

Jobs fall across the UK: Remote working declining as firms push for office returns

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Thursday, 11 April 2024

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The number of UK job postings fell by 2.5% in March, with remote job roles also contracting as businesses increase return to office pressures. That's according to the latest data from leading global talent solutions provider, WilsonHCG.

The data – powered by Claro Analytics, WilsonHCG's talent intelligence and labour market analytics platform –marked the fifth consecutive month of decline. The number of job postings for remote roles also dropped, as more organisations continue to push for a return to office.

In March 2024, 4.4% of jobs in the UK were listed as fully remote, down on the 5.8% reported in January 2023. Hybrid job postings have, however, seen a gradual uptick over the last 12 months, increasing by 0.5 percentage points between March 2023 and 2024.

AI demand remains robust

Demand for artificial intelligence (AI) specialists remains robust though, with 2,971 AI-specific job openings reported in March 2024. Data scientists were the most in demand roles in AI for the month, followed by Senior Data Scientists and Machine Learning Engineers.

Of the organisations most actively recruiting for AI specialists, JPMorgan Chase Bank National Association is the top employer, accounting for 155 of all AI job postings last month. Harnham and International Business Machines Corporation round off the top three companies hiring AI specialists across the UK in March.

Craig Sweeney, EVP of global strategic talent solutions at WilsonHCG commented:

“The slowdown in hiring is perhaps expected given the economic climate, while the drop in remote job postings does suggest that even more employers are opting for a return to office. Given the positive impact that more flexible working practices can have on diverse recruitment and employee retention, it's encouraging to see that hybrid working options are slowly increasing.

“More broadly, the data does suggest that demand for AI specialists is continuing to rise. And it shows no signs of slowing, particularly with the latest news that Microsoft is launching an AI hub in London. The demand for AI expertise is growing across businesses of all sizes, so competition for both general and specialist AI skills is going to intensify over the coming months. Employers need to ensure they're in a position to both bring in new resources and expand and grow skillsets within the business to create a sustainable talent pool.”