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# Employment Survey

## The results

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April 2024



# Employment Survey

Thank you to everyone who participated in our inaugural Annual Employment Survey.

It has produced some very interesting results and valuable insights for the HR Community.

Our survey concentrated on four areas:

- Recruitment
- HR priorities for 2024
- Flexible working
- HR technologies and AI

We report here on the key findings, which have helped us to design our training programme for this year. We hope that the findings also help you to benchmark your approach and to plan for the rest of 2024 and beyond.

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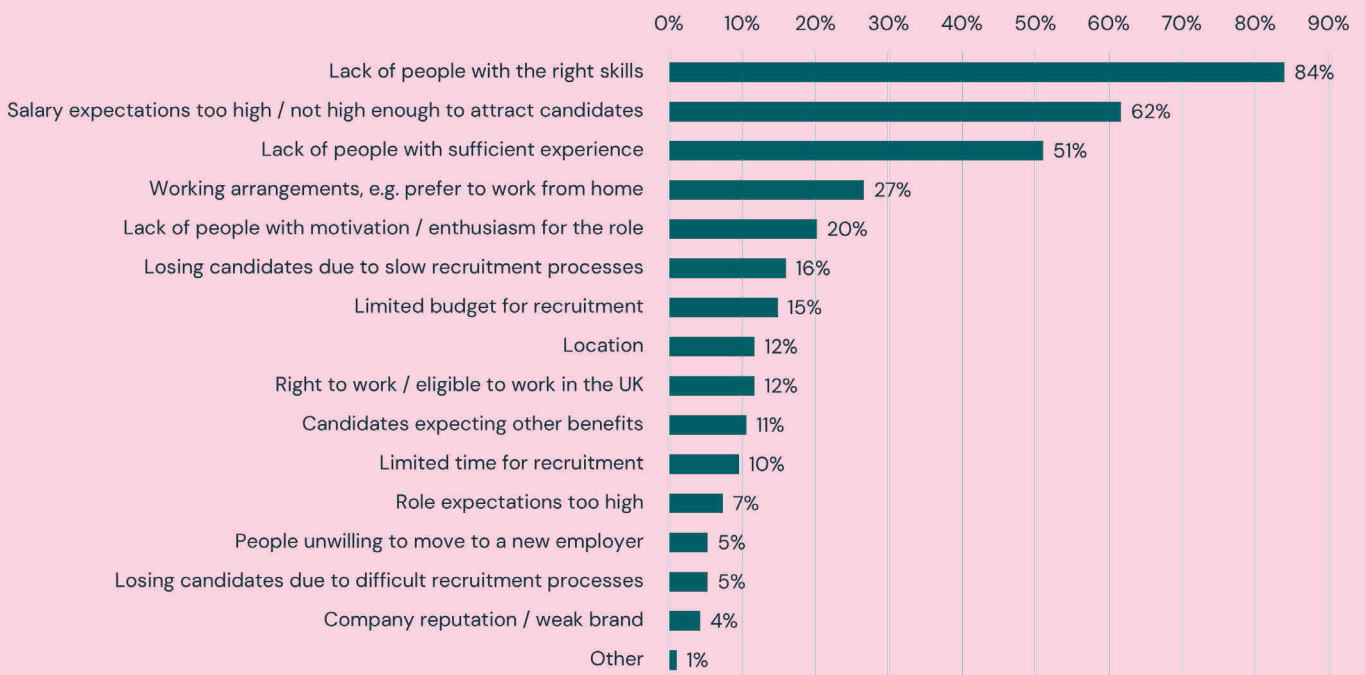
*"The team are totally client focussed working collaboratively and with full line of sight to the client, taking time to understand both the claim/case and the background/context. A thorough understanding of the law with up to date caselaw knowledge and respect from the local courts helps the processes immensely."*

The Legal 500, 2024

*An overwhelming theme of the responses to the survey was that of recruitment difficulties*

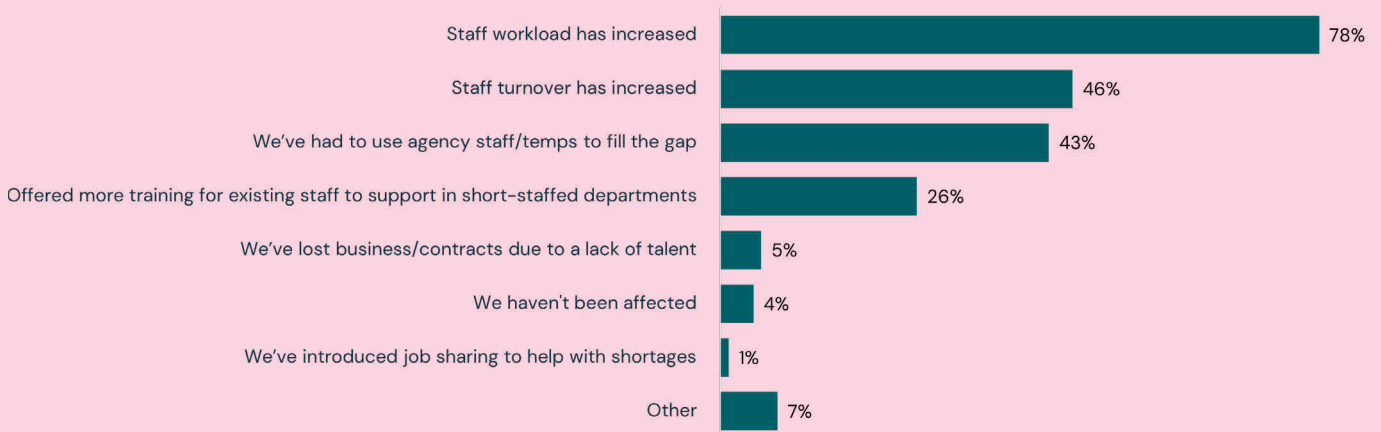
## Recruitment difficulties

81% of participating businesses said that they faced challenges in recruiting employees with the right skills, with the key factors being a lack of skilled individuals and high salary expectations.



## Impact of shortages

HR Managers reported that staff shortages led to increased workloads and therefore **increased staff turnover**, creating a vicious cycle affecting businesses negatively.



## Brexit effects

70% of participants reported no significant impact from Brexit on their ability to recruit, though some sectors, such as logistics, felt a stronger effect.

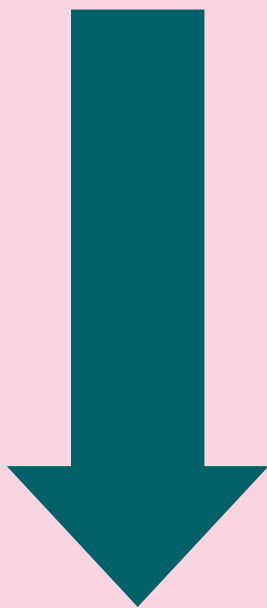
*Question: How, if at all, have changes in immigration policies post-Brexit affected your ability to recruit talent from outside the UK?*

### Recruitment outside UK post Brexit



## Attracting factors

Salary and **flexible working conditions** were identified as the most important factors for attracting new recruits in 2024.



### Most Important

- Salary
- Hybrid & remote working
- Flexible hours
- Employee benefits
- Learning & development opportunities
- Wellbeing support
- Social aspects

### Least Important

*“The talent pool keeps getting smaller and smaller...”* Head of Talent

### Conclusion:

Some of the reasons for recruitment challenges are difficult for individual employers to control in terms of the talent pool. So, two key areas for consideration are elements over which the employer has more influence: **employee retention** and **the approach to flexible working**.



*With all of the recruitment difficulties identified, it is easy to understand why retention of employees was listed as the main priority of HR Managers over the next 12 months*

## HR main priorities

We asked employers to identify their top 5 priorities for 2024. This graph indicates the proportion of employers who listed these issues in their Top 5:

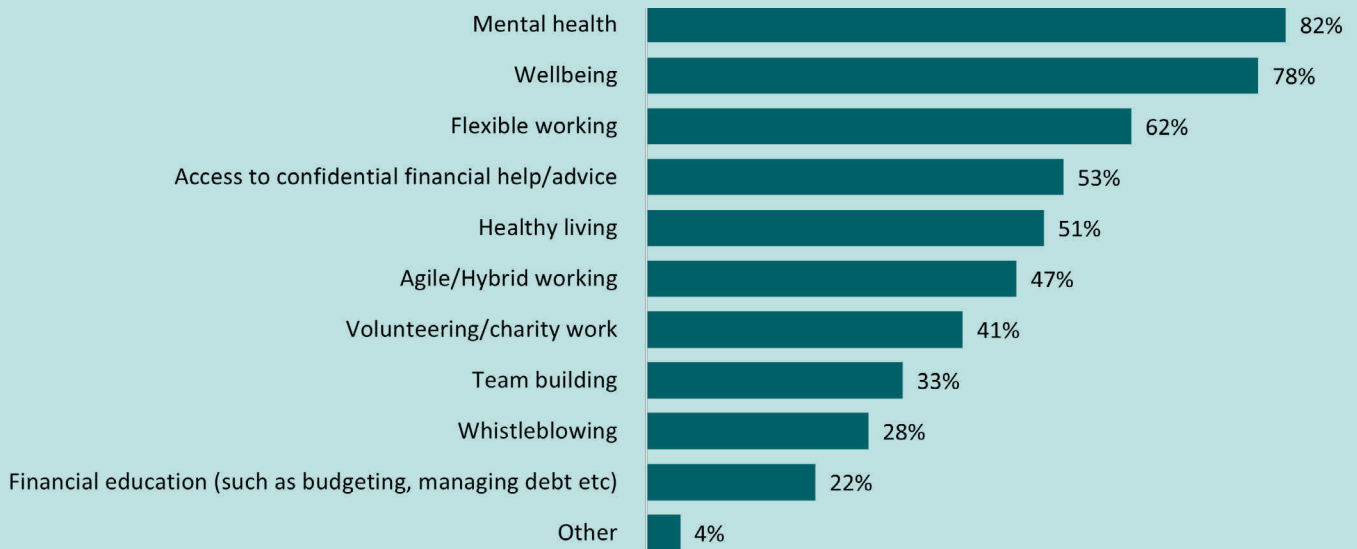
HR main priorities



This reveals a broadly similar level of importance attached to a number of areas, but employee retention stands out on its own as the leading key priority.

Diversity and inclusion remains an important priority and has not dropped down the agenda.

Employers are already investing in initiatives in a number of areas that might assist with employee retention. The image below sets out the percentage of employers currently operating various HR initiatives.



It is also interesting to note that relatively few employers currently have whistleblowing initiatives. This may change in the future as we see a push for potential reform of whistleblowing law. For example, there are discussions about whether financial incentives should be offered to whistleblowers, as is the case in other jurisdictions. Having clear whistleblowing policies in place and enabling whistleblowing can help businesses in the long term, so whistleblowing initiatives might be an issue that more businesses want to push up the agenda.

## Conclusion:

Whilst there is naturally a variation in HR priorities in different organisations, employee retention is the leading priority for employers in 2024. Those businesses who have recruited good employees are very keen to retain them.



## *Permitting flexible working is seen as an important initiative to assist with employee retention*

27% of employers reported difficulty in recruiting because people preferred to work from home and 62% of employers reported that they are working on flexible working initiatives.

*“I think employers that can offer hybrid working may well find themselves having a competitive advantage over the employers that won't allow it.”* Senior HR Manager

Our survey identified that:

- The pandemic accelerated the trend of flexible working, with 82% of participant businesses now allowing some staff to work from home.
- Across businesses surveyed, an average of 57% of the workforce worked remotely in some capacity.
  - 43% work on company premises all of the time
  - 42% work from home some of the time
  - 15% work from home the majority or all of the time
- Half of those interviewed had experienced difficulties getting staff to return to the office after the pandemic and participants reported the following as reasons given for reluctance to return to the office.





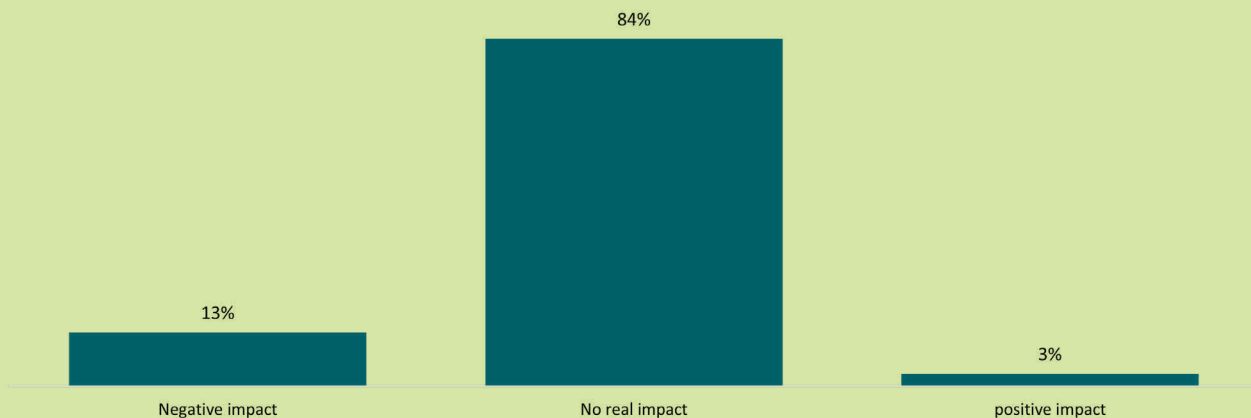
*“New members of staff have issues when starting out when none of their team are in the office because they’re all working from home.”*

HR Manager

Over half of HR Managers viewed hybrid working as positively impacting employee wellbeing, with work-life balance and saved commuting time being the biggest factors. Only 15% considered it to have negative influence on employee wellbeing, but some negative aspects were identified such as the impact on new starters.

84% of participants felt that remote and hybrid working had no real impact on career progression within their businesses, with only 13% reporting a negative impact.

**Do you feel that remote and hybrid working styles are impacting career progression with your organisation in any way?**



## Conclusion:

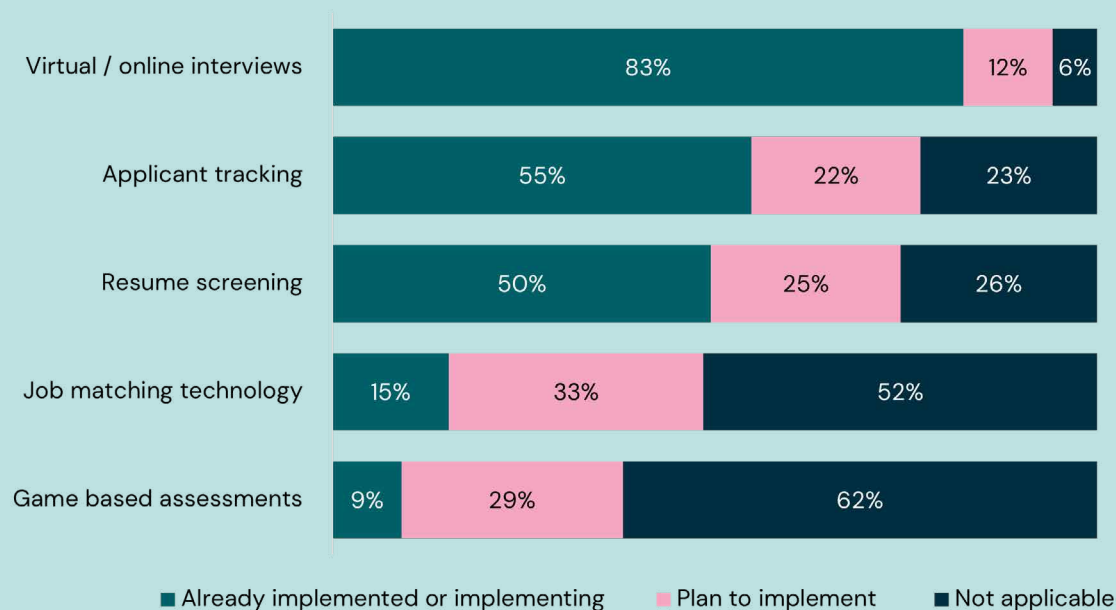
In overall terms, the survey identified a generally positive attitude towards flexible working and the advantage it can offer to employers in a competitive market for talent. With changes to the law permitting more flexible working requests, this is likely to be a key focus for HR in the immediate future.

## *Attitudes towards technology, and AI in particular, might best be described as “tentative”*

### Current technology - recruitment

In terms of current adoption of technologies, the survey indicated significant use of online interviews, but relatively little use of game-based assessments. It will be interesting to see whether things change over the next 12 months if the proportion of employers planning to implement new technology such as game-based assessments (29%) and job matching technology (33%) do so.

#### Adoption of candidate screening technologies

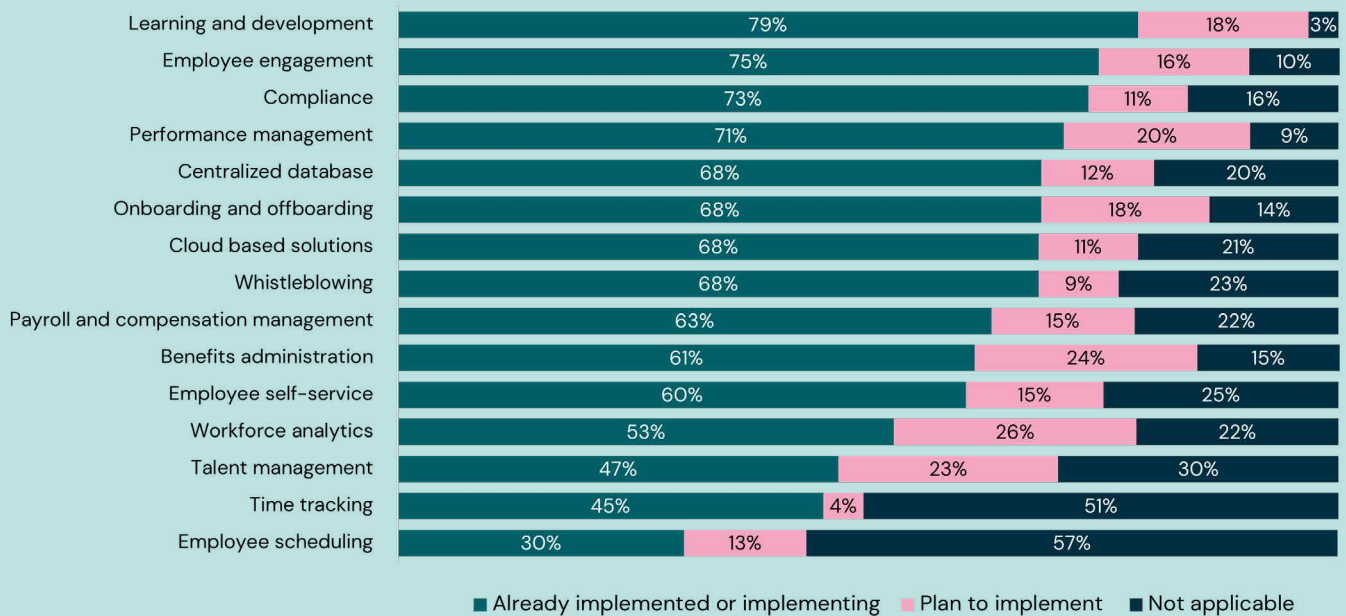


As identified above, some candidates are lost due to slow or difficult recruitment processes. This is in spite of the fact that the vast majority of employers (83%) are already using virtual or online interviews.

## Employee management

There is significant use of technology in relation to current employees, with the greatest investment being in the area of learning and development, such as e-learning.

### Adoption of employee support tools



## AI

It appears that AI has a trust problem.



I would trust AI tools to support the learning and development of employees

I would trust AI tools to support the HR needs of employees

I would trust AI tools to recruit the best candidates

■ Disagree ■ Neither ■ Agree ■ Don't know

Whilst 43% of participants said that they would trust AI tools to support the learning and development of employees, only 11% reported that they would trust AI tools to recruit the best candidates.



It is interesting to note that in our research about recruitment challenges, a number of employers reported losing candidates due to slow or difficult recruitment processes. AI tools might streamline recruitment processes, and help address these challenges, although it appears that the lack of trust is a barrier to this.

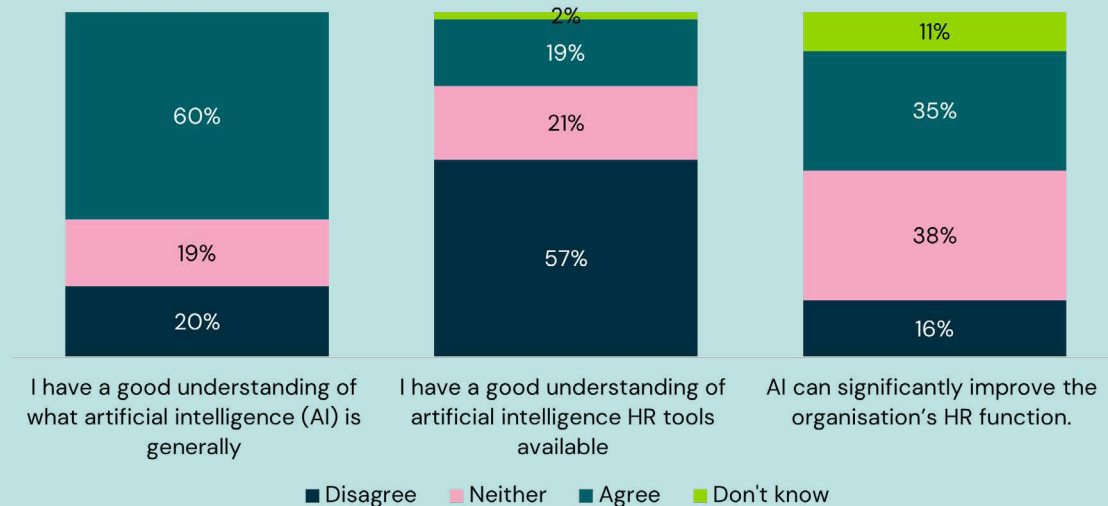
This lack of trust perhaps explains why only 15% of participants said that investing in HR AI tools is a strategic priority for their business. Further, 51% of participants said that they do not currently plan to implement AI HR tools.

## Stage of AI implementation



Why the lack of trust? It seems to us that it is possible that the lack of trust in AI might well be related to a lack of knowledge as to what tools are available.

Our survey revealed that only 19% of participants said they had a good understanding of AI HR tools available. Whilst employers don't seem to trust AI and are not prioritising it, is that because they don't know or understand what is out there?



## Conclusion:

It may be that with some time invested in understanding the available AI tools, trust might be built, enabling businesses to gain a march on their competitors who are still sceptical and untrusting of AI. Even if HR managers invest time in finding out more about the AI possibilities and still do not trust it, then at least they will be making an informed decision based on knowledge of what is available.

## Awards and accreditations



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