



Two Futures for Jobs in an AI era

2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer

Ireland Analysis



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.

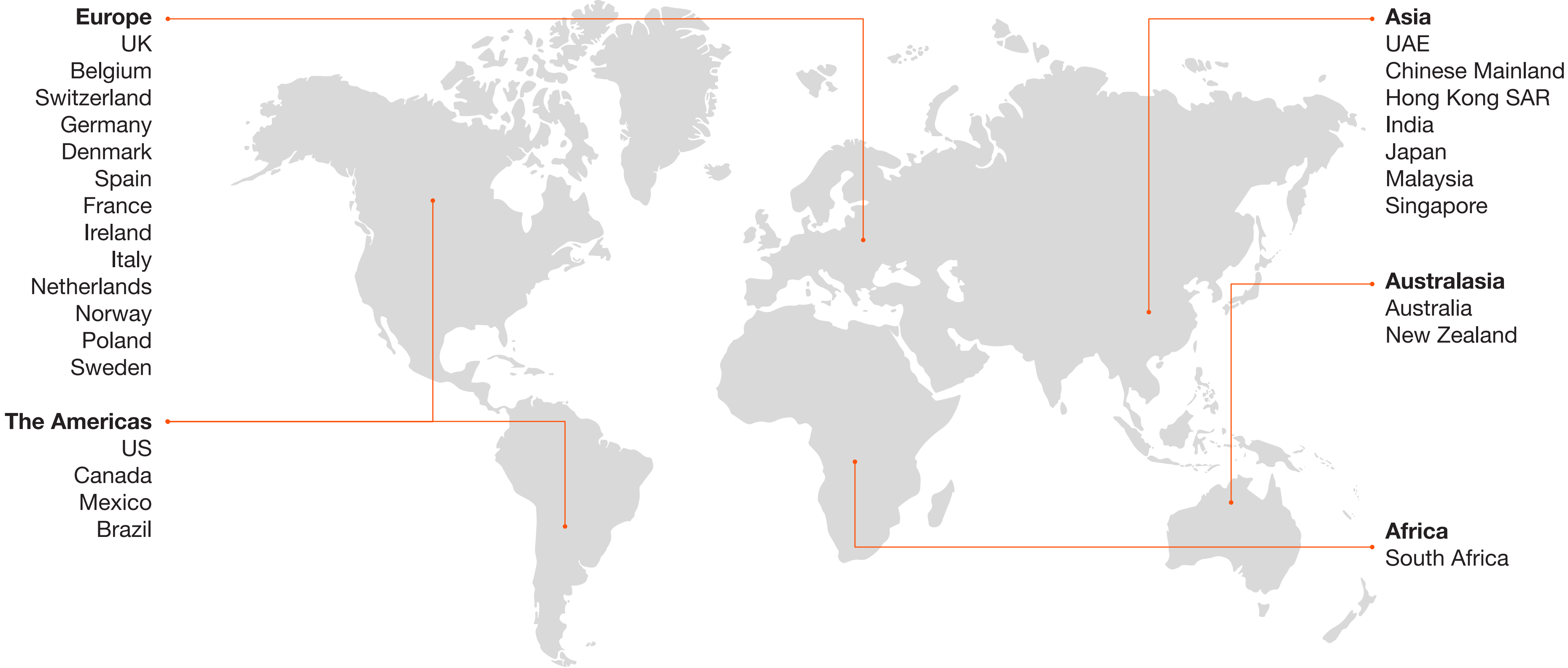
35%

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

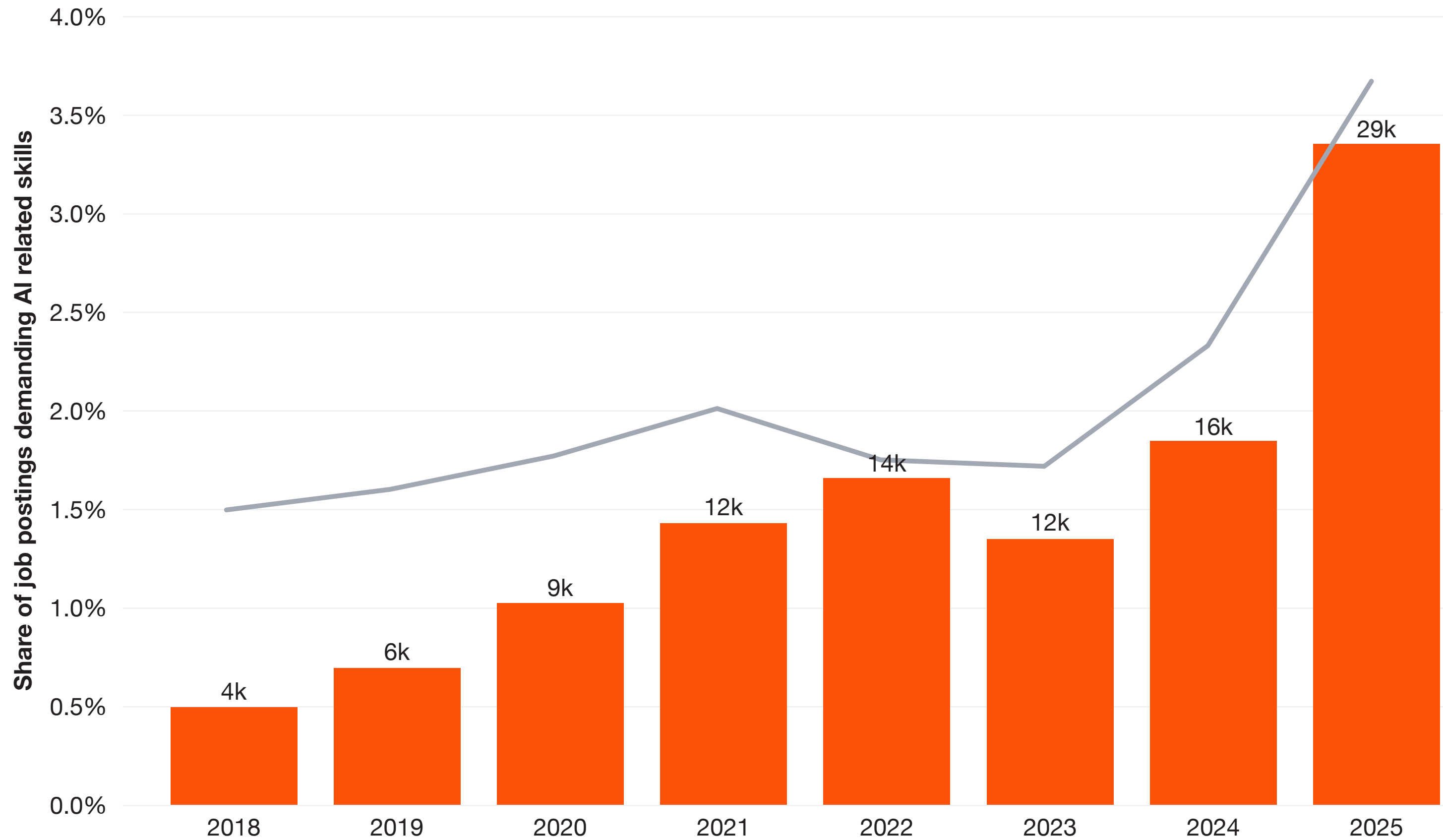


Ireland Insights



AI hiring in Ireland has almost doubled between 2024 and 2025 indicating increased AI adoption in the workforce

Total number and share of job postings requiring AI related skills, Ireland, 2018-2025



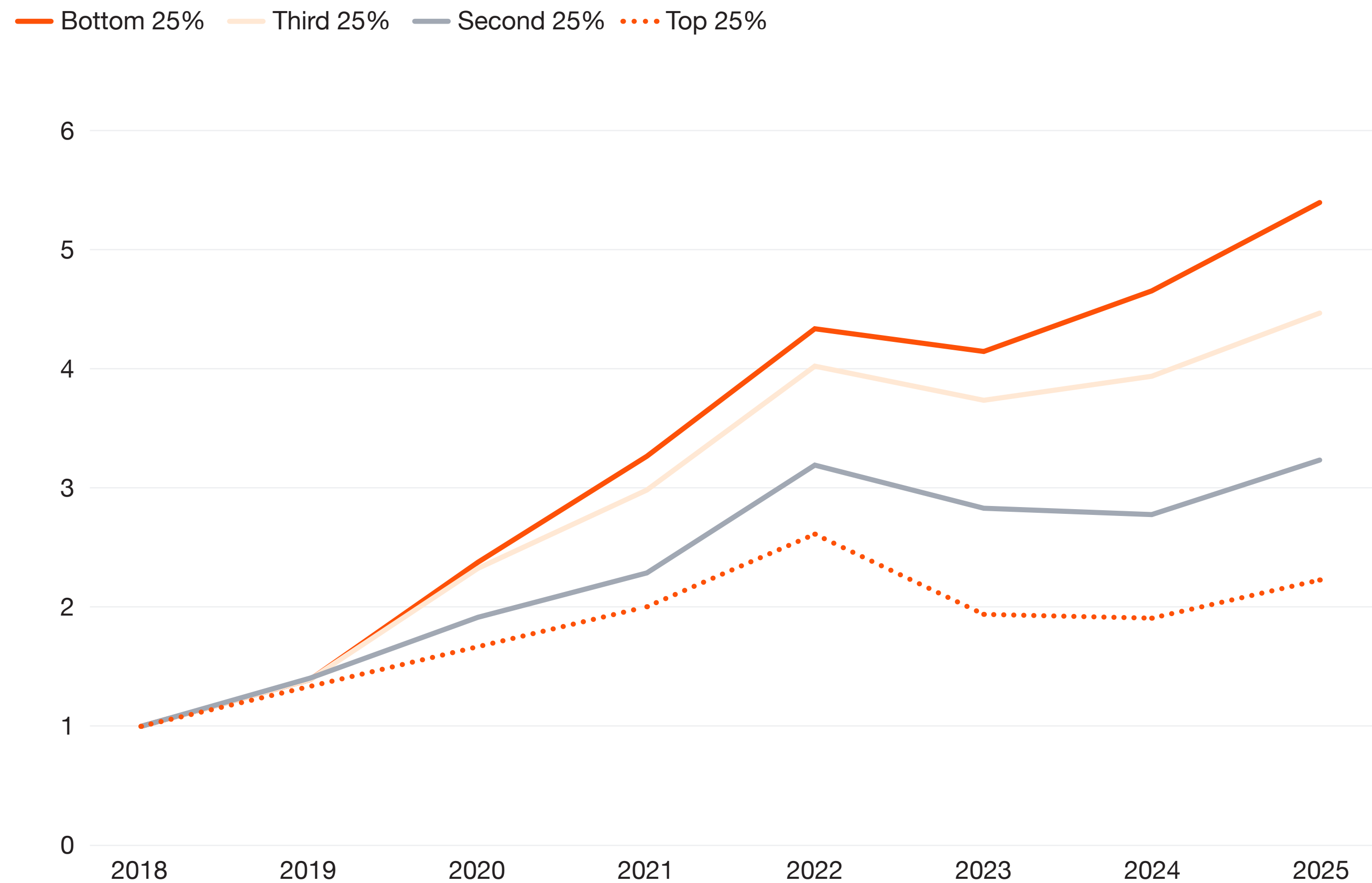
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- The number of job postings in Ireland requiring AI skills increased by around 13k in 2025.
- As a result, the share of job postings requiring AI skills reached 3.7% in 2025.

Job postings growth in Ireland has been stronger in less AI-exposed occupations since 2018

Number of job postings relative to 2018 by AI exposure quartile, Ireland, 2018-2025



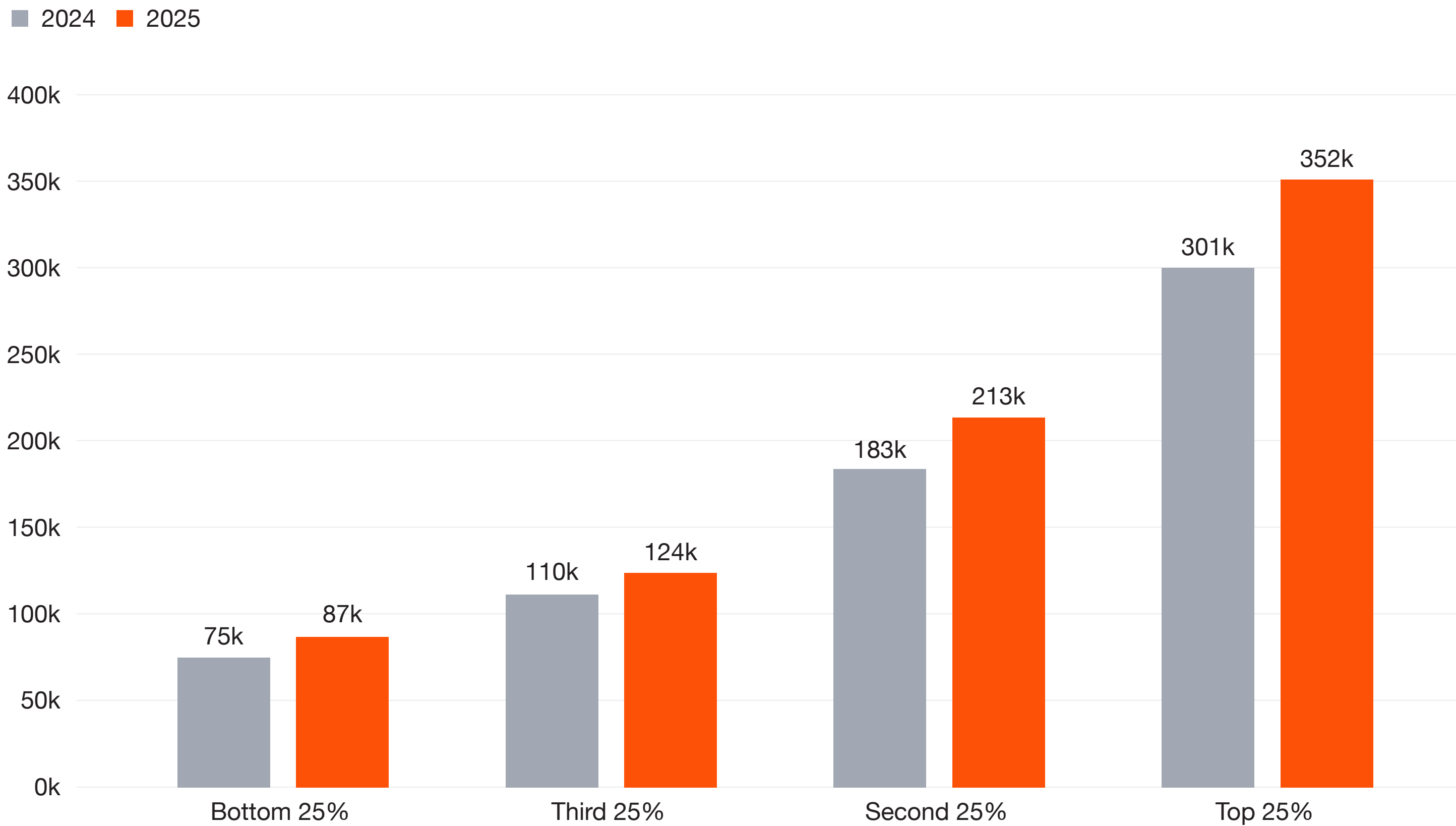
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- When grouped by AI exposure, less exposed occupations show significantly stronger growth in job postings. By 2025, occupations in the lowest exposure quartile have around 5.4 postings for every posting in 2018, compared to 2.2 in the highest exposure quartile.
- Job posting growth across all quartiles experienced a dip around 2022, but growth has since resumed and strengthened by 2025.

However, the top quartile of AI exposed occupations still accounts for the largest number of job postings in Ireland

Total number of job postings by AI exposure quartile, Ireland, 2024 and 2025



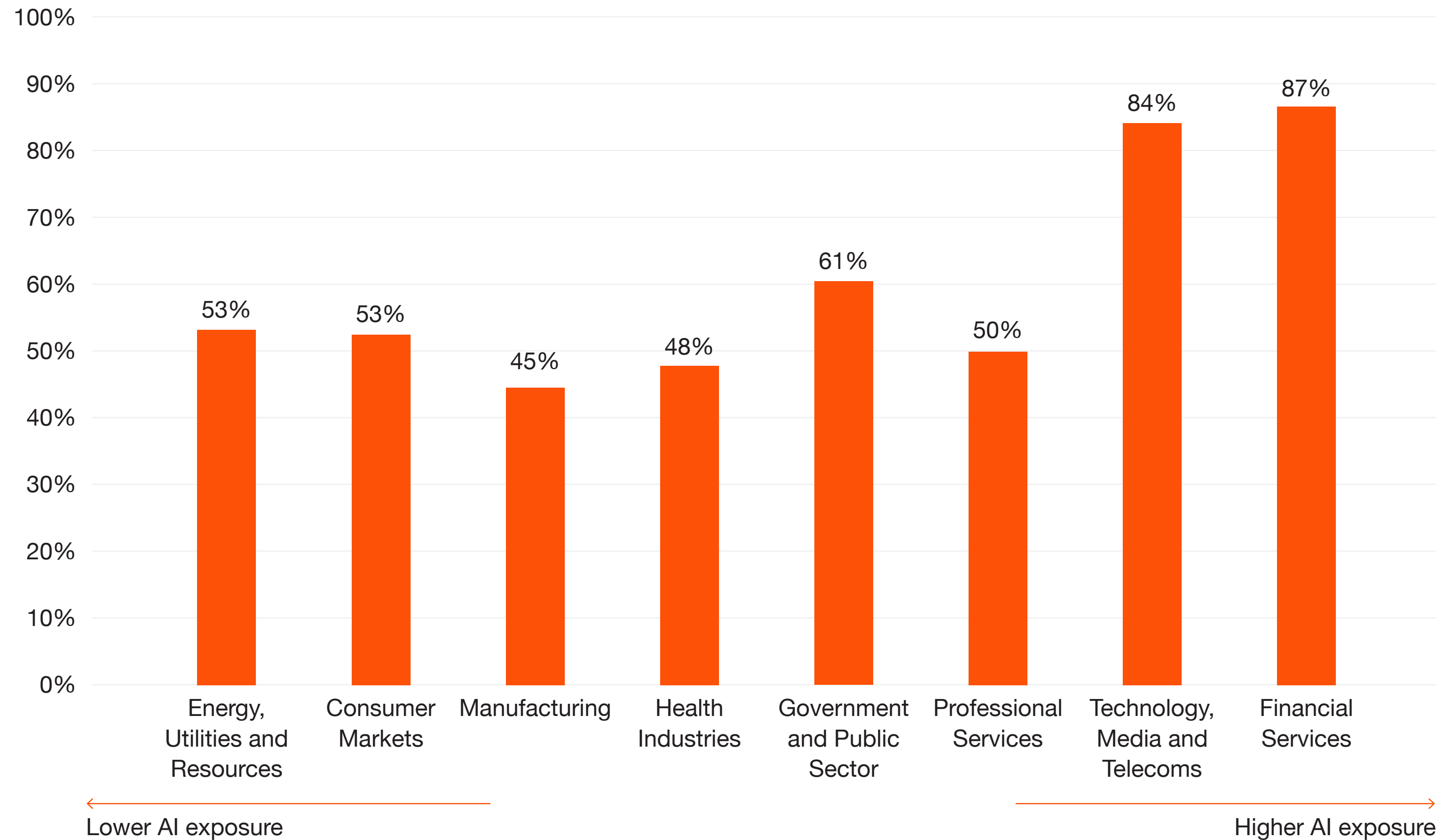
Findings

- While job postings have grown faster in less AI-exposed occupations, higher exposure quartiles still account for more postings in absolute terms.
- In 2025, the most AI-exposed quartile recorded around 352,000 job postings, significantly higher than lower exposure groups.
- All quartiles saw an increase in job postings between 2024 and 2025, indicating an expansion in hiring demand.

Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

AI wage premiums in Ireland are strong across all sectors, with the highest premiums in more AI-exposed industries

Wage premium by sector, Ireland, 2025



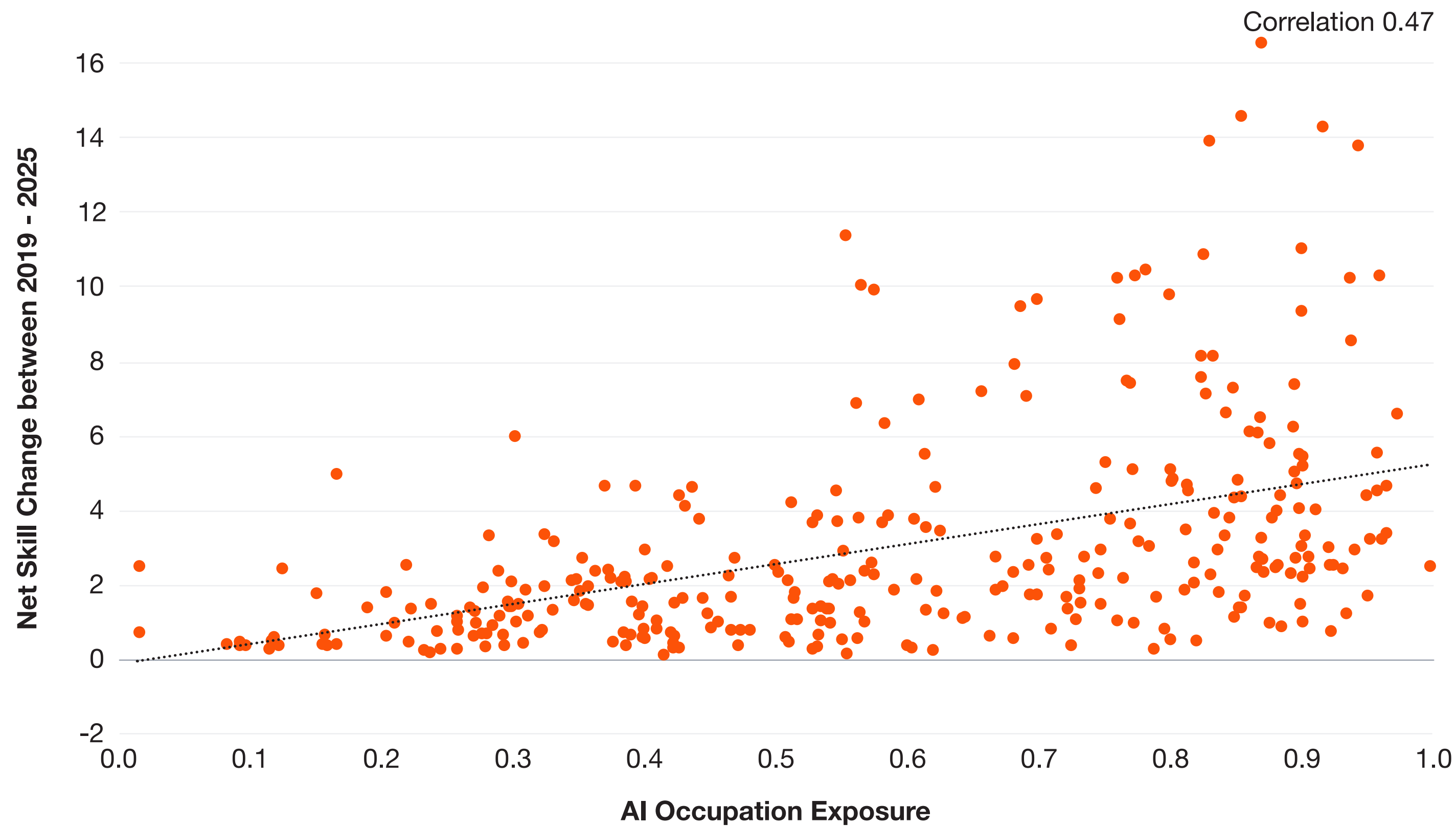
Findings

- AI wage premiums are evident across all sectors in Ireland, with higher premiums observed in more AI-exposed industries.
- Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT) and Financial Services record the highest premiums, reflecting strong demand for AI skills in more AI-intensive sectors.

Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

In Ireland, more AI-exposed occupations are experiencing faster rates of skills transformation

Net skill change from 2019 to 2025 for 4-digit ISCO code occupations by AI occupation exposure, Ireland

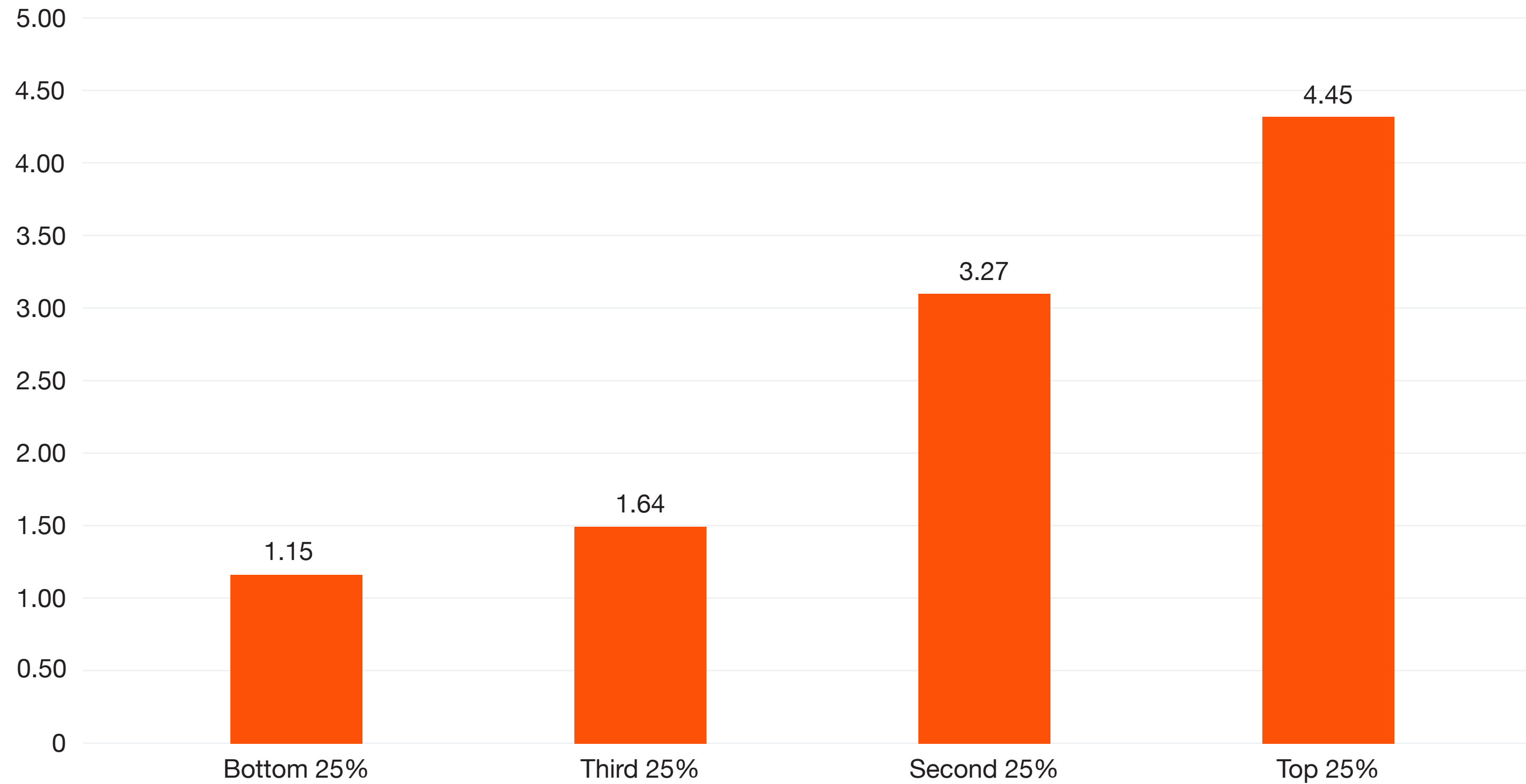


Findings

- There is a positive correlation of 0.47 between AI exposure and net skills change between 2019 and 2025, indicating that more exposed occupations tend to see greater shifts in skill requirements.
- This suggests that AI-exposed roles are adapting more rapidly, with evolving task demands reshaping the capabilities required.

This is evident across exposure quartiles, where the most AI-exposed occupations show the largest skill shifts

Average net skill change from 2019 to 2025 for 4-digit ISCO code occupations by AI occupation exposure quartile, Ireland



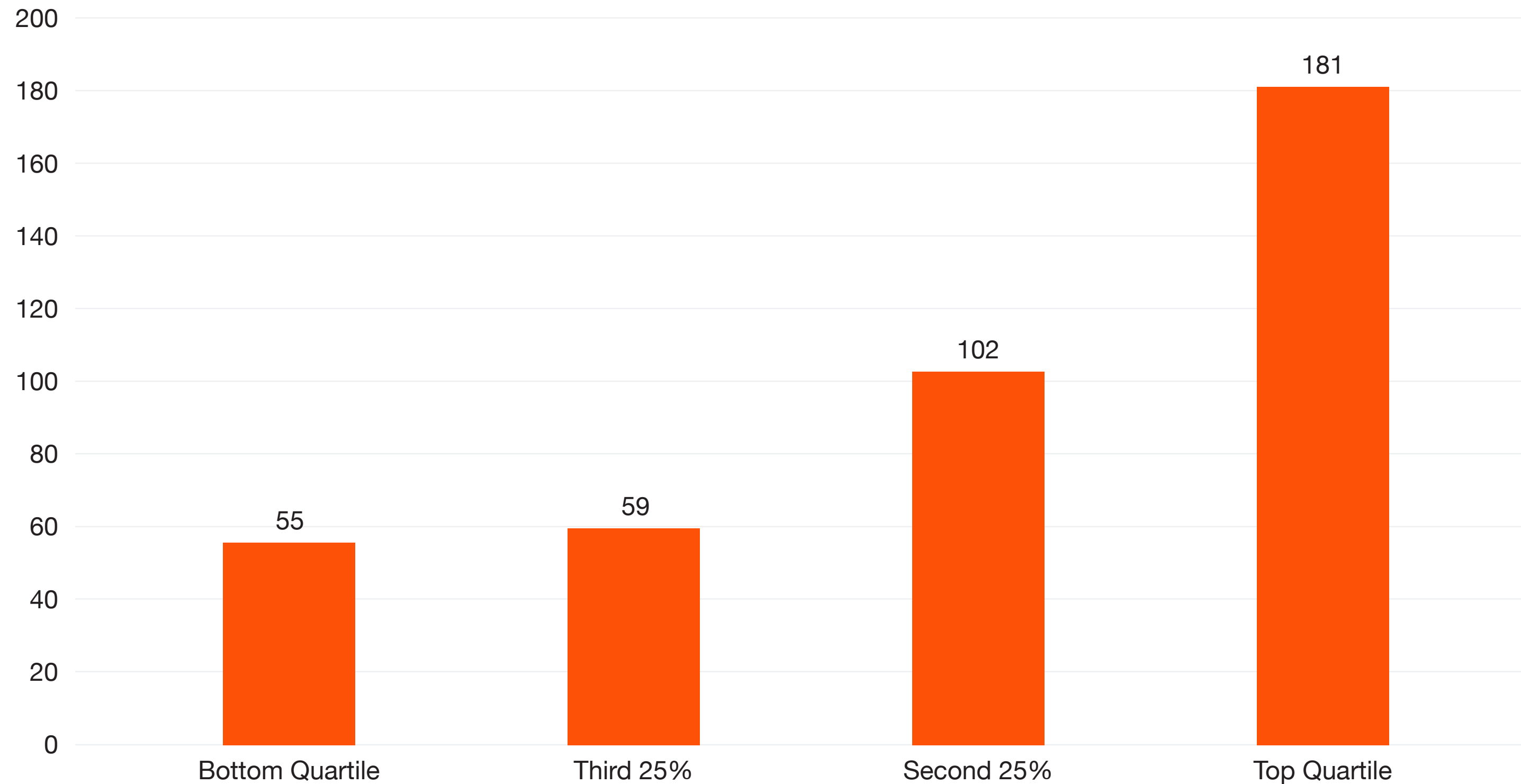
Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Findings

- The same pattern observed earlier is reflected across exposure quartiles: occupations in the highest AI exposure group show the fastest skills transformation between 2019 and 2025.
- Lower exposure quartiles also follow a gradual upward progression, with each successive quartile seeing higher average net skill change.
- This reinforces the earlier finding of a positive relationship between AI exposure and skills change in Ireland, where more exposed occupations tend to evolve faster as task requirements shift.

In line with this, the most AI-exposed occupations see greater expansion in the average number of new skills per occupation

Average number of “new” skills per occupation, by AI exposure quartile, Ireland, 2025 relative to 2019



Source: PwC analysis, PwC AI Occupational Exposure Index, Lightcast data

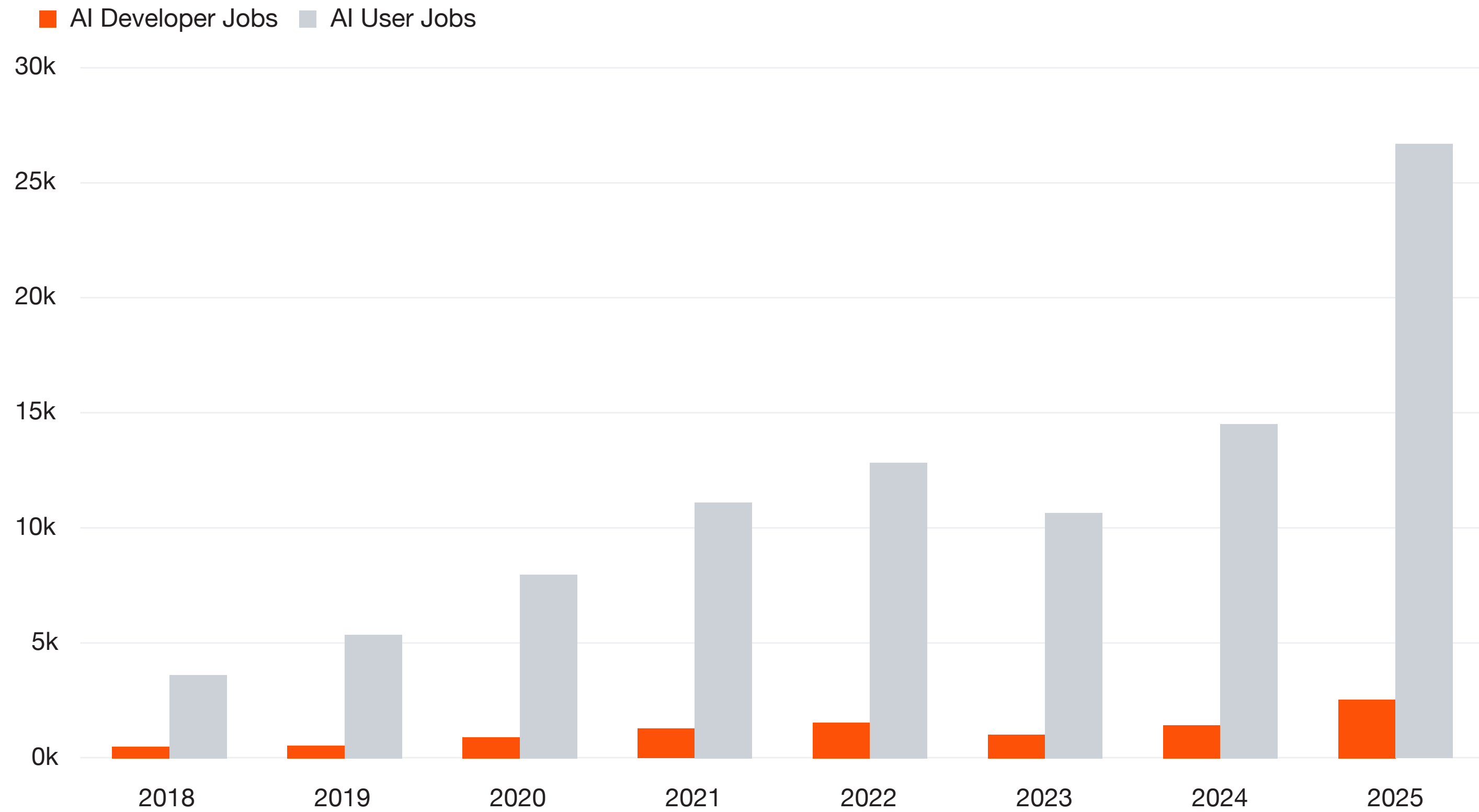
Notes: We define a ‘new skill’ as any skill that has greater than 10 mentions in an occupation in 2025, but five or less mentions in that same occupation in 2019. Across all postings for an occupation in a given country, we count the number of ‘new skills’ required for that occupation.

Findings

- We find a clear positive relationship between AI exposure and the number of new skills required within occupations. Specifically, occupations in higher AI exposure quartiles exhibit a greater average number of newly emerging skills between 2019 and 2025.
- Importantly, this metric reflects the average number of new skills per occupation within each exposure quartile, rather than the total number of new skills observed.
- While the bottom and third quartiles show relatively modest differences, there is a more pronounced increase at higher exposure levels, with the top quartile averaging 181 new skills per occupation. This suggests that skill expansion accelerates as AI exposure increases.
- While some of this increase reflects higher posting volumes in more exposed occupations, this is consistent with underlying job growth and evolution, as expanding roles require a broader and more diverse set of skills.

AI job demand in Ireland is dominated by user roles, with strong growth across both user and developer roles

Total number of AI user and AI developer job roles, Ireland, 2018-2025



Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

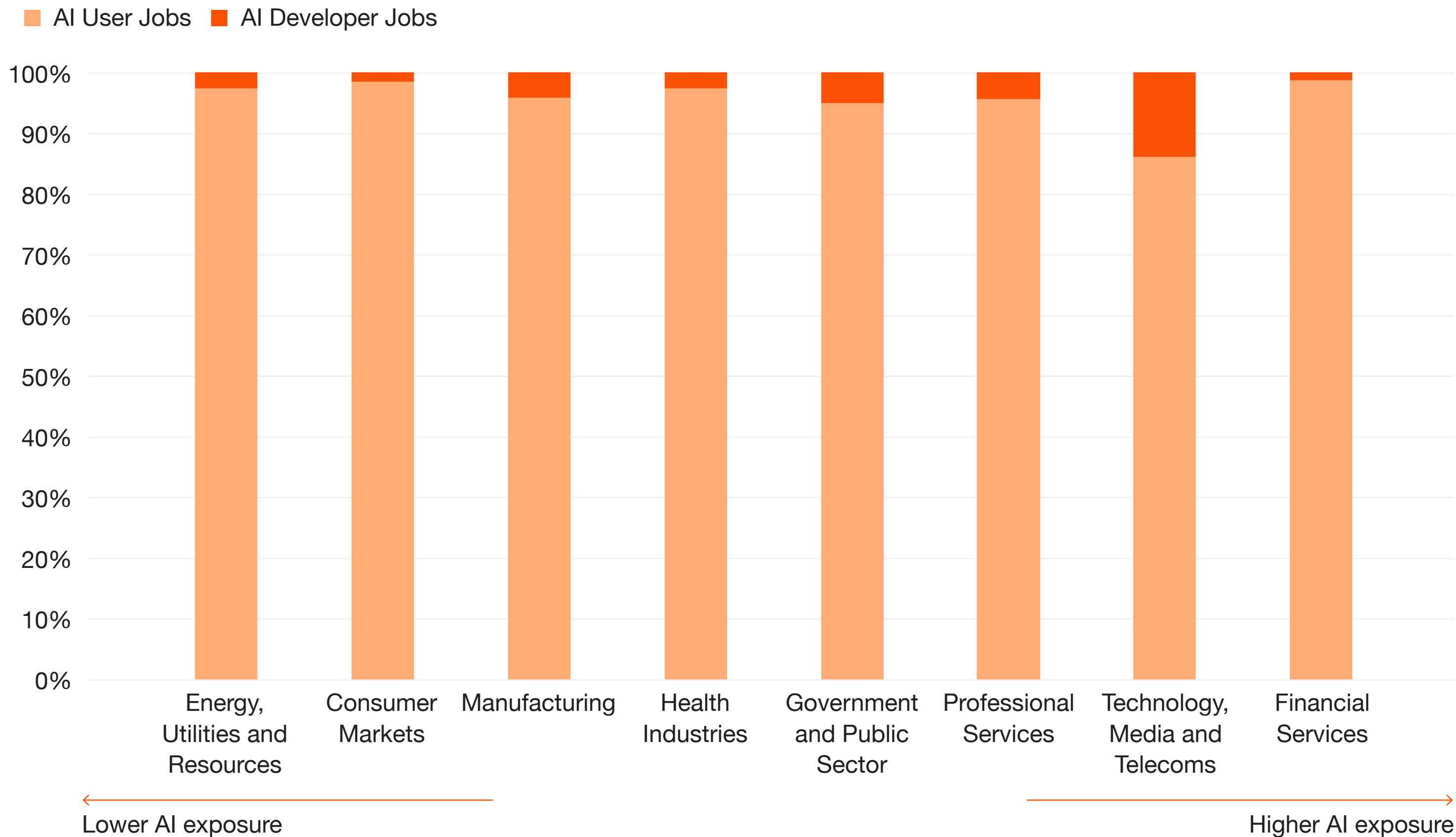
Notes: AI user and AI developer job roles are determined as jobs requiring Tier 0 or 1 skills (AI literacy and applied AI skills) for AI user jobs and Tier 2 skills (advanced AI skills) for AI developer jobs. AI developer jobs are tagged as such if there are any skills in the job postings data requiring Tier 2 skills for a specific job role.

Findings

- AI user roles account for the majority of AI-related jobs and continue to drive overall demand, increasing by **~12.2k** roles in 2025, despite a dip in 2022.
- In contrast, AI developer roles remain lower but stable, growing by around **~1.1k** in 2025.
- Growth has been strong across both categories in the last year, with AI user roles increasing by **83.6%** and AI developer roles by **73.3%**, indicating continued expansion in both adoption and development of AI capabilities.

Across sectors, AI job postings in Ireland remain concentrated in capabilities related to the use of AI rather than its development

Within sector shares of AI user and AI developer job roles of all AI related roles, Ireland, 2025



Findings

- AI user roles account for the largest share across most sectors, indicating a strong focus on deploying and integrating AI into existing workflows.
- **Technology, Media and Telecoms (TMT)** shows the highest share of **AI developer** roles (**13.8%**), consistent with its role in developing and advancing AI technologies.
- **Financial Services** records the highest share of **AI user** roles (**98.8%**), reflecting broad-based adoption of AI across operational roles rather than in-house development.

Source: PwC analysis, Lightcast data

Notes: AI user and AI developer job roles are determined as jobs requiring Tier 0 or 1 skills (AI literacy and applied AI skills) for AI user jobs and Tier 2 skills (advanced AI skills) for AI developer jobs. AI developer jobs are tagged as such if there are any skills in the job postings data requiring Tier 2 skills for a specific job role.

Contacts



David Lee
Chief Technology Officer,
PwC Ireland



Ger McDonough
Partner, Workforce
Consulting, PwC Ireland



Laoise Mullane
Workforce Consulting and AI
Adoption Director,
PwC Ireland



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