

IT sector growth threatened by critical skills shortages

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New data shows a continued surge in IT jobs across the UK, with volumes up by 55%, but with skills shortages rife the sector's growth could be restricted. 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, when analysed by year, the monthly average for 2022 is 30% up on 2021, and this surge in IT vacancies looks set to continue in the months to come with the 2022 forecast set to see three times more postings than 2020.

By sector, technology companies are, unsurprisingly, the most active recruiters. Between January and May there were over 32,000 IT vacancies across the sector, accounting for 43% of all the IT positions advertised. Despite this, there are some concerns for the sector's hiring in the coming months, as a flurry of tech companies have announced plans for redundancies including DAZN and Klarna.

Across the regions, London holds the largest share of IT vacancies, accounting for 46% of all IT jobs across England & Wales. Other regions worth mentioning include the South East, now responsible for 11% of all vacancies, as well as the North West with 7%. Notably, remote vacancies are on the rise and this option is now included in up to 11% of all advertised positions, up 9 percentage points on the pre-pandemic figures.

Ann Swain, CEO of APSCo, comments:

"The demand for IT experts spiked during the pandemic and we've witnessed a continuation of this trend for the year so far. While it's certainly encouraging to see such demand for IT professionals, the UK's dearth of talent is now critical and we are already seeing this impact the growth of tech companies at a time when they should be thriving. In response to this, recruitment professionals and businesses alike need to upskill existing staff, hire from wider talent pools to boost diversity and increase the number of women in IT. Doing so will be key in helping to narrow skill shortages."

"While recruitment professionals and hiring teams will certainly be key players in helping the IT sector navigate skills shortages, a true recovery may only be possible when the UK's policymakers implement an internationally viable approach to boosting the country'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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