

White collar jobs boom continues: vacancies up 28% as skills crisis rages on

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Permanent white-collar jobs have spike once again, up 28% in January when compared to the same time last year, while the UK continues to battle a skills crisis. That's according to the latest Recruitment Trends Snapshot

(<https://mediaserver.responsesource.com/mediabank/8474/APSCoBullhornProfessionalRecruitmentTrendsSnapshotFebruary>) report from The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo).

The data, provided by the global leader in software for the staffing industry, Bullhorn, revealed that demand for contractors was also up year-on-year, increasing 38%. Month-on-month figures also showed a spike in jobs, with permanent and contract vacancies increasing 104% and 78% between December and January, which can be attributed to a bounce back following a seasonal lull.

This continued pressure on the recruitment market comes at a time when skills shortages are plaguing the UK, with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealing at the end of last year that over half of businesses reported they are unable to meet demand due to worker shortages.

In its Access to Skills and Talent Public Policy plan, APSCo highlighted its government asks in order to create a labour market that is dynamic and flexible to address the skills shortages that are being felt across the UK. This includes the need to reform the Apprenticeship Levy to ensure independent professionals and other members of the self-employed workforce can also access skills training. According to the trade association, flexible, pragmatic, training initiatives must be designed by government to maximise access across the workforce from school leavers to mid-life "lane changers" if it is to equip the UK labour market with the skills, experience, and expertise in demand by employers and business now and in decades to come.

APSCo's data also reveals a significant increase in placements, with the number of candidates accepting new permanent roles increasing 84% between January 2021 and January 2022. Contract placements were up 12% during the same period. With the ONS reporting a continued decline in unemployment levels, this rise in placements alongside a spike in vacancies will put increasing pressures on the UK's recruitment market.

Ann Swain, CEO of APSCo comments:

“The hiring market in the UK is showing no signs of slowing. While this is promising for staffing firms, skills shortages remain rife across the country which will only be exacerbated if vacancy numbers continue on the same growth trajectory without a sustainable solution to the dearth of talent. While the release of the Levelling Up Whitepaper does show a promising commitment to increasing the professional skills of the UK market, there’s still more that can be done, including changes to the Apprenticeship Levy to make it more flexible so that the likes of agency workers can carry training over in their roles. APSCo continues to lobby government to ensure the professional recruitment market is able to continue to thrive once the inevitable ‘settling down’ period begins.”

Joe McGuire, Sales & Strategy Director, Analytics at Bullhorn comments:

“Based on all the conversations I am having I don't think this level of productivity will surprise many. The market conditions remain very exciting and we are going to continue to see a war for talent for some time. It's important for agencies to be focused on improving efficiency & utilising their existing candidate relationships in a much more strategic way.”

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Press contact

Vickie Collinge

vickie@bluesky-pr.com

01582 790 705