

# A Fresh Approach To Environment & Sustainability Recruitment

2024 INSIGHTS



## INSIGHT

## The current hiring market challenge:

Now more than ever, I'm seeing first-hand the positive shift in attitude towards addressing climate change, environment, sustainability, and CSR. Organisations are embracing action and pushing for passionate people to be at the forefront of their net zero and emission reduction strategies - while spearheading impactful change.

Being all about people and connections, I have the pleasure of speaking to various organisations across a breadth of industries every day. Through recent conversations, it's safe to say that this year has seen the biggest demand for professionals in this space for over a decade - a trend that doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon.

Organisations like yours want to employ people dedicated to protecting the planet, environment, and communities - people who align with your values and people who want to create change for the better. What's more, data found in the latest LinkedIn Jobs On The Rise report and their Global Green Skill report reinforce this surge in demand.

After digging into the insights, I'd like to share a few standout

stats. It's amazing to see that green talent in the 2023 workforce rose by a median of 12.3% compared to 2022, a great step in the right direction. However, the share of jobs requiring at least one green skill grew twice as quickly, by a median of 22.4%.

Which leads me to the current hiring market challenge. Businesses face the same difficulty when recruiting in the Environment, Sustainability and ESG space. Emerging talent isn't coming through the ranks quickly enough, resulting in a scarce talent pool and a significantly candidate-led market.

So, I have some simple advice for businesses hiring at the moment: ensure everything about your role, from your remuneration to your employer brand, is as attractive as possible. The limited green talent in the market has the pick of the bunch, so make sure you, as an employer, stand out.

Alternatively, speak to me about how I tap into passive candidate pools and deploy effective role marketing strategies, successfully giving my clients a boost in securing these hard-to-find professionals.

## Meet Aj

Leading the Principal People Environment and Sustainability division, I have one goal. A mutual objective shared among the passionate organisations I work with: to make the world a greener and more sustainable place. I want to see my little nephew and his future cousins grow up on a planet as green and verdant as when I was a child. We do it for them - the future generation.

You do this by executing green strategies and ESG initiatives, and I do this by helping recruit zealous individuals who will empower your organisation to do better.

Over a decade-long career, I've prided myself on working with integrity and urgency to ensure my clients are beyond satisfied, and my feedback is a testament.

Working with me means you have access to my extensive experience supporting the delivery of multi-billion-pound projects and work packages across four continents in businesses ranging from SMEs to FTSE 100s.

For me, it is vital that I go above and beyond to protect the interests of candidates who have depended on me to secure their next role or clients to deliver on their operational and project objectives. Why? because I work towards successful outcomes and, ultimately, a cause bigger than myself.





# Salary survey

ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, AND ESG SALARY GUIDE 2024	
Seniority	Average Salary
Administrator	£30,000 - £35,000
Graduate	£28,000 - £35,000
Advisor	£45,000 - £50,000
Senior Advisor	£50,000 - £55,000
Manager	£55,000 - £65,000
Regional Manager	£70,000 - £80,000
Head of	£85,000 - £95,000
Director	£120,000 - £130,000
Global Director	£150,000 - £170,000

2023 was a challenging year for businesses and workers as living costs soared and the market cooled. Salaries within consulting rose an above-average amount of 4% in 2023, and notably, despite similar salary growth over recent years, professionals in consulting reported significantly lower salary satisfaction. The benefits appealing most to consulting professionals we engaged are increased bonuses, hybrid and remote working, private health insurance and flexible working hours. This is mirrored somewhat by construction professionals who find private healthcare, flexible hours, and bonuses the most attractive package elements.

Source IEMA – “In a recent report, the think tank Onward has highlighted how circa 3.2m workers will need to increase their skill level or retrain in a new qualification to meet the Government’s 2050 net zero target.”

The arms race has effectively begun for EPCs, consultants, contractors, JVs, and owners/operators to bolster their Environment, Sustainability and ESG teams to reach these lofty ambitions. Senior researchers at Onward have noted that the UK workforce is ‘woefully prepared’ for the transition to net zero emissions. As a result, new jobs that help drive the UK towards net-zero emission are set to offer salaries that are almost 1/3 higher than those in carbon intensive roles and industries.







## Our tried, tested and trusted process



### Specification Call

No two businesses are the same, and neither is our approach. Our specification call allows us to dive deep under the surface and become familiar with your nuances, expectations, and timescale.



### Candidate Screening

We don't like to throw CVs over the fence and hope for the best. Instead, we pre-qualify candidates, ensuring they fit your role's criteria and specific requirements.



### Employer Interview

This is when we hand over the reins to you. However, before we do, we firmly believe in helping you and the candidate prepare so that you both perform your best on the day.



### Engaging the Market

Our team will meticulously craft and execute an effective role marketing strategy specifically for your role, engaging with the right person at the right time in the right way.



### Shortlisting

After learning each candidate's strengths, weaknesses, and motivations, we will personally present each to you during a shortlisting discussion.



### Offer Management

After an offer is agreed upon, our priority is to ensure the candidate's support through the resignation process and to liaise with both parties to facilitate a seamless transition for everyone involved.

## Our process delivers results

96%

client satisfaction rate

4.8/5

Google review score

93%

of candidates with  
12+ months tenure





## SERVICES

# Where we specialise

### Permanent recruitment

Each year, we place over 400 people in permanent positions, contributing to making the world sustainable and safe. Our industry is always changing, and for the last 35+ years, we've been right there with it. Gone are the days of a one-size-fits-all, transactional approach to recruitment.

We believe that Environment and Sustainability recruitment should be more than just a process; it should be a commitment to quality, a pledge to ethics, and a promise to protect our planet.

It's about finding people who resonate with your mission and are driven by a mutual sense of purpose.

### Interim and Contract recruitment

Have you found yourself in urgent need of an Environmental and Sustainability subject matter expert, or do you have an upcoming project that requires extra resources? We're here to help.

Our three decades of experience mean we're well-versed in recruiting in this space. Our 96% satisfaction rate is a testament to our ability. We've achieved this by fostering long-lasting relationships, utilising the latest vacancy marketing techniques and drawing from our extensive network of professionals; we consistently deliver the right talent on time and within budget.

### Executive Search recruitment

We all know the saying, "It all starts at the top." Therefore, it is crucial to have the right person, deliver the right message, and implement the right action plan at the senior leadership and executive level to drive change effectively.

We have searched for the world's best leadership talent in QHSE and we're eager to share these exceptional candidates and thought leaders with organisations that match their ambition and vision.

Since our Search and Selection team's establishment, we've achieved a 100% success rate within this division, mostly due to our rigorous and detailed search process.





## Doing our bit



### UN Global Compact

Working in recruitment, people are at the heart of everything we do, and in turn, so are labour rights. One of our company values is Ethics - doing the right thing. That's why we choose to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies.

As participants of the UN Global Compact, we commit to meeting the four key fundamental responsibilities: human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

We are dedicated to ensuring that all of our colleagues and candidates can expect equal pay for equal work, a livable wage, and healthy and safe work environments.



### S4G Network

Established in 2018, S4G Network (Safety & Sustainability For Good) is our own not-for-profit organisation, created as a way to give back to the Safety and Sustainability community. Our mission's core is to help those working in the industry grow in their careers and facilitate meaningful connections with like-minded peers. We do this by hosting events, supporting charities, and running mentoring programs. So far, we have helped over 100 Safety and Sustainability future leaders with their career development.



### Plant a tree campaign

Through our partnership with TreeApp, we will plant one tree for every placement as part of our commitment to giving back to the environment and sustainability. Our focus is on a private forest located in Indonesia, where over 40% of its mangrove trees have been lost. This has led to increased flooding and natural water-related disasters that affect both flora and fauna. Our reforestation efforts will benefit around 300 species of tropical birds and over 500 species of coral reefs.



### Other initiatives

CSR is incredibly important to Principal People. We take pride in supporting several local charities and not-for-profit organisations close to our hearts. Recently, we have participated in charity sports events and phone support for Sight for Surrey, beach clean days with the Marine Conservation Society, bake sales, and donations to our local Frimley Park Hospital. We have more exciting events and charity action days planned for the remainder of 2024.







## Case study

# Recruitment for Regional Environment and Sustainability Roles

HEADCOUNT

**3500+ FTE**

REVENUE

**£1.39B**

## The Challenge

While each of the five roles presented its nuances, the primary challenge was recruiting for the three regional roles in the South West, London & Southeast and Midlands.

Each position required candidates who were autonomous and capable of working independently in their respective regional areas. Additionally, for some of the roles, the initial salary was below what we'd expect for Regional Environment and Sustainability Advisors, especially with market intelligence indicating the need to increase the salary by 10% to attract the right talent.

## Introduction

Our longstanding client, a leading UK construction organisation, faced a significant recruitment challenge. With the recent promotion of their Regional Environment and Sustainability Manager to the UK Head of Environment Manager, there was an immediate need to fill his previous role based in Scotland.

However, that was just the first hurdle. Additionally, four other key regional/project-based positions needed to be filled across the UK, including the South West, London & Southeast, Midlands, and Yorkshire areas.

Having worked with us previously on health and safety roles, our client felt confident about reaching out to us for our proven expertise in hiring niche regional roles.







## Approach

### London & Southeast:

We shortlisted candidates with degrees and operational experience, focusing on those with ambition and relevant industry affiliation. Though the successful candidate did not meet all criteria (degree education), their IEMA membership, direct industry experience and on-site work proved invaluable.

### Midlands:

Our resourcing team reached out to the passive market and connected with a candidate who had direct industry experience having worked part-time for a competitor. The candidate ticked all other boxes; however, despite initial rounds, the role could not initially be offered part-time. Not wanting to let the candidate go, the role was then flexed creatively to accommodate a four-day week. The client has recently expressed they made the right decision and hired the best person for the role.

### Southwest:

A strong candidate faced retention efforts from her current employer, who offered a substantial counter-offer (as is the trend in this marketplace). Through strategic management and highlighting senior leadership opportunities and female leadership initiatives, the candidate felt confident in her decision not to accept the counter-offer and accept the new role.

## Collaborative Client Engagement

The client was proactive and receptive to advice, adopting a consultative approach that facilitated the successful placement of all roles.

"Principal People were amazing in helping us to recruit five environmental advisors and managers. It's a challenging process right now, but thanks to their expertise and industry knowledge, we succeeded together. I would definitely recommend working with Principal People to support recruiting within the environmental field."

**National Environmental Manager**



## Result

### 100% Fill Rate

All five positions were successfully filled within six weeks of entering the market.

### Long-Term Placement

All placed candidates have been in their roles for over a year, indicating high retention and job satisfaction.

Through strategic adjustments, thorough market engagement, and collaborative client interaction, we were able to meet and exceed the recruitment needs of our client in a timely and effective manner.







## Testimonials

"Principal People were very helpful when I was looking for new staff and not only found me someone who is fitting in very well but ensured that the process went smoothly."

**Linda Wilson**

**Head of Sustainability at Volker Stevin**

"It was always a pleasure working with Aj; his passion is contagious! He takes the time to get to know what a business needs and always provides well-suited candidates who go on to have great success with the business."

**Ashely Barker**

**HR Assistant at Bilfinger**

"The Principal People team have placed several social value and stakeholder positions at managerial and advisor level through the second part of 2022.

They have provided a fantastic service, finding candidates where others had not. They treat your needs as a priority, have found exceptional candidates, keep to agreed-upon timetables, and provide guidance and insight throughout."

**Kevin Hutchinson**

**Head of Social Impact at Considerate Constructors Scheme**

"Ajogu Akoh has been very pleasant and understanding of our hiring needs and the urgency of finding suitable Candidates during very challenging periods. I highly recommend discussing your resourcing challenges and gaining market information/trends."

**Sabir Ijaz**

**Recruitment Manager for Mabey Hire**

"Principal People did a fantastic job of understanding my values and what I wanted from my job and matching that with a role at Octavius Infrastructure. They were very supportive throughout the application process, and the encouragement helped immensely."

**Zachary Pears**

**Senior Environmental Advisor at Octavius**

## You'll be in good company

**FLO GAS**

**FORMULA**

**GallifordTry plc**

**certas energy**

**VEOLIA**

**Wates**





01252 309507  
info@principalpeople.co.uk

**in** principal-people  
principalpeople.co.uk

Abbey House, Farnborough Road, Farnborough  
Hampshire GU14 7NA