CEO's review

Momentum

Momentum sharpens our focus and captures the benefits associated with market leadership. As we leverage our sources of competitive advantage, a self-reinforcing flywheel will drive higher market share, further material productivity growth, profitability, and client and candidate satisfaction.

Mark Dearnley
CEO

Introducing our Momentum Strategy

For 60 years, Hays has been a leader in recruitment – trusted by organisations to find great talent, build their workforce, and help them prepare for the future.

Recruitment has traditionally been a cyclical market. We've been through downturns before but this time is different. The future is significantly uncertain, shaped by the potential impact of AI on jobs, disintermediation by technology platforms, increased macroeconomic uncertainty, and threats from deglobalisation. Our world has changed, and the pace and scale of that change has never been greater.

At the same time, client expectations are rising. Skills needs are evolving rapidly, demand is shifting towards more flexible, project-based and specialist work, and hiring is becoming more complex, shaped by regulation and technology. Advances in AI and ongoing economic uncertainty are only accelerating this.

Momentum anticipates these challenges and provides Hays with a sharper focus to pioneer the future of specialist recruitment and workforce solutions.

A strategy to accelerate growth, improve profitability and increase market share

Momentum is our strategy to accelerate growth, improve profitability and increase market share by helping Hays solve specialist talent selection processes better than anyone else in the market. It anticipates changes in the world of work and is shaped by what clients have told us they need to respond to increasingly complex workforce challenges and the greater pressure organisations face to make the right hiring decisions, where getting it wrong can be costly. Clients universally want access to the highest quality candidates and favour a technology-enabled, consultant-led service through radically improved search & match capability that incorporates hard and interpersonal skills matching.

Momentum places Hays consultants at the centre of a self-reinforcing flywheel and enables them with the best tools through our investments in technology. It forges sustainable long-term relationships with our clients and candidates.

We will deliver our *Momentum* strategy through five dimensions of focus:

1. A more focused geographic footprint, concentrating on 16 countries with a c.£100 billion and growing addressable market opportunity where we can build or extend leadership positions
2. Targeted investment in six global specialisms where Hays has the strongest opportunity to extend or become a market leader
3. Higher-skilled roles, where specialist expertise can mitigate the cost of exiting an unsuccessful regretted hire and where the potential impact from AI is lowest
4. Three core products: Recruitment, Solutions and Services
5. End market industries, for public and private sector clients, targeting those where demand for our products is greatest

We will also deliver a positive structural shift in our profitability, cash flow and return on capital employed (ROCE) as our greater focus and digital processes drive a swift and precise candidate search & match, a more than 50% increase in consultant net fee productivity over the medium term and lower cost to serve in our middle and back office functions. Over time, we believe we will return to a 25%+ conversion rate.

These priorities are underpinned by continued investment in the capabilities that strengthen our competitive advantage:

- Our people, supported by our Hays Academy (a global centre for learning, performance, reward and career development), so we continue to build the best specialist recruitment capability in the industry. It is built on a framework of trust and integrity which attracts, develops and retains top talent, and creates a winning culture through the *Hays Way*
- Our technology and proprietary data, including continued investment in the *Hays Digital Platform* and enhanced AI capabilities, which will drive a radically improved candidate search & match capability
- Our brand, reinforcing Hays' specialist positioning and increasing our relevance with clients and candidates

The financial returns will be shared with investors through sustainable growth in shareholder returns and Hays colleagues through a top-quartile reward potential and an all-colleague share award.

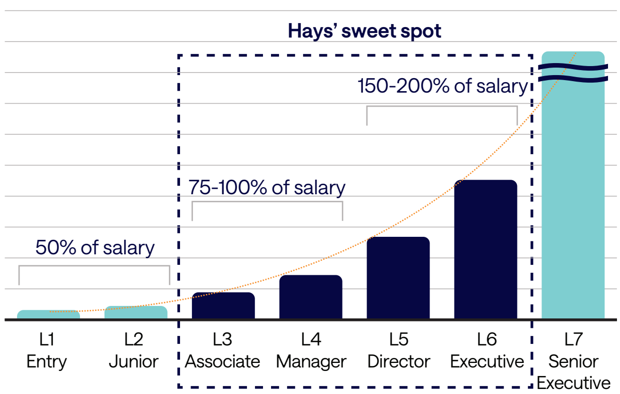
Clear and encouraging feedback from our clients: technology-enabled, consultant-led

The feedback from a recent global survey of our clients is clear – they universally want access to the highest quality candidates. Hays is best positioned to adapt to these influences and succeed when we deliver curated candidates through a swift and precise search & match process, with Hays consultants at the centre of this process. Price ranked well below the top two purchasing considerations for Permanent and Temporary & Contracting recruitment processes.

Once baseline technical skills requirements have been achieved, then interpersonal skills, including values and behavioural alignment, are the key candidate attributes. This presents Hays with an opportunity to differentiate: by leveraging our 10+ million candidate database and c.40,000 weekly interactions between our consultants and their clients and candidates, and by applying proprietary search & match algorithms to assess hard and interpersonal skills, we can swiftly and precisely identify the highest quality candidates. A strong technology platform is necessary but our clients are clear that our consultant-led approach is a critical element they wish to retain, so maintaining a 'human in the loop' remains key.

Our clients' need to secure the best talent is influenced further by two risks which we help to mitigate. Firstly, the cost of exiting an unsuccessful regretted hire increases with seniority due to exit packages, organisational disruption and the direct time and cost of finding a replacement. As a percentage of salary, our data indicates that these costs for a Director-level role (150% of salary) can be more than twice as high as for an Associate.

Cost of an unsuccessful regretted hire



Secondly, regulations, largely designed to avoid 'mock employment', are amplifying tax complexity and compliance burdens in many countries. Collectively, these materially increase financial, operational and reputational risk for clients, particularly in relation to employees covered by Temporary, Contracting, Managed Service Provider and Statement of Work arrangements.

Examples include the UK's IR35 off-payroll working regime, the EU Platform Work Directive and associated scrutiny of worker misclassification, and tighter controls on temporary agency labour in markets such as Germany, alongside forthcoming requirements under the EU Pay Transparency Directive which explicitly apply to agency workers. As scrutiny and enforcement intensify, compliance is increasingly becoming a source of competitive differentiation favouring large recruitment agencies with deep local regulatory expertise and the ability to consistently and swiftly embed compliant engagement models. We continue to evolve our global compliance model to provide a global framework for quality of assurance.

Candidates indicated that they value successful placement outcomes and regular feedback, and rapidly become frustrated by poor communication. Hays is addressing these areas of detraction by embedding more automation and AI into our workflows to create a meaningful and personalised digital relationship with each candidate.

Sharper focus on growth markets where we have or can achieve leadership

Momentum is about doing what we do best: being the home of specialist talent. Our goal is to be the world's leading specialist recruitment and workforce solutions provider, pioneering the best of human and AI capability.

We are sharpening our focus and driving increased penetration of a narrower portfolio of countries with substantial existing professional recruitment and services markets and attractive growth potential. We're moving away from trying to do everything, everywhere, and instead focusing on doing fewer things brilliantly. This aligns with our clients' desires to access recruitment consultants with strong specialism expertise and high-quality candidates.

In every market we compete in, our ambition is clear: to grow, achieve market leadership, and deliver the benefits that come with it, including higher-paid roles, stronger margins, and better outcomes for clients and candidates. We have a clear view of where we hold leadership positions or have a credible path to leadership over the medium term. Where we can't, we will step back and reallocate investment.

Going forward, we will operate in 16 countries comprising DACH (Germany, Austria and Switzerland), UK & Ireland, Australia & New Zealand, Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal and Italy), Poland, France, North America (USA and Canada), India, and Japan. In aggregate, these address a substantial and growing market with c.£100 billion net fees in the year to December 2025 and, with a tighter portfolio, we can more effectively leverage our competitive advantages in proprietary data and technology, our people, our brand and our reputation to drive leadership positions and growth.

We will focus on six global specialisms: Technology, Finance (including procurement), Engineering, Construction & Property, Life Sciences, and Human Resources. We will double up where we are current market leaders and selectively invest in sub-scale specialisms only where Hays has the ability to establish a leading position. These are our current areas of expertise and we believe they are also likely to grow even as AI and other wider global megatrends influence the world of work.

Some countries or clusters may also provide a few additional specialisms where we already have profitable market leadership and expect continued growth. In markets where we have significant legacy positions, we'll take a phased transition approach, minimising disruption for clients and colleagues while gradually shifting investment towards our priority specialisms.

Hays will continue to provide a broad portfolio of employment services across these countries and specialisms, including our core Recruitment proposition, higher volume MSP services to large Enterprise clients through Solutions, and Services under Statement of Work projects with low delivery risk where our German Contracting business has an established track record of profitable growth.

Over the last 18 months, we have taken swift and decisive action to refocus our country portfolio, commencing with the exit of our recruitment operations in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Thailand. In June 2026, we completed the disposal of our operations in six European countries and announced that we were exploring options relating to Belgium, Brazil, Greater China, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore and UAE. Over the last two decades, these 17 countries generated modest profits, and occasional losses, after central overhead allocation in every year aside from FY18, FY19 and FY22.

CEO's review *continued*

There is no certainty regarding the likely timeline to achieve market leadership and return to prior profitability, and supporting this recovery would require investment which could be otherwise deployed on higher potential areas of the Group. In addition, these 17 countries have added to our complexity and a streamlined portfolio would allow us to unlock structural efficiencies. For example, we operate a dedicated services centre in Portugal to support our Brazilian business and individual countries require regular oversight from senior management. We believe we can generate attractive shareholder returns by redeploying these savings on a more focused core.

Leveraging our competitive advantages to create a self-reinforcing 'flywheel' effect

Our internal data confirms a strong link between speed and attractive financial returns. Roles for which CVs have been sent on the same day achieve a materially higher fill rate than responses over the next one to two days. Single CV submissions perform even better, clearly demonstrating that candidate quality and the judgement applied by Hays consultants are vital aspects of the matching process.

Five critical sources of competitive advantage support our market leadership and the frequency of these positive matching outcomes, namely our proprietary data and technology, our people, our brand and our reputation, how we go to market, and our operational excellence.

Several of our current initiatives are designed to enhance this competitive advantage:

- Building upon our existing database of 10+ million CVs and c.40,000 weekly interactions with clients and candidates, we intend to develop the deepest source of relevant, qualified candidates and unique insights into client hiring behaviour. These proprietary inputs are difficult to recreate using models trained on public or semi-public information.
- We monitor placement volumes and evolving skills profiles and leverage this data to provide proprietary, specialism-specific insights and analytics.
- We are investing in our front office platforms to create the 'talent workspace of the future' including market-leading automated candidate search & match algorithms and end-to-end tech-enabled processes.
- Our differentiated, market-leading compliance and vetting processes will help to minimise on-boarding friction for clients and candidates.
- Skilled specialist consultants trained at the Hays Academy.

These sources of competitive advantage create numerous benefits for clients and candidates, with Hays consultants at the centre. Leveraging our proprietary data and investments in technology and training, Hays consultants will match client demand and candidate supply more swiftly and accurately. Clients swiftly and precisely access the best candidates, which reduces their search costs and the risk of an unsuccessful regretted hire. Candidates are offered the best roles, successful placement outcomes, and regular feedback.

As we leverage our sources of competitive advantage, we believe a self-reinforcing 'flywheel' will drive higher market share, further material productivity growth, profitability, and client and candidate satisfaction.

Powering productivity and structural cost efficiency

Our initiatives to improve consultant net fee productivity by more than 50% over the medium term versus FY26 and structurally improve our cost base will continue to be key drivers of profit recovery. We were encouraged by our return to strong year-on-year profit growth in the second half of FY26 and, over time, we believe we will return to a 25%+ conversion rate.

During the year, we reported our 11th consecutive quarter of consultant net fee productivity growth, driven by careful allocation of consultants to business lines with the most attractive productivity and long-term structural growth opportunity, targeting higher-skilled candidate roles, and investing in the best tools for our consultants. Through our *Momentum* strategy, we intend to further leverage our sources of competitive advantage to generate a self-reinforcing flywheel.

In parallel, we are diligently reviewing our cost base with the aim of significantly reducing overhead costs and external spend, including tighter control of discretionary spend, optimisation of support functions, and consolidation of office footprint. We target a further c.£50 million per annum of structural cost savings in FY27. This will protect profitability in the near term, improve operating leverage, and create capacity to reinvest in priority strategic areas. Improving operational efficiency is an obsession across Hays and we have established a positive track record by exceeding the structural cost savings targets we communicated in FY24 and FY25 several years ahead of schedule.

Investing in Technology to enhance our search & match processes, fill rates, and cost efficiency

Our Technology initiatives will reinforce our strong competitive position, improve consultant net fee productivity, and enable further structural cost savings. Building on many years of investment, Hays owns core proprietary technology systems which include our OneTouch CRM system, global client and candidate databases, and Vendor Management System (VMS). These provide a powerful cost and flexibility advantage versus off-the-shelf solutions and allow the rapid training and development of proprietary AI and analytics essential to optimising staffing processes.

During the year, we started to develop our next-generation *Hays Digital Platform*, which is making good progress, and invested in technology infrastructure and cybersecurity:

- Using Databricks we have combined candidate, client, and operational data into a single data lake to accelerate our ability to train and deploy AI agents including next-generation development of candidate search & match.
- We recently accelerated our AI transformation through the enterprise-scale rollout of advanced Microsoft AI capabilities, becoming one of the first in our industry to deploy Microsoft E7 capabilities. The global rollout was completed across all regions in July 2026.
- Our 3SS VMS platform is being upgraded to cover end-to-end processes including candidate registration, timesheet approval, invoicing and payments. We have improved the user experience, especially on mobile, and integrated with Microsoft Teams to simplify approval processes.
- In early February 2026 we completed a major upgrade to our One Touch CRM platform in APAC, which is now being deployed to Southern Europe. This provides a foundational platform that allows us to deploy AI directly into the workflows where our consultants spend the majority of their time.

Investing in our people: the Hays Academy and an all-colleague share award

Momentum sets our direction. The *Hays Way* is how we deliver it. This defines what great performance looks like at Hays, built on expertise, a framework of trust and integrity (increasing the confidence of clients, candidates, colleagues, suppliers, investors and regulators) and our Valued Behaviours. Two recent initiatives significantly increase our investment in our people.

Firstly, we are establishing the Hays Academy which will become our global centre for learning, performance, reward and career development, bringing together on-boarding, capability building, leadership development and career progression into one connected experience.

Secondly, we have introduced a potential one-off share award for all colleagues, satisfied by existing shares held in treasury and by our Employee Benefit Trust, which recognises their contribution and reinforces alignment with shareholders. The scale of the award will be determined by pre-exceptional operating profit in FY27. Through broader employee share ownership and top-quartile reward potential, we will strengthen engagement, foster a long-term ownership mindset, and incentivise successful delivery of our *Momentum* strategy.

We would like to thank our colleagues across the Group for their professionalism, resilience and commitment during the year and encourage them to behave like owners in anticipation of soon becoming shareholders. Their continued focus on supporting clients and candidates, while simultaneously helping to reshape the business so we can prosper for another 60 years, has been instrumental to our progress in FY26.

We are confident that Momentum is a compelling strategy

We started to rapidly and decisively execute our *Momentum* strategy in FY26 and are confident that our goals are ambitious and achievable.

Momentum is aligned with feedback from our clients that they universally want access to the highest quality candidates and favour a technology-enabled, consultant-led service through radically improved search & match capability that incorporates hard and interpersonal skills matching.

Our strategy is based on a clear business definition and understanding of what is required to win in each market, but also makes deliberate choices on what we won't do so we remain focused on disciplined execution. It charts a path to leadership in large and growing markets which supports our ambition to deliver structurally higher profitability, free cash flow, and return on capital employed.

FY26 operational and strategic review

Market backdrop and trading review

FY26 was another year of significant strategic and operational transformation against a backdrop of economic and political uncertainty which weighed on client and candidate confidence. We used feedback from our clients, candidates, and colleagues to shape our *Momentum* strategy, which will leverage our competitive advantages to create a self-reinforcing flywheel effect and achieve market leadership and the associated economic benefits. We took decisive action to sharpen our focus, including the reshaping of our country portfolio, and invested in the *Hays Digital Platform* to enhance our search & match processes, fill rates, and cost efficiency.

Temporary & Contracting and Permanent recruitment net fees decreased by 5% and 12% respectively. Although Temporary & Contracting net fees were relatively resilient through the year, Permanent recruitment was subdued as we saw modestly lower activity and placement conversion through the year in markets outside North America, Southern Europe, and Asia. This more than offset improvements to our mix and pricing.

However, our actions to drive consultant productivity growth together with strong progress on our structural cost initiatives offset the profit impact of an 8% reduction in Group like for like net fees in FY26, with pre-exceptional operating profit increasing by 3%.

You can read about each division's performance on pages 38-41 and see our detailed financial performance on pages 22-24.

Our Momentum strategy is delivering sharpened focus and an improved business mix

We continue to align our business with the most in-demand job categories and took decisive action in FY26 to reshape our country portfolio. We are investing in high-potential and high-performing areas – for example in Germany, Construction & Property has increased from 4% of net fees in FY24 to 9% in FY26 as we have successfully targeted opportunities in the infrastructure and energy sectors – and are scaling back or exiting business lines with low performance and potential. The proportion of our business delivering year-on-year net fee growth increased from c.15% in the first quarter of FY26 to c.30% in the fourth. Improving our business mix will continue to be a material driver of sustained consultant productivity growth over time.

We made good progress on increasing our exposure to higher-skilled and higher-paid roles in the year. The average salary of our Permanent recruitment and Temporary & Contracting candidates in the UK&I increased by 6% and 8% respectively in FY26. Similarly, in ANZ, our average Permanent placement salary increased by 5% in FY26.

We are improving our net fee mix by increasing the proportion of Temporary & Contracting net fees in our businesses over time. Temporary & Contracting net fees were relatively resilient in FY26 and the contribution to Group net fees increased to 64% from 62% in the prior year. In contrast, Permanent recruitment markets remained challenging in many of our countries.

Although Temporary & Contracting net fees declined by 5% year-on-year in FY26, growth was positive in five countries, including notably strong performances in Spain, Japan, and our Services businesses:

- Japan (FY26 Temporary & Contracting net fees +36%) driven by client wins, higher volumes in Technology and Life Sciences, rising Contractor fees, and selective additions to consultant headcount.
- Spain (+35%) driven by client wins and continued expansion into specialisms such as Life Sciences and Engineering.
- We generated good net fee growth and new order intake in our Germany Services business during the year. We launched a Services business in the UK&I, a portfolio of Statement of Work-based solutions under the Hays brand to target the UK Technology Professional Services market, and we are building scale in ANZ.

Temporary & Contracting net fees declined in Germany primarily due to fewer hours worked and challenging markets in Temporary recruitment where we have greater exposure to the Automotive sector, although both factors stabilised sequentially in the second half of the year. In the UK&I and ANZ, we experienced tougher market conditions in the public sector but relative resilience in the private sector, and Technology Contracting, in the UK&I, returned to growth, up 3%.

Our Solutions business works with some of the largest Enterprise companies in the world, often in multiple countries and specialisms. We manage contingent labour forces under MSP arrangements, our largest area at c.85% of Solutions net fees in FY26, but also provide Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), on-boarding, compliance, assessment, and workforce planning. Solutions has performed strongly and remained more resilient than the rest of our business. We have previously highlighted a substantial bid pipeline with large Enterprise clients in North America and are mobilising several new contract wins which we expect to contribute to net fees over the coming quarters.

CEO's review *continued*

Decisive action delivered a return to profit growth in the second half of FY26

Our actions to drive consultant productivity growth together with strong progress on our structural cost initiatives offset the impact of the Group's net fee reduction in FY26, and we returned to strong year-on-year profit growth in the second half including improved performances in ANZ and Rest of World (RoW).

We continue to carefully allocate our consultants to business lines with the most attractive productivity and long-term structural growth opportunity, target higher-skilled candidate roles, and invest in the best tools for our consultants. Despite challenging markets, our actions delivered 7% year-on-year growth in average consultant net fee productivity in FY26 including notable increases in the UK&I, up 14%. This continues the encouraging trend we demonstrated through FY25 and, on a seasonally adjusted basis, productivity has increased now for 11 consecutive quarters. Group consultant headcount ended the year down by 12% year on year on a like for like basis.

At our August 2025 prelims, we set ourselves a new ambition to deliver c.£45 million per annum structural cost savings by the end of FY29, building on the c.£65 million per annum structural cost savings delivered in FY24 and FY25. We made strong progress towards this target, with c.£50 million annualised savings secured three years ahead of schedule in FY26 and, in total, we have now delivered c.£115 million annualised structural savings since the start of FY24. This has been achieved through our global Finance and Technology transformation programmes, restructuring our back-office functions in Germany, EMEA, UK&I, ANZ and Asia, restructuring our regional management structure in UK&I, and rationalisation of our global property portfolio.

We closed or consolidated 74 offices in FY26, ending the year with 155 offices. We exited our operations in Thailand and, in February 2026, we closed our recruitment operations in Mexico but continue to provide Enterprise and administrative support to our Americas countries. In June 2026, we completed the disposal of our operations in six European countries. We continue to proactively manage our country portfolio and, in June 2026, announced that we were exploring options relating to Belgium, Brazil, Greater China, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore, and UAE. Non-consultant headcount ended the year down 13% year on year on a like for like basis.

As a result of these actions, we incurred an exceptional restructuring charge of £89.6 million, detailed in note 5 of the Financial Statements. Due to the ongoing and multi-year nature of our restructuring and transformation programmes, which are strategically reshaping the business in line with our *Momentum* strategy, we expect to incur further exceptional costs in FY27 but the Board is committed to materially lower exceptionals thereafter.

Maintaining our capital allocation framework and dividend policy

Our business model remains highly cash-generative, the Board's views on priorities for use of cash flow are clear, and we apply the following principles to our capital allocation framework. Firstly, fund the Group's investment and development requirements. Secondly, maintain a strong balance sheet position. Thirdly, maintain a dividend that is affordable and appropriate within a target cover range of 2-3x pre-exceptional earnings. Fourthly, return surplus cash to shareholders through an appropriate combination of special dividends and share buybacks.

At the preliminary results in August 2025, the Board proposed a reduction in the final dividend payment that more appropriately aligned to the Group's current level of profitability and affordability. In addition, we removed our £100 million cash buffer to provide greater flexibility through the cycle as our cash position rebuilds over the longer term.

The final dividend proposed of 0.29 pence per share is unchanged from the FY25 final dividend, representing 2.8x FY26 pre-exceptional earnings cover, and applying our historic one-third/two-thirds interim/final split. This brings the full-year payment to 0.44 pence per share.

Our investment case

Driven by our *Momentum* strategy and the structural growth opportunities in our industry, we believe there are three compelling reasons to invest in Hays.

1. Market position

We have a clear view of where we hold leadership positions in the large, fragmented global professional recruitment market, which generated £160 billion net fees in the 12 months to December 2025 and is expected to grow by 3.4% annually over the next five years supported by long-term structural growth drivers. In every market we compete in, our ambition is clear: to grow, achieve leadership, and deliver the benefits that come with it, including higher-value roles, stronger margins, and better outcomes for clients and candidates.

2. Structurally improving Hays

We have established a reliable track record of consultant net fee productivity growth and structural cost savings over the last three years. Our *Momentum* strategy targets a more than 50% increase in consultant net fee productivity over the medium term and lower cost to serve in our middle and back office functions. Over time, we believe we will return to a 25%+ conversion rate, and a significant increase in profitability, cash flow, ROCE and shareholder returns.

3. Shareholder returns

We are highly cash-generative through the cycle and committed to delivering substantial shareholder value over the long term. Our financial strength supports value-accretive organic and inorganic growth, and allows us to return surplus capital to shareholders in the most appropriate form.

Mark Dearnley
In conversation

"Momentum sharpens our focus and captures the benefits associated with market leadership. As we leverage our sources of competitive advantage, a self-reinforcing flywheel will drive higher market share, further material productivity growth, profitability, and client and candidate satisfaction."

Mark Dearnley

Q: What is Momentum?

Momentum is about creating the next era of Hays by making deliberate choices around where we compete, the specialisms we prioritise, the products we offer, and where we have the greatest opportunity to grow and establish leading positions. Because in recruitment, leadership matters. Businesses that have a top-two share of clearly defined markets, by country and by specialism, consistently deliver stronger growth, higher margins and more resilient performance. We are confident that *Momentum* is a compelling strategy because it is closely aligned with feedback from our clients, candidates and colleagues.

Q: What have you learned from meeting clients and candidates?

Clients want the right people with the right mix of technical expertise and interpersonal skills, delivered quickly through high-quality placements by a partner who understands their world and makes hiring simple and reliable. They want new hires to integrate well, add value quickly, and stay for the long term, especially in higher-skilled, more complex roles. They expect to work with us in a way that maintains human judgement with Hays consultants at the centre, while using technology to seamlessly connect with their wider business processes. They rank price as an important but not a decisive consideration.

Q: What are your ambitions for Hays?

In every market we compete in, our ambition is clear: to grow, achieve leadership, and deliver the benefits that come with it – higher-paid roles, stronger margins, and better outcomes for clients, candidates, shareholders and social value. Where we can't, we'll step back and reallocate investment. Where we already benefit from market leadership, some countries or clusters may choose one or two additional specialisms, supported by a clear plan to maintain leadership over time. In markets where we have significant legacy positions, we'll take a phased transition approach, minimising disruption for clients and colleagues while gradually shifting investment towards our priority specialisms.

Q: What are your thoughts on culture at Hays?

The *Hays Way* defines what great performance looks like, built on expertise, a framework of trust and integrity, and our Valued Behaviours. We intend to grow our leaders and develop our colleagues, through our recently founded Hays Academy, giving them the skills, judgement and confidence to deliver in more complex, specialist markets. This brings together the best of our global initiatives and builds on our long-held reputation as having some of the best training in the industry. It's how we translate that expertise into better outcomes for clients, matching not just technical capability, but the whole person. In addition, we are delighted to introduce a potential one-off share award for employees which recognises their contribution and reinforces alignment with shareholders. Through broader employee share ownership, we will strengthen engagement, foster a long-term ownership mindset, and incentivise successful delivery of our *Momentum* strategy.

Q: What are your key priorities for FY27 and beyond?

We intend to maintain our rapid pace of execution in FY27 while targeting revenue growth in our core geographies and specialisms which provide a c.£100 billion market opportunity forecast to grow at a 3.4% compound rate through to 2030. Driven by our *Momentum* strategy, we will sustain our positive track record of net fee productivity growth and significant savings in non-fee-earning costs and external spend. Several of our initiatives are designed to enhance our competitive advantage and build a best-in-class search & match platform to drive improved market share and profitability.

Q: What are your technology initiatives?

We are making good progress with our next-generation *Hays Digital Platform*. We have completed a major upgrade to our One Touch CRM platform in APAC which is now being deployed to Southern Europe. We are rolling out AI agents to provide our consultants with best-in-class tools and recently accelerated our transformation through the enterprise-scale rollout of advanced Microsoft AI capabilities, becoming one of the first in our industry to deploy Microsoft 365 E7.

Chief Financial Officer's review

CFO's *review*

The decline in net fees eased to 8% in FY26 and we executed our strategy well, reporting 7% consultant net fee productivity growth and exceeding our structural cost savings target three years ahead of schedule. Following a return to strong year-on-year growth in the second half, pre-exceptional operating profit grew by 3% in FY26 although reported results were impacted by exceptional costs related to the rapid initial execution of our *Momentum* strategy.

James Hilton
Chief Financial Officer

19th August 2026

Group net fees[(2)]
£905.5m
FY25: £972.4m

Cash from operations[(4)]
£92.0m
FY25: £128.3m

Pre-exceptional operating profit[(5)]
£48.6m
FY25: £45.6m

Dividend per share
0.44p
FY25: 1.24p

Earnings per share[(5)]
1.21p
FY25: 1.31p

Cash conversion[(7)]
189%
FY25: 281%

Year-end net cash
£20.1m
FY25: £37.0m

Operating performance

Year ended 30 June (£m)	2026	2025	Actual growth	LFL growth
Turnover[(1)]	**6,421.2**	6,607.0	(3)%	(4)%
Net fees[(2)]	**905.5**	972.4	(7)%	(8)%
Pre-exceptional operating profit[(5)]	**48.6**	45.6	7%	3%
Post-exceptional operating (loss)/profit	**(41.0)**	14.9	(375)%	
Statutory (loss)/profit before tax	**(54.5)**	1.5	(3733)%	
Pre-exceptional basic earnings per share[(5)]	**1.21p**	1.31p	(8)%	
Statutory basic earnings per share	**(3.64)p**	(0.49)p	(643)%	
Cash generated by operations[(4)]	**92.0**	128.3	(28)%	
Core dividend per share	**0.44p**	1.24p	(65)%	

Note: unless otherwise stated all growth rates discussed in the CFO's review are like-for-like (LFL) YoY net fees and profits, representing organic growth of operations at constant currency, and excluding country closures and exits.

1. Net fees of £905.5 million (FY25: £972.4 million) are reconciled to statutory turnover of £6,421.2 million (FY25: £6,607.0 million) in note 4 to the Consolidated Financial Statements.
2. Net fees comprise turnover less remuneration of temporary workers and other recruitment agencies.
3. Conversion rate is the proportion of net fees converted into pre-exceptional operating profit[(5)].
4. Cash generated by operations is stated after IFRS 16 lease payments, which we view as an operating cost.
5. Exceptional items for the year ended 30 June 2026 consist of £45.1 million relating to operational restructurings, £26.6 million relating to rationalisation of the global property portfolio, £8.0 million relating to the disposal of the operations in six European countries, and £9.9 million relating to the partial impairment of goodwill in Belgium and the Netherlands and net impairment of intangible assets. The prior year charge of £30.7 million consists of a restructuring charge of £17.7 million and £13.0 million relating to operational transformation programmes. There were no exceptional charges in FY22 or FY23.
6. The underlying Temporary margin is calculated as Temporary net fees divided by Temporary gross revenue and relates solely to Temporary placements in which Hays generates net fees, and specifically excludes transactions in which Hays acts as an agent on behalf of workers supplied by third-party agencies, and arrangements where the Group provides major payrolling services.
7. Operating cash conversion represents the conversion of pre-exceptional operating profit[(5)] to cash generated from operations[(4)].

Fees and turnover

Turnover for the year ended 30 June 2026 decreased by 4% (3% on a reported basis). Net fees for the year ended 30 June 2026 decreased by 8% on a like-for-like basis, to £905.5 million. This represented a like-for-like net fee decline of £73.6 million versus the prior year. The higher net fee decline compared to turnover was due to the relatively resilient performances in Temporary & Contracting versus Permanent recruitment and in our Solutions business.

Temporary & Contracting net fees (64% of Group) decreased by 5%. Volumes declined by 4%, with a further 1% or c.£6 million net fee impact from lower average hours worked per contractor in Germany. There was minimal impact from specialism and geographical mix, with a 20bps year on year decrease in our underlying Temp margin[6] to 15.1%.

Permanent placement net fees (36% of Group) decreased by 12% as weak client and candidate confidence drove below-normal conversion of activity to placement and a lengthening of our 'time-to-hire'. Average Perm fee grew by 2% year on year as good growth in RoW and UK&I was offset by placement mix, most notably due to more significant net fee decreases in Germany. Net fees in the private sector (84% of Group) decreased by 7% but the public sector was more challenging, down 9%.

Our largest global specialism of Technology (26% of Group net fees) decreased by 1%, with Permanent resourcing significantly more challenging than Temporary & Contracting. Senior Finance outperformed Junior Finance but overall our Accountancy & Finance net fees decreased by 12%. Construction & Property grew by 3% driven by a strong Germany performance and greater stability in ANZ and UK&I. Net fees in the Solutions business were resilient, with good performance in MSP contracts and several new client wins offsetting the loss of an RPO contract which was taken back in-house.

Pre-exceptional operating profit increased by 3%

FY26 pre-exceptional[3] Group operating profit of £48.6 million represented a like-for-like increase of 3% (up 7% reported). The Group conversion rate[4] increased by 70 bps year on year to 5.4%.

Like-for-like operating costs decreased by 8% year on year or £75.1 million (£69.9 million on reported basis, down 8%). This was driven by 15% lower average Group headcount, lower commissions and bonuses, close control of third-party spend, and our structural cost-saving initiatives, partially offset by our own salary increases and underlying cost inflation.

Exchange rate movements increased net fees and operating profit by £14.9 million and £2.1 million, respectively. This resulted from the weakening in the average rate of exchange of sterling versus our main trading currencies, notably the Euro. Currency fluctuations remain a significant Group sensitivity.

Exceptional restructuring charge

During the year, the Group incurred an exceptional charge of £89.6 million (2025: £30.7 million) as we undertook significant restructurings of the Group's operations through the implementation of our *Momentum* strategy, which is our response to changes in the recruitment market.

The Group undertook the restructure of several country business operations at a cost of £45.1 million which generated a c.£40 million annualised structural cost saving. In Germany, the United Kingdom & Ireland, ANZ, Europe and Asia, we restructured our sales operations and back-office functions, including the multi-year Technology and Finance Transformation programmes. In the Americas we closed our operations in Mexico and in Asia we closed our operations in Thailand.

The Group undertook a strategic review of its global property portfolio which led to the exit or consolidation of 74 offices, and resulted in an exceptional charge of £26.6 million, which generated a c.£10 million annualised structural cost saving.

In June 2026, the Group announced that it had completed the sale of its operations in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Luxembourg, Romania and Sweden to Meraki Capital. The disposal resulted in an exceptional loss of £8.0 million (including £1.0 million of costs directly attributable to the disposal), comprising net assets disposed of £11.6 million offset by total consideration receivable of £4.6 million.

The Group incurred a £4.7 million charge and a £2.2 million charge resulted from the partial impairment of the carrying value of goodwill in Belgium and the Netherlands respectively, resulting in a combined goodwill impairment of £6.9 million which is a non-cash item.

During the year, the Group accelerated the digitalisation of its business and the deployment of new technology solutions. As a result, management determined that certain existing intangible assets would no longer be used in the Group's operations and therefore concluded that their carrying values were no longer fully recoverable. This resulted in a net impairment charge of £3.0 million.

The cash impact of the exceptional charge in the current year was £31.2 million, with an additional £10.8 million of cash payments in respect of the prior year exceptional charge, including £2.8 million of lease liability repayments relating to right-of-use assets that were previously impaired.

The exceptional charge generated a net £12.1 million tax credit (2025: tax credit of £2.0 million).

Net finance charge

The net finance charge for FY26 was £13.5 million (FY25: £13.4 million). Net bank interest payable (including amortisation of arrangement fees) was £8.2 million (FY25: £7.3 million) due to modestly higher average drawings on the Group's revolving credit facility.

Among non-cash items, there was a £0.4 million charge on the unwinding of discounted provisions (FY25: £nil), net interest on defined benefit pension scheme obligations was £nil (FY25: £1.5 million) following the full buy-in of the Scheme's remaining benefit obligation in FY25, and the interest charge on lease liabilities under IFRS 16 was £4.9 million (FY25: £4.6 million).

We expect the net finance charge for FY27 to be c.£12 million, slightly below FY26, driven by a lower IFRS 16 interest charge on the reduced property lease liabilities.

Taxation

The tax charge for the year ended 30 June 2026 of £15.8 million (FY25: £11.3 million) represented a pre-exceptional effective tax rate (ETR) of 45.0% (FY25: 35.1%). The higher ETR was driven by the impact of losses arising in countries where no tax benefit has been recognised, coupled with the concentration of profits in countries with higher tax rates. On a statutory basis, the effective tax rate was minus 6.8%, including a £12.1 million tax credit in respect of exceptional items.

We expect the Group's ETR in FY27 to be slightly below FY26, assuming no material change in geographic mix of profits, and to reduce as profits rebuild over time.

Chief Financial Officer's review *continued*

Earnings per share

The Group's pre-exceptional basic earnings per share (EPS) of 1.21p was 8% lower than the prior year. The reduction was a result of a higher ETR, partially offset by a 7% higher pre-exceptional operating profit noted above. On a statutory basis, the loss per share increased by 643% year on year to 3.64p.

Balance sheet and cash generation

Our net cash position at 30 June 2026 was £20.1 million (FY25: £37.0 million). We had a strong cash performance across the Group and converted 189% of operating profit(3) into operating cash flow(5) (FY25: 281%(5)) due to a working capital inflow of £24.9 million in FY26 (FY25: £58.1 million inflow) as Temporary & Contracting fees and placements reduced and cash collection remained strong. Debtor days improved slightly to 36 days (FY25: 37 days), and our aged debt profile remains strong. Group bad debt write-offs were minimal and are at historically low levels. Cash from operations declined by 28% year on year to £92.0 million.

Cash tax paid in the year was £19.8 million (FY25: £12.9 million). Capital expenditure was £24.1 million (FY25: £22.7 million), with ongoing investments in our Hays Digital Platform, technology infrastructure and cybersecurity. We anticipate capital expenditure in the £30-35 million range in FY27, at a similar run rate to our H2 26 capex of c.£14 million.

Net interest paid was £8.2 million (FY25: £7.3 million). The cash impact of exceptional restructuring charges in FY26 was £42.0 million.

During the year we paid a £4.6 million final core dividend for FY25 and a £2.4 million FY26 interim dividend.

Final dividend

At the preliminary results in August 2025, the Board proposed a reduction in the final dividend payment that more appropriately aligned to the Group's current level of profitability and affordability. In addition, we removed our £100 million cash buffer to provide greater flexibility through the cycle as our cash position rebuilds over the longer term.

The final dividend proposed of 0.29 pence per share is unchanged from the FY25 final dividend, representing 2.8x FY26 pre-exceptional earnings cover, and applying our historic one-third/two-thirds interim/final split. This brings the full-year payment to 0.44 pence per share.

The final dividend will be paid on 26 November 2026 to shareholders on the register on 16 October 2026. A Dividend Reinvestment Plan (DRIP) is provided by Equiniti Financial Services Limited. The DRIP enables the Company's shareholders to elect to have their cash dividend payments used to purchase the Company's shares. More information can be found at www.shareview.co.uk/info/drip. The deadline to elect to participate in the DRIP is 3 November 2026.

Foreign exchange

Overall, net currency movements versus sterling positively impacted results in the year, increasing net fees by £14.9 million, and operating profit by £2.1 million, primarily due to the weakening of sterling versus the Euro.

Fluctuations in the rates of the Group's key operating currencies versus sterling represent a significant sensitivity for the reported performance of our business. By way of illustration, based on our FY26 results, each 1 cent movement in annual exchange rates of the Euro and Australian dollar impacts net fees by c.£3.9 million and c.£0.6 million respectively per annum, the Euro has c.£0.6 million per annum impact on operating profit and the Australian dollar £0.1 million.

The rate of exchange between the Euro and sterling over the year averaged €1.1506 and closed at €1.1609.

The rate of exchange between the Australian dollar and sterling over the year averaged AUD $1.9805 and closed at AUD $1.9209.

James Hilton
Chief Financial Officer

19 August 2026