

AI MARKET & SALARY INSIGHTS

2025 - 2026

UNLOCKING TALENT IN THE AI ERA

UK DATA & AI JOB MARKET SNAPSHOT

Market Growth & Adoption

AI MARKET VALUE:

Replace with this: 'The UK AI market is estimated to be worth more than **£21 billion**, with a growth trajectory targeting **£1 trillion** by 2035.' Source: Forbes.com

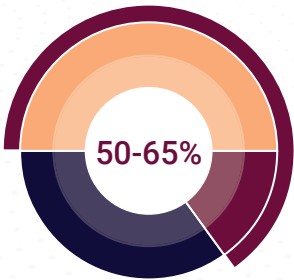
over
£21 billion
in 2025

BUSINESS ADOPTION:

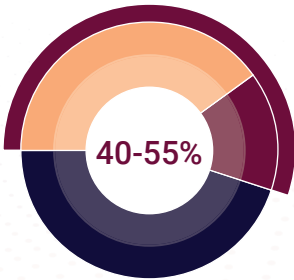
A survey of 300 tech leaders, developers, and AI practitioners found that of respondents say their organizations **already use agentic AI systems**.
Source: Techstrong.ai

72%

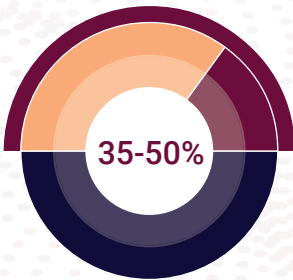
AI SOLUTION ESTIMATED % OF ORGANISATIONS USING:



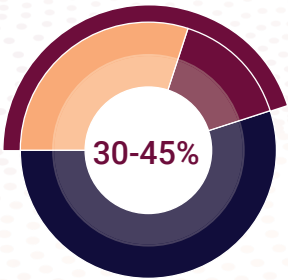
Text Generation
& Summarization
(among those using GenAI/AI)



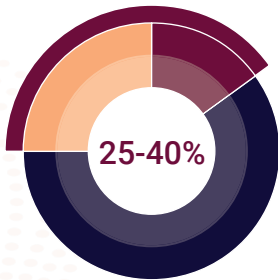
Workflow Automation
/ Orchestration



Customer Service / Chatbots
/ Virtual Agents



Code Generation
/ Developer Assistance



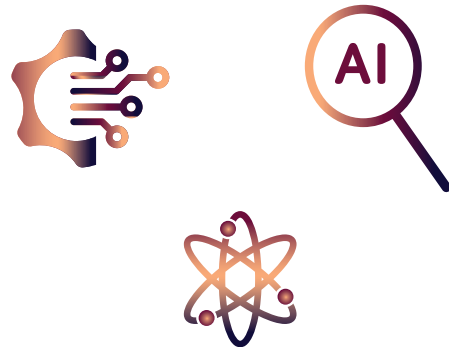
Knowledge Management
/ Search & Retrieval

"Compiled from McKinsey (2025), RSM Middle Market AI Survey (2025), MLQ Media (2025), Gartner/Statista (2025), Master of Code (2025), a16z (2025), and Stack Overflow (2025). Figures represent approximate utilization across enterprises adopting AI globally."

In-Demand Roles & Skills

TOP ROLES:

- Agentic AI Engineer
- AI Product Manager
- AI Forward Deployed Engineer
- AI Research Scientist
- AI Governance Lead
- AI Infrastructure Engineer
- Head of AI Strategy



ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Turns proof-of-concepts into production-grade multi-agent systems - a rare blend of ML, SE, and orchestration.
- Pushes the boundaries of what models and agents can do; vital for innovation pipelines.
- Data pipelines - Model deployment & monitoring - Vector DB / RAG infra - Containerization - Observability & performance tuning.
- Applied ML / AI integration - Systems & data architecture - Cloud infrastructure and security standards - Basic UI / UX prototyping.

Recruitment Trends

AI IN RECRUITMENT:

The adoption of AI in recruitment processes has **quadrupled over the past year**



72% of UK employers are now **implementing AI** in their hiring processes

45% of large companies **utilize AI** to conduct candidate interviews

In Insight Global's 2025 AI in Hiring Report, **98%** hiring managers who use AI say it has **improved their hiring process** in some way

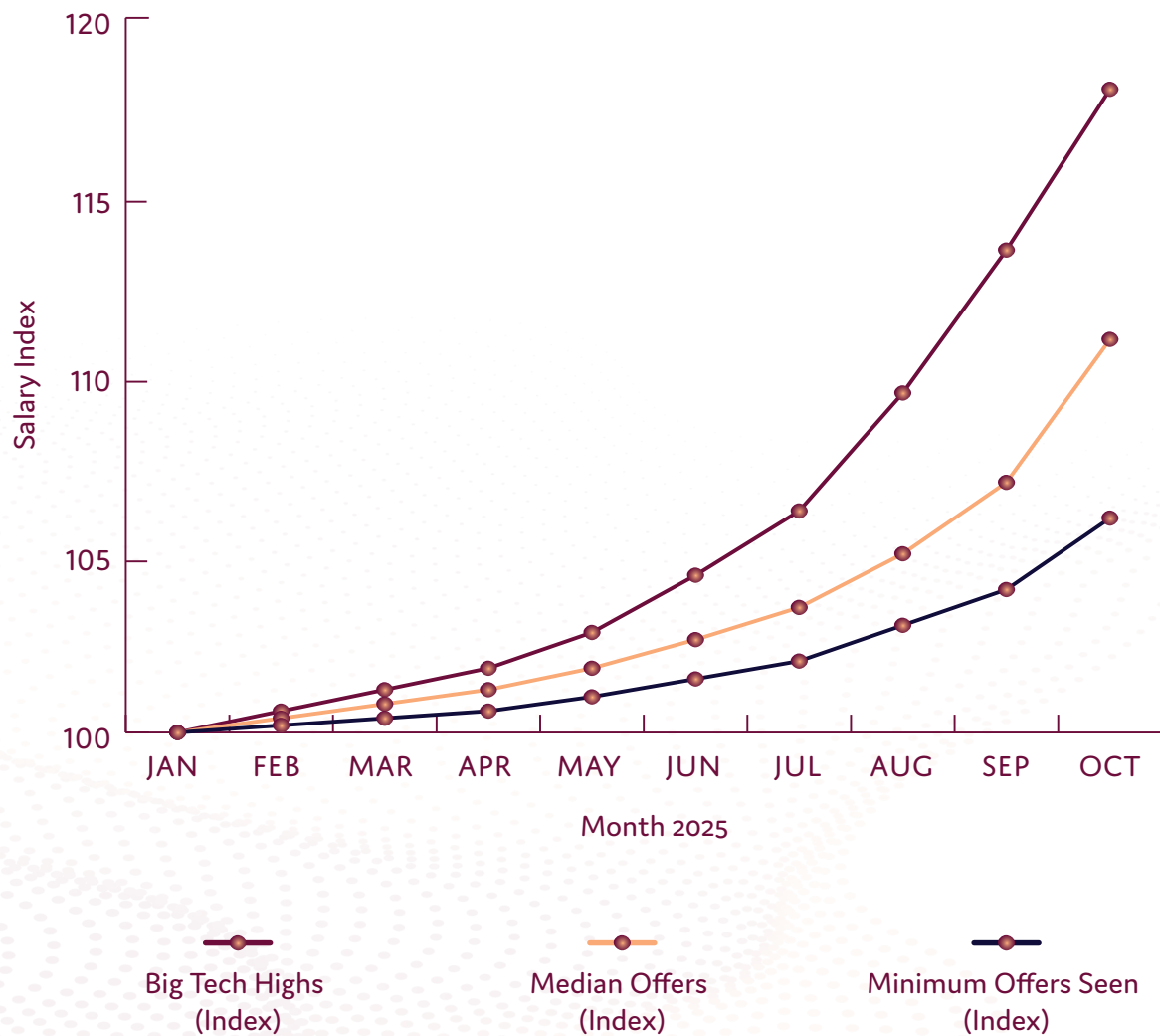
EFFICIENCY GAINS:

AI reduces the average cost of hiring **BY 71%**

Recruiters save an average **OF 4.5 HOURS PER WEEK** through AI tools

The AI Talent Salary Report 2025 suggests AI roles command a 28% premium over “comparable tech roles” globally.

UK AI HIRING SALARY INFLATION (JAN - OCT 2025)



INSIGHTS

Omnis Partners is working with a range of organisations leading the market in the development and deployment of AI to enhance business efficiency.

Despite ongoing volatility in technology hiring, we are seeing strong demand in specific sectors as organisations invest in their AI and data platforms. Businesses are turning to consulting and professional services firms with **proven AI capabilities** to support large-scale adoption programs. We are partnering with both well-resourced consultancies and innovative boutique firms as they look to attract individuals with demonstrable enablement capability; those who blend technical expertise with commercial acumen.

The bar for hiring remains exceptionally high. Salaries are rising significantly above market trends, with offers typically **15 - 20% above** current compensation, along with sign-on **bonuses between 5 - 10%** for top-tier candidates.

Within this sector, we have returned to a candidate-driven market, with individuals frequently entertaining 4 - 6 opportunities simultaneously.

In contrast, some companies looking to enter the AI market lack a clear strategy and continue to use outdated, slow, and laborious interview processes. This often results in poor candidate experiences, reduced engagement, and a cycle of re-advertising roles, weakening employer brand traction.

The firms winning the war for talent are those with a **clearly articulated AI strategy, strong technical direction, and decisive leadership**. Their interview processes are rigorous yet efficient, and their employee value propositions resonate alongside a clear business vision.

Organisations are re-evaluating their salary bandings and benchmarking to reflect tangible AI experience, which continues to command a premium.

We are also seeing rising investment appetite in start-up and scale-ups. These organisations offer **fresh approaches to AI and exciting opportunities** to join early in a business journey, getting hands-on with the development of new technologies. As with consulting, the bar for hiring is exceptionally high, with impeccable academic credentials required, ideally alongside prior experience in Big Tech.

Demand is currently strongest across AI Infrastructure, Agentic AI Architecture, Productionisation and Orchestration, and AI Product. Firms are hiring aggressively to secure the very best talent, with demand patterns now matching pre-pandemic levels. As a result, the top candidates continue to receive multiple offers, prompting firms to enhance salaries, working conditions, and equity incentives.

The winners in this new talent paradigm will be those able to combine a compelling strategic narrative with an enticing employee value proposition and a dynamic approach to sourcing, interviewing, and onboarding.

SALARY INFORMATION

With UK AI salaries rocketing, use these ranges as a compass not a contract
- from lean minimums (harder to hire), through healthy medians, to Big Tech's
and Consultancy's stratospheric peaks.

	MIN	MED	MAX
MACHINE LEARNING			
Turning messy data into reliable, automated decisions - blending data prep & model design.			
Machine Learning Engineer	£80k	£100k	£120k
Senior Machine Learning Engineer	£110k	£140k	£180k
Lead/Principal Machine Learning Engineer	£150k	£180k	£220k
ML OPS & AI INFRASTRUCTURE			
Specialist in deploying, fine turning and monitoring ML models & LLMs at scale.			
MLOps Engineer	£80k	£100k	£120k
Senior MLOps Engineer	£110k	£140k	£180k
Lead/Principal MLOps Engineer	£150k	£180k	£220k
LLMOps Engineer	£80k	£100k	£120k
Senior LLMOps Engineer	£110k	£140k	£180k
Lead/Principal LLMOps Engineer	£150k	£180k	£220k
AGENTIC AI ENGINEERING & ORCHESTRATION			
The end-to-end discipline that advances methods, builds & ships production grade multi-agent systems and sets strategy, governance & scale.			
AI Research Scientist	£70k	£110k	£130k
AI Engineer	£90k	£130k	£180k
AI Forward Deployed Engineer	£120k	£160k	£200k

	MIN	MED	MAX
AI INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLATFORM (AGENTIC AI ERA)			
Builds GPU/TPU clusters, distributed training, scalable serving.			
AI Infrastructure Engineer	£75k	£95k	£120k
Senior AI Infrastructure Engineer	£110k	£140k	£180k
Lead/Principal Infrastructure Engineer	£140k	£170k	£220k
Designs internal platforms for model orchestration, RAG pipelines and agent frameworks.			
AI Platform Engineer	£70k	£90k	£110k
Senior AI Platform Engineer	£110k	£140k	£180k
Lead/Principal AI Platform Engineer	£140k	£170	£220k
DATA ENGINEERING & PLATFORM (AI-READY DATA SYSTEMS)			
Now evolving into AI/real-time data engineers.			
Senior Data Engineer	£100k	£130k	£160k
Owns AI ready pipelines real-time, ELT, streaming, feature stores.			
Lead/Principal Data Engineer	£120k	£160k	£200k
Builds cloud native infra optimised for AI workloads.			
Data Platform Engineer	£75k	£95k	£115k
Senior Data Platform Engineer	£110k	£140k	£170k
Lead/Principal Data Platform Engineer	£140k	£170k	£210k
SENIOR LEADERSHIP			
Very senior, with strong AI infrastructure strategy, real-time pipelines, high leadership scope.			
Head of Data Engineering	£130k	£180k	£220k
Truly owns AI Infrastructure Strategy: large scale inference, GPU/TPU/cluster architecture, reliability, cost, LLM deployment, leadership			
Head of AI / AI Infrastructure	£150k	£200k	£230k
With an AI/data platform focus, real-time / streaming / hybrid / unstructured data.			
Head of Data Architecture	£130k	£180k	£250k
Data, AI infrastructure, and AI productization under one leader.			
Data & AI Director	£150k	£200k	£280k



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