



## KPMG AND REC, UK REPORT ON JOBS

Hiring activity remains weak as uncertainty over the outlook intensifies in October

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

Solid drop in permanent staff appointments, temp billings rise only slightly

Vacancy growth eases to 93-month low

Pay continues to rise as candidate availability falls again

#### **KEY DATA**

Permanent Placements Index



Temporary Billings Index



The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs is compiled by IHS Markit from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment consultancies.

### Commenting on the latest survey results, James Stewart, Vice Chair at KPMG, said:

"Businesses are still waiting to hear that starting gun, and until there is some certainty around Brexit and now the election, employers continue to stall on creating vacancies and making permanent hires.

"It's not just businesses that are being cautious, however, and over October we've seen jobseekers become increasingly nervous about making a career change. The lucky few that do find jobs are continuing to demand higher pay as reflected in the rise in starting salaries and

"The IT and computing sector threw caution to the wind last month as the best performer in vacancy growth. Meanwhile, the medical sector is not far behind, and we also saw a sharp increase in the demand for temp staff in this sector."

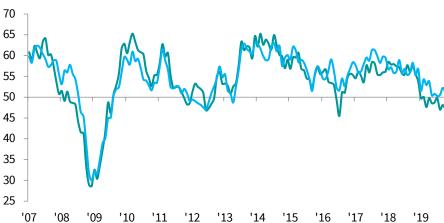
### Neil Carberry, Chief Executive of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation, said:

"These figures underline why this needs to be a jobs election. The labour market is strong, but permanent placements have now dropped for eight months in a row, and vacancies growth has fallen to its lowest level since January 2012. One bright spark is the temporary labour market, which continues to provide flexible work to people and businesses that need it during troubled times.

"Ending political uncertainty and getting companies hiring again is vital – but we must also look to the long term future of work. Jobs must be front and centre during this election campaign, and we will be launching our REC manifesto for work next week. We will be urging all political parties to run on policies which support and enhance the UK's flexible labour market - allowing businesses to create jobs, employees to build careers and the economy to grow."

#### Permanent Placements Index / Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month









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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Report on Jobs is unique in providing the most comprehensive guide to the UK labour market, drawing on original survey data provided by recruitment consultancies and employers to provide the first indication each month of labour market trends.

The main findings for October are:

## Quicker fall in permanent staff appointments

As has been the case throughout the majority of 2019, the number of people placed into permanent job roles fell during October, and at a solid rate. At the same time, temp billings growth weakened to only a marginal pace. According to panel members, political and economic uncertainty continued to dampen hiring activity.

## Vacancy growth weakest since start of 2012

October data signalled only a modest upturn in overall demand for staff across the UK. Notably, the rate of vacancy growth was the slowest seen since January 2012, with both permanent and short-term worker demand increasing at historically weak rates.

## Candidate supply deteriorates at steeper pace

An uncertain outlook also weighed on candidate availability during October, as people were reluctant to seek out new roles. Total candidate numbers fell at the sharpest pace for four months. This was largely driven by a steep fall in permanent labour supply, as the availability of temporary staff declined at a softer pace.

## Starting salaries and temp wages both rise further

Salaries awarded to newly-placed permanent staff continued to rise sharply in October, despite the rate of inflation easing from the previous month. Average pay for short-term staff also rose markedly. Increased pay offers were widely linked to a shortage of suitably skilled candidates.

#### Permanent Salaries Index / Temporary Wages Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month 70 65 60 55 50 45 40 35 '07 '08 '09 '10 '11 '12 '13 '14 '15 '16 '17 '18 '19







## 2 STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Recruitment consultancies report on the number of people placed in permanent jobs each month, and their revenues (billings) received from placing people in temporary or contract positions at employers.

An index reading above 50 signals a higher number of placements/billings than the previous month. Readings below 50 signal a decline compared with the previous month.



## Solid decline in permanent placements

Adjusted for seasonal influences, the Permanent Placements Index remained below the neutral 50.0 value, to signal a further fall in permanent staff appointments across the UK. The rate of contraction quickened to a solid pace that was the second-quickest since July 2016, when placements fell following the Brexit referendum. According to recruitment consultants, heightened uncertainty regarding Brexit had led clients to cancel or postpone staff hiring.

Permanent staff appointments declined sharply across the Midlands, the South of England and London in October. In contrast, the North of England registered a solid increase in permanent placements.

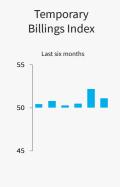
#### Permanent Placements Index



#### Permanent Placements Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '19	48.5	46.4	46.9	44.1	56.9
Jun '19	48.7	48.7	45.0	46.0	54.1
Jul '19	49.7	46.5	48.2	46.9	54.6
Augʻ19	47.0	50.3	47.0	45.6	47.0
Sep '19	48.1	48.0	49.6	44.1	50.3
Oct '19	47.1	45.9	45.6	44.8	53.3



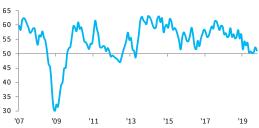
## Marginal rise in temporary billings

Recruitment agencies signalled a further upturn in billings received from the employment of short-term workers at the start of the fourth quarter. Panel members that noted higher temp billings generally linked this to firmer demand for temporary staff, which in many cases was due to firms choosing to hire short-term workers as opposed to permanent ones. That said, the respective seasonally adjusted index indicated that the rate of growth eased to a marginal pace that was much slower than the historical trend.

Higher temp billings were recorded in the Midlands and the North of England, while declines were seen in the South of England and London.

## Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous mont



#### Temporary Billings Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '19	50.4	53.0	56.0	44.2	46.6
Jun '19	50.8	54.1	53.0	49.1	49.5
Jul '19	50.3	52.1	52.7	47.9	47.9
Aug '19	50.5	49.4	50.3	49.9	51.6
Sep '19	52.2	48.5	50.8	55.0	56.0
Oct '19	51.1	47.7	48.9	56.5	52.2







## 3 VACANCIES

Recruitment consultants are asked to specify whether the demand for staff from employers has changed on the previous month, thereby providing an indicator of the number of job vacancies.



# Growth of demand for staff eases to modest pace

The seasonally adjusted Total Vacancies Index pointed to a further easing in the rate of vacancy growth across the UK in October. At 51.7, down from 52.6 in September, the index posted its lowest reading since January 2012.

## Permanent and temporary vacancies

Data broken down by job type pointed to softer growth of demand for both permanent and temporary workers during October.

The rate at which permanent vacancies expanded was the slowest since the start of 2012 and modest overall. Demand for temp staff increased at the second-weakest pace since July 2012.

## Public & private sector vacancies

The overall increase in staff vacancies in October was driven by the private sector, as demand for workers fell across the public sector.

Growth of demand for both permanent and temporary staff in the private sector cooled, and was notably weaker than this time last year. Permanent public sector roles fell solidly, while a modest drop was seen for temporary vacancies.

#### **Total Vacancies Index**



#### Permanent / Temporary

sa, >50 = growth since previous month



#### Vacancy Index summary

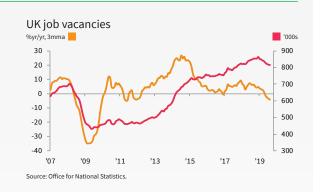
sa, >50 = growth since previous month. \*Not seasonally adjusted.

		Permanent			1	Temporar	у
	Total	Total	Private*	Public*	Total	Private*	Public*
May '19	54.1	54.1	55.5	49.1	54.7	56.6	53.7
Jun '19	54.1	54.1	55.4	47.9	54.1	54.4	52.3
Jul '19	54.4	54.5	57.4	47.1	53.2	56.7	49.6
Augʻ19	52.9	52.9	54.1	47.0	52.0	52.0	51.9
Sep '19	52.6	52.6	52.9	47.1	53.3	56.5	50.9
Oct '19	51.7	51.6	52.5	47.0	52.9	54.0	47.6

#### OFFICIAL DATA: UK JOB VACANCIES

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicated that the overall number of job vacancies across the UK declined by -4.0% on an annual basis in the third quarter of 2019. This marked the quickest rate of reduction for over seven-and-a-half years.

The number of vacancies at the national level stood at 813,000 in the three months to September, having steadily fallen since peaking at 861,000 at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, the figure was the lowest seen since the three months to November 2017.









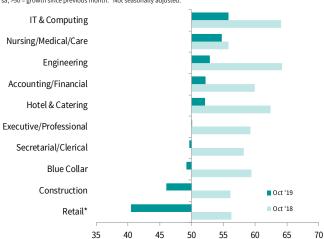
## **4 VACANCIES BY SECTOR**

Recruitment consultancies are requested to compare the demand for staff according to sector with the situation one month ago.

#### Permanent vacancies

Softer permanent staff demand trends were seen across all monitored sectors compared to a year ago in October. IT & Computing was the best performer in terms of vacancy growth, while Retail remained at the bottom of the rankings.

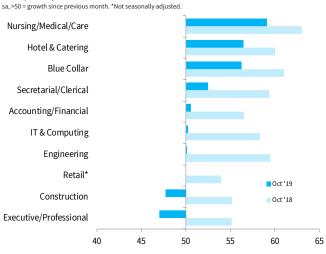
## Permanent Vacancies Index sa, >50 = growth since previous month. \*Not seasonally adjusted.



#### **Temporary vacancies**

Nursing/Medical/Care saw the sharpest increase in demand for short-term staff during October, followed by Hotel & Catering. The only two sectors to record reduced demand for temp workers were Executive/Professional and Construction.

#### **Temporary Vacancies Index**











## 5 STAFF AVAILABILITY

Recruitment consultants are asked to report whether availability of permanent and temporary staff has changed on the previous month. An overall indicator of staff availability is also calculated.



# Candidate supply deteriorates at quicker pace

Recruitment consultancies across the UK registered a sustained decline in total candidate availability at the start of the fourth quarter. The rate of contraction was the quickest recorded for four months and sharp overall.

The reduction was predominantly driven by a marked fall in permanent staff supply, as the downturn in temporary candidate numbers softened.



### Permanent Staff Availability Index



# Sharp reduction in availability of permanent workers

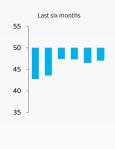
Survey data showed that the number of candidates available for permanent job roles fell in October, thereby stretching the current sequence of deterioration to six-and-a-half years. The pace of contraction was sharp, having accelerated to a four-month record. Panel members that noted lower permanent labour supply generally linked this to the fact that people were reluctant to seek new roles due to greater market uncertainty.

Sharp drops in permanent candidate availability were seen across all four monitored English regions, led by the South of England.

### Permanent / Temporary



#### Temporary Staff Availability Index



# Softer fall in temporary candidate numbers

The availability of candidates for short-term roles in the UK also fell further in October. That said, the rate of contraction eased since September, and was among the slowest seen since the current sequence of deterioration began in July 2013. Where lower candidate supply was noted, this was attributed to general skill shortages, fewer workers from the EU, and the upcoming implementation of new IR35.

The Midlands saw by far the steepest drop in temporary candidates during October.

## Permanent Staff Availability Index

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '19	37.3	37.9	36.4	39.6	38.3
Jun '19	38.5	39.0	35.8	44.9	39.2
Jul '19	42.1	46.1	39.4	43.6	42.4
Augʻ19	42.6	44.2	39.4	44.4	43.4
Sep '19	42.8	41.5	42.3	42.0	45.7
Oct '19	41.6	41.9	39.2	43.3	40.6

#### Temporary Staff Availability Index

sa, >50 = improvement since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '19	42.8	42.6	44.1	41.2	45.0
Jun '19	43.6	42.2	43.5	45.2	49.1
Jul '19	47.4	49.8	44.2	46.1	50.6
Aug '19	47.3	47.5	47.3	42.4	49.0
Sep '19	46.5	46.5	44.3	46.0	49.3
Oct '19	47.0	49.0	46.4	41.9	47.3







## **6 DEMAND FOR SKILLS**

Recruitment consultancies are invited to specify any areas in which they have encountered skill shortages during the latest month.

## Skills in short supply: Permanent staff

#### Accounting/Financial Accountants Auditors Book Keepers Credit Controllers Estimators Finance Finance Directors Financial Services Investment Payroll Pensions Admin Taxation Blue Collar Forklift Drivers Industrials LGV Drivers Production Warehouse Construction Construction Construction Sales Planners Quantity Surveyors

Engineering Engineers Mechanical Engineers Senior Electronic Engineers

## Executive/Professional

Technicians

В2В Compliance Law Management Marketing Marketing Executives Portal Fee

#### Hotel/Catering

Baristas Catering Chefs Hospitality Kitchen Porters

#### IT/Computing

Analysts Automation Testers

Data Professionals Data Scientists Developers Digital Software Technical Sales Technology

#### Nursing/Medical/Care

Chemists Health Care Assistants Nurses Social Workers

#### Secretarial/Clerical

Administration Office Staff Receptionist

### Retail

Retail

## Other

Call Centre Customer Service Ecologists Media Procurement Sales Semi Skilled

## Skills in short supply: Temporary staff

#### Accounting/Financial Accountants Auditors Book Keepe Credit Controllers Estimators Finance Financial Services Payroll

Pensions Admin Risk

#### Blue Collar

Blue Collar Drivers Electricians Factory Forklift Drivers HGV Drivers Industrials Labour LGV Drivers Manufacturing Production Warehouse Welders

#### Construction

Construction Quantity Surveyors

#### Engineering

Design Engineers Mechanical Engineers System Engineers

#### Executive/Professional

Management Marketing Portal Fee Project Managers Recruitment Consultants Surveyors

### Hotel/Catering

Baristas Catering Front of House Kitchen Porters

Blu

Purchasing Manager

## IT/Computing

CAD Data Scientists Developers Programmers Python Software Engineers Technology

#### Nursing/Medical/Care

Carers Health Professionals Nurses Social Workers Support Workers

#### Secretarial/Clerical

Administration Office Staff Receptionist

#### Other

В2В Buvers Call Centre Customer Service Sales Supply Chain Team Leaders Telesales Testers Unskilled

## Skills in excess supply: Permanent staff

Accounting/Financial	Marketing			
Finance	Project Managers			
Blue Collar	Hotel/Catering			
Blue Collar Industrials Manufacturing Site Managers Warehouse	Hospitality			
	Nursing/Medical/Care Social Workers			
	Construction	Retail		
Construction	Secretarial/Clerical			
Executive/Professional	Administration			
Business Analysts Executives Management	Clerical Office Staff Personal Assistant			

Other Customer Service Graduates Sales Testers Unskilled

## Skills in excess supply: Temporary staff

Blue Collar	Hotel/Catering
Drivers	Hospitality
Industrials Production Site Managers Warehouse	IT/Computing
	Programmers
	Nursing/Medical/Care
Engineering	Doctors
Electrical Engineers	Practice Nurse
Executive/Professional	Social Workers
Business Analysts	Retail
Digital Marketing	Retail Staff
Project Managers	Secretarial/Clerical

Secretarial/Clerical Administration Clerical

Personal Assistant Receptionist Other Customer Service Testers

Note: Skills can be reported as being both in short supply and excess supply as we survey various recruitment agencies across the country, so there is geographical variation as well as the possibility of candidates with particular skills being concentrated in certain areas

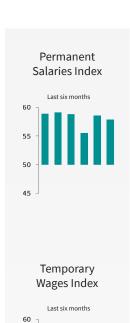






## 7 PAY PRESSURES

The recruitment industry survey tracks both the average salaries awarded to people placed in permanent jobs each month, as well as average hourly rates of pay for temp/contract staff.



55

45

# October sees further robust increase in starting salaries

The seasonally adjusted Permanent Salaries Index remained firmly above the neutral 50.0 value, to signal a further steep increase in salaries awarded to permanent joiners in October. This was despite the rate of pay growth easing slightly since September. Recruiters often mentioned that higher salaries were having to be offered in order to attract and secure suitably skilled staff.

The South of England saw the most marked increase in starting salaries, followed by London.

## Solid increase in short-term pay

Average hourly pay rates for temporary staff increased for the eighty-first month in a row in October. The rate of inflation was marked overall, having picked up from September's two-and-a-half-year low. Greater competition for scarce candidates was the key factor cited by panellists as having driven up wages in the latest survey period.

Stronger rates of wage inflation in London and the South of England contrasted with softer increases in the Midlands and the North of England.

#### Permanent Salaries / Temporary Wages

111



13

#### Permanent Salaries Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

35

'07

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North
May '19	58.9	54.0	59.9	60.5	61.5
Jun '19	59.1	54.3	59.7	62.2	60.0
Jul '19	58.8	53.9	59.6	59.1	63.4
Augʻ19	55.5	53.3	57.1	55.3	56.9
Sep '19	58.6	58.6	58.0	58.6	58.5
Oct '19	57.9	57.5	59.5	56.0	55.0

#### Temporary Wages Index

sa, >50 = inflation since previous month

	UK	London	South	Midlands	North	
May '19	59.1	59.0	61.7	58.6	58.8	
Jun '19	59.3	58.7	55.5	59.8	59.3	
Jul '19	57.3	56.1	55.8	59.1	60.3	
Aug '19	57.1	52.2	56.9	61.2	60.0	
Sep '19	54.7	54.0	54.1	58.6	55.4	
Oct '19	55.6	55.1	56.6	53.9	53.6	

#### OFFICIAL DATA: UK AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

Latest data from the Office for National Statistics indicated that employee earnings (including bonuses) rose by 3.8% in the three months to August. This was down slightly from a 3.9% increase in the preceding three months, but still highlighted the strongest period of pay growth for over a decade.

Strong increases in earnings were seen across both the private and public sectors. The private sector continued to register the quicker rate of growth, despite the pace of expansion easing from 4.0% to 3.8% in the latest three-month period. Meanwhile, public sector pay growth also softened slightly from 3.7% to 3.5%.









## 8 SPECIAL FEATURE

This section features data from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation's survey of employers

## UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES TO UNSETTLE BUSINESSES

The economic outlook continues to be marred by uncertainty: the EU approved another Brexit extension until 31 January 2020 and the UK is set for a general election on 12 December. What happens next on Brexit would depend on the outcome of that election.

One option is to implement the Brexit deal that the Prime Minister has negotiated with the EU, another is to renegotiate. There is the possibility of another referendum although this would likely require a further Brexit delay. Another alternative is to hold a so-called 'confirmatory' referendum with a particular Brexit deal as an option. But as political parties embark on their election campaigns, employers anticipate further months of Brexit-related uncertainty.

Employers' confidence in the UK economy already dropped to its joint-lowest level since mid-2016, according to new data from the REC (JobsOutlook<sup>1</sup>, October 2019). At net: -31, this is only the second time that confidence in the economy has dropped to this level since REC records began in 2016. Although businesses have ambitious plans for recruitment – in the short-term, employers' intentions to hire permanent staff rose to a net figure of +24, while hiring intentions for temporary agency workers remained strong at net: +10 – record low business confidence hinders hiring plans with many organisations scaling back or even cancelling these. This has been highlighted by the UK Report on Jobs survey, which has reported a sustained drop in permanent staff appointments in recent months, while use of short-term staff has been historically subdued.

### **Employers' confidence**



The net percentage is calculated by subtracting the % of respondents answering 'worse' from the % of respondents answering 'better'

The figures demonstrate the damage that political indecision is causing to business confidence. While companies are ready to hire and invest, a lack of a clear path ahead is denting plans. Similarly, individuals are more reluctant to seek new roles as uncertainty persists.

A study by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) emphasised the adverse impact of chronic uncertainty on investment and productivity growth. While the economic outlook depends critically on the UK's trading relationships after Brexit, the study estimated that the economy is 2.5% smaller now than it would otherwise have been as a result of the 2016 Brexit vote. As the Chairman of the Office for Budget Responsibility highlighted in his letter to HM Treasury in the wake of the Government's decision to cancel the 6 November Budget, the policy impact of Brexit depends on the trade, regulatory and migration regimes that are ultimately agreed.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> REC. (2019) Jobs Outlook. Monthly reports available at: www.rec.uk.com/research





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#### Methodology

The KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs is compiled by IHS Markit from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 UK recruitment and employment consultancies.

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted data series.

For further information on the survey methodology, please contact <a href="mailto:economics@ihsmarkit.com">economics@ihsmarkit.com</a>.

#### **About IHS Markit**

IHS Markit (NYSE: INFO) is a world leader in critical information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide. The company delivers next-generation information, analytics and solutions to customers in business, finance and government, improving their operational efficiency and providing deep insights that lead to well-informed, confident decisions. IHS Markit has more than 50,000 business and government customers, including 80 percent of the Fortune Global 500 and the world's leading financial institutions.

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#### **About KPMG**

KPMG LLP, a UK limited liability partnership, operates from 22 offices across the UK with approximately 16,300 partners and staff. The UK firm recorded a revenue of £2.338 billion in the year ended 30 September 2018. KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax, and Advisory services. It operates in 154 countries and has 200,000 professionals working in member firms around the world. The independent member firms of the KPMG network are affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative ("KPMG International"), a Swiss entity. Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such.

#### **About REC**

The REC is all about brilliant recruitment, which drives our economy and delivers opportunity to millions. As the voice of the recruitment industry, we champion high standards, speak up for great recruiters, and help them grow. Recruitment is a powerful tool for companies and candidates to build better futures for themselves and a strong economy for the UK. Find out more about the Recruitment & Employment Confederation at www.rec.uk.com.

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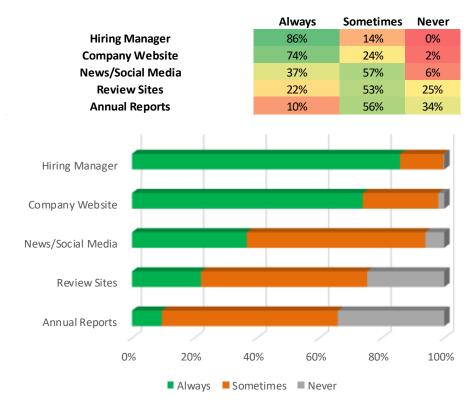


# KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs

## Special Feature Questions: October 2019

In October 2019, UK recruitment agencies were asked two questions around resources for briefing candidates on employers, and the importance of organisational purpose and leadership.

## 1) How do you obtain relevant information on a prospective employer to attract and brief candidates?



Sources: KPMG, REC, IHS Markit

Nearly nine out of ten recruitment consultants (86%) indicated that they always obtain relevant information on a prospective employer through the hiring manager. Panel members also indicated that the Company Website was also a useful channel to obtain relevant information on an employer, with 74% of recruiters always looking at this for information. Of the listed categories, Annual Reports were the least likely to be used for gaining information on a prospective employer. Notably, around one-third of respondents (34%) stated they never look at Annual Reports to gain relevant information on an employer.

Other useful sources of information included:

- Face-to-face meetings with clients
- Site visits
- Credit checks
- Web searches
- Websites such as LinkedIn and Glassdoor

- Current and past employees
- Sector-relevant rankings/ratings for organisations
- HR department
- Networking events
- Business magazines

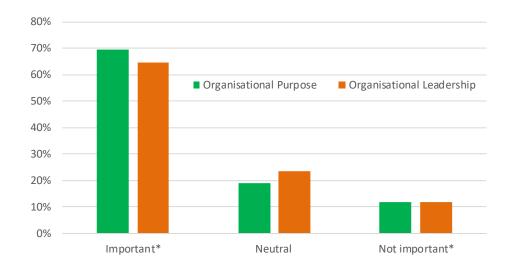
### 2) How important are the following when attracting candidates?

Recruiters selected one option per category (1 = very important, 5 = not important)

	Very important		Neutral		Not important
	1	2	3	4	5
Organisational Purpose	38%	31%	19%	9%	3%
Organisational Leadership	33%	31%	24%	9%	2%



\*Figures are rounded.



Note: Important = categories 1 + 2, Neutral = category 3 and Not important = categories 4 + 5.

Sources: KPMG, REC, IHS Markit

The vast majority of recruitment agencies believe that Organisational Purpose (69%) and Organisational Leadership (65%) are important factors when attracting candidates. Furthermore, just 12% of recruiters believe these two factors are not important to candidates when offering them a role.