

# Hiring falls across the country as uncertainty impacts business confidence

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- Permanent jobs fall 24% while placements are down almost a quarter
- Contract hiring slows, down 21% year-on-year
- Salaries report growth of 2% as cost-of-living crisis continues

Recruitment fell sharply in April, suggesting that employers are holding back on hiring as business confidence continues to be impacted by economic uncertainty. That's according to the latest statistics from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) – the trade body for the professional recruitment sector.

The data - provided by the global leader in software for the staffing industry, Bullhorn – revealed that permanent and contract vacancies fell 16% and 13% respectively between March and April. The annual comparison also shows a decline in recruitment. Jobs fell 24% for permanent roles and 21% for contract positions between April 2022 and 2023.

Placements fall as businesses fail to recruit

According to the statistics, the number of placements also fell in April, down 25% for permanent and contract positions between March and April 2023. While this is indicative of a slowdown in hiring over the Easter holidays, the annual comparisons point to a contraction that is being driven by a lack of business confidence. Permanent placements were down almost a third (-31%) between April 2022 and the same period in 2023, while contract also fell 27%.

The data does, however, indicate a monthly uptick in average permanent salaries which, although only small at 2%, does suggest that remuneration is creeping up as a combination of the cost-of-living crisis and shortages of highly skilled professionals prevails across the UK.

Ann Swain, Global CEO of APSCo comments:

“The latest figures do present a level of concern for the UK. The recruitment market often serves as a bellwether for the broader economic climate, making this sharp annual fall in jobs and placements an issue that all business leaders and government authorities should take note of. The data suggests that we have shifted from a lack of candidates to a sharp drop in requirements as business confidence falls amid economic uncertainty. While reports from the OBR suggest that we have narrowly avoided a recession so far, we could be heading in a different direction unless confidence in the economy is strengthened, and that needs to be underpinned by a strong labour market.”

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Press contact

Vickie Collinge

vickie@bluesky-pr.com

01582 790 705

About APSCo

The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) is the trade association for the professional recruitment market. APSCo Global comprises APSCo Asia, APSCo Australia, APSCo Deutschland and APSCo United Kingdom as well as APSCo OutSource, the trade body for the RPO and MSP sectors.

Find out more: [www.apsco.org](http://www.apsco.org)

About the Recruitment Trends Snapshot

The Recruitment Trends Snapshot is based on data supplied by Bullhorn. Year-on-year increases compare December 2021 data with December 2022 data. Month-on-month figures compare December 2022 data with November 2022 data.