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Jobs Index Q4 2021

Foreword

"As we look towards 2022, the recruitment landscape is shaping up to be a strong, candidate led market; a trend that will continue to dominate the recruitment space in line with the continued lifting of Covid-19 restrictions and the progressive reopening of the economy."

As we take our first steps into 2022, the Q4 IrishJobs Jobs Index 2021 suggests that the Irish recruitment landscape is shaping up to once again be a strong, candidate-led market.

It is telling that some of the most pronounced growth in the last quarter was in the recruitment, retention, and HR space. The world of work has undergone unprecedented change in the last two years, and typically, it is HR departments that are being tasked with managing this change, including the development of remote and hybrid-working policies and logistics, employee engagement programmes and new remote onboarding and internal training processes.

Underlying these new challenges and ways of working is the constant goal of maintaining organisational performance and keeping your best people. Our data indicates that employers are acutely aware of how competitive the talent market is and are therefore moving quickly to put the necessary internal resources in place to support and advance their wider recruitment and retention ambitions in 2022.

Overall, job vacancies in Ireland were 86% higher in the last three months of 2021 than the same time last year and 43% above pre-pandemic levels (Q4 2019 data). Of the 30 sectors analysed by IrishJobs, 25 posted quarterly increases in vacancy generation and 22 surpassed their pre-Covid rate.

It comes as welcome news that some of the sectors most negatively impacted by Covid-19 rebounded strongly in Q4, including Tourism, Travel, and Airlines (+80% versus pre-Pandemic) and Construction, Architecture, and Property (+75% versus pre-Pandemic).

Other sectors to experience strong growth include Sales (+99% vs pre-Pandemic levels), Environment, Health, and Safety (+55% pre-Pandemic levels), Legal profession (+10% vs pre-Pandemic levels), Accountancy and Finance (+34% pre-Pandemic levels), and Healthcare and

Medicine (+235% on pre-Pandemic levels).

All 26 counties recorded year-on-year Q4 growth, with Dublin (+97%), Galway (+93%), Cork (+57%) and Limerick (+20%) all seeing strong double-digit growth versus this time last year.

Remote working was one of the most topical talking points amongst both employers and employees in 2021.

Working-from-home job vacancies had been rising very strongly until the second quarter of 2021, but the growth rate has been falling back since. In the third quarter of 2021 the number of working from home vacancies increased by a relatively modest 9% and now over the fourth quarter the growth rate dropped further to a modest 4%.

This possibly suggests that while many employers are very supportive of remote working strategies in the short to medium term, there is still a reluctance to one hundred percent commit to it on a permanent basis, until there is a greater understanding of its long-term impact on working cultures and productivity.

However, flexible working has become a more in-demand option for jobseekers since the onset of the pandemic, therefore it may become a

requirement for those looking to attract the best talent. Ultimately for employers looking to maintain a competitive edge in the market in 2022, they must ensure that their recruitment and retention strategies remain agile and attuned to the evolving needs of the candidates within their field.

Orla Moran

General Manager, IrishJobs.ie

Orla Morean



Key Takeaways

Employers prepare for war on talent in 2022, as Talent Acquisition and HR roles rise by 420%.

Orla Moran, General Manager of IrishJobs "Employers are acutely aware of how competitive the talent market will be in the year ahead and are moving quickly to put the necessary internal resources in place to support their recruitment ambitions in 2022."

In summary:

- 86% YoY increase in job vacancies, with vacancies now 43% higher than pre-Covid levels
- 25 of 30 sectors see YoY increases, with 22 surpassing pre-Covid levels.
- Tourism, Travel, and Airlines (+80% vs pre-Pandemic), Construction, Architecture, and property (+75% vs pre-Pandemic) rebound strongly.
- All 26 counties in the Republic of Ireland recorded year-on-year Q4 growth.
- Dublin (+97% YoY), Galway (+93%), Cork (+57%) and Limerick (+20%) all experienced strong double-digit growth, versus Q4 2021.
- Remote working vacancies see modest 4% YoY growth.





Job Vacancies

Job vacancies increase by **86%** in year-on-year terms in 2021:Q4

IrishJobs job vacancy advertisements provide a timely insight into Irish job vacancy generation, through which the impact of Covid-19 on Irish economic activity can be monitored.

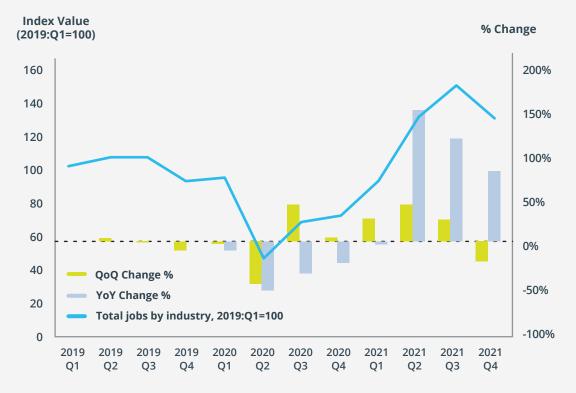
As is evident from the most recent IrishJobs data, the Irish economy's revival under less onerous Covid-19 public health restrictions continued into the final quarter of 2021. IrishJobs vacancy data reveals a year-on-year increase in job vacancies of 86% when compared with 2020:Q4.

However, ongoing Covid-19 disruption is still evident in the data: quarterly job vacancies

declined by 11% in 2021:Q4. While the fourth quarter is traditionally one in which the rate of hiring is relatively slower, recent global supply chain disruptions and the emergence of a more transmissible Covid-19 variant have contributed to lingering economic uncertainty. Comparison with pre-Covid 2019:Q4 vacancy data provides a fuller overview of the trajectory of IrishJobs vacancies: the level of job vacancies generated in 2021:Q4 was 43% higher than that of 2019:Q4. As illustrated in Figures 1 (below), the IrishJobs Jobs Index value (131) for 2021:Q4 has fallen back somewhat on its 2021:Q3 level (147), but still remains well in excess of pre-Covid index levels.

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Job Vacancies

By way of context for the current IrishJobs quarterly index we provide a snapshot of prevailing Irish economic conditions. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus in mid-March 2020, the Irish economy has endured an unprecedented contraction. However, in spite of new public health restrictions being introduced in the latter stages of the fourth quarter, the Irish economy has experienced robust growth. The latest ESRI Winter Quarterly Economic Commentary expects Irish GDP to have grown by 13.6% in 2021.

Both domestic and external sources of growth have contributed to the strong performance of the Irish economy in 2021. The export sector, dominated by foreign multinationals, performed particularly strongly in the first three quarters of 2021. On an annual basis, exports increased by 18.1% in 2021:Q3. Goods and services exports increased by 18.5% and 17.6% per annum, respectively.

Domestic sources of growth which had been constrained throughout the first half of 2021 rebounded significantly in the second half of the year. The ESRI expects private consumption to have grown by 7.5% in 2021 compared to 2020.

Despite the robust recovery in 2021, the level of household expenditure remains below what may have been expected had the economy continued to grow in line with pre-pandemic trends.

Expenditure in October 2021 remained well below pre-pandemic levels for transport and accommodation, while many of the other items have recovered.

One area where the robust nature of the domestic recovery is particularly evident is in the labour force. The (Covid-adjusted) unemployment rate, which had peaked in January 2021 at over 27%, has fallen to 6.9% in November, and is likely to continue to decline to its pre-pandemic low of 5% into early 2022. In 2021:Q3 average weekly earnings across all areas of employment increased by 0.7% compared to 2021:Q2, while they increased by 11.0% year-on-year.

According to the CSO Labour Force Survey, the official number of persons in employment was up 9.8% in the year to 2021:Q3. Employment increased over the year in all eight regions, with the Border region (Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan) enjoying the largest percentage increase at 18.8%.





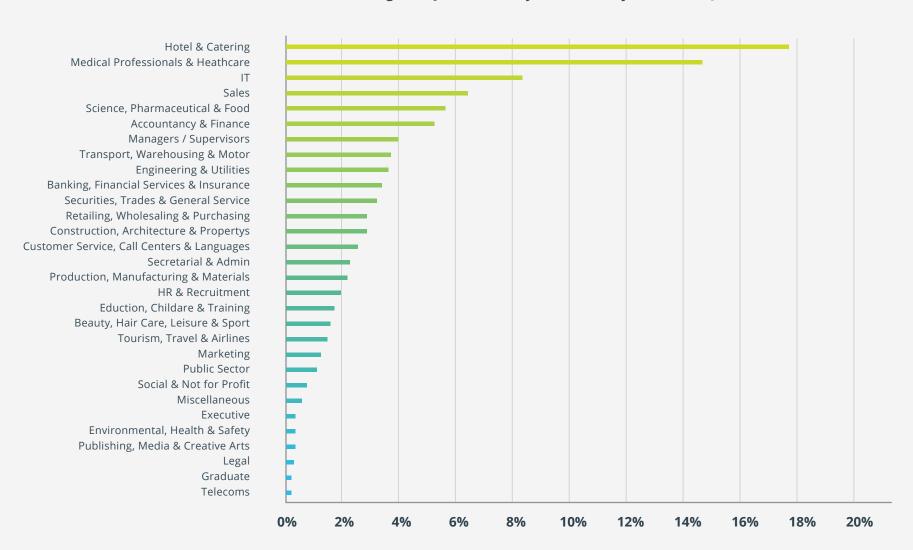


IrishJobs job vacancy data reveals distinct sectoral trends in job vacancy generation during 2021:Q4, with the overall index disaggregated into 30 sectors. Those sectors which generated the greatest proportion of job vacancies in 2021:Q4 are illustrated in Figure 2 (below).

Since the reopening of the hospitality sector earlier this year, the Hotel & Catering sector has re-emerged as the largest source of job vacancies. This sector accounted for just under 18% of job vacancies generated in 2021:Q4, surpassing Medical Professionals & Healthcare (15%) which has been at the forefront of the health sector's response to Covid-19.

The next largest source of job vacancies in 2012:Q4 was the IT sector (8%), reflecting the ongoing role played by IT services in supporting remote working and hybrid workplace arrangements. Other significant sources of job vacancies were Sales (6%) and the export-orientated Science, Pharmaceutical & Food sector (6%). The trajectory of these five sectors over time can be seen in Figure 3, which tracks the vacancy indices of these sectors from 2019:Q1 to 2021:Q4.

Figure 2: Job availability as % of total jobs in 2021:Q4



As is evident from Figure 3, job vacancy rates in the Hotel & Catering, IT, and Sales sectors have dipped in 2021:Q4, while those in Medical Professionals & Healthcare sector and the Science, Pharmaceutical & Food sector have both posted quarterly increases. These sectoral trends are discussed in further detail below.

In keeping with an end-of-year report, 2021:Q4
IrishJobs data offers a valuable opportunity to take stock of sectoral trends in job vacancies across 2021 and indeed since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. These sectoral trends are set out in detail in Table 1 (below), with pre-Covid 2019:Q4 data denoted as bi-annual in Table 1.

Of the 30 sectors analysed in this report, 22 sectors have surpassed their pre-Covid rates of vacancy generation. However, these sectors have not all experienced the Covid-19 shock in an identical manner. As is evident from the data, these sectoral growth experiences can be usefully categorised as Covid-resilience, sector-specific rebounding as public health restrictions ease, and increased demand for business support services in the context of economy-wide recovery. Those sectors which have proven to be most resilient to the

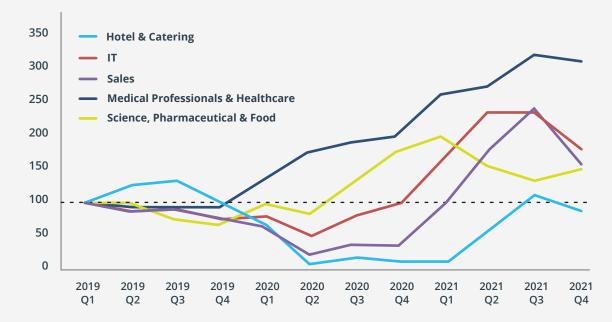
Covid-19 shock have been those which have provided medical or technical goods and services that have been of particular importance since March 2019: Medical Professionals & Healthcare (+235% pre-Covid; +50% y-o-y); Science, Pharmaceutical & Food (+125% pre-Covid; -14% y-o-y); IT (+164% pre-Covid; +77% y-o-y); Telecoms (+130% pre-Covid; -46% y-o-y).

The robust export performance of foreign-owned multinationals in the Science, Pharmaceutical & Food sector has been well documented in previous reports, as has the role of the IT sector in supporting flexible working arrangements. However, the dip in year-on-year job creation in the Science, Pharmaceutical & Food sector, as well as the Telecoms sector, may be an indication that the unique Covid-related demand which propelled these sectors in previous quarters has now eased somewhat.

The strongest sectoral rebounds have been observed in sectors whose activities were directly curtailed by Covid-19 public health restrictions: Tourism, Travel & Airlines (+80% pre-Covid; +4,856% y-o-y); Sales (+99% pre-Covid; +283% y-o-y); and Construction, Architecture & Property

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(+75% pre-Covid; +110% y-o-y). The extent of this rebound is most evident in instances where year-on-year vacancy growth eclipses bi-annual growth from the pre-Covid benchmark – with the Tourism, Travel & Airlines sector being the most pronounced example of this.

A range of business support services have also experienced strong vacancy growth rates, as they benefit from increased demand in the context of an economy-wide recovery. Examples of such sectors include: Publishing, Media & Creative Arts (+479% pre-Covid; +740% y-o-y); HR & Recruitment (+123% pre-Covid; +420% y-o-y); Security, Trades & General Services (+95% pre-Covid; +221% y-o-y); Accountancy & Finance (+34% pre-Covid; +120% y-o-y); and Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (+15% pre-Covid; +76% y-o-y).

However, eight sectors remain below their pre-Covid rates in terms of job vacancy generation. Among these sectors are a number of activities that were directly impacted by Covid-19 public health restrictions. Seen in a positive light, six of these sectors experienced year-on-year vacancy growth, suggesting that they are approaching their pre-Covid levels: Hotel & Catering (-8% pre-Covid; +420% y-o-y); Education, Childcare & Training (-10%)

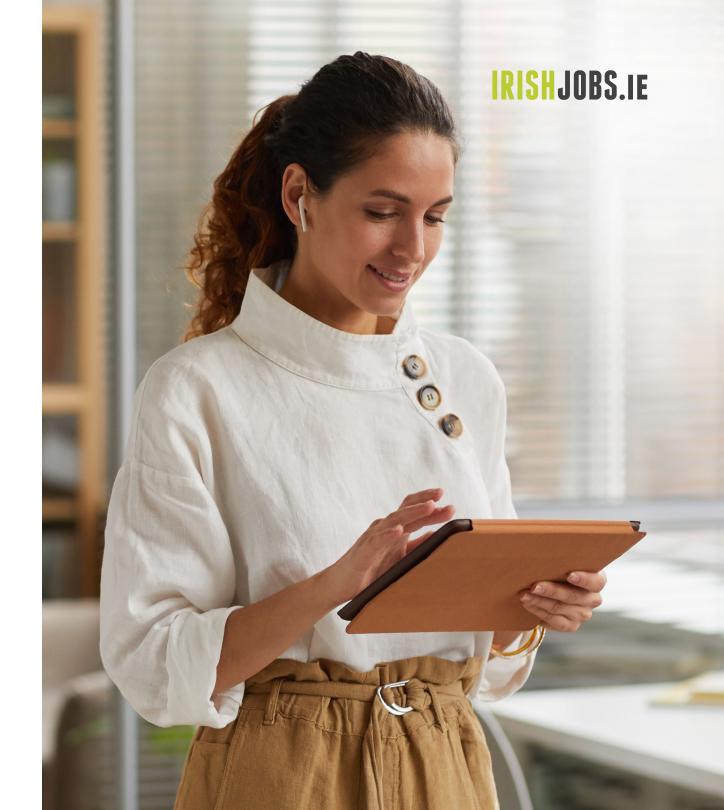
pre-Covid; +9% y-o-y); Production, Manufacturing & Materials (-11% pre-Covid; +27% y-o-y); Marketing (-24% pre-Covid; +7% y-o-y); Beauty, Hair Care, Leisure & Sport (-27% pre-Covid; +68% y-o-y). That said, two sectors can be seen to have contracted both in year-on-year terms and relative to their pre-Covid vacancy rates: Engineering & Utilities (-12% pre-Covid; -18% y-o-y); Retailing, Wholesaling & Purchasing (-29% pre-Covid; -33% y-o-y).

While the overall picture in terms of vacancy generation appears to be positive across sectors, the quarterly vacancy rates presented in Table 1 serve as a timely reminder that a number of Covid-19 uncertainties remain. Of the 30 sectors analysed here, 19 sectors posted quarterly declines in 2021:Q4. Fourth quarter hiring rates are traditionally relatively slower than other quarters, and quarterly growth rates in general are prone to fluctuation than year-on-year figures. That said, hiring decisions in the final quarter of the year may also have been impacted by a confluence of challenges such as as global supply chain disruptions, the emergence of the more transmissible Omicron Covid-19 variant, and dampened investor sentiment in the face of higher inflation and possible interest rate increases across the leading global economies.



Table 1: Changes (%) in sectoral job vacancies for 2021:Q4 (2019:Q1 = 100)

Sector	Index	Bi-annual (pre-Covid)	Anual	Quarterl
Accountancy & Finance	23	34	120	11
Banking, Financial Services & Insurance	5	15	76	10
Beauty, Hair Care, Leisure & Sport	-27	-27	68	-13
Construction, Architecture & Property	125	75	110	-7
Customer Service, Call Centres & Languages	-21	9	37	-3
Education, Childcare & Training	-28	-10	9	-9
Engineering & Utilities	-13	-12	-18	5
Environmental, Health & Safety	29	55	147	5
Executive	185	-34	84	38
Graduate	-6	25	211	7
Hotel & Catering	-9	-8	420	-20
HR & Recruitment	60	123	420	2
IT	75	164	77	-18
Legal	-28	10	145	-17
Managers / Supervisors	372	230	585	-26
Marketing	-47	-24	7	-35
Medical Professionals & Healthcare	205	235	50	1
Miscellaneous	187	197	200	-47
Production, Manufacturing & Materials	-20	-11	27	-8
Public Sector	33	70	225	33
Publishing, Media & Creative Arts	522	479	740	-11
Retailing, Wholesaling & Purchasing	-6	-29	-33	-5
Sales	51	99	283	-32
Science, Pharmaceutical & Food	45	125	-14	8
Secretarial & Admin	28	53	262	-11
Security, Trades & General Services	130	95	221	-12
Social & Not for Profit	31	66	-5	-14
Telecoms	-10	130	-46	26
Tourism, Travel & Airlines	144	80	4,856	-15
Transport, Warehousing & Motor	30	36	139	-12

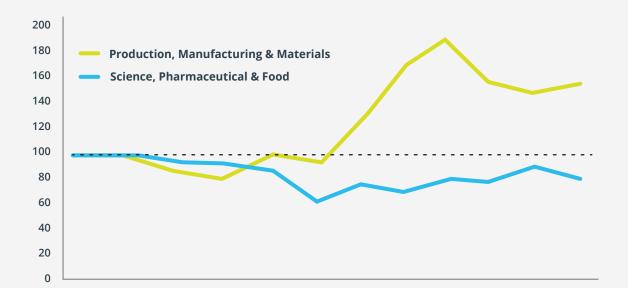


As noted above, the resilience of the Irish export sector has been a hallmark of Irish Covid-era economic activity. With that in mind, we present the vacancy rates of two export-orientated sectors with a strong multinational presence (Science, Pharmaceutical & Food; Production, Manufacturing & Materials) as indicators of the Irish employment outlook (Figure 4, below).

The Science, Pharmaceutical & Food sector experienced a remarkable surge in job vacancy creation throughout 2020 and into 2021:Q1, as it scaled up production in response to Covid-related demand. However, this sector then posted quarterly declines in job vacancy generation for two consecutive quarters before returning to its upward trajectory in 2021:Q4. The exceptional Covid-related demand which saw this sector surge in 2020 clearly appears to have eased back somewhat over the course of 2021. However, the recent upturn in vacancy rates for this sector should be welcomed as indication that export activity among Irish-based multinationals were not solely linked to Covid-19 and will continue to contribute positively to Irish economic growth in 2022.

The Production, Manufacturing & Materials
Services sector, on the other hand, has exhibited
an intermittent movement back towards
pre-Covid vacancy rates since 2020:Q2. The fall in
vacancy rates posted in 2021:Q4 suggests that
domestic manufacturers are susceptible to
Covid-related global economic headwinds, such
as supply chain disruptions and rising production
costs. An orderly unwinding of global supply
chain disruptions and a more benign inflationary
environment in early 2022 would enhance the
growth prospects for this sector in the coming
quarters.

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2020

2020

2020

2021

01

2021

Q4

2020

2019

2019

Figure 4: Changes in export orientated sectors (2019:Q1=100)



Location

As regards vacancy gains by location, the fourth quarter decline at national level is underpinned by a range of experiences at county level (See Table 2).

Seventeen counties have experienced a fall in vacancies over the quarter, with particularly strong decreases in Donegal (-32%) and Leitrim (-25%). These falls contrast with relatively strong quarterly vacancy increases in Longford (+47%) and Limerick (+13%). The falls do not yet offset the strong increases observed in the previous three quarters. The year-on-year figures remain positive for all counties but present a far wider range than the quarterly figures. Very high year-on-year increases have been observed in Wicklow (+173%), Wexford (+162), Kilkenny (133%), Carlow (+133%) and Donegal (+127%). Other counties, notably Leitrim (+17%) and Sligo (+18%) experienced more modest increases.

Table 2: Percentage changes in job vacancies by location

Counties	YoY change	Quarterly Change
Carlow	133	22
Cavan	63	22
Clare	85	-16
Cork	57	0
Donegal	127	-32
Dublin	97	-9
Galway	93	-3
Kerry	63	-9
Kildare	114	1
Kilkenny	133	-19
Laois	86	11
Leitrim	17	-25
Limerick	20	13
Longford	85	47
Louth	30	-6
Mayo	57	4
Meath	73	-9
Monaghan	35	-14
Offaly	92	-5
Roscommon	40	-15
Sligo	18	-5
Tipperary	55	8
Waterford	72	-19
Westmeath	82	-20
Wexford	162	-14
Wicklow	173	-20



Location

Figure 5 presents quarterly figures since 2019:Q4 for the counties that include the five main cities. All these counties show a similar trend, characterized by a strong decrease in the index in 2020:Q2 followed by a strong increase in 2020:Q3. The biggest decrease in the vacancy index during the second quarter of 2020 was experienced in Dublin. Waterford was the least affected, with a relatively small drop in 2020:Q2 and a strong recovery in 2020:Q3. Most cities proved to be relatively resilient in the face of the second and third Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020:Q4 and 2021:Q1. All counties with major cities, except Limerick, continued their strong performance in the second quarter and the vacancy numbers in all counties were above those recorded before Covid-19.

However, 2021:Q4 presents a change in the trend observed in previous quarters. All but one of the counties with a main city experienced a fall in vacancies with a particularly strong fall recorded in Waterford (-19%), the county that, until this point, had outperformed the other counties. County Limerick is the exception, recording a modest gain (+13%) in the final quarter. In all five

counties the vacancy index remains comfortably above pre-Covid levels.

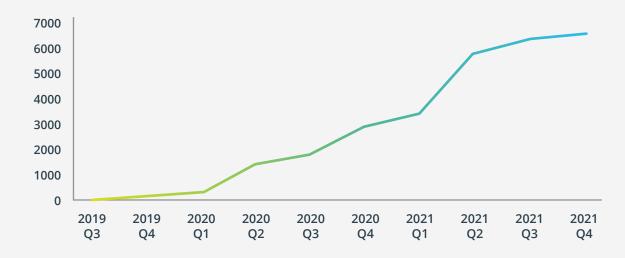
This report continues to track developments in relation to job vacancies that involve home working. Figure 6 presents quarterly figures since 2019:Q3. When expressed as an index and compared to a baseline value in 2019:Q3 of 100, the index value reaches 6,375 in 2021:Q4. The figures clearly reflect the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Working-from-home job vacancies had been rising very strongly until the second quarter of 2021, but the growth rate is falling since. In the third quarter of 2021 the number of working from home vacancies increased by a relatively modest 9% and over the fourth quarter the growth rate dropped further to a modest 4%. It is still too early to suggest that the working-from-home numbers are stabilising. Working-from-home vacancies are still growing at a faster rate than that of overall vacancies.

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Figures 6: Working from home vacancy indices (Q3 2019 = 100)





Conclusion

In order to assess the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Irish economy, up-to-date indicators of economic activity are essential. The IrishJobs Jobs Index, based on quarterly job vacancy data, offers timely insights into the economic impact of the ongoing crisis. This report reveals that the IrishJobs Jobs Index has experienced an 86% year-on-year increase in 2020:Q4 but has posted a quarterly decline of -11% for the quarter. The IrishJobs Jobs Index value (131) for 2021:Q4 has fallen back somewhat on its 2021:Q3 level (147), but still remains well above pre-Covid index levels.

Internationally traded sectors

The robust performance of the Science, Pharmaceutical & Food sector and the IT sector throughout the Covid-19 period have seen the internationally traded segments of the Irish economy mitigate the negative economic effects of the pandemic. While vacancy rates have fallen back somewhat in both of these sectors over the course of 2021, this can in part be attributed to an easing of the exceptional conditions that made their services indispensable in the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. Recent Covid-related economic uncertainties - such as global supply chain disruptions, the emergence of the more transmissible Omicron Covid-19 variant, and dampened investor sentiment in the face of higher inflation and possible interest rate increases across

the leading global economies – may also have impacted on 2021:Q4 hiring decisions. However, as indicated by the upturn in Science, Pharmaceutical & Food in the final quarter of the year, these internationally traded sectors continue to be robust sources of vacancy generation and economic activity within the Irish economy.

Domestic sectors

A number of domestic sectors have enjoyed strong rebounds in 2021, as Covid-19 public health restrictions have become less onerous. Such sectors include Tourism, Travel & Airlines; Sales; and Construction, Architecture & Property. Furthermore, a range of business support services have also experienced strong vacancy growth rates in 2021, as they benefit from increased demand in the context of an economy-wide recovery. Examples of such sectors include: Publishing, Media & Creative Arts; HR & Recruitment; Security, Trades & General Services; Accountancy & Finance; and Banking, Financial Services & Insurance.

However, a number of domestic sectors of significance to the Irish economy have yet to return to pre-Covid levels of job vacancy generation. Most notable among these sectors are Hotel & Catering; Production, Manufacturing & Materials; and Beauty, Hair Care, Leisure & Sport. The ability of these hospitality and leisure sectors to sustain their vacancy generation in 2022 will very much depend on a swift reduction in Omicron Covid-19 infection rates and the expected easing of ongoing Covid-19 public health restrictions.



Conclusion

Location

As regards vacancy gains by location, most of the counties experienced a fall in vacancies in 2021:Q4, with particularly strong decreases in Donegal (-32%) and Leitrim (-25%). These falls contrast with relatively strong quarterly vacancy increases in Longford (+47%) and Limerick (+13%). All counties with major cities, except Limerick, have experienced a fall in vacancy numbers during 2021:Q4 but in all of these five counties the vacancy index remains comfortably above pre-Covid levels. The growth rate of working-from-home vacancies has been falling since the second quarter of 2021 and only increased by a modest 4% during the fourth quarter. Yet, working-from-home vacancies are still growing at a faster rate than that of overall vacancies.

Looking ahead to 2022

Despite a tightening of Covid-19 public health restrictions in December 2021, the current Irish economic outlook nonetheless provides grounds for optimism in terms of job creation as we look to the year ahead.

The robust performance of Irish-based multinational firms looks set to yield additional vacancies over the coming year. The IDA (1) have recently announced that 249 new investments were secured in 2021, resulting in net increase of almost 17,000 jobs year on year. Of these 249 investments, 104 were from new

investors rather than existing investors - and 53% of these investments will reside in regional locations.

As detailed in this report, Pharmaceutical sector goods exports and IT sector services exports have continued to post vacancy growth in the face of Covid-19 economic disruptions. Notwithstanding the Covid-related global economic uncertainties mentioned above, these sectors are well placed to continue their robust economic performance in 2022.

While the domestic Production, Manufacturing & Materials has yet to return to pre-Covid levels of job vacancy creation, Enterprise Ireland reports that in 2021 its domestic client companies accounted for a net increase of 11,911 jobs. According to Enterprise Ireland (2) these domestic job gains occurred across all economic sectors, with particularly strong jobs growth reported in Life Sciences, Business Services, and Digital Technology. The ability of domestic employers to create new vacancies in what has been a challenging year bodes well for their performance in 2022.

As noted in this report, construction-related sectors have also displayed resilience in the face of Covid-19 disruptions. The sector has surpassed its pre-Covid level of job vacancy generation and has posted successive quarters of job vacancy increases prior to falling back somewhat in 2021:Q4. The Central Bank (3) forecasts that the construction sector will continue to grow in the coming year, with investment in building and construction expected to grow by approximately 8% over the course of 2022.



Contact

FOR IRISHJOBS.IE:

Sarah Brewer

Marketing Director sarah.brewer@stepstone.com

FOR SALES

Paul Egan

Sales Director paul.egan@irishjobs.ie

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Paddy O'Dea

paddy@pr360.ie 01 637 1777 | 086 357 3365

Lauren Ennis

lennis@pr360.ie 01 637 1777 | 086 161 1912

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A NOTE ON THE DATA

The report utilises a dataset comprising of all corporate jobs advertised on IrishJobs and Jobs.ie from 01/10/2021 to 31/12/2021. Revisions to the data-gathering process mean that the figures stated in this report are not directly comparable to previous reports.

