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UK employee engagement 2026 at a glance

The published evidence on one page: headline numbers, five drivers, six sectors

10%

of UK employees engaged on Gallup's strict measure; Europe 12%, world 20%. *Gallup, April 2026*

70%

satisfied with their job; 18% expect to quit within a year; half satisfied with pay. *CIPD Good Work Index, July 2026*

46%

felt a lot of stress the previous day, well above the European average of 39%. *Gallup*

Five things the evidence agrees on

1. **The line manager is the biggest lever.** Job satisfaction 89% with a top-quartile manager, 38% with a bottom-quartile one (CIPD).
2. **Development holds up, career prospects do not.** 54% see good skills development; 36% see good prospects for advancement (CIPD).
3. **How change is led separates the engaged from the rest.** Change handled well is the largest differentiator, 1.9×; only 55% rate it favourably (Perceptyx).
4. **Workload and wellbeing are the pressure points.** 30% say their workload is too high: private 28%, public 37%, third sector 39% (CIPD).
5. **Recognition moves engagement independently of pay.** In the NHS, 43% feel the organisation values their work; 73% feel their manager does (NHS Staff Survey 2025).

Sector by sector

Sector	Engagement 2026	Distinctive
NHS	6.75 / 10, down from 6.85	Pay satisfaction 32%; career development 51% and falling
Civil Service	65% index, up one point	32% say change is handled well
Manufacturing	6.8–7.2 / 10 (Hive)	86% expect employment costs to rise; management the top retraining priority
Technology	7.9 / 10 (Hive)	Highest-scoring sector; eNPS +31 to +35
Government	6.5–6.6 / 10 (Hive)	Lowest-scoring sector; eNPS −14 to −10
Retail & hospitality	No 2026 index	Highest churn (hospitality 52%, CIPD/ONS 2022-23); 42% retail / 45% hospitality say they are overqualified (CIPD)

What the organisations beating the average do

Measure what matters, not just what scores · Treat the first year as a separate population · Invest in managers before the score moves · Close the loop visibly

Instruments differ, so comparisons between sources are directional. Full article, with every source and date: greatwithtalent.com/insights/state-of-uk-employee-engagement-2026/

Does any of this sound familiar?

The organisations we work with rarely come to us asking for a survey. They come with something that is costing them money, time or people. These are the ones we hear most often.

MAKING MONEY

"We hire well on paper and still get it wrong in the role."
Personality, leadership and competency assessment matched to the job, so interviews test what matters and offers go to people who will perform. (FindingPotential)

"Our best people leave and we only find out why afterwards."
Exit intelligence in the leaver's final weeks: what was avoidable, who would come back, and what to change first. (LastOpinion)

"Leaders get feedback once a year and nothing changes."
Forward-looking 360 feedback that lands as development rather than judgement, with the actions built in. (FeedForward)

SAVING MONEY

"Too many new starters are gone inside a year."
New-starter surveys at the points the first-year leak opens, so you act at three months instead of reading about it at exit. (OnBoarder)

"References take weeks and tell us nothing."
Automated referencing with questions that predict, most returned within 48 hours. (ReferenceExpert)

"We run an engagement survey and the results sit in a drawer."
Engagement reporting down to team level in plain English, with the three moves each team's own people chose. (WinningFormula)

SOLVING PROBLEMS

"The board wants evidence on culture, conduct and speaking up."
A confidential always-on channel and a harassment-prevention audit that give you the evidence before a regulator asks for it. (SafeSpace)

"We publish an inclusion statement and cannot show whether it is true."
Inclusion measured at every stage from hire to exit, so you can see where the experience differs and act on it. (ED&I)

"We have the data and cannot turn it into a decision."
Twenty years of UK benchmark data and analysts who turn results into a board paper, not a dashboard. (Workforce intelligence)

Who we are

great{with}talent is a UK workforce-intelligence consultancy, founded in 2003. We help organisations hire better, keep people longer, improve leadership, strengthen inclusion and reduce workplace risk, with a connected set of tools that turn employee data into clear, fast action across the whole employee lifecycle. Independent, GDPR-compliant and Cyber Essentials certified, hosted on Microsoft Azure.

Not on the list? It will not always be. If you are working on something you think we might be able to help with, drop us a note describing what you are trying to do and we will come back to you.

On the list or not, let's talk.

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