



Salary Guide


2025 Northern Ireland

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Our Role Is To Help
You Excel By Building
Careers & Shaping Futures
Together. In this guide,
you will find:



Expert insights on Northern Ireland's
employment trends and strategies for
success in 2025.

Current salary benchmarks across
specialisations to ensure competitive
compensation.

Key data from our latest research to
inform and strengthen your talent
strategy.

Foreword

As we wrap up the first quarter of 2025, Northern Ireland's job market continues to show resilience in the face of change. Despite the challenges that arose in 2024, the employment industry demonstrated remarkable adaptability, with many businesses finding ways to grow and innovate. The economy experienced moderate growth last year with an estimated overall growth of approximately 4.5%, though final figures are yet to be released. In 2024, Northern Ireland recorded its lowest-ever unemployment rate of 1.6%, as published by the Department for the Economy. However, despite this positive trend, it remains the lowest-earning region in the UK.

The year ahead will bring new hurdles that will require creative solutions and strategic planning. April marks a significant moment for businesses across all sectors, with the introduction of two key financial changes which will bring challenges industry-wide.

On April 1st, the minimum wage increased to £12.21 for those aged 21 and over, and on April 6th, National Insurance Contributions (NICs) rose to 15%. While annual wage increases are an expected part of business operations, the NICs adjustment has been an unexpected factor across all industries.

These changes will require careful financial planning, but they also present an opportunity for businesses to focus on efficiency, employee retention, and value-driven service.

Polly Adgey

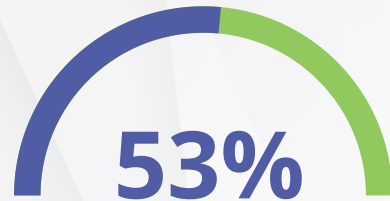
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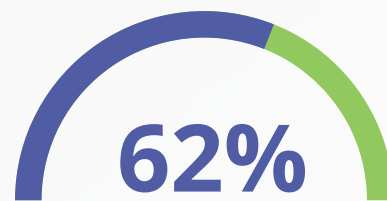
Key Takeaways



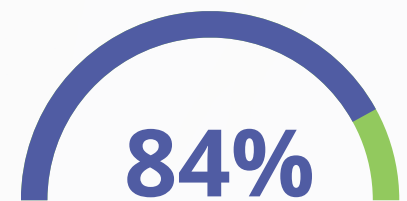
of employers see **'Lack of skilled candidates available'** as the main hiring challenge



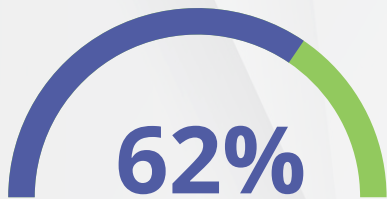
of employers have **lost talent** in the last 6 months.



of businesses we spoke to are using **Temporary Staffing Solutions**.



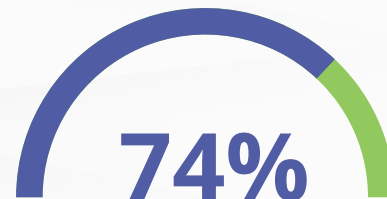
of businesses we spoke to **found sourcing top talent difficult** in 2024.



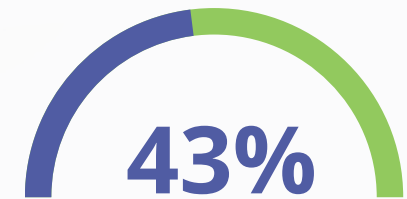
of businesses we spoke to **are optimistic about the economy** in 2025.



of professionals plan on **actively looking for a new job** in the next few months



of candidates we spoke to **prefer a mix of in office and remote work** options.



of candidates we surveyed said that the **lack of housing** options will directly impact their employment plans



Hotel & Catering

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Hotel & Catering Market Overview

The hospitality sector in Northern Ireland is experiencing a mixed recovery post-pandemic, with tourism rebounding but ongoing challenges in staffing persisting. Hotels, restaurants, and event venues are seeing increased demand, especially in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, and other coastal areas. However, rising costs, wage pressures, labour shortages and other recruitment difficulties are persisting.

NI's Tourism Boom

Northern Ireland has experienced a tourism boost with a 12% increase in visitors in 2024, driven largely by the success of film tourism, with Game of Thrones playing a key factor. While Game of Thrones isn't actively filming anymore, tourism related to the series remains a major source of revenue. Reports suggest that the show has been attracting around 350,000 visitors per year, contributing tens of millions annually to the economy. In addition, 2025 sees the 153rd Open Championship returning to Royal Portrush. It is expected to generate a significant economic boost for Northern Ireland, building upon the success of the 2019 event which brought in over £100 million in economic benefit. The Open Championship is a major draw for golf tourists, and Portrush's relatively isolated position at the very top of the country means that most people who travel to the tournament will stay around the general area, allowing for a far greater spend and investment. The event is expected to further boost tourism in Northern Ireland, particularly in the Causeway Coast and Glens area. The 2019 event had over 5,400 hours of global television coverage, significantly enhancing Northern Ireland's global tourism appeal—a trend expected to continue in 2025.

Technology Replacing Human Touch

The introduction of AI into the hospitality sector brings both opportunities as well as its own challenges. Many large hotel chains are embracing AI-driven customer service and automated check-in systems, helping to address staffing shortages. However, this shift also comes at a cost, as it diminishes the personal touch and human interaction that define the hospitality industry in Northern Ireland. Striking a balance between efficiency and the personal touch will be crucial to ensuring that AI enhances, rather than detracts from, the guest experience.

Labour Shortages & Wage Pressures

Recruitment challenges are persisting post Brexit with many businesses struggling to fill key roles such as chefs, kitchen staff, and front-of-house positions. The increase in the minimum wage, while welcomed as a positive for the workforce battling a cost-of-living crisis, will put financial strain on businesses already beset with obstacles including ongoing high energy prices. Rising prices will result in costs continuing to be passed onto consumers resulting in a vicious cycle.

Several proposals have been submitted to both the Stormont Executive and Westminster to help alleviate costs within the hospitality sector. These include calls for a reduction in the 20% VAT rate on hospitality to better align with that of the Republic of Ireland, which currently stands at 13.5%. Additionally, the sector has requested grants and financial assistance with energy costs. However, these measures have yet to be approved or implemented. The ongoing delays in providing even the most basic support are increasing financial pressures, forcing many businesses to consider staff redundancies or, in some cases, closure, a trend which will continue in 2025 if nothing is done.

2025 Outlook

The hospitality industry in Northern Ireland remains a vital part of the economy, but urgent action is needed to address staffing shortages, wage pressures, and rising operational costs to sustain long-term growth. With the continued labour shortages compounding all of the challenges the industry faces, the importance of training, upskilling and retaining staff has never been as strong. The rise of staffing agencies is also being highlighted due to their ability to adapt to fluctuating staffing needs, avoiding the costs associated with permanent employees. These agencies provide trained, compliant workers, enabling establishments to adjust staffing levels based on demand.



Hotel & Catering Salary Guide	Low	Average	Good
Chef Salaries			
Executive Chef	£49,500	£70,200	£90,500
Head Chef	£40,000	£55,000	£65,720
Sous Chef	£35,500	£36,000	£45,500
Junior Sous Chef	£27,000	£30,250	£32,000
Breakfast Chef	£26,250	£28,000	£30,500
Chef De Partie	£26,500	£28,300	£32,055
Pastry Chef	£28,000	£32,150	£38,125
Head Pastry Chef	£30,000	£35,720	£41,050
Commis 1st Year	£23,810	£23,810	£24,200
Commis 2nd Year	£24,000	£24,000	£24,400
Commis 3rd Year	£24,400	£24,400	£24,800
Commis 4th Year	£25,000	£25,000	£26,000
Industrial, Corporate and Retail Catering Salaries			
Regional Manager	£35,025	£42,675	£58,260
Area Manager Industrial Catering	£37,000	£42,000	£46,050
Unit Manager	£34,120	£38,175	£42,000
Unit Supervisor	£27,200	£30,150	£32,820
Executive Chef / Culinary Director	£32,900	£37,905	£44,800
Chef Manager	£31,850	£35,570	£41,250
Head Chef Industrial Catering	£29,000	£32,000	£35,000
Sous Chef Industrial Catering	£27,250	£29,000	£32,025
Chef De Partie Industrial Catering	£25,000	£26,250	£28,500
Kitchen Porter	£23,810	£23,810	£24,500
Catering Assistant	£23,810	£23,810	£24,500
Waiting Staff	£24,500	£24,500	£25,500
Barista	£24,500	£24,500	£25,500

Hotel & Catering Salary Guide	Low	Average	Good
Hotel Salaries			
General Manager	£50,000 + Bonus	£65,200 + Bonus	£95,000 + Bonus
Deputy General Manager	£32,000 + Bonus	£40,400 + Bonus	£55,750 + Bonus
Operations Manager	£30,000	£35,255	£39,300
Food & Beverage Manager	£28,050	£32,500	£34,520
Accommodation Manager	£25,020	£32,050	£35,100
Accommodation Staff	£23,810	£23,810	£24,815
Restaurant Manager	£26,020	£30,050	£34,500
Restaurant Supervisor	£25,500	£27,500	£29,500
Director of Sales	£41,250	£51,025	£72,800
Sales & Marketing Manager	£37,125	£43,140	£48,115
Wedding Coordinator	£26,000	£28,050	£32,500
Sales Executive	£27,240	£32,050	£39,875
Conference & Banqueting Manager	£26,000	£28,950	£33,855
Meeting & Events Coordinator	£26,000	£27,020	£31,500
Revenue Manager	£28,900	£33,250	£38,080
HR Manager	£28,000	£35,000	£40,500
HR Assistant Manager	£25,250	£28,500	£32,500
Reservations Manager	£28,000	£31,200	£34,850
Front Office Manager	£28,000	£31,200	£34,850
Reception Supervisor	£25,000	£26,900	£29,200
Receptionist	£23,810	£23,810	£25,000
Night Manager	£26,050	£29,100	£33,250
Duty Manager	£25,600	£27,200	£39,200
Spa & Leisure Manager	£28,000	£32,050	£36,125
Spa Therapist	£25,200	£27,500	£29,140
Bar Manager	£26,000	£29,000	£35,000
Bar Staff	£23,810	£23,810	£25,000
Waiting Staff	£23,810	£23,810	£25,000



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Healthcare

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Healthcare Market Overview

Northern Ireland's healthcare sector remains under significant strain due to staffing shortages, rising demand for services, and ongoing NHS reforms. Care home closures and a lack of domiciliary care workers are putting additional pressure on hospitals, with both waiting lists for treatment and waiting times in Emergency Departments at a well-publicised all-time high. With Northern Ireland, like most nations in the UK and ROI, having an aging population, demand on services will only increase. One in six people in Northern Ireland are aged over 65 and projections from NISRA indicate that this is likely to rise to one in five by 2030. A growing elderly population requires more healthcare services, leading to a higher demand for doctors, nurses, care workers, and allied health professionals. Specialties like geriatric care, palliative care, and community healthcare are seeing particularly high demand.

Pay Disparities and Workforce Retention

Pay disputes continue in the sector with particular frustration aimed at the NHS Agenda for change which sees NHS Staff in Northern Ireland as the lowest paid within the UK, while the cost of living in the devolved nations remains broadly the same. A disparity which has previously driven strike action and is likely to again. Many healthcare workers are leaving the profession due to stress and poor working conditions, exacerbating the workforce crisis. In addition, the aging population is as much of a challenge in staffing as it is in demand for services, with many healthcare workers reaching retirement age and retiring faster than they are replaced.

Recruitment Struggles and Overseas Hiring

Recruitment of healthcare professionals remains a significant challenge, particularly in nursing, social care, and GP services. Efforts have continued to attract nurses from the Philippines and India, but visa processing delays have hindered arrivals. Currently, there are over 3,000 nursing vacancies in Northern Ireland, leading to increased reliance on agency staff.

New Qualification Requirements for Health & Social Care Workers

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in the sector for 2025 is the introduction of the new entrance level qualification for health and social care workers; the Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice. In line with the CiP Framework, all new social care staff, who are registering with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) for the first time, will have the opportunity to complete this new work-based, qualification within the first 6 months of commencing employment as part of their induction process. At this stage the certificate is not mandatory, but it is expected that as this becomes embedded it will be a specified requirement in the future.

The Role of AI and Digital Health in Healthcare

It will be interesting to see what the impact on the sector will be from the perspective of AI and Digital Health. The UK government announced an additional £150 million for Northern Ireland's healthcare system in early 2025, focusing on recruitment and digital transformation. 2024 saw the roll out of Encompass across the Trusts - a new electronic patient record system designed to create a single digital care record for every citizen in Northern Ireland who receives health and social care. It aims to create better experiences for patients, service users and staff by bringing together information from various existing systems that do not currently communicate effectively. It intends to reduce the time needed to access information and to eliminate the need for paper records. It should also reduce the duplication of orders. This should make the health service safer, more efficient and effective. It is expected to have a transformative effect on health and social care in Northern Ireland. With the addition of the rollout of AI-assisted diagnostics and virtual GP appointments, it is hoped that pressure on frontline services will continue to be reduced, but this will remain to be seen.

2025 Outlook

Northern Ireland's healthcare sector stands at a crossroads, facing significant workforce shortages, ongoing pay disputes, and the pressures of an aging population. However, new qualification frameworks, targeted recruitment efforts, and digital transformation initiatives offer potential pathways to greater efficiency and sustainability. The success of these measures will be crucial in shaping the future of healthcare delivery across the region.




Healthcare Salary Guide	Low	Average	Good
Residential Care			
Registered Manager (RN/SW/AHP)	£35,000	£40,000	£45,000
Registered Nurse Manager	£47,200	£53,500	£55,000
Deputy Nurse Manager	£36,000	£42,000	£48,000
Clinical Nurse Manager	£43,200	£45,800	£49,600
Senior Staff Nurse	£35,300	£39,200	£42,600
Staff Nurse	£28,500	£31,350	£35,300
Specialist Support Worker	£27,100	£28,500	£29,300
Senior Healthcare Assistant	£25,300	£26,600	£27,600
Senior Support Worker	£26,100	£27,500	£28,200
Healthcare Assistant	£23,800	£24,500	£26,000
Support Worker	£23,800	£24,500	£26,000
Activities Coordinator	£25,400	£27,100	£28,100
Human Resource Manager	£38,000	£40,000	£45,000
Human Resource Administrator	£23,800	£26,000	£28,000
Reception/ Administrator	£23,800	£26,000	£28,000
Catering and Household			
Head/ Senior Chef	£33,000	£35,000	£37,000
Chef	£29,000	£31,000	£33,000
Kitchen Porter	£23,800	£24,500	£26,000
Catering Assistant	£23,800	£24,500	£26,000
Housekeeper/ Cleaner	£23,800	£24,500	£26,000




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Industrial & Warehousing

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Industrial & Warehousing Market Overview

The **industrial sector** in Northern Ireland remains strong, particularly in the areas of manufacturing, logistics, and construction. However, the sector still faces significant challenges including a growing a shortfall of skilled tradespeople, due to many older workers retiring and fewer young people entering the industry.

Key Challenges for the Industrial Sector in 2025:

Skills Shortages:

Recruitment remains a key challenge, with a skills shortage in advanced manufacturing, engineering, welding, and machine operation roles. This may be alleviated in the long-term with the expansion of Government-backed apprenticeship schemes in engineering and construction which have been designed to attract more young people. However, in the short term, businesses will continue to struggle to fill critical roles.

Economic Pressures:

Additional challenges include energy price increases and supply chain disruptions, and these continue to impact industrial businesses, with Brexit remaining an ever-present thorn in the side. The Windsor Framework has eased some trade issues, but businesses still face regulatory challenges when moving goods between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. More support is needed for these businesses in navigating post-Brexit trade complexities.



Key Trends Shaping the Industry

- Sustainable Manufacturing & Innovation
- Artificial Intelligence & Automation

Sustainable Manufacturing

Northern Ireland's industrial sector is witnessing significant investment in sustainable manufacturing and innovation, driving job creation and economic growth. Notable projects include:

- **Wrightbus** £50 million electric bus factory in Ballymena
- The landmark £150 million **Enkalon Business Park by Errigal Group**, encompassing new warehouses, light industrial units, retail showrooms, and research/design offices - set to create 690 new jobs
- The £100 million **Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC)**, projected to create up to 1,500 jobs across Northern Ireland
- **Artemis Technologies** is leading zero-emission maritime vessel innovation, with the launch of the Pioneer of Belfast. Off the back of this Belfast Harbour is seeing increased investment in warehousing and distribution, boosting logistics employment

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence & Automation

AI is coming for this sector too, transforming everything from manufacturing to logistics. It is also being brought in to increase energy efficiency and worker safety with the ability to monitor for industrial hazards like gas leaks or unsafe practices. It can even predict accidents before they happen! Perhaps the biggest challenge will be in workforce transformation with AI changing job roles, with workers focusing more on managing AI driven systems rather than manual tasks. This will result in the need to encourage digital upskilling for workers adapting to automation.

2025 Outlook

Northern Ireland's industrial sector is at a turning point. While workforce shortages, economic pressures, and Brexit-related challenges create difficulties for the industry, substantial investment in sustainable manufacturing and AI-driven innovation present exciting opportunities. Addressing skills gaps and digital transformation will be crucial in ensuring the sector remains competitive and sustainable in the years ahead.



Industrial & Warehousing Salary Guide	Low	Average	Good
Warehouse Manager	£40,000	£45,000	£50,000
Assistant Warehouse Manager	£29,500	£32,500	£34,600
Reach Counterbalance Operative	£23,900	£25,600	£27,300
PPT Operative	£23,900	£24,850	£25,700
Handballer	£23,900	£24,950	£26,000
Rigid Truck Driver	£25,000	£30,000	£38,000
Artic Truck Driver	£30,000	£32,000	£38,000
Skilled Fitter	£24,000	£27,000	£30,000
General Operative	£24,500	£26,100	£27,800
Production Administrator	£23,900	£25,000	£28,000
Forklift Operative	£25,200	£27,400	£29,600
Transport Manager	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Transport Planner	£32,000	£35,000	£42,000
Transport Coordinator	£30,000	£34,000	£40,000
Operations Manager	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Supply Chain Manager	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Supply Chain Specialist	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Planning Manager	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Demand Planner	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Freight Forwarder	£30,000	£35,000	£38,000
Customs Agent	£25,000	£32,000	£35,000
Customs Administrator	£23,800	£25,000	£27,000
Health & Safety Manager	£45,000	£52,000	£60,000
Health & Safety Advisor	£35,000	£40,000	£45,000
Health & Safety Officer	£30,000	£33,000	£35,000



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Overall Outlook For 2025

For 2025 there are two key foci for businesses in Northern Ireland.

As recruitment agencies experience a surge in both temporary and permanent staffing requests across all industries, **timely recruitment is a critical priority**. Securing the right employee efficiently is essential for cost management and operational stability. While low unemployment is beneficial for the economy, it reduces the pool of available talent, making it increasingly difficult for businesses to find suitable candidates. With ongoing economic challenges and shifting workforce demands, recruitment strategies must be proactive, innovative, and adaptable to ensure sustained growth across these key sectors.

With a stretch on financial resources impacting on wages, Employers need to look at **ways of attracting and retaining talent** such as;

- flexible working
- hybrid working
- gym memberships
- employee rewards
- well-being initiatives

Offering employee benefits is not just a perk—it's a strategic investment in a company's workforce. When employees feel secure in their jobs and have access to health and wellness programs, they are more likely to stay engaged and productive. Benefits such as mental health support and flexible work arrangements contribute to a healthier, happier workforce. By **prioritising employee well-being**, businesses can boost productivity, retain top talent, and create a more positive and engaged workplace.



Overall Outlook For 2025

Businesses also need to look at how they **adopt and embrace AI**. AI is considered a game-changer for organisations of all sizes and across all sectors due to its ability to drive efficiencies, improve decision-making, and provide a competitive edge. AI-driven recommendations can offer personalised marketing and predict trends which improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Repetitive tasks can be automated, reducing human errors and freeing up time for more strategic work. AI can support businesses with increasing workloads to develop faster operations, without proportional increases in costs or resources, effectively streamlining operations and allowing businesses to allocate resources more effectively. Essentially, businesses that fail to integrate AI risk falling behind. **Implementing AI needs to be considered a priority.**

Ultimately the workforce market here has consistently shown its ability to adapt and thrive, and this needs to continue in 2025. By embracing innovation and strategic thinking, businesses can navigate these changes and continue contributing to Northern Ireland's economy.



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