

## Labour Market Insights - Dorset | June 2020

July 2020

While UK is slowly emerging from the lockdown imposed back in March and pubs, restaurants, cafes and other businesses have opened their doors for the first time over the first weekend of July, early insights on the recruitment activity illustrate the impact the period in lockdown has had on the labour market in Dorset. Using Labour Insight data by Burning Glass Technologies - a source of labour market intelligence accessed under a Dorset LEP licence - we looked at the recruitment activity in the region over the first half of the year focusing on the period of lockdown (23 March – 30 June 2020).

Noting that the scale and form of the impact is quickly evolving, the data confirms that, as expected, new recruitment plans have seen a considerable drop as affected businesses have focused on maintaining their existing staff utilising the available [Government's support](#), rather than recruiting new employees. There were around 27 thousand jobs advertised in Dorset over the first half of 2020 – 4.8 thousand fewer than the same period last year marking an overall 15% decline in job vacancies. Looking at the lockdown period in 2020 and comparing it with the same period last year the decline is more pronounced - 34%.

The prospects for the labour market in Dorset prior to the outbreak were positive. For example, there were close to 5.3 thousand jobs advertised in March 2020 when the lockdown started, in fact a marginal increase from the previous year. The significant drop followed in April, when vacancies fell almost by half (from the previous month) and have since showed an improvement over May and June, despite a significant part of the economy remaining closed over that time.

The recruitment activity throughout lockdown illustrates the impact on the shape of demand, and the types of jobs required throughout the pandemic. The recent developments illustrate the growing need for key and essential workers during the outbreak or those less affected by the pandemic predominantly in health, social care and technical occupations.

The breakdown of vacancies advertised by industry during lockdown shows decreased numbers across all industries in Dorset when compared to the same period previous year except for Public Administration & Defence and Health & Social Care where the numbers actually increased, illustrating the joint efforts of the public services in Dorset to fight the pandemic. This is also illustrated by the recruiting employers where the NHS, Department for Work and Pensions and the Councils have topped the list of recruiters.

Unsurprisingly, the early indications are that sectors such as Tourism & Food services Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Construction have been most significantly affected. Again, this is expected – given that many of those sectors have been completely closed and protection of existing staff has been their priority.

What is of interest is that demand for jobs in professional occupations such as health professionals, software developers, lawyers, project managers etc. has actually increased in 2020. Similarly, caring occupations demand has increased, while management and associate professional occupations have seen only slight decline. In comparison, demand for lower-skills jobs such as process, plant and machine operatives, customer service and elementary occupations decreased more markedly and quickly. While reflecting the affected industries, this may also relate to what has been commented in national press, that higher-skilled 'white collar' professions may have been better protected during the outbreak and, in fact, lower-skilled jobs have been affected disproportionately. This would be a trend worth monitoring over the next few months.