

H1 2026 Recruitment Market Report

Reporting period: April 1st to September 30th 2026

Placement trends, regional shifts and the skills in demand.

Recruitment activity across Vivid Resourcing's markets presented a mixed picture during the first half of 2026. Engineering accounted for the largest share of placements, followed by Technology and Government, while regional activity varied across the UK, mainland Europe and the US.

Engineering represented 44.42% of placements, with Technology accounting for 25.02% and Government 21.93%. Professional Services contributed 8.63%, despite launching just two months before the end of the reporting period. Its share therefore reflects a considerably shorter period of activity than Vivid's more established sectors.

Regionally, the UK and Benelux accounted for the largest shares of placements. Compared with the previous six months, placement activity increased in the UK and US, while Benelux and DACH recorded decreases.

External market evidence adds further context. Investment in European data centre capacity continues to create opportunities across technology and engineering, while financial pressures on local authorities are influencing the environment in which public-sector recruitment decisions are made. Across these markets, access to the right technical and professional skills remains an important consideration for employers.

This report brings together Vivid's internal placement data and selected external research to examine the patterns emerging from H1 and the factors worth monitoring during the second half of the year.

Placement distribution
at a glance

44.42%
Engineering

25.02%
Tech

21.93%
Government

8.63%
Professional Services

Vivid placement figures describe activity within our own business and should not be interpreted as market-wide recruitment statistics.





1. The H1 Placement picture

Engineering leads the sector shares

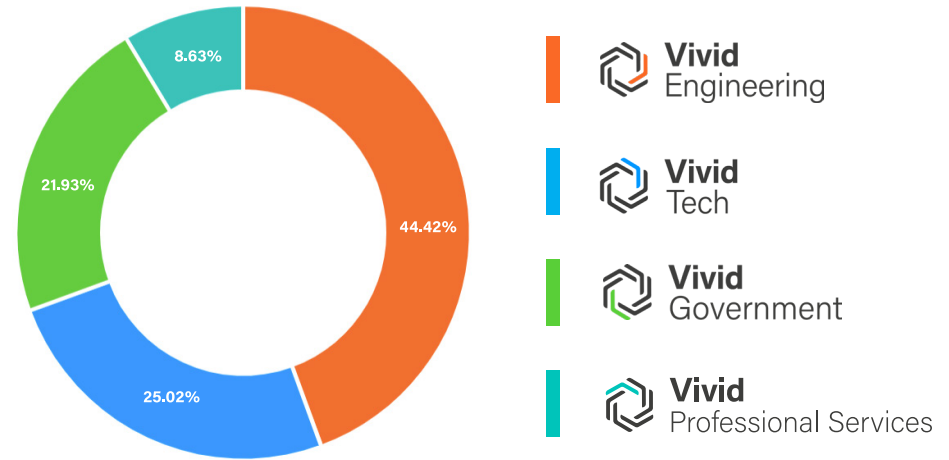
Engineering accounted for **44.42%** of Vivid's placements between April and September, making it the largest contributor to activity. Technology represented **25.02%**, followed by Government at **21.93%**.

These figures demonstrate the breadth of Vivid's recruitment activity across technical, digital and public-sector markets. They also provide a starting point for understanding where placements were concentrated and which areas warrant closer examination.

Within Engineering, **Construction and Planning** accounted for **25.77%** of total placements. Mechanical, Process and Design represented 5.27%, while EC&I accounted for 4.98%. Embedded Engineering contributed a further 4.54%.

Technology placements covered several distinct specialisms. **Data and Analytics represented 5.14% of total placements**, Software and Web Development 3.52%, Cloud and Infrastructure 3.21%, and ERP and CRM 2.19%.

These percentages show each category's contribution to overall placement activity. They do not, on their own, establish whether a specialism is growing or declining. That requires a like-for-like comparison with the previous period, alongside wider market evidence.



Source: Vivid Resourcing internal placement data, April to September 2026

A new sector joins the mix

Professional Services represented **8.63%** of placements during the reporting period. However, this figure needs to be considered in light of the sector's launch just **two months** before the end of H1.

Unlike Vivid's more established Engineering, Technology and Government markets, Professional Services had a much shorter period in which to contribute to the overall placement mix. Its share is therefore an early snapshot of activity, rather than a directly comparable measure of performance against the longer-established sectors.

As the sector develops, future reporting periods will provide a more meaningful basis for assessing changes in its contribution and the demand emerging across its markets.

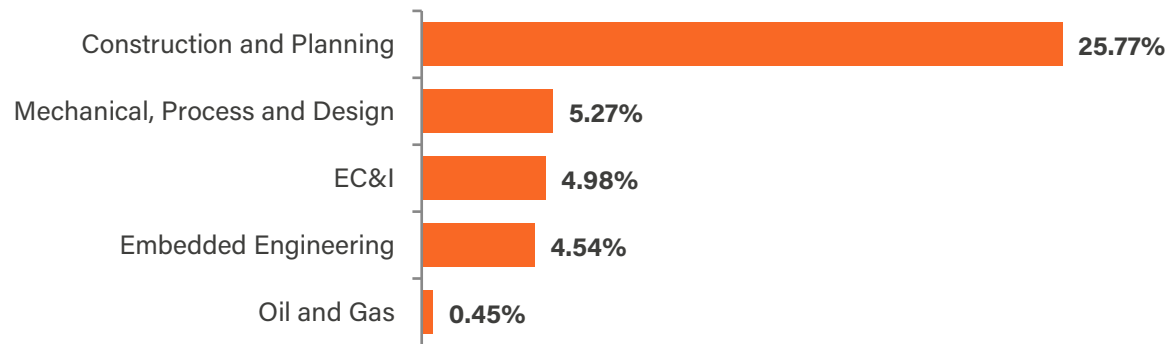
What this tells us: Vivid's placement mix reflects established activity in Engineering, Technology and Government, alongside the early development of its Professional Services offering. Future comparisons will help show how that mix evolves.





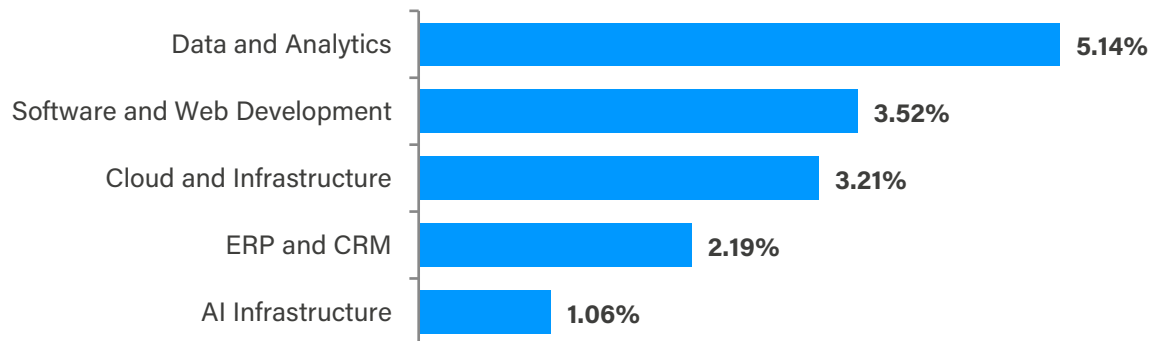
European Engineering Subsector Spotlight

% of Vivid Resourcing's total placements, April-September 2026

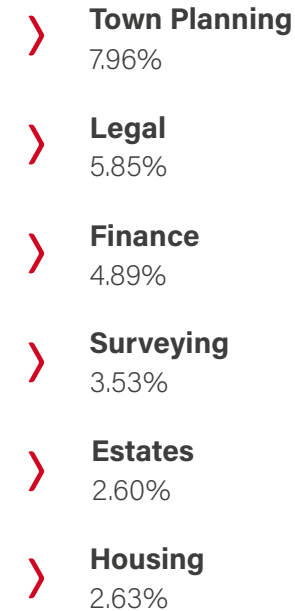


Global Technology Subsector Spotlight

% of Vivid Resourcing's total placements, April-September 2026



UK Placements Subsector Spotlight



Source: Vivid Resourcing Placement Data.
Percentages represent share of placements
across entire Vivid Resourcing placements
from 1st April 2026 - September 30th 2026.





2. Regional Recruitment Activity

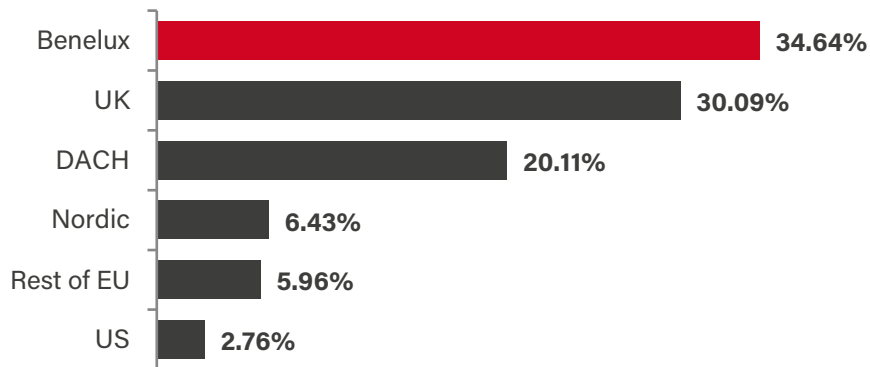
Where placements were concentrated

Benelux represented **34.64%** of Vivid's placements during H1, followed by the UK at 30.09%. DACH accounted for **20.11%**, while the Nordic region contributed **6.43%**, the rest of Europe **5.96%** and the US **2.76%**.

Benelux and the UK together accounted for almost two-thirds of placements. However, the proportion of placements in a region and the direction of change over time are different measures. A region can account for a substantial share of activity while experiencing a decrease against the previous period as other areas rise in placements (e.g. US).

Regional share of placements

Share of Vivid's total placements, April to September 2026



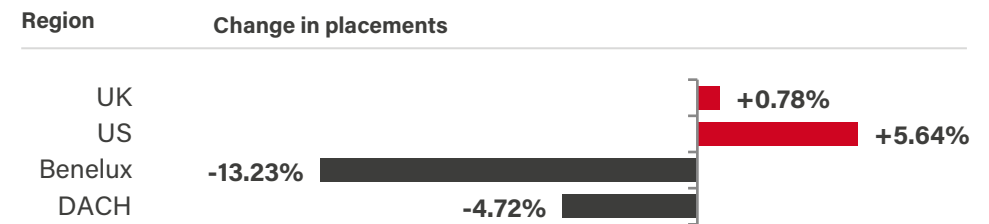
Source: Vivid Resourcing internal placement data, April to September 2026

How placement activity changed

Comparing April to September 2026 with October 2025 to March 2026, Vivid reported the following changes in placements:

Change in placements by region

April to September 2026 compared with October 2025 to March 2026



Source: Vivid Resourcing internal placement data, October 2025 to September 2026

The UK recorded a relatively stable result, while US placements increased. Benelux and DACH recorded lower activity compared with the preceding six months.

These movements need to be understood in the context of Vivid's own business, sector exposure and project timelines. Its activity in Benelux and DACH is concentrated largely in Technology and Engineering, where the timing of projects and seasonal patterns can influence when recruitment requirements arise. Technology hiring historically has quietened in summer months as annual leave is taken and workloads are lighter, preparing for the Autumn acceleration in projects.



Vivid expects some of its mainland European activity to become busier as projects move into delivery and new work begins around the turn of the year. This outlook based on Vivid's experience of the specific markets it serves, rather than a forecast for the wider recruitment industry.

In the US, the increase reflects Vivid's continued expansion, including the development of its Charlotte office, alongside activity within its core Palantir software market. We predict the US share of placements to grow in coming months as Vivid expand their presence in the US to service site managers and other engineering clients in H2.

What the wider market tells us

External recruitment results also highlight differences between regions. In October 2026, Hays reported that net fees for the first quarter of its 2027 financial year were **up 8%** year-on-year in the US, while Germany was **down 6%** and the UK and Ireland were **down 5%** on a like-for-like basis.

Hays net fees by region

Q1 FY2027, year on year, like-for-like

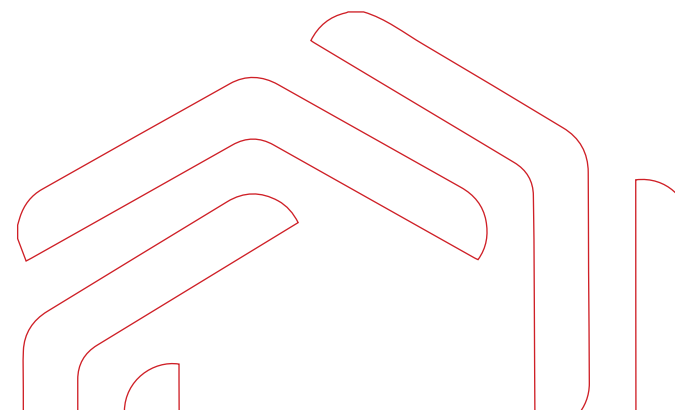


Source: Reuters, Hays quarterly net fee performance across regions, 12 October 2026

Net fees are not directly comparable with placement volumes, and one recruitment group's results do not represent the whole market. However, the figures provide useful context for the contrasting conditions reported across these geographies.

What this tells us

Regional recruitment activity is not moving uniformly. Sector exposure, project schedules and local commercial conditions all matter when interpreting changes in placement activity.





3. Technology

Investment, infrastructure & business systems

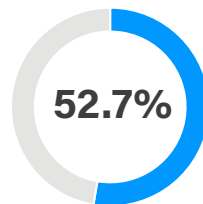
Technology accounted for 25.02% of Vivid's placements during H1, spanning disciplines from software development and data through to cloud infrastructure, enterprise systems and automation.

The mix highlights the range of skills involved in digital delivery. It also shows why **technology recruitment cannot be treated as one uniform market**: the requirements associated with a software development project can differ significantly from those involved in cloud migration, data platforms or enterprise system implementation.

Cloud & Infrastructure

Cloud and Infrastructure represented **3.21%** of total placements, while AI Infrastructure accounted for **1.06%**.

Wider adoption of digital services provides important context for these areas. Eurostat reported that **52.7%** of EU enterprises used paid cloud computing services in 2025, an increase of 7.4 percentage points compared with 2023.



Percentage of EU enterprises that used cloud computing services in 2025.

Cloud adoption can create requirements across infrastructure, migration, platform management and security. The scale and timing of recruitment depend on how organisations implement and maintain their systems, rather than adoption rates alone.

Data centre investment is another relevant driver. CBRE's European data centre figures for Q2 2026 forecast capacity reaching 13GW by year-end, representing a **20% increase** compared with 2025. CBRE also reported that new European colocation capacity signings intended for AI purposes had more than quadrupled during the first half of the year.

Data centre development can generate requirements across technology and engineering, including infrastructure, electrical systems, controls, cooling and commissioning. The specific skills required depend on the stage and nature of each project.

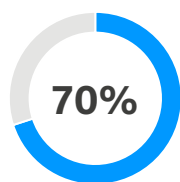
Data, Software & Enterprise Systems

Data and Analytics accounted for **5.14%** of Vivid's total placements, making it one of the largest individual technology categories in the supplied data. Software and Web Development represented **3.52%**, while ERP and CRM accounted for **2.19%**.

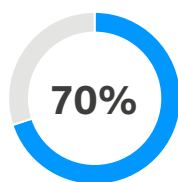




Eurostat's 2025 figures show that specialised business software remains well established across the EU. Belgium and the Netherlands both recorded 70% of enterprises using at least one of the categories covered by Eurostat's measure of specialised e-business software, including **ERP, CRM and business intelligence**.



Belgium



Netherlands

Percentage of enterprises using at least one category covered by Eurostat's measure of specialist e-business software

For employers, implementing these systems is only part of the challenge. Organisations also need people who can connect technical delivery with business processes, integrations and operational requirements.

The placement shares provide a useful baseline for tracking these specialisms in future reporting. Historical comparisons will be needed to establish whether their contribution is increasing or decreasing.

Consultant Insight



We're in the middle of a big shift in the IT landscape. Companies are rolling out major AI developments, getting their data in order and facing a growing risk of cybersecurity incidents. As a result, the market for Data, AI and Cybersecurity consultants keeps growing.

Ronan Gazenbeek - Vivid Amsterdam

Netherlands IT Recruitment: Executive Consultant

What to watch in H2

Cloud infrastructure, AI-related investment, enterprise systems and the technical skills required to deliver complex digital projects.





3. Engineering

Established disciplines and evolving infrastructure

Engineering accounted for 44.42% of Vivid's placements, the largest sector share in H1.

Within this activity, the Construction and Planning industry represented **25.77%** of all placements. Skills-wise, Mechanical, Process and Design accounted for **5.27%**, EC&I for **4.98%**, and Embedded Engineering for **4.54%**.

These categories span different project environments, from the built environment and industrial systems through to embedded technology. Their contribution illustrates the breadth of engineering recruitment activity within Vivid's markets.

Infrastructure investment and technical requirements

European data centre investment provides one example of how wider infrastructure development is influencing engineering workforce requirements sent by clients to Vivid Resourcing.

As facilities become more complex and capacity expands, projects can require expertise across electrical infrastructure, instrumentation, controls, cooling, commissioning and site delivery. These requirements can overlap with established engineering disciplines, although investment announcements do not automatically translate into immediate vacancies.

Project timing is important. Employers need to secure the right skills at the appropriate stage of delivery, while professionals increasingly need experience that combines technical knowledge with an understanding of project constraints, safety and operational requirements. Finding these individuals has been a problem area for businesses, and it's in these situations we've seen clients come to Vivid for assistance.

Key demand factor: **Data Centre Investment**

Tracking changing disciplines

Vivid's H1 data provides a baseline for several important engineering categories. However, individual placement shares should not be treated as evidence of momentum without comparison against the previous period.

For example, Oil and Gas represented **0.45%** of total placements. This indicates its contribution to the H1 mix, but a declining trend can only be confirmed once comparable historical figures are reviewed.

That said, the **rise of renewables and transitional energy** lends a rational theory to the potential decline of oil and gas - and by extension oil and gas placements - in years to come.





The same principle applies to emerging or changing requirements across engineering. Market intelligence is strongest when placement data is combined with evidence of project investment, hiring activity and direct insight from consultants working with employers. **The strongest intel of recruitment patterns often derives from our consultants**, who speak with hiring managers and candidates daily.

Consultant Insight



Energy independence remains a key priority for European markets. This has triggered a substantial rise in investment into alternative fuels; in particular LNG as a short-term solution and hydrogen as a long-term pathway.

The construction of new terminals, storage facilities and hydrogen-ready infrastructure has created opportunities across every core discipline, from EPC management to commissioning and HSE.

Luke Burgess - Vivid Düsseldorf

Construction & Engineering Recruitment: Executive Consultant

High-volume project areas

Germany

Italy

Denmark

Netherlands

What to watch in H2

The data centre boom, Infrastructure projects moving into delivery, demand across established engineering disciplines and the specialist skills needed to meet project schedules.





5. UK Government & Professional Services

Hiring under different pressures

Government accounted for **21.93%** of Vivid's placements during H1. Professional Services represented **8.63%**, with the important distinction that the sector launched only two months before the reporting period ended.



21.93%
Government



8.63%
Professional Services

Source: Vivid Resourcing internal placement data, April to September 2026

Although these markets can share requirements for planning, project delivery and professional expertise, their recruitment decisions are shaped by different pressures. Public-sector hiring is heavily influenced by budgets, statutory responsibilities and service delivery, while we've seen private-sector professional services respond to commercial activity, regulation and project pipelines.

Government: Balancing budgets and delivery

Financial pressure remains an important part of the local government environment. The Local Government Association's 2026/27 council budget-setting survey, published in March 2026, found that **58%** of respondents considered setting a balanced budget very or fairly difficult.

Budget pressure can lead to greater scrutiny of workforce plans and recruitment decisions. At the same time, local authorities must continue to meet statutory responsibilities, deliver services and manage projects.

This created a varied picture across the public sector in H1. Recruitment needs depended on individual authority priorities, available funding, workloads and the specialist expertise required to deliver services.

For recruitment, national budget announcements were therefore only one part of the picture. Local funding decisions and the practical requirements of each organisation also influenced when and where recruitment took place.

Professional Services: An early view of a rapidly developing sector

Professional Services contributed **8.63%** of placements during H1, but its recent launch makes direct comparisons with Vivid's established sectors inappropriate at this stage.

The sector brings together professional markets with their own hiring drivers, including finance, legal services and planning-related expertise. Demand can vary according to regulatory requirements, commercial conditions, project activity and the experience organisations need to bring into their teams.





As the sector matures, Vivid will be able to build a clearer picture of placement patterns and changes in demand. For now, the H1 figure is best understood as an early indication of its contribution to the business, rather than a measure of long-term performance.

UK Subsector Spotlight

> Town Planning 7.96%	> Legal 5.85%
> Finance 4.89%	> Surveying 3.53%
> Estates 2.60%	> Housing 2.63%

Source: Vivid Resourcing UK Placement Data. Percentages represent share of placements across entire Vivid Resourcing placements from 1st April 2026 - September 30th 2026.

What to watch in H2

The effect of budget decisions on public-sector recruitment, demand for planning and professional expertise, and how the newly launched Professional Services sector develops.



Consultant Insight



Georgia Howe
Vivid Manchester
UK Legal Recruitment:
Executive Consultant

Governance and strategic legal recruitment featured prominently in the Government Legal market throughout H1 2026, amid uncertainty around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Client conversations indicate continued demand for senior legal expertise, with councils relying on experienced professionals to support governance, advise on complex strategic matters and navigate an evolving local government landscape, despite pauses to reorganisation plans in many areas.



Consultant Insight



Kurtis Webster
Vivid Manchester
UK Private Sector
Planning Recruitment:
Executive Consultant

Residential development and urban regeneration remain areas of steady growth across the UK, while Grid Reforms have created uncertainty in renewable energy. Client conversations suggest residential demand remains strong, although securing land agreements is a key challenge. Renewable energy is still seen as the future, but uncertainty around when the market will shift is leaving some planners unsure of their next steps. For candidates, a strong pipeline of work remains a major selling point.





6. A cross-sector challenge

Combining technical and commercial skills

Across Vivid's markets, employers need more than technical knowledge alone. Depending on the role, professionals may also need to communicate with stakeholders, manage competing priorities, lead teams and understand the commercial outcomes behind a project.

Project management is one example. Clients may seek individuals who can understand technical detail while also managing people, delivery requirements and commercial objectives.

Alexander Loft, .NET & M365 Dynamics Consultant, describes the challenge:



An issue businesses are increasingly running into is finding project managers who have undeniable development skills and can then pair that with the ability to manage a team with commercial outcomes in mind as their driver. Knowing which people can bridge the gap between business and technical is in my opinion the greatest reason for prospective clients asking for my assistance.

A similar combination can be valuable in technical sales roles, where professionals need to understand the products or systems they represent as well as the commercial process. In specialist markets, finding people with both types of experience can narrow the available candidate pool.

For employers, clearly defining the technical requirements alongside the commercial and interpersonal expectations can help sharpen a search. For professionals, experience connecting technical delivery with wider business outcomes can be an important differentiator.

What to watch in H2

Whether demand for people who can bridge technical and commercial responsibilities becomes more prominent across Vivid's technology, engineering and professional markets.





7. Looking ahead

H2 2026 and beyond.

The second half of 2026 will bring further project milestones, budget decisions and workforce requirements. Based on Vivid's placement data and the external evidence explored in this report, four areas merit attention.

1

Regional differences

Contrasting results across the UK, Benelux, DACH and the US underline the importance of monitoring each market individually. Vivid Resourcing expects some of its mainland European activity to grow as projects progress and new work begins in January 2027. This remains an internal outlook.

2

Investment translating into hiring

Data centre development and digital infrastructure investment remain important areas to monitor. The key question is which projects move into delivery, when recruitment requirements arise and which technical disciplines are needed at each stage.

3

UK public sector budget pressures

Local authorities will continue to balance financial constraints with service delivery and statutory responsibilities. Hiring activity may vary significantly according to individual funding, priorities and workloads.

4

Skills and project delivery

Technical expertise, project management and the ability to work across business and technical teams are worth watching across sectors. Further analysis of Vivid's placement data, supported by consultant insight and external evidence, will help distinguish broad themes from genuine changes in demand for individual specialisms.





Conclusion

Vivid's H1 placement data shows a varied recruitment picture across sectors and regions. Engineering accounted for the largest share of placements, Technology represented a quarter of activity, and Government remained a significant part of the mix. Professional Services also contributed 8.63%, despite having launched only two months before the end of the reporting period.

External evidence adds context, from European data centre investment to the financial pressures facing local authorities. However, wider market trends do not tell the whole story. Recruitment decisions are also shaped by project timelines, available budgets and the expertise organisations need to secure.

As the market moves into the second half of 2026, understanding these differences will be important for employers planning their workforce and professionals considering their next move.

Vivid Resourcing will continue to monitor activity across its core sectors: Technology, Engineering, Government & Professional Services, combining placement data with consultant insight to examine how hiring requirements are changing.

vividresourcing.com/market-insights

Methodology

This report uses Vivid Resourcing's internal placement data for April to September 2026, with regional changes compared against October 2025 to March 2026.

Sector and subsector percentages represent the share of Vivid's total placements, unless stated otherwise. Regional changes describe the reported movement in placements between the two six-month periods. These figures should not be interpreted as market-wide recruitment statistics.

External sources provide context for selected trends. Their measures differ in scope and methodology from Vivid's internal data and are not directly comparable.

Sources

- Vivid Resourcing Internal Placement Data 2026: H1, 01/04-30/9
- CBRE, **European Data Centres Figures Q2 2026**
- Eurostat, **Cloud computing services used by 53% of EU enterprises in 2025**
- Eurostat, **E-business integration**
- Local Government Association, **Council budget-setting survey 2026/27**
- Reuters, **Hays quarterly net fee performance across regions, 12 October 2026**



Further reading

Sectors



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