

# Recruitment in the South East soars with construction leading jobs boom

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Professional recruitment within the South East was exceptionally buoyant last year - despite the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the economy and fears of a looming recession - with new data revealing that construction led the jobs growth. That's according to new research from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo), the trade association for the professional recruitment sector.

The data, provided by business intelligence specialist VacancySoft revealed that vacancies in the South East peaked in March 2022, with over 6,500 jobs, followed by May which saw over 6,300 roles advertised. In addition, the research shows that the professions most sought after were construction, IT and marketing/PR specialists.

Vacancies for IT professionals were up 5.8% year-on-year in 2022 with over 18,000 jobs advertised, accounting for 27% of the jobs posted last year. Looking at marketing and PR roles, the data reveals an annual rise of 11.1%, however construction professionals saw the most significant year-on-year growth in demand, up 23% over the previous year.

Looking at the most active hirers across the region, the data reveals that construction firm, Kier Group led the way, posting over 1,300 new jobs in 2022, more than double the total in 2021. This is in keeping with the overall demand for construction professionals noted last year, and a trend that is expected to continue with Kier Group recently awarded projects to deliver multiple net zero and all-electric developments in Scotland and Wales, including a £25m teaching block and £30m mortuary.

Ann Swain, CEO of APSCo, comments:

"Despite the challenging economic circumstances in which we still find ourselves it is pleasing to see that the labour market in the South East is resilient to the cost of living and inflationary pressures. Given that the UK is now expected to avoid a technical recession we can approach the future with increased optimism and confidence. Our data shows that there is considerable demand for skilled professionals in construction, IT and marketing across the region.

"It remains to be seen if the Government's renewed focus on skills and getting the economically inactive back into the labour market will pay dividends. However, it is clear that demand for skills is still outstripping supply. We need better public policies to give firms better access to skills, training and talent. Such policies will ensure that the UK has a highly skilled and flexible workforce that is fit for the future."

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