



GMA
ASSOCIATION
OF

GMA WORKFORCE INSIGHT REPORT 2026

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FOREWORD

Grounds management is fundamental to the quality, safety and sustainability of sport and green spaces across the UK. Whether in professional stadia, schools, local authority facilities or community clubs, the work of grounds staff underpins participation, performance, and public value. Yet for too long, the workforce that delivers this essential contribution has remained under-recognised in wider discussions about sustainability, investment, and long-term planning - leaving a critical component of the nation's sporting and green infrastructure undervalued and under-supported.

The GMA's Workforce Insight Report brings together the best available evidence on the scale, composition, and experience of the grounds management workforce, alongside the wider economic and labour market context in which employers are operating. Its findings paint a clear and consistent picture: the sector is supported by a committed and skilled workforce, but one that is under growing pressure from an ageing demographic, recruitment challenges, rising costs, and constrained budgets.

For employers, these pressures are not abstract. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled grounds staff, increasing reliance on overtime, and the risk of losing experienced practitioners to retirement all have direct consequences for service quality, pitch standards, operational resilience, and long-term costs. At the same time, many employers are themselves navigating significant financial constraints, with limited room to absorb rising wage and business costs or to invest in workforce development without support.

The evidence in this report shows that these challenges are systemic rather than the result of isolated poor practice. They reflect the environment in which employers and grounds staff alike are operating. That is why the response must also be collective, coordinated and grounded in partnership.

The Grounds Management Association exists to support both the workforce and the organisations that employ them. We recognise that improving employment practices is not about imposing one-size-fits-all solutions, but about setting clear expectations, sharing good practice, and supporting employers to make sustainable improvements that work in their specific context.

This report marks an important step in that journey. It provides the evidence base for the creation and implementation of the GMA's Fair Work Strategy, which will focus on strengthening pay structures, improving wellbeing and work-life balance, supporting skills development and career progression, and enhancing professional recognition across the sector. Crucially, the strategy is being developed with employers, not simply for them, recognising the operational and financial realities they face.

Our aim is a sector in which grounds management is seen as a skilled, valued, and attractive profession, and where employers are supported to offer fair, professional and sustainable employment. Achieving this will require collaboration across clubs, facilities, governing bodies and partners. It will also require honest engagement with the challenges highlighted in this report.

We invite employers, stakeholders, and partners to use this report as a starting point for reflection and discussion, and to work with us as we move forward with the Fair Work Strategy. By taking a collective, evidence-led approach, we can help secure a resilient workforce and a stronger future for grounds management across the UK.



GEOFF WEBB CEO



GLOSSARY

Term	Description
Apprenticeship Levy	A UK government funding mechanism requiring large employers to contribute towards apprenticeship training. Levy funds can be used to support skills development, workforce planning and new entry routes, while smaller employers can access government-funded apprenticeship support.
Career Progression	Opportunities for grounds staff to move into more senior, specialist or managerial roles through experience, training and skill development.
Contractor	An external business or self-employed individual engaged to deliver grounds maintenance services under a contractual arrangement.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development. Ongoing learning, training and development undertaken by grounds staff to maintain, improve and update professional skills, knowledge and competence.
CPIH	Consumer Price Index including housing costs. The ONS's preferred measure of inflation.
Direct Paybill	The total cost of employing grounds staff, including wages or salaries and employer on-costs such as National Insurance and pension contributions.
Employer On-costs	Additional costs incurred by employers beyond wages, including National Insurance, pensions and statutory benefits.
GMF	Grounds Management Framework
Grassroots / Community / Member Clubs	Local, non-professional sports clubs that operate for community, health, social or educational purposes and often rely on a mix of paid staff and volunteers to maintain facilities and pitches. For the purposes of the sector modelling, grassroots and private members clubs have been grouped together.
Head Grounds Manager	A senior role with overall responsibility for grounds maintenance strategy, staff management and standards.
In-kind Value	A monetary estimate of the value of non-cash contributions, such as unpaid volunteer time, donated services or shared resources, used to illustrate their economic and social importance.
Living Wage (Real Living Wage)	A voluntary hourly wage rate independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation, based on the cost of living in the UK and intended to provide a minimum acceptable standard of living.
NLW	National Living Wage. The statutory minimum hourly wage set by the UK government for workers aged 21 and over, designed to protect low-paid workers and support income levels.
Pay Compression	A situation where pay differences between entry-level and more experienced or skilled staff narrow, often due to increases in minimum wage rates, which can affect motivation, progression and retention.
OBR	Office for Budgetary Responsibility
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Skills Gap	A mismatch between the skills required for a role and those available within the recruitment pool/workforce.
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification. A UK-wide system used to classify jobs based on skill level, qualifications and job content. Grounds staff are classified under SOC Code 5114 (Grounds person and Greenkeepers).
Succession Planning	Preparation to ensure continuity when experienced staff leave or retire.
Turnover	The rate at which employees leave and are replaced within an organisation.
Workforce Retention	The ability of employers or sectors to keep staff over time, reducing turnover and retaining skills, experience and organisational knowledge.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UK grounds management sector underpins the quality, safety and sustainability of sport and green spaces across the country. From professional stadia to schools, local authority facilities and community clubs, grounds staff play a critical role in participation, performance and public value. This Workforce Insight Report sets out the current state of the sector's workforce, the pressures it faces, and the implications for employers if action is not taken.

The **grounds management workforce employs over 30,000 people across the UK**, with Independent Schools and Golf representing the largest employers. Grassroots, community and private members clubs collectively form the third-largest employment group, closely followed by contractors. Annual expenditure on grounds management exceeds £1.2 billion, including a direct paybill of over £940 million. In addition, volunteers contribute more than **13 million hours of grounds care each year, with an estimated in-kind value of over £150 million**. These figures underline that grounds management is not a marginal or peripheral workforce, but a significant and economically important part of the sport and recreation system.

Despite the scale and importance of the sector, the workforce is under increasing strain. **Nearly half of grounds staff are aged between 45 and 64, and 15% expect to retire within the next three years**. At current workforce levels, this would equate to approximately 1,500 retirements per year, creating a substantial risk to continuity, skills retention and service quality. Entry routes into the profession remain limited and fragmented. Apprenticeships exist but are not yet a dominant pathway, with many people still entering the sector by chance or through informal networks.

The demographic profile of the workforce highlights additional vulnerabilities. The proportion of female grounds staff has increased slightly over the past five years, but **women still make up less than 10% of**

the workforce. Similarly, **people from diverse ethnic backgrounds remain significantly underrepresented, accounting for approximately 3% of the workforce**. These figures point to a narrow recruitment base at a time when the sector needs to widen participation and attract talent from a broader pool, while also understanding and addressing the structural, cultural, and practical barriers that limit who is able to enter, remain, and progress within the profession.

Overall **job satisfaction among grounds staff is relatively high**, reflecting strong intrinsic motivation, pride in work and connection to sport and outdoor environments. However, this sits alongside much lower satisfaction with pay, benefits and work-life balance. **Just over half of grounds staff are satisfied with their pay and benefits**, and only 56% are satisfied with their work-life balance. Long hours, regular overtime and increasing workloads are common, often driven by constrained operating budgets and rising costs of materials and equipment. One in four grounds staff report having no access to mental health support through their employer.

Recruitment and retention are consistently identified as the single greatest challenge facing the sector over the next five years. **Over three-quarters of grounds staff believe recruitment and retention will be a major issue, and two-thirds feel the situation has worsened compared with five years ago**. Employers report a shortage of qualified applicants, increasing competition for labour, and growing difficulty in attracting new entrants with the right skills. These challenges are occurring at the same time as the workforce is ageing and experienced staff approach retirement, increasing the risk of a loss of institutional knowledge and technical expertise.

Pay dynamics present a further structural challenge. While inflation has eased from its 2022 peak, the cumulative impact of the cost-of-living crisis has significantly eroded real wages. Even where employers have followed GMA pay recommendations over the past



decade, grounds staff have experienced only marginal real-terms pay growth. Large increases to the National Living Wage, while welcome for low earners, risk compressing pay differentials between new starters and experienced staff if wider pay structures are not reviewed. This compression threatens progression incentives, motivation and retention at precisely the point when the sector needs to retain and develop skilled practitioners.

The 2025 Budget presented mixed implications for the sector and the economic context facing employers is complex. Many organisations are operating within tight financial constraints, with rising wage costs, business rates pressures and limited scope to increase income. At the same time, opportunities are present, particularly through expanded funding for apprenticeships and youth employment, which could strengthen entry routes into the sector if effectively utilised.

Taken together, the evidence in this report points to a clear conclusion: without coordinated action, workforce pressures risk becoming a limiting factor on the quality, sustainability and resilience of grounds management across the UK. The challenges identified are not the result of isolated poor practice, but of systemic pressures affecting employers across sectors.

In response, [the Grounds Management Association is using this evidence base to inform the development of its Fair Work Strategy](#). The strategy is intended to support employers to strengthen their employment offer in ways that are fair, practical and sustainable, while recognising the financial and operational realities they face. It will focus on setting clear expectations, supporting good practice, amplifying the workforce voice, and working in partnership with employers and sector bodies to secure a more resilient future for the grounds management workforce.

This report provides the foundation for that work. It is a call for collective attention and shared responsibility, grounded in evidence, and focused on ensuring that grounds management remains a skilled, attractive and viable profession for the future.

GROUNDS MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE EMPLOYS OVER 30,000 PEOPLE ACROSS THE UK.

13 MILLION HOURS OF GROUNDS CARE EACH YEAR, WITH AN ESTIMATED IN-KIND VALUE OF OVER £150 MILLION.

NEARLY HALF OF GROUNDS STAFF ARE AGED BETWEEN 45 AND 64, AND 15% EXPECT TO RETIRE WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

WOMEN STILL MAKE UP LESS THAN 10% OF THE WORKFORCE.

PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS REMAIN SIGNIFICANTLY UNDER-REPRESENTED, ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY 3% OF THE WORKFORCE.

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG GROUNDS STAFF IS RELATIVELY HIGH.

JUST OVER HALF OF GROUNDS STAFF ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR PAY AND BENEFITS.

OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF GROUNDS STAFF BELIEVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION WILL BE A MAJOR ISSUE, AND TWO-THIRDS FEEL THE SITUATION HAS WORSENER COMPARED WITH FIVE YEARS AGO.

THE GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION IS USING THIS EVIDENCE BASE TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS FAIR WORK STRATEGY.



1.

INTRODUCTION



1.1. Background and methodology

The Grounds Management Association (GMA) exists to support, strengthen and professionalise the UK's grounds management sector. While the GMA has made significant progress in advancing skills, standards, and visibility, there remains a persistent challenge around employment conditions, pay, and professional recognition for those working at the front line of grounds care.

Many grounds staff face low pay and insecure contracts, limited opportunities for progression and poor recognition for their technical expertise and contribution to sport and community wellbeing. These issues have knock-on effects for recruitment, retention, and quality, and they limit the sector's potential to attract and sustain skilled professionals.

This workforce insight report provides a snapshot of the available evidence around the grounds management workforce and current economic context, with particular focus on economic outlook, inflationary pressures, wage projections and market rates.

Data Sources include: ONS Labour Market Statistics, CBI Economic Forecast, OBR Economic and Fiscal Outlook, CGCS salary scales, NJC and GMB for Local Government Services salary guidance, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, and National Minimum Wage and Living Wage recommendations. CIPD and Brightmine remuneration surveys have been used to confirm actual and forecasted pay settlements. This report also includes data from the unpublished 2024 GMA workforce survey and Industry Research report.

A note on terminology:

This report is focused on people employed in the grounds management industry. For the sake of consistency, and to avoid confusion, we have used the term grounds staff to mean anyone working in a grounds management role within the various sectors of the sports turf industry. These roles are also known as grounds manager, grounds person, groundskeeper, and greenkeeper. Where mention is made to head grounds manager this refers to the specific, more senior, role. When sources of data that relate to other specific staff have been referenced, we have used the specific terminology from that source (for example, greenkeepers at golf courses from BIGGA research).

In 2024 the GMA undertook modelling of the grounds industry to provide an approximate scale and scope of the industry. Within the modelling grassroots clubs, community clubs and private members clubs have been combined into a single group as it is not possible to separate them within the source data. Elsewhere, we refer to grassroots/community clubs and private member clubs separately. In this case grassroots/community clubs refers to local sports clubs operating at a non-professional level for health, social, educational or community purposes.



1.2. Economic Context

The recent cost of living crisis has calmed somewhat from the highs of recent years, peaking in 2022 when inflation was over 11%, but inflation remains persistently above target. The OBR forecasts CPI inflation of 3.5% in 2025, falling to 2.5% in 2026 and returning to 2% in 2027.¹

Price pressures remain due to higher wage settlements and services inflation. These are expected to fall back as the labour market loosens. Unemployment, rising gradually since 2022, is now close to 5% and expected to remain so until 2027 before easing toward the “equilibrium rate” of around 4%.²

The medium-term economic outlook is one of moderate but stable growth of around 1.5% annually and inflation returning to target. However, risks remain significant. Uncertainty remains around productivity levels, and in particular the potential impact from artificial intelligence. Domestic and global uncertainties, including interest rates, geopolitical tensions, and trade disruptions, have the potential to negatively impact growth.³ There are also unresolved labour supply issues including an ageing population and rising sickness-related inactivity.⁴

The latest official data show that the UK labour market is loosening, meaning that there are more people looking for work than there are jobs available. In July–September 2025 the 16–64 employment rate was 75%, while the unemployment rate had risen to 5% and economic inactivity was 21%.⁵

There were stark differences in employment intentions between industries with strong positive employment intentions in IT (+36), compared to strong negative intentions in Higher education (-24) and Non-compulsory education (-15). Around one in five employers are planning to make redundancies in the 3 months to December 2025.⁶

Further information on current economic and labour market trends are provided in *Annex 2*

The Budget 2025, announced in November 2025, delivered a mixed picture for the grounds industry: tighter margins for grounds teams and contractors, increased costs to larger sports facilities, alongside the potential for a major expansion of funded entry routes into the sector. For many grounds sector employers, 2026 will require balancing rising wage and business rate costs, improving employee rewards packages, while leveraging strategic opportunities to access additional funding and attract and develop new talent. Details of specific measures that may impact the grounds workforce are provided in *Annex 3*.

1 OBR (2025), p. 7

3 OBR (2025), p. 30, 34

5 ONS (2025c)

2 OBR (2025), p. 8

4 OBR (2025), p. 8

6 Ibid.



2.

SECTOR WORKFORCE PROFILE



2.1. Sites with grounds management staff

Our approach to quantifying the grounds management industry in the 2024 Industry Research⁷ is outlined in *Annex 5*, but can be summarised as attempting to map key grounds sectors in terms of:

- Number of playing sites
- Numbers employed at sample sites
- Approximate annual operating budget at sample sites

We then used weighting factors to estimate the overall employment levels for each sector based on the sample data we had collected.

Key sectors include professional sports (over 250 clubs in football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union and tennis), golf courses (over 1,750), horse racing (61 racecourses), higher/further education (99 universities and 264 colleges), independent schools (1,382 with pitches), state-funded secondary schools (4,177) and local government (197 single-tier councils, 164 district councils, 10,235 parish/town councils). This is not intended as a completely exhaustive list but is a transparent attempt at quantifying the sector.

There are also thousands of grassroots, community and private members clubs operating in the UK. Following the methodology outlined in *Annex 6* we identified over 12,500 grassroots/community/members clubs operating in football, bowls, cricket, rugby Union, rugby league and tennis that were likely to have some responsibility for pitches. It was not possible to separately identify community and private members clubs for the purposes of the economic modelling.

In their mapping of sports clubs for Sport England in 2017, Sheffield Hallam University found over 74,000 sports clubs in England alone, with Football, Cricket, Bowls and Tennis clubs making up just over 50% of all sports clubs in England.⁸

2.2. Size and structure of the workforce

The GMA Industry Research 2024 provided an estimate of sector employment based on a methodology outline in *Annex 5*. This modelling suggests that the grounds sector employs over 30,000 grounds staff. The largest sector employers are Independent Schools and Golf as shown in *Table 1*.

Reported numbers of apprenticeships suggests around 1,200 apprentices working in the sector, with two-thirds working in independent schools and grassroots/community/private members clubs.

7 GMA (2024)

8 Shibli and Barrett (2017)

**Table 1: Employment by sector⁹**

	Staff	Apprentices	Direct staff Paybill (£m)	Annual Operating Budget (£m)
Football	926	148	29.4	5.6
Bowls	-	-		12.3
Cricket	143	3	5.4	1.1
Golf	10,526	-	356.5	156.9
Horse Racing	400	19	15.3	3.5
Rugby League	24	6	0.9	0.4
Rugby Union	60	20	1.9	0.5
Tennis	190	0	5.7	1.8
Higher/Further Education	1,452	87	51.6	12
Independent Schools	9,277	392	304.7	52.3
State-funded Schools	1,090	-	43.8	10.9
Local Government	1,905	-	72.2	45.3
Grassroots/Community Members Clubs	2,396	428	54.2	40
Contractors	2,137	98		
Total	30,526	1,201	941.6	342.6

Higher and further education institutions, state-funded schools and local government also employ significant numbers; with Parish and Town councils estimated to be a larger direct employer than local authorities as many councils have transferred responsibility for the upkeep of pitches to Parish councils or local clubs via community asset transfer agreements. Taken as a single group, grassroots/community/private member clubs are now the third largest employer in the sector, closely followed by contractors hired by local government and grassroots/community/private member clubs for grounds maintenance.

The total pay bill (including allowances for employer on-costs such as National Insurance and pension contributions) comes to over £940 million. Operating budgets (which also include spend on contractors used by grassroots clubs and outsourced local government provision) comes to £343 million. This means that the annual expenditure on grounds management in the UK is over £1.2 billion.

The Annual Population Survey for SOC Code 5114: Grounds people and greenkeepers¹⁰ has 33,700 people employed in the role with a 95% confidence interval of +/-7,600. This suggests that our estimate is both realistic and more likely to be underestimating the size of the sector than overestimating.

9 GMA (2024), Economic modelling

10 Annual Population Survey (ONS), Jul 2024-Jun 2025, downloaded from NOMIS. SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) codes are a four-digit codes used in the UK to provide a standardised classification of jobs based on skills, qualifications and responsibilities.

At grassroots/community/members club level, Football and Cricket Clubs are more likely to directly employ grounds staff than other sports, as shown in *Table 2*, while Bowls has the highest levels of volunteering. It is possible that higher levels of volunteering are linked to higher rates of participation by older people in these sports.

Table 2: Grassroots/community/members clubs employment and volunteering by sport¹¹

	Employed Grounds Staff	Average Staff per club	Volunteers	Average Volunteers per club	Average Hours per week Volunteered
Bowls	-	-	25,090	6.8	9
Football	1,300	0.3	14,415	3.2	13
Cricket	866	0.4	7,701	3.4	17
Rugby League	230	0.3	330	3.2	14
Rugby Union			1,971	3.6	12
Tennis	-	-	4,653	4.7	8
Total	2,396	0.2	54,160	4.3	14

Data was collected on the number of hours per week each volunteer spent on grounds work. However, as we are assuming that the volunteers who responded to the survey are likely to be more involved than other volunteers, we have estimated all other volunteers do half the average reported hours per week. This would still equate to over 13 million hours of volunteering per year, with an in-kind value of over £150 million that volunteers are providing local sports clubs.



¹¹ GMA (2024), Economic modelling

2.3. Demographic characteristics

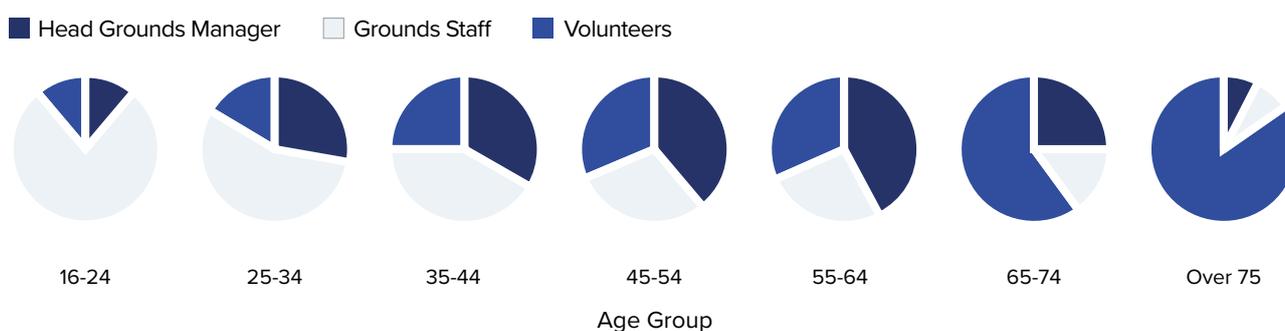
The most recent industry survey, undertaken in 2024, collected data on the demographics of respondents. The survey received a response from 444 grounds staff working across the sector. It suggested a small shift towards more women working in the industry with 4.3% of responders being female compared to 1.6% in 2019¹², although only 1% of Head grounds managers that responded in 2024 were women. The Annual Population Survey indicates that approximately 3% of people employed in roles classified as SOC Code 5114: Grounds people¹³ are female. Women were more likely to work in Local Authority/Education, see *Table 3*. Around 8% of volunteers were women.

Table 3: Gender by broad sector¹⁴

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Professional sports	29%	26%
Grassroots/ Private members clubs	19%	11%
Local Authority/ Education	36%	53%
Other	16%	11%
Base	425	19

There was no significant change in terms of ethnic diversity since 2019 with 97% of responding grounds staff indicating they were White.¹⁵

Figure 1: Age group by job role¹⁶



Almost half (49%) of respondents were aged between 45-64 (see *Figure 1*). Head grounds managers had a higher age profile than other grounds staff with the most frequent age group 55-64 (31%) compared to 56% of other grounds staff who were aged under 45. Volunteers unsurprisingly had the highest age profile with 58% aged 55 and over.

12 2024 n = 444, 2019 n = 577, difference = 2.7%, 95% CI: 0.7%–4.7%

13 Annual Population Survey (ONS), Jul 2024-Jun 2025, downloaded from NOMIS.

14 GMA (2024), Base 444

15 2024 n = 438, 2019 n = 575, difference = -0.3%, 95% CI: -2.3% to 1.7%

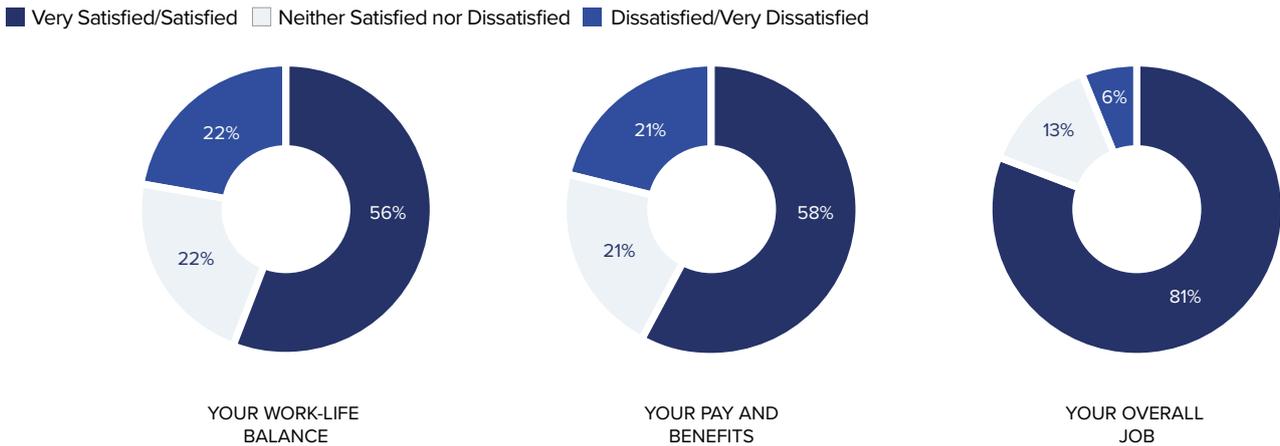
16 GMA (2024), Base 440



2.4. Job Satisfaction, Wellbeing and Retention

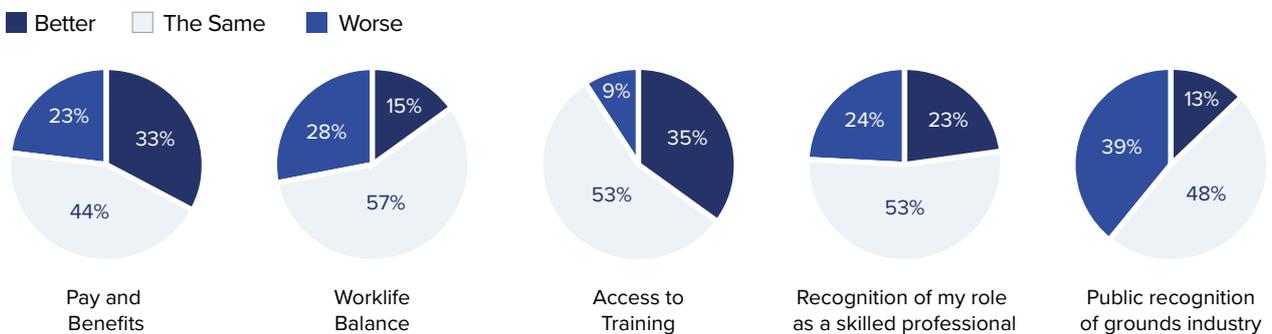
Respondents to the 2024 workforce survey were asked how satisfied they were with aspects of their current job. The majority of respondents (81%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall job (see *Figure 2*), although this varies by industry with staff working in Grassroots/Community Sports (89%) reporting higher satisfaction than those working in Private/Members Sports Clubs (75%).

Figure 2: Job satisfaction of grounds staff¹⁷



Satisfaction levels were lower for both pay and benefits (58%) and work-life balance (56%). When asked to compare the present situation with five years ago there was a mixed picture in relation to pay and benefits. One third (33%) of respondents felt that pay and benefits had got better, compared to nearly a quarter (23%) who felt they had got worse. The picture was starker for work-life balance, with 28% saying it was worse and only 15% saying it was better. Respondents reported the most improvements around access to training. (see *Figure 3*).

Figure 3: Compared to five years ago, are the following things better or worse:¹⁸



17 GMA (2024), Base 439

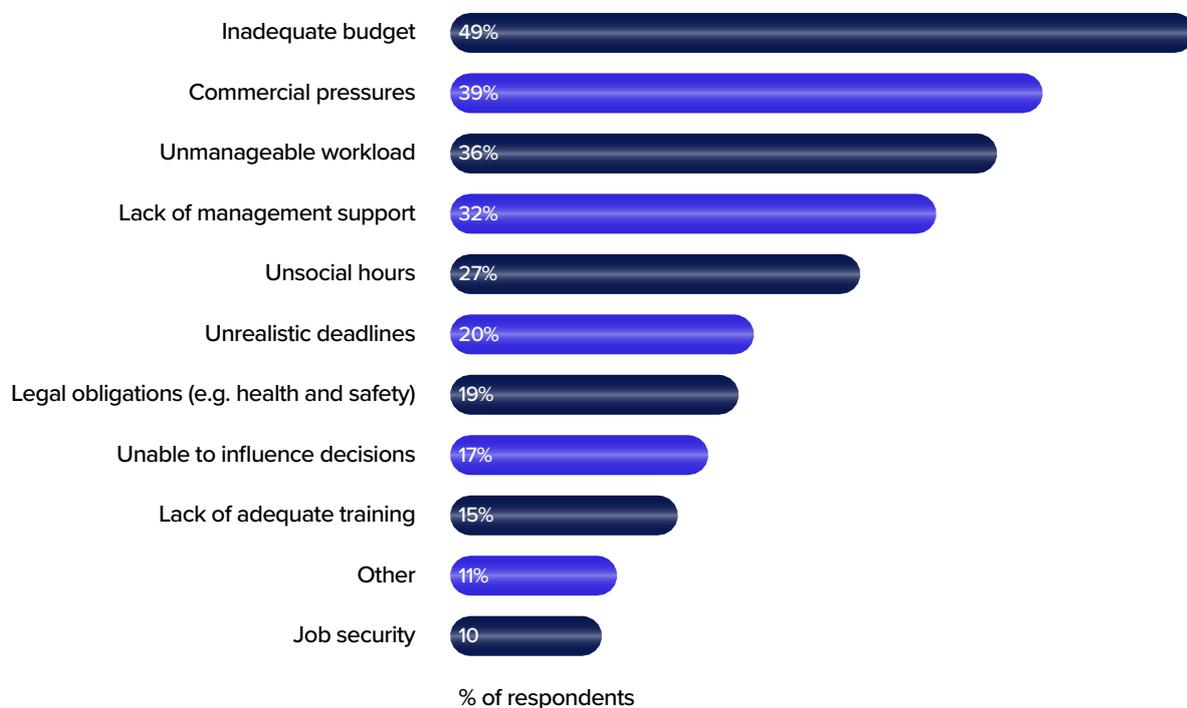
18 GMA (2024), Base 409



One quarter of grounds staff said the recognition of their role as a skilled professional had got worse compared to five years ago. This reflects a sizable minority (13%) of grounds staff who do not feel respected and valued as a professional by their employers.¹⁹ A similar proportion (15%) would not feel comfortable discussing work pressures or mental health with their line manager or colleagues. Despite the obvious pressures facing grounds staff, 25% reported that their employer did not offer any mental health services or support.

When asked about causes of additional pressures or stress in their current role, the most frequent issue was inadequate budget, which was mentioned by half (49%) of grounds staff (see *Figure 4*). In a period when there has been significant increases in the costs of supplies and materials, 59% of respondents said their annual budget has either remained the same or decreased.

Figure 4: Causes of additional pressure or stress in current job²⁰



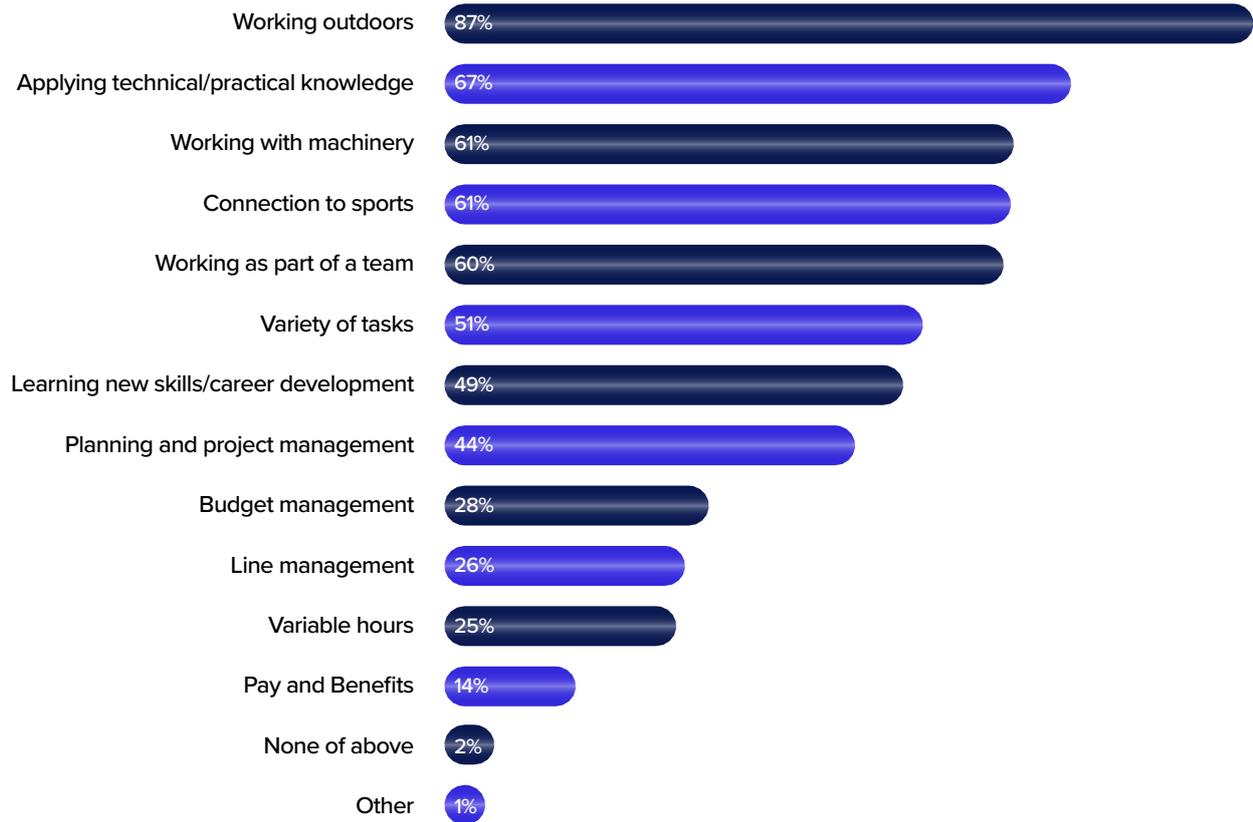
Over 60% of respondents worked at least six hours of overtime per week, with half feeling they were not adequately compensated. Commercial pressures, unmanageable workload, lack of management support and unsocial hours are also significant concerns which are likely to exacerbate retention challenges in the sector.

The main appealing factors to working in the grounds industry were working outdoors, applying technical/practical knowledge, working with machinery, team-working and connections to sports (see *Figure 5*).

¹⁹ In GMA (2024) 13% of grounds staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel respected and valued as a professional by my employers."

²⁰ GMA (2024), Base 405

Figure 5: Appeal of working in the grounds sector²¹



Given the older age profile of grounds staff it is perhaps not surprising that 15% reported planning to retire in the next 3 years. Out of an estimated workforce of around 30,000 this would equate to around 1,500 retirements per year.

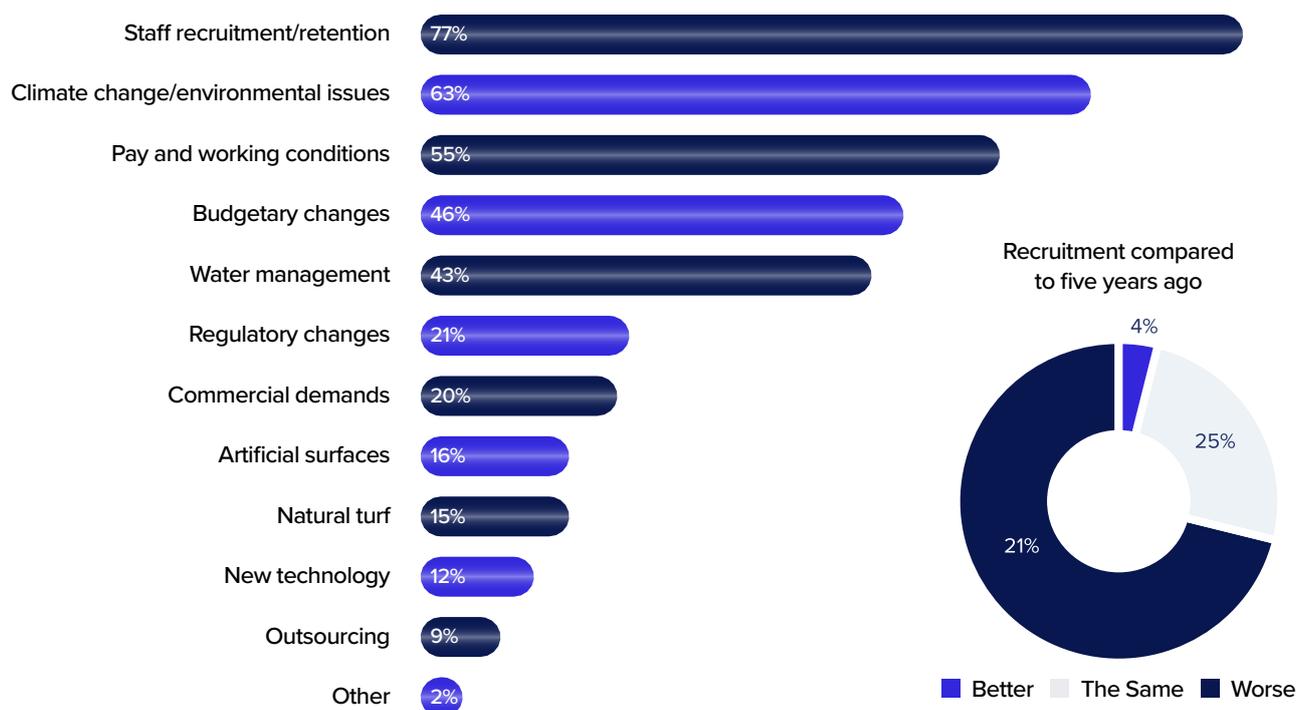


21 GMA (2024), Base 444

2.5. Recruitment and Skills Gaps

Staff recruitment and retention was raised by over three quarters of professional grounds staff as the greatest challenge facing the sector over the next five years. Many expressed concern that it is getting more difficult to recruit both in terms of numbers and the quality of candidates. Over two thirds also felt that the recruitment situation now is worse than it was five years ago. (See Figure 6).

Figure 6: Greatest challenges to the grounds sector in the next five years²²



A similar picture was observed in a recent 2024 survey of greenkeepers for BIGGA²³, which found that the biggest reported barrier to recruitment was the lack of qualified applicants (57%) followed by demands for higher pay (48%).²⁴ Despite the continuing challenges around recruitment it is a concern that word of mouth was the most popular method to try to recruit new greenkeepers.²⁵

Local Government Association survey data show that around 35% of councils report recruitment difficulties for “gardeners and grounds people”.²⁶ A report by the Landscape Institute entitled *Skills for Greener Places* highlights a “*looming management and maintenance skills crisis*”²⁷, noting shortages in skills, resources and limited entry routes contributing to shortages in entry-level technical and practical roles. Low take up of apprenticeships in the landscape sector (only 20% of businesses have ever employed an apprentice and nearly half have no plans to in future) weakens the pipeline of new workers entering skills-shortage areas such as grounds management.²⁸

In the 2024 GMA research, grounds staff were nearly as likely to have entered the professional by accident (16%) as by an apprenticeship (17%), with the most likely route via an interest in sport

22 GMA (2024), Base 441

24 Sporting Insights (2024) p. 19

26 Local Government Association (2025)

23 BIGGA (2024)

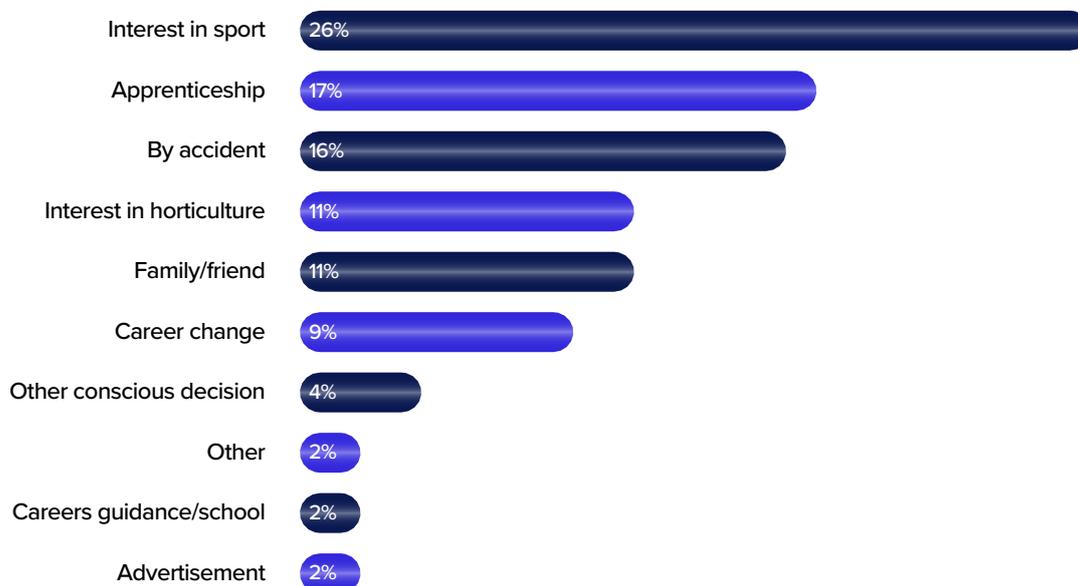
25 Sporting Insights (2025) p. 18

27 Landscape Institute (2025), p. 10



(see *Figure 7*). The proportion of respondents to the GMA industry research reporting they entered the industry via apprenticeships increased slightly from 14% in 2019 to 17% in 2024, but the change was not statistically significant²⁹, suggesting there has been little movement towards apprenticeships as a route into the profession. The Employer-led Sports Turf Industry Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group - of which the GMA is a member - has worked closely with Skills England (previously IFATE) to develop a suite of sports turf apprenticeship qualifications that serve the needs of our vital sector. The GMA professionally recognises the suite of qualifications including apprenticeship Levels 2 and 3 which are already embedded within the GMA's Grounds Management Framework, providing a clear career pathway from entry level through to advanced professional qualifications. The group has recently developed a Level 5 Sports Turf Technical Manager apprenticeship which is awaiting approval from Skills England. The introduction of a fit for purpose higher level option - such as this Level 5 Apprenticeship – will strengthen that pathway by enabling progression into more specialist and senior roles. It will also help improve sector resilience by broadening opportunities for upskilling and attracting new entrants to the profession.

Figure 7: Entry route into the grounds management industry³⁰



Less than a quarter of grounds staff have industry related qualifications above level 4, although this figure is slightly higher amongst grounds staff that manage High and Elite level pitches (see *Figure 8*). This suggests there is work to be done to ensure that qualification levels more closely align with the quality of pitch cared for.

The Grounds Management Association has developed the Grounds Management Framework (GMF), which provides a clear, role- and pitch-quality-aligned structure linking skills, knowledge, qualifications, and continuing professional development. GMA training courses and qualifications are mapped to this framework, offering employers a practical tool to support progression, target investment in training, and ensure that workforce capability develops in line with the standards required. However, to translate into meaningful impact, training and CPD must be consistently supported and funded as part of sustainable employment practice.

²⁹ (difference = 2.7%, 95% CI: -3.3% to 8.7%)

³⁰ GMA (2024), Base 446

Figure 8: Highest industry related qualification by pitch quality³¹

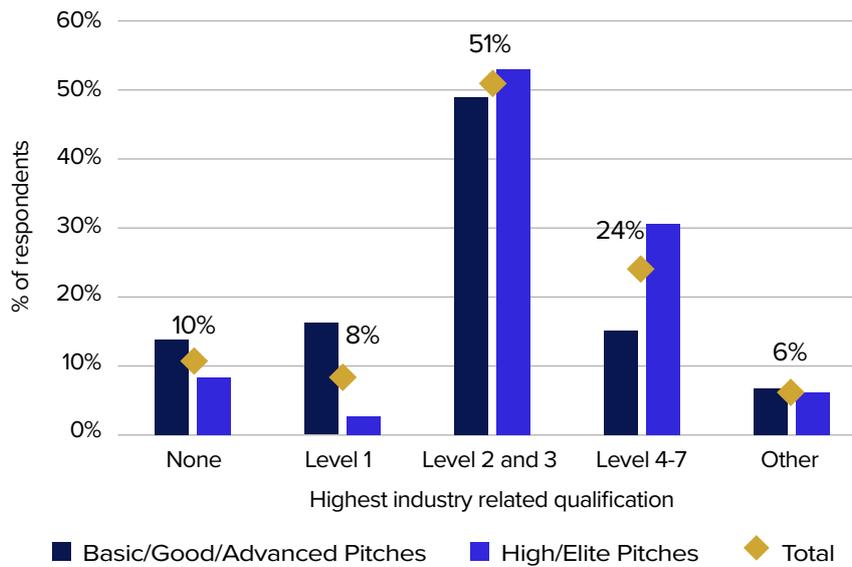


Figure 9: Training in previous 12 months³²



Over half of grounds staff had training in the previous twelve months, mainly through their employer (see *Figure 9*). A similar proportion of grounds staff (55%) reported having undertaken training from the GMA, however only 9% of those had used the Grounds Management Framework (GMF) to develop training plans. This suggests that while engagement in training is relatively high, there remains significant scope to embed a more consistent, structured approach to workforce development. The GMF’s practical framework helps employers and individuals plan development more strategically. Wider use of the GMF has the potential to improve consistency and credibility across the sector, demonstrate clear progression pathways, and support more sustainable investment in training and professional development.

Persistent recruitment challenges, driven by a shortage of qualified applicants and limited entry routes, underline the importance of strengthening apprenticeships as a pathway into the grounds industry, particularly given the renewed focus and funding in the recent budget. At the same time, relatively low qualification levels point to the need for greater investment in, and employer support for, ongoing training and CPD.

31 GMA (2024), Base 401
 32 GMA (2024), Base 443



3. PAY AND BENEFITS



3.1. Pay negotiations

The grounds industry research 2024 collected data on how grounds staff’s most recent pay award (since January 2023) was determined. As shown in *Table 4*, the majority (66%) of pay rises were determined at the organisational level, with the highest prevalence in independent schools (81%), local government/education (72%) and professional sports (70%).

Table 4: How latest pay rise was determined by Sector

	Professional Sports	Grassroots/Community Sports	Private/Members Sports Club (inc golf)	Independent schools	Education/Local Government	Total
Negotiated individually	16%	22%	24%	8%	3%	13%
Negotiated as part of a team	5%	0%	3%	4%	9%	5%
Determined at organisation level	70%	46%	55%	81%	72%	66%
Other	10%	33%	18%	7%	16%	17%
Base	126	46	33	83	79	432

In contrast, grassroots/community sports and private/members-only sports clubs have lower reliance on organisational agreement (46% and 55% respectively) and greater prominence for individually negotiated pay based on performance (22% and 24% respectively compared to 13% for the sector).

When coded the most common “other” pay determinations were linked to trade unions, national bodies or the NJC for local government services (24% of other), rises in the minimum wage (10%), individual negotiations not linked to performance (8%), determinations by chairman/board (7%) and self-employment (7%).

33 Unfortunately, the OBR does not use CPIH as a measure of inflation as it does not affect public finances, so only CPI and RPI projections are available.

34 House of Commons Library (2024)
35 ONS (2025b) Page 2



3.2. Inflation

In line with Office of National Statistics (ONS) recommendations, CPIH is the key inflation figure. It is the most comprehensive inflation measure as it includes housing costs for homeowners.³³ High inflation in the past few years has led to a “cost of living crisis”, as prices for essentials like food, energy and housing rose much faster than incomes. UK inflation peaked at 11.1% in October 2022, the highest rate for over 40 years, sharply reducing households’ real disposable incomes.³⁴ CPIH inflation for the year to October 2025 was 3.8%.³⁵

Even though inflation has since fallen, prices remain significantly higher than before: by October 2023, the overall cost of the typical consumer basket was about 16% higher than two years earlier, with energy prices up around 49% and food prices up 28%.³⁶ Because wages have generally not kept pace with these price rises, real wages have fallen, squeezing living standards and prompting intense pressure from workers and unions for higher pay settlements to restore lost purchasing power.³⁷

The Bank of England projects UK CPI inflation to continue to fall into early 2026 as earlier spikes in energy and food prices drop out of the annual comparison and weaker demand opens up spare capacity.³⁸ The OECD³⁹ expects inflation to move closer to the 2% target in 2026 but highlight risks from geopolitical tensions, global commodity prices and domestic wage settlements, which could renew price pressures. The projected CPI inflation figure for 2025 is 3.5%, with RPI projected to be 4.3%. In 2026, CPI is projected to be 2.5% and RPI 3.7%⁴⁰.

KPMG also predict inflation to fall from 3.4% in 2025 to 2.1% in 2026, with an expected fall in both energy and food prices.⁴¹

3.3. National Minimum and Living Wage

The Living Wage Foundation independently calculates the voluntary Living Wage, which is an hourly rate of pay set to reflect the basic cost of living in the UK. The Living Wage rates for 2025-26, announced on the 22nd October, were £13.45, 85p more than the 2024/25 rate, equivalent to a 6.7% increase. The London Living Wage has increased by 90p to £14.80, equivalent to a 6.9% increase.⁴²

The government increased the National Living Wage (affecting those aged 21 years and over) to £12.71 from April 2026, an increase of 4.1%.⁴³

In April 2026, following the above inflation increase in the National Living Wage announced in the November budget, the difference between the National Living Wage and the voluntary real Living Wage will be at its lowest level in the past decade as shown in *Table 5*.

36 Resolution Foundation (2023)

39 OECD (2025)

42 LWF (2025)

37 Litsardopoulos (2024)

40 OBR (2025) Table A.1 Page 182

43 <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

38 Bank of England (2025)

41 KPMG (2025) p. 5

**Table 5: Real Living Wage vs. National Living Wage 2020-2025**

Year	Real London Living Wage	Real UK Living Wage	National Living Wage	Difference between NLW and UK Living Wage
2016-17	£9.75	£8.45	£7.20	−£1.25
2017-18	£10.20	£8.75	£7.50	−£1.25
2018-19	£10.55	£9.00	£7.83	−£1.17
2019-20	£10.75	£9.30	£8.21	−£1.09
2020-21	£10.85	£9.50	£8.72	−£0.78
2021-22	£11.05	£9.90	£8.91	−£0.99
2022-23	£11.95	£10.90	£9.50	−£1.40
2023-24	£13.15	£12.00	£10.42	−£1.58
2024-25	£13.85	£12.60	£11.44	−£1.16
2025-26	£14.80	£13.45	£12.21	−£1.24
2026-27			£12.71	−£0.74

Source: Living Wage Calculations, November 2025

shows the Living Wage accreditation status of grounds management employers by Sector, with significant variation observable across sectors.

Local government/education employers have the highest rate of full accreditation as living wage employers (75%), with the next closest sectors Professional sports (48%) and Independent schools (29%). There were low levels of accreditation reported in grassroots/community sports (9%) and private/members-only sports clubs (17%).

Table 6: Living Wage Accreditation by Sector

	Professional Sports	Grassroots/Community Sports	Private/Members Sports Club (inc golf)	Independent schools	Education/Local Government	Total
Yes - fully accredited	48%	9%	17%	29%	75%	36%
No - but pays living wage	3%	18%	28%	16%	10%	14%
No	8%	27%	17%	7%	4%	11%
Don't Know	41%	45%	38%	48%	12%	38%
Base	63	33	29	58	52	274



Just over one in ten respondents (11%) reported that their employer did not pay the living wage, with higher rates in grassroots/community sports (27%) and private/members-only sports clubs (17%).

A significant challenge in interpreting results across sectors is the high level of uncertainty amongst grounds staff, as indicated by the “Don’t know” responses. Nearly half of respondents in grassroots/community sports (45%) and independent schools (48%) are unsure about their organisation’s living wage accreditation status, highlighting a potential knowledge gap.

3.4. Earnings growth

Average earnings can be affected by changes to the rate of pay and also to the composition of employment (for example if more people work more hours this would increase average earnings). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provide “decomposition” figures which show the contribution caused by changes in wages and employment composition separately. The provisional figure for earnings growth from the ONS decomposition data was 4.9% in September 2025. 4%25%21%⁴⁴

This aligns closely with the predicted average weekly earnings growth for 2025 of 5.2%, as forecast by the OBR in November. The OBR expects that a looser labour market, lower inflation, and higher employer costs will depress wage growth in 2026 to 3.3%.⁴⁵

Provisional data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings show that median gross pay for full-time SOC Code 5114: Grounds person and greenkeepers increased by 9.8% in 2025 to £28,288, as shown in *Table 7*. This increase in gross median pay follows a 17.6% increase between 2024 and 2022 (data from 2023 was not available). The irregularity of these changes possibly reflects fluctuations due to sampling rather than tangible changes in the median.

Table 7: Interquartile range of grounds person and greenkeepers 2020 – 2025⁴⁶

Year	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	% change in Median
2025*	£25,114	£28,288	£33,482	9.8%
2024	£22,925	£25,758	£29,265	17.6%
2023	-	-	-	-
2022	£19,756	£21,907	£25,182	5.4%
2021	£18,992	£20,787	£23,832	-0.9%
2020	£18,840	£20,986	£25,001	5.40%

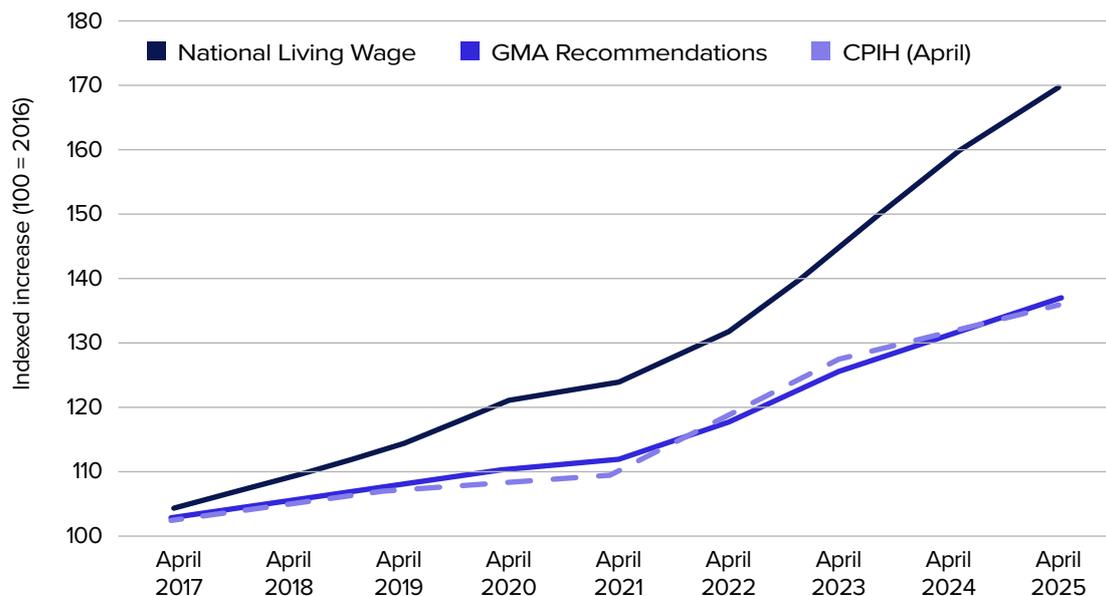
44 ONS (2025e) column KA25 in 1.Decomp_WE
45 OBR (2025) pages 7, 182

46 ONS (2025a) – S02010 code 5114 – Table 14.7a Annual pay – Gross – Full-time - 2025 – Provisional figures



Figure 10 provides an indexed growth of National Living Wage (NLW), CPIH inflation and the GMA recommendations since 2016, to their relative growth over time. The GMA recommendations have tracked CPIH closely and have resulted in a real-terms increase of only 0.7% over the past decade. In comparison, the NLW has experienced a real terms increase of over 30% over the same period. If this trend continues it will likely result in a retention crisis as pay compression will mean experienced staff will no longer be adequately rewarded for the additional value, they provide.

Figure 10: Indexed increases in NLW, CPIH and GMA recommendations



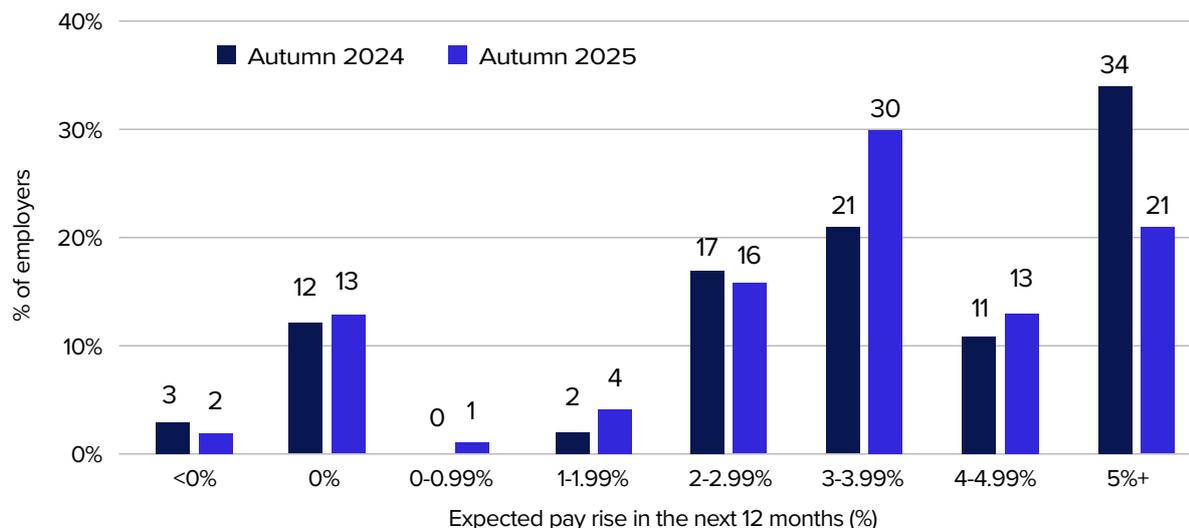
3.5. Predicted Pay Awards

In a CIPD survey of public and private sector employers⁴⁷ the median expected pay award in both the private and public sectors over the twelve months to Autumn 2026 will be 3%.

Although the expected median pay award is the same as Autumn 2025, there is evidence of a downward shift in the level of pay awards planned by employers. In Autumn 2024, 34% of employers planned to offer a pay rise of 5% or more, but this has fallen to 21% of employers this year, with a equivalent rise in employers in the 3–3.99% range. (See Figure 11)

47 CIPD (2025) Page 12

Figure 11: Distribution of expected pay awards (%)



Source: CIPD (2025)

In a Brightmine analysis of pay trends in 2025,⁴⁸ the median basic pay award in both the private and public sectors over the year to August 2025 was 3%. This is down from 4.9% in the year to August 2024 and 6% in the year to August 2023.

Looking ahead to 2026, Brightmine analysis of employer pay intentions⁴⁹ suggest a continuation of the current approach with a median expected pay award for 2026 of 3%. The dominant factors putting downward pressure on forthcoming pay awards levels were affordability, employer national insurance contributions, and organisation performance. The upward pressures included inflation/cost of living, pay levels in the same industry and pay levels in the same occupational group.

Brightmine identify financially sustainable pay decisions, employee motivation and performance-focused rewards, and low-cost benefit packages as key employer reward priorities for 2026.⁵⁰

The committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) has designed an online salary calculator⁵¹ which takes account of the details of an individual role (including experience, responsibilities and qualifications) to provide minimum salary rates. They have continued to provide annual uprates to the recommended rates contained within the salary calculator. The GMA has examined whether a similar benchmarking approach would be applicable to the grounds management industry but given the wider range of sectors and roles covered it is not currently a viable option.

The committee recommended increases of 5% in 2025⁵² and 4.8% in 2026.⁵³ A key concern in both years was the pressure placed upon existing wage structures by the increase in National Living Wage, with the pay differential between new starters and experienced staff being reduced by large increases in the NLW.

48 Nagandira (2025)

49 Attwood (2025)

50 Mason (2025)

51 <https://golfclubsalaries.org.uk/salary-calculators/>

52 <https://golfclubsalaries.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2025-CGCS-Statement-Final-Oct-24.pdf>

53 <https://golfclubsalaries.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2026-CGCS-Statement-Oct-25.pdf>



3.6. Updated GMA Salary Framework

In 2024 we outlined our intention to provide a consistent, simple and transparent methodology that takes into account inflation, wage growth and predicted pay awards. Our proposed uprating methodology used an average of inflation, wage growth (proxy for market rates) and pay awards (so linked to realistic employer offers). Following several years of above inflation rises to the National Living Wage (NLW), we are proposing to also include the % increase in the NLW in this calculation to protect against compression at the bottom end of the wage structure. Further details of the methodology are provided in *Annex 4*. A summary of the above data for April each year is provided in *Table 8*.

Table 8: Summary of Uprating data 2022-2026

	CPIH	Wage Growth	Pay Awards	NLW	Uprating
April 2023	7.8%	7.1%	5.5%	9.7%	6.8%
April 2024	3.0%	5.8%	5.0%	9.8%	4.6%
April 2025	4.1%	4.8%	3.0%	6.7%	4.7%
April 2026 (predicted)	2.5	3.3	3.0%	4.1%	3.2%*

**provisional based on current OBR predictions for CPI and weekly wage growth in 2026*

The recommended uprating for April 2025 is 4.7%. Based on current projections the uprating for April 2026 will be 3.2%.

The 2025 framework is provided below. The framework is now based on a 40 hour week and still reflects recommended minimum basic salaries and not “salary ranges” (there is no maximum specified).

	Minimum Basic Salary (£) 2025		
Grounds Manager	48,459	to	75,070
Head Groundsperson	41,329	to	56,725
Deputy Head Groundsperson / Sole Charge	33,812	to	43,155
Groundsperson (Skilled)	31,621	to	40,339
Groundsperson	25,333	to	32,318
Junior Groundsperson (under 18)	17,733	to	22,623



When using the salary framework please note the following:

- They reflect **minimum** recommended basic salary payments and are not “salary ranges”. There is no maximum salary specified.
- Salaries in the framework are now based on a 40 hour week.⁵⁴ For those working different basic hours the framework should be adjusted pro rata.
- Experienced staff in some sectors (notably professional/elite sports) would be expected to earn well above the average in other sectors and these minimum salaries would not be applicable, although the recommended annual uplift could still be used as a basis for negotiation.
- Junior Groundsperson (under 18) rates are calculated as 70% of the standard minimum groundsperson salary, and should vary dependent on experience.⁵⁵
- These bands relate to a set of role descriptions that reflect the typical job responsibilities and experience required for each level within the industry career hierarchy, available on request from the GMA.
- Bonuses, overtime and subsistence payments have not been included in the salary bands and are therefore additional.⁵⁶
- To ensure a Living Wage, the minimum salary for a groundsperson in London should not be lower than £27,927. We would encourage employers to become a Living Wage Employer by gaining accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation.

The provisional minimum salaries for April 2026 (based on the current projection of a 2026 rise of 3.2%) are provided below.

Provisional	Minimum Basic Salary (£) 2026		
Grounds Manager	50,010	to	77,472
Head Groundsperson	42,652	to	58,540
Deputy Head Groundsperson / Sole Charge	34,894	to	44,536
Groundsperson (Skilled)	32,633	to	41,630
Groundsperson	26,144	to	33,352
Junior Groundsperson (under 18)	18,301	to	23,346

⁵⁴ In previous years this was 37.5 hours so this framework is not directly comparable with previous years without pro rata adjustment.

⁵⁵ NB: Minimum wage for under 18's is 62% of the standard minimum wage. GMA are intending to undertake some work on Junior and Apprentice Groundsperson roles in the coming year.

⁵⁶ Employers should ensure they meet their obligations in terms of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and ensuring fair payment for overtime worked. This can be done in partnership with employees with agreements reached about the balance between overtime pay, time off in lieu and flexible working. The benefit value of any accommodation provided has not been included and should be negotiated separately.



4. FORWARD LOOK: 2026



4.1. Key Issues Facing the Grounds Industry Workforce in 2026

Recruitment issues and skills gaps

Over three-quarters of professional grounds staff identify recruitment and retention as the greatest challenge for the next five years, with two-thirds saying hiring has worsened compared with five years ago. The sector has an ageing workforce: almost half of workers are 45–64 and 15% plan to retire within three years, risking the loss of around 1,500 experienced staff annually.

Apprenticeships exist but recruitment into the sector remains more down to word of mouth or chance. The 2025 Budget identified more than £1.5bn additional funding for employment and skills support, including guaranteeing six-month paid work placements for every eligible 18-21 year old and £725m to fully fund SME apprenticeships for under-25s. This represents a significant opportunity to strengthen the use of apprenticeships in the sector.

Heavy Workloads, Long Hours and Wellbeing Strain

Half of grounds staff cite inadequate budgets as their biggest pressure, worsened by rising costs of materials and equipment; 59% report their budgets have stayed flat or fallen despite inflationary pressures. Over 60% work at least six hours of overtime per week, and half feel under-compensated for it. Work-life balance satisfaction is low (56%), with many saying it has deteriorated over the past five years. Combined with variable provision of wellbeing support from employers, this risks further exacerbate retention challenges. In response the Grounds Management Association provide its members access to sector-specific support services, including the GMA Member Assistance Programme and legal and employment advice. However, reliance on individual support services alone cannot offset sustained workload pressures and resourcing constraints, which risk further exacerbating retention challenges if not addressed at an organisational and sector-wide level.

Low Pay and Pay Compression

Pay and benefits satisfaction amongst grounds staff is relatively low (58%), and pay is rarely viewed as an appealing feature of the job. The cost of living crisis has meant that even where employers have followed the GMA recommendations over the past decade, staff would only have experienced a real-terms increase of 0.7%. Large increases to the National Living Wage rates risk compressing pay differentials between new starters and experienced staff, which may impact motivation, progression incentives and retention.

Financial Constraints Across Employers

Inflation, rising wage costs and squeezed public budgets constrain employers' ability to improve pay and conditions. Business rates revaluation, combined with a new high-value business-rates multiplier applicable from April 2026, are likely to impact the budgets of many sector employers.



4.2. What the GMA Is Doing to Address these Issues

The evidence set out in this report demonstrates that the challenges facing the grounds management workforce are systemic, long-term and shared across sectors, requiring a coordinated response from across the industry. Recruitment difficulties, an ageing workforce, skills gaps, workload pressures and pay compression are not isolated problems, nor are they issues that individual employers can resolve alone. They require a coordinated, evidence-led response that recognises both workforce needs and the operational and financial realities facing employers.

In response, the Grounds Management Association is developing a Fair Work Strategy for the sector. The strategy is informed directly by the findings of this research and by engagement with employers, grounds staff and sector partners. Its purpose is to support the development of fair, professional and sustainable employment practices that strengthen workforce resilience, protect standards and help secure the long-term future of the profession.

A core focus of the strategy is setting clear and consistent expectations around employment practice across the sector. This includes fair and transparent pay structures, recognition of technical skills and qualifications, manageable workloads, access to training and CPD, and appropriate wellbeing support. The aim is not to impose a single model, but to establish a shared baseline that reflects the professional and technical nature of grounds management work.

The strategy also seeks to strengthen skills development and progression. The Grounds Management Framework (GMF) provides a structured approach to identifying skills requirements, planning training and supporting progression across different levels of responsibility and pitch quality. The GMA will promote wider use of the GMF to help employers align training investment with operational need, support apprenticeships and early-career routes, and plan for succession as experienced staff approach retirement.

Employer engagement is central to the Fair Work Strategy. The GMA will work with employers, National Governing Bodies and partners to co-design practical guidance, tools and templates that support improvement in employment practice. This includes support for reviewing pay structures, embedding training and progression pathways, improving wellbeing provision and making better use of available funding, including apprenticeship and skills programmes.

The strategy will also amplify the workforce voice within the GMA's research, policy and advocacy activity. Ongoing workforce insight will help ensure that emerging issues are identified early and that interventions remain grounded in lived experience as well as labour market evidence.

Finally, the GMA will use transparency and recognition to encourage positive change. By sharing good practice, benchmarking data and examples of employer leadership, the strategy aims to support continuous improvement across the sector and to reinforce the value of investing in people as skilled professionals.

Taken together, these actions reflect a shift towards a more joined-up approach to workforce sustainability. The Fair Work Strategy is not a standalone initiative, but a framework for long-term collaboration between the GMA, employers and the workforce, ensuring that grounds management remains a skilled, valued and viable profession for the future.



5. ANNEXES



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Annex 2 Economic and labour market trends

The OBR notes that GDP growth in 2025 has been revised up to 1.5%, compared with 1.0% expected in March. Expected growth eases to 1.4% in 2026 before stabilizing at around 1.5% a year through the rest of the decade.⁵⁷

In their December UK economic outlook, consultancy firm KPMG predict a similar picture, with weak consumer confidence and a slowing job market acting as a drag on growth. They predict GDP will grow by 1.0% in 2026, alongside rising unemployment.⁵⁸

The UK's central long-term challenge remains weak productivity. Productivity growth averaged only 0.6% in the decade after the global financial crisis (2010-2019), far below the pre-crisis (1998-2007) trend of 2.1%.⁵⁹ Under-investment, exacerbated by a series of economic shocks including recent trade disruption, the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic and leaving the EU have all contributed to ongoing weak productivity.⁶⁰ Reflecting this evidence, the OBR has revised down its estimate of medium-term trend productivity growth from 1.3% to 1.0%.⁶¹

A central policy response to the productivity and growth challenge is higher public investment. The 2024 and 2025 Budgets have provided over £120bn in additional departmental capital spending relative to previous plans. Public sector net investment will average 2.7% of GDP, the highest sustained level in four decades.⁶²

The latest official data show that the UK labour market is loosening, meaning that there are more people looking for work than there are jobs available. In July–September 2025 the 16–64 employment rate was 75%, while the unemployment rate had risen to 5% and economic inactivity was 21%.⁶³ Independent analysis by the Resolution Foundation similarly finds that unemployment has risen by around 0.5 percentage points over the past year and that multiple indicators now point to a labour market “*looser than it was on the eve of the pandemic*”, *even though wage growth has not yet fully adjusted*.”⁶⁴

Vacancy data confirm this shift from a tight to loose labour market. Total vacancies in August–October 2025 were estimated at 723,000, broadly flat on the quarter but down 99,000 (12%) on a year earlier. The number of unemployed people per vacancy was 2.5 in July to September 2025, up from 2.3 in the previous quarter; this is the highest level (excluding the pandemic) since 2015.⁶⁵

Looking ahead, recent work by the Bank of England and the Resolution Foundation suggests that slack has continued to build through 2025, with unemployment close to 5% and vacancies close to pre-pandemic norms, but that the degree of slack is still far smaller than after the financial crisis.⁶⁶

In the most recent Labour Market Outlook⁶⁷, the CIPD report that the net employment balance, the difference between employers expecting there will be an increase in staff levels and those expecting there will be a decrease in the next three months, was +9 which is historically very low (excluding comparisons with the pandemic).

Many educational institutions are facing a funding crisis, due in part to a fall in both per-student funding levels and international student numbers. In a 2025 Universities UK survey, 60% of institutions report having scaled back on repairs and maintenance to existing facilities due to funding restraints, with 89% saying they may need to do so over the next three years.⁶⁸

57 OBR (2025), p. 33

58 KPMG (2025) p. 1

59 OBR (2025), p. 27

60 HMT (2025) p.13

61 OBR (2025), p. 16

62 HMT (2025), p. 1, p. 5

63 ONS (2025c)

64 Resolution Foundation (2025)

65 ONS (2025d)

66 Bank of England (2025) and Resolution Foundation (2025)

67 Cockett (2025)

68 <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/creating-voice-our-members/media-releases/universities-grip-financial-crisis-what>



Annex 3 Key measures in 2025 Budget

The UK Government's 2025 budget announcements contained both challenges and opportunities for the UK grounds management sector. Provided below is a summary of the budget measures that will likely have the greatest impact on the grounds management sector over the coming year.

Rising wages and employment costs⁶⁹

The National Living Wage will increase to £12.71 an hour from April 2026, with apprentice wages rising 6%. While this is good for low earners, it will increase payroll costs for employers across the sector and runs the risk of pay compression in the sector. Unless employers review and adjust pay structures for experienced staff alongside these raises, it will reduce differentials between new and experienced staff. This may undermine progression incentives, morale and retention.

Tax changes will impact employees, self-employed and small businesses⁷⁰

Dividend tax rates will rise by 2 percentage points from April 2026, and the Lower Earnings Limit and Small Profits Threshold will increase from 2026–27. This will directly raise costs for many self-employed grounds managers and small businesses operating as limited companies. Freezes to both National Insurance and Income Tax thresholds will increase fiscal drag and reduce the take-home pay for many staff over the longer term. Pension contributions made via salary sacrifice above £2,000 per employee per year will in the future become subject to both employer and employee National Insurance. All of these changes may increase the desirability of flexible benefits packages as employees look for ways to minimise their tax liabilities.

Investment in Apprenticeships and youth employment⁷¹

The government will provide more than £1.5bn for employment and skills support, which will fund the Youth Guarantee, guaranteeing six-month paid work placements for every eligible 18-21 year old and includes £725m to fully fund SME apprenticeships for under-25s. This will occur alongside reforms to simplify the apprenticeship system. This offers an exciting opportunity to encourage skills development and recruitment into the sector.

Increased local authority and education budgets⁷²

Funding reforms for councils, Mayoral authorities (worth at least £13 billion between 2026–30), and an increase in the education capital budget for 2026–27 to £8.3 billion, including dedicated funding for playgrounds, may result in additional investment in green-spaces, pitches and grounds maintenance.

Business rates are likely to increase for many clubs⁷³

Business rates revaluation, lower business-rates multipliers for smaller Retail, Leisure and Hospitality (RHL) businesses, combined with a new high-value business-rates multiplier will be applicable from April 2026. There will be transitional relief arrangements to help those businesses most impacted by increases in their bills. While lower multipliers may help to reduce business rates in some smaller community clubs, many sports facilities, clubs and stadia will face an increase in costs at a time when budgets are already stretched.

69 HMT (2025) Para 4.22

70 HMT (2025) Para 4.115, 4.118, 4.109

71 HMT (2025) Para 3.114, 3.115

72 HMT (2025) Para 4.91, 4.92, Table C.2

73 HMT (2025) Para 4.32, 4.33



Annex 4 Methodology for Salary Uprating

In 2024 we outlined our intention to provide a consistent, simple and transparent methodology that takes into account inflation, wage growth and predicted pay awards. In this way people could see how the exact annual uprate figures were derived and can replicate if they want it to apply to a different period of time (say for a January uprate) or for a different set of data (for example focusing only on private sector earnings growth).

Our proposed uprating methodology used three data sources:

- Inflation
- Wage growth
- Pay awards

The average of these three figures was used as the uprating amount. This meant that the uprating will take account of both inflation, market rates (through wage growth) and be linked to realistic employer offers (through pay awards).

Following several years of above inflation rises to the National Living Wage (NLW), we are proposing to also include the % increase in the NLW in this calculation to protect against compaction at the bottom end of the wage structure. The inclusion of this rate would have resulted in higher award in each of the past 3 years.

Data on National Living Wage (NLW) increases are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Consumer Price Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) is the key inflation figure, in line with Office of National Statistics (ONS) recommendations.

We will use the 12 month % change in CPIH in April each year, which is available here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/I55o/mm23>

Average earnings can be affected by changes to the rate of pay and also to the composition of employment (for example if more people work more hours this would increase average earnings). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provide "decomposition" figures which show the contribution caused by changes in wages and employment composition separately. We have used the wages contribution only for 12 month change in average weekly earnings excluding bonuses and arrears as at April each year. This data is available here (column KA25 in 1.Decomp_WE): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/averageweeklyearningsbysectorearn02>

Brightmine provide a regular analysis of pay awards made in the previous three months.

Therefore the analysis in July represents pay awards that came into effect between 1 April and 30 June. This data is available here (paywall)⁷⁴: <https://hrcentre.uk.brightmine.com/survey-analysis/pay-and-benefits/>

⁷⁴ We are not permitted to publish the monthly pay award data from Brightmine as that is outside the permissions of the data license.



Annex 5 Sector employment map methodology

The initial focus was on a survey of grounds staff which was intended to provide information on their current working conditions and opinions as well as:

- Number of employed grounds staff
- Salary levels
- Annual operating budgets
- Number of volunteers

Our general approach was to divide the grounds management industry into key sectors and then to quantify each sector in terms of:

- Number of playing sites
- Numbers employed at sample sites
- Approximate annual operating budget at sample sites

We could then use weighting factors to estimate the overall employment levels for each sector based on the sample data we had collected. Where the quality of the data was not sufficient to enable robust estimates we have made this clear by marking sections as estimates.

There were several sectors (e.g. maintained schools, golf) where alternative sources of information (e.g. DfE School Workforce Census, BIGGA Survey of Greenskeepers) provided more robust data than would be possible from the above method. Where alternative methods have been used this has been made clear in the relevant section.

For some grassroots clubs and Bowls we have assumed that they will employ a contractor to undertake the required grounds work. We examined the annual accounts of a sample of clubs and recorded the latest annual expenditure on grounds maintenance at the club. This was used to provide an estimate of the overall budget for grounds maintenance at grassroots clubs.

It should also be noted that the previous GMA research focused primarily on England due to availability of data. In 2024, where possible, we have included also included Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in sector site estimates.

Employment and Annual Budget

Before using our sample data to estimate the scale of employment and annual operating budget for each of the sectors, we tested the quality of the data in each area. This involved:

- Identifying and removing statistical outliers or mis-categorised respondents.
- Ensuring that the sample sizes were adequate to make a reasonable estimation.
- Ensuring that the operating budget figure was not significantly lower (>5%) than the estimated pay bill. Where this was the case it was assumed the operating budget did not include staffing and was adjusted accordingly.

In some cases the quality of the data available was not good enough to produce robust estimates. Where this was the case, we have provided broad estimates based on easily understood assumptions to ensure transparency and replicability.

The operating budget data was far more variable and in many of the commercial sectors people were wary in providing it. One of the main issues with the data was inconsistency in whether people included staffing in the figures or not. The survey requested that it included staffing, but in many cases it did not. We followed up with respondents and have adjusted some data



following a set of cleaning rules. However, it is likely that these figures represent the lower end of likely expenditure. For clarity in reporting we are presenting the annual operating budget excluding staffing as it will be presented alongside estimated paybill.

Differences with previous research

“Groundsmanship - Sport’s Vital Profession”⁷⁵ was published five years ago in 2019. Key findings it made about the grounds industry include:

- Direct employment of 25,289
- Paybill of £588 million
- Operating budgets of £452 million
- Over 40,000 volunteers

On a blunt comparison the more recent findings show significant increases in most of these areas:

- Direct employment of 30,526
- Paybill of £942 million
- Operating budgets of £343 million
- Over 54,000 volunteers

However, direct comparison between reports is not legitimate due to large differences in both coverage and methodology. Some of the key differences between the reports include:

- 2019 included estimates for 1,911 independent schools compared to 1,382 in 2024
- 2019 included estimates for 142 universities compared to 99 in 2024
- Data for Bowls was derived from annual accounts in 2024
- Data for State-funded schools was sourced from the Schools Workforce Census in 2024
- Data for golf was sourced from the BIGGA workforce survey in 2024
- 2024 included estimates for Parish councils and Contractors
- Due to low/non-response in some areas the 2024 had to rely on 2019 data to provide estimates for Tennis and Local Government
- 2024 volunteering data was based on a much larger sample of volunteers

75 https://thegma.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/news/a4_52pp_industry_research_web.pdf



Limitations and Future Research

The economic modelling provides reasonable and transparent estimates of the number of grounds staff working in the UK. However, some areas are reliant on very low quality data or the need to make broad assumptions. In particular, caution should be taken when considering the following areas:

- The relationships between grassroots/community clubs, private/members clubs and local government (both councils and Parish councils) are complex and often specific to the local area. Care has been taken to avoid double counting but estimates in these areas are still reliant on assumptions which may not apply at a more granular level. More research on the role of Parish councils as employers would be beneficial.
- The quality of data for additional annual budget was poor and it was often unclear whether the figures provided included staffing costs or not. While collecting the data in bands had allowed for greater response it also lowered the overall accuracy of the data. More work is needed to accurately assess the amount spent within the industry as we suspect the data reported in the survey is likely to be an underestimation.
- The research was reliant on the Active Places database which only covers England. Data was not provided on sites in Scotland and Northern Ireland in particular (for example, it did not include Scottish football leagues or Gaelic football), which would necessarily lead to undercounting.
- The industry is reliant on seasonal workers but it was decided not to collect data on these this year as the quality of data in 2019 was so low. This is an area that needs specific research as their use varies across sectors. Again this will make underestimations more likely.
- The importance of contractors in the industry is only likely to increase, and more needs to be done to recognise the unique nature of these workers. Future surveys should distinguish between employed and self-employed professional grounds staff.
- We received some responses from grounds staff at private estates. Consideration needs to be given to whether this sector should be included in the future and what defines grounds keeping in these locations.

Annex 6 Sector site mapping methodology

For the purposes of the economic modelling we divided the industry into the following sectors:

- Performance level for Football, Cricket, Horse Racing, Rugby Union, Rugby League and Tennis
- Golf
- Bowls
- Independent Schools
- Higher/Further Education
- Maintained schools
- Local government
- Grassroots/community clubs



Grassroots/community clubs refer to local, community-level sports clubs operating at a non-professional level for health, social, educational or community purposes. These are often, but not exclusively, run by volunteers or community members. This would include clubs and community organisations covered by Sports England,⁷⁶ non-professional football clubs and leagues⁷⁷ and “recreational” cricket clubs.⁷⁸

There is a high degree of overlap between maintained schools, local government and grassroots clubs. In previous research, local councils often reported having leased out sports pitches to local clubs who are then responsible for the related maintenance. Conversely many grassroots/community clubs use facilities provided either by the council or by local schools.

Details of the number of individual sites by sport and management type is provided below. The intention is to avoid double counting sites by excluding those managed by local government from grassroots figures, and vice versa. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and it is likely that some of these figures will be undercounted. The intention is to provide a transparent and accountable approach for future refinement.

Football

At the top of Association Football men’s pyramid in England and Wales is the Premier League with 20 clubs. While they are likely to have multiple sites (stadium, training grounds, etc) the grounds teams are likely to deal with them all and so a club will be treated as a single site for economic purposes.

There are also grounds staff who work at sites involved in national football infrastructure, which includes Wembley and St. George’s Park (England), the Cardiff City Stadium (Wales), Hampden Park (Scotland) and Windsor Park (Northern Ireland). These five sites will be counted separately.

Below this is the Football League Championship (24 teams), League One (24 teams) and League Two (24 teams). Below this are three leagues that used to be known as “conference” football, the National League (24 teams) and the National League North (NLN) and National League South (NLS) (44 teams).

The pyramid continues down to incorporate a further 5 levels, each with multiple leagues and a total of 1,581 teams but these will be captured in the count of grassroots football.

The top of the women’s pyramid is the FA Women’s Super League (12 teams) followed by the FA Women’s Championship (12 teams) of whom all will share facilities with team in the top 4 leagues of the men’s pyramid. Below this are a further 6 leagues containing 72 teams. We are assuming that these teams will share facilities with a site already counted and so will not add to the overall numbers of sites.

It is not possible to get an accurate figure on the total number of grassroots football clubs. England Football says it supports 18,000 teams outside of the professional game⁷⁹; and in 2018 the FA put the figure at 22,000⁸⁰ in England and Wales.

There are 11,263 individual sites that have “adult football” pitches on Active Places, of which 56% are managed by local government or educational establishments. This leaves 4,728 sites once the 165 which have already been accounted for in the professional figures above are removed. This is lower than the likely figure for grassroots football as many of these teams will use pitches and facilities provided by either local government or educational establishments and we want to avoid double-counting.

76 <https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/clubs>

77 <https://www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/leagues-and-clubs>

78 <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/what-we-do/recreational-cricket>

79 <https://www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/leagues-and-clubs>

80 <http://www.thefa.com/-/media/thefacom-new/files/about-the-fa/2018/fa-in-2018.ashx>



Cricket

There are 18 First Class Counties (many of whom will also serve as test grounds) and an additional 20 National Counties (although these clubs tend to use Premier League grounds in their county).

In terms of grassroots Cricket, there are around 5,500 cricket clubs in England and Wales.⁸¹ Of these, over 1,800 are ECB Clubmark accredited cricket clubs, with a further 300 working through the accreditation process.⁸²

At grassroots level, there is a high degree of shared surfaces with other sectors. There are a total of 6,708 sites listed as having a grass cricket pitch in Active Places database. Of these, 3,497 also have an adult football pitch and so have been included in the figures for grassroots football sites. Of the remaining 3,211 sites, 29% are managed by local government or educational establishments. This leaves 2,274 sites managed by commercial, community or sports clubs once the First Class Counties have been removed.

Rugby Union

At the top of the Rugby Union pyramid is the Premiership (10 teams). Below this is the Championship (12 teams). There are then a further 2 levels of National Leagues incorporating 4 leagues and 56 teams. Below level 4 there are a further 7 levels of regional leagues which are connected to the national leagues by promotion and relegation.

Active Places lists 3,458 individual sites with pitches dedicated to Senior Rugby Union, although 2,630 are already included in the numbers for either grassroots football or cricket above. Of the remaining 828, 28% are managed by local government or educational establishments. This leaves 575 grassroots sites not already counted once the 24 top teams are deducted.

Rugby League

At the top of the Rugby League pyramid is the Super League (12 teams). Below this is the Championship (14 teams) and League 1 (9 Teams) although these teams will tend to ground share with local football teams and so will not be counted to avoid double counting. There are two French teams within the top two leagues (Catalans in the Super League and Toulouse in the Championship). The amateur National Conference League contains a further 4 leagues with 49 teams. There are then 13 regional leagues and assorted amateur competitions administered by the British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA) which run throughout the winter.

Active Places lists 469 individual sites with pitches dedicated to Rugby League, although 271 are already included in the numbers for either grassroots football, cricket or Rugby Union above. Of the remaining 198, 33% are managed by local government or educational establishments. This leaves 121 grassroots sites not already counted once the Super League teams are deducted.

Horse Racing

According to the Racecourse Association there are 59 racecourses in Great Britain. Of these, 23 are National Hunt courses, 19 are flat, 17 are dual-use (of which, 6 are all-weather).⁸³ In addition, there are two racecourses in Northern Ireland (Downpatrick and Down Royal) making the total 61 for the UK.

81 <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/what-we-do/recreational-cricket>

83 <https://racecourseassociation.co.uk/>

82 <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/club-support/clubmark>



Tennis

We are working on the basis of two major tournament venues in England and Wales (the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (Wimbledon) and Queens Club). Below these are 10 regional player development centres (RPDCs) and 45 local player development centres” (LPDCs), of which 7 are also RPDCs (leaving 38).

At grassroots level there are 1,495 sites with outdoor tennis courts (excluding concrete and Macadam). Of these, 30% are managed by local government or educational establishments. Subtracting those sites already included above, this leaves 990 sites with tennis courts.

Golf

There are 1818 golf courses listed in Active Places in England and Wales, of which 1,364 have 18 hole courses and 454 have less than 18 holes⁸⁴. There are also 217 driving ranges at sites that do not include an 18 or 9 hole golf course.

A small proportion of golf sites (3.9%) are managed in-house by local authorities or educational establishments. To avoid double counting we have excluded these from the employment and expenditure calculations for golf, as they are likely to be included in the figures for local government, higher/further education or schools.

This leaves a total of 1,331 18-hole, 418 9-hole golf courses, and 206 driving ranges.

Bowls

It has proven difficult to find definitive figures on the number of Bowls clubs in England and Wales, as there are a variety of governing bodies, each with their own membership lists.

Bowls England state there are over 3,500 clubs in England, which would include flat green and crown green bowls.⁸⁵ Bowls England is responsible for outdoor, flat green bowls and has 1,846 clubs listed.⁸⁶ The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) list 2,123 clubs.⁸⁷ Combining these provides a figure of 3,969 bowls sites.

Higher/Further Education

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) there are 141 universities in Great Britain, of which 99 have playing fields.⁸⁸

The Association of Colleges lists 264 colleges in the UK.⁸⁹

Many of the Universities and Colleges will have multiple locations but we are treating each as one “site” for the sake of the economic model.

84 These are mainly 9 hole courses although there are a few 6, 10 and 12 hole courses reported. For ease of understanding we will refer to anything less than 18 hole as 9 hole courses.

85 <https://www.bowlsengland.com/places-to-play/>

86 <https://www.bowlsengland.com/find-a-club/>

87 <https://bcgba.justgo.com/clubfinder.htm>

88 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/estates/table-1>

89 <https://www.aoc.co.uk/about/list-of-colleges-in-the-uk>



Independent Schools

According to the latest DfE statistics⁹⁰, there are 2,421 independent schools in England, although this includes direct grant nurseries. From alternative sources, there are 1,676 independent schools listed as “open” on Edubase. In addition, there are 82 independent schools in Wales,⁹¹ 71 in Scotland⁹² and 14 in Northern Ireland.⁹³ This gives a total of 1,843 independent schools in the UK.

Not all independent schools will have sporting facilities. According to the Independent School Council (ISC) Census,⁹⁴ 66% of their members have sports fields, 54% have astroturf pitches and 57% have tennis courts. Data is not available on whether schools have any one or more of these facilities. As such, we will assume that 75% of independent schools have some sports facilities which require grounds maintenance. This would equate to 1,382 sites.

State-funded Schools

There are total of 21,599 state-funded schools in England (including Primary, Secondary and Special but excluding Nursery and PRUs). However, as most competitive sport is not played until key stage 3 (ages 11-14), we will focus only on Secondary Schools. There are 3,452 state-funded secondary schools (including all-through schools) in England.⁹⁵ There are 1,460 maintained schools in Wales, of which 176 are secondary schools.⁹⁶ There are 2,465 local authority schools in Scotland, of which 357 are secondary schools.⁹⁷ There are 192 post-primary schools in Northern Ireland.⁹⁸ This means the total secondary school figure for the UK is 4,177.

Local Government

There are a total of 339 councils in England and Wales, consisting of 21 Counties, 164 Shire Districts, 132 English Single-Tier Authorities (including Unitaries, Met Districts and London Boroughs) and 22 Welsh Unitaries. There are 32 Scottish Local Authorities and 11 councils in Northern Ireland.⁹⁹

As councils will manage a range of sites and have varying management approach (both in-house and outsourced) we are treating the council itself as one “site” although it will cover a range of pitches and locations.

In the previous industry research there were only three county councils who reported having responsibility for any sports pitches (the majority saying that it was the responsibility of their district councils). Since that research there has been a local government reorganisation in which some counties became unitary authorities. None of the counties who claimed responsibility for sports pitches still exist as a county. As such we will not include county councils as sites for this year.

90 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3bf8aa5c-0a6b-4edb-5eef-08dcbc57789f>

91 <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Independent-Schools/Schools/schools-by-localauthorityregion-year>

92 <https://www.scis.org.uk/facts-and-figures/>

93 <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/independent-schools>

94 https://www.isc.co.uk/media/9316/isc_census_2023_final.pdf

95 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3a05638b-456b-452b-d7f9-08dcbc56bd3b>

96 <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Schools/schools-by-localauthorityregion-type>

97 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-estates-statistics/>

98 <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolment-school-level-data-202324>

99 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6401d6a6d3bf7f25f813fc3a/List_of_councils_in_England_2023.pdf, <https://law.gov.wales/local-government-bodies>, <https://www.mygov.scot/organisations>, <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/local-councils-in-northern-ireland>



Below council level there are town and parish councils. There are 10,235 town and parish councils in England and Wales.¹⁰⁰ While some parish councils will have responsibility to maintain sports pitches, many will not. There is also likely to be overlap in grounds responsibility between local authorities, town/parish councils and grassroots clubs. Any approach to capturing the role of town and parish councils will need to recognise the high risk of double counting. The previous industry research excluded town and parish councils. This year we are including them as an important link between local government and grassroots sport.

Summary

We examined the 28 sectors detailed above, including grassroots level clubs in 5 main sports (football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union and tennis) as summarised in *Table 9*. We also considered the role of contractors. For each of the sectors we quantified likely employment levels, while trying to minimise the likelihood of double counting.

100 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6639fb878603389a07a6d14b/2024-25_Local_precepting_authorities_in_England.ods

**Table 9: Number of sites by sector**

Sector	Type	Organisations /Clubs/Sites
Football	Premier League	20
	National Infrastructure	5
	Championship	24
	National Leagues (League 1, League 2, National League, NLN, NLS)	116
	Grassroots	4,728
Bowls		3,969
Cricket	First Class County	18
	Grassroots	2,274
Golf	18 Hole	1,331
	9 Hole	418
	Driving Ranges	206
Horse Racing		61
Rugby League	Super League	12
	Grassroots	121
Rugby Union	Premiership	10
	Championship	12
	Grassroots	575
Tennis	Major Tournament Venues	2
	RPDC	10
	LPDC	38
	Grassroots	990
Higher/Further Education	Universities	99
	Colleges	264
Independent Schools		1,382
State-funded Schools		4,177
Local Government	Single-Tier Authorities	154
	Shire Districts	164
	Town and Parish Councils	10,235



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