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Accounting & Finance

UK Finance Labour Market Trends | June 2026



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Foreword

Accounting & Finance recruitment is characterised by a two-speed economy. While Commerce & Industry hiring has rebounded strongly, Financial Services recruitment remains challenging.

Employers continue to face shortages of qualified finance professionals, particularly those combining technical accounting expertise with commercial, analytical, regulatory and technology skills. Our [2025 Workplace Trends Report](#) found that 77% of employers are finding it challenging to attract skilled talent, particularly in Financial Services where demand for highly specialised skills outpaces supply.

Commerce & Industry has become the strongest growth area within finance recruitment. Market data indicates that accountancy hiring in C&I increased by 17% during 2025, representing the strongest rebound in more than a decade. Growth has been driven by:

- Infrastructure investment
- Manufacturing and engineering expansion
- Retail transformation programmes
- ESG and sustainability reporting requirements
- Digital finance transformation initiatives
- Supply chain and operational restructuring

Demand is strongest for professionals supporting business performance, governance and transformation. In particular, employers are seeking candidates with ERP, data analytics, automation and AI-enabled finance expertise.

Financial Services recruitment presents a nuanced picture. Traditional front-office and investment-related hiring has been impacted by reduced deals, higher interest rates,

cost-reduction programmes, headcount rationalisation and increased automation.

Asset Management hiring has been weak and Investment Banking recruitment remains selective, although compensation is highly competitive for experienced professionals. Demand remains high in Risk & Compliance, while Internal Audit hiring has increased as firms strengthen governance and assurance functions.

Market Trends

Employers continue to face shortages of finance professionals with technical, commercial and technology skills. The market remains candidate-short in specialist niches despite broader economic uncertainty.

Although salary inflation has moderated compared with the post-pandemic period, competition remains strong for qualified finance professionals. Professionals in FP&A, finance business partnering, financial control, treasury, risk and regulatory reporting continue to command premium salaries in London and regionally.

Across both C&I and FS, employers increasingly expect finance professionals to work alongside automation tools, AI platforms and reporting systems.

Market Outlook

The medium-term outlook for UK Accounting & Finance recruitment remains positive, but hiring patterns will differ by sector.

Overall, the UK market has shifted from volume hiring to capability-driven hiring, with employers prioritising finance professionals who can support strategic decision-making, digital transformation and business growth.



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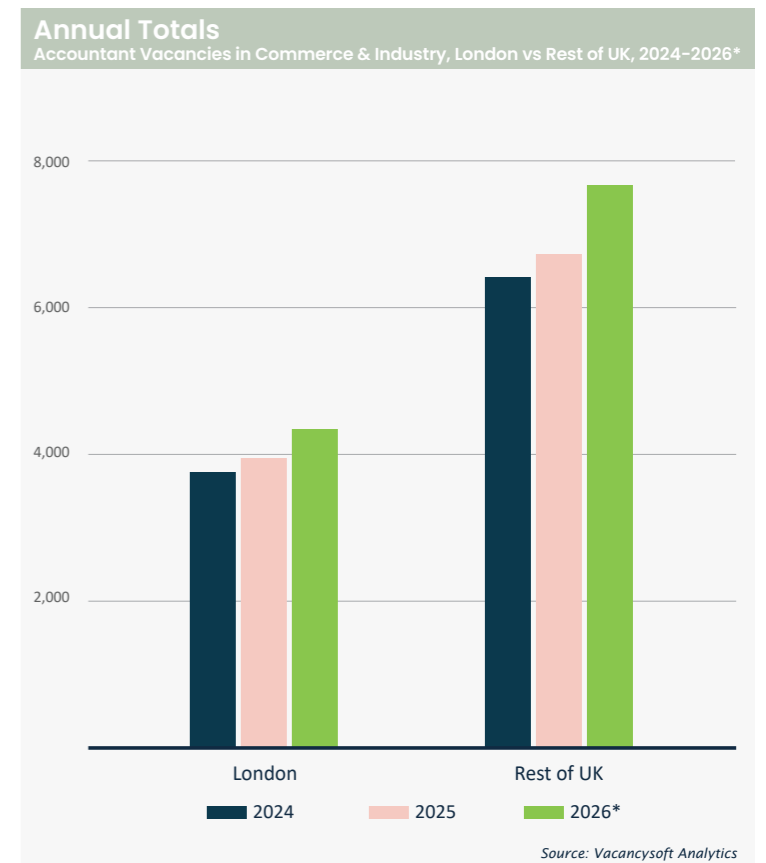
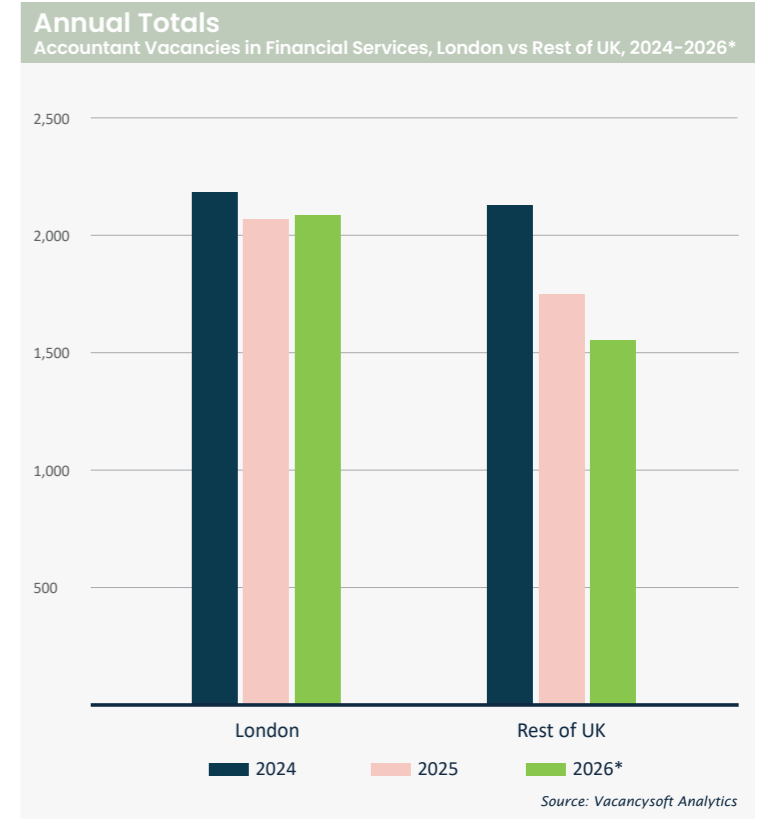
Overview

UK accountancy hiring in 2026 is splitting along sector lines, with Financial Services demand softening while Commerce & Industry accelerates into a second consecutive year of growth. The FCA's Sustainability Disclosure Requirements and UK adoption of the IFRS S1 and S2 standards are reshaping reporting workloads, while energy transition alongside elevated defence spending is feeding finance demand across the real economy. Financial Services employers remain focused on cost discipline and selective investment in Core Banking and Asset Management.

Within Financial Services, UK accountant vacancies are forecast to fall close to 5% in 2026 to around 3,640 roles. This is a softer contraction than the near 12% drop of 2024 to 2025 but is a third consecutive year of decline. London is forecast to edge up just over 1% to roughly 2,090 vacancies, the first uptick after a 6% fall the year before, while the rest of the UK is forecast to drop close to 12% to about 1,550 roles. London's share has climbed from around 51% in 2024 to a forecast 57% in 2026, the strongest regional concentration in the period.

Commerce & Industry (C&I) tells the opposite story, with UK vacancies forecast to rise close to 13% to around 12,020 roles and accelerating from the 5% gain of 2024 to 2025. London is forecast to grow close to 10% to about 4,340 roles, but momentum is stronger outside the capital, where rest-of-UK vacancies are forecast to rise just over 14% to roughly 7,680 roles. The first five months of 2026 have already recorded over 5,000 C&I accountant vacancies against just over 1,500 in Financial Services.

The combined picture is of a labour market rebalancing rather than weakening. Bank rate has held at 3.75% through the spring, leaving the macro backdrop steady as Financial Services consolidates around the capital and Commerce & Industry expands on energy, infrastructure and consumer investment.



2026* - Estimation

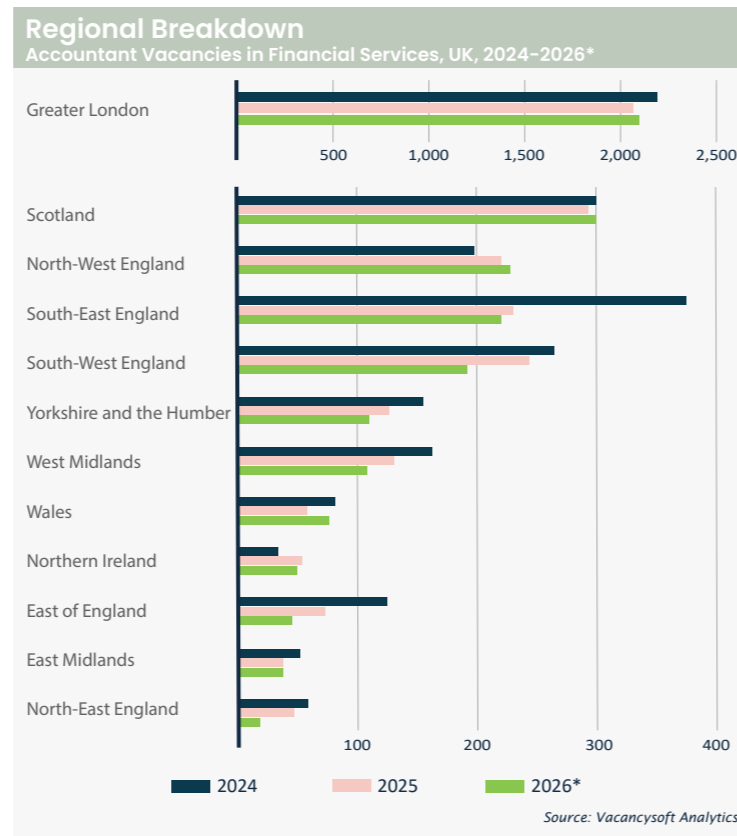
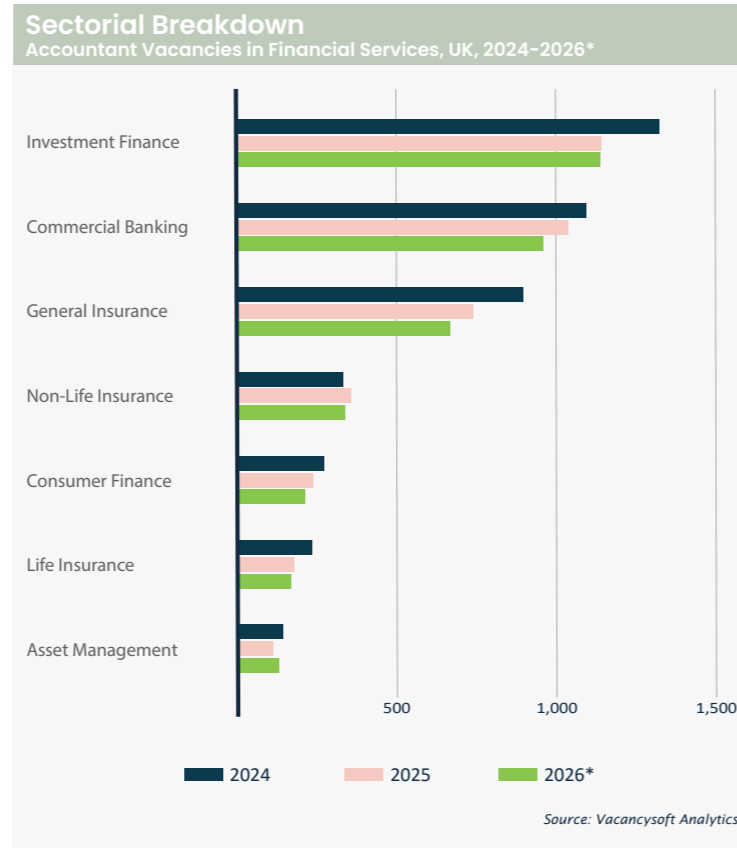
Financial Services

Financial Services (FS) accountancy hiring entered 2026 in its third consecutive year of contraction, yet the shape of demand is changing. UK FS vacancies are forecast to fall close to 5% to around 3,640 roles, lower than the 12% drop of the prior year. The mix is rotating away from Insurance and consumer-credit functions toward Investment, Banking and Asset Management.

Investment Finance remains the largest and most resilient sub-sector, forecast at roughly 1,140 vacancies, essentially flat after a near-14% fall the year before. Its share of FS accountant demand has risen from just under 30% in 2025 to close to 31% in 2026, the highest in the period. Commercial Banking follows at around 960 vacancies, an 8% decline after a 5% fall the prior year, with the sub-sector's share easing only marginally to roughly 26%. Together, these two sub-sectors now account for close to 58% of UK FS accountant vacancies, the most concentrated percentage in the three-year window.

Insurance and Consumer Finance remain the weakest pockets of demand. General Insurance is forecast to fall close to 10% to around 670 roles, Consumer Finance just over 9% to about 220, Non-Life Insurance close to 4% to roughly 350, and Life Insurance just over 3% to around 170. Asset Management is the only FS sub-sector forecast to grow, rising by nearly 16% to approximately 140 roles after a 21% decline the previous year, marking a tentative recovery from a low base.

Regionally, the consolidation around London is the defining feature of 2026. Greater London is forecast to grow just over 1% to around 2,090 vacancies, Scotland close to 2% to 300 and the North West close to 4% to 230. Almost every other region is forecast to retrench, as banks, insurers and consumer-finance firms consolidate finance functions into the capital and a handful of established regional hubs.



2026* - Estimation

Commerce & Industry

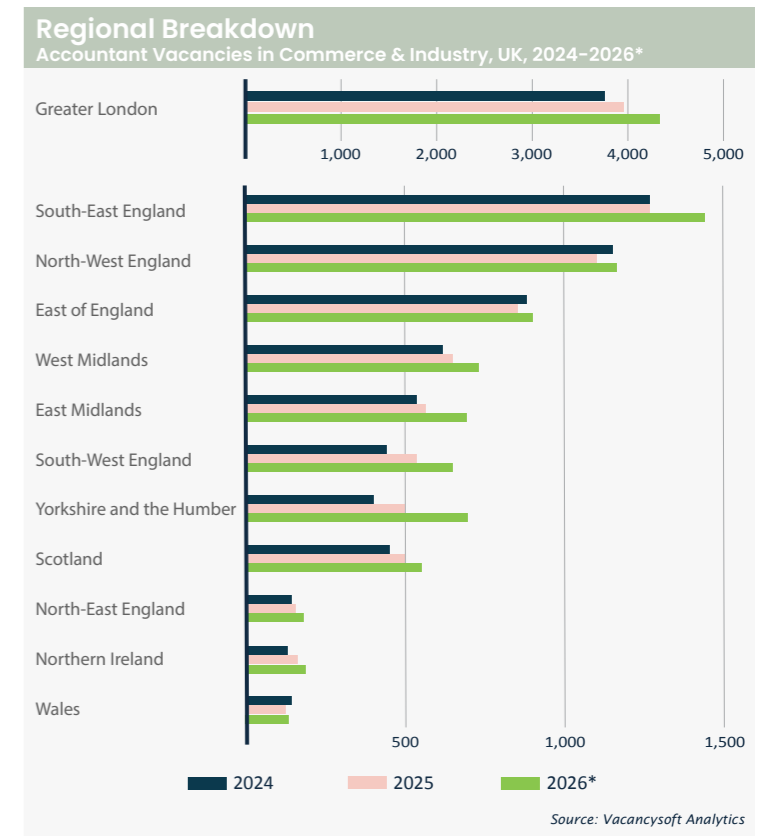
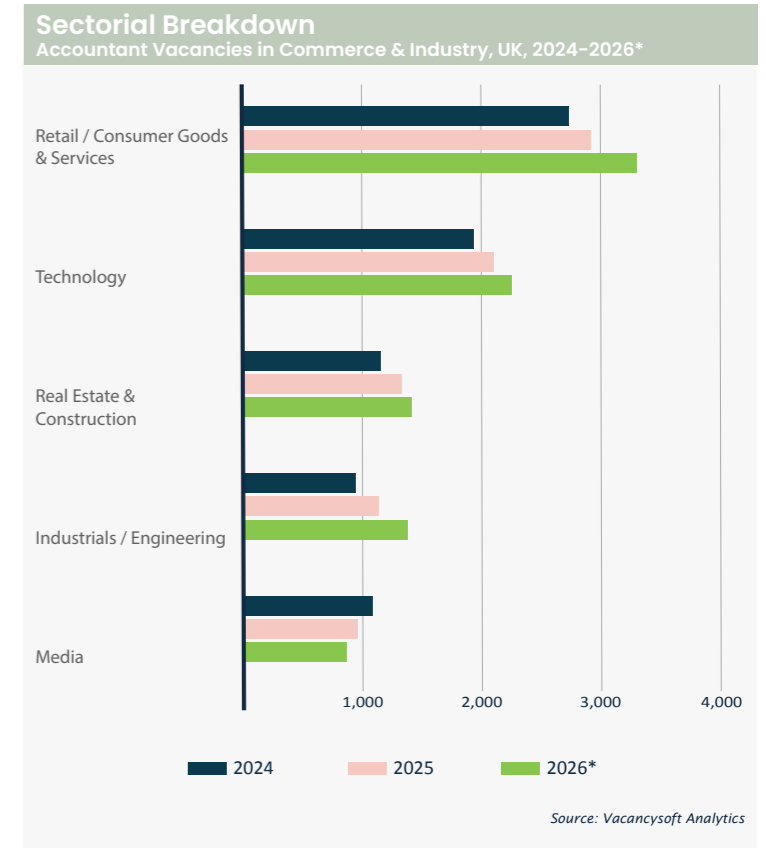
Commerce & Industry (C&I) is the engine of UK accountancy hiring in 2026. Vacancies are forecast to rise close to 13% to around 12,020 roles, accelerating from the 5% gain of 2024 to 2025. The breadth of growth across regions and sectors marks a clear step-change from the more uneven recovery of last year. The first five months of 2026 have already recorded just over 5,000 C&I accountant vacancies. This is consistent with this trajectory and pointing to sustained rather than front-loaded momentum.

Regionally, growth is broad-based and decisively tilted outside the capital. Greater London is forecast to grow close to 10% to around 4,300 roles, but its share of national C&I demand slips marginally from just over 37% to around 36% as the rest of the UK outpaces it.

Yorkshire and the Humber leads the regional table with a 40% rise to roughly 700 vacancies, building on a 25% gain from 2024 to 2025. The East Midlands is forecast to grow close to 23% to about 690 roles, and the South West close to 21% to around 650, while Northern Ireland, the North East and the West Midlands all post double-digit gains, and no major centre is contracting.

Sectorally, the standout is Energy and Utilities, forecast to rise close to 75% to around 760 vacancies, the steepest gain among C&I sectors and a clear marker of the finance build-out underpinning the energy-transition cycle. Support Services follows with a forecast 49% rise to roughly 530 roles, consistent with continued growth in outsourcing and facilities platforms.

Among the larger sectors, Industrials and Engineering is forecast to grow just over 20% to around 1,390 vacancies, a second consecutive year of near-20% growth that aligns with elevated defence spending and reshoring activity. Retail and Consumer Goods remains the largest sector overall at about 3,300 vacancies, up just over 13%.



2026* - Estimation

Companies to Watch

The top of the Financial Services table is led by the global banks. JPMorgan Chase is forecast at around 175 vacancies in 2026, close to 18% higher year-on-year and the largest FS employer of accountants in the UK by a clear margin, extending a 14% gain in 2024 to 2025.

Barclays follows at about 100 vacancies, just under 7% higher after a 64% surge the prior year, and Lloyds Banking Group at roughly 90, just over 19% lower in a second year of double-digit decline that reflects continued cost discipline in UK retail banking.

Legal and General is forecast at around 90 vacancies, recovering close to 14% from a 34% fall the year before, while BNY Mellon is the standout, forecast close to 83% higher at about 80 roles as the firm scales its UK custody and asset-servicing footprint.

Morgan Stanley, AXA and NatWest all post gains, while Goldman Sachs, Blackrock and a longer tail of large insurers and asset managers continue to reduce headcount.

Across Commerce & Industry, the leading employers reflect the broader sectoral story. Sainsbury's leads the C&I table at around 110 vacancies, more than doubling in 2025, with continued investment in finance transformation across its grocery and convenience estate.

Sodexo is forecast at roughly 90 vacancies, more than tripling in 2025 and the steepest forecast gain among any large employer in the dataset, while Entain is forecast to rise close to 107% to a similar total.

National Grid and SSE underscore the Energy and Utilities surge, each forecast above 80 vacancies and more than doubling on the year, while BAE Systems eases close to 9% from an elevated 2025 base, and Babcock continues to expand close to 16% to around 70 roles.

Greene King, EasyJet and WH Smith round out a top tier in which consumer-facing employers continue to feature heavily as trading conditions stabilise.

Top 10 Companies Accountant Vacancies in Financial Services, UK, 2024-2026*			
Company	2025	2026*	YoY% 25-26*
AXA	38	48	26.3%
Barclays	90	96	6.7%
Blackrock	49	48	-2.0%
BNY Mellon	42	77	82.9%
Goldman Sachs	55	48	-12.7%
JPMorgan Chase	148	175	18.4%
Legal & General	80	91	14.0%
Lloyds Banking Group	116	94	-19.3%
Morgan Stanley	53	65	22.3%
NatWest	51	53	3.5%

Source: Vacancysoft Analytics

Top 10 Companies Accountant Vacancies in Commerce & Industry, UK, 2024-2026*			
Company	2025	2026*	YoY% 25-26*
Babcock	62	72	16.1%
BAE Systems	95	86	-9.1%
EasyJet	34	65	90.6%
Entain	44	91	107.3%
Greene King	43	70	61.9%
National Grid	38	89	133.7%
Sainsbury's	54	113	108.9%
Sodexo	25	91	264.8%
SSE	39	84	115.4%
WH Smith	67	65	-3.3%

2026* - Estimation

Source: Vacancysoft Analytics

About Morgan McKinley

Morgan McKinley is a global talent services expert, offering the full spectrum of solutions to meet employers' and jobseekers' needs. With 19 offices in 10 countries and nearly 1000 employees, it provides three distinct solutions for customers:

Morgan McKinley Recruitment Solutions encompasses deep expertise across 10 professional disciplines, offering temporary, contract and permanent recruitment; Morgan McKinley Executive Search targets C-Suite talent searches; and Morgan McKinley Talent Solutions includes RPO, MSP, Project Recruitment and more.

Morgan McKinley is part of Org Group, a professional services firm focused on reshaping how work gets done through technology and talent.

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Vacancysoft is the UK's leading provider of labour market data and analytics. We provide high-grade lead generation, client intelligence and market analysis solutions for Britain's top recruitment industry firms and others.

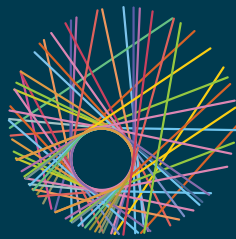
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