



gateway   
CAREER MANAGEMENT

## Gateway Guide Public Sector

Gateway Career Management is a team of career coaches and development specialists based in the South East.



## **GATEWAY - PUBLIC SECTOR GUIDE**

**Welcome to the Gateway Public Sector Guide. We hope you find it interesting.**

In this guide we will be covering the following:

1. Research likely to impact on public sector workers careers in 2010. (CIPD Study).
2. Trends in the public sector market - a recruiter's view.
3. Public or private sector? Some considerations.
4. Gateway Career Management - top 10 tips for progressing your career...

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## **Research likely to impact on public sector workers careers in 2010.**

The recent CIPD quarterly *Employee Outlook* survey shows that UK workers still feel in the grip of economic downturn, **especially in the public sector**. Almost half of employees say that their organisation has either frozen (40%) or cut (7%) pay, and job satisfaction has fallen to a record low. [Contact us for a free copy of the report at info@gatewaycareers.co.uk](mailto:info@gatewaycareers.co.uk).

Here is a summary of the key findings.

### **Conclusions impacting on public sector workers**

- **For the first time since the start of the recession public sector employees are more pessimistic than those in the private sector over their chances of losing their jobs. More than a quarter (26%) of public sector staff think it likely or very likely they could lose their jobs, compared with just 17% of private sector workers. This compares with the last quarter when a fifth (20%) of private sector workers and 18% of public sector staff feared being made redundant. Voluntary sector staff remain least likely to believe their jobs are at risk: 13% compared with 12% for the previous three months.**
- **The proportion of public sector workers saying their organisation is planning to make redundancies is now 40%, while just 10% of private sector employees say this is the case.**
- **It is public sector employees who are most pessimistic over their chances of securing a new job, followed by those in the voluntary and private sectors.**
- **For people looking to move sectors, the public sector remains the most popular destination despite the major cuts to public spending announced by government.**
- **The proportion of people looking to change jobs to reduce stress has increased over the last year from 28% to 34%, with public sector employees most likely to say this is a reason.**
- **For public sector employees the second biggest reason for not changing jobs is the quality of the pension they enjoy (33%).**
- **Public sector job satisfaction has again fallen from +34 to +31 over the last quarter and private sector job satisfaction has fallen from +36 to +33 over the same period.**
- **Just 18% of public sector staff feel like they are consulted over important decisions by senior managers, with 58% disagreeing, while just 16% of public sector staff say they trust their senior managers compared with 49% disagreeing.**

A fuller review of the report is given below and **Public sector references** under each section are marked in bold.

### Job satisfaction

- Overall job satisfaction remains low at +35, representing a 1% net decrease since last quarter and a substantial decrease compared with spring 2009 (+46).
- Those employees working in the voluntary sector remain the most satisfied (+53), with a 9% net increase since last quarter. **Public sector employees continue to be the least satisfied with their jobs (+31) (private sector: +33).**

### Employee attitudes to management

- Employees continue to be generally positive in their attitudes towards their immediate line managers, with scores broadly similar to last quarter, but all ratings have dropped since April 2009.
- Employees are most likely to feel that their managers are always/usually committed to their organisation (71%) and treat them fairly (67%).
- **Perceptions of leadership are much worse in the public sector – in fact, every item has a negative net satisfaction score like last quarter.** Perceptions of consultation (–40), trust (–33) and confidence (–31) in senior leaders **are particularly poor in the public sector.**

### Workload and pressure at work

- The proportion of employees under excessive pressure every day or once or twice a week is 40%, a slight fall from the last quarter's figure of 44%.
- **Public sector workers are more likely to report that they are under excessive pressure than those in the private or voluntary sector. However, the proportion of public sector staff saying they are under excessive pressure at work every day has dropped from 23% to 16% over the last three months.**

### Work-life balance

- Women are typically more satisfied with their work–life balance than men. Almost two-thirds (65%) of women agree they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives compared with 56% of men. Those employees aged between 18 and 24 are least happy in this respect. Just 53% agree they achieve the right work–life balance compared with 68% of people aged 55 and over.
- More than a third (37%) of respondents agree their organisation provides support to help them manage their work–life balance, a slight increase from last quarter's figure of 34%.
- Again, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of employees across all sectors agreeing their organisation helps them to manage their work–life balance since the previous quarter.
- Women are more likely to agree this is the case (41%) than men (33%). Across age cohorts, employees aged between 25 and 34 are most likely to agree that their organisation provides work–life balance support, while those aged 45–54 are least likely to.

- Four out of ten respondents (41%) agree their manager provides support to help them manage their work–life balance, a slight increase from the previous quarter’s figure of 37%.
- Women (43%) are more likely to agree this is the case than men (38%). Voluntary sector staff (46%) are more likely to agree than those in **the public (42%)** or private (41%) sectors.

### Employee attitudes and the recession

- 18% of employees think it likely or very likely they could lose their jobs as a result of the recession, down from 19% for the previous quarter.
- **For the first time public sector employees are now significantly more pessimistic over job security than staff in the private sector.**
- There has been a further erosion of people’s confidence in the job opportunities available in the labour market since last quarter.
- Two-thirds (66%) of respondents think it would be difficult or very difficult to find a new job in the event of losing their current position, compared with 63% for the spring CIPD survey.
- **Just over a quarter (26%) of public sector employees say their employer has made redundancies, a slight decrease from last quarter’s figure of 31%.**
- **The proportion of public sector staff saying their organisation is planning to make redundancies has crept up to 40% from 39% over the same period.**

### Other factors

- **Just over a quarter (26%) of public sector employees say their employer has made redundancies, a slight decrease from last quarter’s figure of 31%.**
- **The proportion of public sector staff saying their organisation is planning to make redundancies has crept up to 40% from 39% over the same period.**
- The share of voluntary sector staff saying their employer has made redundancies has fallen from 34% to 22% over the last quarter, while those saying their employer is planning job cuts has also fallen from 17% to 12%.
- **Public sector employees are most likely to say their employer has reduced training opportunities (38%), followed by those in the private sector (19%) and those working in the voluntary sector.**
- The proportion of respondents reporting pay freezes has crept up to 40% from 37% for the spring CIPD survey. **There has been a particular jump in the proportion of public sector respondents saying their employer has frozen pay from 30% to 51%.**
- In all, 48% of employees agree they feel less secure in their jobs, with 26% disagreeing (net agree score +22).
- **Public sector employees are significantly more likely to agree with this statement than those in the two other main sectors.**
- The proportion of respondents reporting an increase in conflict at work has dropped slightly over the quarter to 18% from 21% for the previous quarter. There has also been a slight drop in the proportion saying there has been an increase in bullying by line managers from 15% to 13%.

- The proportion of respondents reporting an increase in stress has edged up slightly to 49%, while the percentage of respondents saying they have noticed an increase in people taking time off sick has remained unchanged at 20%.
- **Public sector employees are more likely than those in the other two main sectors to report they have noticed any of these trends.**

### Personal standard of living

- Employees are nearly three times more likely to say their standard of living has worsened over the last six months than they are to say that it has improved. Just 10% of respondents report their standard of living has improved over the period compared with 29% that say it has worsened.
- There is virtually no difference between men and women in terms of their reported standards of living over the last six months.
- Employees aged between 18 and 24 are most likely to say their standard of living has improved, with 25% saying this is the case compared with 20% reporting the opposite. Those aged between 45 and 54 are least likely to say that their standard of living has improved (7%) and most likely to say it has deteriorated (37%).
- **Public sector staff are marginally more likely than those in the other main sectors to say their standard of living has improved (12%), while voluntary employees are least likely to say their financial position has deteriorated (24%).**

### Working hours

- In all, 23% of respondents say the number of hours they work in a typical week has increased in the last three months, compared with 70% who say they have remained the same and 7% reporting their working hours have decreased.
- **There is little difference between public and private sector respondents.** However, voluntary sector respondents are less likely to report an increase in working hours and also less likely to say that working hours have decreased.

### Job seeking

- Just under a quarter of all employees (22%) are currently looking for a new job; this has dropped by 5% in the last three months.
- **Like last quarter, voluntary sector employees are most likely to be looking for a new job this quarter (25%), compared with 22% of private sector employees and 22% from the public sector.**
- Of the 5% of employees who have moved jobs in the last six months, half (47%) are receiving more money and 31% are receiving less. This is less favourable than last quarter, where 50% were receiving more money and 21% receiving less.
- When asked if they would ideally like to change jobs in the next year, 36% of employees said they would. This represents a slight decrease from last quarter (41%). **While public sector employees are jointly (with private sector employees) least likely to be looking for a new job currently, they are the group that would ideally most like to change jobs within the next year (39%).**

- Almost a third of employees (30%) are very or fairly optimistic that they will be able to change jobs within the next year. This is slightly down on last quarter (33%) and is less than a year ago in spring 2009 (39%).

### **Rethinking sector and type of work**

- Of those who would like to change their job in the next year, almost a quarter of employees (24%) will be looking in a different sector from their job; this is exactly the same amount when we last surveyed on this question in summer 2009.
- Private sector employees (26%) are more likely than **public (20%) and voluntary sector (9%) employees** to want to change their sector.
- **Of those who would like to change their job and will be looking for a job in a different sector, the most popular sectors are largely the public sector despite the threat of imminent cuts, with 31% wanting to move into local government/civil service and 25% wanting to move into public administration/services and defence. The third most popular area is retail (25%).**
- Over a quarter (26%) want to change their line of work altogether; this represents a slight increase on last year (summer 2009: 24%). Those working in the private sector (26%) are most likely to want to change their line of work, compared with **16% in the public sector and 12% in the voluntary sector.**

### **Reasons for wanting to change jobs**

- The top three reasons why UK employees would ideally like to change their job is to increase job satisfaction (61%), for better pay and benefits (48%) and to learn new things (40%).
- Thirty-nine per cent would also like to do a different type of work and just over a third (34%) would like to change jobs to reduce stress.
- Better pay and benefits has increased in importance since last year, as have wanting to learn new things and wanting to reduce stress.
- With a view to changing jobs, around a fifth (19%) are up-skilling, one in ten are retraining and a further one in ten are getting volunteering experience, while 8% are holding more than one job. These figures broadly reflect employees' responses last summer, with just a slight increase in people up-skilling in preparation for changing jobs (summer 2009: 17%).

### **Reasons for staying in their current job**

- The top reason overall for people staying in their current role is that they have job satisfaction (45%). The second and third reasons respectively are that they enjoy working with their colleagues (29%) and they would find it difficult to find another job at the moment (23%). These are also the top three reasons for employees working in the private sector.
- **For those working in the public sector, while job satisfaction still comes top, the second reason relates to having a good pension (33%) and the fact that they believe their job is secure (26%). For those employees in the voluntary sector, their top two reasons are in line with the overall findings but their third reason for staying in their current role is the fact that they like their customer/client (28%).**

## **Job search methods**

- The most popular method of looking for a job is through local newspaper advertisements (53%), followed by the use of recruitment agencies (45%).
- Recommendations from friends are high on the list (38%), showing the power of employee advocacy.
- Corporate websites are also used by 35%.
- Despite the hype surrounding Web 2.0 and social networking, only 11% of respondents use social networking sites (such as LinkedIn) when searching for jobs. These figures are similar to those in summer 2009.

**Background information** YouGov conducted the latest quarterly online survey for the CIPD of 2,096 UK employees in the middle of June 2010. This survey was administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of more than 285,000 individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. The sample was selected and weighted to be representative of the UK workforce in relation to sector and size (private, public, voluntary), industry type and full-time/part-time working by gender. The sample profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry-accepted data. Panellists who matched the sample profile (as explained above) were selected at random from the YouGov Plc UK panel and sent an email inviting them to take part in the survey. Respondents were drawn from a mixture of public, private and voluntary organisations. Size of organisation was classified in the following way: sole trader (one-person business), micro business (2–9), small business (10–49), medium (50–249) and large (more than 250). Net scores refer to the proportion of people agreeing with a statement minus those disagreeing.



## Trends in the public sector market – a recruiter's view.

One recruiter recently commented that as the recession continues to affect the UK economy, **public sector jobs** have become an increasingly attractive proposition for individuals. Government announcements on increased borrowing to protect and indeed increase, the scope of public sector jobs has led to a general feeling that elements of the sector – for example the NHS and central/local government - will weather the storm better than most areas of the economy.

The picture is less certain for the **charities dominated not for profit sector**. The charity sector witnessed significant growth in recent years, with many of the larger and medium sized charities benefiting from the additional focus on the developing world, and the increase in availability of contracts within the public sector. However, with much of third sector funding being dependant upon donations, this is an area that could be under a lot of pressure this year as the full effects of the economic downturn are experienced.

**The public and not for profit sector** has for some time been trying to recruit candidates from industry and banking at a time when not for profit organisations have been trying to improve their business efficiency and performance inline with more commercial business models. This has resulted in a gradual increase in salaries and packages to tempt individuals from outside the sector.

To employers, certain skills are seen as more transferable into a non-profit environment than others. For example, individuals with highly technical finance skills developed within a banking environment lend themselves well to policy-led and highly regulated organisations, such as government departments. Likewise, working in core areas such as audit, management accounting or financial accounting can offer an entry-point, with increasing specialisation possible later on. Change management and project-led experience is also highly prized.

However relevant the transferable experience an individual has, there is no denying that the deciding factor for employers is still an understanding of, and empathy with, the "product" of the not for profit sector. It is not enough for individuals to want to work in the sector because they see it as a stable option in a volatile recruitment climate. They need to actively demonstrate that they are "on-message" with what the non-profit employer is trying to achieve and that they can commit to being a part of making it happen.

## **Public or Private sector?**

How do you decide between continuing to work in the public sector or moving on and taking a private sector job? What are the pros and cons? When starting job hunting, what should you look for in job advertisements and job boards?

Requirements such as minimum level of education, salary offered, where the employer is located, career goals compatibility, job security, promotion possibility, and employer type are all important factors that will influence your decision.

The employer's standing is also significant. Your approach towards employment and developing your career path depends on the broad surroundings and the distinct culture that the employer offers. Selecting the right employer is not something to take lightheartedly.

Since there is a major difference in public sector and private industry jobs, it helps to be able to **identify the benefits and drawbacks of working in each of the sectors.**

### ***What does public sector involve?***

As you will know the public sector comprises national, provincial and local businesses and entities and, broadly, employs people to help govern the country, provide essential services, research, development and education.

### ***What do private sector jobs involve?***

The private sector is what brings in money for the country. Income from private industry jobs helps to sustain economic growth. It consists of any organisation or business that supplies goods or services at a set price. The aim of the private sector is to manufacture and promote a product or provide a service that ensures a return to shareholders.

Some of the **main differences** between the public sector and private sector jobs are as follows:

### ***Objectives***

In the public sector it has been said that the main objective in the education, science and knowledge fields and all other areas is to work for the greater good and benefit of society. Research and goals are long term. For this reason the public sector plans years ahead and has an enormous budget.

The private sector by contrast cannot afford to work with 20 year plans and budgets. Businesses in the private sector have to make profits while the public sector just needs to be able to break even or show little growth. What are the implications to you? As such you will work on longer term projects when and if you choose to continue in public sector employment since profit is not such a big issue. You will also not be judged so strongly on productivity and output as in the private sector.

If you are someone who likes to see the end results of your work, wants to complete projects in shorter time spans and enjoy diversity, then the private sector jobs are more for you. Why is this? The public sector has more time to implement procedures and plans, while in the private sector you need to finish a task in a set time to make a profit. If you cannot deal with strict budgets and deadlines then the public sector may be better suited for you.

### ***Professional and career development***

Membership of professional organisations plays a major role in the public sector employment while the private sector places less emphasis on participation. There are of course exceptions. Professional association membership can be a tremendous benefit to help you progress your career and as such should be pursued. Generally it will however, count more in your favor in the public sector than in the private sector.

### ***Networking***

Public sector employment at higher levels normally involves a lot of networking with other departments including NGO's. The private sector by contrast has only recently started to recognise the true value and importance of networking. Cross networking can be found in both industries. People and communication skills are required in both sectors, although, generally, the private sector utilises it more effectively.

### ***Publications***

The public sector places more emphasis on ongoing research and the subsequent publication of results than the private sector. Academic institutions in particular, have this as a high priority. Acknowledgement for research is definitely more prominent in public sector employment than in private industry jobs. You are much more likely to receive bursaries, research grants and promotion based on your research than in the private sector.

### ***Working environment***

The working environment in the public sector tends to be more conservative and in general the managers are less open to new ideas. Stagnation sometimes plagues departments and creativity is often suppressed. On the positive side, you get job security, clear guidelines and procedures for doing your job. If you prefer to work in a stable and secure environment with clear guidelines, managerial or supervision rules and specific working times, then you should consider the public sector as your employer.

If you prefer a more open managerial style, openness to new ideas and more flexibility in rules with fewer guidelines, you might want to consider employment in the private sector.

Of course your decision will depend on many other factors as well - your aspirations, goals, values, career needs and wants and personality. It will also depend on your broader life style outside work.

Public sector employment offers more opportunity for changing jobs without necessarily changing employers, but the private sector jobs provide more opportunity for quick advancement.

### **Here are some useful public sector job links**

[public sector \*\*job vacancies\*\*](#)

[\*\*job openings\*\* public sector](#)

[\*\*jobs\*\* in public sector \*\*companies\*\*](#)

[\*\*sungard\*\* public sector careers](#)

[public sector \*\*employment agencies\*\*](#)

[public \*\*health government jobs\*\*](#)

[public sector \*\*employment uk\*\*](#)

## **Gateway Career Management - top 10 tips for progressing your career.**

As you decide what route to take, consider the various work options and formulate your action plan you will need to review four essential points:

*What are my main goals, needs and priorities outside work?*

*What do I have to offer and take to the job market?*

*How will I connect with it and what is my marketing plan?*

*Do I need help to get there?*

**Here are our top 10 helpful hints including links to provide further information:**

- 1. Be clear what you have to offer. What are you cut out for? Have you assessed what skills and experience you have to take to the market?**

This is a crucial phase as you start to identify what interests you and drives you and what stands you apart from others. How many of your skills are you using at the moment? How many are lying dormant? Which of these skills are transferable?

What have you achieved in your work to date? What are you proudest about? What is your greatest success? Can you quantify these achievements? Remember that employers want to know more about what you have achieved less of what you have had responsibility for. Ask yourself two questions:

Have I done what they want?  
Can I do it for them?

**[Why not book up a session for a Personal Career Review](#)**

- 2. Review your basic temperament, your values, motivators and your broader career needs and wants. What do they tell you about your next job?**

Most people go through their adult working lives not knowing what really drives and motivates them and without a feel for their natural personality and temperament.

Many have no picture of what they want in their next work role. We have identified a list of 75 career wants and needs. If you knew what your top 10 were how valuable would that be in charting your next move. For example:

Do you want to work for a cause?  
Do you like working with intelligent colleagues?

Do you want to have a boss?  
Do you want a clear career path?  
Do you want to work on your own?  
Do you want flexible working hours?  
Do you want to use technology?  
Do you want to bring about change?  
Do you want to solve problems?  
Do you want a good reward package?

**[Start by taking a Gateway online PPI temperament profile? Email us for more details at \[info@gatewaycareers.co.uk\]\(mailto:info@gatewaycareers.co.uk\)](#)**

- 3. Think beyond employment. Look at all areas from self employment to starting up a business, from consultancy to interim, from part time work to developing a portfolio career. How about doing further training?**

How do you know which option you are most suited to? Which one will deliver the lifestyle that you prefer? Once you have a clear picture and know what the main alternatives are you can start to develop your CV and capture what you have to offer the job market on paper.

**[Book up a session with one of our career coaches?](#)**

- 4. Make sure that your CV sells you even more than it has done in the public sector. Think Achievement not Responsibility. Have more than one CV.**

Your CV is an important document. Writing your CV is one of the most difficult things you have to do. The initial aim of it is simply to get interviews.

As a job searcher your current CV validates your existence, is a marketing tool, and facilitates face to face presentation. It will support your networking, it must provoke interest and assist you to obtain interviews. Interviewers also use it as a comfort factor, as often to eliminate as to hire.

The process of creating or revising your CV will assist you to fix in your mind your skills, achievements and experience, laid out and prioritised to reflect your particular target(s) of sector and job function.

With a well constructed and focused CV, professionally presented you will open doors, help you to obtain interviews, and drive those interviews. Your CV must be clear, concise and easy to read. It must also have impact and highlight your important points and achievements.

**[Download our CV writing guide](#)**

- 5. Be proactive in your marketing approach. Given that 85% of the job market is unadvertised think about what are you doing about proactive marketing?**

Here are some avenues to consider:

Be prepared to take any job as a stepping stone into the sort of work you are aiming for. Look at short-term contracts, agency work or unpaid work experience

Start to network with family, friends and other contacts in the field to find out where jobs are likely to come up, and what employers are seeking.

Try a direct or speculative approach to target employers that you would like to for work.

Consider approaching small, local companies as well as bigger employers in your occupational area..

Aim for self-employment in your chosen field? This will work for some professions, but not for others.

[Download our newsletter on the hidden job market](#)

**6. Use your personal and business network of contacts. Use LinkedIn.**

[Book up a session with our LinkedIn expert. Contact us on 0845 089 0035 or complete the enquiry form](#)

**7. Research organisations which interest and appeal to you.**

This is an integral part of your proactive job search. Where to start? Who to target? If you have done the preliminary work it will be easier to know and from there it is a question of drawing up your plan.

**8. Be prepared to answer the question “Tell me about yourself”**

How competent are you at job interviews? Where do you shine and where could you improve? Why not review you performance in job interviews that you have had previously? If you have not had a formal interview before then reflect on how you have come across in in-house interview situations - appraisals, coaching situations, review meetings, feedback sessions.

Here are some key areas to review:

Was I in the right frame of mind?  
Was my physical presentation alright?  
Was my eye contact alright and did I smile?  
Did I display initiative?  
How did I deal with awkward questions?  
Did I manage to put my achievements across?  
Who controlled the interview?  
Had I done sufficient homework?  
What were my questions like?  
In general, did I come across as myself?

[Contact us for a copy of the Gateway Interview guide](#)

**9. Body Language is essential – get some advice on how you come across.**

And finally

**10. Have a plan and stick to it.**

This is the key to success and the glue that will hold your job search together. Many people are driven and motivated to manage their own strategy and daily planning. Others need support and guidance and regular review to ensure that they are on track.

The first step is to think about your main career and work goals and from there go through the above points. After that it is question of drawing up a timetable of action and committing to it. There are various ways to achieve this but they will depend upon your end goals, your personality and your preferred way of working.

**For more information on any part of this guide:**

**Contact us at 0845 459 0035 or by email at [info@gatewaycareers.co.uk](mailto:info@gatewaycareers.co.uk)**

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