

Latest jobs data: Contractor demand stumbles as employers lock in talent

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

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- Contract vacancies slip 9%
- Permanent placements up 7%
- Contractors out on assignment down 11%
- Permanent vacancies down 0.4%
- Average salaries up 0.9% year-on-year

Demand for contractors stumbles

Professional recruitment firms reported that overall vacancy numbers for contract roles dipped by 9% in November 2017, while demand for permanent professionals remained largely stable, increasing by 0.4% year-on-year, according to new survey data from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCO (<http://www.apsco.org>)).

APSCO's data, which focuses on professional recruitment, reveals that demand for contractors decreased across every one of the trade association's core sector groups. Vacancies within engineering, for example, slipped by just 2%, while demand within IT, finance and marketing fell more significantly (by 9%, 9% and 24% respectively).

Permanent placements up

While new openings for permanent roles increased by just 0.4% in November 2017, the number of professionals placed that month increased by 7% year-on-year. Much of this strength can be attributed to the finance and engineering sectors (where placements increased by 19% and 6% respectively).

This data coincides with reports

(<https://www.cbronline.com/boardroom/workforce/brexit-uk-tech-talent-exodus-started/>) that professional talent is becoming scarcer as a result of Britain's decision to leave the EU, and suggests that employers are locking in the skills they need as a result.

Fewer contractors out

The overall number of contractors out on assignment, meanwhile, dipped by 11% during the same period. This can largely be attributed to a 33% year-on-year fall in IT professionals working on a contract basis during this time.

Despite this overall dip, the number of contractors out on assignment within engineering and finance increased year-on-year in November 2017 (by 9% and 2% respectively).

APSCO's data reflects the 64,000 decrease in full-time self-employment as reported

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/>) by the Office for National Statistics in December 2017.

Average salaries stable

APSCo's figures also reveal that median salaries across all professional sectors remain largely stable, decreasing by 0.9% year-on-year. This figure is characterised by notable fluctuations in terms of sector, with financial services and engineering, for example, recording uplifts of 3.4% and 1.5% respectively.

Ann Swain, Chief Executive of APSCo comments:

"This time last year, we reported that permanent vacancies were flat-lining amid uncertainty around Brexit. However, today it seems that employers are more concerned about an exodus of talent than a demise in demand, as was previously feared."

"As a result, businesses are moving away from the contingent workers that they leaned on in times of greater uncertainty and locking in the talent they need to thrive in 2018."

Adam Pode for Staffing Industry Analysts says:

"Faced with a very uncertain world next year, companies are trying to ensure they have the talent they need by concentrating on perm placement."

- Ends

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Notes to editors:

Professional Recruitment Trends is the only monthly publication providing original data and analysis on the professional staffing market. It is produced jointly by APSCo and Staffing Industry Analysts.

APSCo is the membership body that is dedicated to representing professional recruitment in the UK. It was formed to give all firms involved in the recruitment of professional talent who have a commitment to excellence, the specialist support and distinctive voice they need to be successful. It gives candidates and employers a trusted badge of quality whilst providing member firms with an innovative range of services designed for them by recruitment experts. These services, combined with its growing international profile, commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility and opportunities for professional networking give APSCo members a unique opportunity to develop their businesses and gain competitive advantage (<http://www.apsco.org> (<http://www.apsco.org>)).