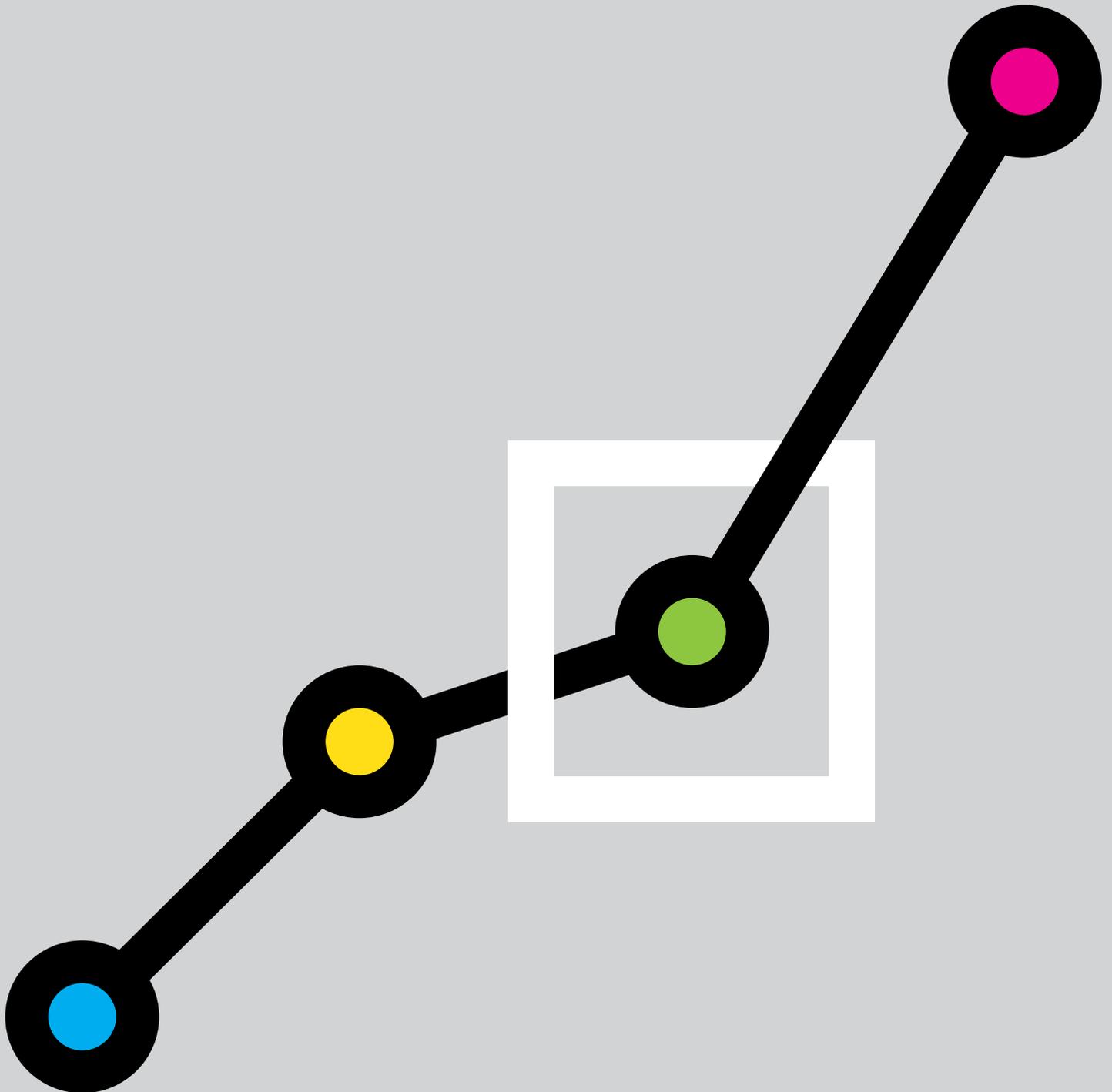


Future Trends Survey:

April 2022



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 on a quarterly basis 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

The following is a summary analysis of the results from the April 2022 survey returns.

RIBA Future Trends Workload Index (April 2022)

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	18
Stay the same	59
Increase	23
TOTAL	100
Balance	+5

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

In April, the RIBA Future Trends Workload Index fell by fourteen points to a balance figure of +5. Whilst still in positive territory, architects' predictions for future work are becoming less optimistic as the broader economy weakens.

Twenty-three per cent of practices expect workloads to increase in the coming three months, whilst fifty-nine per cent expect them to remain the same. Eighteen per cent of practices expect workloads to decrease.

Overall, practices of all sizes expect workloads to increase, although optimism has dipped across all practice sizes.

Whilst the Private Housing and Commercial sectors both remain positive about Future Workload, confidence levels have dipped markedly. Both the Community and Public sectors are now in negative territory.

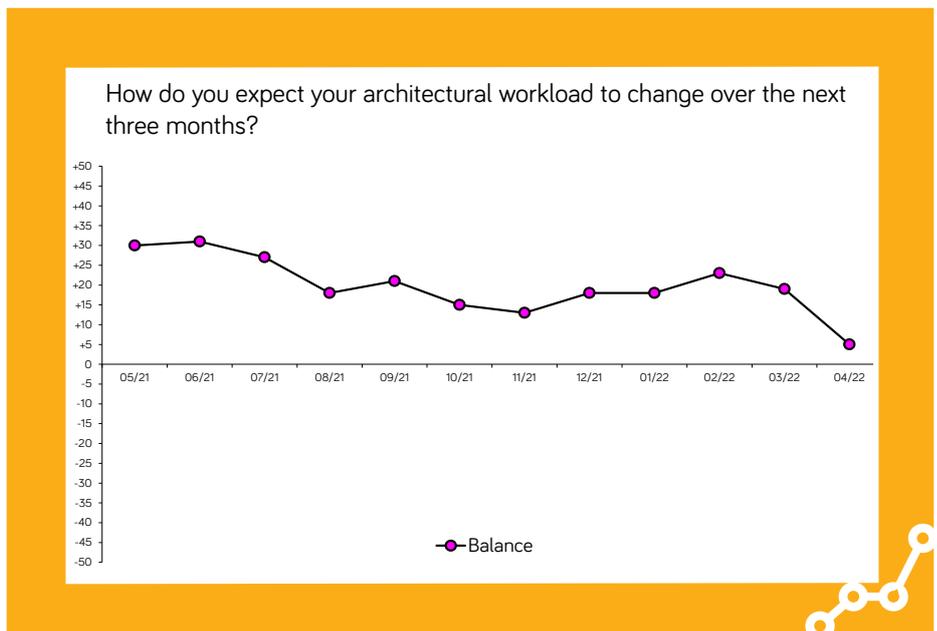
Confidence has dipped in the southern regions, with only the North of England and the Midlands & East Anglia posting comparable figures to last month. Like last month, London has posted the largest fall in confidence.

The post-pandemic recovery is weakening. Practices report workloads now being a little lower than they were a year ago and levels of personal underemployment have increased.

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.



Looking at the April 2022 RIBA Future Trends Workload Index in terms of practice size, region and sector:

In April, **small practices** (1 - 10 staff) posted a positive balance figure of +3, down 13 points from March's figure of +16.

Large and medium-sized practices (11+ staff) remain positive about future workload, but they too have seen confidence fall, with a balance score of +19, down from +36 last month.

Most regions have seen confidence fall, and the South of England has fallen into negative territory. Nevertheless, all but one region remain positive about future workloads.

Whilst still positive overall, London has seen another marked fall in confidence. At +8 in April, London's score has fallen by 14 points this month, and 32 points since February.

The North of England has held steady in April, dipping by just one balance point to an index figure of +17. It is the most optimistic region about future workloads.

The Midlands & East Anglia is the only region to see optimism increase, with a balance score of +6, a one-point increase on last month's figure.

Wales & the West have posted a balance score of zero, down 24 points. The South of England has seen a move into negative territory with a drop of 25 points this month, down from +15 in March to -10 in April.

Turning to the work sectors, three of the four sectors have seen confidence fall.

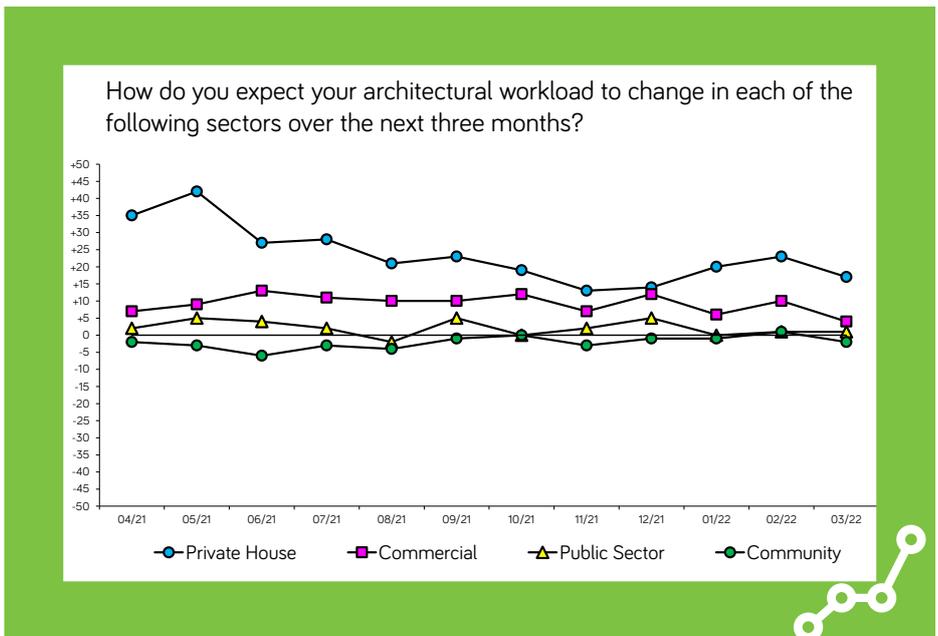
In April, the **private housing sector** posted a balance figure of +7, down 10 points from last month's figure of +17, and down 35 points over the last 12 months.

The **commercial sector** softened a little in April, down 1 point to +3.

The **public sector** has fallen into negative territory for the first time since August 2021, with a balance figure of -3, down 4 points when compared to last month's figure of +1.

The **community sector** remains in negative territory this month, with a balance figure of -2, the same as last month.

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



RIBA Future Trends Staffing Index
(April 2022)

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

Permanent Staff	%
Decrease	6
Stay the same	82
Increase	12
TOTAL	100
Balance	+5

(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.)

In April, the **RIBA Future Trends Permanent Staffing Index** returned a balance figure of +5, down 4 points when compared to March.

Twelve per cent of practices expect to employ more permanent staff over the coming three months whilst six per cent expect to employ fewer. Eighty-two per cent expect staffing levels to stay the same.

Medium and Large-size practices (11+ staff) are more likely to recruit staff in the coming months, with a combined balance figure of +27; a positive outlook for recruitment, but one that is down from last month's balance figure of +42.

Optimism among smaller practices (1 - 10 staff) is more muted, with an index figure of +2, one point down on last month.

In April, the regional picture for permanent staffing is mixed, with one region falling into negative territory.

London (balance score +8), the South of England (+8) and Wales & The West (+9) are the regions where demand for staff is anticipated to be the highest. The North of England is also positive, with a balance score of +3. However, on balance, practices in the Midlands & East Anglia, posting a balance score of -8, now expect staffing levels to fall. Here 12% of practices expect a reduction in permanent staff numbers in the coming three months.

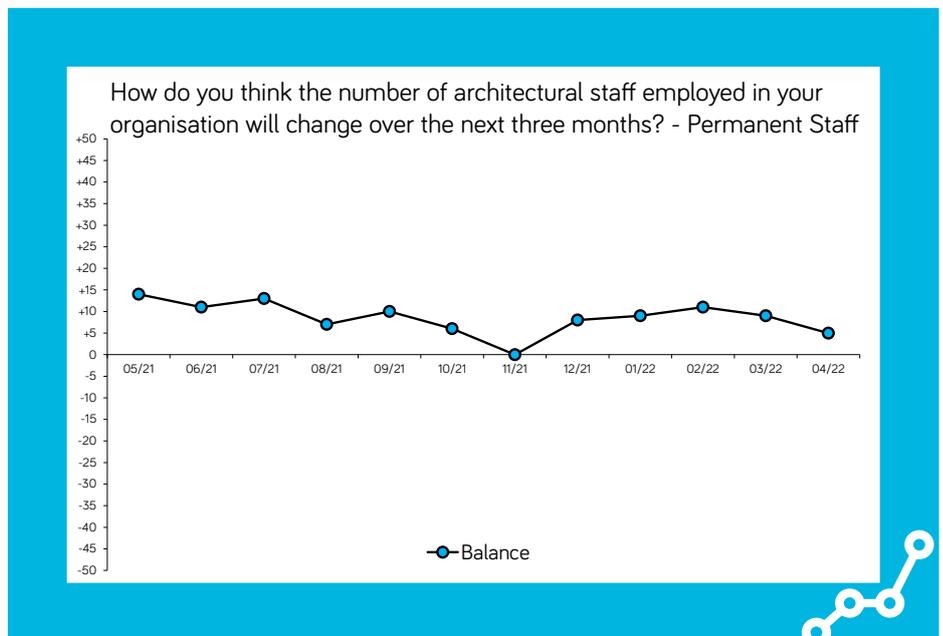
The **Temporary Staffing Index** eased off again this month, falling slightly from March's figure of +3 to +1 in April.

In April there was an uptick in **personal underemployment**, with 17% reporting being personally underemployed in the previous month, compared to 11% in March.

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

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.



RIBA Future Trends (April 2022)

Overall, architects remain optimistic about future workload levels, but that optimism has seen a significant drop in April. The RIBA Future Workloads Index has fallen by 14 points this month, the biggest monthly fall in confidence since the early days of the pandemic.

Rapidly rising inflation, significantly increased energy costs, continuing supply chain issues, cost of living increases, and ongoing difficulties implementing the agreed trading arrangements with the EU; this is the current economic backdrop for the architects' market.

In the commentary received in April, concerns among practices focus on the rising cost of projects, whether through labour costs, practice salaries, the cost of materials, or energy costs. These rapidly and unpredictably rising costs make project pricing and cash flow management increasingly challenging.

Ongoing delays in the planning process continue to hamper project delivery.

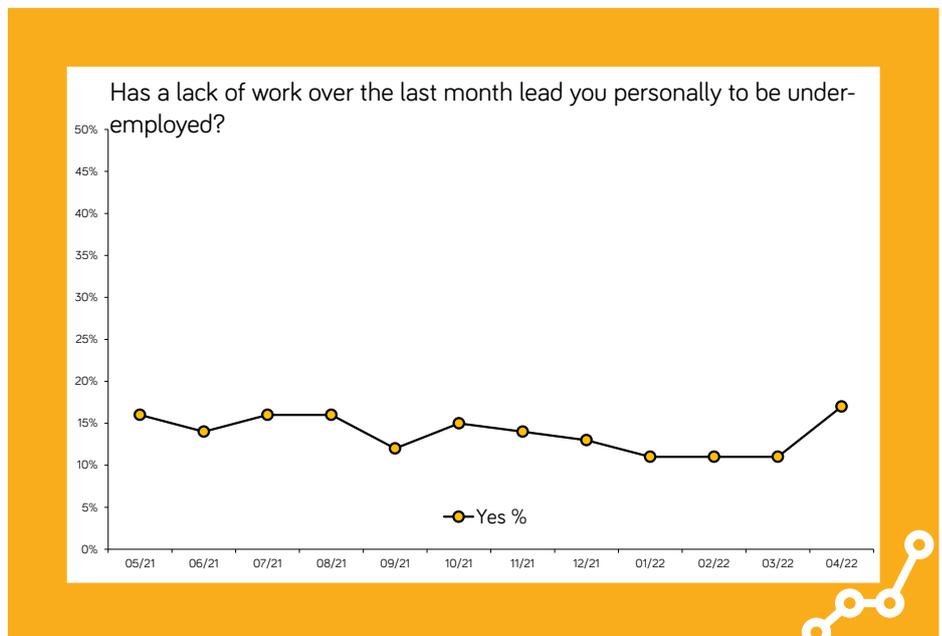
However, overall, practices do remain optimistic about future work. Commentary includes reports of full order books, practices working at capacity, and new enquires holding up. Demand for booth quality design and small scale domestic work remains.

Nevertheless, the strong levels of optimism seen in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic restrictions remain on a downward trend.

The following graph plots the levels of personal underemployment over time:

Notes

The percentage of respondents telling us that they were personally underemployed in the last month, due to a lack of work, is plotted here.



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 205 practices took part in the Survey in April 2022. 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.