

The following is based on the Chamber's recent member survey, anecdotal knowledge and client feedback from Let's do Business advisers plus comments made at the recent Chamber meeting with Sally-Ann Hart.

Recruitment

Over 37% of businesses who responded to our survey advised they had already experienced issues with recruitment

A further 10.5% expected to experience difficulties.

We do not have a breakdown by sector but responses were primarily from business and professional services who represent a wide range of sectors and, hence, were responding both from their own experience and of their clients.

Clearly we know some sectors have been particularly hard hit e.g. hospitality and tourism but construction, manufacturing and professional services all featured and hence we can conclude recruitment challenges are being faced across the board.

Reasons stated for recruitment challenges included:

- A lack of applications ~ 33.33%
- Poor quality applicants ~ 27.8%
- Skills Gaps ~ 27.8%
- Other ~ 16.7% ~ reasons not specified
- 5.6% ~ A lack of access to previous markets

Additional comments on the above included:

- Significant numbers of vacancies are remaining unfilled ~ recruitment agency feedback
- Comments around deferring recruitment due to lack of interest/quality
- Use of freelancers until they can fill vacancies permanently
- Applicants being very choosy ~ employee's market. Applicants waiting for better paid roles.
- As above vacancies being created due to staff moving to better paid roles.
- Many lower skilled/ paid roles mean applicants were still better off on benefits (Comments from recruitment agency)
- A lack of training investment ~ comments from a recruitment firm (specialising in manufacturing/engineering/Administration) an accountancy firm ~ unclear if this relates to them or their clients ~ suspect the latter and a construction firm
- Impact of Brexit and then pandemic sited as some of the reasons for challenges with a lack of or apathy in the labour market.

Other comments regarding Recruitment

Primarily around inflationary impacts due to:

- Increasing salaries to attract/retain staff
- Use of temporary staff/freelancers to fill vacancies adding to inflationary pressures
- Despite rising wages, wages and costs are out of line/not keep pace with inflation

- Employer concerns about future wages cost rises next year due to the National Insurance social care costs

Vacancies

Nearly 90 vacant positions were notified. Mostly from 1 recruitment agency (70). They specialise in manufacturing and engineering but covered unskilled, semi and skilled roles, temporary and permanent posts, manual and technical roles to administration and office based roles.

Other firms highlighting vacant roles were mainly office based and professional services for semi-skilled and skilled positions.

Skills Gaps

Sited by 28% of firms as a reason why they have recruitment challenges. Unfortunately they did not specify what skills but from all the above it seems reasonable to speculate these issues are across the board in terms of roles and skill levels.

Kick Start

Little feedback available as this was not covered in our survey.

Aware of one firm who have utilised and are very pleased.

A further who is after 3 positions but having a torrid time working through the process ~ lack of response, incorrect or conflict information, being passed around the houses ~one minute they are eligible, the next they aren't

A further firm taking on 3 and also finding the process very difficult.

Observations are that many of the difficulties have been due to the scheme being rushed in and developed as it went along. We suspect this will have discouraged some and others may have given up.