



IT PROJECT RECRUITMENT REPORT

2025/2026



Introduction

The UK continues to face a significant project management talent gap in 2025/2026, with IT project management roles steadily increasing as digital transformation accelerates across all industries.

Over 170,000 new openings are forecast by the end of the decade, and organisations remain in fierce competition for a limited pool of IT project management professionals. Innovative recruitment and retention practices are now more essential than ever for building strong, flexible project teams



We've drawn from a variety of industry reports, but also on our practical experience as IT Project Delivery and Recruitment specialists over the last 12+ years, to put together this report.

Demand has soared for expertise in AI, cloud platforms, cybersecurity, and digital transformation management. Core IT Project Management experience—such as requirements analysis, Agile, and project governance—remains essential.

Soft skills are in particular demand: Advanced leadership, communication, adaptability, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence are cited as the most sought-after 'differentiators' for top-performing project professionals. Data fluency is now expected of project managers at all levels.

Whilst project qualifications remain an important factor in the recruitment process, the biggest influencer and the most sought-after skills continue to be for those project professionals with genuine leadership skills. Specific technical skills can be difficult to find, but comparatively easy to teach. However, finding a Project Manager, who can genuinely lead a team and manage your senior stakeholders is more challenging

If you would like to talk to P3M Recruitment about how we can help you meet this challenge, we will of course be delighted to hear from you.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Buttle', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jamie Buttle, Managing Director
P3M Recruitment

Salary Benchmarking for Your Role

When it comes to budgeting, a number of factors are going to influence the pay structure for your Project Team. It can be a useful starting point to define 'the average' and then look at a whole host of influencing factors. We've defined our average based on our decade of experience in recruiting PM's, combined with industry analyst benchmarks.

INFLUENCING FACTORS:

- Company sector and culture
- Experience & seniority
- Location/region
- Willingness to travel/ remote mobility

AVERAGE PM PROFILE:

- Age - 35-44
- Years of Experience - 7
- Qualification - Minimum PRINCE2 Practitioner or equivalent

AVERAGE SALARY:

The average salary for a Project Manager in the UK is £55,000. Variance from this average is dependent on the influencing factors listed.

Salary ranges are influenced by experience, sector, and company; leading firms (e.g., UBS, HSBC, Barclays) may pay substantially above average for experienced project managers.

Average Project Manager Salary by region

Scotland
£48,500

Northern Ireland
£52,500

North East
£42,500

East Midlands
£55,000

West Midlands
£60,000

East of England
£55,000

Wales
£62,750

South West
£52,500

London
£70,000

South East
£52,500

Yorkshire
£54,000

North West
£60,000



Salary Trends

The gender pay gap has increased to 35% in project management in 2025, highlighting the importance of inclusive recruitment strategies.

+35%

Despite high demand, average IT Project Manager salaries have increased only modestly year-on-year, typically tracking inflation for most roles.

Key exceptions include:

Tech, security, and digital transformation roles, with pay premiums up to 25%. (Highly skilled contractors and specialists in cloud and AI, who command higher daily or annual rates)

Tech, security, & digital transformation roles

+25%

Permanent vs Contractor Market

Permanent roles remain most in demand, as firms prioritise skills retention and internal succession planning.

Contractor/project-based roles thrive in high-growth tech sectors and where specialist skills are needed for urgent transformation deliverables.

In 2025, the average permanent Project Manager earns **£52,500**, while contractors can expect an equivalent annual reward of up to **£85,000** for high-demand projects



Although talent shortages persist, the demand for IT project managers is at an all-time high due to widespread digital transformation and evolving tech strategies.

Permanent roles remain most in demand, as firms prioritise skills retention and internal succession planning. Many organisations now favour permanent roles to tackle skill gaps, but the contract/project market remains competitive in sectors requiring urgent specialist expertise.

Contractor/project-based roles thrive in high-growth tech sectors and where specialist skills are needed for urgent transformation deliverables.

Technical Skills

AI integration, cloud platforms, cybersecurity, data analytics, Agile, and requirements analysis are in high demand.

Soft Skills

Leadership, communication, emotional intelligence, change management, adaptability, and collaboration are even more crucial in hybrid and remote work settings.

Data Literacy & Digital Fluency

Data literacy and digital fluency are now considered essential for IT project managers, including proficiency with project management tools and emerging technologies.

Certifications

Certifications increasing in demand: PMP (PMI), Agile/Scrum, Lean Six Sigma, PRINCE2, APM, ITIL.

Understanding Your Recruitment Process

An estimated typical recruitment cycle takes, on average, 6- 8 weeks to recruit a permanent Project Manager. Understanding how this process works and what is involved is important in terms of being able to speed this process up where you can.



STAGE 1: RUN ADVERTS

Maximum 1 week



STAGE 2: PROFILING

Shortlisting suitable candidates for interviewing



STAGE 3: RECRUITER INTERVIEW 1

The interview process
Phone (Skype)
interview within 3 days



START ROLE

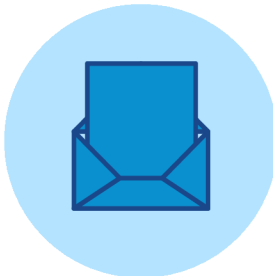
STAGE 4: RECRUITER INTERVIEW 2

Face to face interview
within a week, before
being placed in front of
client



STAGE 5: CLIENT INTERVIEW

Face to face
interview with the
client



STAGE 6: JOB OFFER

Notice period -
Average of 1-month

Best Practice: Streamline interviews (preferably one robust in-person or virtual stage), supported by peer and SME profilers, to reduce dropout rates by up to 30%. Due diligence is important, but if your Project Recruitment Partner understands your culture and has the capability to deliver Peer Profiling (selection and interviewing by Project Professionals) on all their candidates, this can be reduced to a robust, single interview with the client.

Drop-out rates
can increase by

30%

if your interview
process is too long.



Active Candidate

- Actively seeking a new position
- Unhappy in their current role
- Salary not high enough
- Role is no longer challenging

Active Candidates are
52%
satisfied in their current role

Passive candidates are increasingly vital, with over 80% of high-quality project hires identified as passively open rather than actively seeking roles. Use direct outreach, engaging employer branding, and tailored messaging to

Content in their current role, candidates may not haven't polished their CV for some time, however, not broadcasting their resume does not mean they aren't open to new opportunities. The key to recruiting a Passive Candidate is to get their attention.

Passive Candidates are
80%
satisfied in their current role



Passive Candidate

- Not actively seeking a new position
- Happy in their current role
- Would consider a change for more money
- Open to better opportunities

Recruiters really need to do their research, use social media and find candidates whose interest may be piqued by a salary reality check, stretching their project skills or addressing work/life balance. The hard work will pay off. Targeting the Passive Candidate increases the likelihood of hiring a long-term, quality candidate.

Who we are...

Born out of the success of our sister organisation Stoneseed, an IT Programme and Project Management (PPM) Professional Services business, we combine the search capability of a recruiter, with the selection skills of programme management subject matter experts to provide you with only the very best candidates.

P3M Recruitment – Resourcing specialists focused specifically on IT Programme & Project Talent.

What we do

Our Recruitment team are experienced in recruiting IT project talent across multiple technology solutions, sectors and industries. We work on sourcing all types of project and programme talent for clients with Business Change, Transformation, Infrastructure, Digital and IT Project Delivery needs.

Whether you need a Programme Manager, a Business Analyst, Project Manager, PMO staff or Technical Design talent, we can help.

Meet the team




Our talent resourcing team is made up of highly experienced IT recruitment professionals who combine knowledge and experience of IT Programme and Project Management Delivery, with recruitment expertise. This gives us a unique perspective; we know what the right models, governance and approaches look like, and we are committed to delivering the best outcomes to our candidate and clients.

Call us today and let us help you find your project talent!

FOLLOW US:



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