

Firms investing in flexible senior talent, with interim vacancies up 45%

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- Vacancies up 45.1% quarter on quarter as 2020 drew to a close
- Jobs fall 8% year on year
- Tech sector leads hiring activity with Amazon most active hirer

Despite the impact Covid-19 has had on recruitment activity, professional interim vacancies fared particularly well as 2020 drew to a close, with the number of assignments up 45.1% quarter on quarter. That's according to new research from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCO), the trade association for the recruitment sector.

Interim vacancies rise at the end of 2020 despite Brexit and Covid-19 uncertainty

The data, provided by business intelligence specialist Vacancysoft, revealed that despite both Covid-19 and last minute uncertainty around the end of the Brexit transition period, interim vacancies rose by 45.1% between quarter three and quarter four 2020. The data also revealed that compared to 2019, interim vacancies dropped by 8.3% across England & Wales, with London experiencing a slightly sharper fall at -9.1% year-on-year. However, not all regions reported a contraction, with the South East seeing a 5.4% rise in job postings year-on-year, while the North West saw vacancies rise 11.8%.

Tech sector dominated recruitment with Amazon most active hirer

Looking specifically at interim hiring across different sectors, APSCO's data revealed that the telecoms and tech sector performed particularly well – with year-on-year increases of 55.2% and 39.8% respectively. This can largely be attributed to not only the increased reliance on IT professionals to facilitate remote working practices, but also UK tech firms receiving a record £12.2bn in funding last year – higher than the rest of Europe combined.

Across the companies hiring for interims in 2020, online retailer Amazon topped the employer table with over 170 new vacancies – a 195% year-on-year increase. AstraZeneca also fared well posting 31.1% more roles in 2020 compared to 2019 which, given its work with Oxford University on the vaccine, is perhaps unsurprising. Meanwhile, EY took the biggest hit out of the Top 10 companies, with its interim employment falling by 60.4% year-on-year.

Ann Swain, CEO of APSCO comments:

“The fact that interim recruitment activity across England & Wales improved in the final quarter of 2020 is incredibly encouraging and indicates that employers are increasingly relying on highly skilled senior level interim talent. With businesses facing so much uncertainty in a post-Brexit and Covid-hit environment, there is clearly a need for a flexible workforce that can be scaled up or down as and when demand dictates change. And while the data reveals a yearly fall in recruitment levels, it is by no means to the extent which many predicted in the early days of the pandemic. As we progress through 2021 we are optimistic that interim recruitment activity in particular will continue to fare well, with the mass

vaccination programme in full swing and the end of the pandemic in sight.”

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