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TECH MARKET INSIGHTS GUIDE 2026

Your Complete Guide to Tech Sector
Salaries, Hiring Trends & Strategic
Insights



INTRODUCTION

2026 marks a pivotal year for the UK technology sector. Despite economic headwinds, the tech industry continues to evolve, driven by AI adoption, cloud infrastructure expansion, and cybersecurity imperatives. While salary budgets remain steady, hiring strategies are shifting emphasising flexibility, skills-first recruitment, and long-term workforce planning.

At IntaPeople, we help hiring managers stay ahead of the curve. This guide offers a comprehensive overview of:

- Salary benchmarks across key tech roles
- Emerging hiring trends and challenges
- Remote work's impact on compensation
- Skills in highest demand
- Strategic insights to attract and retain top talent

Whether you're scaling a tech team or refining your EVP, this guide equips you with the data and context to make confident decisions.



MARKET TRENDS

CONFIDENCE RETURNS, CAUTIOUSLY

- 60% of UK tech firms expect stable or improved conditions
- Investment in AI, cloud, and cybersecurity continues to drive demand
- Remote and hybrid work remains dominant, with 44% of UK workers spending time at home

HIRING CHALLENGES

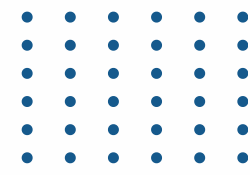
- Skills shortages persist, especially in AI, cloud, and security
- Junior talent development is hindered by remote setups
- Retention pressures remain, with 62% of firms struggling to keep tech talent

STRATEGIC SHIFTS

- Hybrid models are now the norm, balancing flexibility with collaboration
- Employers are reimagining compensation—not just salaries, but benefits, equity, and career development
- AI is reshaping roles, not replacing them. Software developers, data engineers, and AI product managers remain core



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IN DEMAND FOR 2026

Roles

-  Cloud Security Engineer
-  AI/ML Engineer
-  DevOps/Platform Eng.
-  Cybersecurity Analyst
-  Data Engineer

Skills

-  AI & Machine Learning
-  Cloud Infrastructure
-  Cybersecurity
-  Data & Analytics
-  DevOps & CI/CD

PERMANENT VS CONTRACT



SUMMARY

Permanent hiring is stabilising, especially for strategic roles in AI, cloud, and security. Contract roles remain strong for project-based needs, particularly in data, software, and transformation.

Permanent

Contract

Hiring intentions

Over half of UK employers plan to increase permanent headcount in the first half of 2026.

Has experienced fluctuations due to economic factors, with some periods showing a decline in demand.

Sector Demand

Sectors such as AI, cybersecurity, and cloud computing are seeing increased demand.

Certain tech sectors see strong demand for contract roles, indicating targeted project-based hiring.

Hiring Practices

Hiring is expected to remain stable in 2026, with strategic roles in AI, cloud, and cybersecurity driving steady growth across the UK

Employers are increasingly adopting project-based hiring models, for specific, short-term needs, especially in high-demand tech areas.

Market trends

29.3% of employers surveyed intend to significantly increase their permanent workforce, suggesting a strong demand.

Despite overall market fluctuations, certain sectors continue to see strong demand indicating targeted project-based hiring.



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Artificial Intelligence & Autonomous Agents



Redefining software roles: Developers are now expected to integrate and optimize AI models, not just write code.

Creating hybrid roles: AI Product Managers, Prompt Engineers, and AI Ethics Leads are emerging as critical hires.



Quantum Computing

Quantum is moving from lab to enterprise. The UK's £2.5 billion investment is creating demand for: Quantum Software Developers, Quantum Cryptography Analysts, Quantum Security Architects – blending physics, engineering, and cybersecurity.



Cyber Security

AI-powered cyber defence tools are reshaping SOC operations. Deepfake detection and synthetic threat mitigation are new skill areas. Crowdsourced red teaming is gaining traction for scalable offensive security.



Green Tech & Sustainability

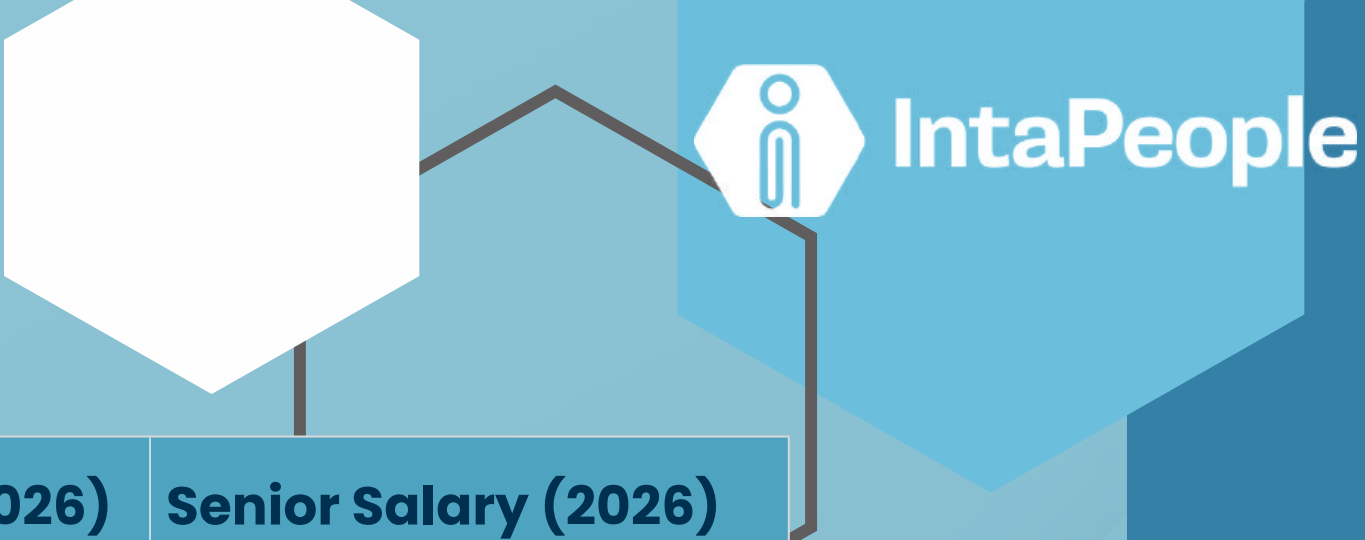
Emerging roles: Green Software Developers, Cloud Sustainability Engineers, ESG Analysts, and Smart Grid Architects.

Skills needed: Energy-efficient coding, carbon accounting, IoT for smart infrastructure, and data analytics for environmental impact.

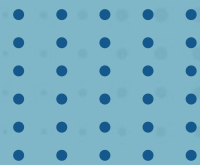
EMERGING TECH IMPACTING HIRING



SALARY BENCHMARK



Job Title	Junior Salary (2026)	Mid-Level Salary (2026)	Senior Salary (2026)
Software Engineer	£28,350 - £36,750	£36,750 - £52,500	£57,750 - £73,500
Lead Software Engineer	£78,750 - £84,000	£84,000 - £89,250	£89,250 - £94,500
Software Engineering Manager	£84,000 - £89,250	£89,250 - £94,500	£94,500 - £105,000
Data Engineer	£31,500 - £36,750	£42,000 - £52,500	£52,500 - £78,750
Infrastructure Engineer	£28,350 - £31,500	£36,750 - £42,000	£42,000 - £52,500
DevOps Engineer	£28,350 - £36,750	£42,000 - £57,750	£68,250 - £94,500
Software Tester (Manual)	£28,350 - £31,500	£36,750 - £42,000	£47,250 - £57,750
Software Tester (Automation)	£31,500 - £36,750	£36,750 - £47,250	£57,750 - £68,250
Business Analyst	£31,500 - £36,750	£36,750 - £47,250	£52,500 - £63,000
Project Manager	£31,500 - £36,750	£36,750 - £47,250	£52,500 - £63,000
Information Security Manager	£42,000 - £47,250	£47,250 - £57,750	£57,750 - £78,750
Security Engineer	£36,750 - £42,000	£42,000 - £52,500	£57,750 - £68,250
Security Analyst	£28,350 - £31,500	£36,750 - £42,000	£42,000 - £47,250

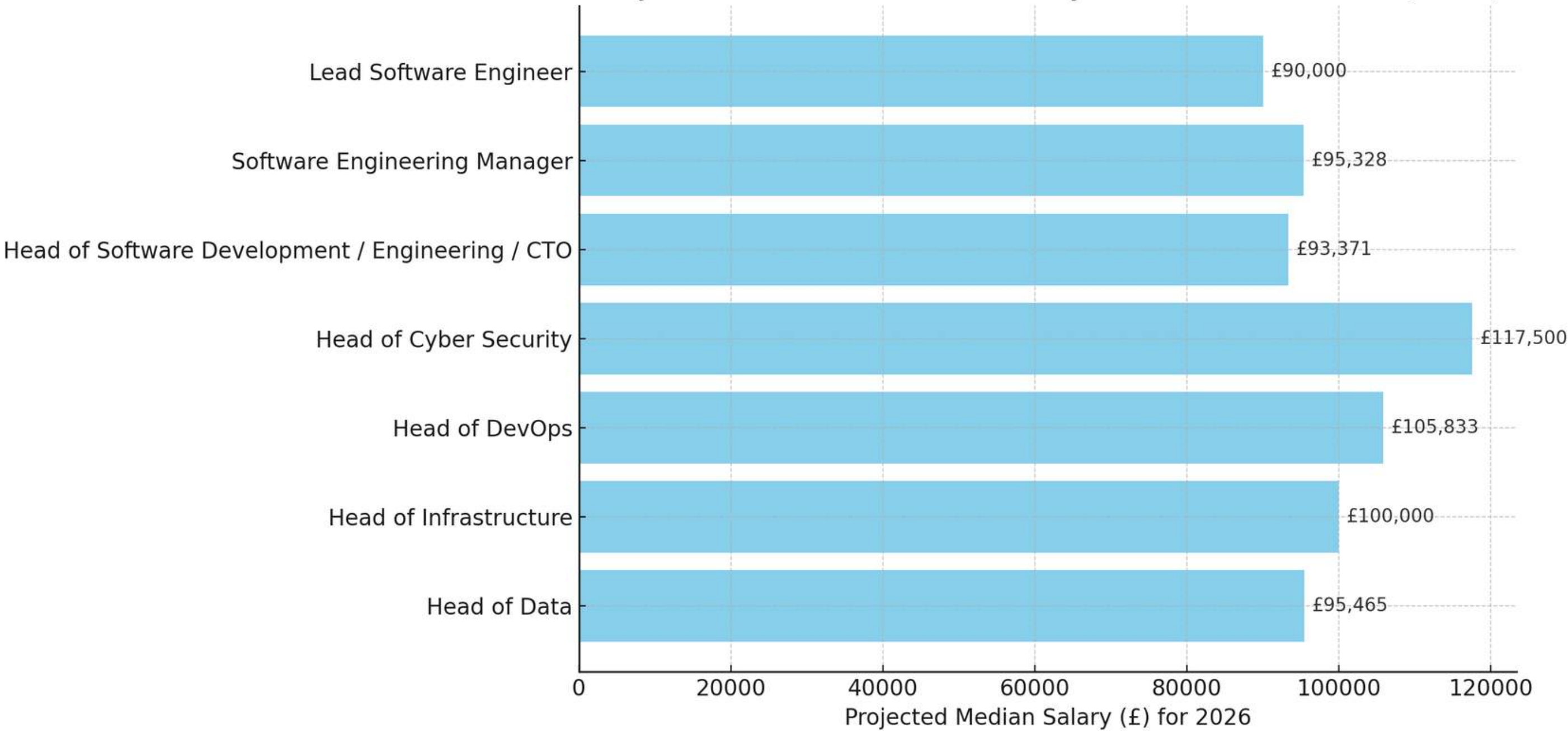


MANAGEMENT SALARIES



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Projected Median Salaries for Key Tech Roles in the UK (2026)



ROLE INSIGHTS (WALES)



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CYBER SECURITY ENGINEER

Median Tenure: 1.2 years

Number of professionals this year: +3%

Changed roles this year: 14.5%

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Median Tenure: 2 years

Number of professionals this year: -0.2%

Changed roles this year: 13%

DEVOPS ENGINEER

Median Tenure: 2.3 years

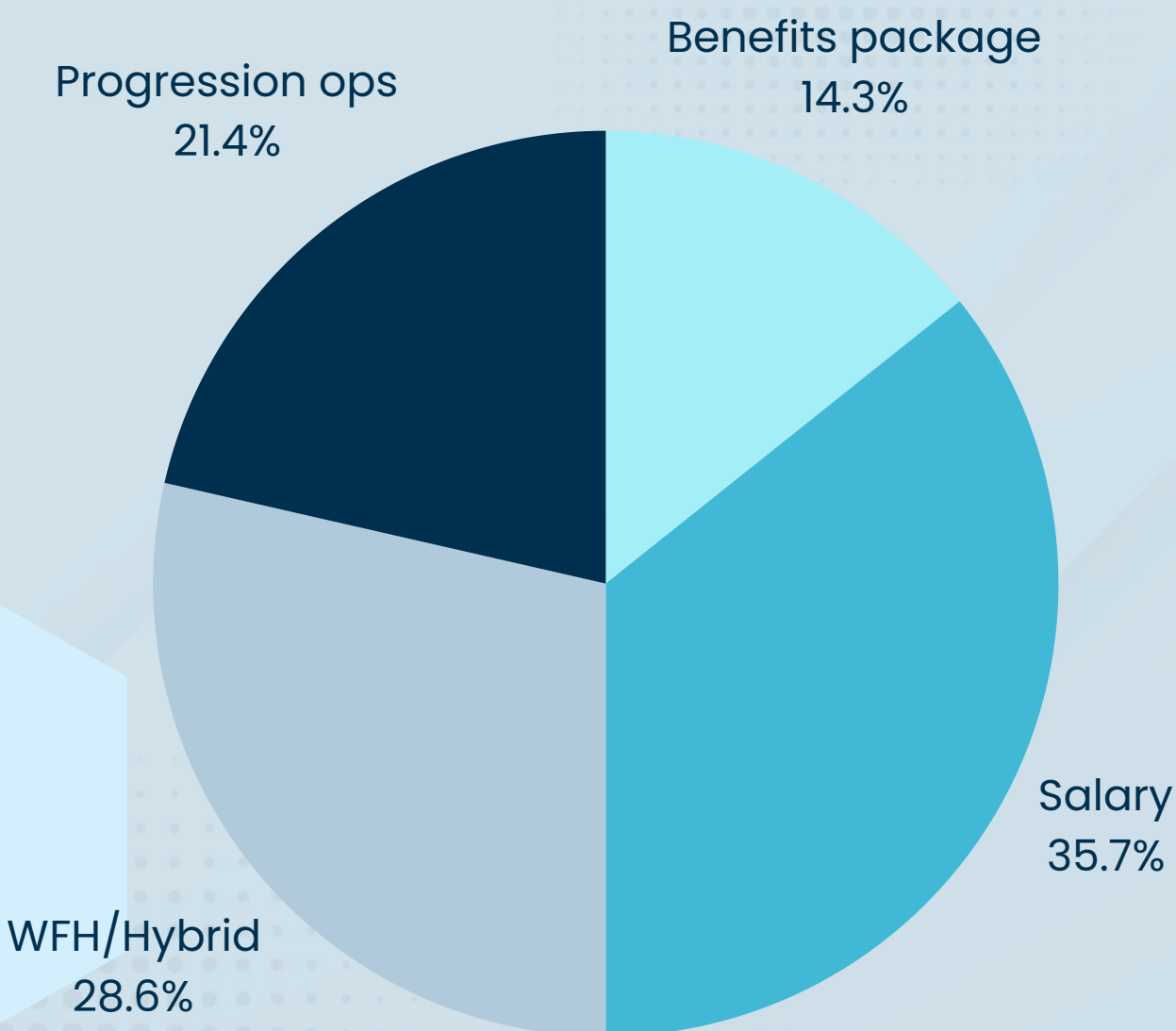
Number of professionals this year: +0.8%

Changed roles this year: 12.6%

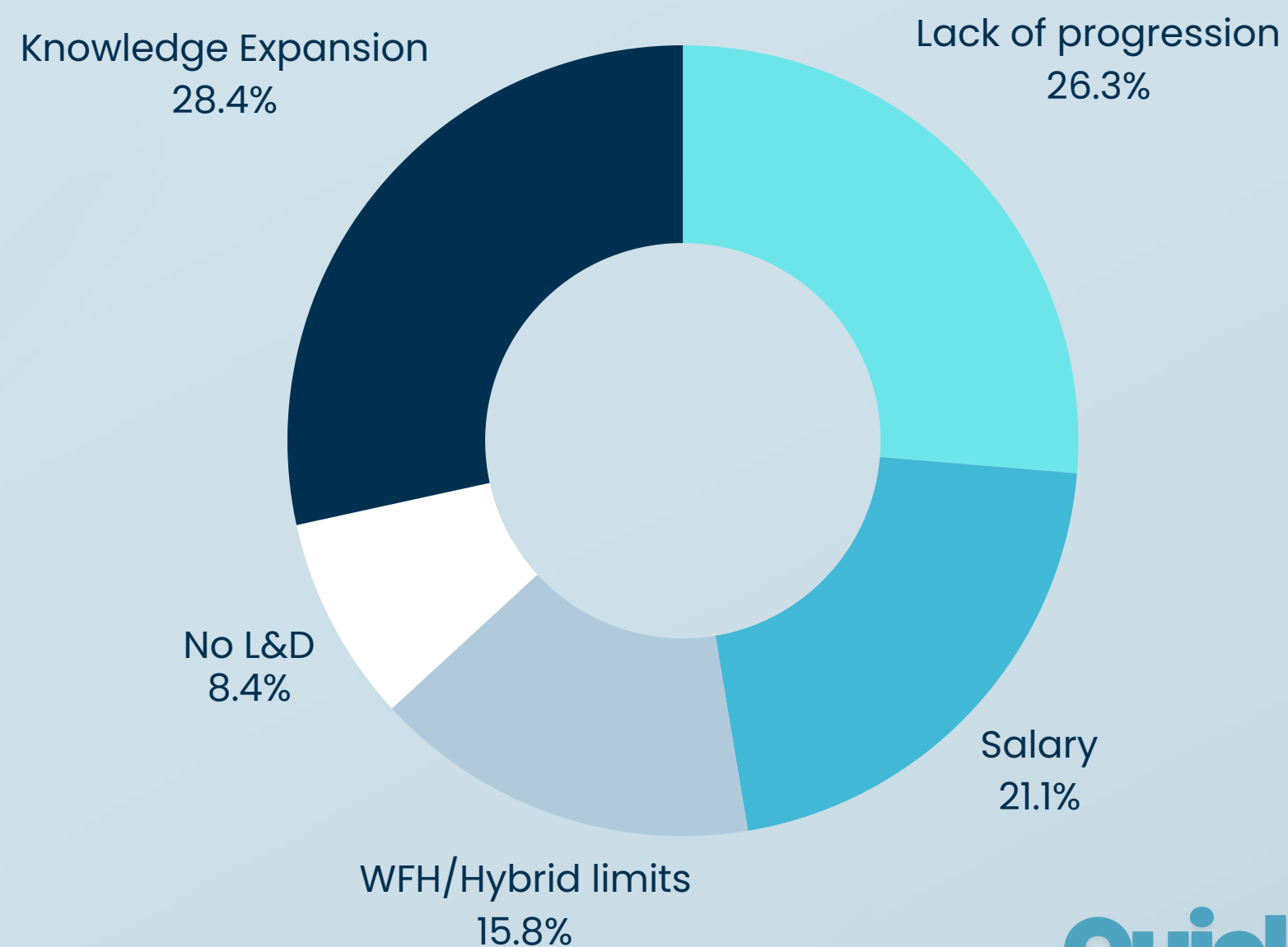


ATTRACTION/RETENTION

Important to candidates



Reasons for leaving



Quick Wins

- ✓ 2 stage interviews
- ✓ Fast feedback
- ✓ Learning and development
- ✓ Clear career paths



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STRATEGIC HIRING RECOMMENDATIONS



- ✓ **Invest in EVP:** Candidates value flexibility, career growth, and purpose as much as pay
- ✓ **Upskill Internally:** Address shortages by developing junior talent, especially in hybrid environments
- ✓ **Diversify Hiring Channels:** Tap into underrepresented talent pools and international candidates
- ✓ **Partner Strategically:** Collaborate with specialist recruiters who understand tech nuances



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PARTNER WITH INTAPEOPLE

At IntaPeople, we don't just fill roles, we build teams. Our deep sector expertise, consultative approach, and commitment to long-term partnerships make us a trusted ally for tech hiring managers across the UK.

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