Two futures for jobs in an AI era

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

Financial Services
and Private Equity
& Principal Investors

Key findings

AI is driving productivity, accelerating skills change and starting to create a redesign of entry level work

AI is strongly linked to significant productivity gains

Since 2022 when AI use soared, companies in the sectors most exposed to AI have tripled their lead in workforce productivity growth over the least AI-exposed companies.

Companies achieving the biggest productivity gains are boosting wages and headcount

Rather than replacing jobs at scale, leading organisations are using AI to amplify human performance and create value.

Harnessing AI is accelerating skills transformation

Skills required for the most AI exposed jobs are changing twice as fast as in least exposed roles - a 75% increase over last year's gap.

Redesigned entry level pathways

AI exposed junior roles are 7x more likely (than the least AI exposed junior roles) to demand traditionally senior skills like leadership and strategic thinking.

A two-track labour market

Jobs professionalised by AI – where AI does the basic work leaving more expert tasks for people (22% of advertised jobs) - are thriving while jobs democratised by AI – where AI takes on the complex work (52% of advertised jobs) - fall behind.

40%

Productivity growth is 40% higher at most vs least AI exposed companies.

52%

The most AI exposed companies see faster headcount growth than the least AI exposed (52% vs 36%) and higher wage growth (24% vs 17%).

2.5x

The most AI exposed jobs are adding tasks that rely on human-intensive skills like empathy, judgment and creativity 2.5x faster - than the least AI exposed roles.

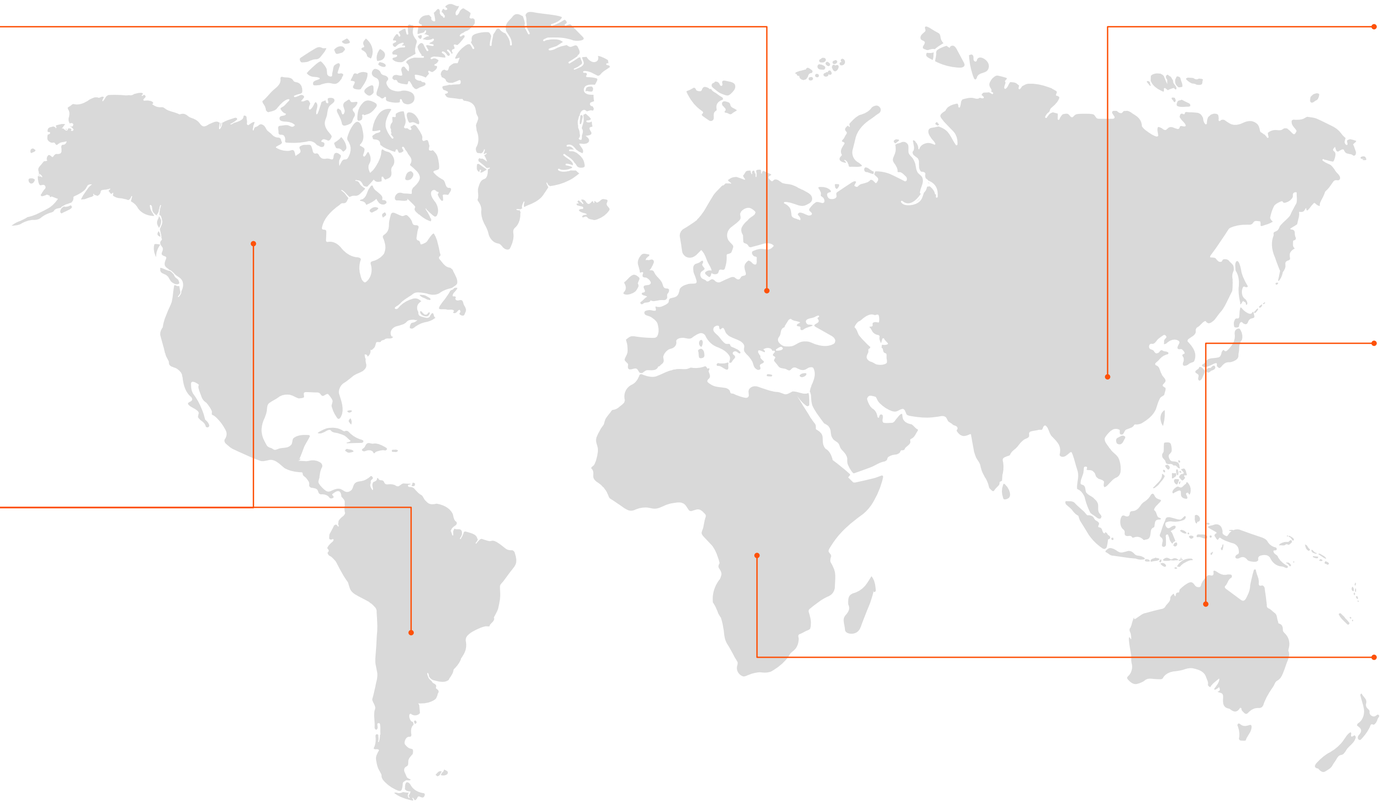
35%

AI-exposed 'seniorised' entry level roles are thriving with 35% growth since 2019 while other entry level roles decline in number.

42%

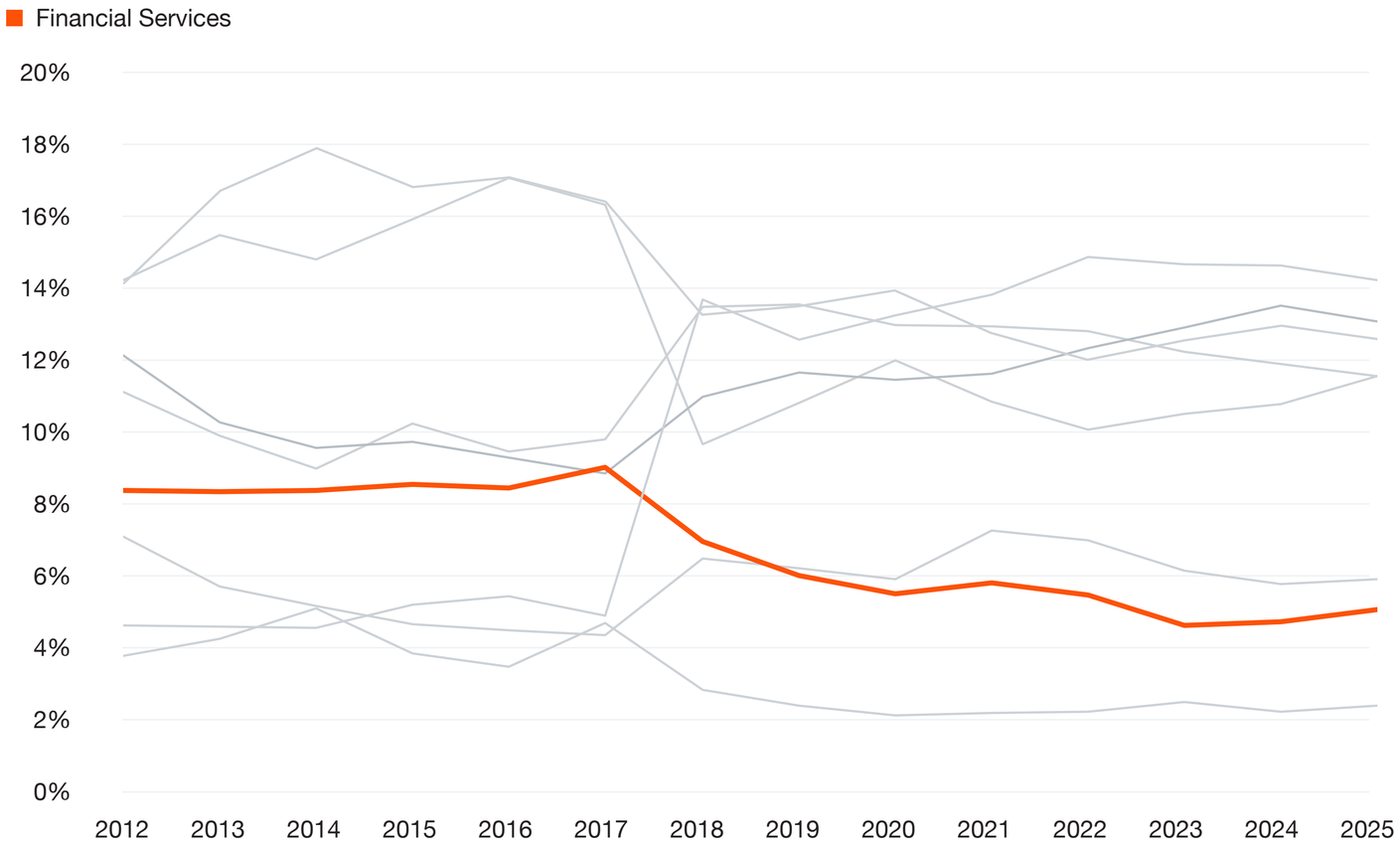
Professionalised jobs are growing twice as fast as Democratised jobs with 42% higher wage growth since 2021.

The 2026 AI Jobs Barometer examines over one billion job ads from 6 continents to reveal how AI is affecting jobs, skills, wages, and labour productivity



The Financial Services sector's share of global job postings has declined since 2012, despite a recent uptick

Share of total job postings in the Financial Services sector, globally (%, 2012 to 2025)



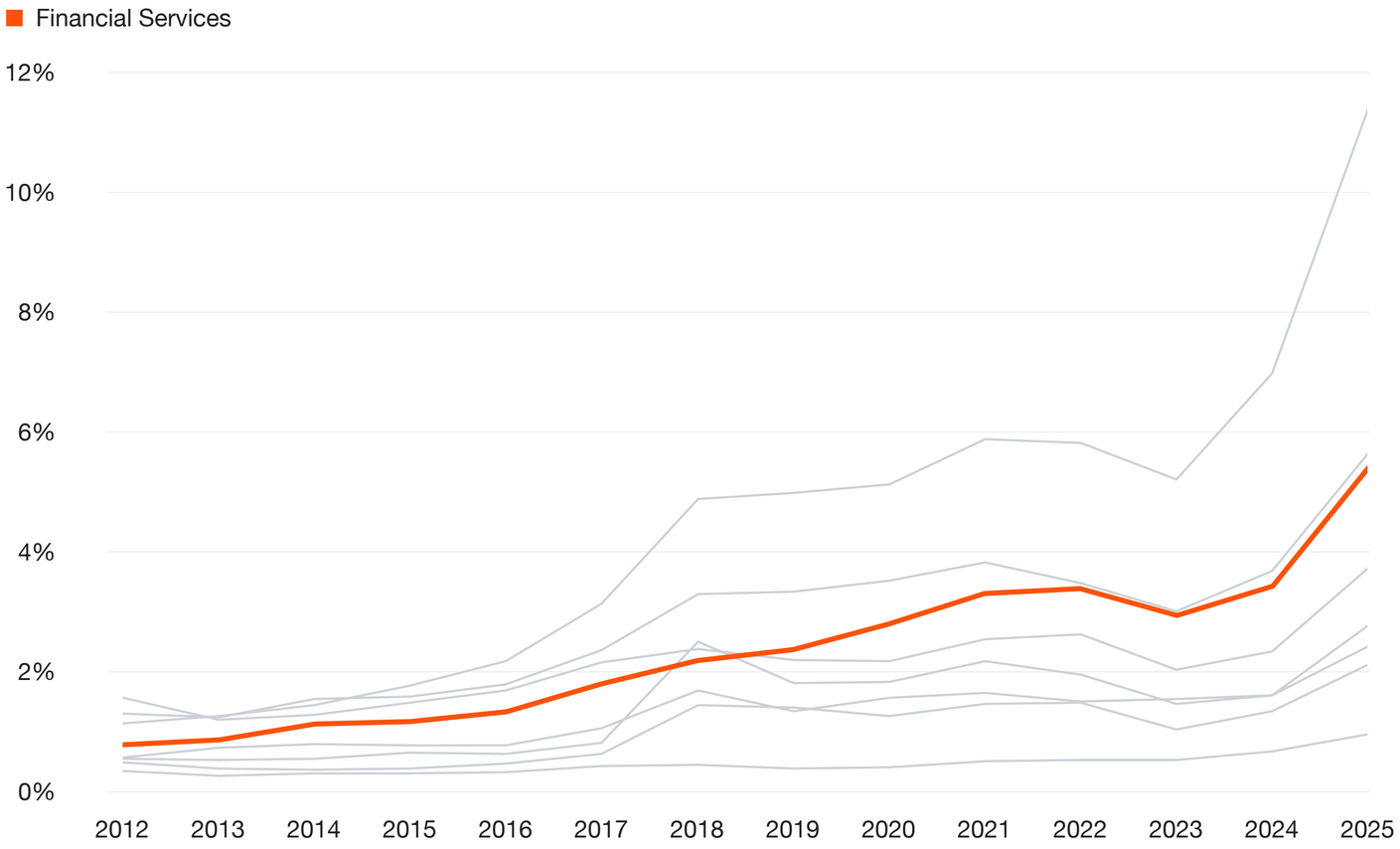
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- The Financial Services sector accounted for around 8.4% of total global job postings in 2012, compared with approximately 5.0% in 2025, reflecting a gradual decline in its relative share over the past decade.
- As this metric is measured as a proportion of all postings, the long run decline reflects softer hiring in Financial Services compared with other sectors, providing context for how demand within the sector is evolving.
- The sector's vacancy share fell to a recent low of around 4.6% in 2023, indicating that hiring weakened relative to other industries during this period.
- Since then, the share has edged up in 2024 and again in 2025, suggesting a modest recovery in its relative position within the global labour market.

Meanwhile, the share of AI hiring in the Financial Services sector has accelerated over recent years, reaching a 5.4% share in 2025

Share of AI jobs within the Financial Services sector, globally (%, 2012 to 2025)



Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- The share of AI job postings in the Financial Services sector rose from 3.4% in 2024 to 5.4% in 2025 globally, marking a sharp year-on-year acceleration.
- Aside from a modest dip in 2023 (likely due to broader macroeconomic pressures and tighter fiscal conditions) the trend has been consistently upward. The sharp rise in 2025 suggests commercial AI adoption is moving from the experimental stage toward embedded and practical deployment across the sector.
- This may indicate increasing competition for AI-enabled capabilities in the financial services sector. As such, workforce analytics and skills benchmarking can prove useful for firms looking to assess their AI hiring trajectory and strategy.

This is underpinned by the strong growth of AI hiring in the sector in recent years, even as overall sector demand for labour remains slow

Growth in total job postings and AI job postings for the Financial Services sector, globally (%, 2012 to 2025)

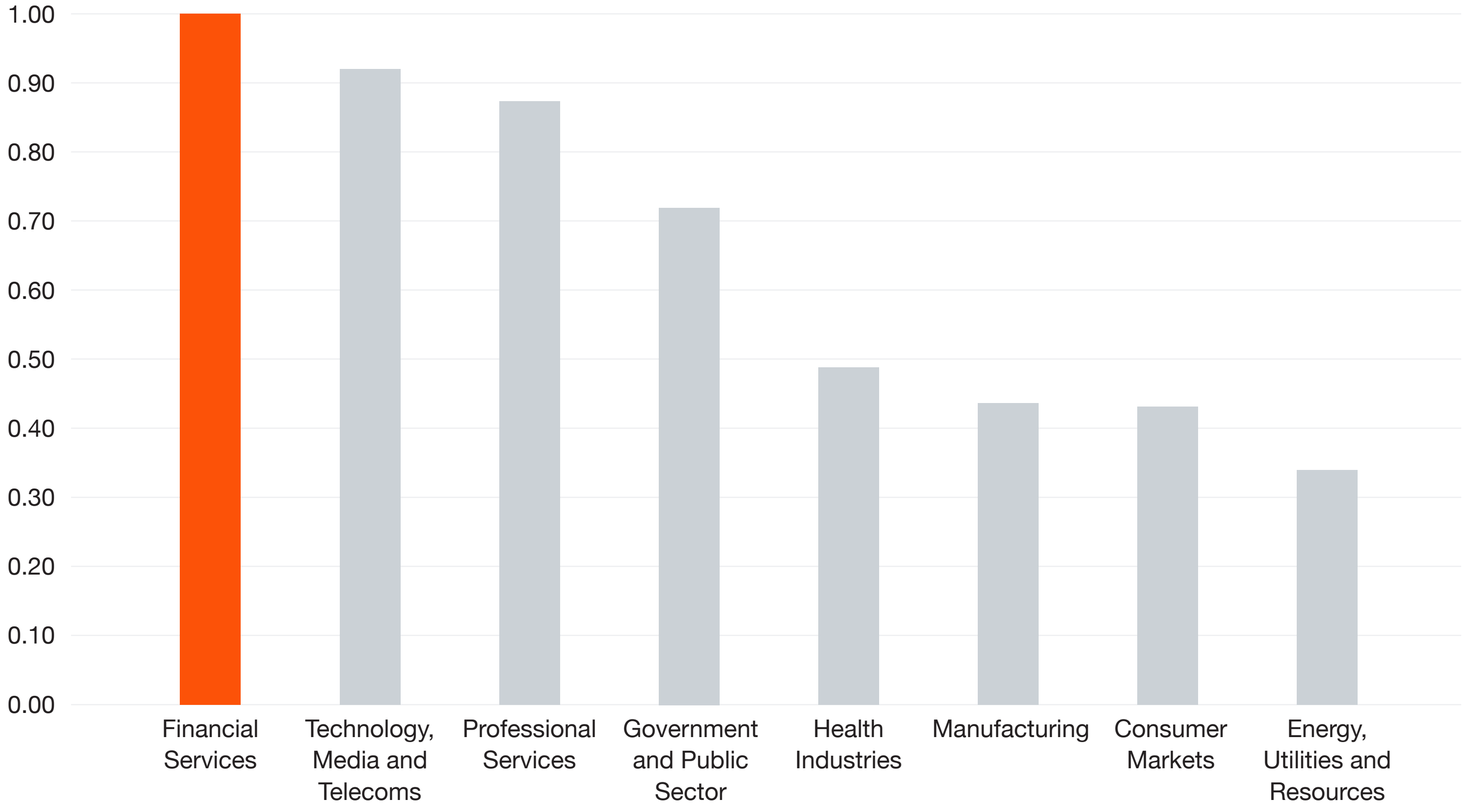
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- Hiring momentum between AI jobs and all jobs in the Financial Services sector shows divergence in 2025. Total job postings rose by 12.8%, while AI roles surged by 77.4% relative to 2024, marking a clear acceleration in AI demand relative to the broader sector.
- This rebound follows a deep contraction in 2023 (–32.8% for total postings and –39.7% for AI postings), with AI growth not only recovering but accelerating further between 2024 and 2025. The widening growth gap suggests AI talent is becoming a strategic priority even as overall labour demand remains subdued.
- The pickup in AI hiring growth may signal growing organisational confidence in AI and increased demand for the right skillset to effectively deploy AI tools.

This divergence in hiring is consistent with the sector being the most AI exposed in the economy, according to our AI Industry Exposure Index

PwC AI industry exposure by sector (2026)



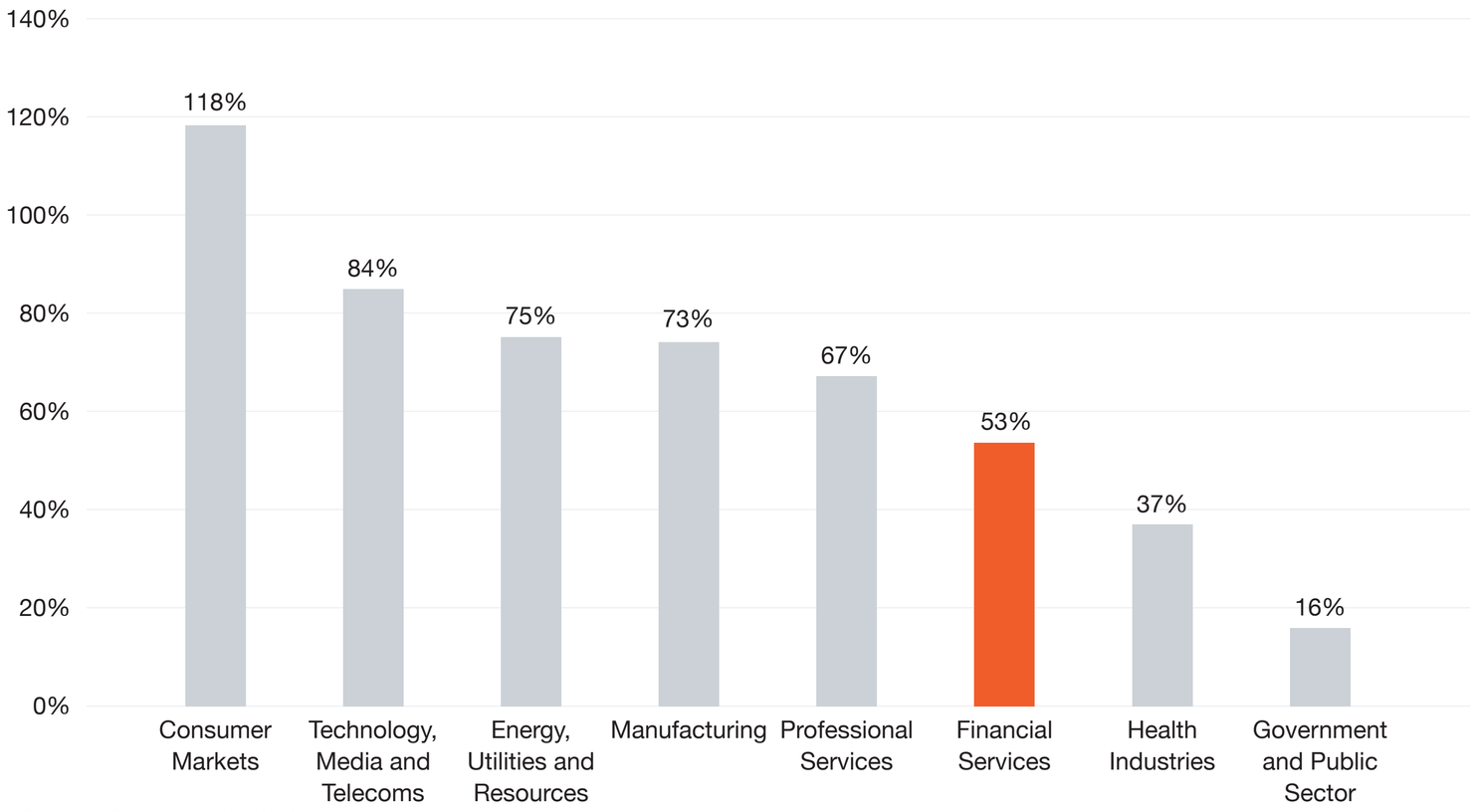
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- Financial Services records the highest AI Exposure Index of all key sectors, indicating that a large share of roles contain tasks that can be replaced or augmented by AI.
- This high exposure helps explain the strong growth in hiring for AI jobs, making Financial Services particularly well-positioned to integrate AI at scale.

Furthermore, this growth is translating into value for workers, with the sector enjoying a substantial wage premium compared to non-AI roles

Average wage premium for AI related skills by sector, globally (%, 2025)



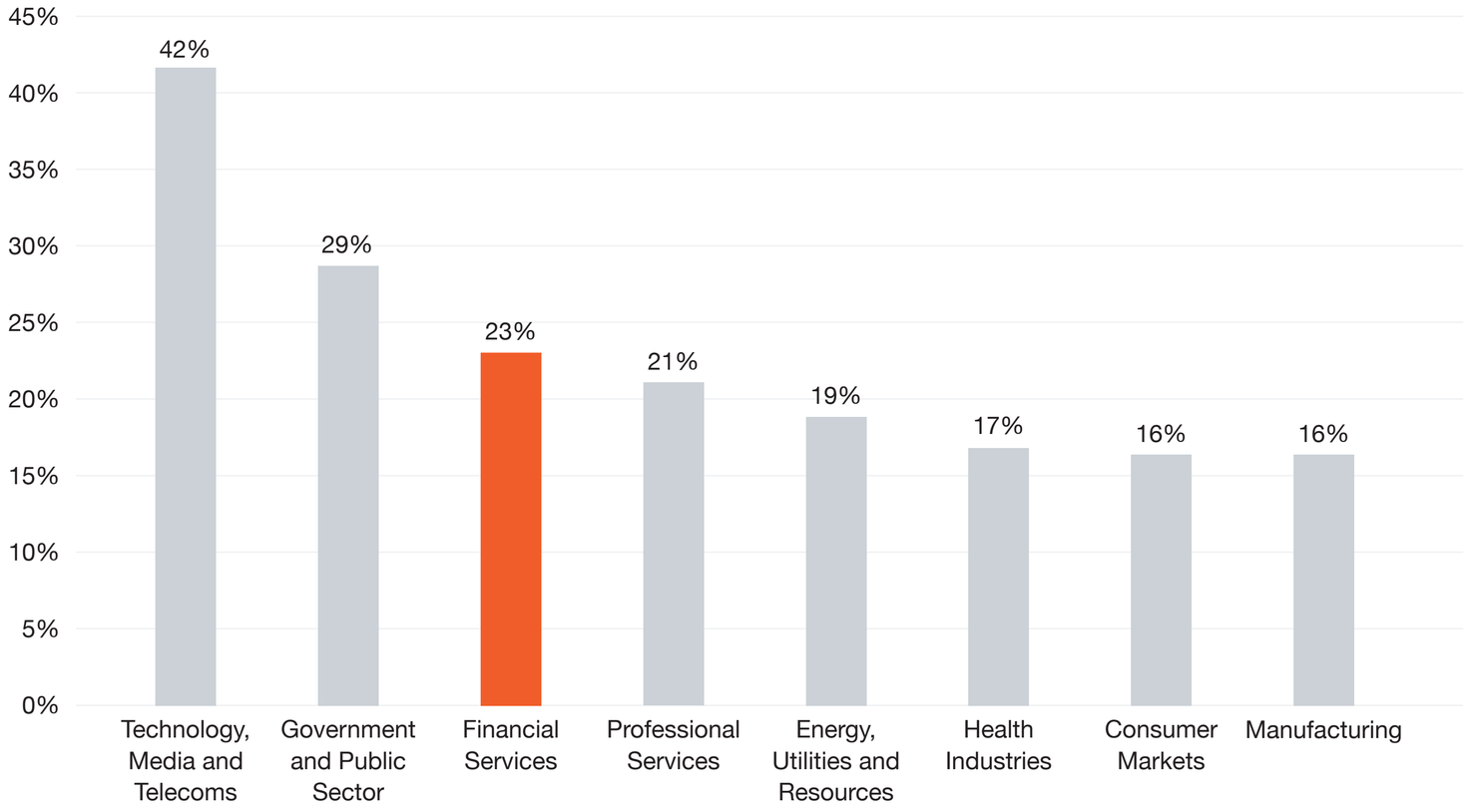
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data
Notes: (i) To calculate wage premiums, we split job postings within a sector by AI and non-AI jobs. From here we estimate the wage premium (difference) within the sector for wages in the AI group compared to the non-AI group. This analysis is not a growth rate but rather a snapshot of a given year. Note that only the eight PwC aligned sectors are shown in the visual.

Findings

- Financial Services recorded a 53% AI wage premium in 2025.
- The premium suggests AI skills are not only in demand but are valued higher, reinforcing the idea that firms are strategically prioritising AI capabilities in the workforce.
- In the context of declining overall job postings, the premium may reflect a shift in how limited resources are used to employ labour with specific skillsets in high impact AI roles.

This strong exposure to AI and consequent value creation is reflected in higher productivity growth in Financial Services

Growth rate in productivity by sector, globally (%, 2018-2025)



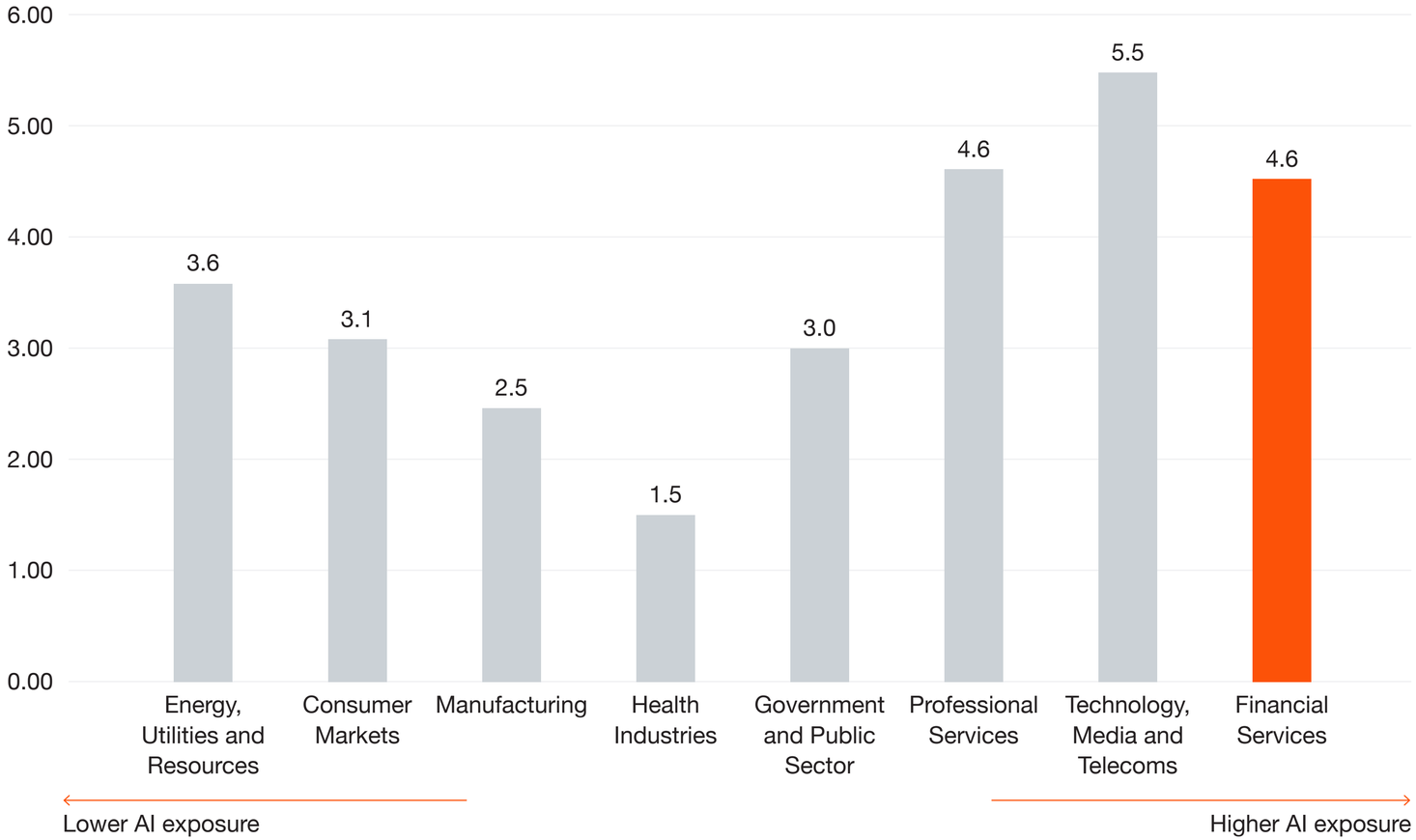
Source: PwC analysis, ORBIS data
Notes: Productivity is measured by turnover per employee using ORBIS data. We compute the growth rate in productivity between 2018 and 2024/25 at company level and aggregate up to sector level. Includes company data from all countries in the 2026 AIJB scope. 2025 data is used for companies where available, otherwise we default to 2024 data. Sectors are mapped from two-digit 2022 NAICS to the closest match(es) amongst the eight key PwC sectors. See productivity analysis appendix for all data cleaning filters applied.

Findings

- Financial Services records productivity growth of 23%, making it the third highest across sectors.
- This is consistent with its high level of AI exposure, suggesting that AI-enabled efficiency gains are contributing to stronger output per employee.
- Overall, the findings indicate that AI adoption in Financial Services is associated with measurable productivity improvements, relative to other sectors.

Driven by its high AI exposure and momentum in AI hiring, the sector is seeing one of the fastest rates of skills transformation in the economy

Net skill change by AI exposure for key sectors, 2019-2025, globally



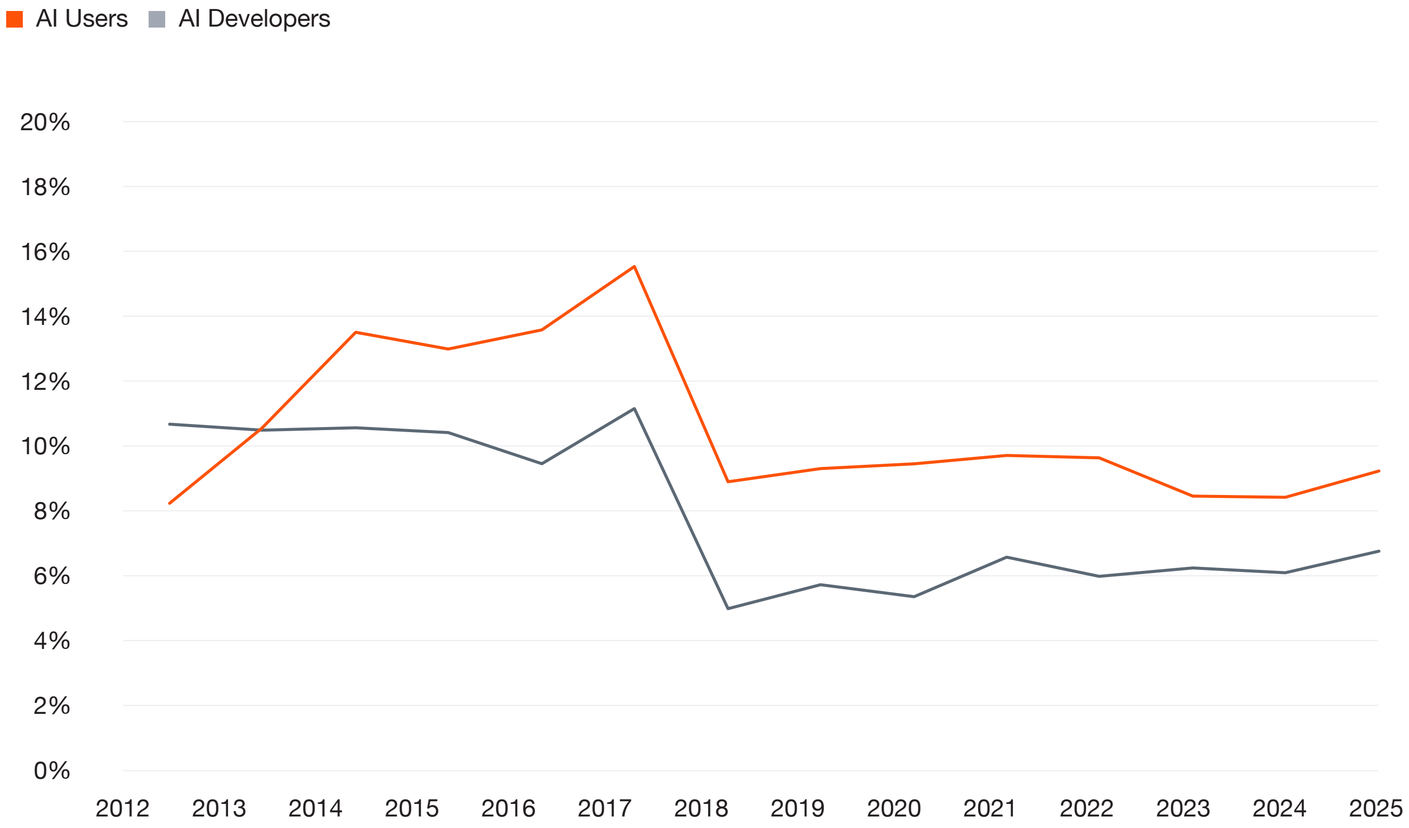
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data
Notes: Net skill change is calculated as the aggregation of the percentage point difference between 2019 and 2025 of the share of a skill making up an occupation.

Findings

- Sectors with higher exposure to AI see higher net skill change. The Financial Services sector, has the second highest net skill change of all the sectors surpassed only by the Information and Communication sector.
- The strong alignment between exposure and skills change suggests AI is not just influencing hiring volumes but reshaping the skills profile of roles in Financial Services.
- This points to ongoing task reconfiguration and rising demand for complementary digital, analytical and AI-related capabilities across the sector.

The Financial Services sector captures a substantial share of global AI skill demand for AI capabilities

Share of global skill mentions for the Financial Services sector, by user category (%, 2012 - 2025)



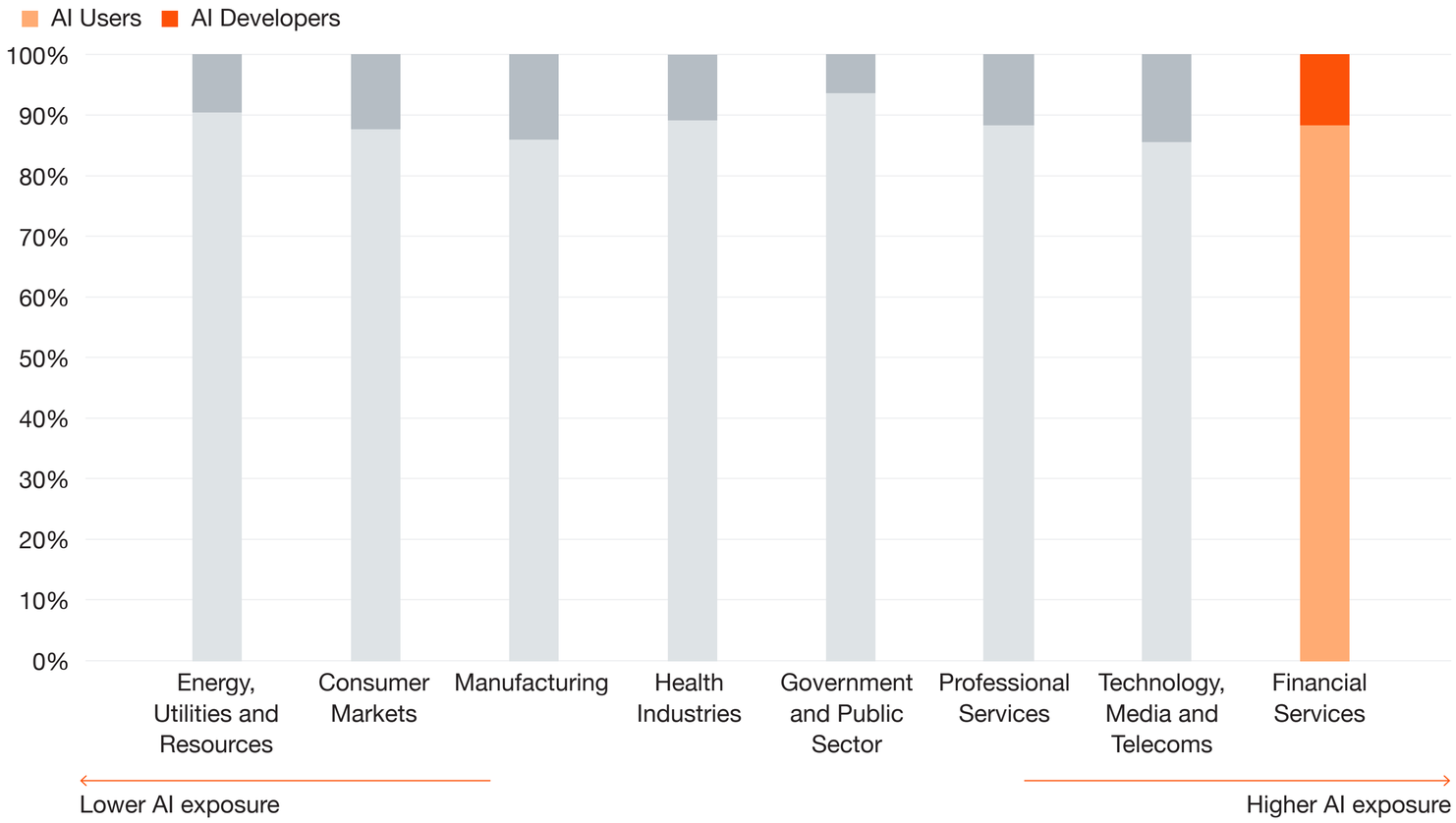
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- In 2025, the Financial Services sector accounts for 9.2% of global AI users (applied AI and basic literacy) skill mentions and 6.8% of AI developer capability mentions (advanced AI development).
- This suggests firms may be increasing focus on embedding AI into business processes and products at scale.
- Additionally, these shares have remained stable in recent years, indicating hiring demand is keeping pace with the supply of AI skills.

Within the sector, AI demand is concentrated in applied roles, with a meaningful developer base supporting build and integration activity

Shares of AI User and AI Developer job postings of all AI related roles, Financial Services, 2025, globally (%)



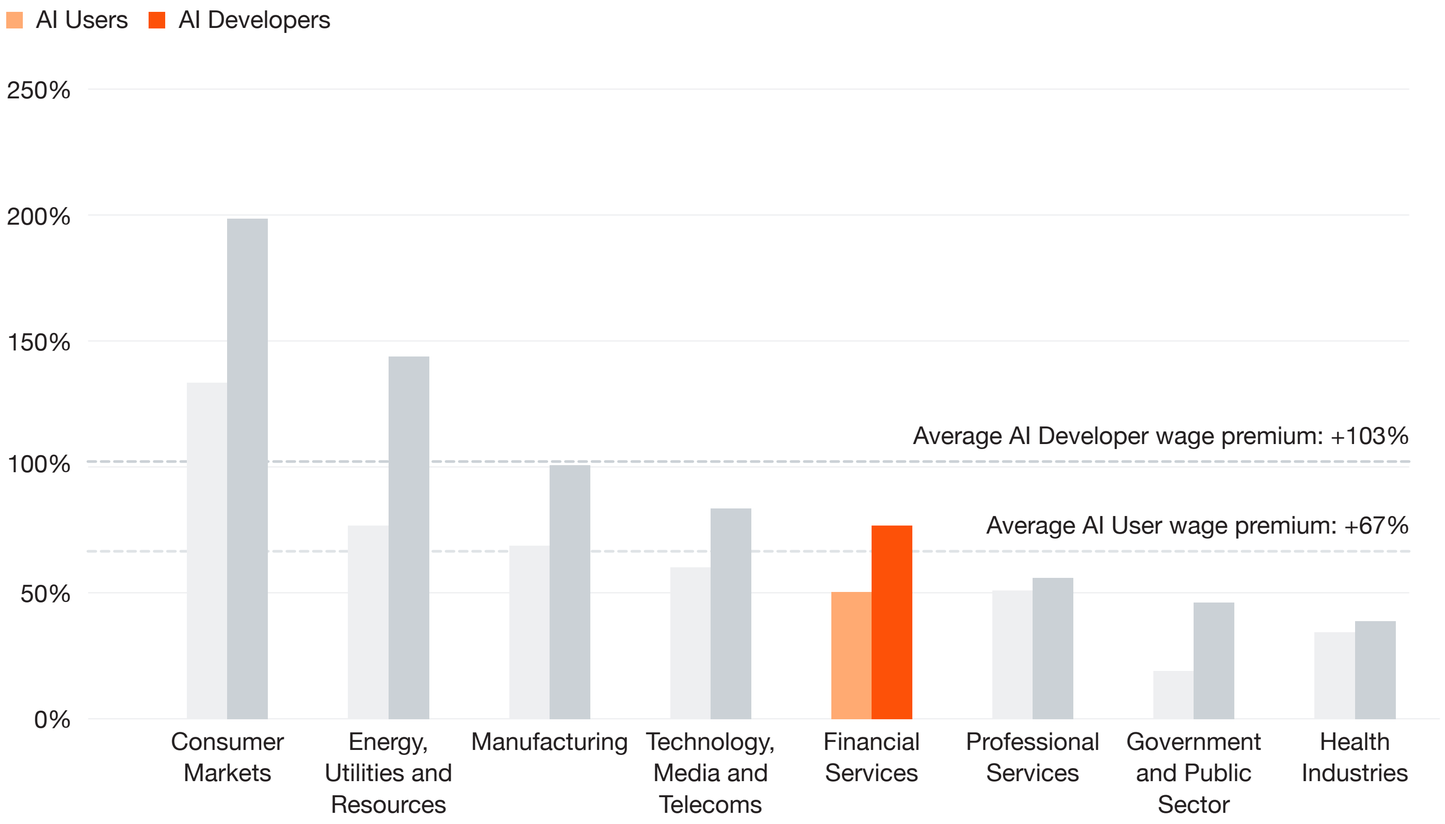
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data
Notes: We only include the countries for which data is available from 2012 in our sample. See Appendix 4b for further details.

Findings

- In 2025, AI user roles account for 88% of AI related roles in Financial Services, versus 12% for AI developer roles. This shows that most demand is focused on applying AI within business functions rather than on specialist build roles alone.
- That mix fits a sector where value depends less on stand alone AI product development and more on embedding AI into core commercial and operational activities, from decision support and risk processes to customer and control functions. The continued developer share points to the need for technical talent to tailor tools, connect them to complex systems and support implementation in a highly regulated environment.

Despite representing a smaller share of hiring, developer roles in Financial Services command the stronger wage premium

AI User and AI Developer wage premiums, Financial Services, globally, 2025 (%)



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Findings

- In 2025, AI user roles in Financial Services carry a wage premium of +50%, while AI developer roles carry a premium of +78% relative to non AI roles in the sector. This indicates that although most AI hiring is concentrated in user roles, the market places a higher premium on more advanced technical AI capability.
- Both premiums sit below the overall cross sector averages, indicating that AI skills are clearly valued in Financial Services, but with a more moderate pay uplift than in sectors where AI talent appears to be scarcer or concentrated in more highly rewarded roles.

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