

Northern Ireland job market remains tight with vacancy numbers rising

The Northern Ireland jobs market shows few signs of weakening despite an easing economic picture.

That's according to the latest report from local jobs portal NIJobs.com which showed that local employers are still actively hiring and vacancies continue to climb.

Using data from its own website, it said the number of jobs rose 6% in the third quarter of the year compared to the previous three months and are now 90% above pre-pandemic levels.

The three sectors which saw the largest gains in the latest quarter were retailing, wholesaling & purchasing; hospitality; and nursing, healthcare & medical.

However, the sector has lost some of its heat, and is down some 7% on the same time last year, a period which coincided with the lifting of lockdown restrictions in the third quarter of 2021.

NIJobs.com said some rebalancing in the local recruitment market is not unexpected in the current climate of economic uncertainty, coming as it does off the back of the record job highs of 2021.

"While the economic environment may be uncertain, our current figures demonstrate that companies are actively recruiting," Sam McIlveen, General Manager at NIJobs.com, said. "The easing of job listings must be viewed within the context of those record highs in 2021.

"There are jobs available, but it's fair to say that the cost

of living and energy crisis is impacting sectors that continue to experience skills shortages. Despite the recent increase in unemployment, the number of people in work remains high, which means the number of candidates available to recruiters is small, with employers targeting the same talent pool.”

Mr McIlveen said older workers could help fill some vacancies.

“Older employees could help tackle the shortages some sectors currently face, and they bring a wealth of skills, experience and expertise to the workplace.”

Richard Ramsey, Chief Economist at Ulster Bank which partners on the report, agreed that economically inactive people may help fill the current shortage.

“Those who can work may re-enter the workforce as household budgets become squeezed. In fact, we are already seeing it happen. The latest Labour Force Survey shows an uptick in the numbers of economically active workers aged 50+ compared to this time last year.”