

# Inside the **Hiring Decision:** What MedTech Hiring Managers Weigh up When Every Hire Counts

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Understand what tips the balance and give employers the confidence to choose you



# Welcome

**If you've reached the final stage of a MedTech recruitment process recently and missed out on the offer, you're far from alone. Employers are making fewer appointments, and they're taking more care over who gets each one.**

Several things are driving that caution at the same time. Hiring intentions across the UK are close to their lowest level outside the pandemic, and from January 2027 the rules on dismissing new starters change significantly.

For employers, that means a wrong appointment becomes harder and more costly to put right. For you, it means the final decision now rests on more than whether you can do the job.

Hiring managers still want skill and experience, but at the final stage they're also weighing up risk. They want to know whether they can trust you to deliver from your first weeks in the role.

This report explains what's changed, what hiring managers are weighing up and how the final decision tends to be made. It also shows you how to give an employer the confidence to choose you.

Much of this happens where candidates can't see it, in debriefs and conversations after the interview has finished. That's where a specialist MedTech recruiter can make the biggest difference to the outcome.

Read it with your next move in mind, whether you're actively looking now or want to be ready when the right opportunity comes along.

# Why Every Hire Counts More Right Now

**691k** lowest number of  
vacancies since  
2014

**17%** of employers  
expect their  
headcount to fall

The UK hiring market has been cautious for well over a year, with little sign of change before the new year.

The Office for National Statistics estimates there were 691,000 vacancies between July and September 2026. Outside the pandemic years, this is the lowest level since the same period in 2014.

Employer surveys tell a similar story. The CIPD's summer 2026 Labour Market Outlook, which surveyed more than 2,000 UK employers, found that only 26 per cent expected staffing levels to rise in the coming quarter, while 17 per cent expected a fall.

The CIPD described a market where hiring has slowed sharply without a rise in redundancies, leaving far less movement than usual. Yet 31 per cent of employers still reported hard-to-fill vacancies.

Together, these findings point to fewer openings, strong competition and employers who remain highly selective.

For candidates, this raises the stakes at the final stage. When a business may fill only one or two roles this year, each appointment carries more weight and scrutiny.

Pay budgets add to that pressure. The median expected pay rise remains at 3 per cent, so employers want confidence that every salary they commit to is money well spent.

Qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal protection

**2 years**



**6 months**

Current qualifying period

From 1 January 2027

England, Scotland and Wales

## What Changes in January 2027 and Why It Matters to You

Another reason employers are becoming more careful is one many candidates haven't heard about yet. A change in employment law takes effect in England, Scotland and Wales at the start of 2027. Northern Ireland has separate legislation.

The Employment Rights Act 2025 reduces the qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal protection from two years to six months. It also removes the cap on compensatory awards, although compensation will still be based on evidenced losses.

The government has confirmed both changes will take effect from 1 January 2027. Existing day-one protections against discrimination and certain automatically unfair dismissals remain in place.

What follows is general information to explain the hiring picture, not legal advice about your own situation.

## What it means for employers

Until now, most employees needed two years' service to qualify for ordinary unfair dismissal protection. From January, that period shrinks to six months, giving employers a stronger reason to assess performance and address concerns earlier.

The CIPD's [guidance to employers](#) now describes probation periods as a key management tool, with clear objectives, effective onboarding and regular reviews becoming more important during the first few months.

Employers may review the length of [probation periods](#), set clearer targets from day one and hold more formal reviews. The law doesn't automatically shorten probation periods, and employers can still dismiss employees fairly after six months.

## What it means at the hiring stage

With ordinary unfair dismissal protection starting earlier, employers have another reason to work harder at avoiding a wrong appointment beforehand. That caution is already showing up in employers' plans.

In the CIPD's [winter 2025/26 survey](#), 37 per cent of employers said they plan to hire fewer permanent staff as a result of the wider employment law reforms. Nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) expect their employment costs to rise.

When the government held [roundtables with employer groups](#) in early 2026, some raised concerns that removing the compensation cap could affect hiring decisions, particularly for highly paid roles.

None of this means employers have stopped hiring. It means the bar for a confident yes has risen, and candidates who understand that have a clear advantage over those who don't.

It also means your first six months in a new role may be watched more closely than before. A good recruiter will make sure you know exactly what success looks like before you accept an offer.



# What Hiring Managers Are Weighing Up

By the final stage, most shortlisted candidates can do the job on paper. The decision is rarely about who has the most experience and far more often about who feels like the safest choice.

That doesn't mean employers want the most cautious candidate in the room. It means they want the one they're most confident will deliver, settle in well and still be with them in two years.

01

## **Evidence that you can do this job, not just a similar one**

Skills still come first for most employers. The Department for Education's [Employer Skills Survey](#) questioned 22,712 UK employers between June 2024 and January 2025, providing a detailed picture of skills shortages in UK businesses.

It found that 27 per cent of vacancies were hard to fill because applicants lacked the skills, qualifications or experience the role needed. That's why employers are wary of anyone who looks close but not quite right.

Hiring managers want proof that your experience transfers directly to their MedTech business, products and customers. That could mean working with similar clinical stakeholders, understanding NHS procurement or managing a comparable sales cycle. The closer the match you can show, the lower the risk they feel.

02

### **How quickly you'll make a difference**

With earlier performance reviews becoming more important, employers are thinking harder about how long a new starter will take to become productive. In MedTech, they'll want to see progress through product training, customer relationships and account development, even where longer buying cycles delay sales results.

Candidates who can explain what they'd focus on in their first few weeks, and why, help the hiring manager picture them succeeding. That picture often decides a close contest between two strong candidates.

03

### **Whether you'll stay**

Replacing someone who leaves within a year is expensive and disruptive for any MedTech team. Hiring managers will look closely at your reasons for moving and at the pattern of your previous moves.

Clear, positive reasons for wanting this particular role reassure them far more than a general wish for change. A run of short stints needs explaining honestly, before the employer draws their own conclusions.

04

### **How you'll fit with the team**

Fit isn't about being the same as everyone else in the team. It's about how you communicate, how you handle pressure and whether the manager can imagine working alongside you every day.

Employers often struggle to put this into words, which is why it can decide an outcome without ever appearing in the feedback you receive.

05

### **Whether anyone can vouch for you**

Employers trust what other people say about you more than what you say about yourself. References, a strong reputation in your MedTech network and a recommendation from someone they trust all reduce the risk they feel.



# How the Final Decision Gets Made

Most candidates imagine the decision is made in the interview room. In practice, it's usually made afterwards, when the people who met you compare notes and discuss what they saw.

Understanding how that conversation works helps explain why the strongest candidate on paper doesn't always receive the offer.

## More structure and more stages

Many employers are moving towards structured interviews, where every candidate is asked the same questions and scored against the same criteria. There's good evidence behind that shift.

A [major 2022 review](#) of decades of selection research, published in the Journal of Applied Psychology, ranked structured interviews as the strongest predictor of job performance among the common methods it compared.

The review isn't UK-specific, and other researchers still debate some of its methods. Even so, it helps explain why you may face scored questions, practical tasks or an extra stage you didn't expect.

Structured interviews reward good preparation. If you know which skills are being scored, you can make sure every answer gives the panel clear evidence.

## The debrief

After the final interview, the panel usually meets to agree a decision. Each person brings their own impression, and a single doubt raised by one of them can carry more weight than several positives.

In a cautious market, the question often shifts from who impressed us most to who worries us least. A candidate with no obvious concerns can overtake one with a brilliant interview and one unanswered question.

## Why the best candidate doesn't always get the offer

Offers are sometimes lost for reasons that have nothing to do with ability. A gap in your CV that nobody asked about, an uncertain salary expectation, or a vague answer about notice can all create doubt.

Other times, the business feels more comfortable with a candidate who comes recommended or has worked with someone on the team. Those factors may be invisible unless someone tells you.

The candidates who succeed usually find out what the concerns are and address them before the decision is made, rather than hearing about them in feedback afterwards.

**A strong interview can still leave an unanswered question.**



# The Trust Factor: Why a Recommended Candidate Carries More Weight

When the cost of getting it wrong goes up, employers lean more heavily on people they already trust. That's a natural response to risk, and it's shaping how many MedTech roles are filled right now.

It's one reason some roles never reach a job board at all. A hiring manager with a vacancy will often call a specialist recruiter they know before they spend money on advertising.

They do that because a good recruiter has already done much of the hard work. They've assessed the candidate's skills, checked their motivation and formed a view on how well they'd fit the team.

**A recruiter can speak up for you in ways you can't**

In a cautious market, that assessment is valuable to an employer. A candidate introduced by a recruiter the hiring manager trusts starts with a level of confidence that an unknown applicant has to build from scratch.

It works in your favour at the final stage too. A recruiter can explain the context behind your CV and reassure the employer on points they might otherwise leave unasked.

None of this replaces your performance in the interview. It means you walk into the process with someone already vouching for you, which can be particularly valuable when employers are choosing carefully.



# How to Give a Hiring Manager the Confidence to Say Yes

You can't control who else is on the shortlist, but you can control how much confidence you give the employer. These six steps will help you remove doubt before it forms.

01

## **Lead with evidence, not adjectives**

Words such as hardworking, reliable and results-driven appear on most CVs and tell an employer almost nothing about you. Replace them with specific examples of what you did and what changed as a result.

Where you can, use numbers from your own work, such as sales targets achieved, territory growth, new accounts won or clinical training delivered. Your recruiter can help you choose the examples that matter most to each employer.

02

## **Show how you'd approach your first three months**

Hiring managers are thinking about probation before you've even started. Prepare a short, realistic view of what you'd want to understand, who you'd want to meet and where you'd expect to add value first.

You don't need a detailed plan, and you shouldn't pretend to know the business better than they do. What matters is showing you've thought seriously about making the role a success.

## Six steps to build confidence, continued

03

### **Make your reasons for moving clear and positive**

Explain what attracts you to this role rather than what you want to get away from. A clear, positive reason for moving reassures an employer that you'll stay and that you've chosen them deliberately.

04

### **Have your references ready before you're asked**

Speak to your referees early, let them know about the roles you're considering and check they're happy to respond quickly. A delayed reference can stall an offer when the employer is already close to a decision. Agree when referees can be contacted, particularly if your current employer doesn't know you're considering a move.

05

### **Be consistent at every stage**

Hiring managers compare what you say at each stage with your CV, your LinkedIn profile and what your recruiter has told them. Small inconsistencies in dates, salary or notice periods can raise doubts that are hard to shift.

06

### **Ask the question that removes doubt**

Towards the end of your final interview, ask whether anything about your background gives them any hesitation. It takes some confidence to ask, but it lets you answer concerns while you're still in the room.

If you're working with a recruiter, they can ask the same question after the interview and come back to you with anything that needs clearing up before they make a decision.

# How a Specialist Recruiter Helps You Get the Final Yes

Much of what decides a hiring outcome happens in conversations you're not part of. A specialist MedTech recruiter can be part of those conversations, and that's where they can make the biggest difference.

At Advance Recruitment, we've specialised in medical sales and marketing recruitment since 1997, helping candidates and employers understand where experience, expectations and opportunity align.

## **Before you apply**

A good recruiter knows which employers are hiring, what each hiring manager values and which concerns tend to come up. They'll tell you honestly whether a role suits you before you invest time in the process.

## **Before each interview**

They'll brief you on the format, the people you'll meet and the skills being assessed. That means you can prepare evidence against the criteria that matter, rather than guessing what the panel wants to hear.

## **After each interview**

Your recruiter gathers feedback from the employer, including concerns that would never reach you directly. They can then answer those concerns on your behalf or help you address them at the next stage.

## **At the offer stage**

When an offer is on the table, your recruiter can manage the conversation about salary, package, notice and start date. They'll also make sure you understand what's expected of you during probation before you commit.

In a market where employers are choosing carefully, that support can be the difference between a close second place and an accepted offer.

# Your Next Step



The UK hiring market is cautious, and from January 2027 employers face higher stakes if they get an appointment wrong. That's making the final stage of every MedTech process more careful and more demanding.

Hiring managers are weighing up evidence, speed to contribution, commitment, fit and trust. The candidate who removes the most doubt often gets the offer, even ahead of someone who interviewed better.

Your next step is to look at how you present yourself through a hiring manager's eyes. Ask where they might hesitate and make sure you have clear evidence ready to answer every concern.

## **Talk through your next move**



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We'll look at where your career is now, what MedTech employers are looking for and how to position you for the roles that suit you best.

It's a planning conversation, not a sales pitch. You'll come away with a clearer view of your options, whether you decide to move now or wait for the right opportunity.



# About Advance Recruitment

Advance Recruitment has specialised in medical sales and marketing recruitment since 1997, helping professionals build successful careers across the MedTech and HealthTech sectors.

Our network of more than 30,000 professionals spans the market, from graduate medical sales through to executive leadership. That experience gives us a clear view of where opportunities are developing, what employers are looking for and how your skills and experience are valued in the market.

We know that the right career move does not always begin with a job advert. In fact, 79% of our placements come from passive candidates. Our search-led approach means we are regularly speaking with MedTech and HealthTech businesses about talented people who may not be actively looking for a new role.

For candidates, that means you can have a conversation with us long before you decide to move. We take the time to understand what you have achieved, what motivates you, the type of organisation and culture in which you perform best, and what you want from the next stage of your career.

Whether you are a Territory Manager, Clinical Specialist, Product or Marketing Manager, commercial leader or taking your first steps into medical sales, our aim is the same: to help you make an informed career decision rather than simply make a move.

Our values of empathy, collaboration, quality and responsiveness shape how we work. You can expect straightforward advice, honest feedback, regular communication and a relationship that extends beyond a single vacancy.

Because the best opportunity is not necessarily the one you are actively searching for. Sometimes it starts with the right conversation.

## Testimonials



Thank you Karen... you were a legend.

During my 24 years in the medical industry I have dealt with a number of different medical recruiters.. both as a active employee looking for their next move and as an RSM looking for a new position to be filled .. and to say that Karen excelled in her contact, conversation, communication and vibe is an understatement - she was simply outstanding. Karen I feel took the time to align me to the correct role and company culture for me which is huge. I'd strongly recommend Karen to anyone in my medical device community

– Ryan W



From the initial contact about the opportunity proposed, Liv has been amazing. Always catching up to see how you're doing and answering any questions you may have. It was a pleasure working with Liv and she made the process of looking for a new opportunity a breeze

– Krzysztof S