

Job vacancies and applications plummet in Northern Ireland

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Job vacancies and application numbers in Northern Ireland have dropped significantly in 2023 compared to last year, according to new research from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo), the trade association for the professional recruitment sector.

The data, provided by the world's largest network of job boards, Broadbean Technology, revealed that year-on-year job vacancy numbers for April 2023 have dropped by 12%. In addition, month-on-month vacancy numbers have seen a more pronounced drop with a 17% fall from March to April 2023, highlighting that growth in the country is weakening as Northern Ireland faces a challenging economic picture for 2023.

Applications for roles have also seen significant decreases with a 22% year-on-year decline and, more worryingly, a 52% drop since March, meaning that businesses will be increasingly focusing on retaining their key staff in light of the challenging hiring market.

Previously, the strongest performing sectors for job creation have been IT, engineering and accountancy, however, vacancy and application numbers fell in each of these fields both month-on-month and year-on-year. This is perhaps unsurprising given rising inflationary and interest rates across the country.

Ann Swain, Global CEO at APSCo, said

“The Northern Ireland labour market is showing signs of slowing with jobs down both month-on-month and year-on-year in April, which can largely be linked to the ongoing economic uncertainty that is impacting both business and worker confidence. However, with a recent report from Trade NI – an alliance of three trade bodies (Hospitality Ulster, Manufacturing Northern Ireland, and Retail Northern Ireland) – outlining the key reforms needed to support growth across the country, including access to resources, the fall we have seen in applications is concerning. With April seeing half the number of job applicants than March, a skills crisis could be on the cards.”

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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.apscouk.org