



UK Recruitment Benchmarks Report 2026

A practical guide to fees, time-to-fill and conversion performance.

Introduction

This report outlines realistic recruitment benchmarks across the UK market, focusing on fees, time-to-fill and conversion rates. It is designed to help agencies understand performance and identify areas for improvement.

1. Recruitment Fees

- 1 15%–20%: Lower margin or high-volume roles
- 2 20%–25%: Typical market range
- 3 25%–35%+: Specialist or niche roles

Most agencies operate within the 20–25% range. Consistently lower fees often indicate positioning issues rather than market constraints.

2. Time-to-Fill

- 1 20–30 days: Strong performance
- 2 30–45 days: Market average
- 3 45+ days: Likely process inefficiencies

Time-to-fill is influenced by job qualification, client responsiveness and candidate availability.

3. Conversion Rates

CV to Interview

- 1 Target range: 30–50%
- 2 Lower rates often indicate poor job briefs or weak candidate alignment

Interview to Offer

- 1 Target range: 40–60%
- 2 Lower rates suggest issues with client clarity or candidate preparation

Offer to Placement

- 1 Target range: 80–95%
- 2 Drop-offs often relate to counter-offers or expectation gaps

4. Key Observations

- 1 High activity does not equal high performance
- 2 Better job qualification leads to stronger conversion rates
- 3 Process control significantly impacts time-to-fill
- 4 Visibility of data is critical for consistent growth

5. Benchmark Checklist

Use the following checklist to track performance over a 30-day period:

- 1 Track average fees and identify low-margin placements
- 2 Measure time-to-fill across all roles
- 3 Calculate conversion rates at each stage
- 4 Identify where deals are lost
- 5 Review job quality and exclusivity
- 6 Compare activity levels against placements achieved

Conclusion

Recruitment performance is driven by clarity, control and consistency. Agencies that track these metrics accurately are better positioned to improve outcomes and scale effectively.