

Midlands's IT sector experiences exponential growth

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Thursday, 14 July 2022

The IT arena is dominating the hiring landscape in the Midlands and is forecast to be the largest growth area in 2022, with vacancies surging to nearly 16,000 jobs so far this year. That's according to recent research from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo).

The data, provided by business intelligence specialist Vacancysoft also revealed that not only has IT consistently had the largest share of professional vacancies, but it has also seen sharp increases, with available jobs rising from 22.5% in 2019 to 23.5% in 2022 so far. This could be explained by the Government's plans to boost digital skills, particularly in regions outside of London, with an investment of £100 million going to West Midlands, Glasgow and Greater Manchester between 2022/23 and 2024/5. The aim of this is to make these regions globally competitive centres for research and innovation. Perhaps as a result, there have been reports of Midlands tech firms growing globally.

Elsewhere, manufacturing and engineering are also a key part of the mix and what the region is best known for, consistently featuring in the top five skills in demand. The surge in engineering vacancies is also noteworthy, with 2021 witnessing an increase of 258%, which has meant that the share of engineering roles has grown from 3.96% in 2019 to 8.8% last year. With reports of up to £750 million of public sector projects commissioned across the Midlands and East of England, it's likely that demand will only continue to grow for professionals across the region.

Ann Swain, CEO of APSCo, comments:

"As the largest regional economy in the UK outside London, it's encouraging to see that professional vacancies in IT and Engineering have surged across the Midlands. Despite this, we can't ignore the fact that the UK's labour market is reaching breaking point. In recent months, we've seen record-breaking vacancy numbers reported by the ONS and the first-ever instance where there are more jobs than people out of work.

"With this in mind, the region, alongside the rest of the UK, will only truly recover when the country's policymakers implement an internationally viable approach to boosting the UK's access to skills. This includes creating an attractive entry route into the country for highly skilled self-employed professionals and refocusing international trade deals on skills, the workforce and the mutual recognition of services and professional qualifications."

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