

MIA Insights

June 2026

Introduction

People make this industry what it is. We all know an inspiring colleague, a mentor who shaped our path, or someone who found their calling in events and never looked back.

The creativity, resilience and commitment of our people are what set this sector apart. But sustaining that depends on understanding the pressures our workforce is facing right now.

Drawing on 100 responses from venues, suppliers, agents and destinations, our latest MIA Insights explore the challenges and opportunities shaping our people, from recruitment pressures and evolving skills needs to the wellbeing of teams working harder than ever.

These insights offer a moment to step back and evaluate your people strategy, and for the MIA, a clear direction for the guidance, partnerships and pathways we will develop to support our workforce and nurture the talent this industry needs for the future.

Shonali Devereaux
Chief Executive, The Meetings Industry Association



At a glance...

90%

say rising employment costs have reduced their ability to recruit younger and entry-level talent.

51%

say the composition of their workforce has changed in the last 12 months

57%

express a lack of confidence in the industry to attract talent needed for the future

73%

are actively developing younger/early career employees for future leadership roles.

20%

have experienced a reduction in its workforce in the last 12 months

63%

of organisations have embedded wellbeing into organisational culture

Workforce Size & Structure

- Over a third of respondents (35%) highlighted that their workforce has increased in size over the last 12 months. 2 in 10 have experienced a reduction in their workforce, and only “slightly”.
- Almost two thirds (61%) expect their workforce to stay the same size for the next 12 months, with just 17% expecting it to decrease.
- Those anticipating a decline in its workforce are citing ongoing cost pressures, uncertainty in the market and anticipated decreases in demand.
- More than half (51%) state that the composition of their workforce has changed in the last 12 months.

How workforce structures are changing....



30%

Teams have expanded



26%

Employing more experience



26%

Greater multi-skilling across teams



23%

Teams becoming leaner



9%

Increased use of AI

Workforce Size & Structure

View from the MIA

"It's encouraging to see that workforce numbers have either remained stable or grown for the majority, reflecting continued confidence in future demand.

"What stands out, however, is the changing composition of that workforce. Rising costs are driving businesses towards experienced hires and multi-skilled employees, suggesting that organisations are becoming more strategic about how they deploy talent. While this adaptability will strengthen resilience in the short term, it must not come at the expense of developing the next generation.

"A sustainable workforce depends on the right balance between experienced professionals and new entrants. That's a balance that we as an industry needs to be intentional about protecting."



Workforce Size & Structure

View from the sector

“The research paints an encouraging picture of the resilience and ambition of the events industry, with businesses continuing to invest in their people, strengthen their teams and plan for growth.

“It’s particularly positive to see organisations focusing on building more experienced, agile and multi-skilled teams, reflecting the changing needs of the industry and the importance of having the right people and capabilities in place to support long-term success.

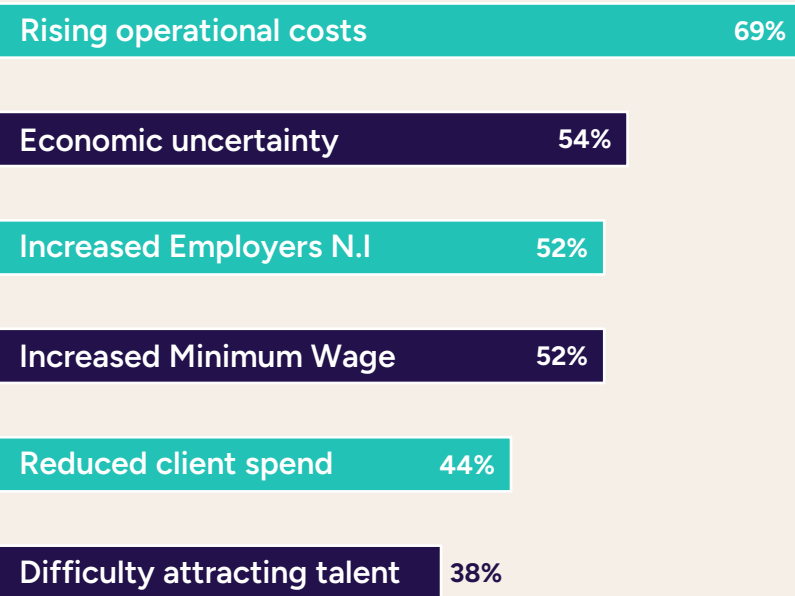
Jeremy Pickess

Head of People & Culture, De Vere



Recruitment & Retention

Factors Impacting Recruitment Plans



- Almost all (**90%**) of respondents say that rising employment costs have reduced their ability to recruit younger and entry-level talent.
- Almost 1 in 3 (**27%**) of new recruits over the past 12 months were aged under 25.
- Rises in National Minimum Wage were highlighted to have increased pressure on employee retention (highlighted by **39%**), reduced working hours or shifts (**35%**) and delayed hiring decisions (**32%**).
- Rises in Employers National Insurance contributions were highlighted to have delayed recruitment plans (highlighted by **41%**), increase internal workloads instead of recruiting (**38%**) and led to restructuring of workforces (**29%**).
- **69%** of respondents say that salary expectations have increased over the past 12 months, with **18%** saying they have done so significantly.
- Almost half of organisations (**49%**) state they are responding by enhancing employee benefits, while **35%** are increasing base salaries. However, a third (**33%**) say they are unable to increase employee compensation.

Recruitment & Retention

View from the MIA

“Rising operating and employment costs are putting real pressure on organisations at a time when many are already working within extremely tight margins. In practice, this is slowing down recruitment and placing more pressure on existing teams, who are being asked to keep day-to-day operations running smoothly.

“In a people-driven industry like ours, that balance is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, particularly as rising salary expectations, while completely understandable, add another layer of complexity for employers trying to remain competitive and sustainable.

“Again, perhaps the most pressing concern is what this means for the long-term talent pipeline. The ability to bring younger and entry-level people into the sector is being squeezed, and that has implications not just for today’s workforce but for the future strength of the industry.”



Recruitment & Retention

View from the sector

"While these findings highlight some very real pressures, they also show that organisations planning ahead and investing in their people are putting themselves in a much stronger position than those simply reacting to events as they happen.

"The statistic that stands out is the impact on younger and entry-level talent. We talk a lot about skills shortages, but if businesses are reducing recruitment at the first rung of the ladder, where is the next generation of talent going to come from?

"I work with employers across the events sector every day, and the businesses attracting the strongest candidates are rarely those with the biggest budgets. They're the ones offering flexibility, development opportunities, strong leadership and a culture people want to be part of.

"The market remains challenging, but the fundamentals haven't changed. Good people still want to work for good employers."



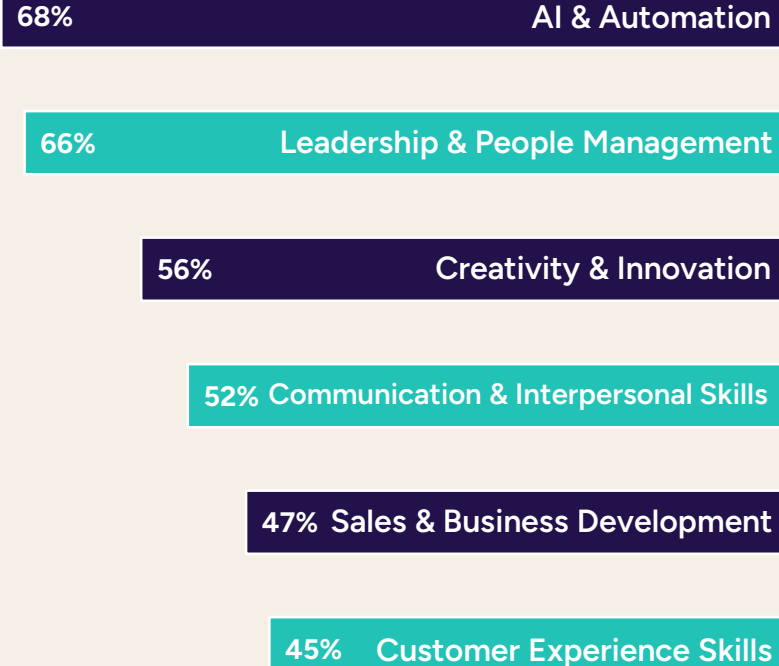
Robert Kenward

Fitability® Recruiter and Founder, Jigsaw Talent Solutions

Skills & Future Workforce

- Confidence in the industry attracting the talent needed for the future remains low, with **57%** expressing a lack of confidence.
- Key solutions include improved pay and benefits (**highlighted by 56%**), clearer career pathways (**50%**) and the promotion of better work-life balance (**37%**).
- Almost three quarters (**73%**) organisations are actively developing younger/ early career employees for future leadership roles.
- Over a third of organisations (**38%**) have increased their investment in training and development over the last 12 months.
- For those that aren't actively developing future talent, limited budgets (**highlighted by 56%**) and lack of time and resources for training (**48%**) are the biggest constraints.

Most Important Future Skills (Next 3-5 Years)



Skills & Future Workforce

View from the MIA

"It is encouraging to see so many organisations actively developing younger team members for future leadership roles and continuing to invest in training. These are positive signs that businesses understand the importance of building from within.

"Despite this, it is equally clear that progress is being held back at a time when confidence in attracting new talent is already low. Limited budgets and a lack of time and resources remain the biggest barriers, and businesses are calling for clearer career pathways and a greater emphasis on work-life balance to help them remain appealing to the next generation.

"This is why initiatives such as the Power of Events' experience of work programme are so important. Creating visible, accessible routes into the industry is one of the most effective ways we can strengthen the talent pipeline and ensure the sectors workforce is both sustainable as well as future-proof."



Skills & Future Workforce

View from the sector

"The findings reinforce what many across the events sector are already feeling: while there is strong intent to invest in future talent, confidence in our collective ability to attract and retain the workforce we need remains a significant concern.

"It is positive to see that nearly three quarters of organisations are actively developing early-career professionals, and that investment in training is increasing. However, the persistent barriers identified from limited budgets and rising employment costs to a lack of time and resource for training highlight a deeper structural challenge that cannot be addressed in isolation.

"However, the events industry is unique in that we have the ability to offer a diverse range of entry level roles and combined with investment in creating apprenticeships around this - we should also have unique opportunity and responsibility to lead from the front"



Emma Thurlow

Sales & Business Manager, Brighton Centre

Wellbeing in Events

- Over half of respondents (54%) say that employee wellbeing in their organisation is 'good', while 29% say that it is 'excellent' (up from 10% in 2025). 5% say that it is below average.
- Almost 8 in ten (77%) agree with the statement "I have a good work-life balance".
- Despite this, almost half (48%) have seen an increase in burnout stress or wellbeing-related issues (down from 53% in 2025) in their organisation over the last 12 months.
- Almost two thirds of respondents (63%) say that their organisation has embedded wellbeing into its organisational culture (up from 42% in 2025). 30% say that it has been done so partially, and just 3% say it hasn't at all.

Key contributors to burnout, stress and wellbeing challenges



67%

High workloads



60%

Financial pressures



47%

Staffing shortages



33%

Tight deadlines



33%

Unsociable or long working hours

Wellbeing in Events

View from the MIA

"The progress here is genuinely encouraging. The significant rise in organisations embedding wellbeing into their culture, and the improvement in how employees rate their own work-life balance, are signs that the industry is moving in the right direction.

"That said, nearly half of organisations have still seen an increase in burnout and stress over the past year, which is a reminder that positive culture and day-to-day experience do not always move at the same pace. Embedding wellbeing into an organisation's values is an important foundation, but it needs to be felt in practice through how workloads are managed, how teams are resourced and how sustainable working is in reality.

"As the industry continues to navigate financial and operational pressures, maintaining that focus on practical wellbeing will be essential to retaining the talent we already have and attracting the talent we need."



Wellbeing in Events

View from the sector

"It's genuinely encouraging to see more organisations embedding wellbeing into their culture. We've worked in the events industry for 25+ years and have seen a real shift in how openly we talk about it.

"But the data is also telling us something we can't ignore, burnout and stress are still on the rise. Having experienced it first-hand ourselves, we have to wake up to it.

"Having wellbeing initiatives in place isn't enough if they aren't consistent, holistic and woven into the fabric of how we work. Wellbeing can't just show up in small pockets throughout the year, an event here and there, the human body doesn't work that way.

"Now is the time to go deeper, look at every pillar of wellbeing and commit to making it truly sustainable in every workplace and at every event."

Lucy Eden
Founder, Be in Your Element



What now?

The purpose of MIA Insights is not only to understand the challenges facing the sector, but to help inform discussions around potential solutions. These findings will continue to shape conversations with partners and policymakers on the issues that matter most to the sector, with the following areas just some of the ways these insights are now being put into practice.

Reinforce rising Wellbeing Culture

Partnering with
Hospitality Action to
issue practical guidance
on embedding employee
wellbeing into
organisational culture

Supporting career pathways

Supporting the Power of
Events' Experience of Work
Programme, pledging to
fund 20 work experience
students' pathways into the
sector.

Reinforcing lobbying activity

Sharing our findings with
DCMS and DBT to strengthen
the case for a reviewing the
impact of increased
Employers NIC and National
Minimum Wage on the sector

Contact Information

To learn more about joining the MIA – the UK's leading association for the business meetings and events industry, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

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