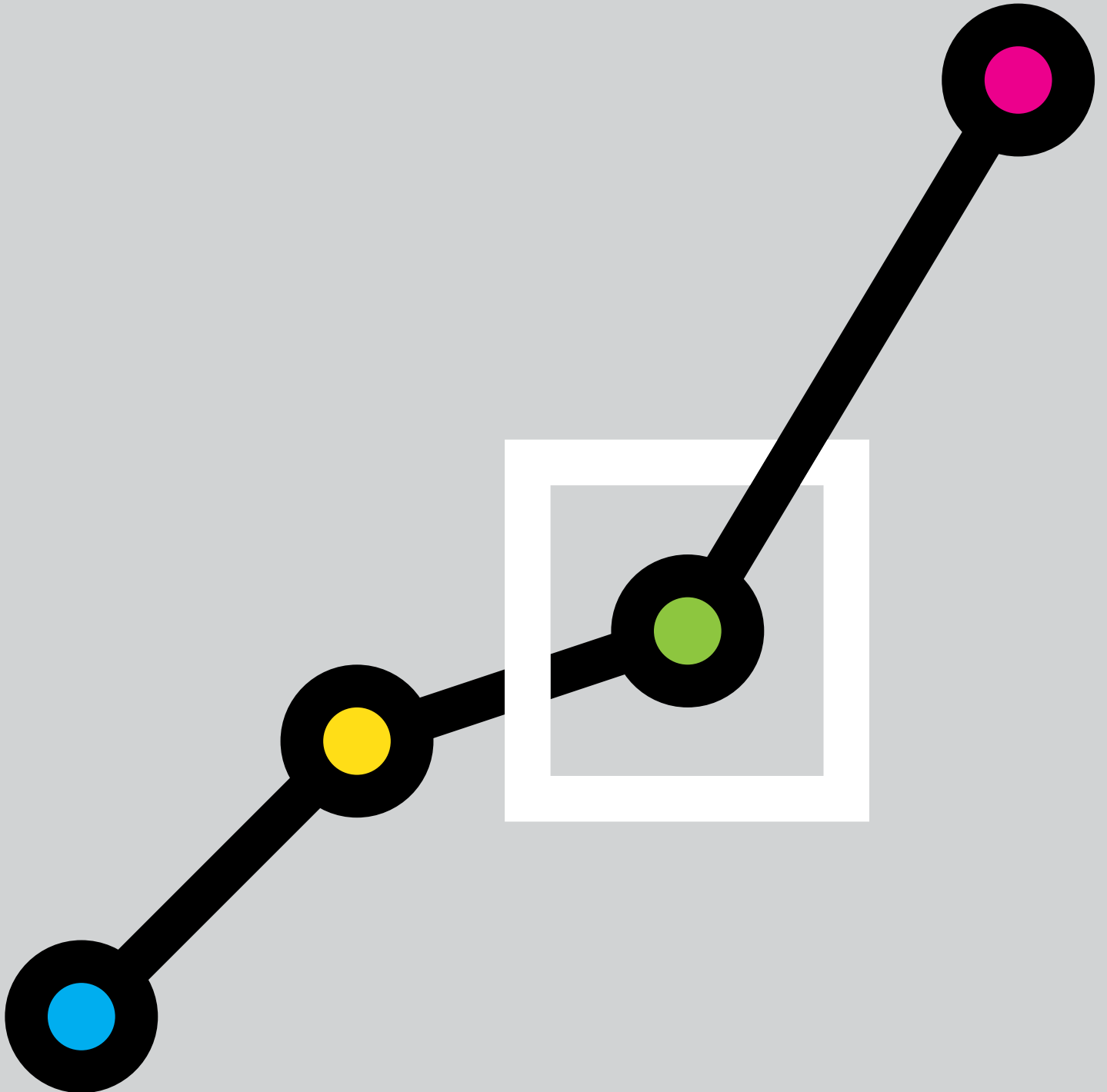


Future Trends Survey:

November 2024



The RIBA's monthly Future Trends Survey

was launched in January 2009 to monitor business and employment trends affecting the architects' profession. Participants give monthly predictions for overall workload and staffing levels over the next three months, and are also asked about their workload predictions in key sectors: private housing, commercial, community and public sector. In addition, practices are asked about their current workload and staffing levels. The Survey is carried out by the RIBA in partnership with the Fees Bureau. Results of the Survey, including a full graphical analysis, are published each month on www.architecture.com

RIBA Future Trends November 2024: Overview

How do you expect the architectural workload in the organisation you work in or own to change over the next three months?

Overall Expect	%
Decrease	26
Stay the same	57
Increase	17
TOTAL	100
Balance	-9

(The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting more work and those expecting less.)

The profession is pessimistic about future workloads. November's RIBA Workload Index has fallen 11 points to -9, the first negative figure since February.

A negative balance indicates an overall expectation among architects that workloads will decrease in the coming three months.

Seventeen per cent of architects' practices anticipate an increase in workloads over the next three months, while 26% expect a decline. Fifty-seven per cent expect workloads to remain stable.

The outlook across the country has deteriorated with all but one region reporting falling confidence, and none reporting overall optimism about future work.

The outlook across all four monitored work sectors has fallen further back, with the sharpest fall in confidence in the Private Housing sector.

While practices are pessimistic overall, medium and large practices, which account for the majority of architectural work by value, remain optimistic. Smaller practices remain pessimistic, however.

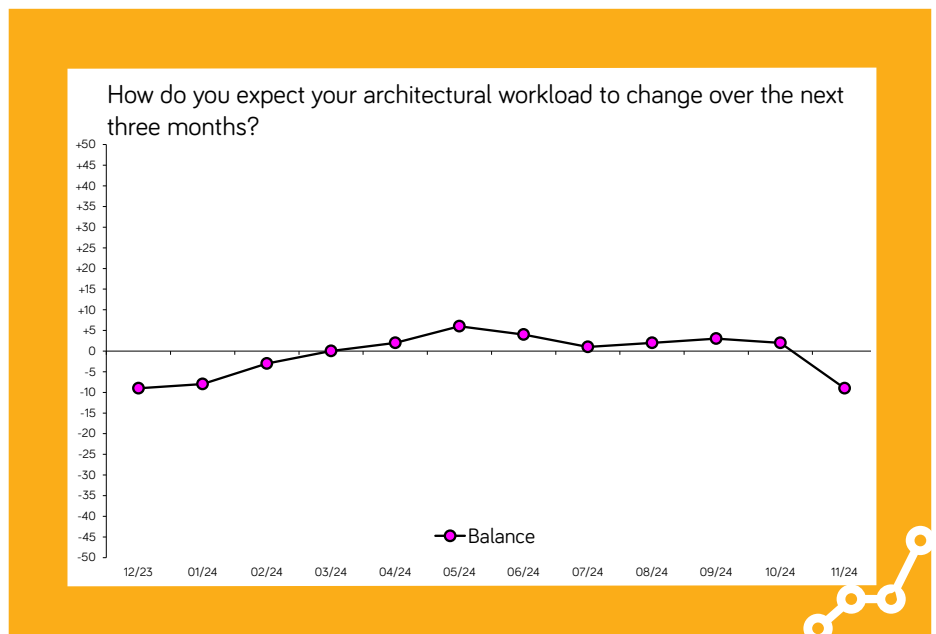
Current workloads remain lower than they were a year ago. The average practice workload has decreased by 11% compared to twelve months ago.

In November, 24% of architects reported personal underemployment, one per cent fewer than last month. At -3, the RIBA Permanent Staffing Index suggests increasing caution about recruitment.

The following graph plots the RIBA Future Workload index over time:

Notes

The balance figure is plotted here. The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting more work and those expecting less.



**RIBA Future Trends November 2024:
Workload Index: Analysis by Practice Size,
Region, and Sector.**

In November, the outlook for **small practices** (1 - 10 staff) deteriorated sharply, falling ten balance points, with a Workload Index figure of -12, compared with -2 in October. Fifteen per cent of small practices anticipate an increase in workloads, 27% expect a decrease, and 58% anticipate stability.

The outlook for **large (51+ staff) and medium-sized practices** (11 -50 staff) continues to be positive but has moderated again with a Workload Index of +16. Thirty-two per cent expect workload growth, 16% anticipate contraction, and 52% expect steady workloads.

The **regional outlook** is increasingly pessimistic, with all but one region reporting a deteriorating outlook.

The outlook in the capital has fallen slightly, with a zero Workload Index compared with +2 in October, with London-based practices now expecting steady workloads in the coming three months.

The North of England has also returned a zero Workload Index figure this month, a marked fall on last month's +24 figure.

The Midlands & East Anglia have fallen back into negative territory this month, posting a -7 balance compared with +3 last month.

The outlook for Wales and the West has seen a very sharp fall this month, with a Workload Index of -32, compared with zero last month.

Although still pessimistic in its assessment of future work, the South of England sees an improved outlook, with a Workload Index of -6, compared with -21 last month.

The **sectoral outlook** has deteriorated. All four monitored sectors continue to return a negative balance figure.

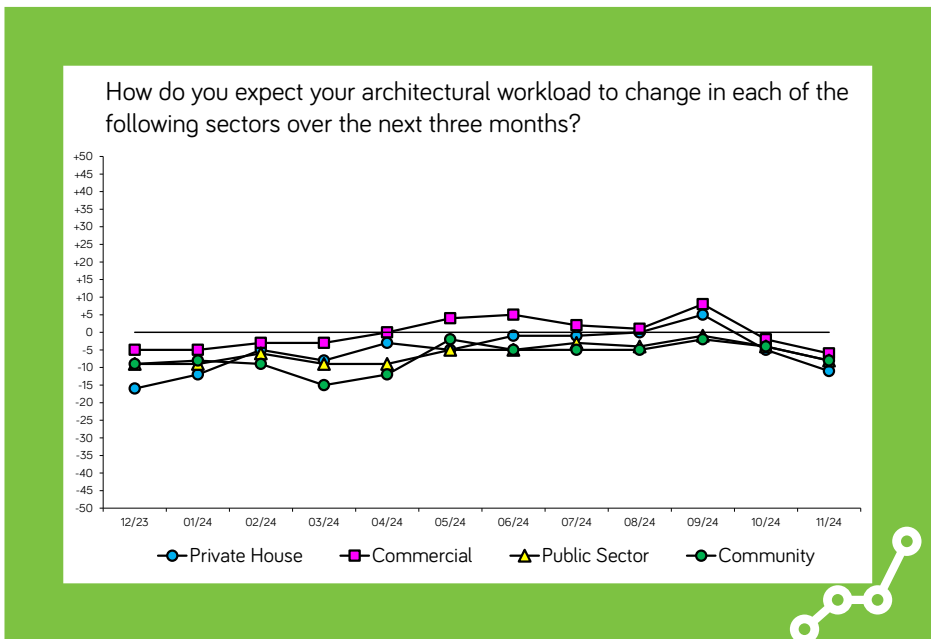
The outlook for **private housing** fell further into negative territory this month, with a Workload Index figure of -11 in November, compared with -5 in October.

The outlook for the **commercial sector** has also deteriorated, with a Workload Index figure of -6, compared with -2 last month.

The outlook for the **public sector** has slipped further, falling from -4 last month to -8 in November.

The outlook for the **community sector** has also worsened with a -8 figure this month, compared with -4 in October.

The following graph tracks the sector predictions in the RIBA Future Trends Survey over time:



**RIBA Future Trends November 2024:
Staffing Index.**

How do you think the number of permanent architectural staff employed in your organisation will change over the next three months?

Permanent Staff	%
Decrease	11
Stay the same	81
Increase	8
TOTAL	100
Balance	-3

(The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting to employ more permanent staff in the next three months and those expecting to employ fewer.)

At -3, the RIBA Future Trends Permanent Staffing Index became negative in November. This follows a zero balance figure in October.

More practices see permanent staffing levels decreasing in the coming three months than increasing. Eight per cent of practices anticipate an increase in permanent staff in the coming three months, 11% expect a reduction, and 81% expect no change.

Only the North of England has returned a positive permanent staffing index figure this month (+4).

The staffing outlook for the capital has fallen from +4 in October to -2 this month, indicating an overall expectation of falling staffing levels. The staffing outlooks in Wales & the West (-11) and Midlands & East Anglia (-10) have also deteriorated this month.

At zero, up from -3 last month, the view from the South of England has improved this month.

The RIBA Temporary Staffing Index fell this month, returning a -5 balance.

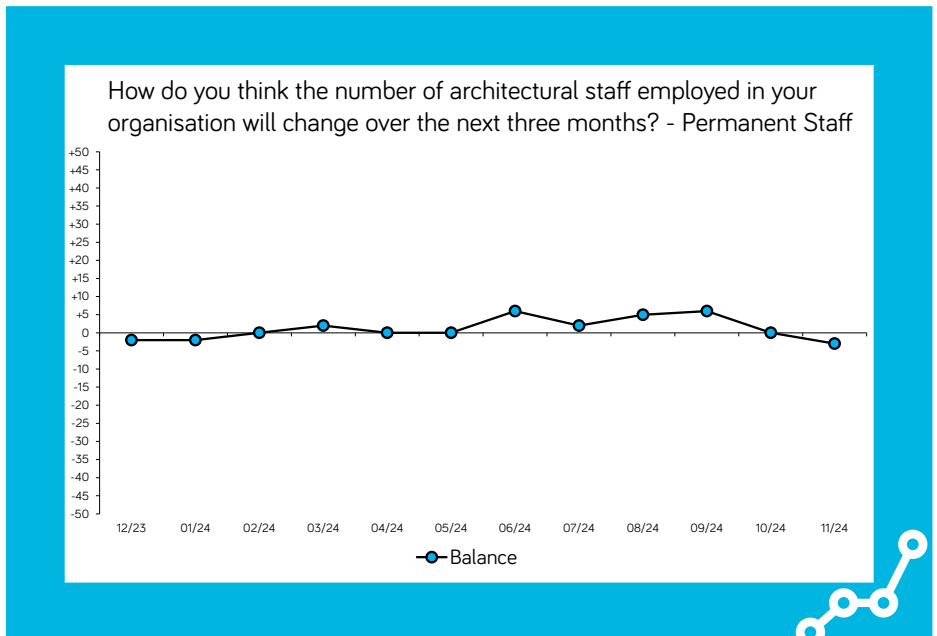
Levels of personal underemployment have fallen slightly as 24% of respondents report 'a lack of work leading to personal underemployment' over the last month.

The region with the lowest level of reported personal underemployment is the North (7%), while the highest is the South of England (35%). A quarter of those in the capital report personal underemployment.

Notes

The balance figure is plotted here. The definition for the balance figure is the difference between those expecting to employ more permanent staff in the next three months and those expecting to employ fewer.

The following graph plots the RIBA Future Trends Staffing Index over time:



November 2024 RIBA Future Trends: Commentary.

This month sees a sharp fall in sentiment about the next three months, with the RIBA Workload Index returning a negative figure for the first time since February. The growing optimism of the second half of the year has now dissipated.

A further fall in the Private Housing outlook is particularly concerning for smaller practices.

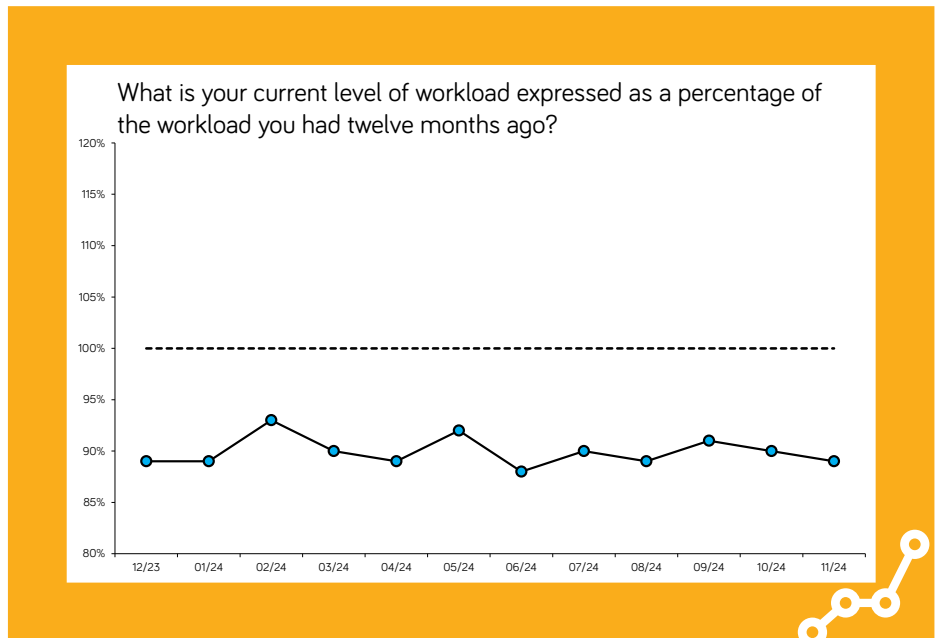
Plans for recruitment reflect the dampened outlook, with practices now more likely to anticipate staff reductions than increases.

The recent budget has not brought market confidence.

Commentary received from practices in November describes a tough market. Planning delays continue to hinder project progress, fee competition remains intense, and some clients are paying late for services. These combined challenges weigh down on practice profitability.

Some practices report concerns that, following the budget, inflation and interest rates will be higher than was expected.

Nevertheless, some practices strike a more positive note, describing an increase in enquiries and expectation of new work secured for 2025, as interest rates further fall.



The RIBA Future Trends Survey is based on a representative sample of the range of different practice sizes and geographical locations which enables analysis of the trends in sectors, size groups and by nation and region.

A total of 189 practices took part in the Survey in November 2024. The development of a larger database of respondents will increase the statistical accuracy of the survey, and if your practice would like to participate in future months, please contact the RIBA Practice

Department on 020 7307 3749 or email practice@riba.org. The survey takes approximately five minutes to complete each month, and all returns are independently processed in strict confidence by our partners The Fees Bureau.