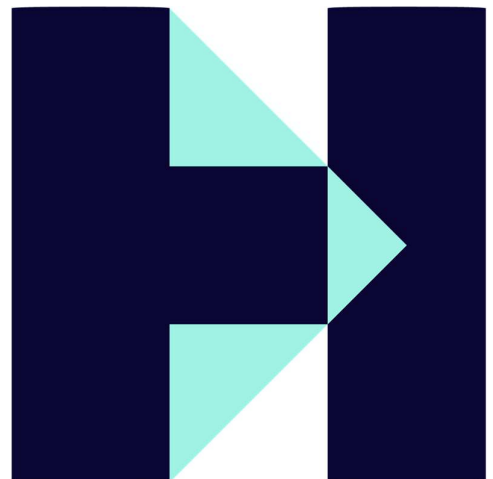




PREPARED REMARKS

19 June 2025





HAYS PLC

INVESTOR CALL SCRIPT – Q4: 19 June 2025

INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Kean. Good morning, everyone, and thanks for joining us today at short notice.

As you will appreciate, we haven't closed our books for June yet so we aren't in a position to provide the full level of disclosure normally contained in our quarterly release but we will be as helpful as we can today and we will include an appendix containing fuller Q4 data in our prelim results slides in August.

I will present the key points and regional details of today's trading update, before taking questions. As usual, all net fee growth percentages are on a like-for-like basis versus prior year unless stated otherwise.

OVERVIEW

I would highlight the following key items:

1. Following a sequentially stable period of trading in Q3, net fees reduced sequentially through our fourth quarter driven primarily by a broad-based weakness in Perm activity globally reflecting low levels of client and candidate confidence as a result of macroeconomic uncertainty. Based on our current expectations for June, Group like-for-like net fees are expected to decline by 9% YoY in Q4 (8% on a working day adjusted basis) despite a soft prior-year comparative
2. Temp & Contracting net fees and forward activity indicators continue to be more resilient. Net fees are expected to decline by 5% in Q4 and 4% on a working day adjusted basis.
3. We have seen a sequential reduction in Perm activity in the majority of our markets globally, both in new job registrations and placements. Despite a soft prior-year comparative, Perm net fees are expected to decline by 14% in Q4.
4. Our current cost base on a periodic and constant currency basis has improved to c.£75m from c.£76m in Q3. Given the largely fixed short-term nature of our cost base there has been a high drop-through of lower net fees to profitability and, as a result, we currently expect FY25 pre-exceptional operating profit of c.£45m. At this level of profitability, our FY25 pre-exceptional tax rate is expected to be c.35%.



5. Despite the shortfall in operating profit, cash performance during our seasonally stronger fourth quarter remains in line with normal trends and we reiterate our guidance for a modest net cash position at year end.

I will now provide a high-level commentary on the performance by each division.

In our largest market of **GERMANY** we expect fees to decrease by 5% YoY.

The YoY decline in Temp & Contracting fees is expected to moderate slightly to 3%. Volumes remain solid overall in Contracting but conditions remain weak in Temp where we have a greater exposure to the Automotive sector. Perm remains challenging and we expect fees to decrease by 17%.

In **UK & IRELAND**, we expect net fees to decrease by 13%.

Temp & Contracting fees, expected 12% down YoY, were impacted by subdued public sector activity. Perm, likely down 14%, has experienced a broad based slowdown as the quarter progressed.

In **ANZ**, we expect fees to decrease by 9% YoY.

While market conditions remain challenging, Temp & Contracting activity levels have been stable through the quarter and we expect net fees to decrease by 6%. Perm has become more challenging during the quarter but the YoY net fee decline is likely to improve to 15% due to an easier comparable.

In our **REST OF WORLD** division, comprising 26 countries, we expect fees to decrease by 9%. EMEA ex-Germany (with expected net fees down 13%) has

experienced challenging Perm markets, particularly in France. Asia (with expected net fees down 3%) is stable overall. We expect net fees to decline by 1% in Americas with 5% YoY growth in North America where markets remain stable.

While we are disappointed to end FY25 with a shortfall in profitability relative to expectations we are pleased with the pace and direction of our strategic development during the year

1. Consultant headcount is expected to decline by 4% in the quarter. By managing our consultant capacity on a business line basis our resource allocation actions should continue to drive a 5% YoY improvement in average consultant net fee productivity in Q4
2. Our Enterprise business has maintained good net fee growth driven by headcount investment in existing clients, higher fill rates and new contract wins and enters FY26 with a healthy bid pipeline
3. Our initiatives to deliver structural savings of c.£30m per annum by the end of FY27 continue to progress well and, consequently, our current cost base on a periodic and constant currency basis has improved to c.£75m from c.£76m in Q3. We have removed duplicated costs, delayed management, outsourced selective opportunities, further standardised and globalised processes, and expanded our shared service centres.

We expect current challenging market conditions to persist into FY26 and remain committed to delivering our focused strategy. Our initiatives to improve net fee productivity in real terms and back-office efficiency will be important drivers of medium-term profit recovery when the market recovers.



I will now hand you back to the administrator, and we are happy to take your questions.

Q&A

If that is all the questions, thank you again for joining the call.

I look forward to speaking to you next at our prelim results on 21st August. Should anyone have any follow up questions, Kean, Rob and I will be available to take calls for the rest of the day.