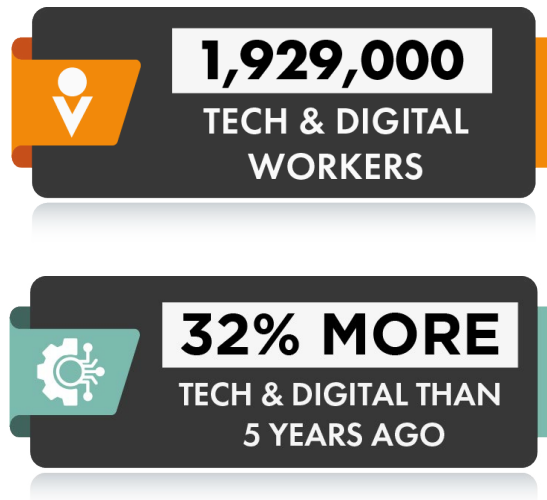
**Richard Protherough**  
Vivo Talent Solutions CEO



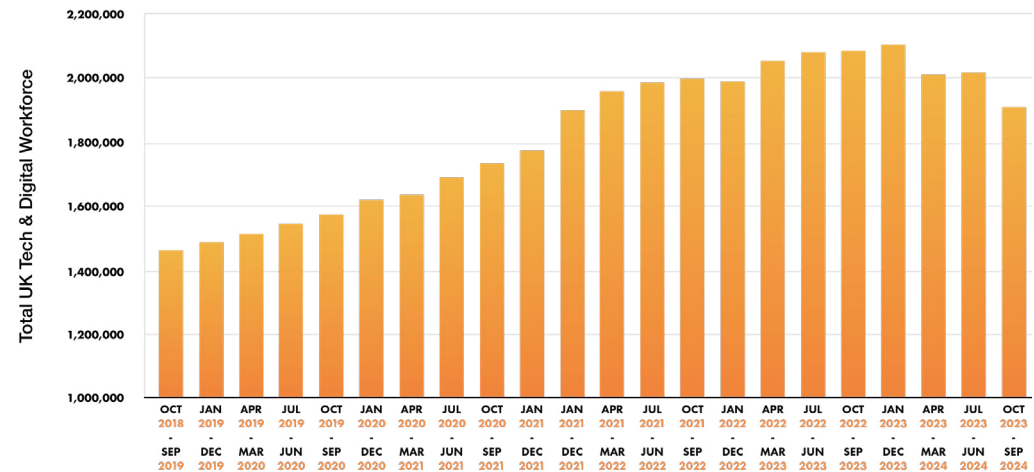
## // The Ebb and Flow of the UK Tech & Digital Workforce

Despite challenging economic condition, the **UK Technical & Digital (T&D) workforce** remains significantly larger than prior to the pandemic.

Across the year to September 2024, there were an average of 1,929k workers engaged in T&D occupations - 32% (467k) higher than five years earlier (year to September 2019).

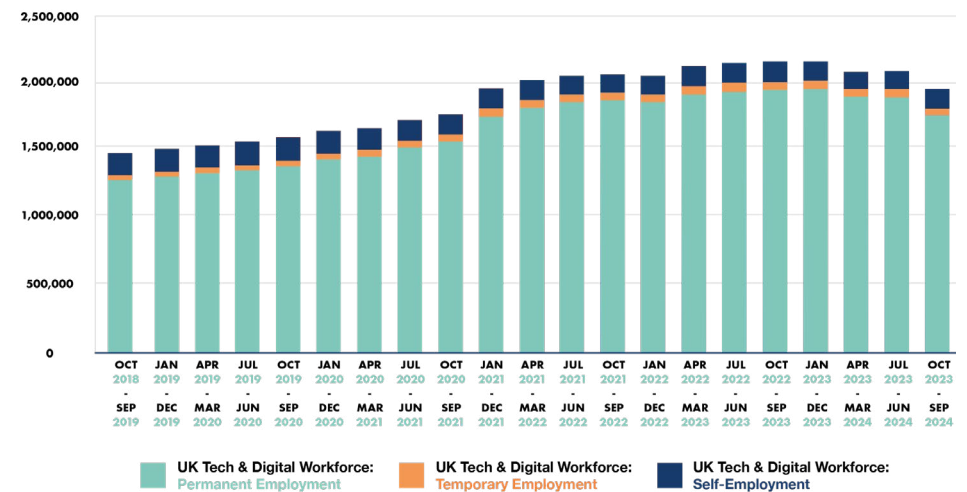


Total UK Tech & Digital Workforce, Years to **Sept 2019** and **Sept 2024**



Source: Vivo Talent Analysis of ONS Data

UK Tech & Data Workforce by Engagement Status: Years from **Sept 2019** to **Sept 2024**



Source: Vivo Talent Analysis of ONS Data

\* Self-employed includes some workers where their status is unknown

## // Tech & Digital Workforce by Employment Status

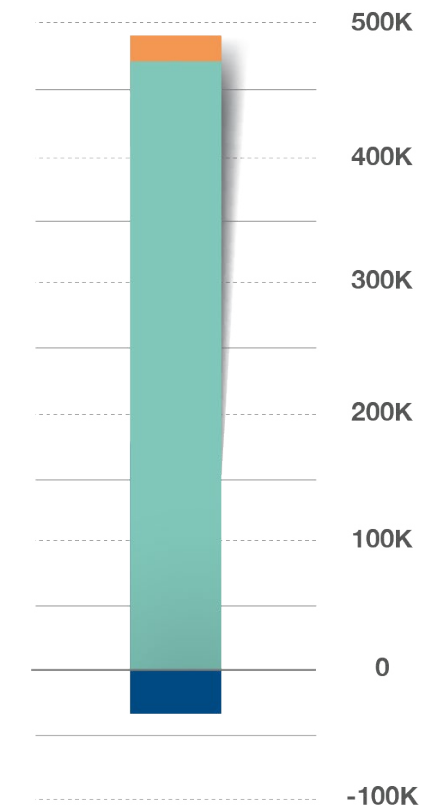


Set against a backdrop of legislative changes – notably the Off-Payroll Worker (IR35) protocol changes, which finally came into effect in the private sector in April 2021 - engagement status fluctuated over the five-year period.

Notably, whilst permanent employee numbers rose by 38% (476k) between the year to September 2019 and the year to September 2024, the number of self-employed workers fell by 14% (23k).

This was partially offset by a **rise in Temporarily Employed Workers** – likely including some workers now **reclassifying** their **engagement status**, courtesy of their shift to **Umbrella employment** or onto a **hirer/MSP payroll** - which rose by 36% (14k).

### 5 YEAR CHANGE IN UK TECH & DIGITAL WORKFORCE BY ENGAGEMENT STATUS: YEAR TO SEPT 2024



Source: Vivo Talent Analysis of ONS Data



## // Changes in Employment Status

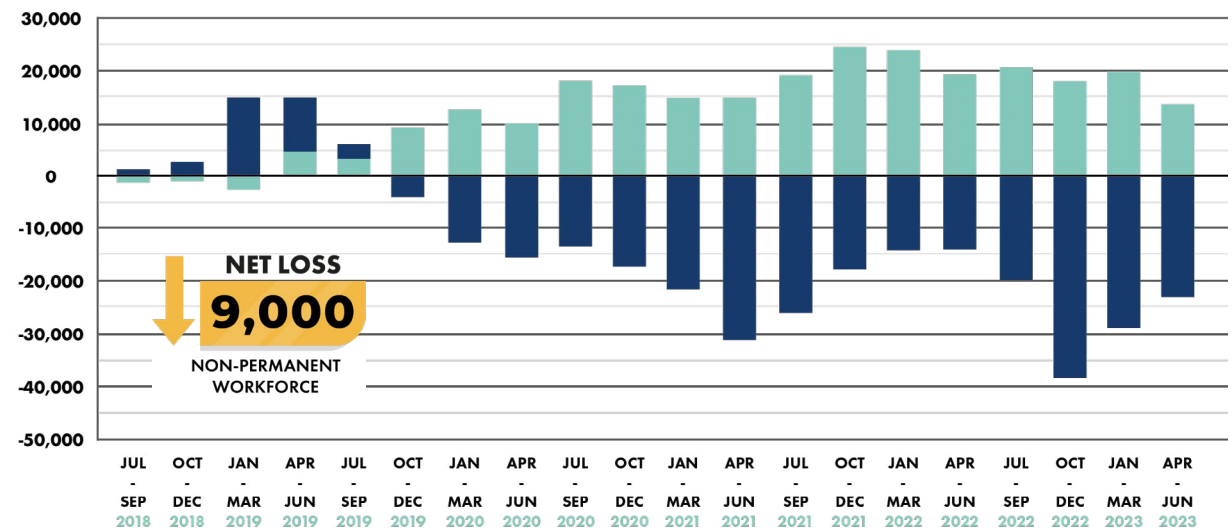
The decline in self-employment was partially counterbalanced by a notable increase in temporary employees, with many workers reclassifying their engagement status.

This shift was largely driven by the transition to Umbrella employment or direct placement onto a hirer/MSP payroll, as well as a growing reliance on Fixed Term Contracts (FTC), which saw a 36% rise (14k).

The surge in FTC usage was a direct response to the changes in Off-Payroll Working (IR35) protocols, as evidenced by workforce data. Notably, a sharp increase occurred in the lead-up to the initially planned but later aborted implementation in Q1 2020.

This trend persisted through late 2021 and has since shown intermittent spikes, particularly around the start of new tax years, reflecting ongoing adjustments by employers navigating compliance challenges and workforce planning.

UK Tech & Data Workforce by Engagement Status:  
Change Compared to the Year to September 2019



UK Tech & Digital Workforce: Temporary Employment  
UK Tech & Digital Workforce: Self-Employment\*

Source: Vivo Talent Analysis of ONS Data

\* Self-employed includes some workers where their status is unknown

## // Reduced use of Tech Self-Employed Contractors

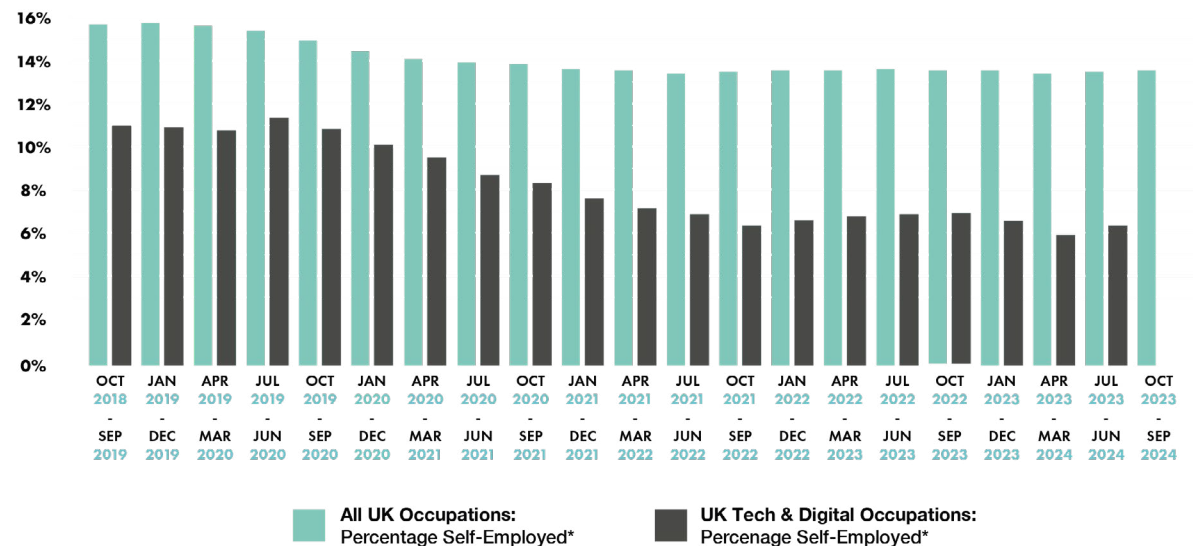
Whilst self-employed workers represented just 7.2% of a much larger UK Tech & Digital workforce across the year to September 2024, this was down from 11.0% five years earlier.

Moreover, this change was proportionally out of kilter with the all-occupation average, which saw a much gentler decline over the period for this cohort – from 15.7% to 13.6%.

As such, it is clear that the changes to the Off-Payroll Working (IR35) protocols have had a disproportionate impact on the composition of the Tech & Digital workforce.

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*Tech & Digital workforce **disproportionally** effected by Off-Payroll Working (IR35)*

Change in the Percentage of Self-Employed Workers\*:  
All UK Occupations and UK Tech & Digital Occupations



Source: Vivo Talent Analysis of ONS Data

\* Self-employed includes some workers where their status is unknown

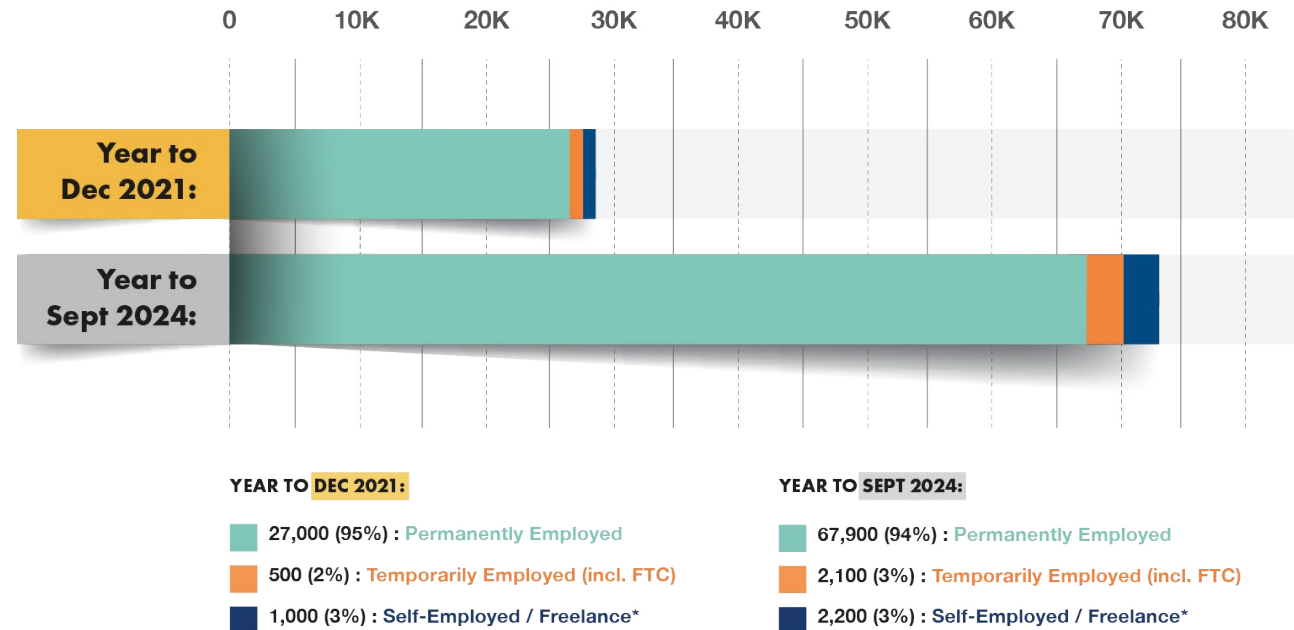
## // Cybersecurity Professional Growth

As a case in point, it is interesting to plot the rise in the number of Cybersecurity Professionals engaged by UK employers over recent years.

This has spiked significantly – increasing from c.29k to c.72k between the year to December 2021 (the first time that the ONS recorded this occupation as a specialism) and the year to September 2024 (the most recent data).

Far from these professionals being engaged on a 'project' or interim basis, however a notable 94% are engaged as permanent employees.

### CYBERSECURITY PROFESSIONALS BY ENGAGEMENT STATUS: YEARS TO DEC 2021 & SEPT 2024



Source: Vivo Talent Analysis of ONS Data

\* Self-employed includes some workers where their status is unknown





## // Insights from CEO

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**The significant rise in employed Tech & Data workers is not solely attributable to legislative change.**

*Tech & Digital transformations, the need to capitalise upon the opportunities that new technologies present - as well as safeguard against increased security risks - have resulted in increased demand and heightened competition for available talent.*

*And once identified, the predominant means of securing scarce talent has been to place them on the permanent payroll, which is a change from 5 to 10 years previously, where scarce talent was often retained on a contract or interim basis.*

*With new employment legislation coming into effect in April, it will be interesting to see if the new legislation starts to change how employers engage workers in the future.*

*Vivo Talent will track the ebb and flow of both the total Tech & Digital workforce and employers' preferred means of engagement as these have a notable bearing on wages / day rates and the availability of talent.*

*I hope you found this unique insight of interest.*

*Rich*

**Richard Protherough**  
CEO of Vivo Talent

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## // Need more Market Analysis?

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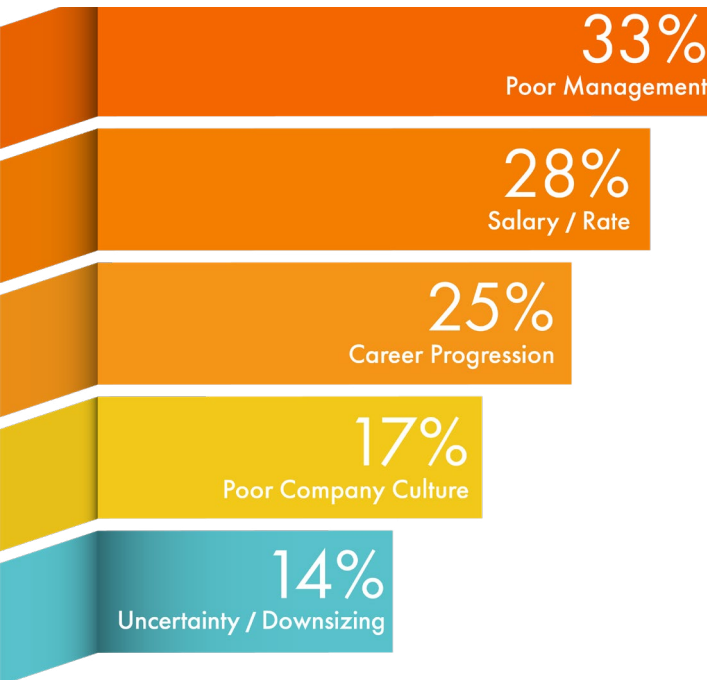


# // Salary Survey



## // Key Recruitment Intel:

### Top 5 Reasons for Leaving a Role:



### Top 5 Technology Talent Shortages:



Cybersecurity Specialists



Cloud & DevOps Engineers



Data Scientists & ML Engineers



Software Engineers



AI & Robotics Engineers

### Top 5 Most Desirable Benefits:



Career Growth & Development



Better Salary & Benefits



Work-Life Balance & Flexibility



Positive Company Culture



Exciting & Meaningful Work



## // Software Roles

	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
JOB ROLES	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Software Architect	£55,000	£90,000	£77,272	£400	£850	£681
Full Stack Software Engineer	£40,000	£80,000	£61,663	£350	£700	£565
Frontend Software Engineer	£40,000	£65,000	£55,833	£350	£750	£524
Backend Software Engineer	£40,000	£80,000	£67,780	£400	£600	£530
Web Developer	£40,000	£60,000	£44,681	£375	£650	£468

	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
KEY SKILLS	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
JavaScript	£40,000	£58,400	£54,168	£400	£650	£517
.Net	£40,000	£80,000	£60,730	£350	£585	£457
Java	£40,000	£75,000	£59,631	£425	£700	£532

## // Data Job Roles

	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
JOB ROLES	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Data Architect	£60,000	£90,000	£76,845	£550	£800	£658
Data Scientist	£40,000	£75,000	£58,186	£425	£685	£527
Data Engineer	£45,000	£95,000	£59,265	£425	£750	£586
Data Analyst	£35,000	£60,000	£43,728	£400	£600	£480
ML / AI Engineer	£45,000	£110,000	£71,100	£500	£800	£675

	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
KEY SKILLS	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Databricks	£55,000	£90,000	£77,272	£400	£850	£681
Python	£45,000	£95,000	£71,434	£425	£850	£653
PowerBI	£45,000	£88,000	£62,912	£400	£775	£591

## // Cloud Job Roles

	UK: Permanent Salary (Base)			UK: Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
JOB ROLES	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Cloud Architect	£60,000	£110,000	£79,097	£500	£850	£636
Cloud Engineer	£45,000	£80,000	£62,113	£350	£800	£513
DevOps Engineer	£45,000	£90,000	£64,773	£400	£700	£507
Site Reliability Engineer	£48,000	£85,000	£66,029	£500	£700	£581
Platform Engineer	£40,000	£90,000	£70,573	£375	£650	£505

	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
KEY SKILLS	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
AWS	£45,000	£80,000	£65,094	£400	£680	£473
Azure	£45,000	£75,000	£57,261	£400	£550	£456
GCP	£50,000	£90,000	£71,875	£400	£700	£541

## // Infrastructure & Support Roles

JOB ROLES	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Infrastructure Architect	£55,000	£100,000	£82,500	£550	£850	£656
Infrastructure Engineer	£35,000	£70,000	£49,548	£370	£650	£479
Network Engineer	£35,000	£65,000	£51,938	£300	£650	£482
Systems Administrator	£30,000	£56,000	£49,502	£300	£600	£475
3rd Line Support	£30,000	£60,000	£42,447	£350	£550	£462
2nd Line Support	£28,000	£42,000	£33,400	£175	£250	£205
Application Support	£35,000	£50,000	£35,739	£275	£600	£408
Service Desk Analyst/ Technician	£24,000	£36,000	£29,019	£150	£250	£178
Help Desk Support	£24,380	£37,000	£28,371	£150	£250	£202



## // Project & Programme Management Roles

JOB ROLES	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Programme Manager	£58,700	£120,000	£81,028	£550	£1,200	£949
Project Manager	£40,000	£75,000	£59,282	£350	£750	£540
Business Analyst	£40,000	£72,000	£54,858	£400	£650	£539

## // Head of Roles

JOB ROLES	Permanent Salary (Base)			Contract Day Rate (Inside IR35)		
	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Head of Data	£70,000	£130,000	£97,692	£600	£1,200	£853
Head of Software	£70,000	£130,000	£90,467	£500	£800	£657
Head of Cloud & Infrastructure	£55,000	£90,000	£68,271	£450	£600	£533
Head of Cybersecurity	£60,000	£110,000	£75,114	£500	£700	£592
IT Operations	£65,000	£100,000	£70,203	£400	£750	£599

## // CONCLUSION & FUTURE OUTLOOK

The **UK's Technical & Digital (T&D) workforce** has demonstrated **remarkable resilience and growth**, with a 32% increase in workforce size over the past five years. Despite economic pressures and regulatory shifts—such as the **Off-Payroll Worker (IR35)** reforms—**demand for skilled professionals remains strong**.

The market has seen a clear trend toward permanent employment, particularly in Cybersecurity, Cloud Engineering and Software Development, **as businesses seek stability and long-term expertise**.

Salary and contract rates continue to fluctuate based on skill demand, company size and industry sector. As organisations navigate the evolving digital landscape, competition for top **talent remains intense**, requiring **strategic hiring approaches** to secure and retain highly skilled professionals.

Looking ahead, several key trends are expected to shape the UK Technology & Digital workforce:

- **Regulatory & Economic Factors:** Businesses will need to stay agile in response to potential legislative changes and economic fluctuations. This may increase the use of temporary & contract resource in the UK and also the use of off-shore labour.
- **Evolving Demand for Emerging Tech Skills:** AI, machine learning, and automation will drive further demand for specialised talent, influencing salary trends and hiring strategies.
- **Shift back towards Contract Resource:** Projects requiring high demand skills will likely turn towards temporary & contract resource due to availability of skills at short notice and flexibility.
- **Regional Salary Comparisons:** Future editions of this guide will include regional breakdowns, offering deeper insight into location - based salary variations.

As the industry continues to evolve, **Vivo Talent** is committed to providing timely insights and data-driven workforce analysis. By tracking trends and salary shifts, **we aim to support** both businesses and professionals in making **informed decisions** in an increasingly dynamic job market.

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