



*Wave*

# Recruitment Trends Report for 2023

2023



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# Foreword

What a year 2022 was. For most people I spoke with, it was very successful from a business perspective, within recruitment certainly. While the world was in complete turmoil in what seemed like a never-ending drama/ sitcom/black comedy box set, the world of recruitment had never been more alight.

The turmoil caused a severe candidate shortage, certainly during the first half of year, and led to many recruiters being busier than ever. Celebrations of record months, quarters and years flowed through social media and cries of 'never had more jobs on' filled the pubs on a Friday evening. Such celebration seemed to slow as the year came to an end but it's certainly been a busy time.

So to the job boards and, once again, despite a decade of job boards 'dying', they continue to be the go-to resource to find candidates. It's been two years since our last annual Recruitment Trends Report and I love seeing them as they represent a snapshot in time around candidate behaviour, recruiter activity and an insight into the economy. Part of my ambition for WaveTrackR is for it to be the single source of truth when it comes to independent job board data. These reports are free from bias or ulterior motive as I've always wanted to show which are the highest performing job boards - something I've been continually asked over the last 20 years. The answer of course is not straight-forward and down to a large number of variables, such as industry, role type, job copy quality, posting day and time. These are all things we try to help uncover in this report... which is why it totals nearly one hundred pages.

The secret of course is timing - when to post the right job, with the right content, at the right time. And the answer to that secret is always changing. This report will give you some insight into that, as well as what's happened over the last 12 months, and what we think may happen in the next 12 months. Of course, as is proven over and over again, predicting what will happen in the future is not something you can ever guarantee, but looking to the past is usually a good start.

I hope you enjoy this report as much as the team enjoyed putting it together. Huge thanks to Luis Cajao, Kamila Fitchett and Emily Buckley for pulling it all together. This is a report to be proud of - the data, the insights, the advice, it's tremendous. And if you're reading this, then we also need to doff our cap to Chris Ash who has been in charge of getting it into the hands of the people who want to know all about the job board market.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Cheers,  
Dave Jenkins  
CEO & Founder

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# Executive Summary

Application numbers grew in the latter half of 2022, whereas job activity decreased in the same time period. This points to an injection of candidates into the market as the year waned.

The best time to post jobs is at the beginning of the week, when candidates are most active.

Job boards accounted for a massive 80% of all jobs posted and 89% of all applications received, proving they are still the most popular platform among recruiters and candidates.

Totaljobs received the greatest percentage of applications of all job boards but niche job boards received the highest average number of applications per job.

The majority of jobs posted were permanent and full-time.

Whether listed for 7 days or up to 42 days, the vast majority of applications were received within 48 hours of a job being published.

Jobs with flexible working terms in their advert have increased hugely from 2020 to 2022. IT & Internet posted the greatest number of flexible permanent jobs and Education posted the highest percentage of flexible part-time jobs.

IT & Internet posted the highest percentage of jobs and received the highest percentage of applications of all industries, indicating a continued boom.



# Introduction

If 2020 was the year that the world was turned upside down and 2021 was the year that it tried to right itself again (in the process of which creating a new way of living and working), the hope was that 2022 would be the year that would be calmer, during which we all began to settle into these changes. What we ended up with was a war, an energy crisis, record inflation, a cost of living crisis, political upheaval (with no less than three UK prime ministers before the year was out), and mass strikes. 2022 was not a year characterised by calm but by uncertainty and by unpredictable turbulence.

However, it wasn't all bad, especially for candidates. A combination of high jobs and a candidate drought placed the ball firmly in the candidate's court. The UK experienced the lowest levels of unemployment in nearly 50 years alongside high levels of economic inactivity, leaving the candidate pool shallow. Jobs may have started to decrease in the second half of the year but they remained above pre-pandemic levels and many recruitment businesses were busier than ever. For recruiters that adapted to client needs, becoming consultative and looking at the broader recruitment requirements for businesses, 2022 was a good year.

The biggest workplace trends were born in 2020, expanded upon in 2021, and solidified in 2022. Flexible and remote working has gone mainstream, employers have become acutely aware of the importance of committing to diverse and inclusive policies, mental health both in and out of the workplace has been given weightier prominence, and there has been a movement for greater pay transparency. Businesses continued to fine-tune what works for them, with many turning to a hybrid model. Some have backtracked, mandating that employees return to the office, but workers have communicated with their feet in many cases, leaving for companies with greater flexibility.

As we entered 2022, it became abundantly clear that a 'return to normal' was not what was wanted or needed. It instead became about what we could do better, on an individual, business and governmental level. If there is one thing we can thank the pandemic for it is that it has forced positive change that might otherwise have taken years to occur. In order to facilitate these changes, employers and recruiters alike have had to prioritise skill building to ensure their employees and candidates are able to navigate a new hybrid, digital world characterised by an emphasis on social skills from entry level positions to leadership roles.

In 2021 the focus was on building back, a year of adaptability and recovery which continued into the early part of 2022. However, the economic pressures and political uncertainties that characterised the majority of 2022 have meant that some businesses entered into a more cautious mode as the year waned. Whilst we are very much still in a candidate-driven market, the turbulent economy is causing candidates, too, to act with caution, with job security becoming more important than ever. Being agile has become an essential skill for all to master, perhaps the most important soft skill of the post-pandemic era.

In Wave's Recruitment Trends Report for 2023 we dig into the recruitment trends that characterised 2022, including how the job market evolved over the year. To help us do this, we examine WaveTrackR data collected over 2022, compare it to 2021, and take an in-depth look at industry specifics to help gain an overview of the year and what we might expect in 2023.

# The Jobs Market

Despite it being a year characterised by political and economic turbulence, 2022 also saw unemployment fall to the lowest rate in nearly 50 years, while the number of job vacancies outnumbered those out of work for the first time on record - highly unusual for an economy facing a recession. This is largely due to an incredibly tight labour market, despite the gradual decrease in job posting activity over the second half of 2022. As a result of an exodus of migrant workers returning to the EU from the UK and a rise in the economic inactivity rate, there are simply fewer people in the jobs market - a shrinking workforce insufficient to fill the number of vacancies that still exist.

The economic inactivity rate has been one of the most interesting statistics to watch in 2022 as it told the job market story more truthfully than employment and unemployment rates. The economic inactivity rate explained the seemingly strange concurrence of decreasing unemployment and employment rates, as well as the disparity between low levels of unemployment and record job vacancies. The unemployment rate, unlike the economic inactivity rate, doesn't take into account those who have left the job market entirely, either permanently or temporarily.

For several consecutive quarters from the start of the pandemic, economic inactivity rose, only slowing in the period August to October 2022. An entire section of the populous dropped out of the jobs market altogether. [The Institute for Employment Studies](#) found that there were 600,000 fewer workers in 2022 compared to 2019. This has been driven by students and the long term sick, but was also due to those taking early retirement during the pandemic. A recent analysis for the [Times Health Commission](#) found that ill health amongst working age adults in the UK is currently costing the economy

£150bn a year. So many people falling out of the jobs market just as unemployment is at historically low levels and jobs remain high has become a real challenge for recruiters and employers and is further slowing economic growth. Attracting these people back to the workforce with the right support and greater flexibility is critical in order to prevent an ongoing skills and talent drain. The fact that the UK is on track to being the only country in the developed world with employment still below pre-pandemic levels by 2023 is sobering.

The recent drop in economic inactivity is driven by those aged 50-64 and is an indication that early retirees are beginning to return to the workforce as a result of the cost of living crisis. The turbulent economic situation in the UK has been a huge driver of many of the trends we've seen in the job market. Whether or not the UK officially falls into a recession is largely irrelevant - for the majority of the population it has certainly felt, and continues to feel, like a recession.. Rising energy bills and double digit inflation that wages cannot keep up with made 2022 a challenging year for many. It forced employers to raise wages in order to retain employees and attract candidates but, with inflation soaring, real pay has decreased.

Figures from the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) show that salary growth in real terms (adjusted for inflation) fell by a record 3% on the year in April to June 2022 and by 2.6% in September to November. What we have is a perfect storm - wages have grown at the fastest rate in more than 20 years but are still failing to keep up with soaring living costs, which are rising at the fastest rate in nearly 40 years. Inflation reached 10.7% in November 2022. Causing further friction is the gaping difference between public and private sector pay growth (3.3% for public sector compared to the private sector's

7.2% in September to November), which has led to the mass strikes the UK experienced in 2022 and continues to experience in 2023. The ONS revealed that June to November 2022 saw the highest number of working days lost due to strike action since 1990.

On a positive note, economic pressures and political uncertainty didn't result in the large-scale redundancies that some feared. Other than the layoffs we saw in Big Tech, businesses have generally taken the stance that it is beneficial to keep hold of talent where they can and try to ride out the storm - something many learned from the difficulty in re-hiring in the post-pandemic rebuilding phase. We have, however, started to see flutterings of caution - while vacancies remain above pre-pandemic levels, the rate of job postings is gradually slowing. Given the extraordinary rate by which jobs rose in 2021, this was perhaps unsurprising. It was unsustainable, especially coupled with a low unemployment rate and relatively high economic inactivity rate. The ONS recorded six consecutive quarterly falls in vacancy numbers from the period May to July 2022, the number one reason likely being economic pressure and uncertainty. Whilst businesses don't appear to be making huge numbers of redundancies (yet), they are starting to act with caution - as are candidates.



## Key Stats

*UK unemployment fell to the lowest rate since 1974 (3.5%)*

*Economic inactivity in the UK has increased by around 600,000 people since before the pandemic*

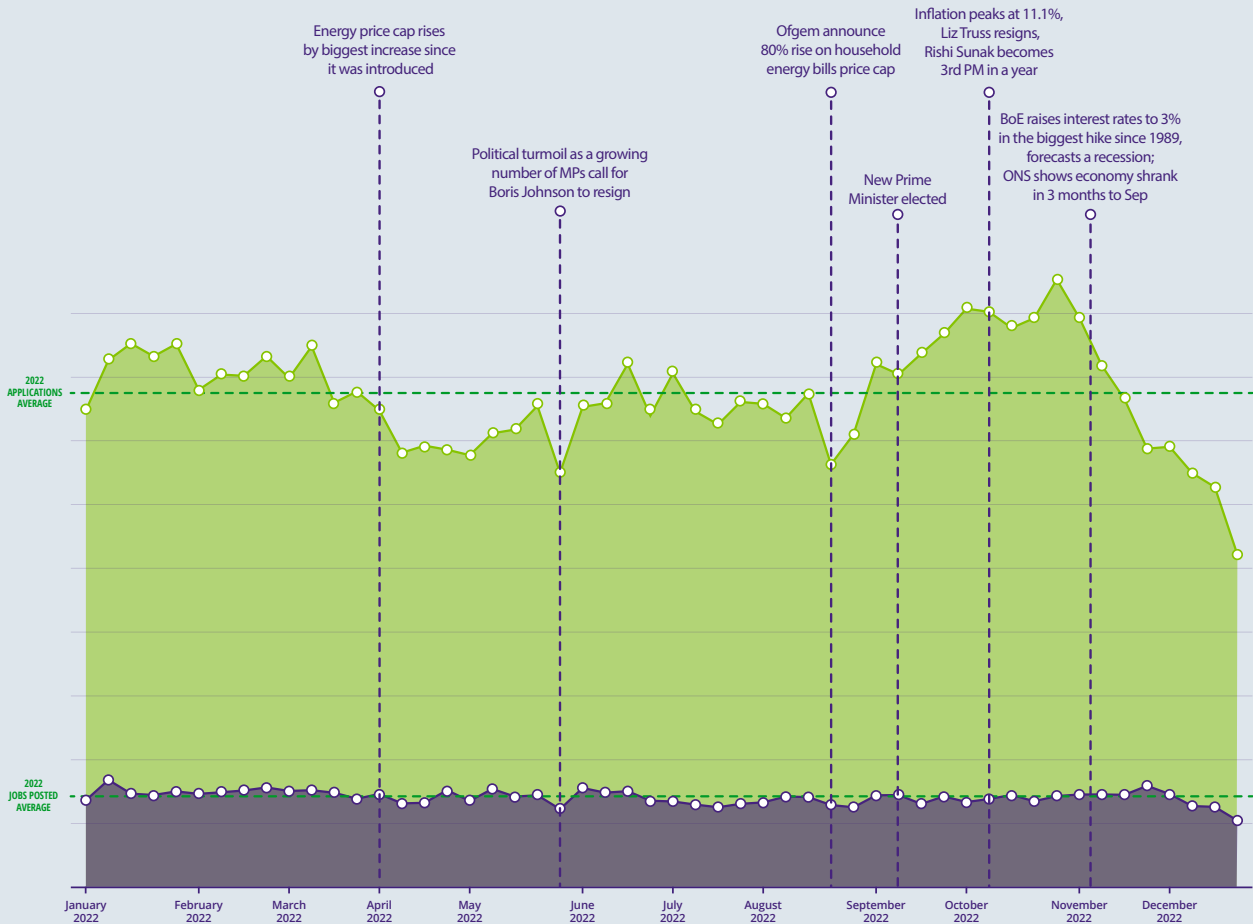
*The ONS recorded six consecutive quarterly falls in vacancy numbers in 2022*

*Wages have grown at the fastest rate in more than 20 years but salary growth in real terms fell by a record 3% on the year in April to June 2022*

# Job Posting and Applications by Week

Compared to 2022 monthly average

● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 1 | Weekly trend for jobs and applications over 2022. Compared to 2022 monthly average.

# Job Posting & Applications Trend

Job posting and application trends tended to be seasonal pre-pandemic - boosted job activity in the new year, a slow-down over the summer, stronger activity once schools return in September and graduates enter the market, and a wind-down in activity as the year comes to a close. When COVID hit, the market was thrown into chaos and unpredictability became the new trend. In 2022 we started to see those trends return, spiked with global and national events such as the onset of the war in Ukraine and the soaring energy, food and materials price fallout leading to rising inflation.

To really get a grasp of how the year unfolded, we looked at jobs and applications figures by week, month and quarter, as well as average application per job by month and a comparison year on year. To help make informed decisions on when and where to apply, we have also investigated jobs and applications by channel, job type, day and time, and looked into the application quality from different job boards.

Breaking jobs and applications data down into weekly statistics allows us to see the minutiae of the market and how it evolved over the year.

*January may not have been the strongest month for jobs, the second week of the year (when most businesses and schools are fully back after the Christmas break) but saw the highest number of jobs posted all year.*

Although numbers dipped mid-month, they rose again in the final week and January proved to be a strong start to 2022. February was largely characterised by job rises but in March they begin to fall or plateau. April zig-zagged, before rising high in early May. However,

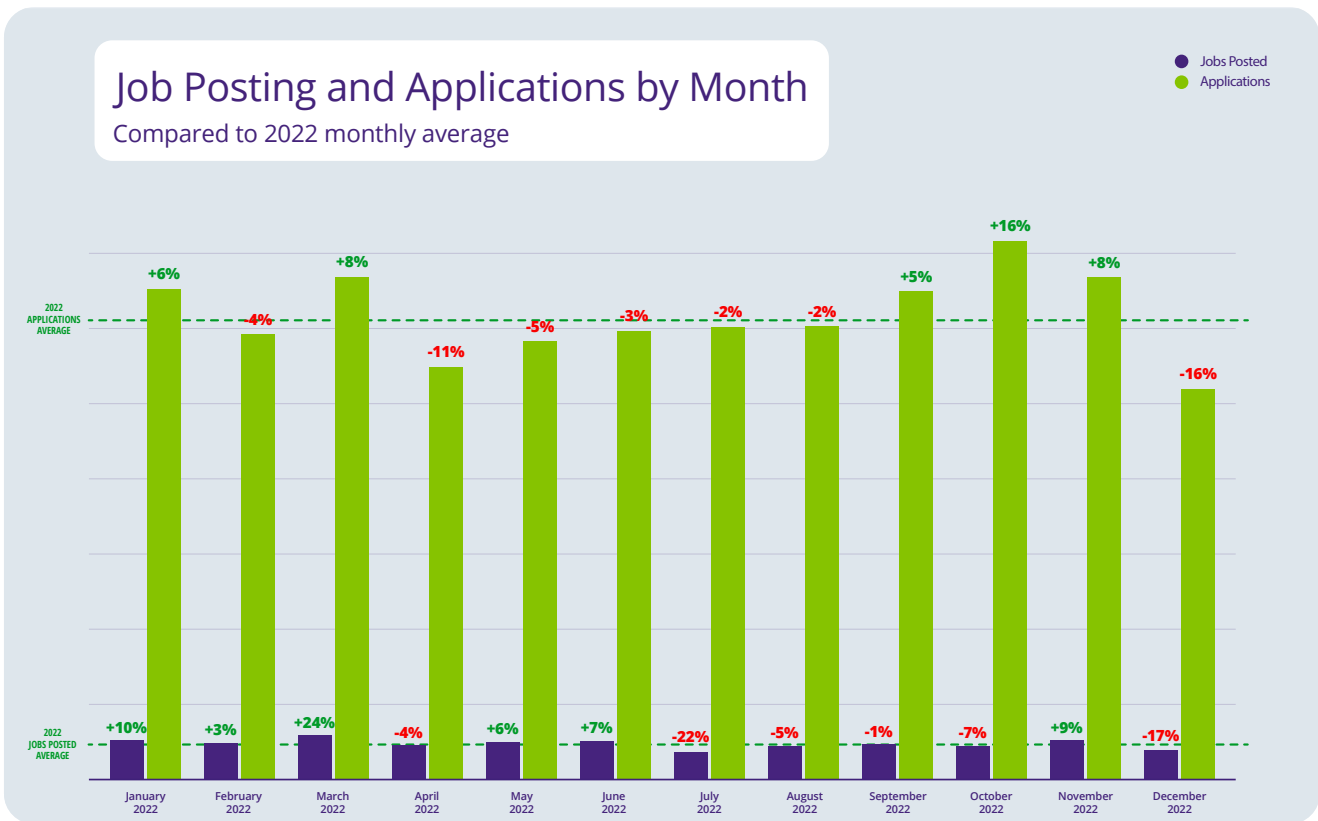
mid-May saw jobs fall to the lowest levels of the year bar Christmas week. Jobs pick up early June but then start to fall again, dropping fairly consistently until mid-July. From that point on, until a spike in late November/early December, jobs remain below the 2022 average, only occasionally rising slightly above it.

Applications didn't zig-zag from week to week as jobs often did in 2022. They remained above the average for the year until the end of March, not rising above it until the end of June.

*The low application numbers for April and May are likely a result of increased caution among those already in jobs as both political and economic uncertainty began to rise following the war in Ukraine and the continuation of soaring energy and household prices.*

Application numbers were higher in the summer months but still largely under the 2022 average, possibly caused by many taking time out for the first fully unrestricted holidays since the start of the pandemic. By the time we get to early September, applications are starting to rise, dipping slightly in October but then peaking in the first week of November (likely due to the onset of seasonal retail and warehouse jobs, combined with economic pressures on households). Applications then gradually fall fairly consistently as the year wanes, in line with seasonal trends but possibly also due to increased caution amongst those who might have ordinarily considered a job to job move.

# Distribution by Month



GRAPH 2 | Monthly trend for jobs and applications over 2022. Compared to 2022 monthly average.

The year started fairly strong for both jobs and applications, with the trend for high jobs from 2021 carrying on into the early part of 2022. In February, following the initial new year, new job and business-building surge, job and application activity decreased slightly.

*At 24% over the 2022 monthly average, March saw the highest number of jobs posted all year.*

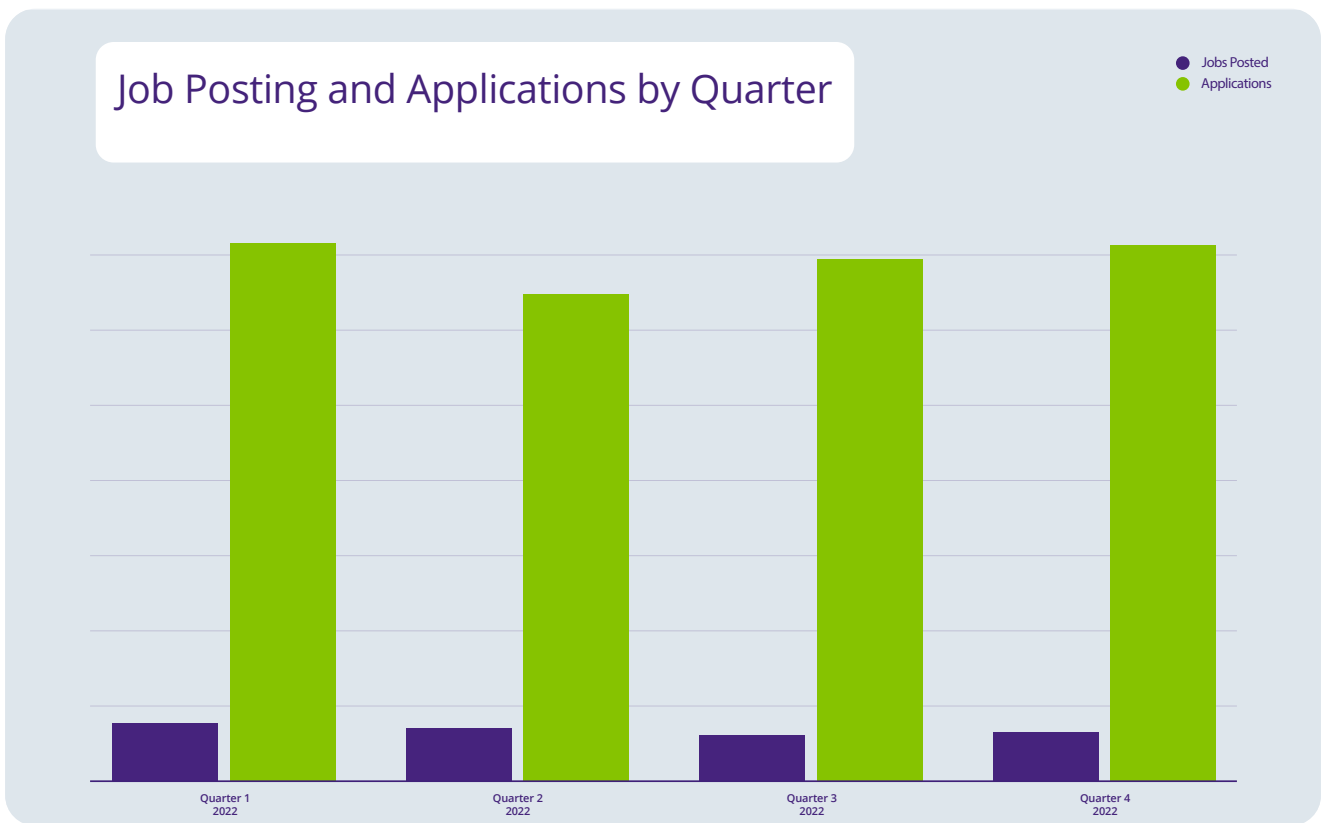
Applications were joint-second highest, equalling November. People seemed to be on the move again, perhaps partly in search of better packages against a backdrop of the rapidly rising cost of living as employers were forced to increase salaries to attract candidates.

March's rises gave way to fairly significant drops in both jobs and applications in April - only December saw lower numbers of applications. This was perhaps a result of continuing price hikes and a general feeling of

uncertainty as the war in Ukraine prompted businesses to begin to act with caution. In May, jobs rose above the 2022 monthly average - just - and applications increased too but not above the average. In fact, applications remained low across the summer months, something that could be a seasonal trend as people took long-awaited, unrestricted holidays.

Jobs effectively plateaued in June, before falling sharply in July and remaining under the 2022 monthly average until November, when they rose to the highest levels since March. Applications, meanwhile, began to pick up in September after the summer slump, rising to 5% above the 2022 monthly average and then peaking in October at 16% above that average. Whilst applications dipped in November, they were still above the monthly average for 2022, making November - a month where job activity tends to decline - a busy month for recruiters. December's dips in both jobs and applications were expected, a seasonal trend as the year winds up.

# Distribution by Quarter



**GRAPH 3** | Quarterly trend for jobs and applications over 2022. Compared to 2022 monthly average.

Job activity was strongest in Quarter 1, with the energy and drive of a new year and before the economic effects of the war in Ukraine began to be fully felt.

Quarter 2 was the weakest for applications - this was a period when uncertainty was mounting, when people were worried about soaring energy prices and were beginning to feel the pinch of the rapidly rising cost of living. It was a time when no-one was sure whether businesses would have to start making redundancies because of increasing business costs and many were holding fire on job searches, feeling safer in the job they were already in.

Applications rose in Quarter 3 but were still lower than Quarters 1 and 4, and jobs were at their lowest all year.

*As Quarter 3 comprises the three summer months when activity tends to wane due to candidates and employees taking annual leave, this is not wholly surprising.*

In the final quarter of 2022, applications were the second highest of the year, likely due to a number of factors, including graduates entering the market, retirees re-entering the market as a result of rising cost of living, and workers seeking a higher salary because of the squeeze on salaries brought on by inflation.

# Average Application per Job by Month



GRAPH 4 | Average application per job by month over the course of 2022

At just 9, January saw the lowest average number of applications per job but at that point the average had been 9 for some time, rising from 7 in August 2021. It's proof that the gap between applications and jobs gradually began to close as 2022 progressed.

*The general trajectory is a rise through the year in the average number of applications per job, with a spike in July and then again in October when the average rose to 16 - the highest all year.*

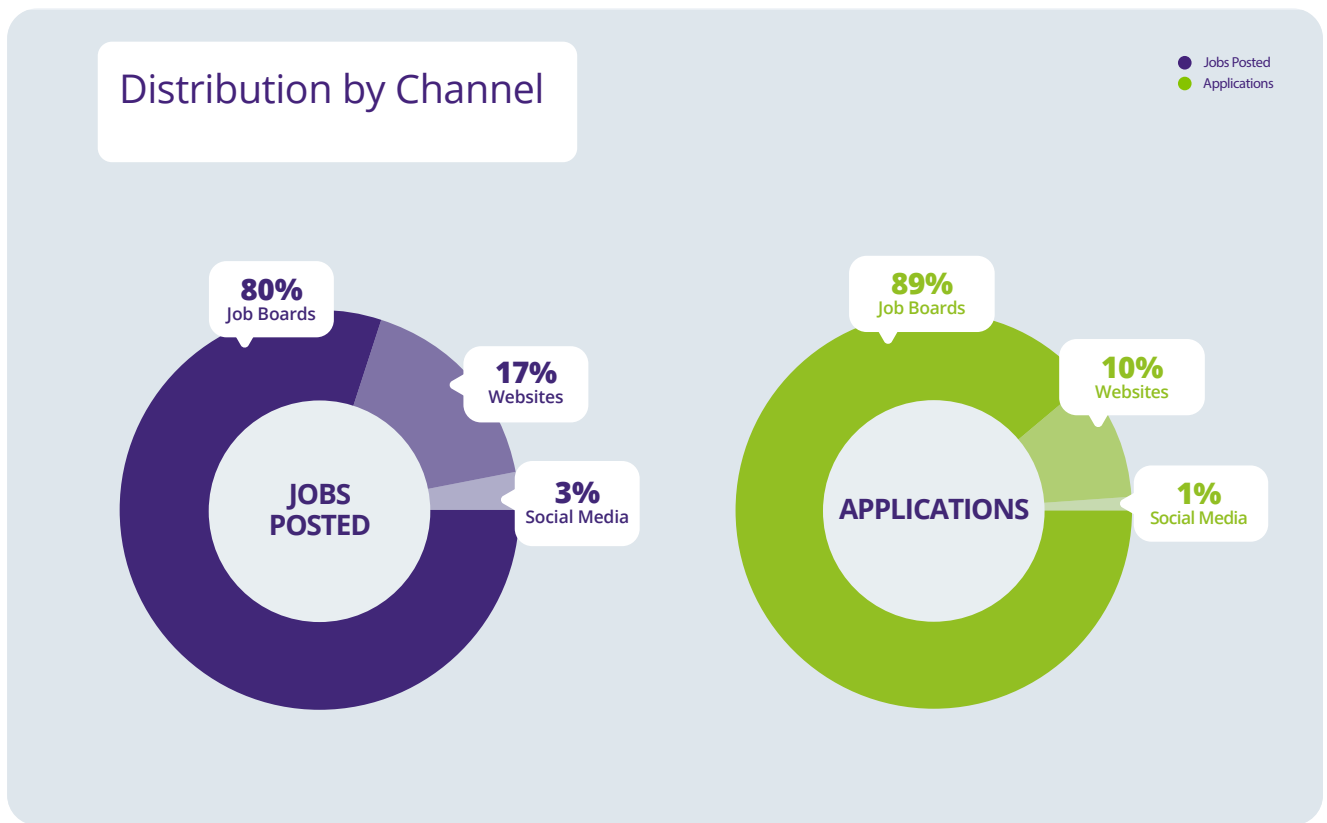
This makes sense given October saw the highest percentage of applications received in 2022 but the third lowest percentage of jobs.

October is often an active month for candidates as children are settled back into school, giving parents the headspace to think about looking for new jobs, plus new graduates are entering the market.

In the period August to October 2022, the ONS also recorded a rise in those aged 50 to 64 re-entering the job market from retirement, likely due to rising living costs. All this, plus those seeking bigger pay packages due to financial pressures, made October a busy month for candidates.

The high number of applications per job in July is likely due to a sharp fall in jobs in that month so, although applications were under the monthly average for 2022, those that were applying were competing for fewer jobs overall. The year ended on an average of 13 applications per job, four more than in January and four more year on year. After months of candidate shortages, this boost to average applications per job is a sign that candidate pools may be slowly starting to fill once more.

# Distribution by Channel



GRAPH 5 | Distribution of jobs and applications by channel

With all the conversation in recent years suggesting that job boards are losing their relevance, you'd be forgiven for thinking recruiters are using them less to post their jobs.

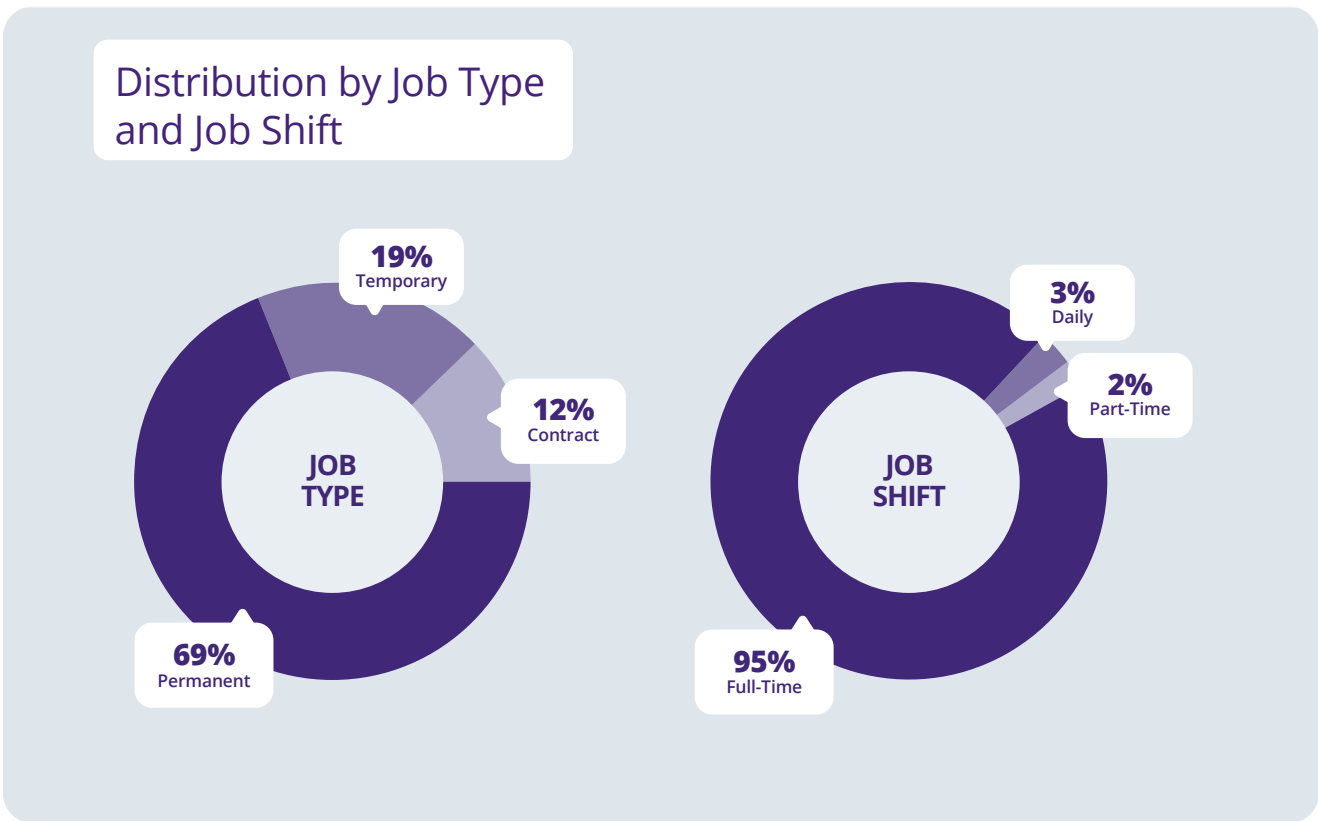
*Our data would strongly suggest otherwise. 80% of all jobs posted in 2022 were on job boards and a huge 89% of all applications received were via job boards.*

What is particularly interesting is that the number of jobs posted to job boards dropped by 1% from 2021 but the number of applications rose by 3% from 2021. Clearly, candidates are still using job boards more than any other platform.

17% of jobs were posted to recruitment websites, a figure that remains unchanged year on year, despite a recruitment agency's own website being an ideal platform for advertising their jobs. Applications to websites declined by 3%, suggesting that more needs to be done from a candidate attraction viewpoint to increase traffic to your website's jobs page.

Social media appears to continue to be more of a general networking and lead generation tool than a job advertising platform - for now at least. Only 3% of jobs were posted to social media channels, although that was an increase of 1% from 2021. However, social media received just 1% of all applications - a statistic unchanged from 2021.

# Distribution by Job Type



GRAPH 6 | Distribution of jobs and applications by job type and job shift

Comprising nearly 70% of jobs, permanent jobs represented the greatest share of all jobs posted in 2022 - an increase of 4% year on year, perhaps due to a general desire for greater job security in a year of such uncertainty. Temporary jobs only accounted for 29% of all jobs posted, a similar figure to 2021. Contract jobs represented 12% of jobs posted, a decrease of 4% from 2021, although this figure may increase in 2023 as a downturn often results in a rise in demand for contractors as a more flexible resource.

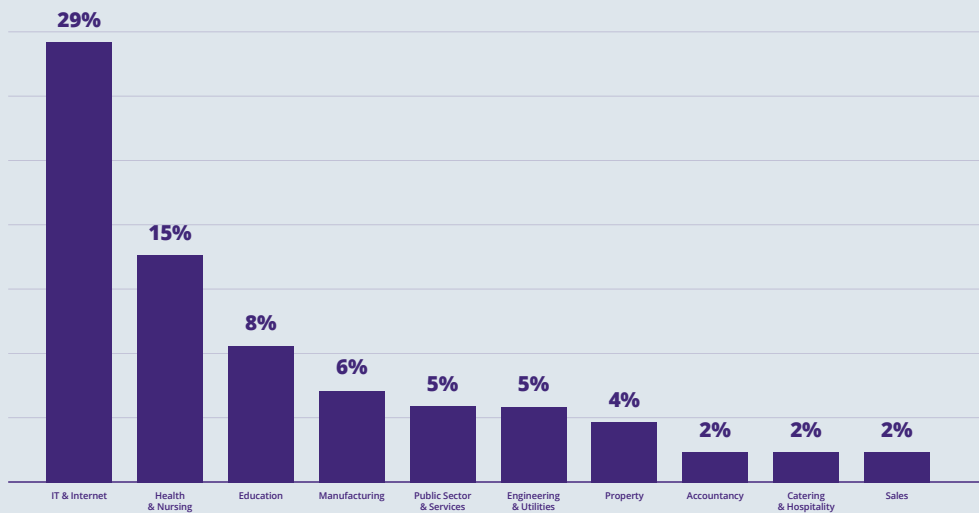
The majority of permanent jobs were accounted for by IT & Internet, whereas Education posted the highest percentage of temporary and contract jobs, likely partly due to the huge increase in locum staff as so many teaching and support staff in schools isolated due to COVID.

*The vast majority (95%) of jobs posted in 2022 were for full-time roles (a figure unchanged from 2021), with just 3% being daily rate jobs (a slight increase on 2021) and only 2% part-time jobs.*

Given the movement for greater flexibility in all areas, including contract type, the low percentage of part-time jobs may seem surprising. However, it could be that, given the cost of living crisis, many aren't able to reduce their hours, with some having to take on second jobs to make ends meet ([a report published by insurer Royal London](#) in September 2022 found that 5.2 million UK workers had taken on a second job, with a further 10 million considering doing so if costs continue to rise). Instead, the increase in flexible working is allowing those that might have been forced to take a part-time position to work full-time in a more flexible way, for example compressed or agile hours.

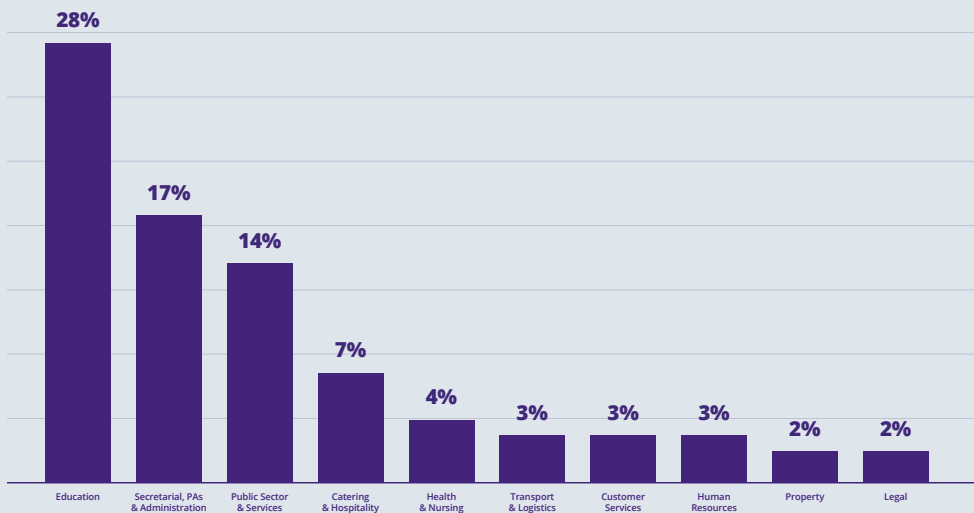
## Top 10 Industries with Permanent Jobs

Percentage of total jobs



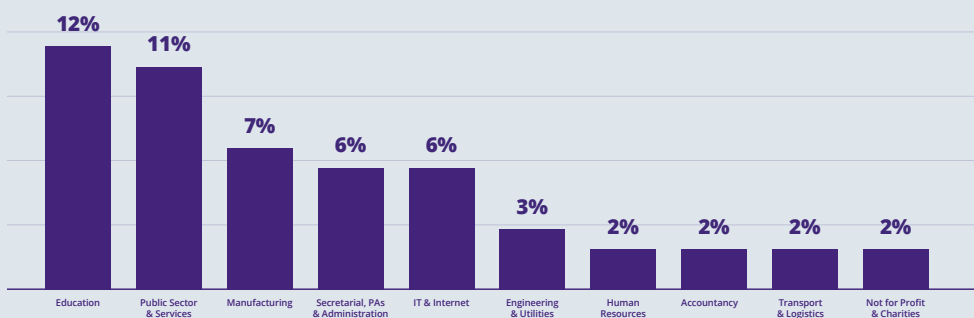
## Top 10 Industries with Temporary Jobs

Percentage of total jobs



## Top 10 Industries with Contract Jobs

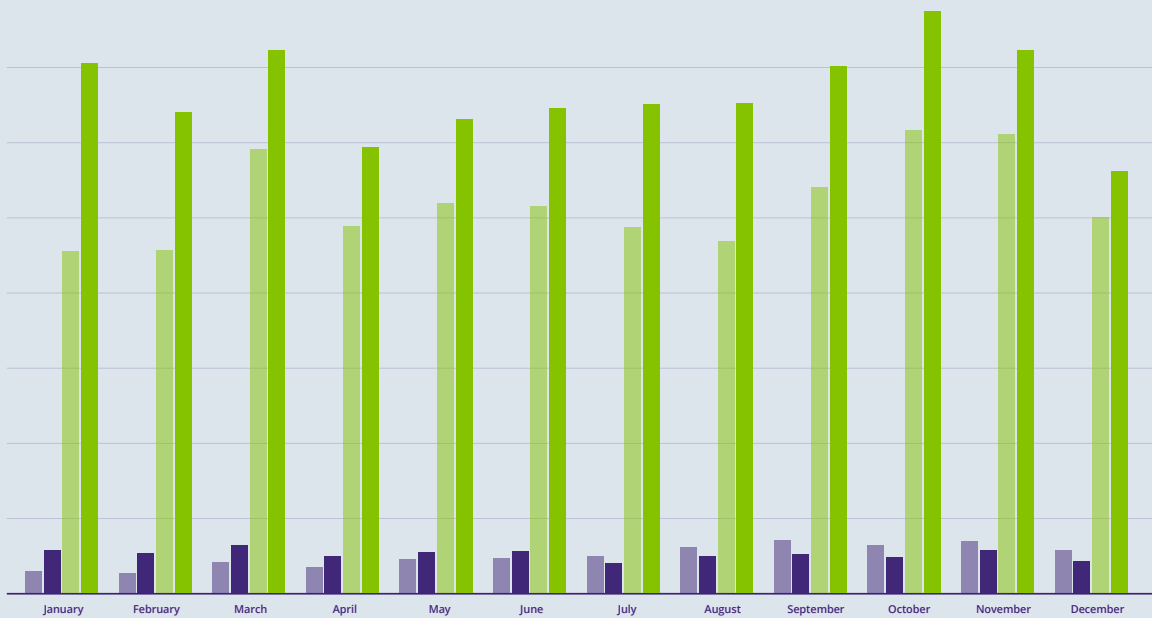
Percentage of total jobs



GRAPH 7, 8, 9 | Top 10 industries with Permanent jobs (top), temporary jobs (middle) and contract jobs (bottom)

## Jobs and Applications by Month 2021 vs 2022

- Jobs Posted 2021
- Applications 2021
- Jobs Posted 2022
- Applications 2022



**GRAPH 10** | Jobs Posted and Applications by Month - 2021 compared to 2022

# 2022 vs 2021

If 2020 highlighted the resilience of the recruitment industry, 2021 showcased adaptability. Following an incredibly tough 2020, by early 2021 jobs had started to pick up and then soared as restrictions eased and businesses began to re-open. Economic recovery in 2021 outpaced all forecasts as we began to rebuild with vigour. The one sticking point? A labour shortage that threatened long-term recovery. However, by the start of 2022, applications increased hugely. In January 2022, more applications were received than in any month in 2021. Jobs were higher than the 2021 monthly average but, bar December, were the lowest they'd been since August 2021.

Jobs dipped in February but remained above the 2021 monthly average. They peaked in March to the highest levels seen in 2022, at 35% above the 2021 monthly average and 24% above the 2022 monthly average. That relatively healthy start to the year for jobs in 2022 was in comparison to an unexpectedly gloomy start to the year in 2021, when the UK embarked on yet another full-scale lockdown that was to last until early March. Business confidence wasn't as low as the 2020 months of the pandemic, largely because the vaccine programme had begun and a roadmap to re-opening the economy had been set out. However, although businesses might have been dipping their toes into the building-back waters, they still weren't diving into hiring again and jobs in Quarter 1 2022 were a huge 82% higher than jobs in Quarter 1 2021.

Applications were also higher in Quarter 1 2022 year on year, though by a slightly less dramatic 38%. In fact, application numbers were higher than 2021 across each quarter of 2022, confirming what many recruiters have seen, heard and felt. The issue of candidate shortages, which was bordering on a crisis in 2021, eased somewhat in 2022. Overall, 2022 saw 28% more applications than in 2021. What's changed? A rise in job to job moves in the first quarter due to candidates

seeking higher pay as a result of increasing energy prices and inflation fuelled applications. In addition, those stuck in jobs they would have ordinarily moved from or who ended up in less than perfect roles after being made redundant, felt less nervous about making job moves in the early part of 2022 than when the pandemic was still prevalent.

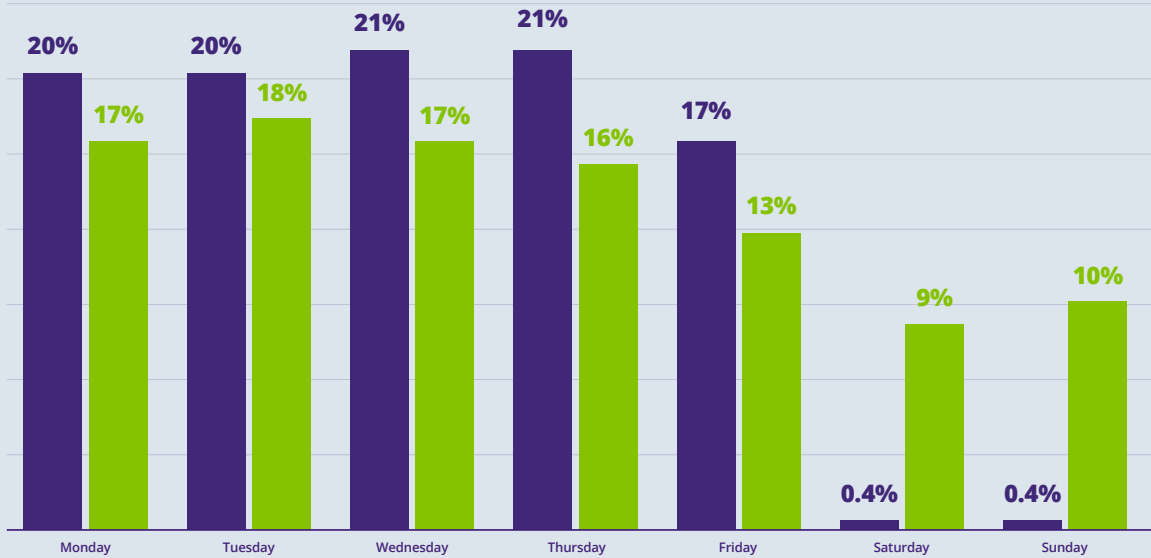
Following a quarter that experienced markedly more jobs year on year, jobs in Quarter 2 of 2022 were over the 2021 figures for the same period but by 27% as opposed to 82%. As the economy started to re-open in the spring of 2021, jobs suddenly started to soar. In May 2021, jobs rose to a colossal 219% above the 2020 monthly average. Largely driven by the services industries which had begun to re-open over the preceding couple of months, the speed at which jobs increased in May 2021 was astounding. However, the [KPMG/REC Report](#) on Jobs for May 2021 revealed that at the same time that its job vacancies index accelerated at the fastest rate in 23 years, staff availability declined at its fastest rate since 2017. Many businesses struggled to recruit the staff they needed to re-open fully.

Jobs in Quarters 2 and 3 of 2022 were down on the same periods of 2021, each by 22%. In 2021, jobs continued to soar from May, growing month on month until a dip in October but rising again in November. With the economy re-opening, the continued success of the vaccination programme, and restrictions rapidly diminishing, businesses were eager to build back and hiring boomed. However, applications were falling and recruiters and employers were struggling to fill vacancies. 2022 might not have seen soaring jobs but jobs remained high - overall they were 5% higher in 2022 than in 2021 - and applications began to tick up. This has resulted in a slightly more stable market, despite the turbulence that marked 2022.

## Jobs and Applications by Weekday

Percentage of total jobs

● Jobs Posted  
● Applications

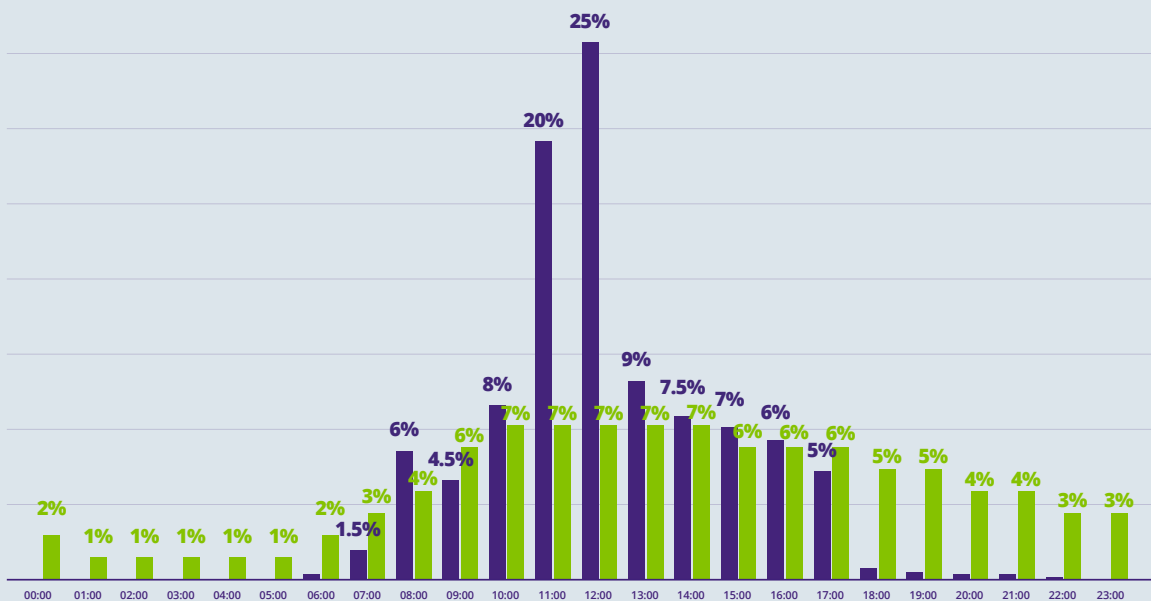


GRAPH 11 | Jobs posted and applications by weekday

## Jobs and Applications by Time of the Day

Percentage of total jobs

● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 12 | Jobs posted and applications by time of the day

# Distribution by Time

Taking an 18% share of the total, the majority of applications were received on Tuesday but Monday and Wednesday were just behind with 17% each.

*What this shows is that candidates are most active at the beginning of the week - a trend that has persisted for many years.*

Applications slowly decrease as the week wanes, with the weekend being the quietest period.

2022 became the year job posting and applications shifted closer to syncing. Wednesday and Thursday were jointly the most popular days to post jobs.

However, posting more on a Monday and Tuesday would be beneficial so the jobs are fresh for candidates applying on a Monday and for the majority who apply on a Tuesday.

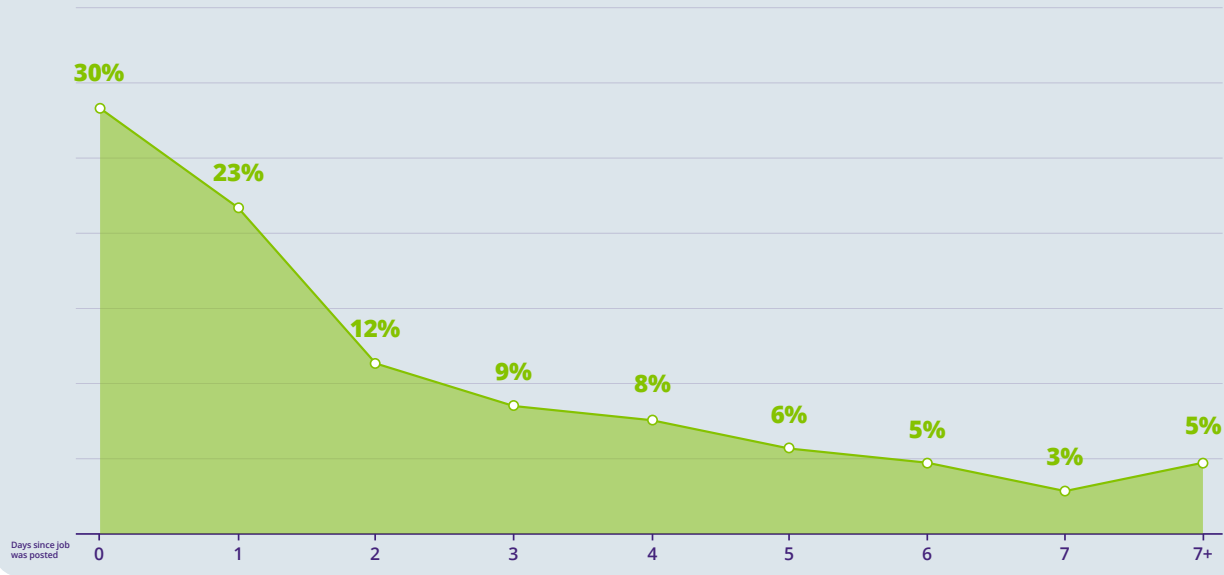
When it comes to time of day, applications and jobs are largely in sync. The majority of candidates apply in the middle of the day, between 10am and 2pm, although it is fairly evenly spaced out between 9am and 5pm. This goes against the general belief that most candidates apply outside of work hours and may be a result of an increased number of people working from home for at least part of the week.

There is, however, still some application activity in the evenings, with 6pm and 7pm being the most popular post-work time to apply. The vast majority of jobs are posted at 12pm, followed closely by 11am.

## Time to Apply for 7 Day Listings

Percentage of total applications

● Applications

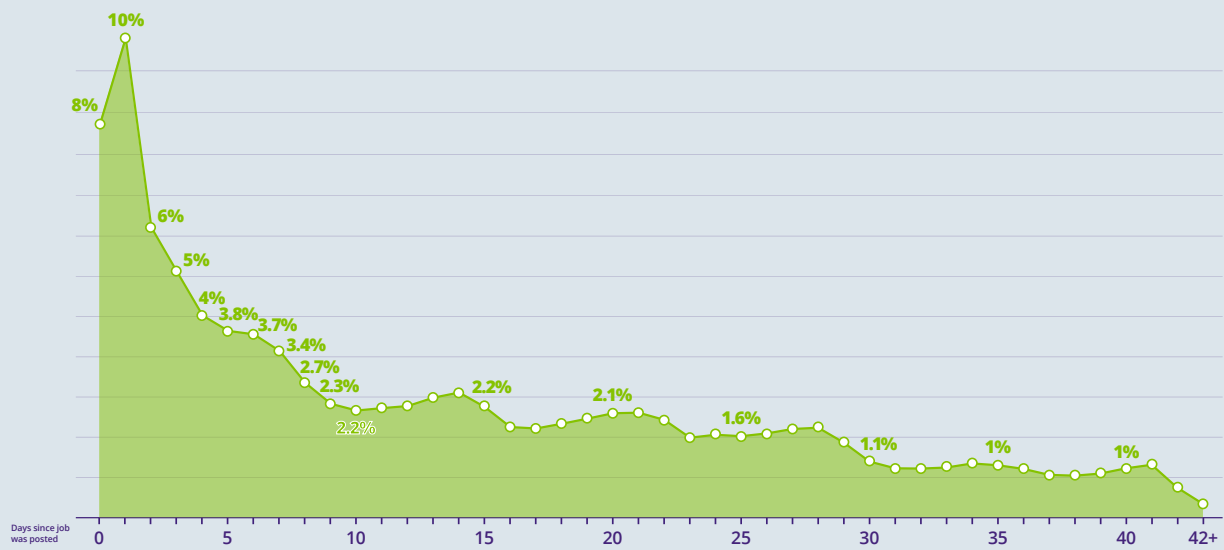


GRAPH 13 | Time to apply for 7 day listings

## Time to Apply for 30-42 Day Listings

Percentage of total applications

● Applications



GRAPH 14 | Time to apply for 30-42 day listings

# Time to Apply

How quickly do candidates tend to apply for a job after it is posted? This data, broken down into categories based on the listing duration, tells us just that. Why does it matter? Combined with knowledge of the days that most applications are received, knowing how long it takes candidates to apply for a job once it is posted can help recruiters to schedule job posts at the best time.

There is a slight difference between jobs with a weekly listing and those with monthly listings but in both cases the majority of applications were sent soon after the job was posted.

*For weekly listings, most applications (30%) were received within 24 hours of the job being posted, with applications dropping off with each passing day.*

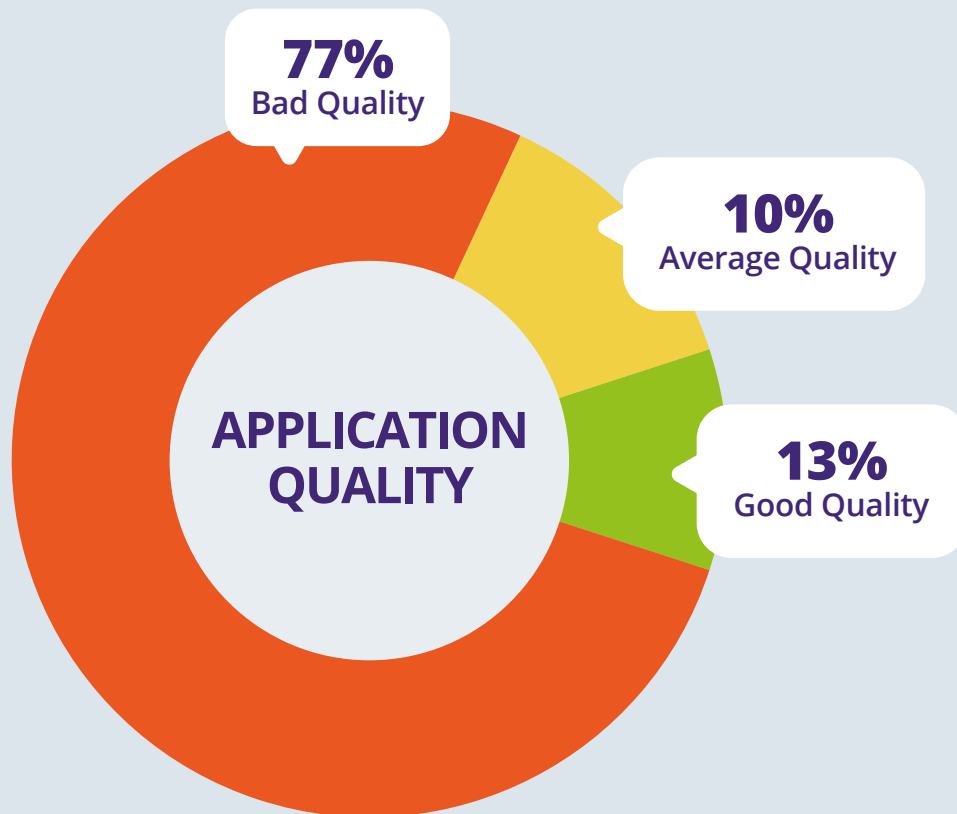
*For monthly listings, most applications were received within 48 hours, again diminishing as time passed.*

This is largely because fresh jobs are posted constantly on job boards so the more time that passes after a job has been posted, the less likely it is that candidates will see it.

In order to ensure your job has been freshly posted when candidates are actively searching, it's vital to post at the right time. As job boards prioritise newer jobs in organic searches, you need to post your jobs on the day that the majority of candidates apply, which is generally the beginning of the week, from Monday to Wednesday. Post towards the end of the week and it could be days before candidates visit the job board, by which point your job will be further down the search results. This could mean the difference between your job appearing on page 1 or page 21 when qualified candidates are looking.

## Application Quality

Based on recruiter ranking



GRAPH 15 | Application quality according to recruiter candidate ranking

# Application Quality

WaveTrackR's traffic light system allows users to rank applications based on quality, dictating which candidates should move forwards in the process. Recruiters can tick the 'green' box against applications that they want to take forward to the next stage, 'amber' for those that are a maybe, and 'red' for those that aren't suitable and won't be moving forwards. It's a highly useful tool when it comes to application and candidate management but it also allows us to analyse the general quality of applications being received.

*A hefty 77% of all applications were marked as red, meaning the vast majority were unsuitable. 10% were amber and just 13% were highlighted as green.*

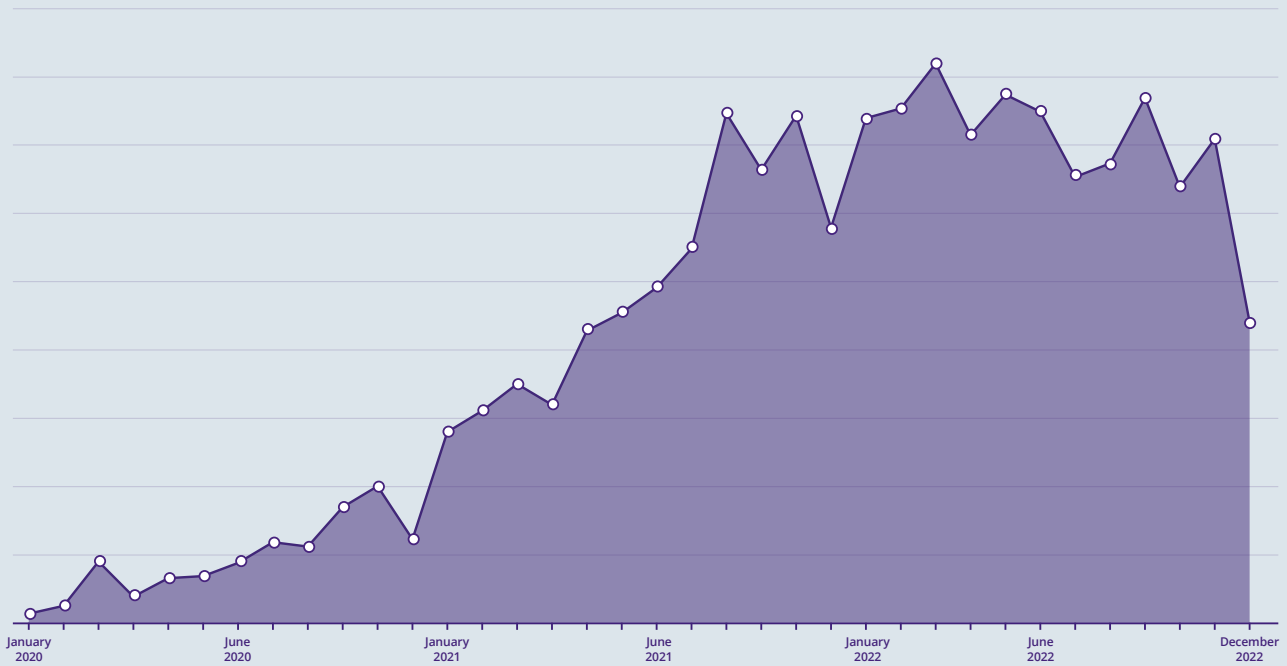
Statistically, recruiters will reject more applications than they progress, especially in industries with high volumes of candidates. It's a good idea, however, to re-assess your job posting strategies to ensure you are doing all you can to reach and attract quality candidates to your jobs.

Are your job ads the right length, with the right keywords and featuring a standardised job title? Do they include a salary, location, benefits, and are they limited to the key responsibilities? Are they compelling and humanised? Once you've perfected your job ad copy, you need to think about the where and the when. Ensure you're posting your ads to the right job boards (as well as your own website) and at a time when candidates are actively searching. Tightening up your job ads and job ad posting strategies is key to receiving a higher percentage of 'green' applications and a lower volume of 'red' ones.

## Flexible Working Jobs

Jobs mentioning flexible, remote or working from home

● Jobs Posted



GRAPH 16 | Flexible working jobs per month, from January 2020 to December 2022

# Flexible Working

Remote and flexible working had been slowly on the rise pre-pandemic but when COVID-19 necessitated that workers stayed at home and companies were forced to go fully remote almost overnight, it accelerated the trend to a degree no-one could have anticipated. Towards the end of 2020, there was huge debate as to whether businesses would and should mandate a return to the office and that debate is ongoing, with news of large organisations backtracking on their flexible work policies still headlining in the press. From the biggest global companies to local SMEs, businesses everywhere have been divided on what the workplace would and should look like moving forward. However, the ones that took their cues from their employees and listened to their candidates have generally found retention and recruitment less challenging, especially as the market changed into one in which job seekers hold all the cards.

WaveTrackR data shows a fairly consistent upwards trajectory for jobs with flexible, remote and/or working from home options from the start of 2020. Those numbers peaked in March 2022 but generally stayed far higher than any time in 2020 or 2021 for the remainder of 2022, only dipping when all jobs in a particular month dipped. In terms of the industries shaping the flexible working agenda, IT & Internet rule - the industry accounted for a huge 80% of all jobs advertised as flexible. Many roles in the IT & Internet sector can be worked remotely and the industry generally has the ability to offer more flexibility. A skills shortage also means the industry needs to utilise every form of candidate attraction it can. Education leads for part-time jobs, with a number of teachers and support staff job sharing. Catering & Hospitality posts the second highest percentage of part-time jobs - an industry known for shift work and, post-pandemic, needing to hire staff in whatever capacity to fill huge numbers of vacancies.

As part of a survey of key hiring decision makers from 62 companies across a range of industries, [Morgan McKinley](#) found that 90% of global employers have changed their policies on flexible working compared to before the pandemic. What the pandemic showed us was that it was completely possible to remain productive and connected when working remotely and flexibly. Get it right and the benefits are huge, creating happier, healthier employees that bring their best to their jobs. Navigating this new terrain has meant each company fleshing out how it works for them, as well as ensuring that those all-important colleague connections are maintained amongst a dispersed workforce. It's a learning curve for both employees and employers and will continue to be so for quite some time.

Because flexible work is no longer a rarity and there is a well-known candidate shortage, employees and candidates feel empowered to ask for it or look elsewhere. A [2021 Future Forum study](#) found that 93% of knowledge workers globally want greater flexibility in where and when they work. Less than 20% view the office as the best environment for focused work but 80% believe the office should be used for team meetings and collaborative work. The [2022 Future Forum Pulse](#) study found that 65% of all workers prefer working part of their week in the office and part from home. Hybrid working and the flexibility to choose the pattern that suits each individual has become the gold standard.

Not only are flexible working patterns the preferred choice amongst many workers, it can make the difference between someone being able to work or not. Parents, and especially working mothers, were particularly hard hit by the pandemic as they struggled to juggle work and caring responsibilities. Some left the workforce and haven't returned, others feel they can't work and manage their other responsibilities. Rising economic inactivity was a real challenge in 2022 but flexible working could tempt early retirees back to the workforce and help make work possible for some of the growing numbers of long-term sick. Flexible working options can allow untapped talent to enter the market at a time when labour shortages are severely impacting a number of industries.

In a move to make work more accessible to everyone, a milestone was reached in December 2022 - the [UK government announced plans](#) that will mean millions of employees have the right to request flexible working in any of its forms (job sharing, flexitime, or working compressed, annualised or staggered hours) from day one of their employment. If an employer cannot accommodate a request to work flexibly, they will be required to discuss alternative options before they can reject the request. It's a positive step and an indication of the direction in which we are moving.

What is clear is that a large number of employees and candidates will think with their feet if flexibility isn't offered. LinkedIn data revealed that more than a third of workers would resign if they were forced back into the office full time. The aforementioned Morgan Mckinley report found that 71% of UK professionals would consider leaving an organisation if their 'preferred flexible working options' weren't offered. The use of the word 'preferred' highlights that there is more to the flexible working trend than providing a one size fits all policy. It needs to be tailored to the individual and their needs.

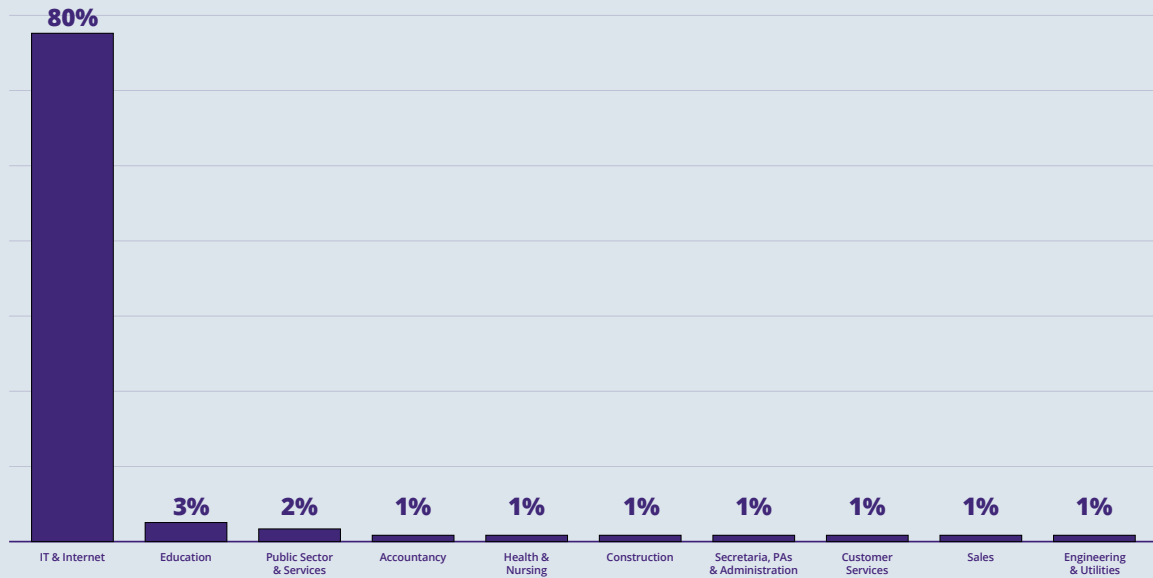
The concern that began to be manifested towards the end of 2022 and continues to be a concern moving forwards into 2023 is that economic pressures and uncertainty will lead to businesses rewinding to in-office mandates. A survey released by [LinkedIn in November 2022](#) showed that 68% of executives are considering reducing flexible working options because they are worried about productivity at a time when they're under pressure to manage costs. And yet multiple surveys have shown that flexible work boosts productivity. The recent Future Forum study revealed that workers with location flexibility report 4% higher productivity scores than full time office workers and those with schedule flexibility report 29% higher productivity, plus 53% greater ability to focus than those with no flexibility in their schedule.

The growing disconnect between what candidates and employees want and what employers are offering seems to have grown across 2022. Data from the [LinkedIn Global Talent Trends 2022](#) shows a reduction in the number of remote roles advertised on the platform (to 9%), yet a rise in the number of applications (to 20%) for remote positions. [LinkedIn's UK Talent Trends Report October 2022](#) found that, as of August 2022, flexibility replaced compensation as the top priority for candidates searching for jobs, even with the uncertainty that characterised the market towards the end of 2022.

Despite this, hybrid working has become the most common model in industries that can accommodate it and that is likely to continue. Ultimately, people have realised that a good work-life balance is key to maintaining positive mental health through whatever the world throws at us, be it a global pandemic, a war, a cost of living and energy crisis, or political chaos. If employers do begin to backtrack on the flexible working models put in place since the pandemic, they may find retention and recruitment a challenge in 2023.

## Industries with Flexible Jobs

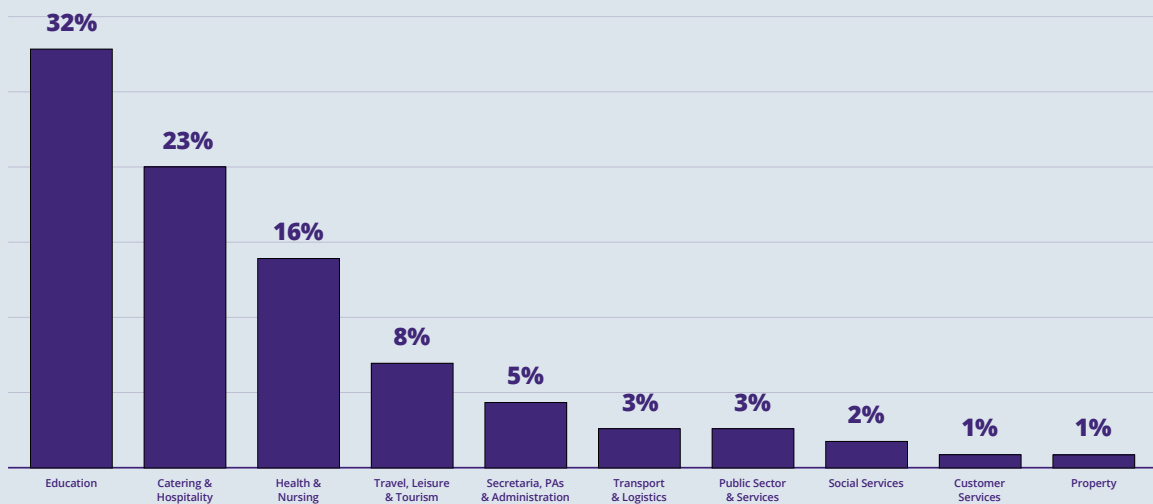
Percentage from the total jobs advertised as flexible



GRAPH 17 | Industries with flexible jobs

## Industries with Part-Time Jobs

Percentage from the total jobs advertised



GRAPH 18 | Industries with part-time jobs



# Job Board Data

As WaveTrackR data has shown, job boards continued to be the most popular choice for recruiters to post jobs to and for candidates to apply on. The majority of recruitment agencies will use job boards as part of their candidate attraction strategy but knowing which job boards to post your jobs to is a key part of the candidate attraction puzzle. Getting it right is even more vital during a candidate shortage and an economic downturn but how can recruiters know which job boards quality candidates will be actively searching on?

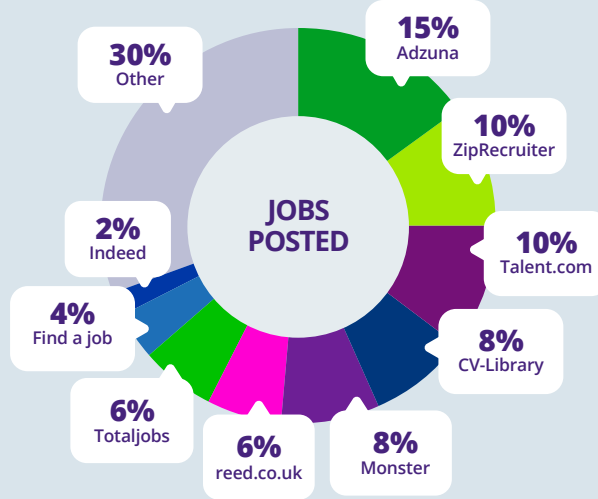
One word: data.

The days of spray and pray are long over. Recruiters have neither the time nor the finances to be paying for jobs to be advertised on a range of different job boards in the hope that covering all bases will produce a high number of quality applications. Volume also doesn't always equal quality. Budgets need to be focused into areas with a high ROI and data can help determine where those areas are. We have looked at the

distribution of jobs and applications across job boards, analysing where most jobs were posted to and which board received the highest percentage of applications - something that doesn't always correlate.

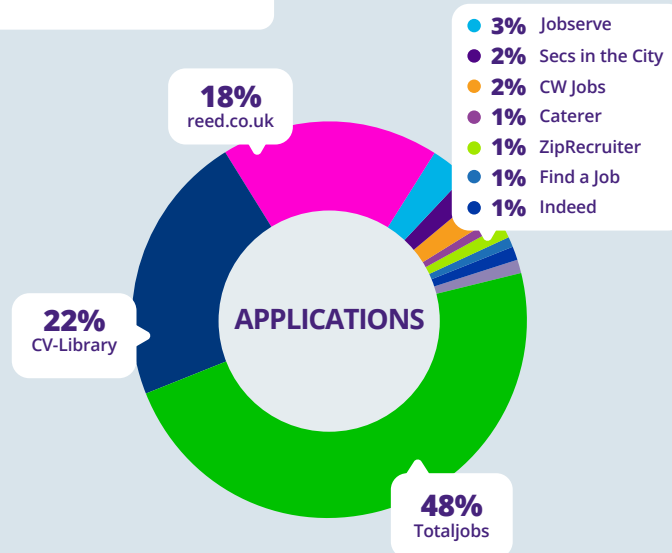
Average application per job per job board tells us which job boards are receiving the highest levels of applications per job and application quality per job board sheds light on the quality rather than the quantity of applications from a range of both niche and generalist job boards. It makes for illuminating reading.

## Job Posting by Job Board



GRAPH 19 | Job posting by job board

## Applications by Job Board



GRAPH 20 | Applications by job board

# Distribution by Job Board

Ignoring the multiple job boards under 'other', the job board that the majority of jobs were posted to in 2022 was Adzuna, taking 15% of the total number of job posts. Interestingly, the top 3 sites for job posts were all aggregators, suggesting that the appeal of performance-based pricing models may have rapidly grown.

Jobs were spread across a number of different job boards, with no one job board hugely standing out.

Most of the major generalist job boards feature but none of the niche boards. This is in direct contrast to applications, the majority of which were made via just three job boards.

***Totaljobs received the vast majority of applications - a huge 48% - followed by CV-Library with 22% and Reed.co.uk with 18%.***

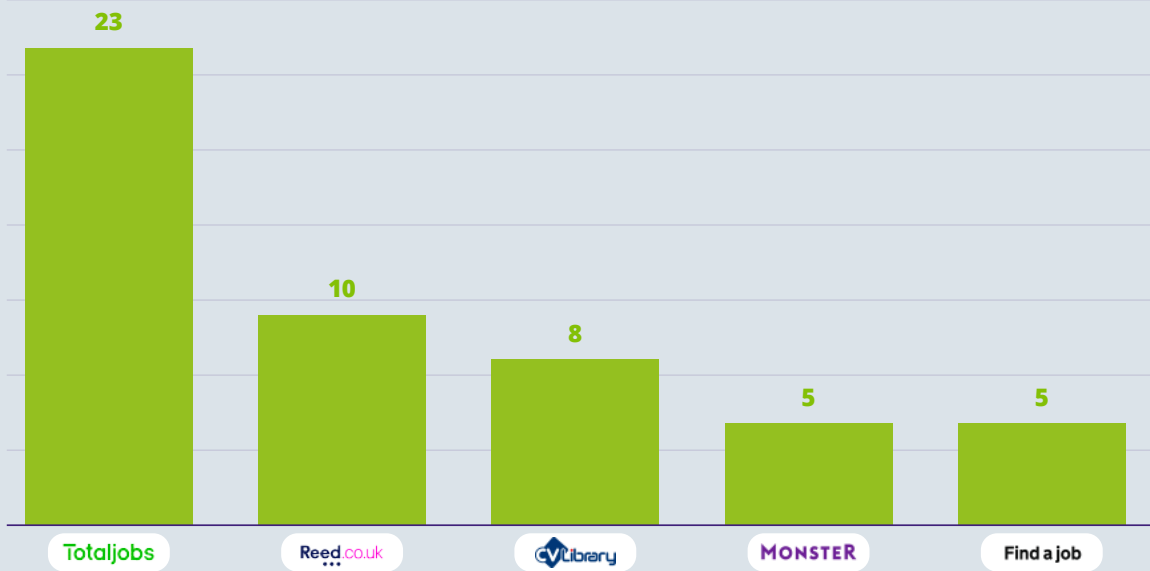
Totaljobs has repeatedly defended its price increases with the argument that it delivers a higher volume of applications and this data certainly suggests that is correct.

Four of the remaining seven job boards to appear in the applications chart are niche, serving the highly in demand tech sector (Jobserve and CW Jobs), the candidate-short hospitality sector (Caterer) and a sector that frequently makes it into the industries with highest application rates, Secretarial, PAs & Admin (Secs in the City).

Given niche job boards cater to a smaller percentage of the overall candidate pool than the generalist job boards, this data shows that niche job boards are a valuable job posting option, especially for those industries with candidate shortages.

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

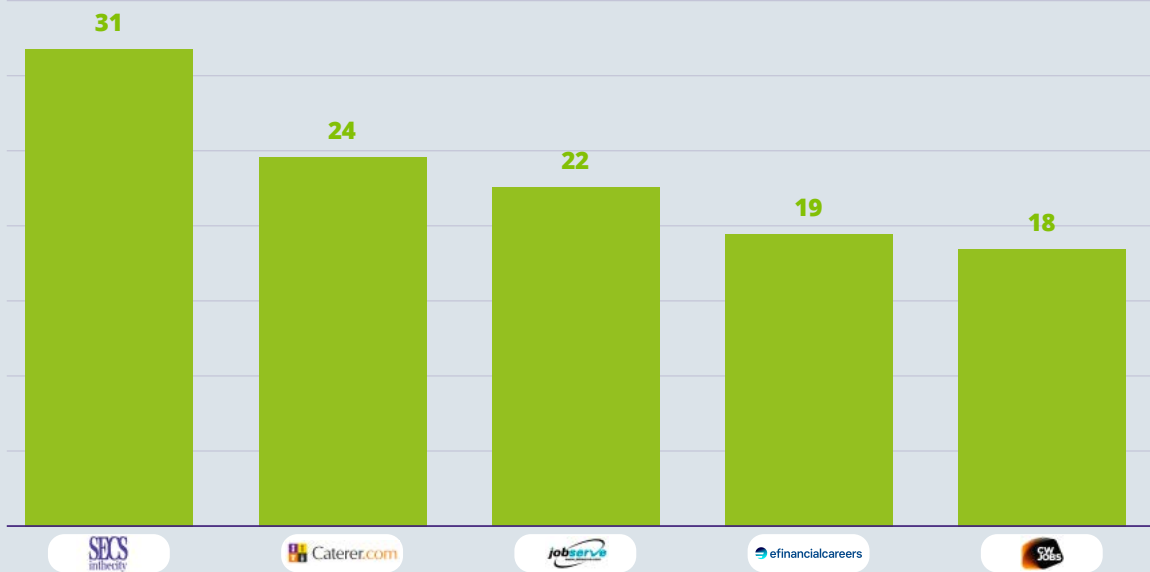
Generic job boards



GRAPH 21 | Average application per job by generic job board

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Niche job boards



GRAPH 22 | Average application per job by niche job board

# Average Application per Job by Job Board

Of the six job boards delivering the highest average numbers of applications per job, only one is generalist and that comes in at number three.

***Totaljobs provided an average of 23 applications per job - 13 more than the next generalist job board, Reed.***

Niche job boards, therefore, delivered by far the highest average applications per job, with Secs in the City totalling an average of 31.

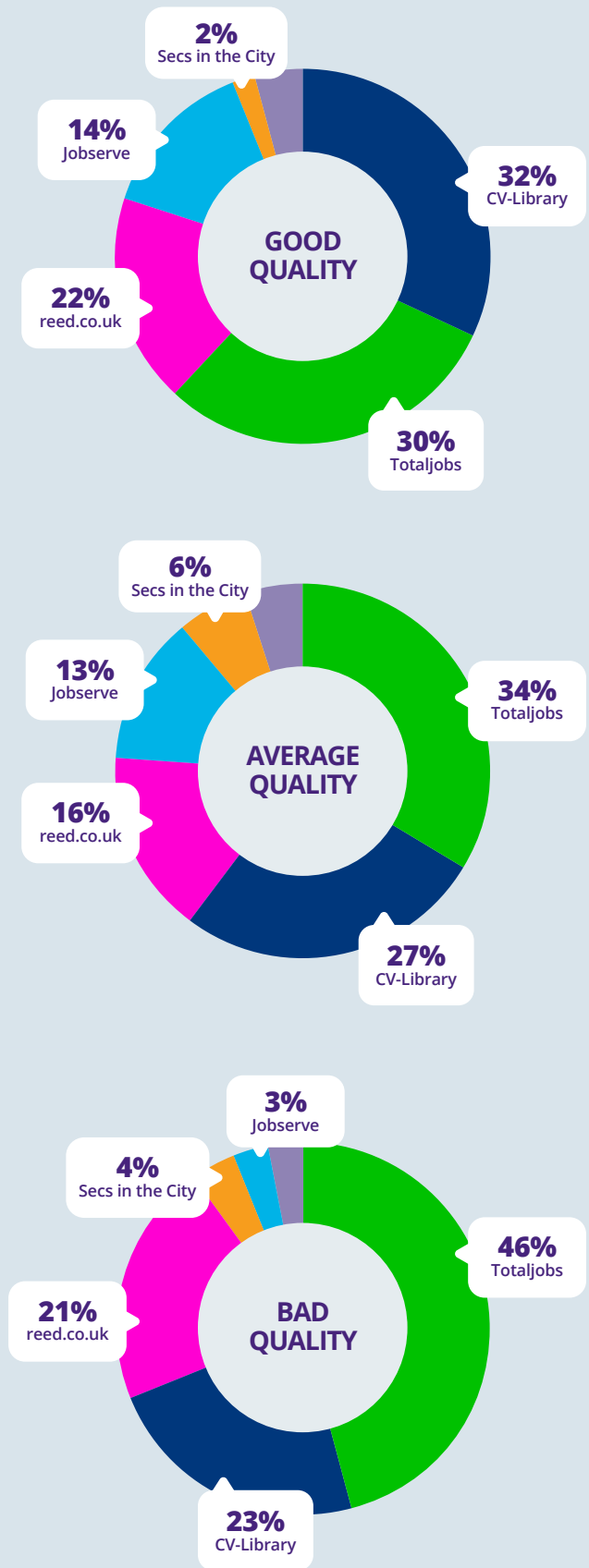
Given our data shows that the number of jobs posted on niche job boards are far lower than those on generalist boards, this may mean jobs posted on niche sites have less competition.

The industries being served by the top niche job boards are all those with hard-to-fill roles - Secretarial, PAs & Admin (Secs in the City), Hospitality (Caterer), IT & Internet (Jobserve and CW Jobs) and Financial Services (E-Financial Careers). Many of the jobs in these industries will require certain skillsets that candidates searching niche job boards are more likely to possess.

Totaljobs succeeded in achieving their promise to deliver high numbers of average applications per job, with the other four (Reed, CV-Library, Monster and CV-Find a Job) all averaging similar numbers - from 5 to 10, that's less than half the number Totaljobs averaged.

# Application Quality by Job Board

Percentage of total good, average and bad quality applications



GRAPH 23 | Percentage of total good quality applications (top), percentage of total average quality applications (middle) and percentage of total bad quality applications (bottom)

# Application Quality by Job Board

As part of its application management tool, WaveTrackR's traffic light system is used by recruiters to highlight which applications to take forward, which are maybes, and which are rejected outright.

A useful way to analyse this data is by using it to measure the quality of each application from each job board as, ultimately, application quality is what matters. Those applications that have been marked green are 'good', those marked amber are 'average' and those checked red are 'bad'.

For example, a job board may deliver a high number of applications per job but a large percentage of those applications could be bad quality, essentially making them null and void. All bad applications achieve is to add to a recruiter's workload.

*As Totaljobs received 48% of all applications, they were statistically going to feature highly in all traffic light categories. They received 30% of all good quality applications, 2% fewer than CV-Library which received less than half the total number of Totaljobs applications.*

Totaljobs received 34% of all average applications, just over those received by CV-Library, and it received a substantial 46% of all bad quality applications (in comparison CV-Library received 23%). Of course, with a higher volume you will likely receive a higher volume of all types of applications but it is certainly food for thought.

*Reed.co.uk received just 18% of all applications - comparatively few by volume - but 22% of all good quality applications.*

Jobserve, an IT-focused, niche job board, received a relatively low 3% of all applications but 14% of all good quality applications. Another niche job board, Secs in the City, received just 2% of all applications but 2% of all good quality applications. However, it also received 4% of all bad quality applications.

Niche job boards catering to industries with a high number of jobs requiring specialist skills, such as IT & Internet, can be highly effective. The industry focus of these boards helps to ensure that your ads are targeted at qualified candidates so that, although they don't experience the traffic that the larger and more well known sites have, the candidates they do get are more likely to be looking for a job in that industry and possess the right kind of specialised skills, leading to more relevant applications and potentially increasing the quality of hire.



# Industry Trends

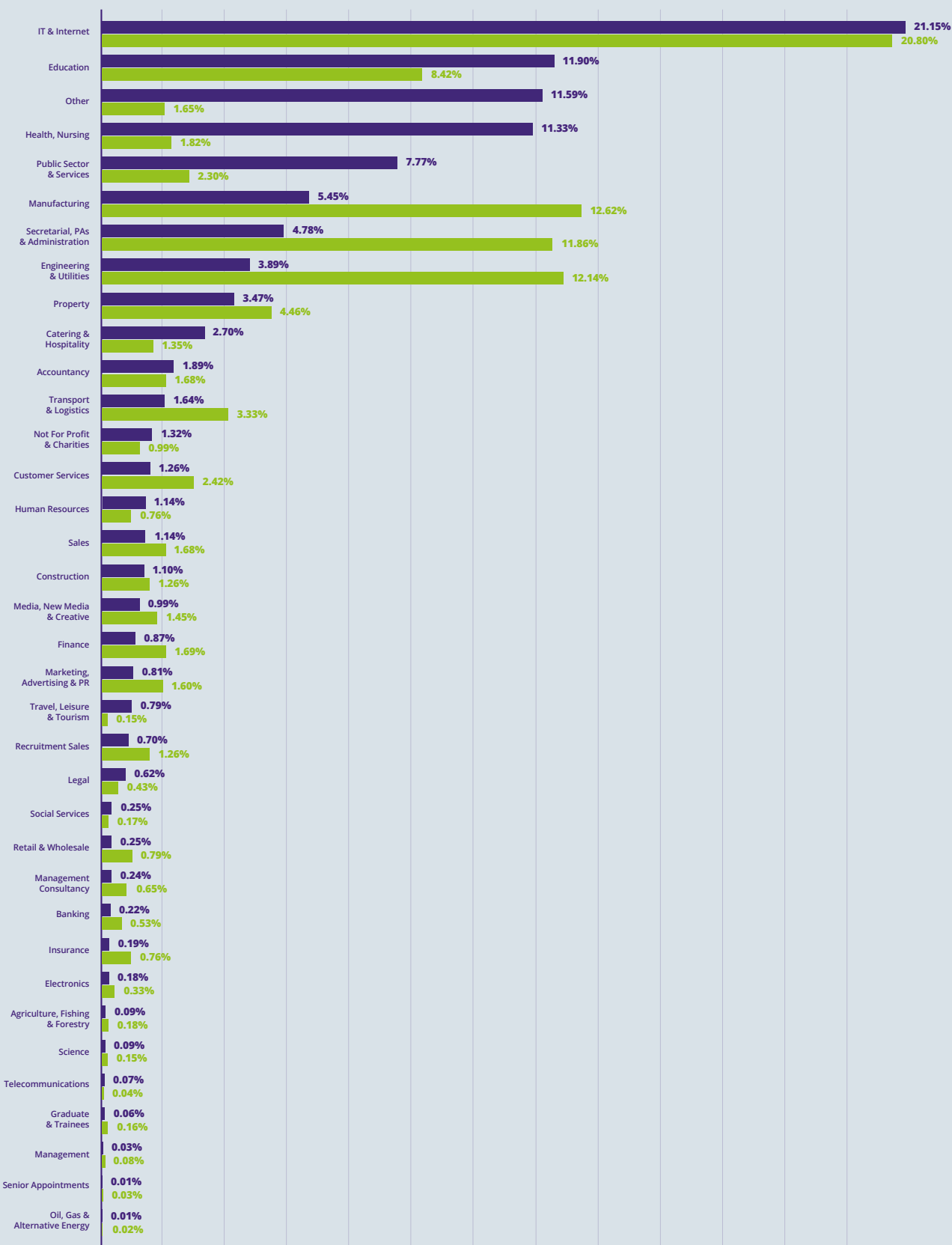
Our general jobs and applications figures are formed by data from across the jobs market as a whole. It's an insightful look into how the market and the wider economy is performing but doesn't tell the story of each individual industry.

For example, IT & Internet has consistently come out top for both jobs and applications throughout the majority of 2022. The industry is booming and looks unlikely to slow over the next year. By contrast, industries such as Health & Nursing and Public Sector have experienced high jobs but low applications thanks to historic labour shortages which have only intensified from the start of the pandemic and as a fallout from Brexit.

The market may have suffered from a candidate shortage in 2022 but that wasn't the case for every industry and some bucked the general trend for relatively low applications and higher jobs. Secretarial, PAs & Admin is a case in point - it received a high percentage of applications but without the job numbers to support them, leading to it receiving some of the highest average numbers of applications per job across all industries.

To help us make sense of general industry trends before we dive into detailed individual industry data, we looked at applications and jobs by industry, average application per job by industry, and industry growth (or negative growth) between 2021 and 2022. Industry growth data proved fascinating, offering a great insight into the hugely accelerated growth the market saw in 2021 in comparison to the rates seen in 2022. As a snapshot of each industry in 2022, our industry trends data is a goldmine.

# Distribution of Jobs & Applications by Industry



GRAPH 24 | Distribution of jobs and applications by industry

# Industry Distribution

In an increasingly digital world, in a year in which AI was a huge talking point, and at a time when businesses across the globe are investing in departments whose sole role is to implement digitalisation processes, IT & Internet boomed. The industry posted the highest percentage of jobs and received the highest percentage of applications of any sector. In fact, its jobs were double those of the industry with the next highest numbers, Education, and were close to double the figures of the industry with the second highest numbers of applications, Manufacturing. With tech innovation and adoption accelerating, the industry's domination of the jobs market is likely to continue for years.

Education, though not in quite the same league as IT & Internet, also balanced a relatively high number of jobs with a similar percentage of applications. Jobs are, however, higher than applications. With the cost of living rising but teaching and support staff salaries failing to rise by the same rate, 2023's strikes are reflective of the general feeling in the industry and it's possible we may see lower levels of applications in the coming year.

Health & Nursing posted a similar percentage of jobs as Education, but without the applications to fill them. Posting 11% of all jobs but just 2% of applications, the historic labour shortage that has plagued the industry is not easing. A [July 2022 report](#) undertaken by MPs found that England had a shortfall of 12,000 hospital doctors and 50,000 nurses and midwives. Concurrently, it also predicted that an extra 475,000 healthcare jobs would need to be filled by the early part of the next decade. A [British Medical Association survey](#) published in October 2022 found that 44% of consultants are considering resigning in 2023 and nurses across the UK are striking due to low pay.

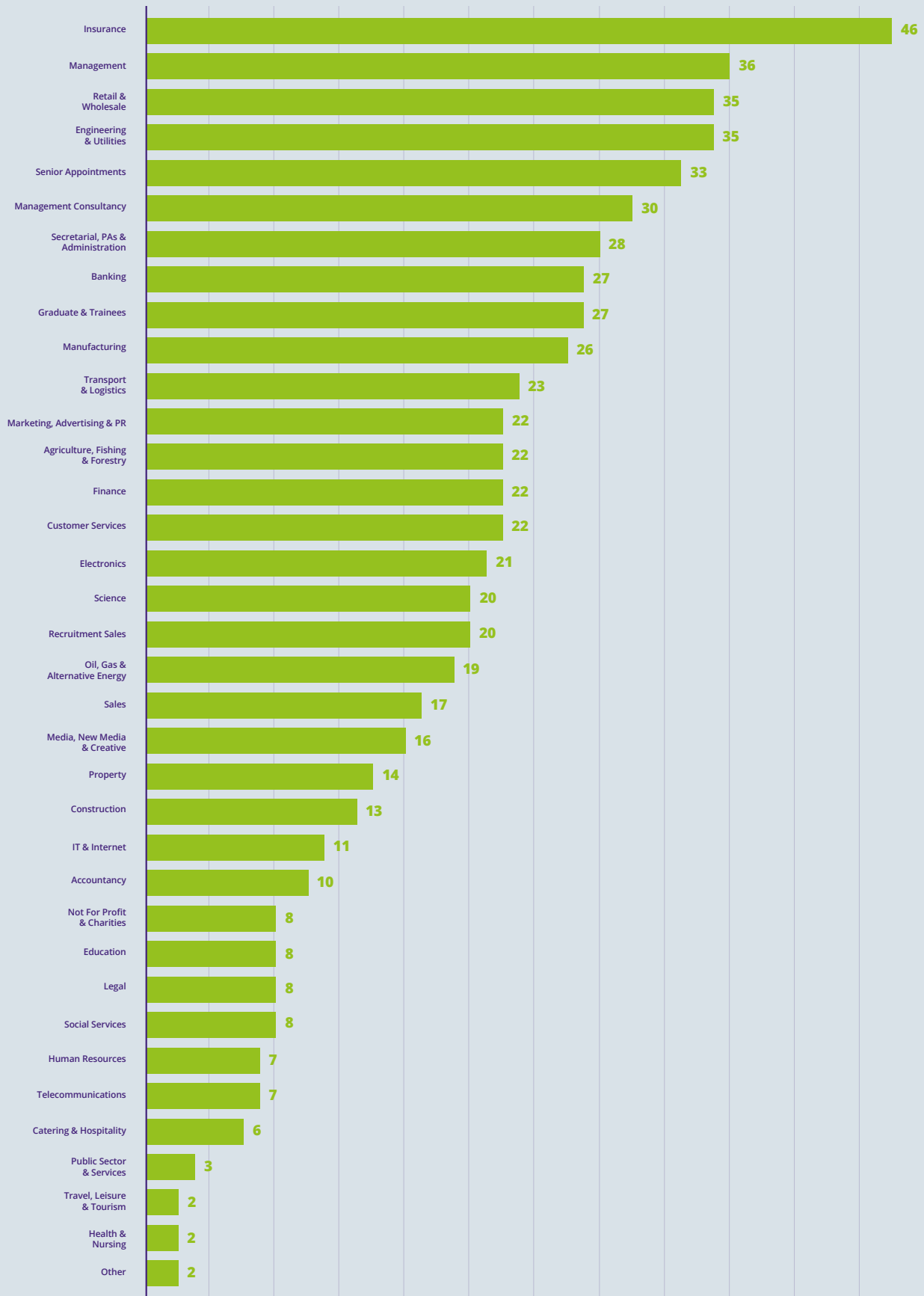
Public Sector is in a similar position to Health & Nursing, with a far greater percentage of jobs compared to applications. The reasons are similar too. Compensation

is low, especially compared to private sector jobs, and working conditions can be tough. The [ONS revealed](#) that in the period September to November 2022, average regular pay growth for the public sector was 3.3%, compared to 7.2% for private sector.

Manufacturing, Secretarial, PAs & Admin, and Engineering & Utilities are facing the opposite challenge to Health & Nursing and Public Sector. These industries have a higher application to job ratio, suggesting jobs are low compared to candidate numbers. Output in the UK's Manufacturing sector was severely affected in 2020 due to COVID restrictions and supply chain issues. It bounced back in 2021 but suffered a forecasted 4.5% contraction in 2022 according to [Make UK](#), largely due to increased energy and materials costs hampering growth. Engineering & Utilities have faced similar problems. The industry started 2022 in a position of strength but rising costs and ongoing disruptions to the supply chain have meant an expected 2022 industry contraction. As for Secretarial, PAs & Admin, it's possible that the growth of AI and digitalisation in general is leading to a reduction of support staff jobs.

Other significant industry trends include a slowdown in Property, leading to a greater percentage of applications than jobs - the cost of living crisis has led to a bumpy 2022, with the [Halifax House Price Index](#) showing that in the final quarter of the year average house prices dropped 2.5%. Catering & Hospitality posted a greater percentage of jobs than applications received - a sign that the industry is still struggling to recruit enough staff. Transport & Logistics faced real problems in 2021, particularly with a shortage of HGV drivers, but the industry received a greater percentage of applications in comparison to jobs posted in 2022, indicating the candidate shortage has eased.

# Average Application per Job by Industry



GRAPH 25 | Average application per job by industry

# Average Application per Job by Industry

Average application per job figures provide us with a way to measure the popularity of a job or, in the case of industry figures, all jobs in that sector over a particular period of time - and allows us to compare this to other industries. A large number of average applications per job could indicate a particular demand for roles within that industry.

In 2022, Insurance received by far the highest average number of applications per job - a huge 46, 10 more than the industry with the second highest figures, Management. Insurance, along with other financial services industries, is often viewed as being a stable industry in which to work, and, in an increasingly turbulent and unpredictable year, the importance of job security soared in 2022. Insurance is able to recruit candidates in other industries with similar skillsets so it may be that the industry is experiencing an influx of candidates looking for increased job stability in another sector.

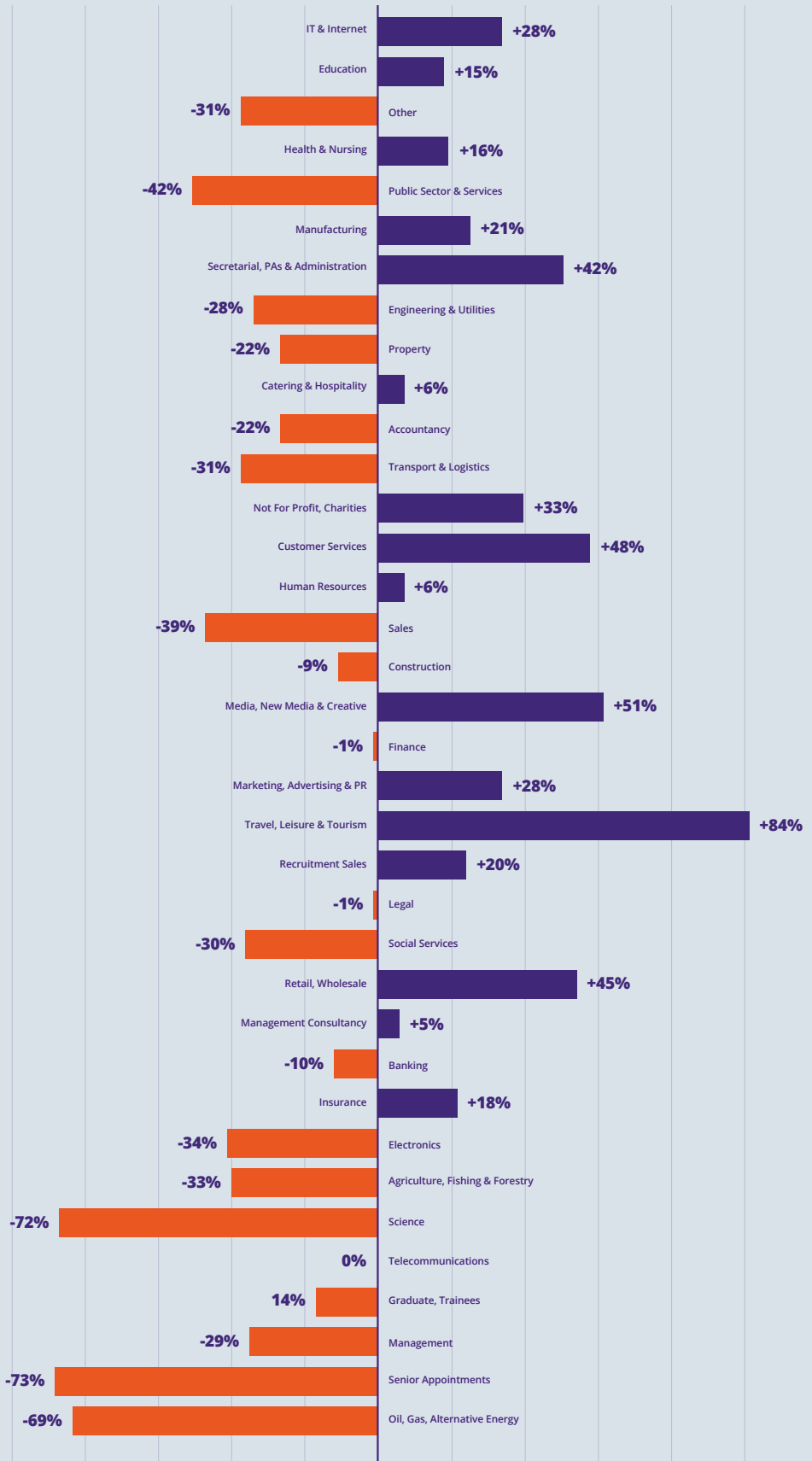
The high average application per job numbers for Retail & Wholesale marks a change given the turbulent few years the industry has faced. When bricks and mortar shops were forced to close during the various lockdowns of the pandemic and people were stuck at home for long periods of time, spending in many areas screeched to a halt and a wave of redundancies were made. Once the economy re-opened and people started spending again, retail businesses found it difficult to re-recruit staff. Fast forward to Q3 and Q4 of 2022 and the cost of living has forced a number of people to take on second jobs or re-enter the market from retirement, many of whom apply for retail jobs.

Given the gap between applications and jobs for both industries, it's perhaps unsurprising that Engineering & Utilities and Secretarial, PAs & Admin recorded a high average number of applications per job. On the flip side, it's the industries that have struggled to recruit post-COVID and/or have historic labour shortages that have recorded low average numbers of applications per job. Health & Nursing, which received an average of just two applications per job, has suffered from a skills shortage for decades but this has intensified since the pandemic, when conditions were incredibly challenging, and during 2022 when soaring inflation led to strikes over pay.

Travel, Leisure & Tourism also recorded an average of just two applications per job. The industry made swathes of redundancies when COVID slammed the brakes on travel and then struggled to re-hire when global restrictions eased, leading to the chaos seen at airports across the world in 2022. Many who were made redundant found jobs in other industries and haven't returned. The same applies to Catering & Hospitality, which recorded an average of just six applications per job. Following an exodus of EU workers as a result of Brexit and then redundancies during the pandemic (many of whom moved into different industries and then stayed for more sociable hours for the same pay), the Catering and Hospitality industry was left with a dearth of candidates which continues to prove challenging. Public Sector, which received an average of just 3 applications per job, has faced similar challenges with skills shortages and pay disputes.

# Industry Growth

Jobs posted in 2021 vs 2022



GRAPH 26 | Jobs posted in 2021 compared to jobs posted in 2022, by industry

# Industry Growth

The industry growth chart reveals that the majority of industries experienced negative growth in 2022 compared to 2021. However, it really is a tale of two halves.

Travel, Leisure & Tourism experienced phenomenal growth of 84% year on year. Following the complete repeal of all restrictions in the UK, including overseas travel, plus the easing of global restrictions, travel boomed. People who had not taken a holiday for two years booked up in their millions, families were able to visit overseas relatives, business travel recommenced. With this huge uptick in travel and tourism, jobs soared. What didn't soar was applications and the fallout was chaos at airports and ports. The challenge was to plug the labour shortfall that COVID had created when travel was essentially banned and huge numbers of redundancies were made.

Media, New Media & Creative, an industry that was stifled by the restrictions during the pandemic, grew by 48% from 2021. As a collaborative industry often involving a multitude of people coming together to create various forms of media, restrictions were incredibly challenging and many projects were put on hold or downscaled. As the restrictions were lifted, the industry could grow once more. Customer Service also experienced significant growth. Digital tools aren't quite there yet and many consumers continue to prefer to speak to a human, call volumes have increased and are likely to increase further, and

companies are realising just how important customer service is in order to grow their business. Retail & Wholesale also grew, by 45%. Having experienced high average application per job figures in 2022, the sector is outperforming the forecasts that were downgraded due to the cost of living crisis affecting consumer purchasing power - great news for the wider economy as well as the industry itself.

On the flip side, there were a huge number of industries that experienced negative growth in 2022. The greatest deceleration - a huge 73% - was experienced in the Senior Appointments sector, followed by Science with a drop of 72%. Oil, Gas & Alternative Energy experienced negative growth of 69%, possibly as a result of the volatility in the energy market in 2022. Electronics, experiencing significant challenges due to increasing raw material prices and supply shortages for components such as semiconductors, also experienced waning demand in 2022 following a sharp rise in demand during the pandemic - this has contributed to a 34% negative growth. The deceleration in Transport & Logistics could be in comparison to the soaring jobs we saw in 2021 when HGV drivers were highly in demand as a result of a shortage largely caused by EU workers leaving the UK due to Brexit and the pandemic.

| No of Words                       | 0 -50 | 50 -100 | 100 -150 | 150 -200 | 200 -250 | 250 -300 | 300 -350 | 350 -400 | 400 -450 | 450 -500 | 500 -550 | 550 -600 | 600 -650 | 650 -700 | 700 -750 | 750 -800 | 800 -900 | 900 -1000 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Accountancy                       | 0%    | 0%      | 9%       | 18%      | 18%      | 9%       | 10%      | 18%      | 6%       | 6%       | 2%       | 2%       | 4%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry   | 0%    | 1%      | 0%       | 1%       | 14%      | 30%      | 1%       | 6%       | 9%       | 3%       | 6%       | 13%      | 5%       | 6%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Banking                           | 0%    | 0%      | 12%      | 24%      | 8%       | 19%      | 11%      | 11%      | 4%       | 2%       | 1%       | 3%       | 2%       | 2%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Catering & Hospitality            | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 1%       | 12%      | 43%      | 21%      | 10%      | 4%       | 2%       | 2%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Construction                      | 0%    | 1%      | 4%       | 9%       | 20%      | 8%       | 12%      | 9%       | 10%      | 21%      | 3%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Customer Services                 | 0%    | 0%      | 4%       | 12%      | 20%      | 26%      | 20%      | 6%       | 3%       | 6%       | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Education                         | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 2%       | 5%       | 14%      | 19%      | 18%      | 15%      | 13%      | 6%       | 3%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Electronics                       | 0%    | 4%      | 4%       | 10%      | 8%       | 16%      | 18%      | 14%      | 12%      | 10%      | 0%       | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 2%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Engineering & Utilities           | 1%    | 0%      | 1%       | 3%       | 8%       | 16%      | 20%      | 18%      | 14%      | 8%       | 4%       | 4%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%        |
| Finance                           | 0%    | 0%      | 13%      | 5%       | 18%      | 10%      | 9%       | 8%       | 15%      | 7%       | 13%      | 0%       | 2%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Graduate & Trainees               | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 1%       | 25%      | 0%       | 1%       | 30%      | 6%       | 36%      | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Health & Nursing                  | 0%    | 0%      | 1%       | 2%       | 5%       | 26%      | 18%      | 15%      | 20%      | 7%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 2%        |
| Human Resources                   | 0%    | 1%      | 7%       | 10%      | 11%      | 21%      | 16%      | 14%      | 3%       | 2%       | 1%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 10%      | 2%       | 1%       | 2%        |
| Insurance                         | 0%    | 0%      | 3%       | 18%      | 36%      | 21%      | 2%       | 8%       | 5%       | 5%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| IT & Internet                     | 0%    | 0%      | 2%       | 7%       | 11%      | 13%      | 16%      | 16%      | 14%      | 8%       | 3%       | 4%       | 2%       | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%        |
| Legal                             | 0%    | 0%      | 1%       | 16%      | 14%      | 20%      | 15%      | 23%      | 0%       | 5%       | 5%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Management Consultancy            | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 15%      | 18%      | 16%      | 10%      | 18%      | 6%       | 13%      | 2%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Manufacturing                     | 0%    | 1%      | 14%      | 16%      | 15%      | 12%      | 9%       | 12%      | 8%       | 6%       | 3%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Marketing, Advertising & PR       | 0%    | 0%      | 2%       | 5%       | 7%       | 26%      | 10%      | 13%      | 19%      | 6%       | 4%       | 2%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 2%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Media, New Media & Creative       | 0%    | 2%      | 12%      | 20%      | 21%      | 15%      | 12%      | 7%       | 7%       | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Not for Profit & Charities        | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 0%       | 1%       | 6%       | 9%       | 55%      | 14%      | 6%       | 2%       | 1%       | 1%       | 1%       | 2%       | 1%       | 2%       | 0%        |
| Oil, Gas & Alternative Energy     | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 16%      | 63%      | 21%      | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Property                          | 0%    | 0%      | 1%       | 5%       | 20%      | 15%      | 18%      | 22%      | 14%      | 2%       | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Public Sector & Services          | 0%    | 1%      | 4%       | 12%      | 12%      | 22%      | 13%      | 8%       | 3%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Recruitment Sales                 | 0%    | 2%      | 2%       | 1%       | 3%       | 8%       | 9%       | 9%       | 3%       | 15%      | 37%      | 2%       | 3%       | 2%       | 0%       | 3%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Retail & Wholesale                | 0%    | 0%      | 10%      | 14%      | 47%      | 14%      | 5%       | 2%       | 2%       | 2%       | 3%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Sales                             | 2%    | 0%      | 9%       | 24%      | 20%      | 11%      | 9%       | 9%       | 4%       | 2%       | 6%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Science                           | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 6%       | 19%      | 16%      | 21%      | 15%      | 3%       | 9%       | 9%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 2%        |
| Secretarial, PAs & Administration | 0%    | 0%      | 2%       | 11%      | 26%      | 34%      | 15%      | 7%       | 2%       | 1%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Social Services                   | 0%    | 0%      | 10%      | 10%      | 13%      | 15%      | 3%       | 5%       | 4%       | 5%       | 3%       | 1%       | 27%      | 1%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Telecommunications                | 0%    | 0%      | 0%       | 0%       | 35%      | 24%      | 21%      | 1%       | 18%      | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Transport & Logistics             | 0%    | 1%      | 12%      | 22%      | 22%      | 15%      | 13%      | 6%       | 4%       | 3%       | 0%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |
| Travel, Leisure & Tourism         | 0%    | 0%      | 1%       | 1%       | 46%      | 3%       | 11%      | 15%      | 7%       | 4%       | 2%       | 1%       | 4%       | 5%       | 1%       | 0%       | 0%       | 0%        |

TABLE 1 | Distribution of applications per advert length by industry

# Job Advert Length

A well crafted job advert is key to candidate attraction. Ultimately, a great placement starts with a great job ad. Optimised, quality, compelling content is vital and an important part of that is length.

Too short and it risks not imparting enough information for a candidate to feel comfortable applying. Too long and it may either scare candidates away or bore them, leading them to quickly click onto another ad. A job ad is not a job description. It should not contain every role responsibility or an unabridged history of the company. An advert - whether for a product or a job - should be designed to grab attention and compel the reader to action.

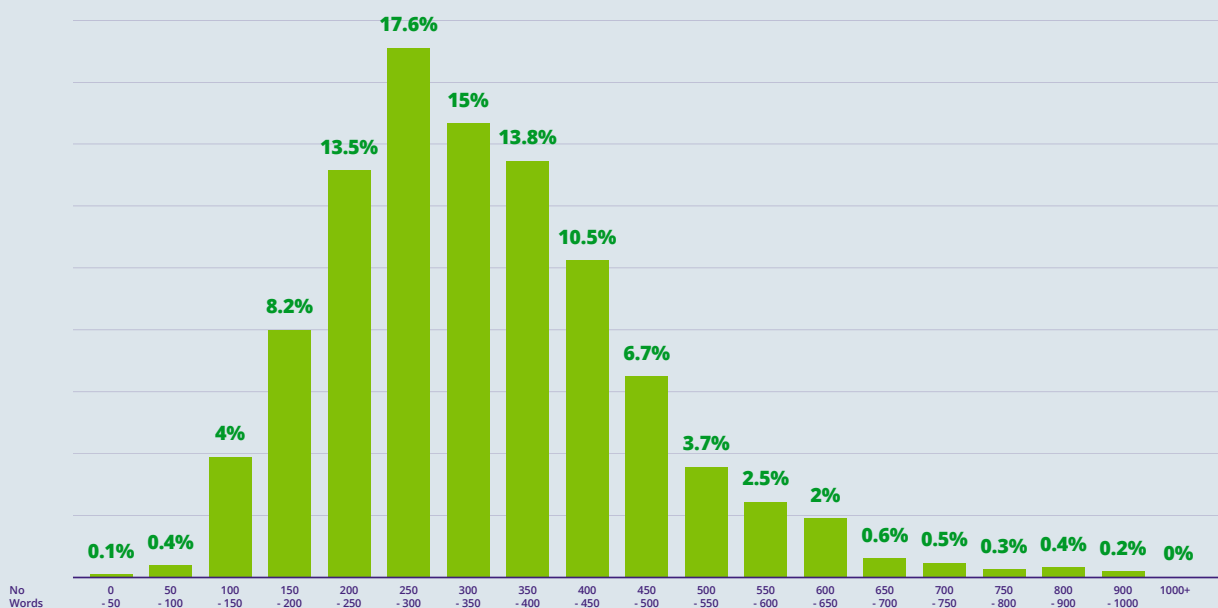
WaveTrackR data shows that, as a percentage of total applications across all industries, ads totalling 250-300 words receive the majority of applications, followed by those containing 300-350 words, and then

350-400 and 200-250, which received similar levels of applications. Any more or fewer words than those averages and the percentage of applications received starts to drop off.

Of course, optimal average word length differs depending on industry as some roles require more or less detail than others and that's where the chart showing the distribution of applications per advert length by industry is fascinating. For Social Services, for example, a comparatively lengthy 600-650 word length received the majority of applications. Banking candidates prefer it short and sweet, with the majority of applications being received for 150-220 word ads.

## Applications per Advert Length

Percentage of total applications



GRAPH 27 | Application distribution per advert length



# Industry Breakdown

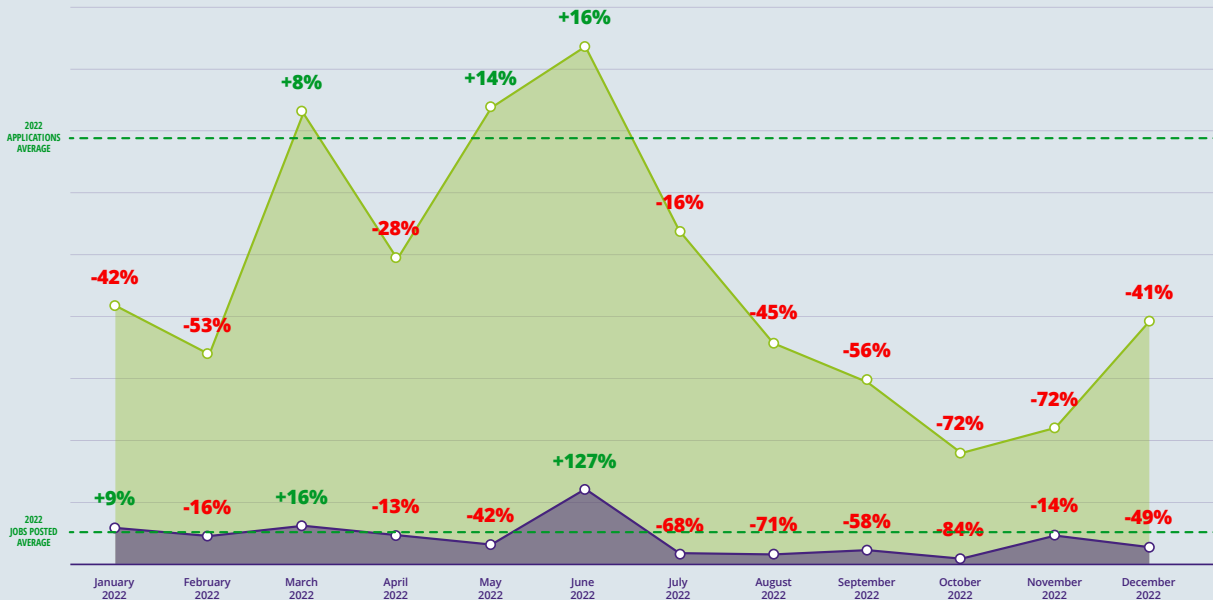
- 52 Accountancy
- 54 Catering & Hospitality
- 56 Construction
- 58 Customer Service
- 60 Education
- 62 Engineering
- 64 Health & Nursing
- 66 Human Resources
- 68 IT & Internet
- 70 Manufacturing
- 72 Marketing, PR & Advertising
- 74 Media, New Media & Creative
- 76 Not for Profit & Charity
- 78 Property
- 80 Public Sector
- 82 Sales
- 84 Secretarial, PAs & Admin
- 86 Transport & Logistics

# Accountancy

## Job Posting and Applications by Month

Accountancy | Compared to 2022 monthly average

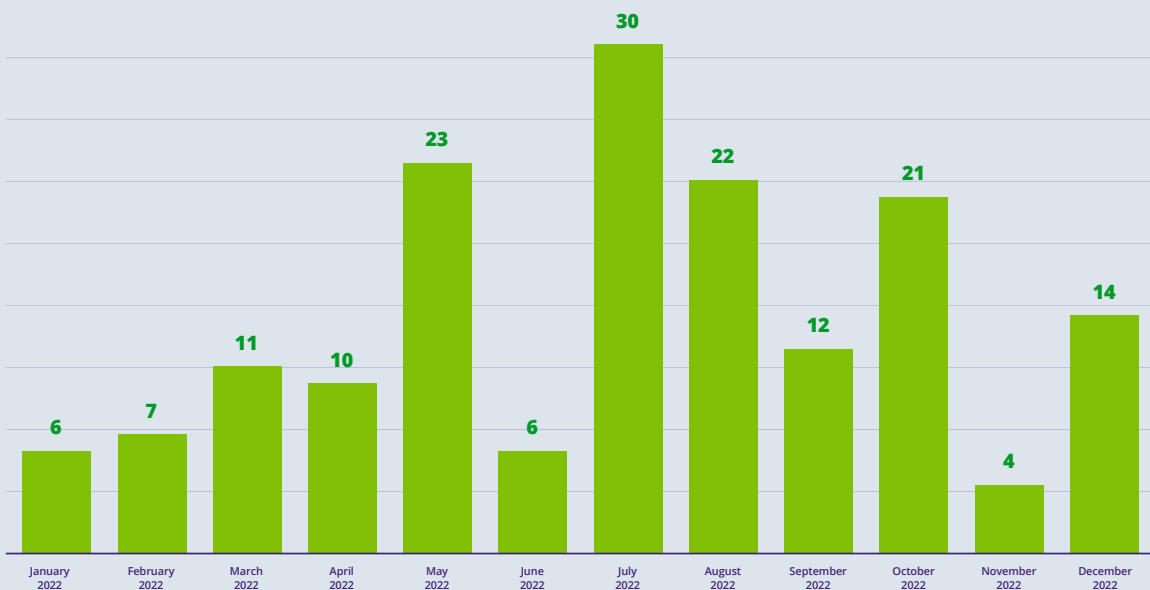
● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 28 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average

## Average Application per Job by Month

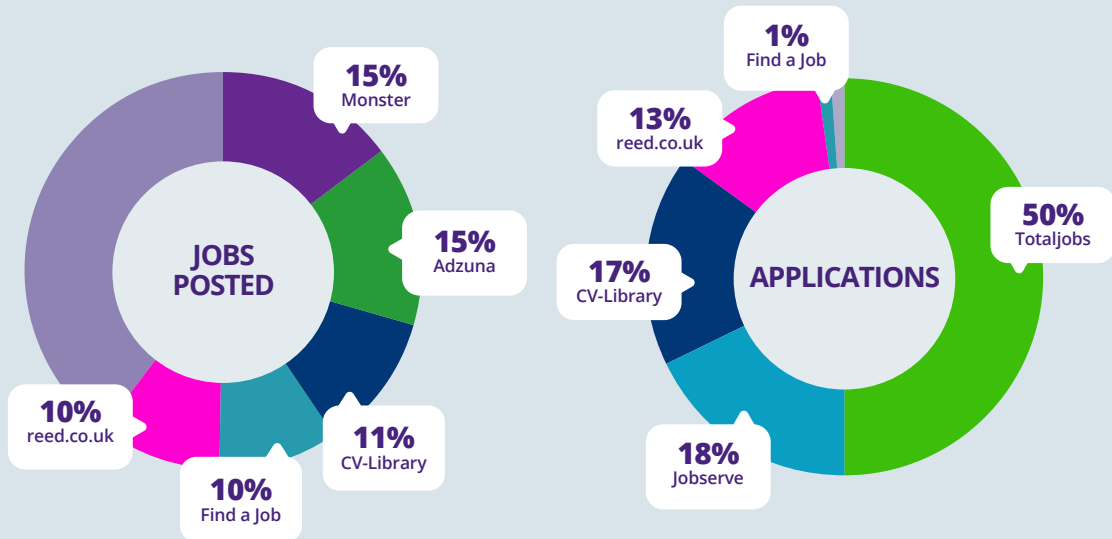
Accountancy



GRAPH 29 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

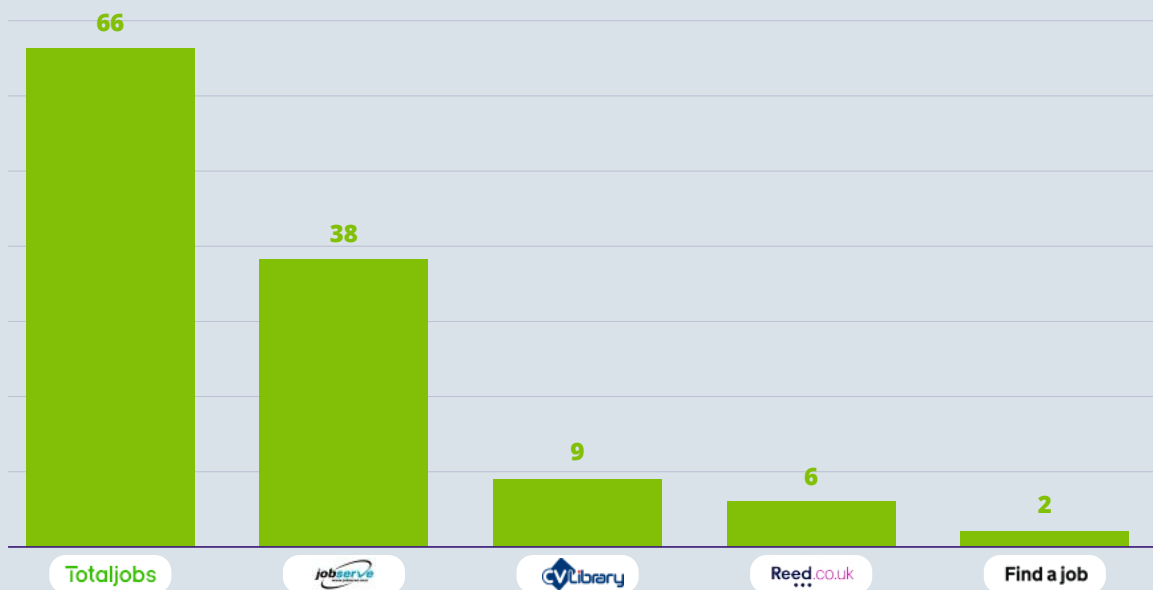
Accountancy | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 30 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Accountancy | Top 5 job boards



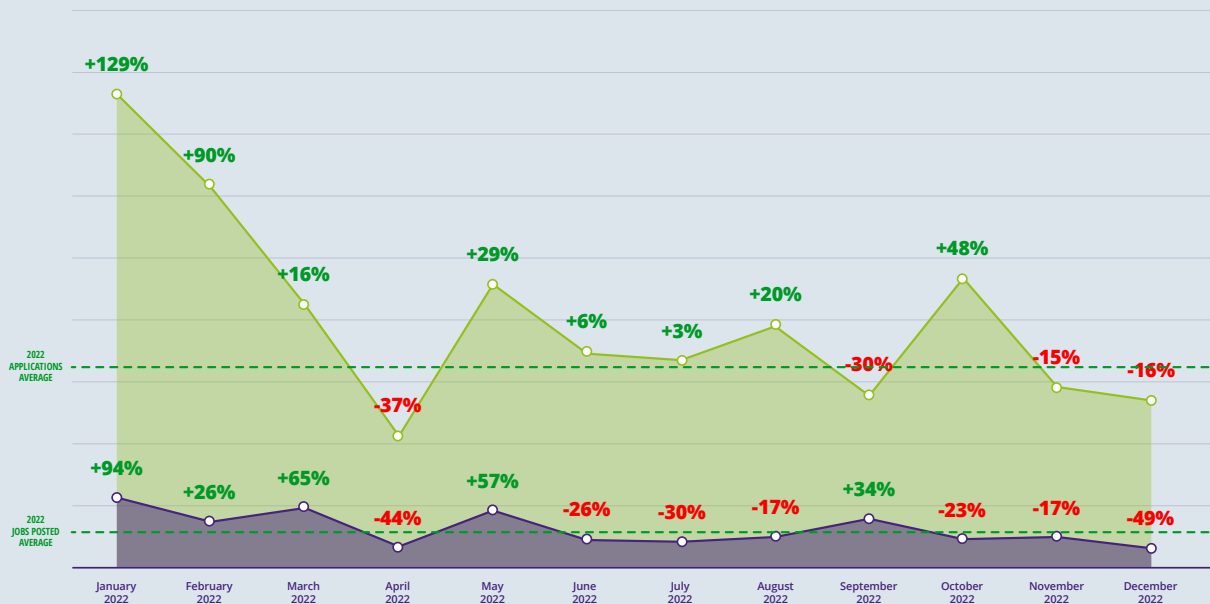
GRAPH 31 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Catering & Hospitality

## Job Posting and Applications by Month

Catering & Hospitality | Compared to 2022 monthly average

● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 32 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average

## Average Application per Job by Month

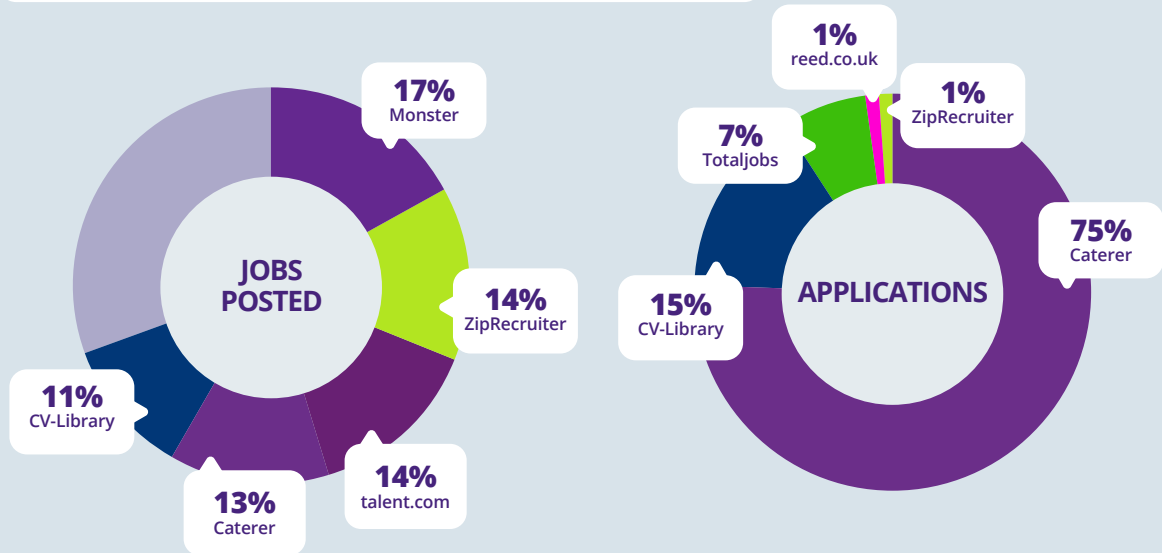
Catering & Hospitality



GRAPH 33 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

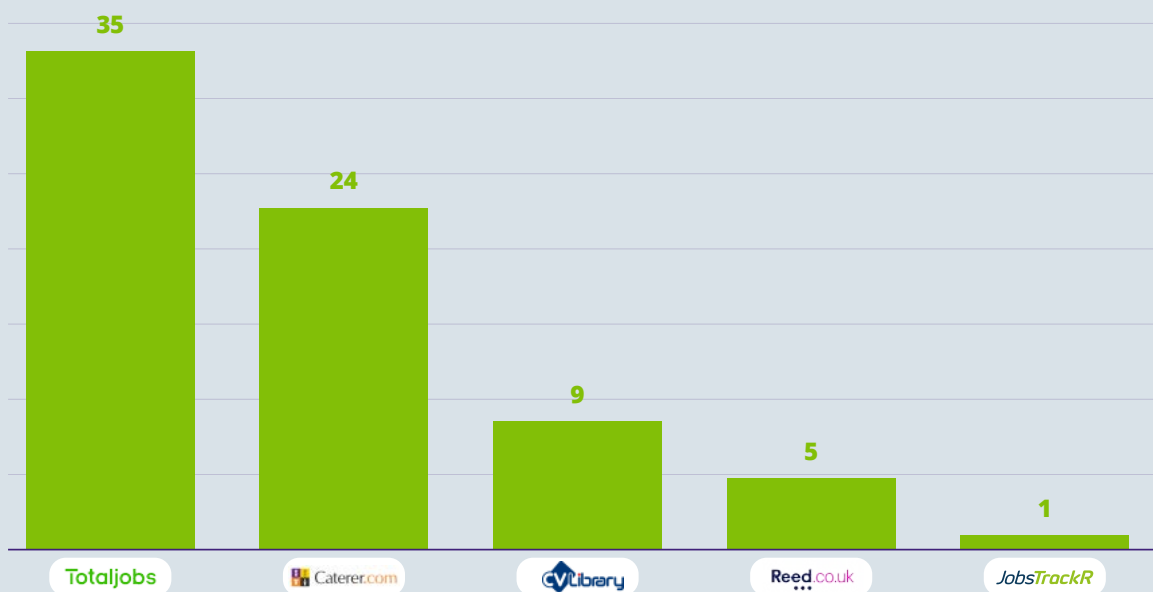
Catering & Hospitality | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 34 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

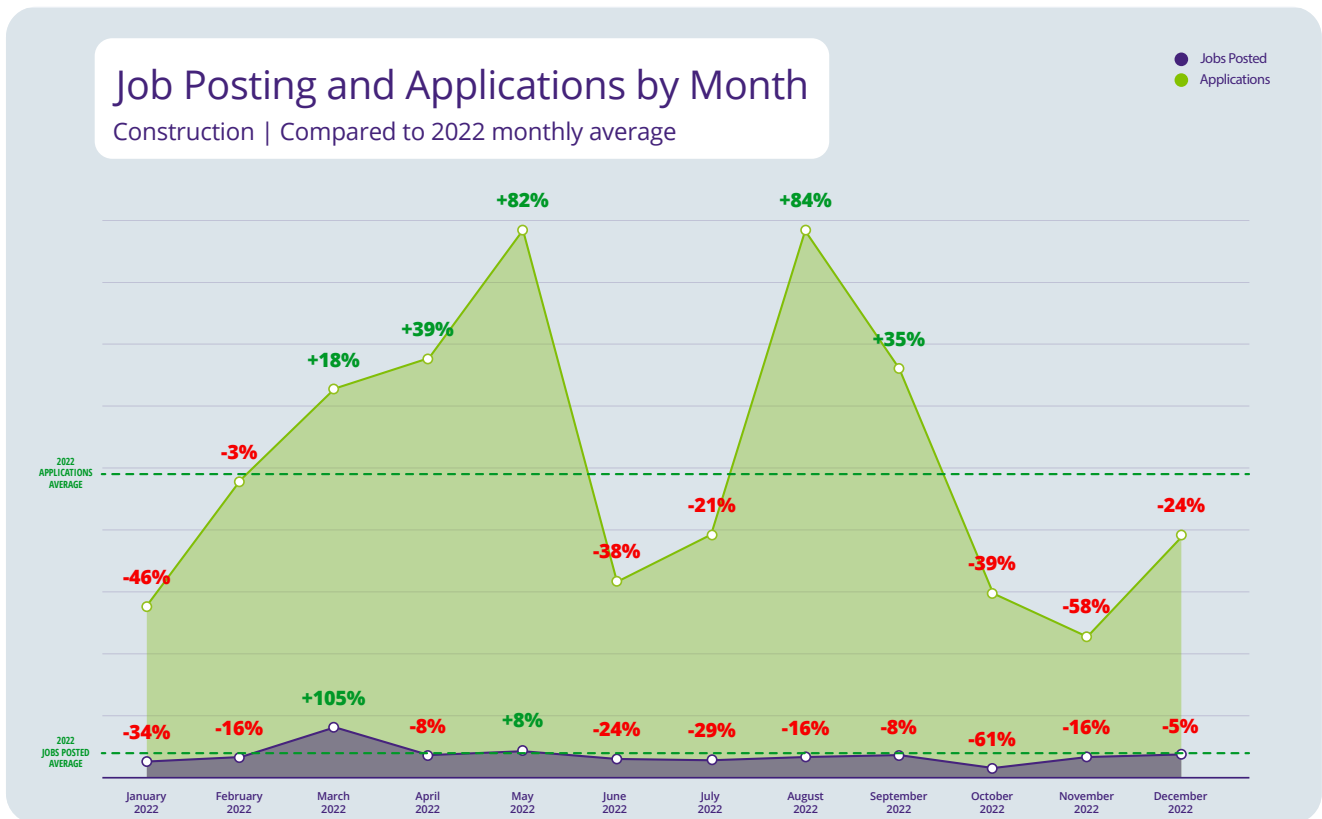
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Catering & Hospitality | Top 5 job boards

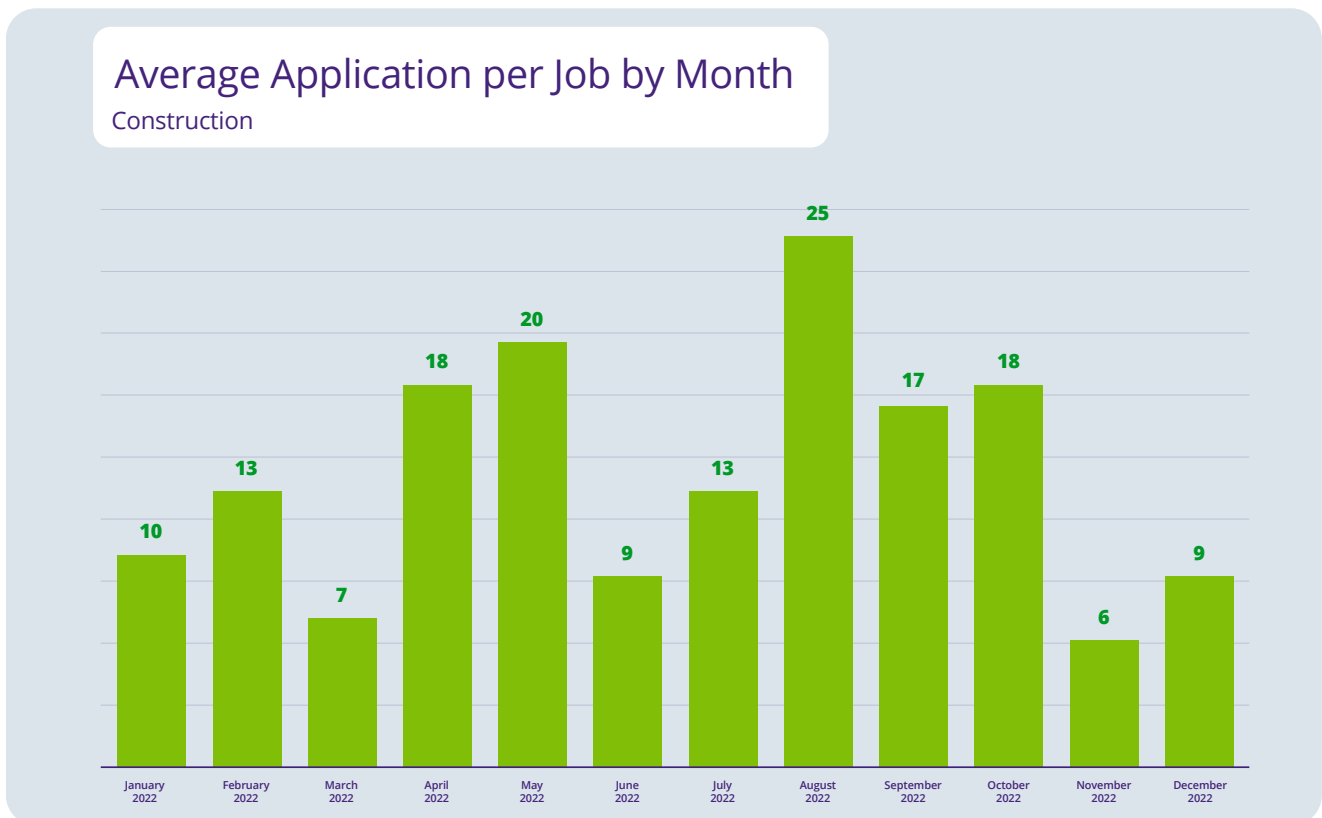


GRAPH 35 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Construction



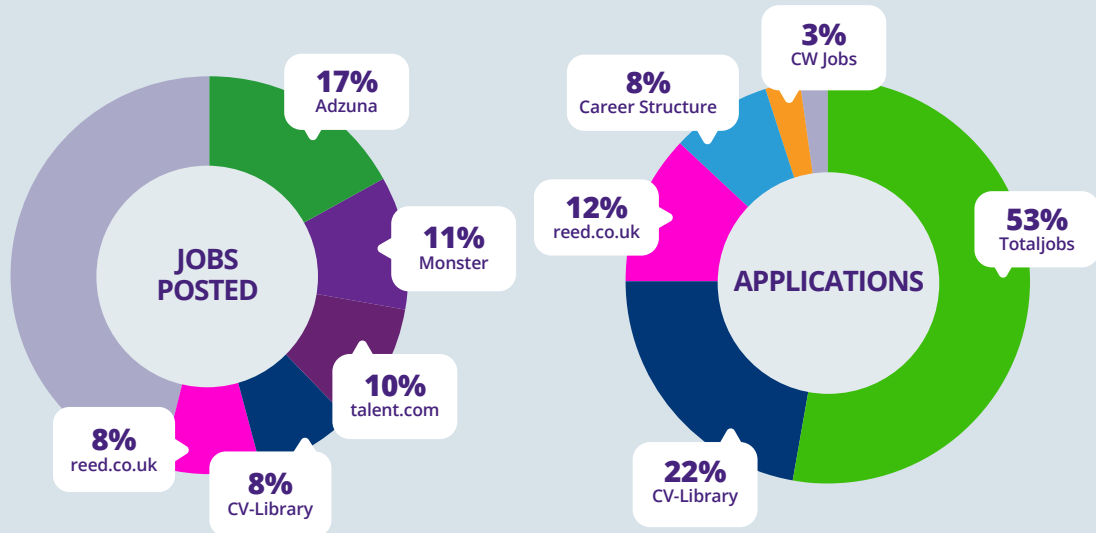
GRAPH 36 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 37 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

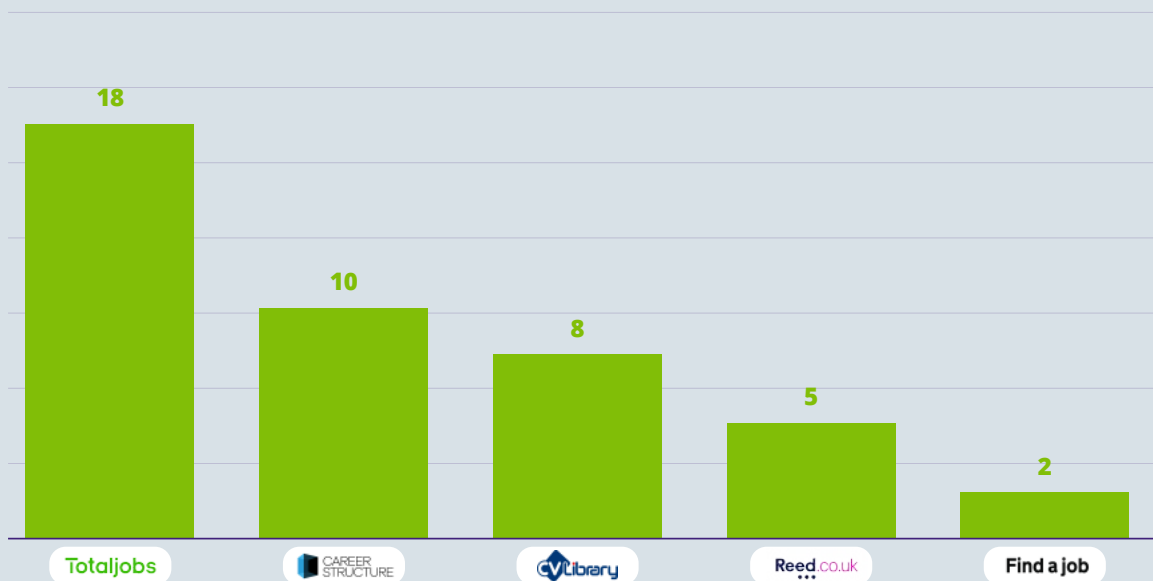
Construction | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 38 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

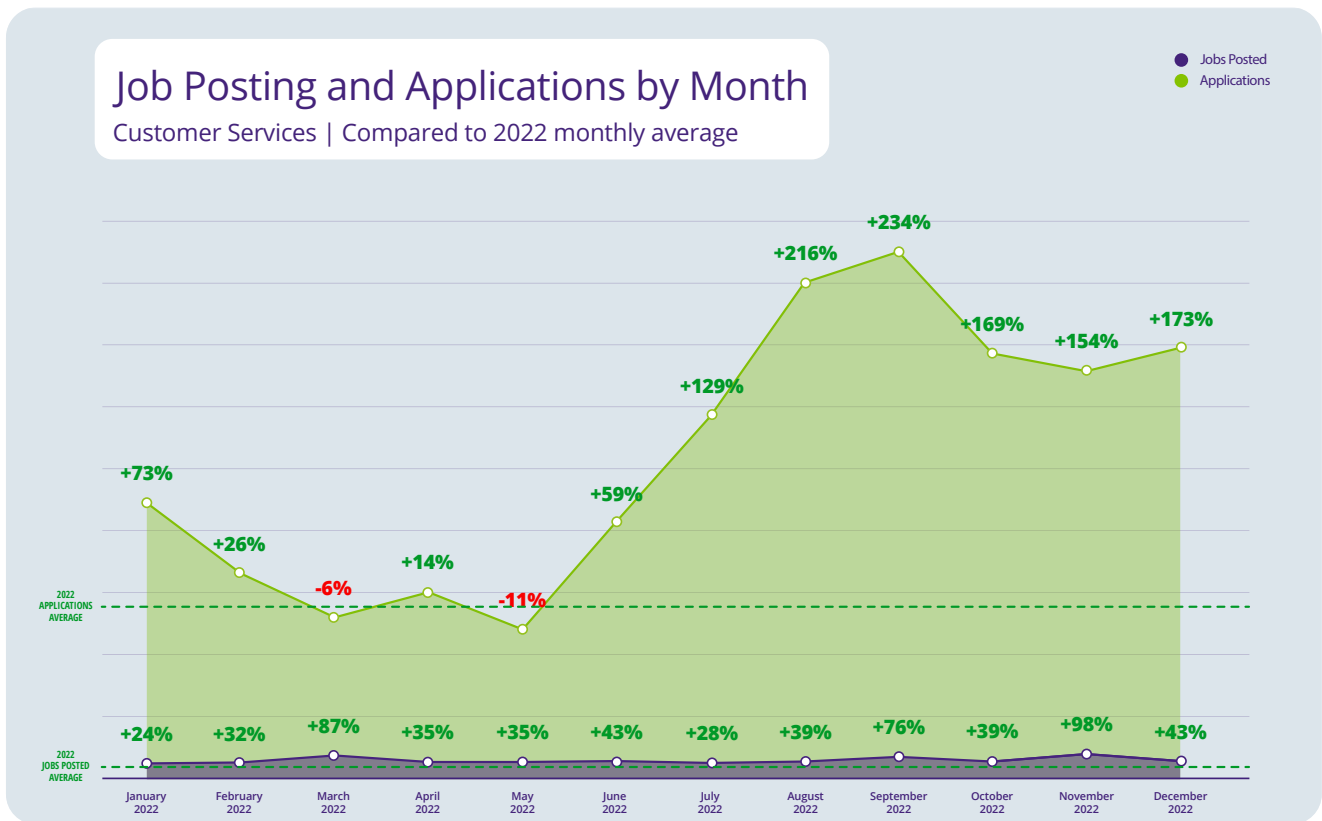
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Sales | Top 5 job boards

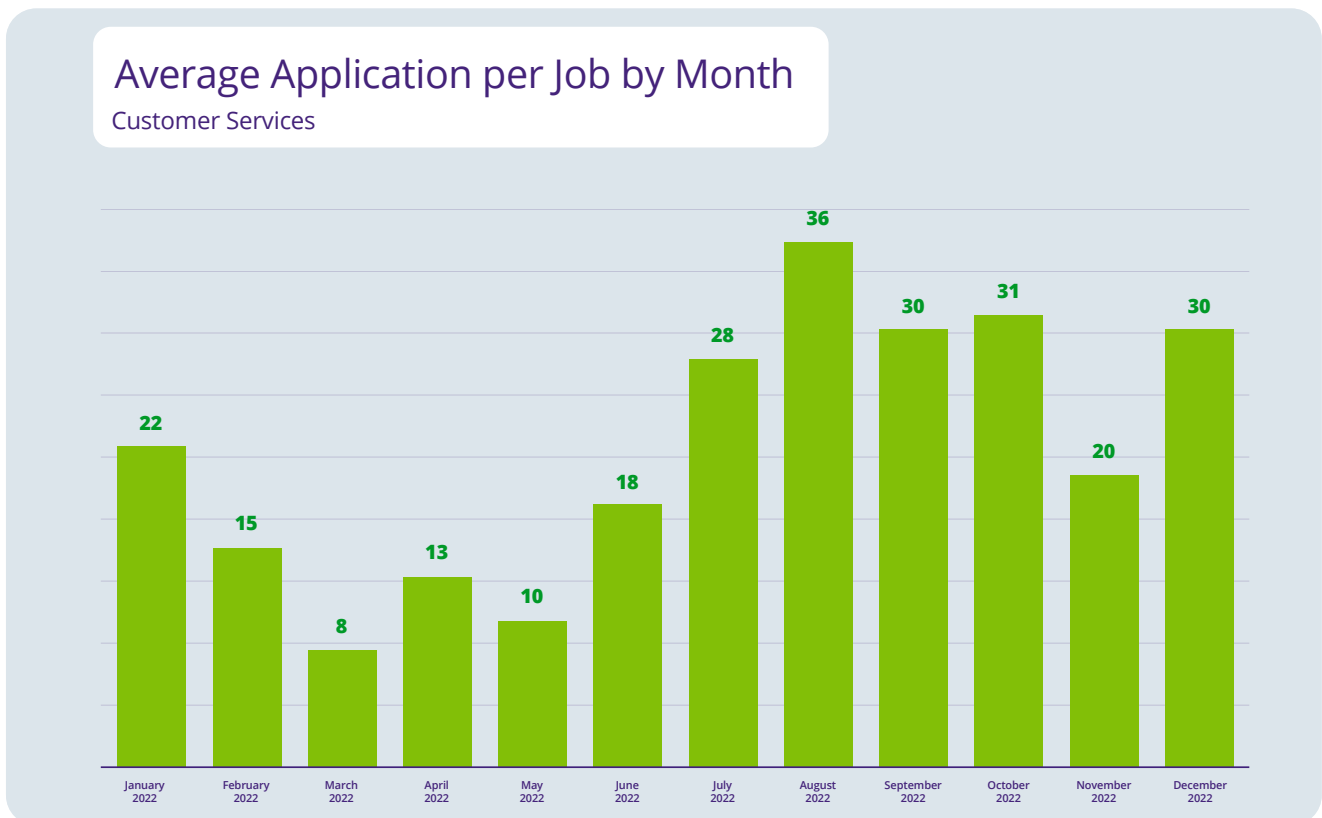


GRAPH 39 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Customer Services



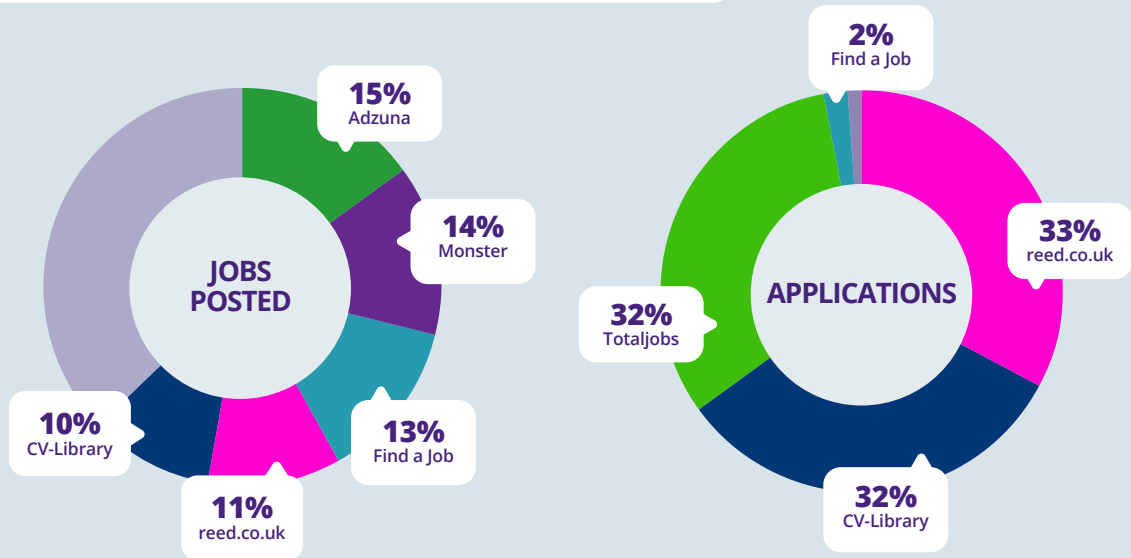
GRAPH 40 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 41 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

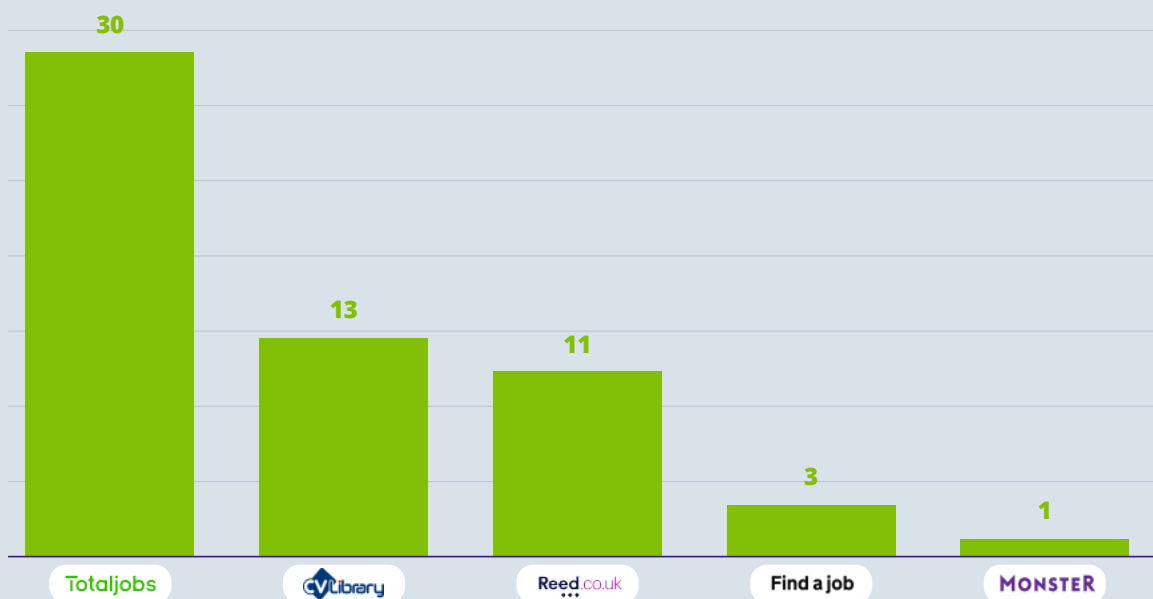
Customer Services | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 42 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

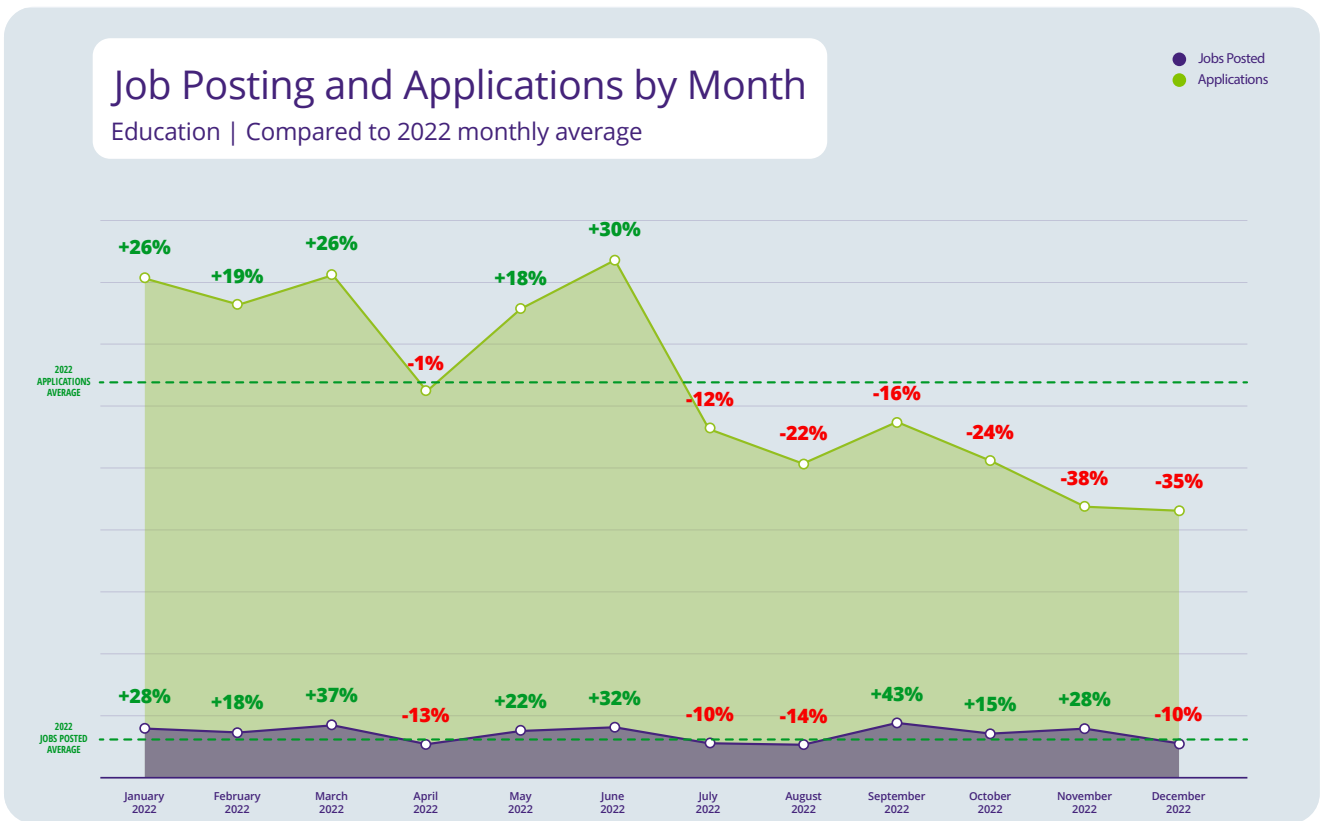
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Customer Services | Top 5 job boards

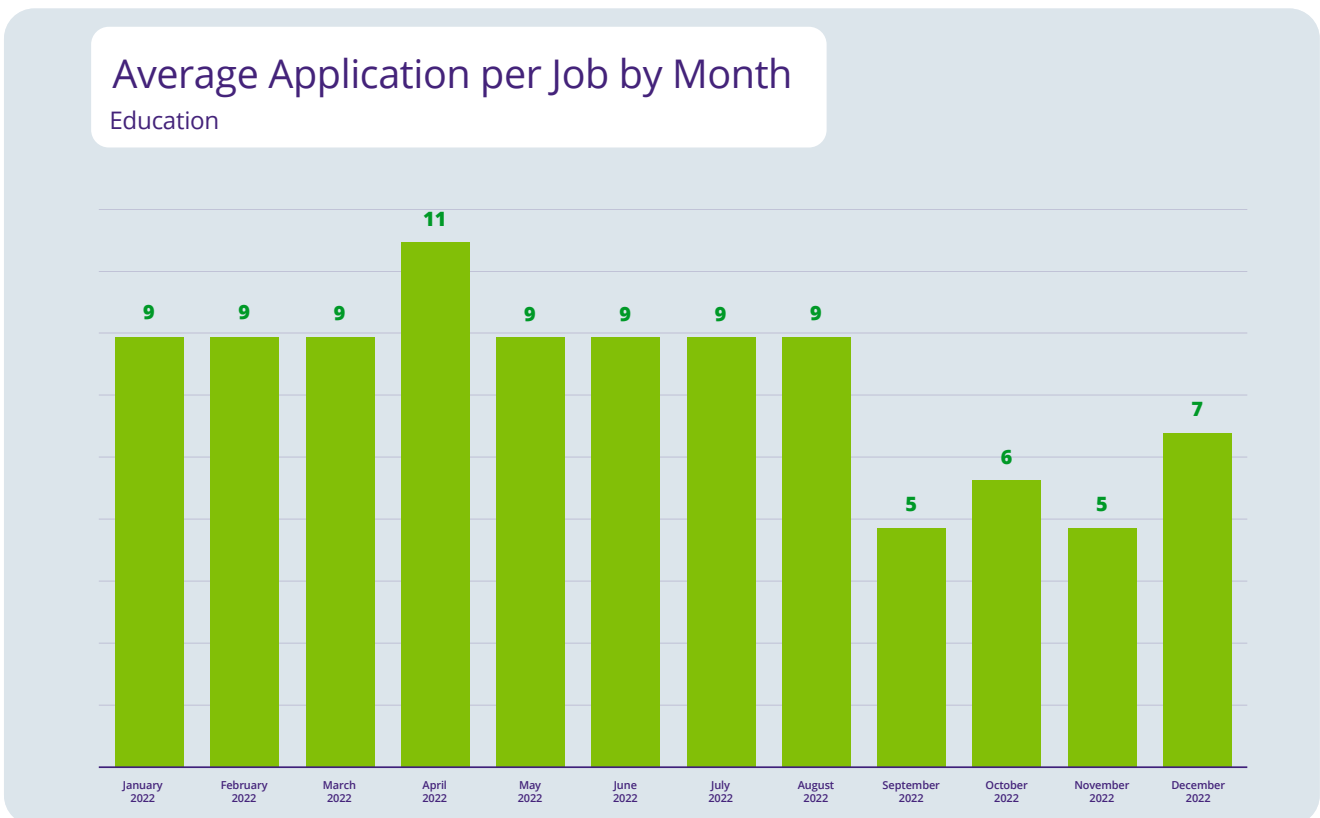


GRAPH 43 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Education



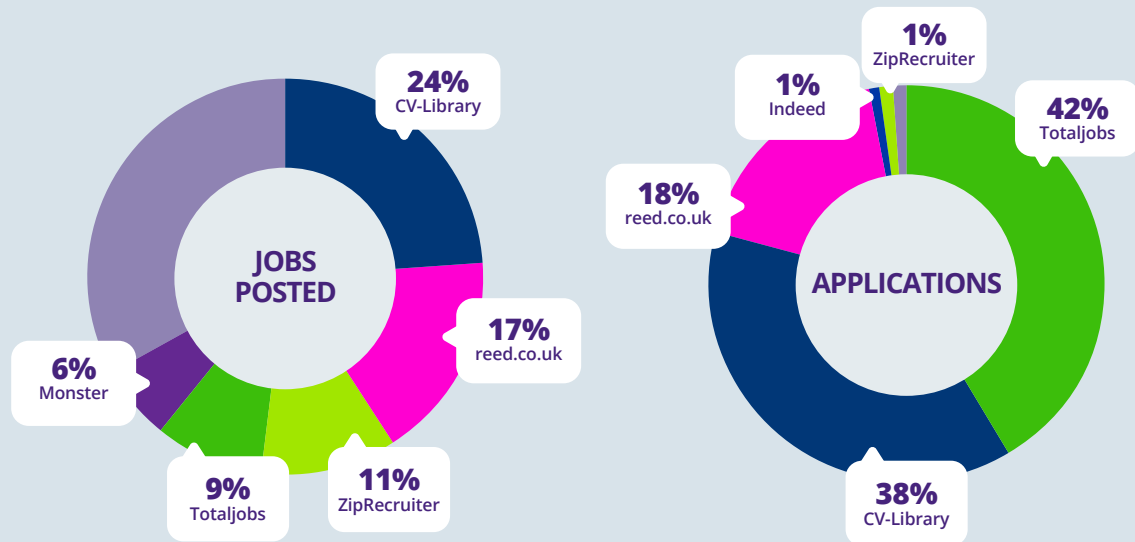
GRAPH 44 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 45 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

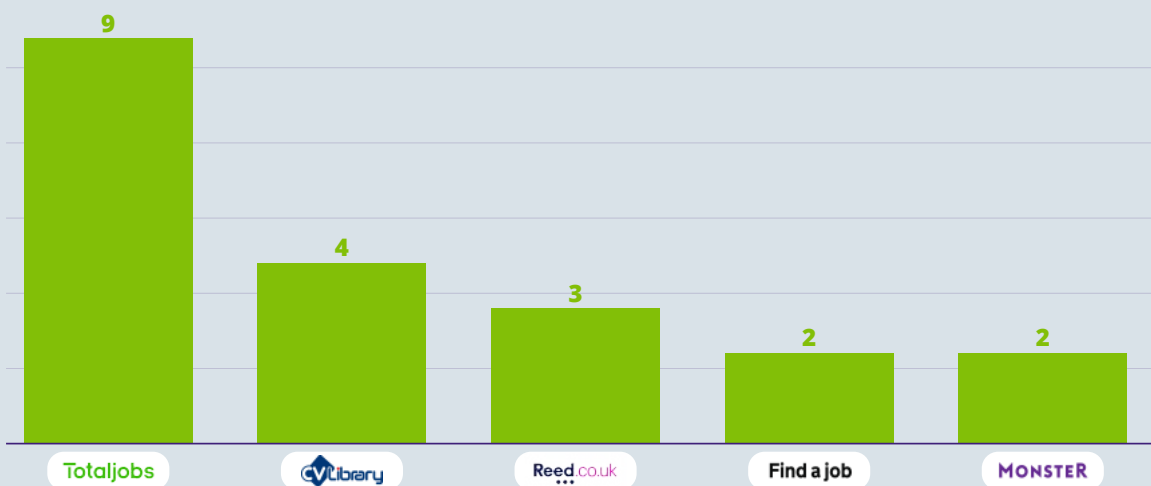
Education | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 46 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

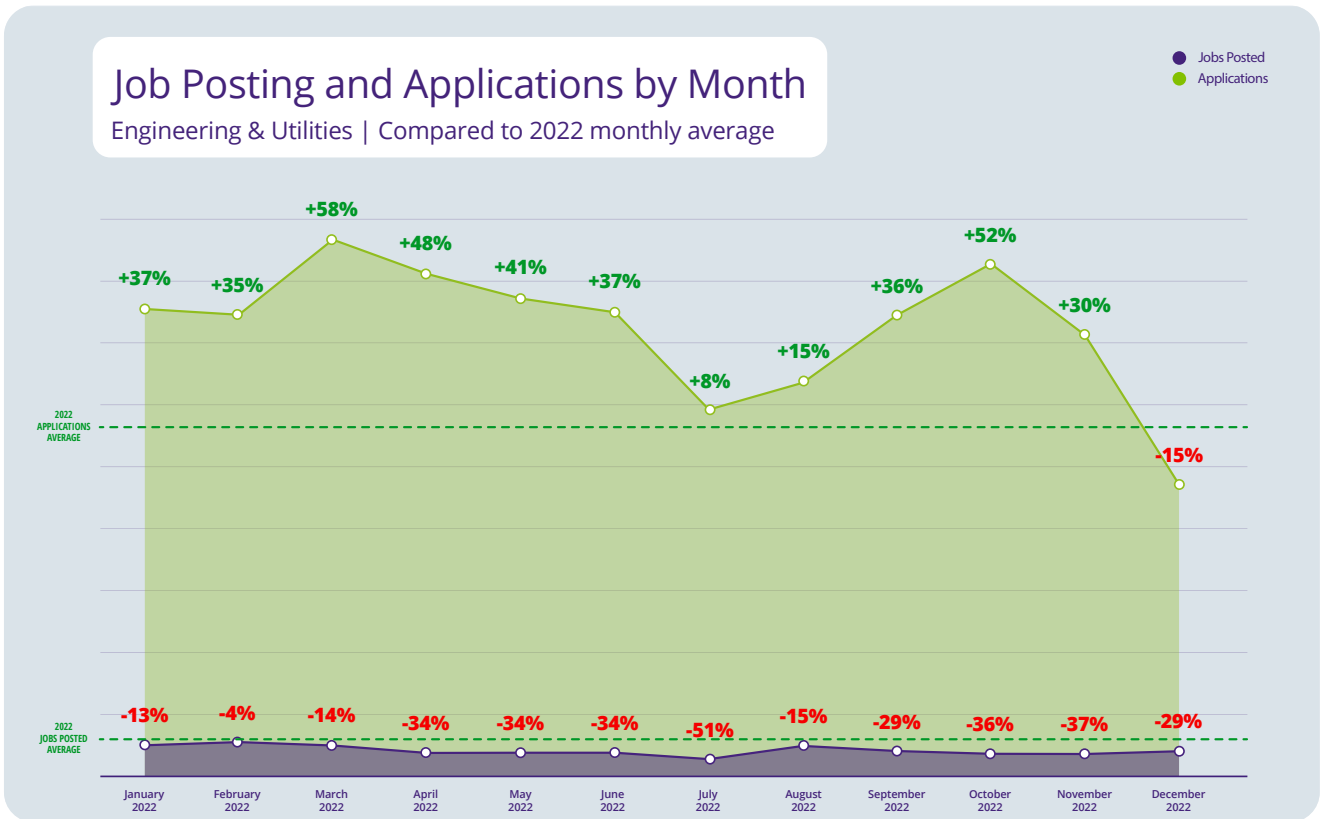
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Education | Top 5 job boards

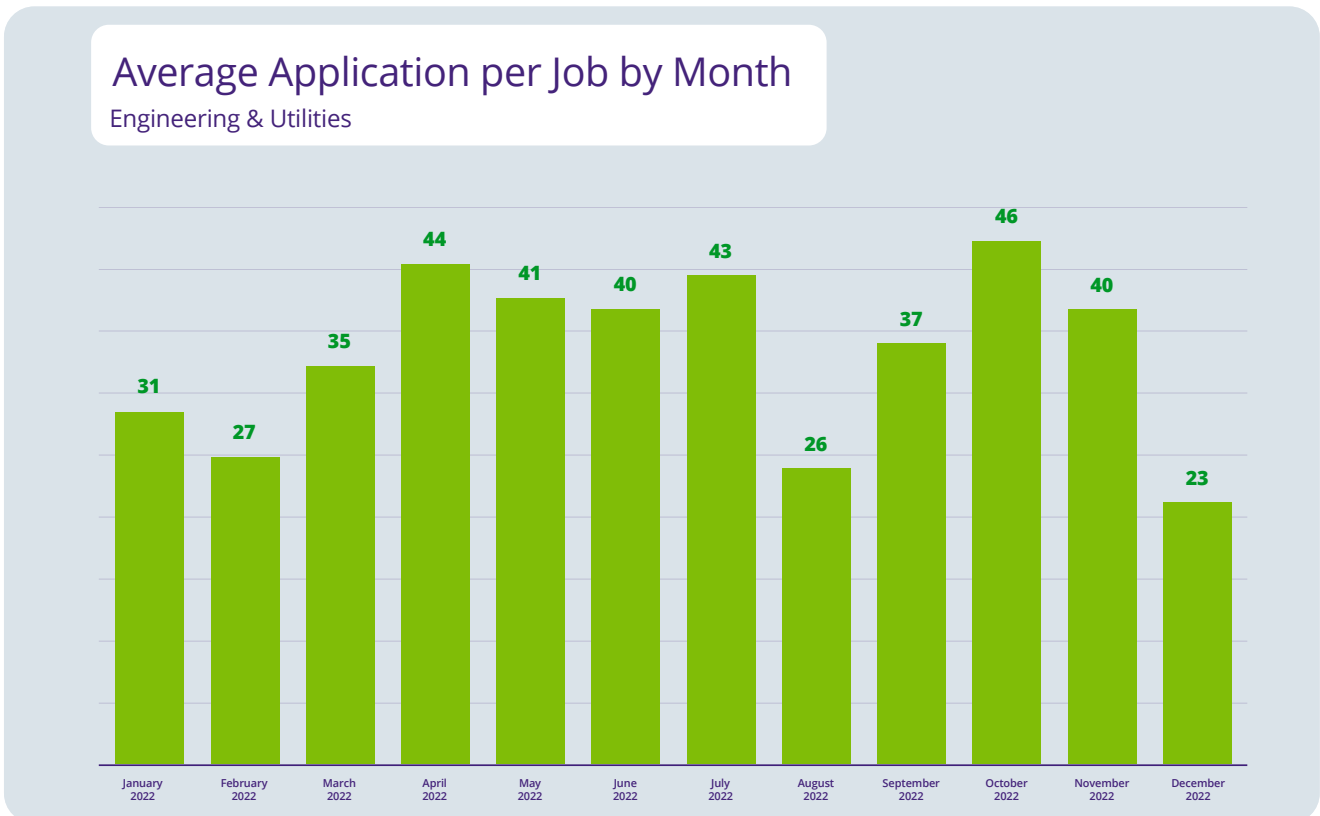


GRAPH 47 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Engineering & Utilities



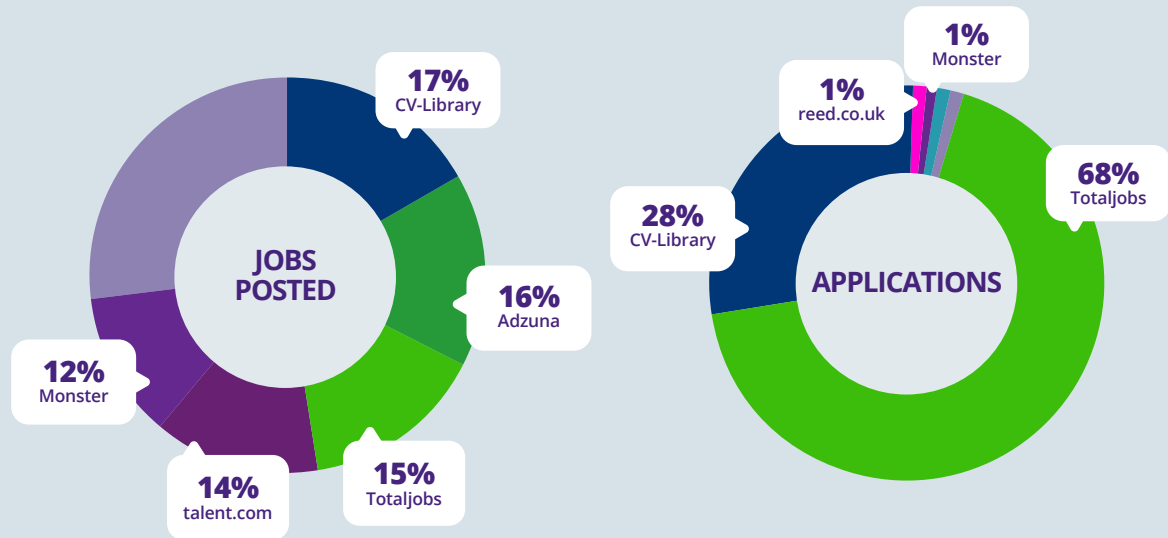
GRAPH 48 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 49 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

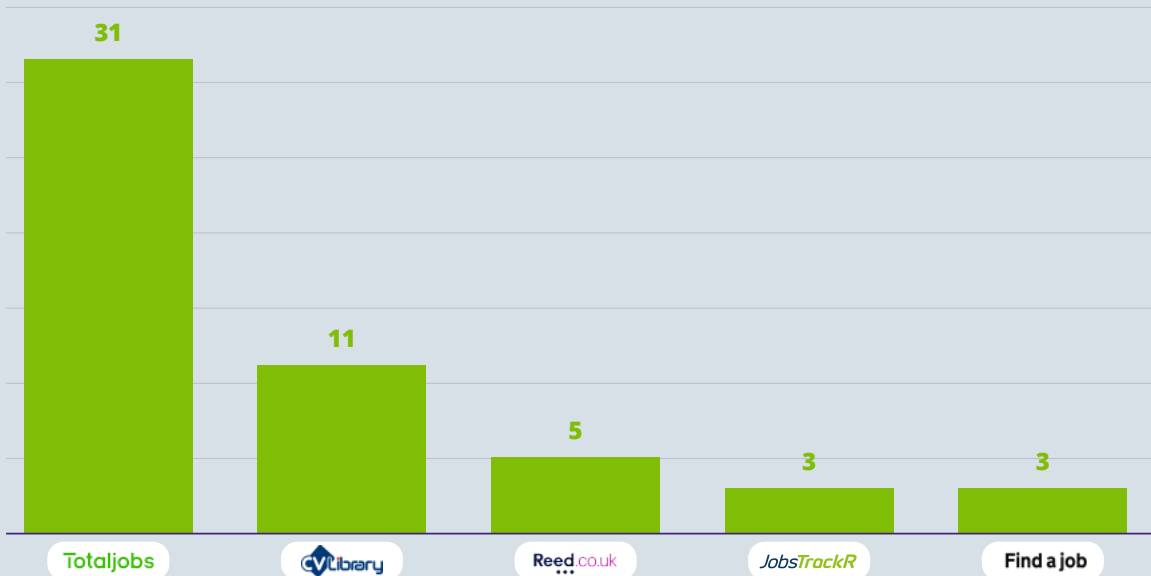
Engineering & Utilities | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 50 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

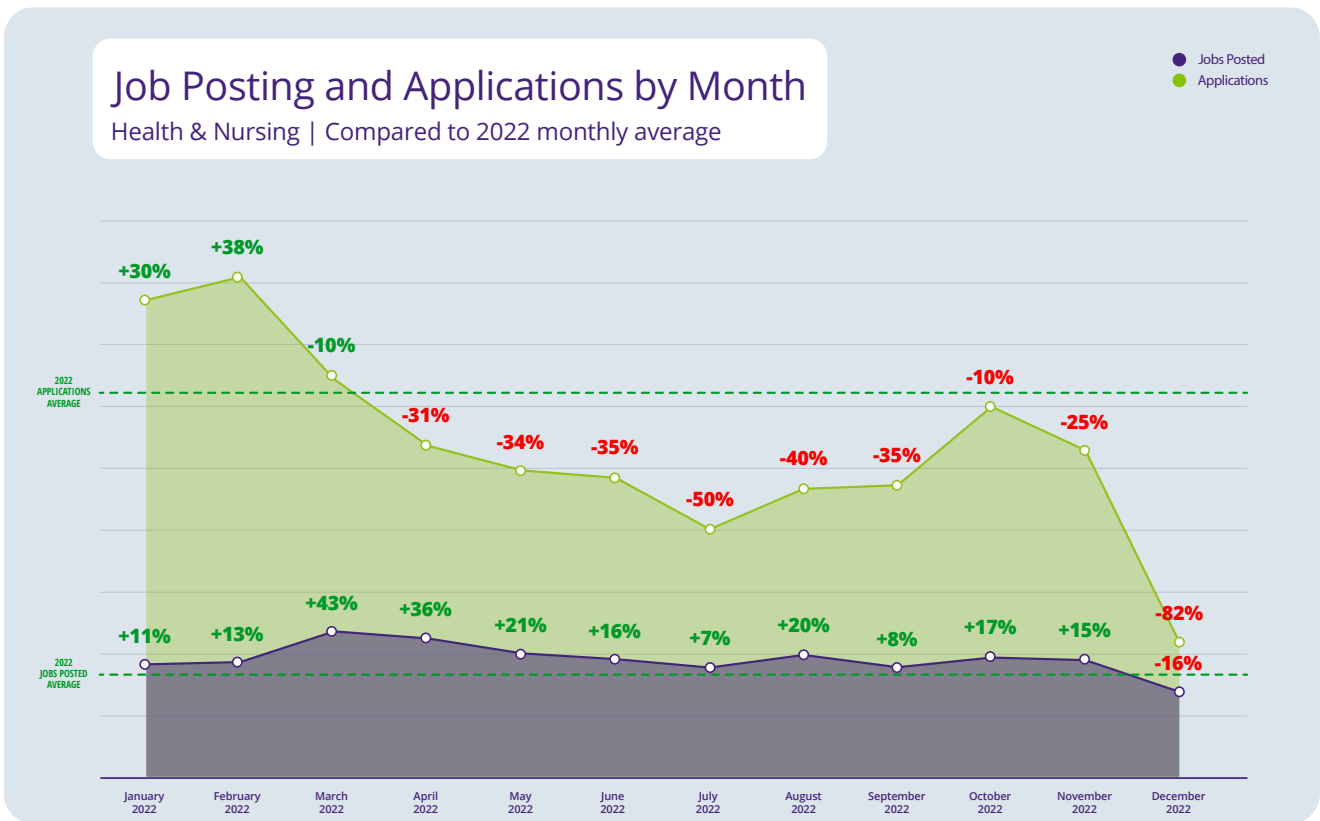
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Engineering & Utilities | Top 5 job boards

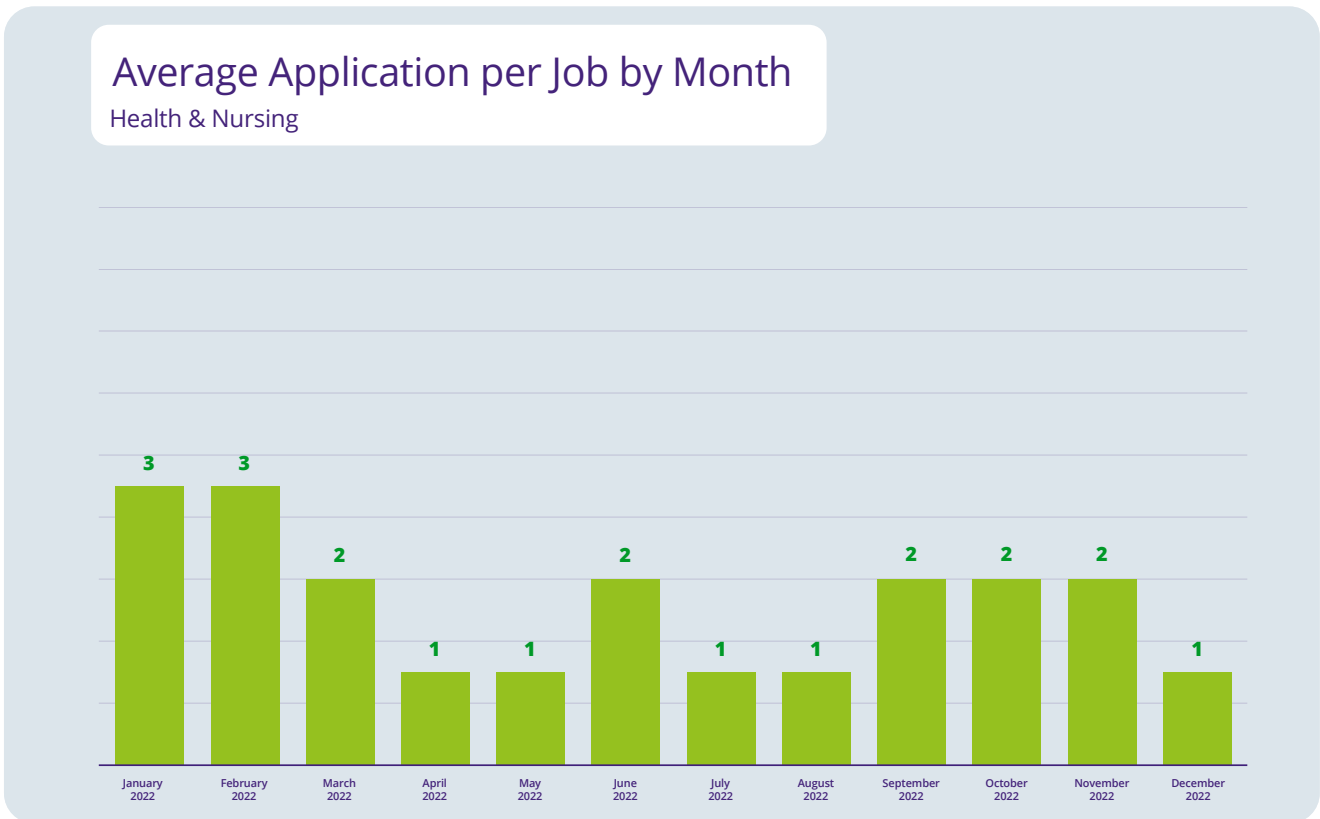


GRAPH 51 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Health & Nursing



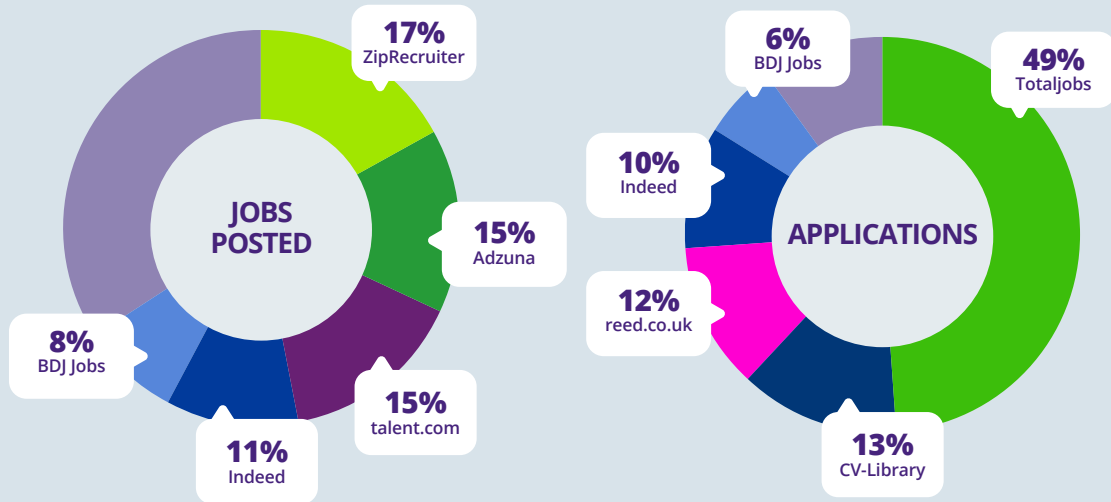
GRAPH 52 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 53 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

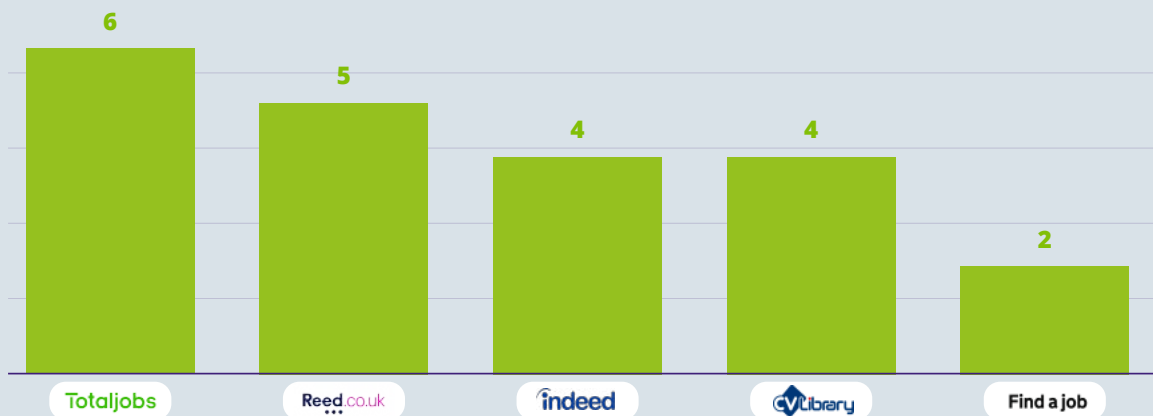
Health & Nursing | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 54 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

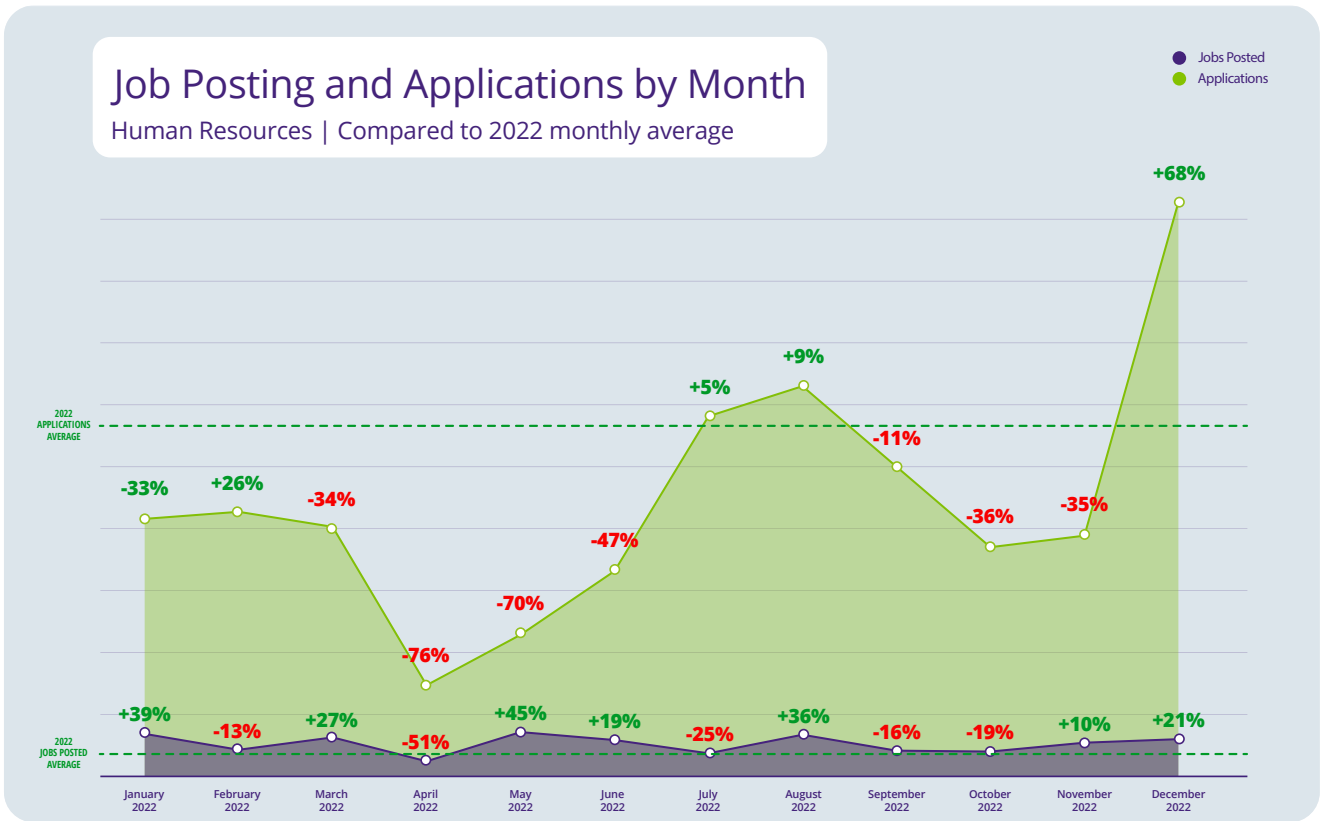
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Health & Nursing | Top 5 job boards

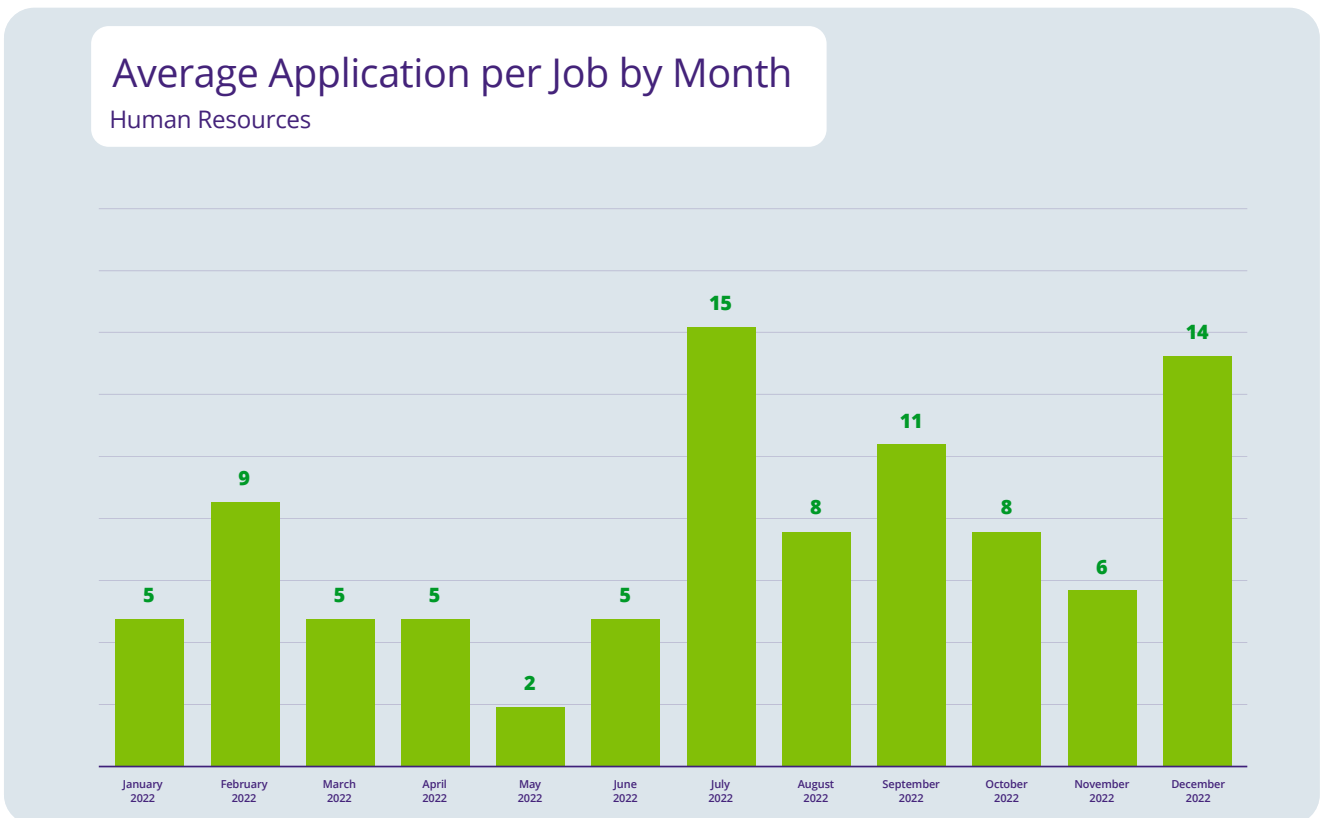


GRAPH 55 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Human Resources



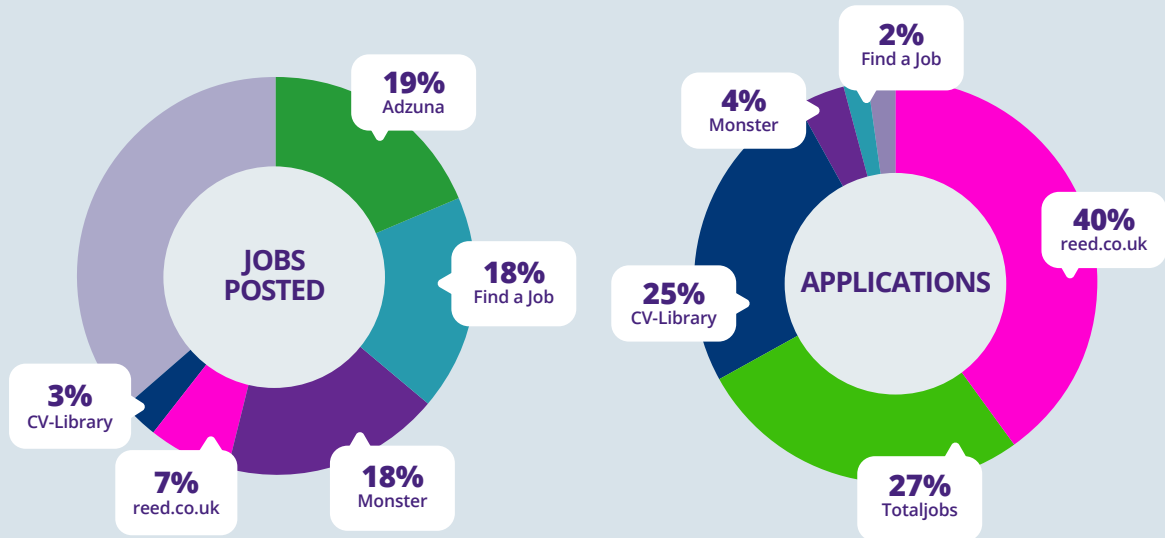
GRAPH 56 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 57 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

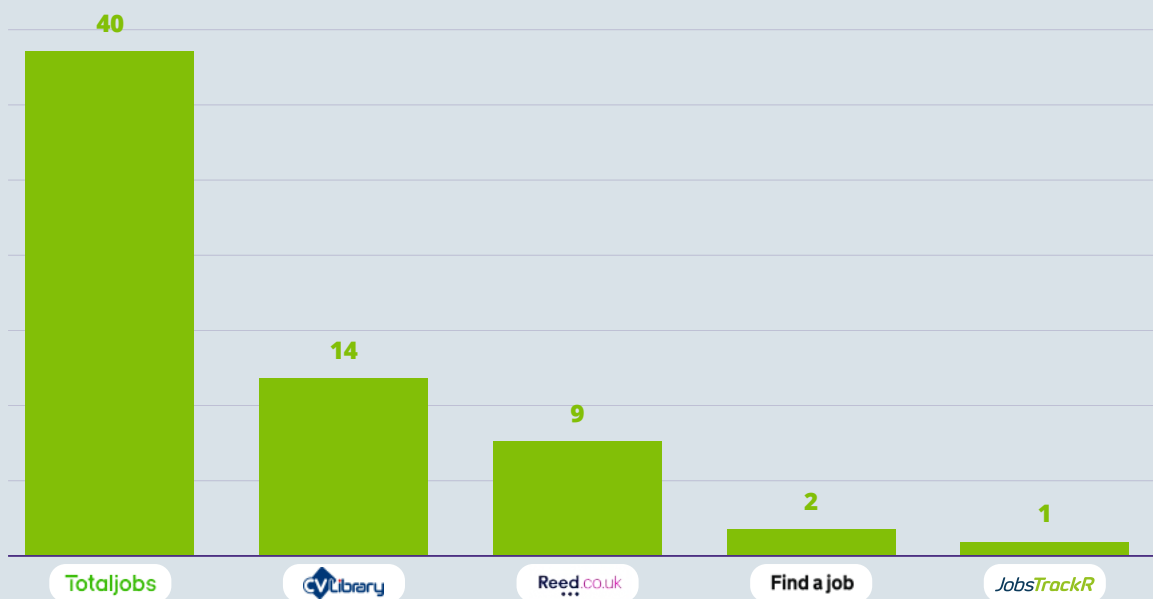
Human Resources | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 58 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

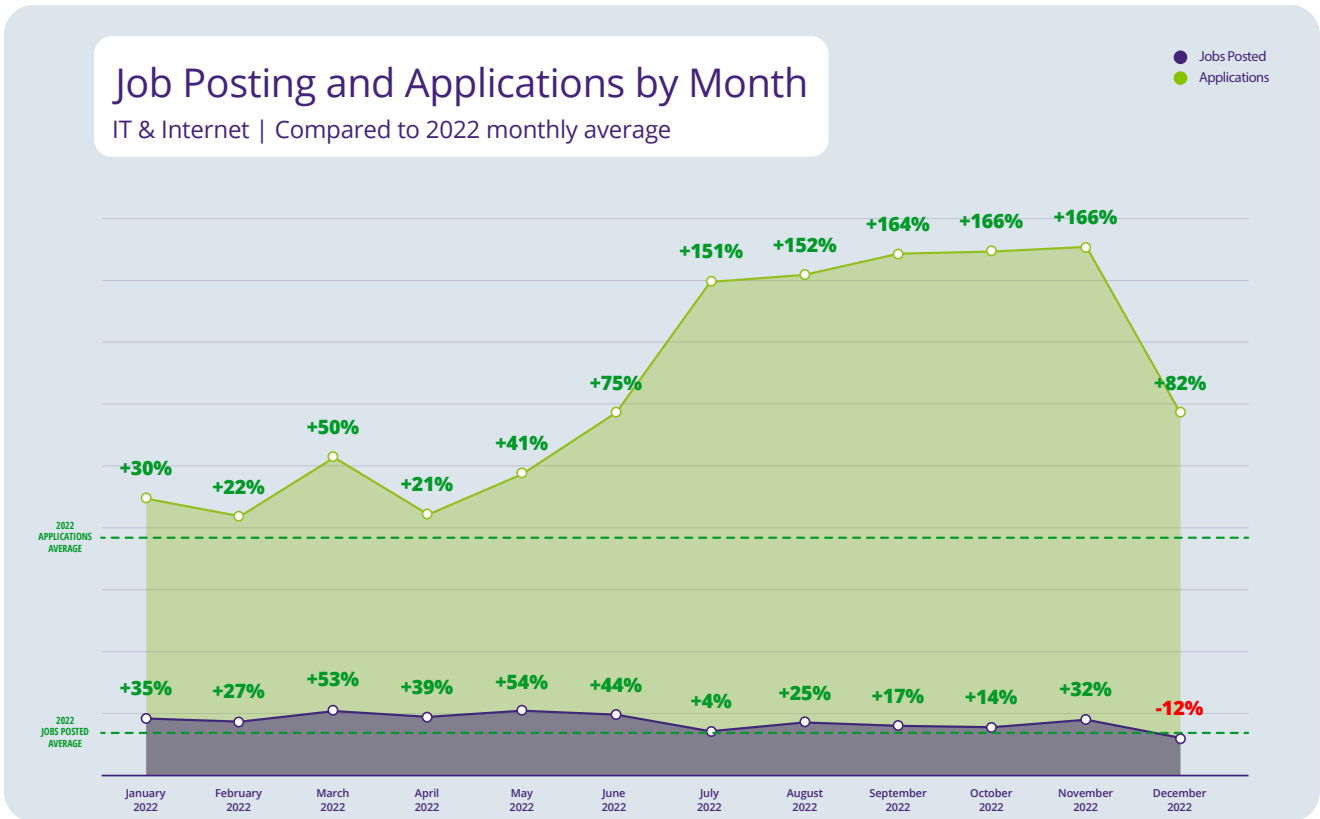
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Human Resources | Top 5 job boards

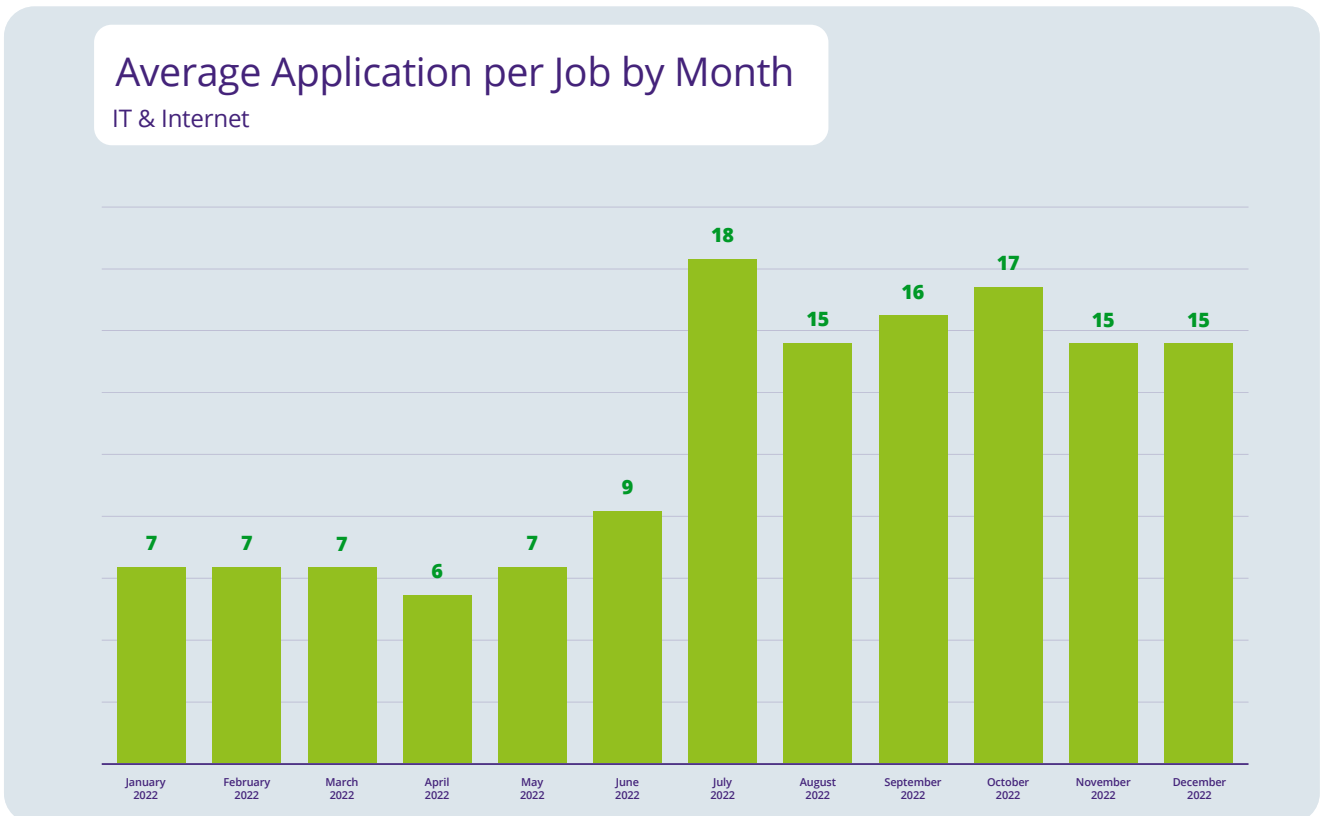


GRAPH 59 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# IT & Internet



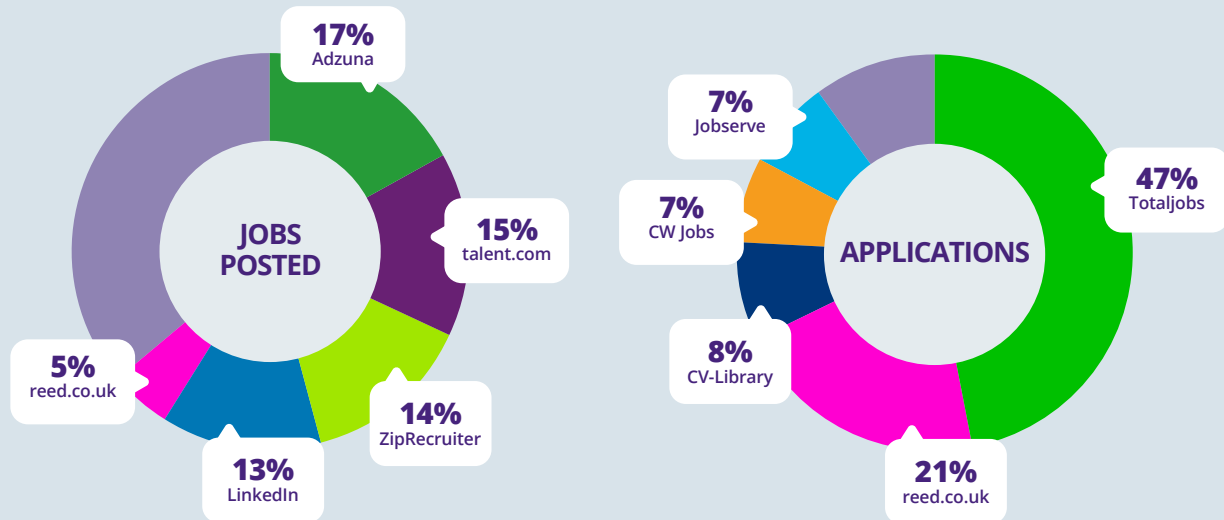
GRAPH 60 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 61 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted and Applications by Job Board

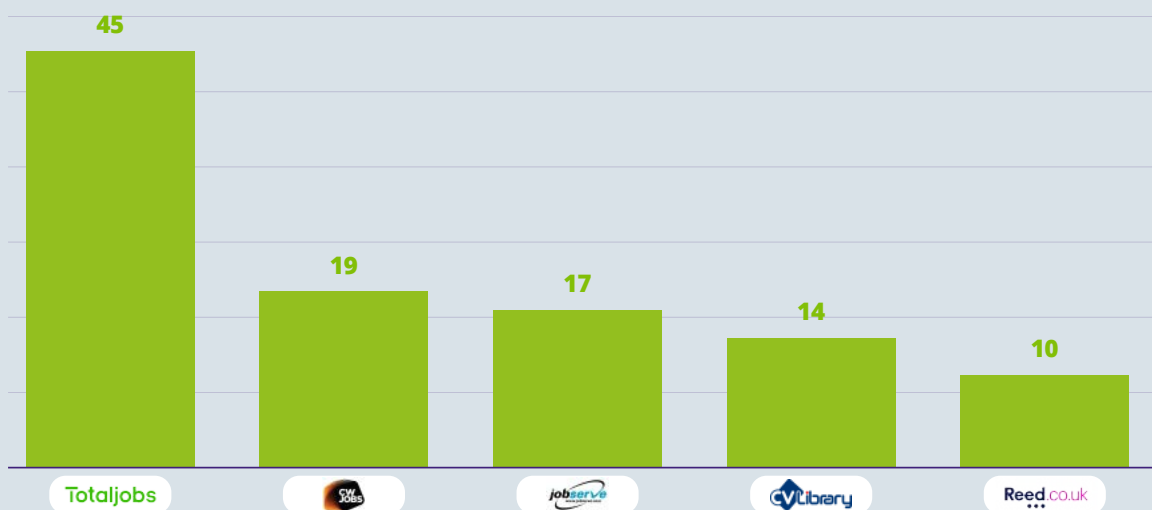
IT & Internet | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 62 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

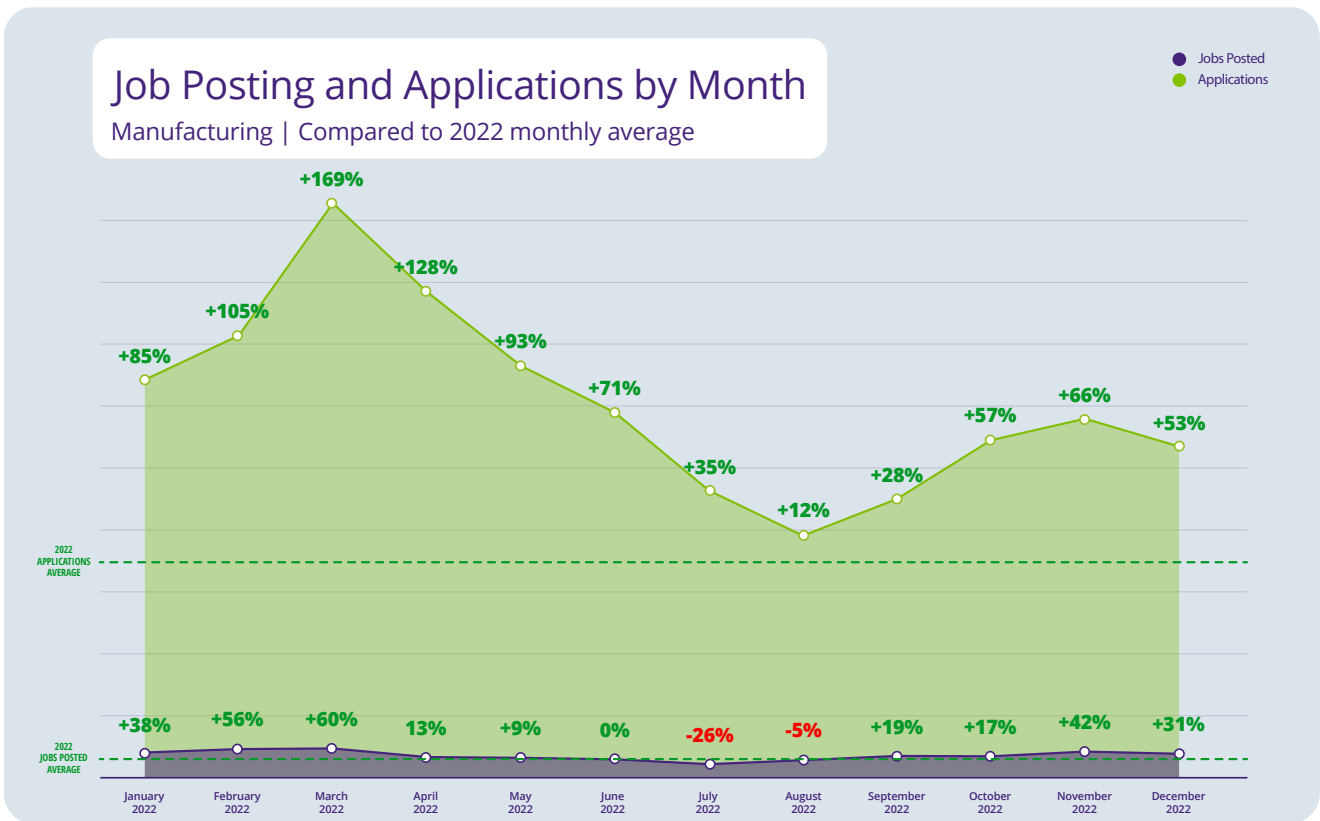
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

IT & Internet | Top 5 job boards

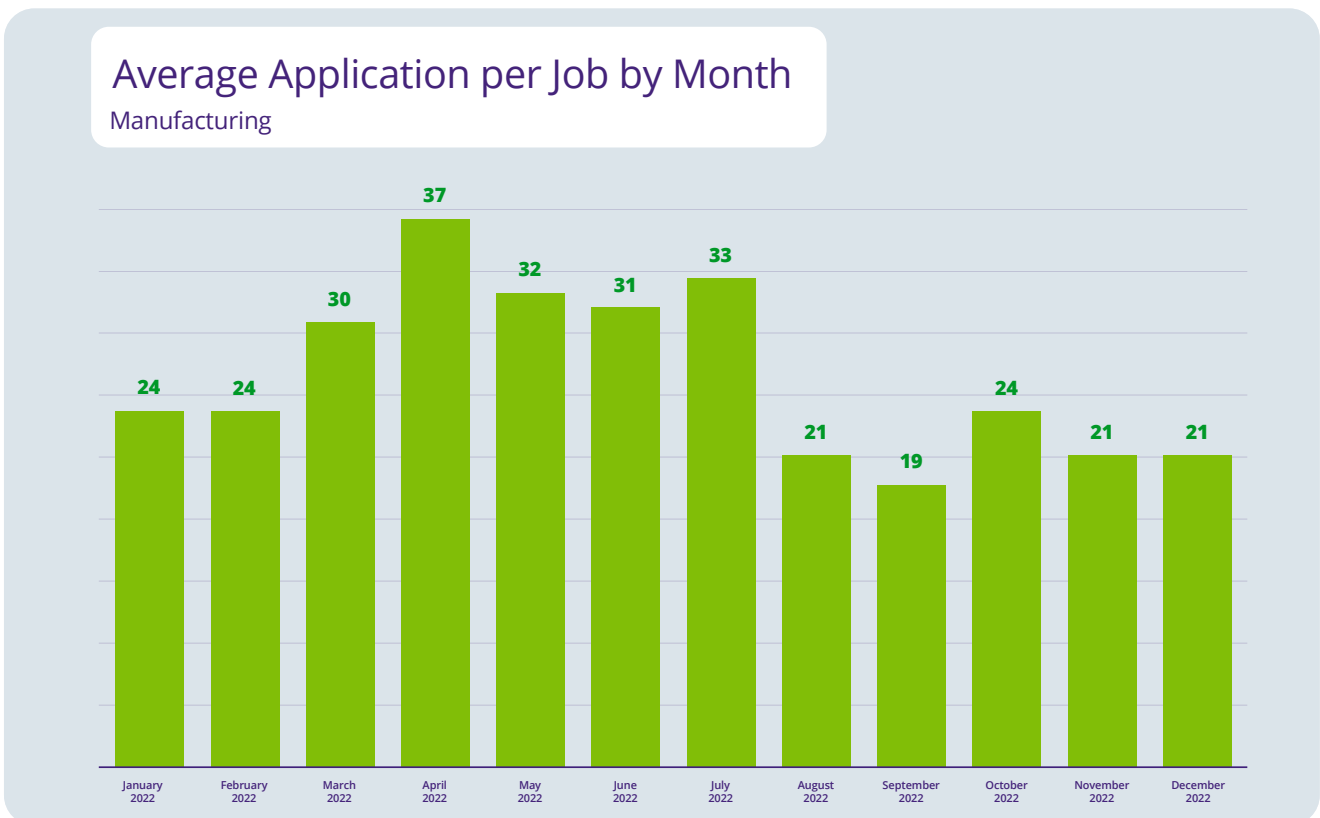


GRAPH 63 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Manufacturing



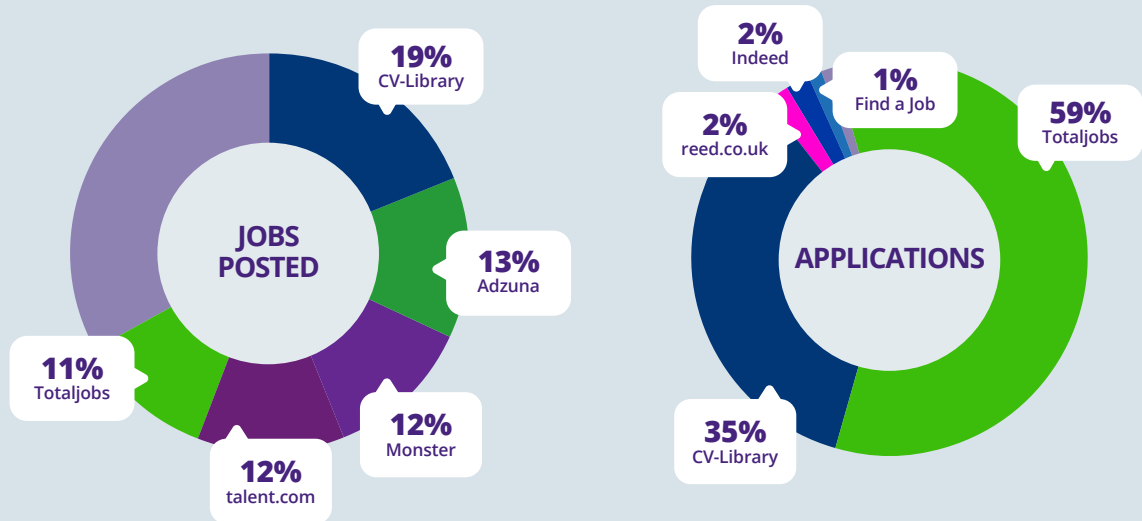
GRAPH 64 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 65 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

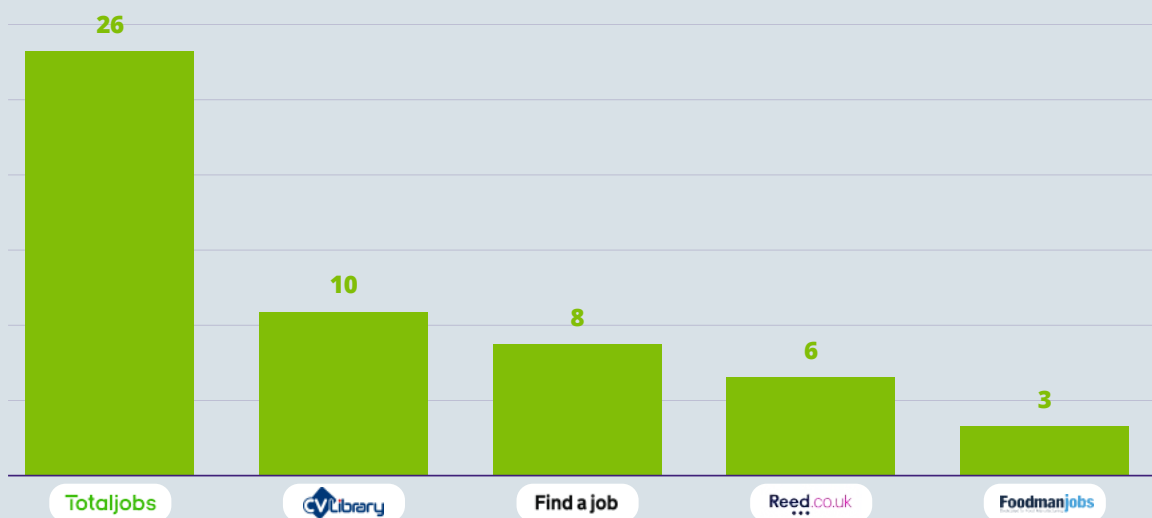
Manufacturing | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 66 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

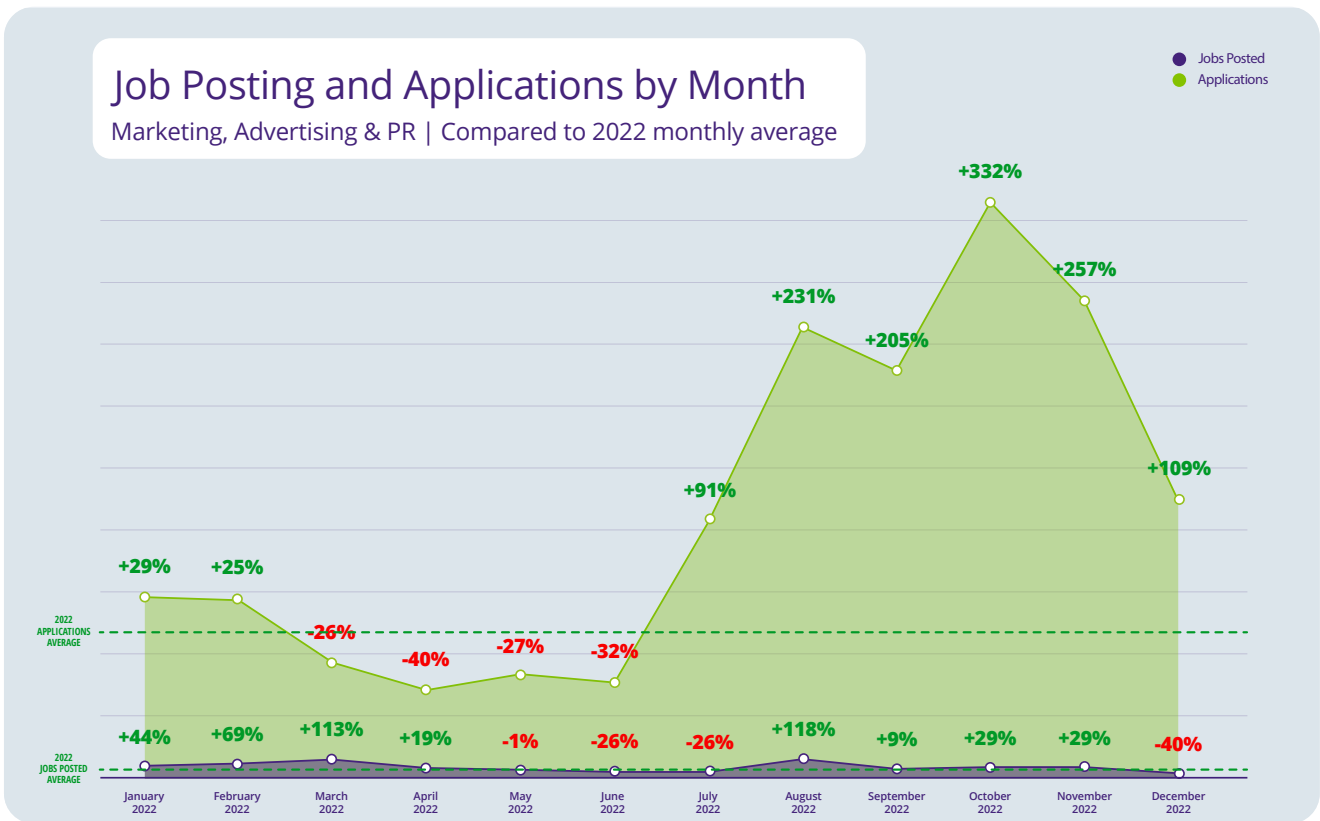
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Manufacturing | Top 5 job boards

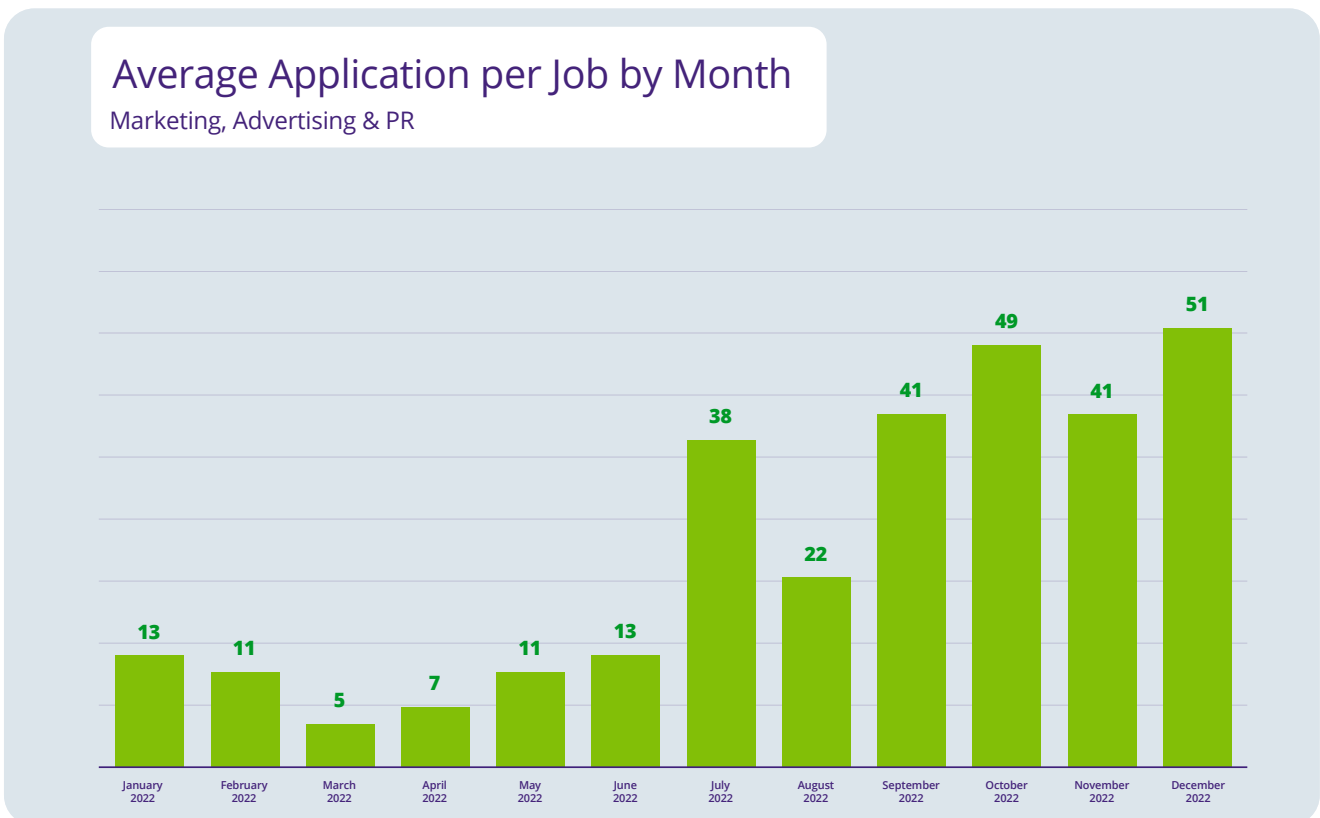


GRAPH 67 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Marketing, PR & Advertising



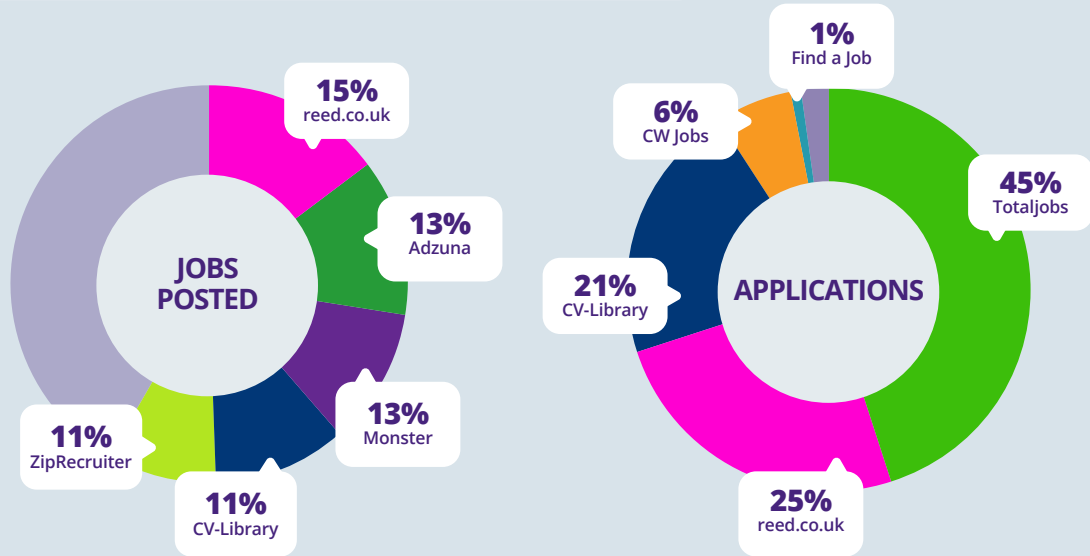
GRAPH 68 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 69 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

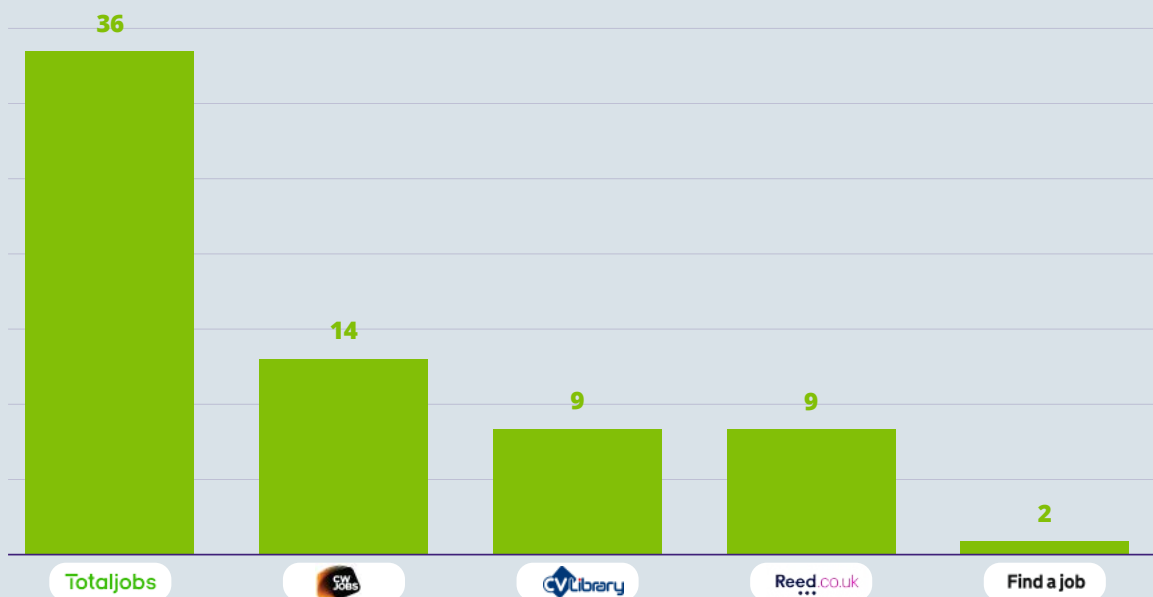
Marketing, Advertising & PR | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 70 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

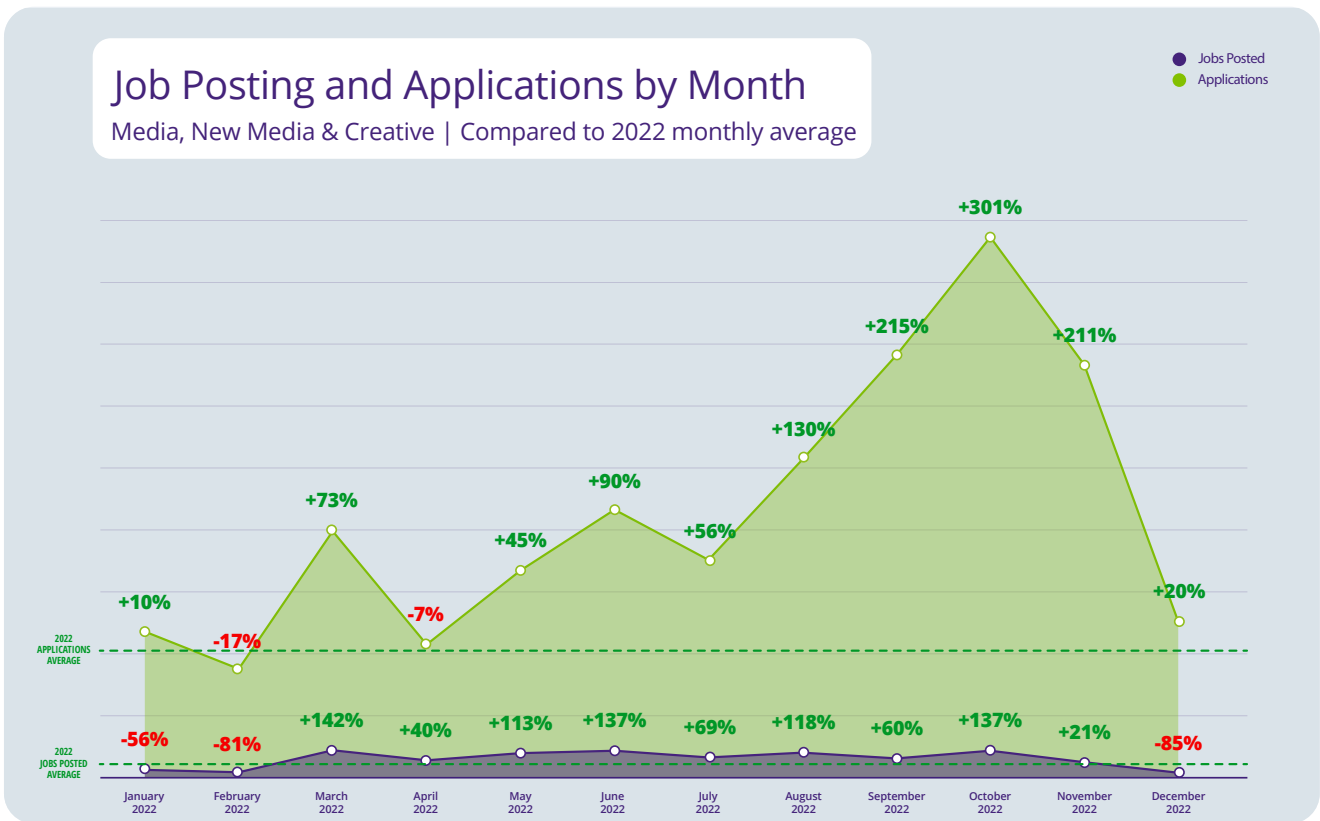
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Marketing, Advertising & PR | Top 5 job boards

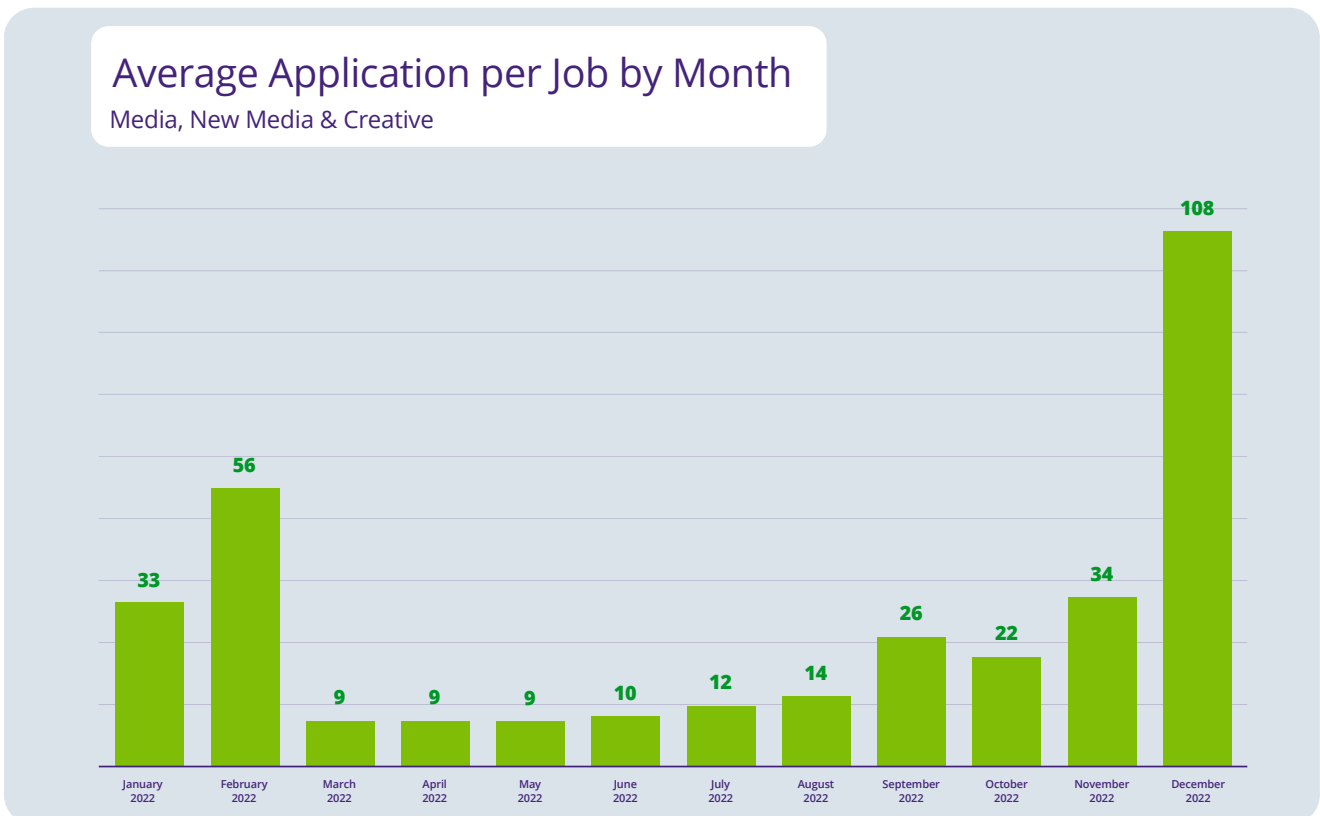


GRAPH 71 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Media, New Media & Creative



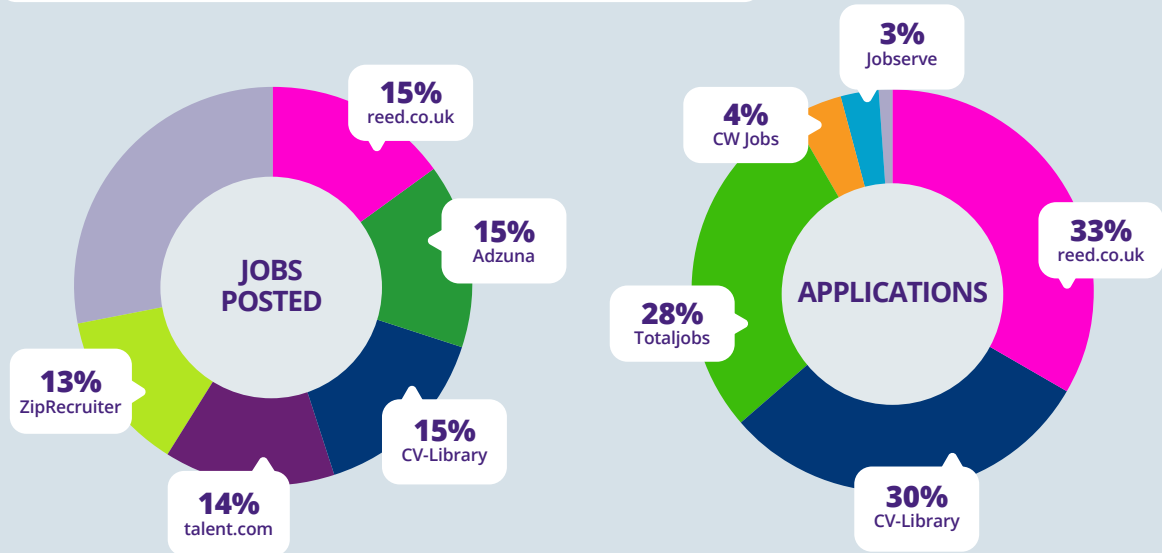
GRAPH 72 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 73 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

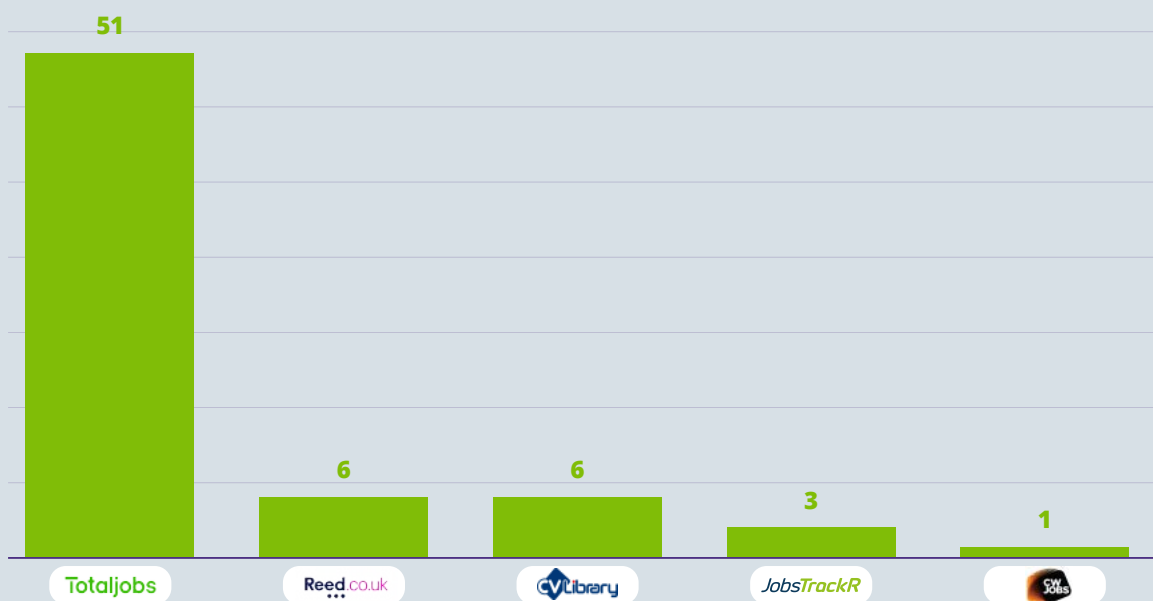
Media, New Media & Creative | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 74 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Media, New Media & Creative | Top 5 job boards



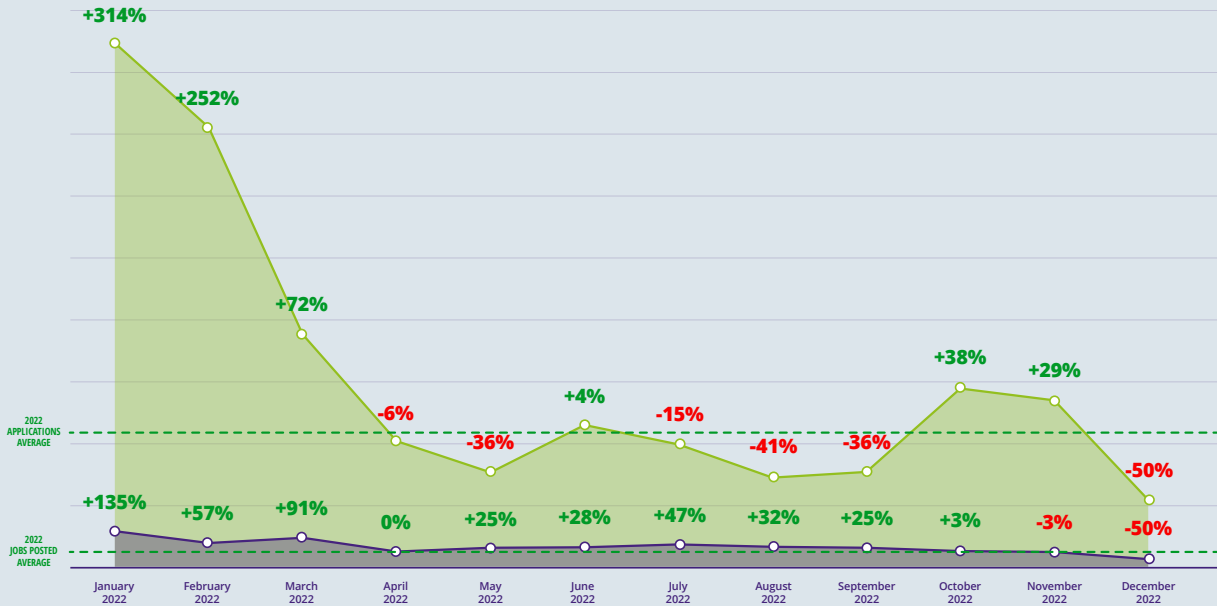
GRAPH 75 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Not for Profit & Charity

## Job Posting and Applications by Month

Not for Profit & Charity | Compared to 2022 monthly average

● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 76 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average

## Average Application per Job by Month

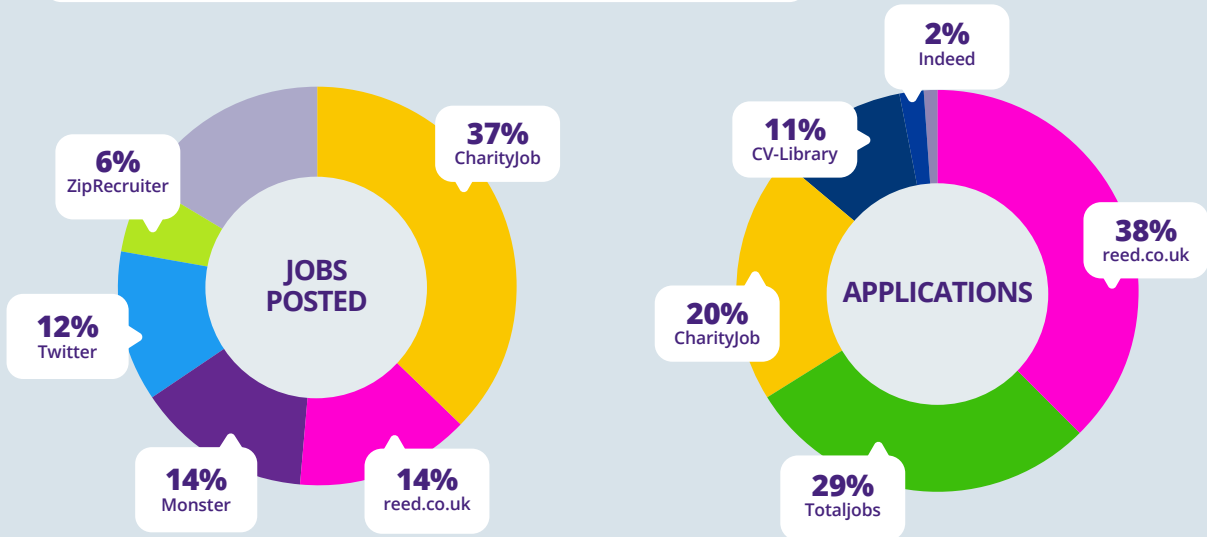
Not for Profit & Charity



GRAPH 77 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

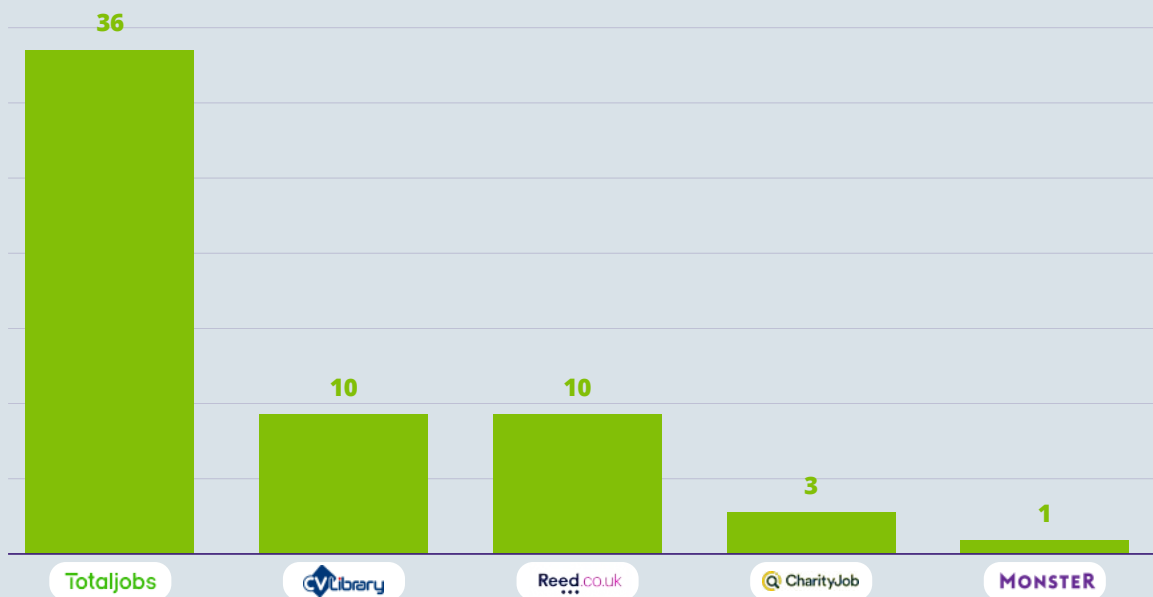
Not for Profit & Charity | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 78 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Not for Profit & Charity | Top 5 job boards



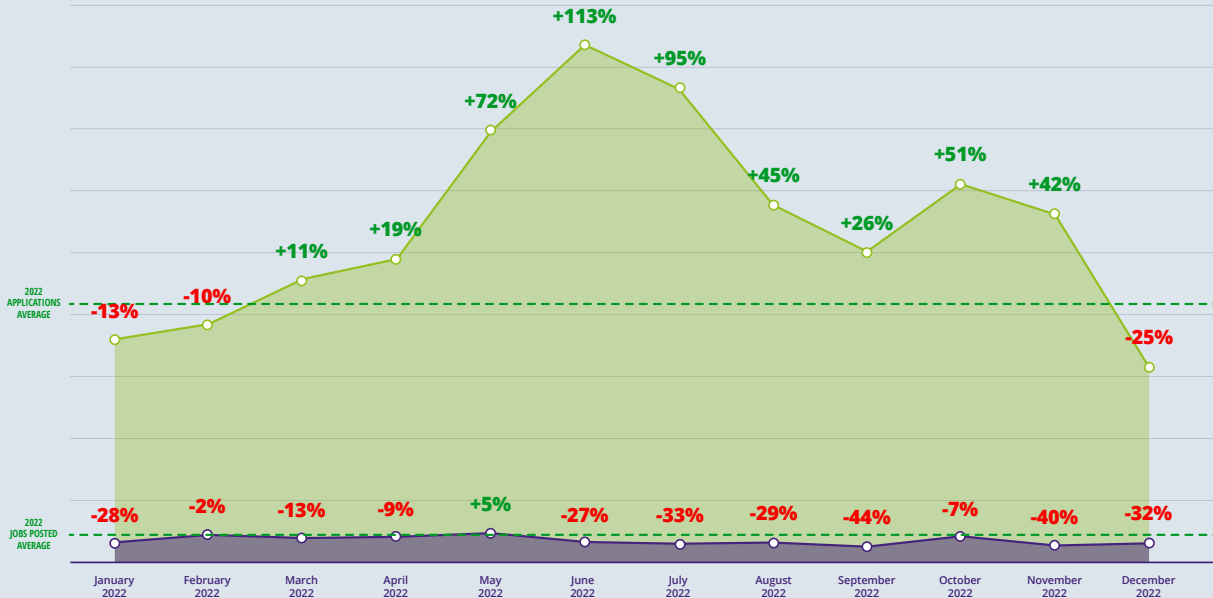
GRAPH 79 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Property

## Job Posting and Applications by Month

Property | Compared to 2022 monthly average

● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 80 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average

## Average Application per Job by Month

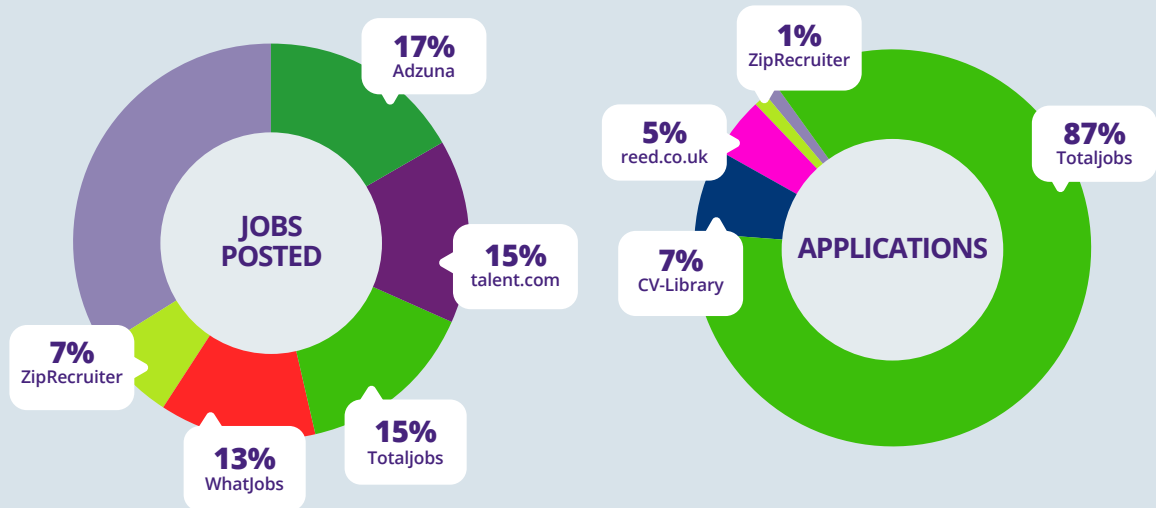
Property



GRAPH 81 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

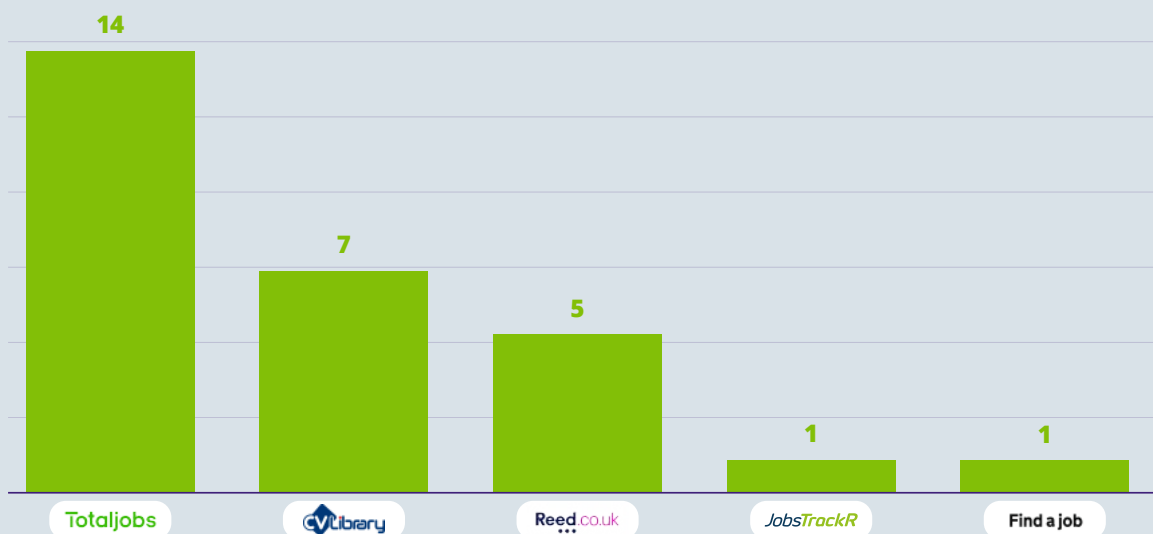
Property | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 82 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

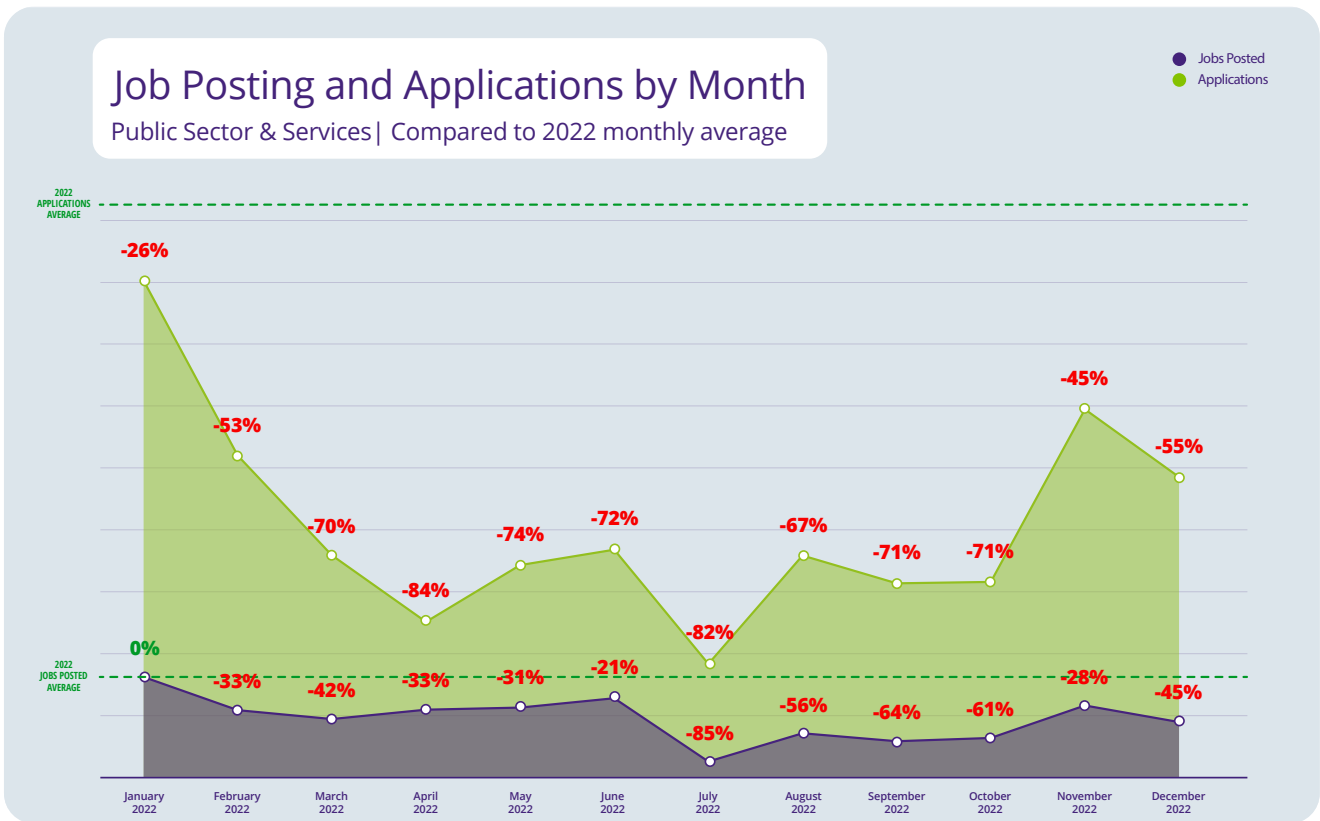
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Property | Top 5 job boards

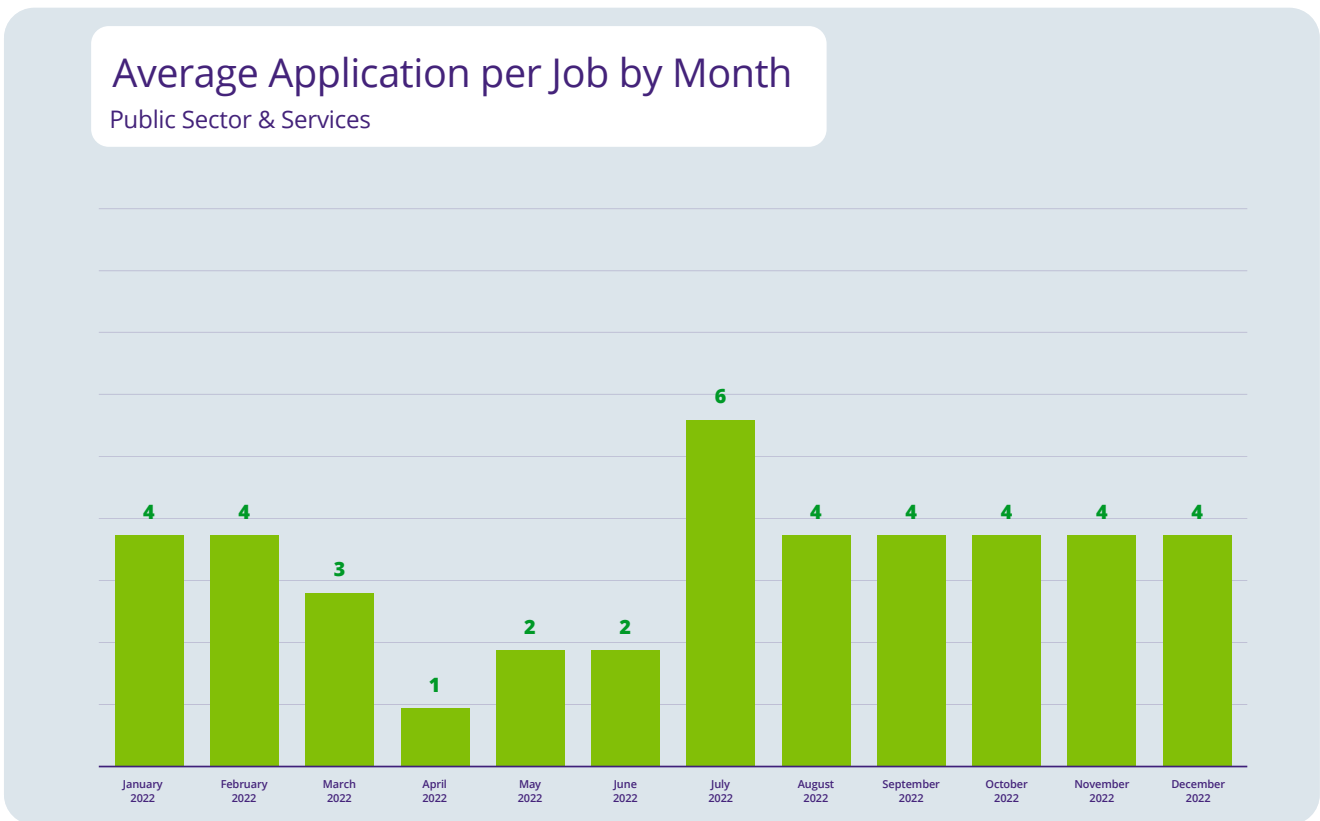


GRAPH 83 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Public Sector & Services



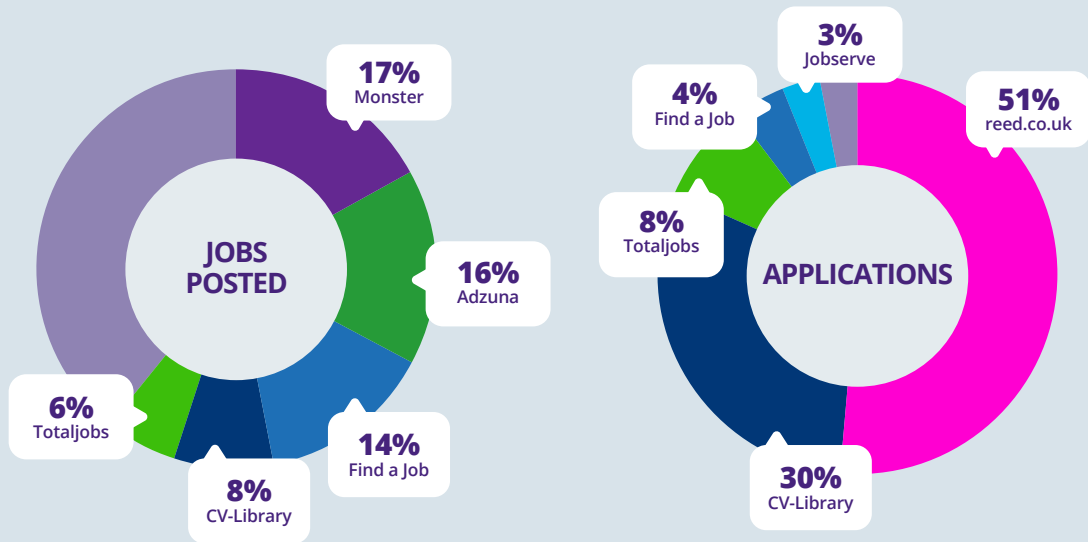
GRAPH 84 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 85 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

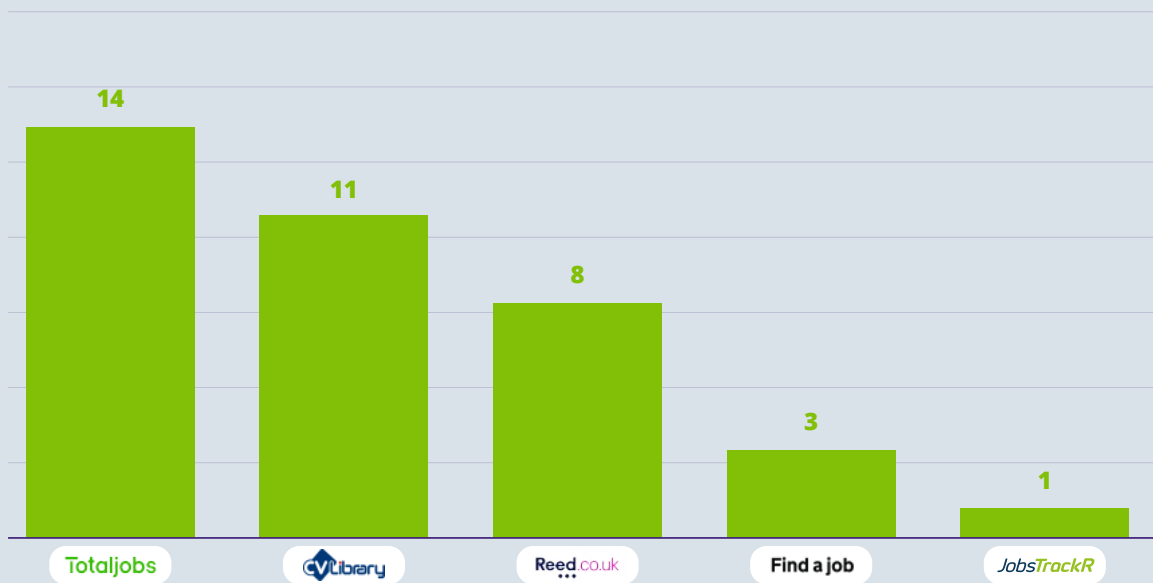
Public Sector & Services | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 86 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Public Sector & Services | Top 5 job boards



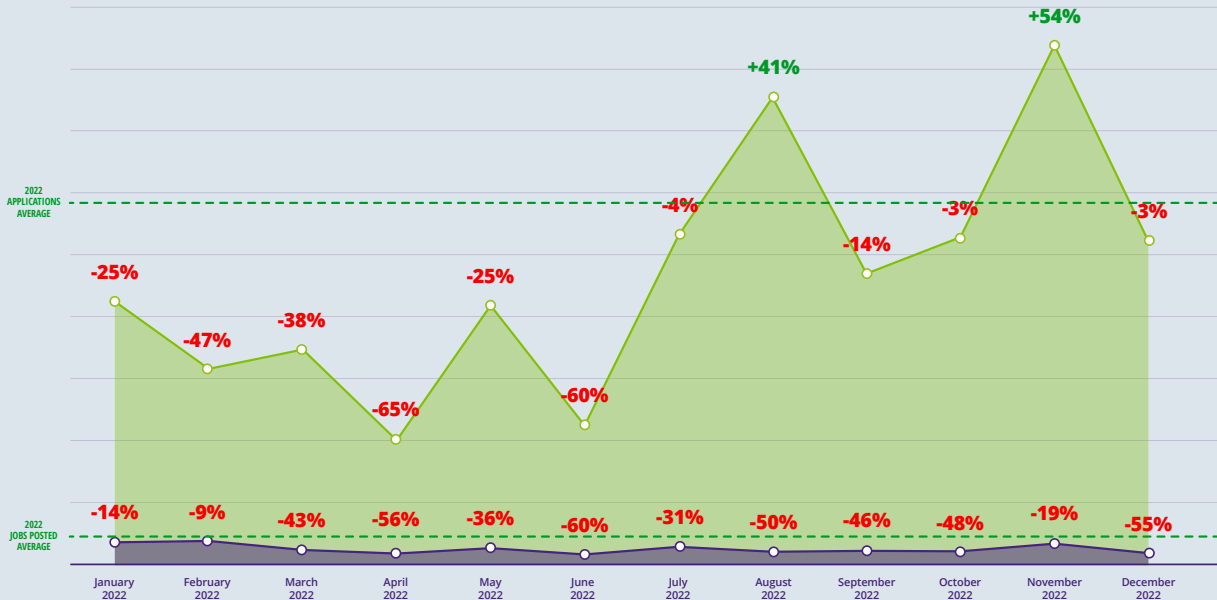
GRAPH 87 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Sales

## Job Posting and Applications by Month

Sales | Compared to 2022 monthly average

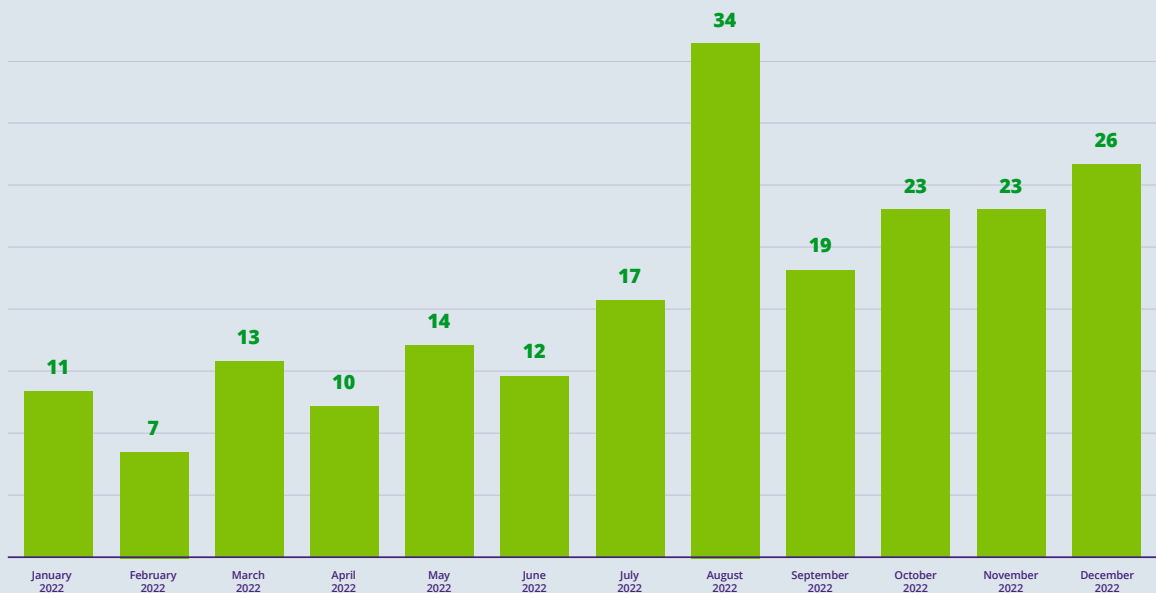
● Jobs Posted  
● Applications



GRAPH 88 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average

## Average Application per Job by Month

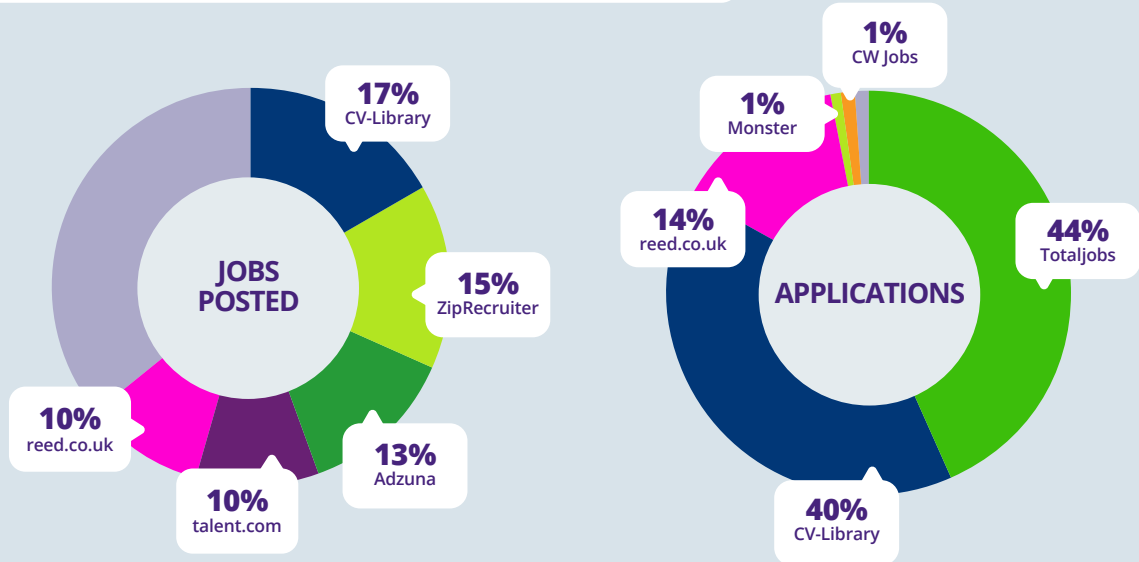
Sales



GRAPH 89 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

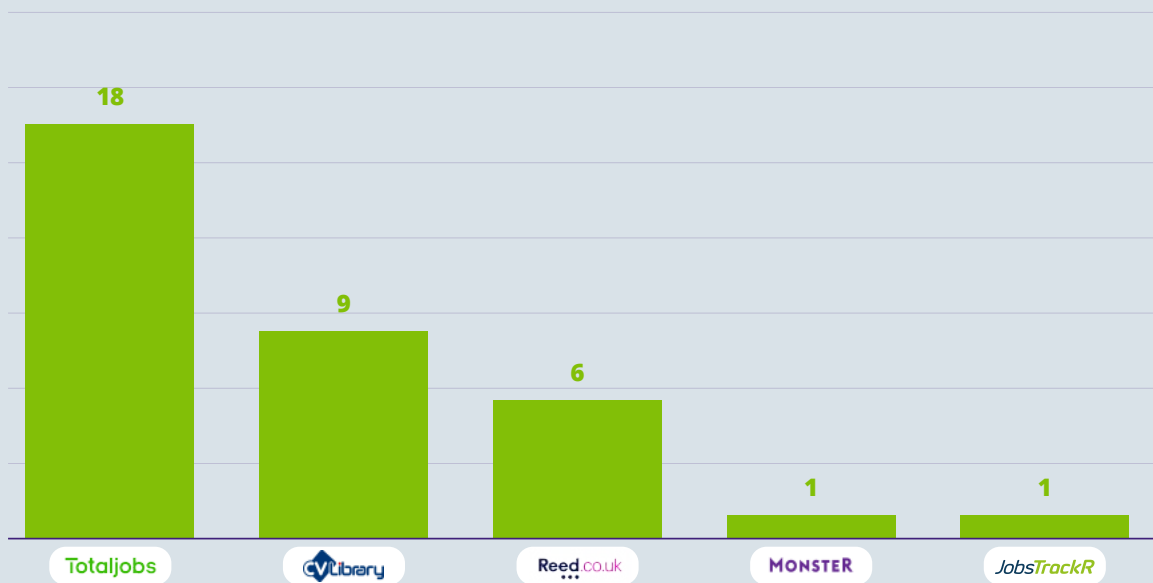
Sales | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 90 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

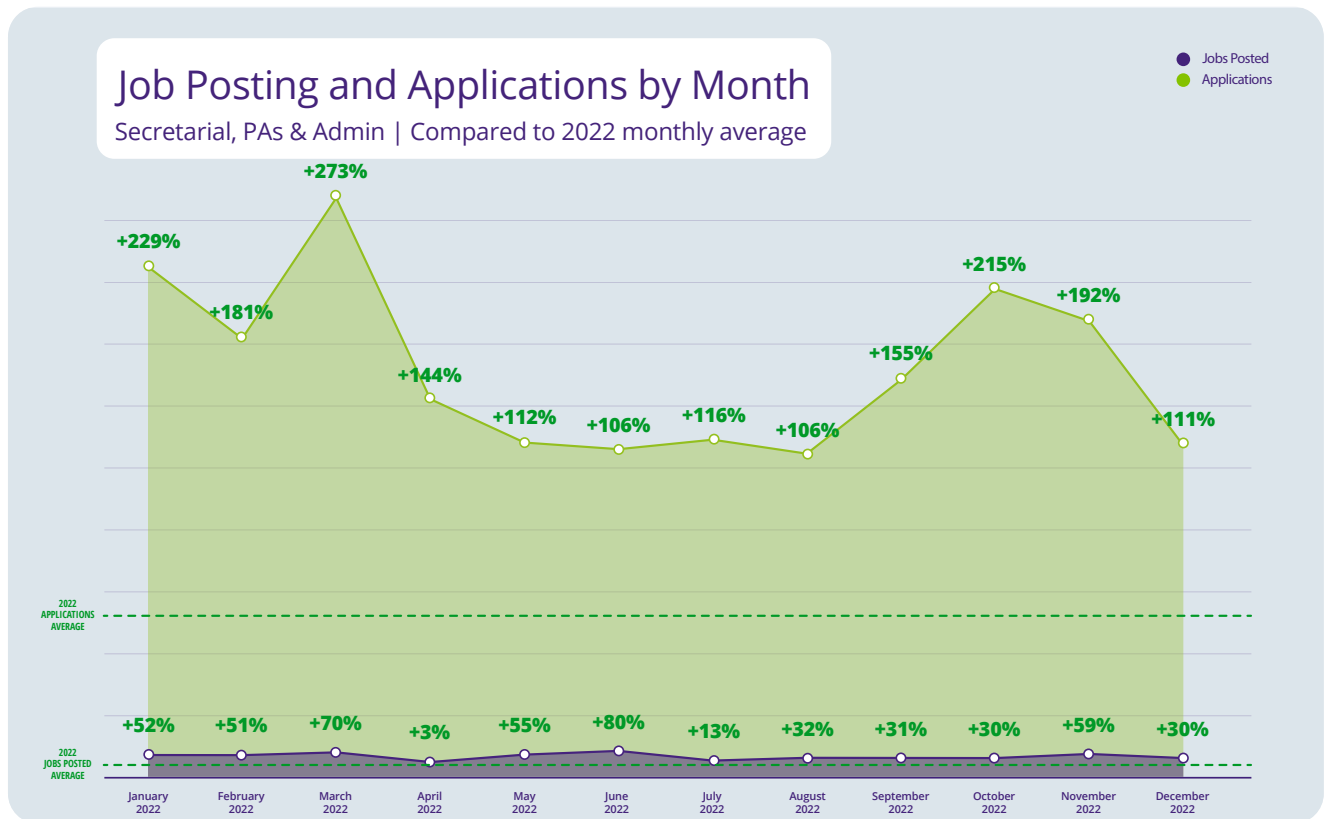
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Sales | Top 5 job boards

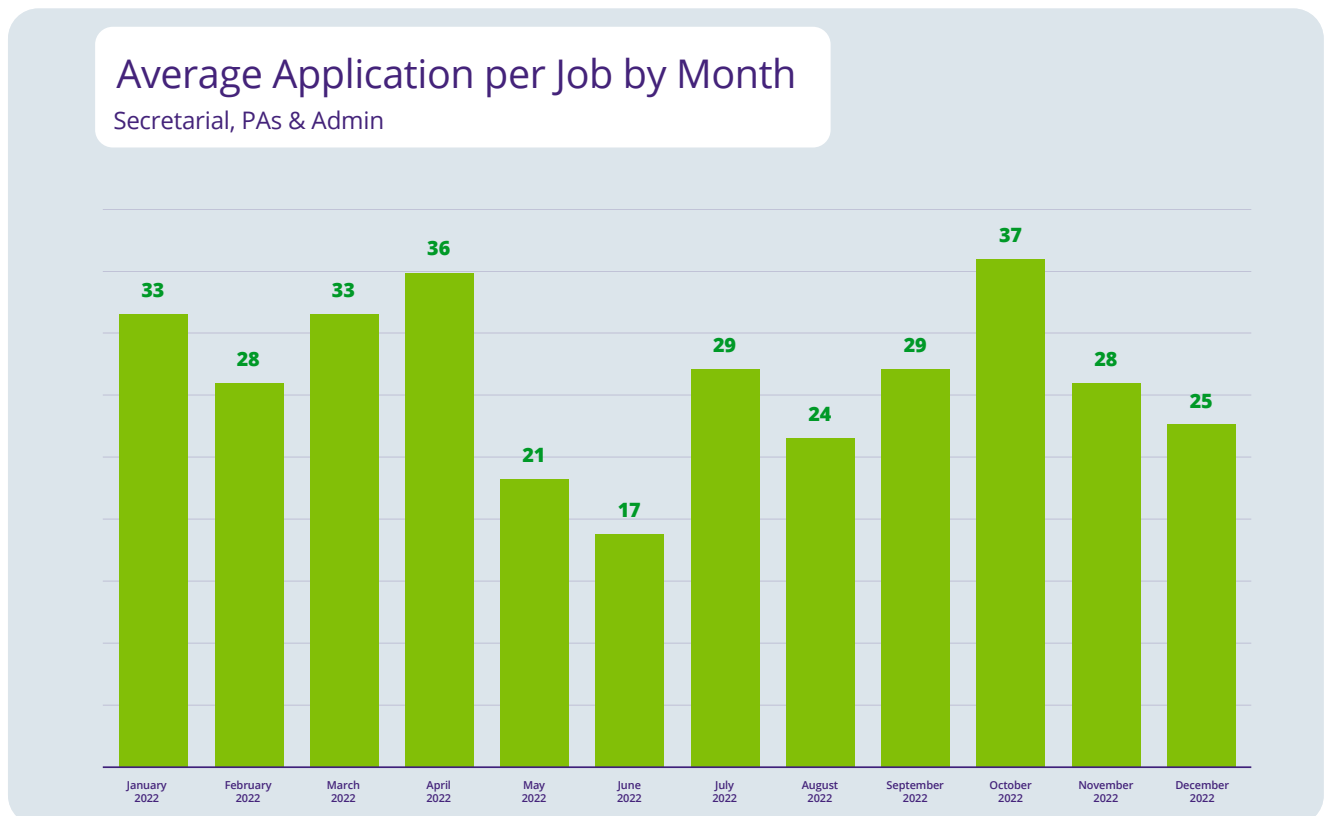


GRAPH 91 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Secretarial, PAs and Administration



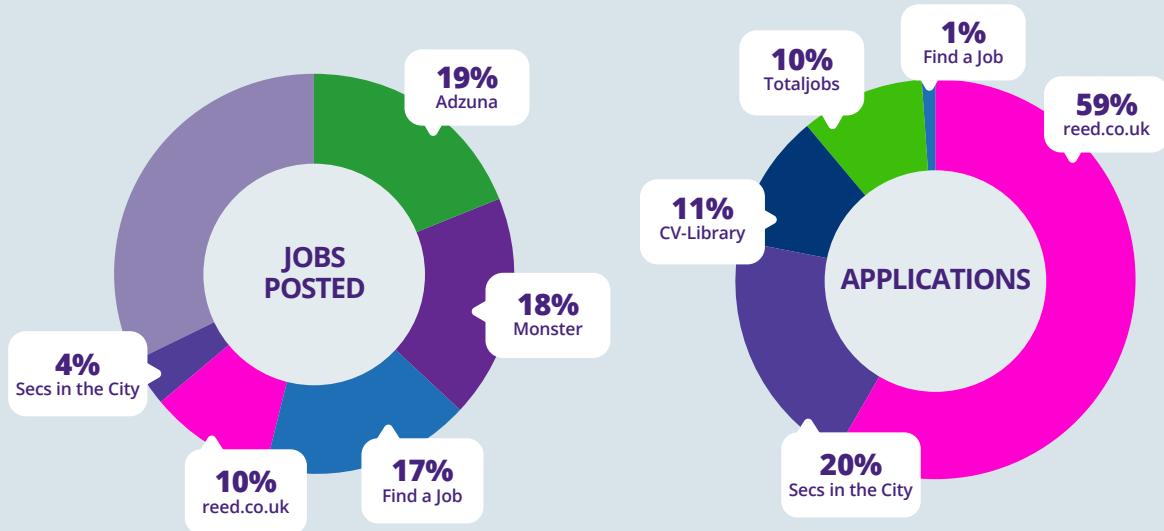
GRAPH 92 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 93 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

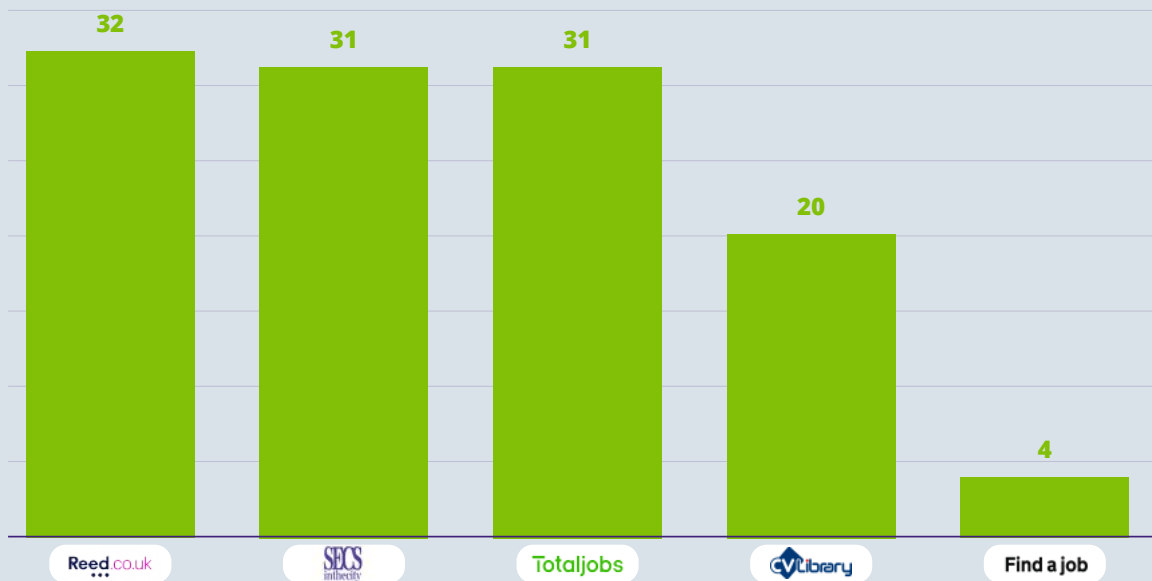
Secretarial, PAs & Admin | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 94 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

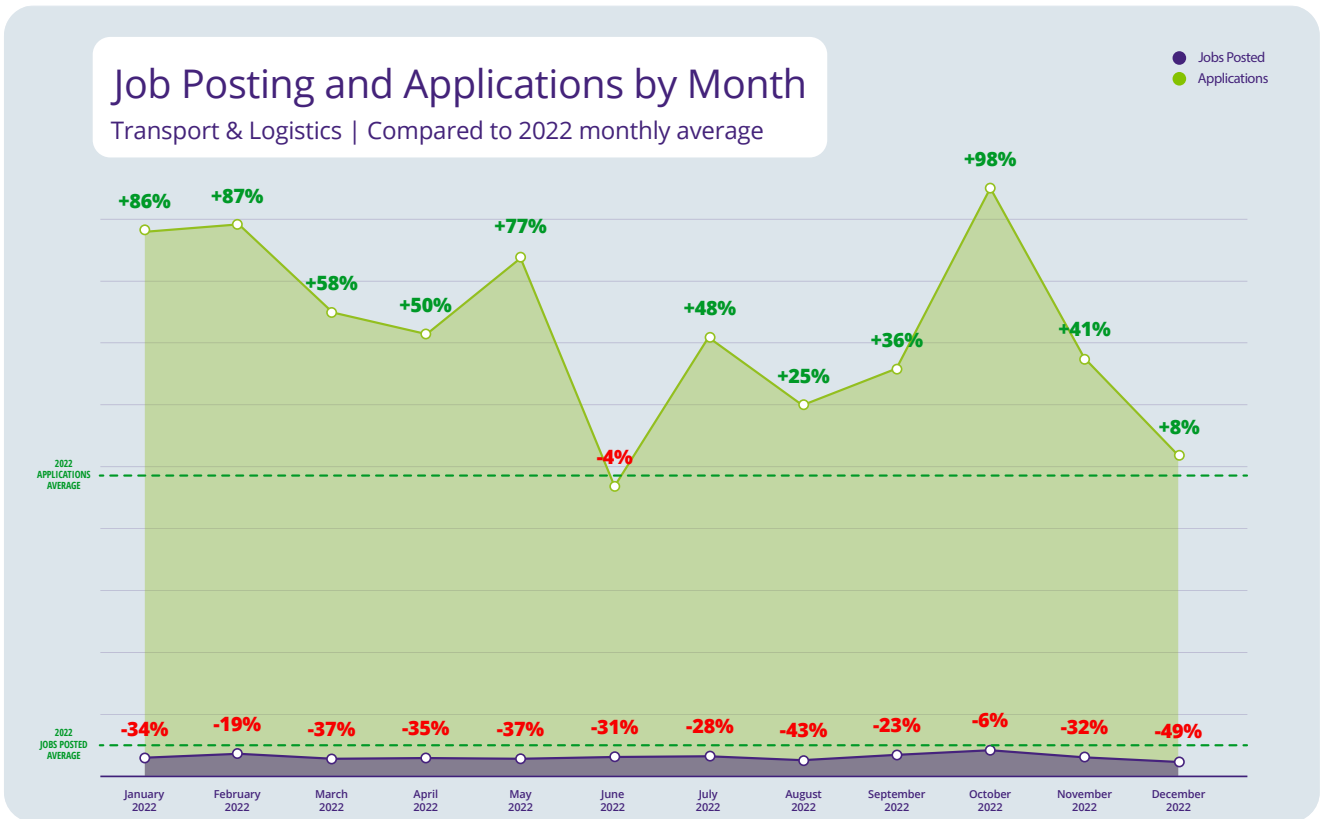
## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Secretarial, PAs & Admin | Top 5 job boards

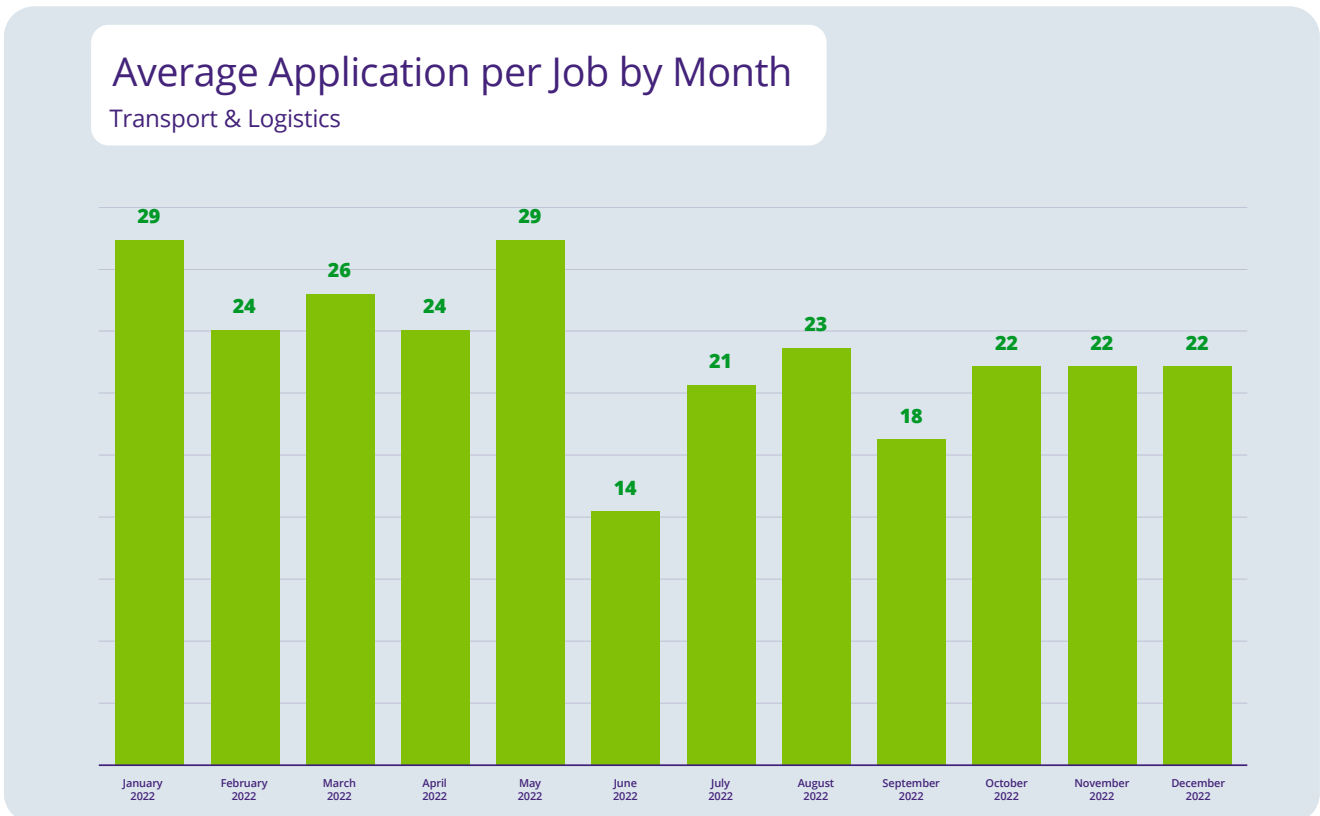


GRAPH 95 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job

# Transport & Logistics



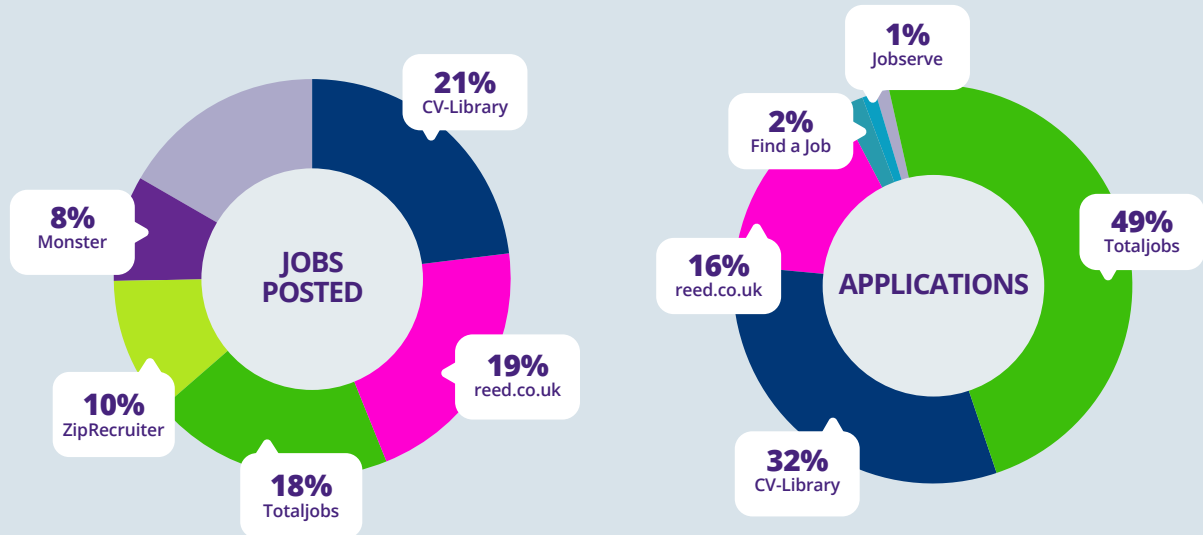
GRAPH 96 | Jobs and applications by month, compared to 2022 average



GRAPH 97 | Average application per job by month

## Jobs Posted & Applications by Job Board

Transport & Logistics | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 98 | Top 5 job boards for jobs posted and applications

## Average Application per Job by Job Board

Transport & Logistics | Top 5 job boards



GRAPH 99 | Top 5 job boards for average application per job



# Summary

Coming off the back of a year in which easing COVID restrictions meant economies across the majority of the globe re-opened, jobs boomed and there was a real sense of optimism and confidence, 2022 was a tough pill to swallow for many. It was a year characterised by turbulence and uncertainty, with war, inflation and the rapidly rising cost of living constant topics of conversation.

The current economic climate is unlike any we've experienced before. We're heading into a recession, yet unemployment is still incredibly low and recruiters and employers are struggling to find qualified and talented candidates for their jobs. However, the market is far from stagnant. People are moving jobs but are exercising a more cautious approach to the job search. [LinkedIn research](#) has found that people are clicking on more jobs before applying and the platform's [Talent Trends in the UK October 2022](#) report revealed that job security became one of the top priorities for candidates looking for new jobs in the latter half of 2022. Armed with this knowledge of candidate behaviour and concerns, recruiters can work to address the issues that might otherwise hamper hiring efforts in 2023.

Thanks to a combination of Brexit, the pandemic and a rise in economic inactivity, there continues to be skills shortages. Because of this, the job market is likely to remain busy going forwards into 2023 so recruiters need to be attuned to shifting candidate motivators. Job adverts need to be written to a high standard, really selling the role and the benefits. The good news is that people are still looking to move jobs, with LinkedIn finding that 20 million UK workers are considering a new role in 2023.

Many are also predicting that more people will rejoin the labour market. [PWC](#) has forecast a boost of 300,000 people to the market, moving from economically inactive to employed or unemployed (but looking for work). Economists are predicting a further boost to the economy and the labour market from new immigrants, with targeted schemes for Ukrainians, Afghans and Hong Kong residents set to contribute an estimated £19bn to the UK economy.

We are likely to face further turbulence, especially in the public sector, where rapidly decreasing pay growth will result in continued strike action. However, on a positive note, Rishi Sunak pledged to halve inflation in 2023, which economists have forecast will happen as energy prices fall. The [British Chambers of Commerce](#) believe inflation has likely already peaked at just over 11%. We will remain in a downturn for some time but it will be unlike the 2008 recession, with only slight rises in unemployment forecast.

Ultimately, the recruiters that succeed in attracting talented candidates in 2023 will be those that recognise and address what is now driving candidates and employees, those that rethink traditional ways of hiring and take steps to meet candidate expectations. Flexible working, fair and attractive compensation and job security will be key candidate drivers in 2023 and it will be the recruiters that understand and communicate those needs to their clients that will succeed. In order to stay competitive in 2023, recruiters need to offer far more than a transactional service. They need to be industry experts, workforce planners, relationship builders. That is what will help recruiters ride out the recession and grow in 2023.

# Further Reading

-  [The Office for National Statistics](#)
-  [The Institute for Employment Studies](#)
-  [The KPMG/REC Report on Jobs](#)
-  [The Royal London Cost of Living Survey](#)
-  [Morgan McKinley 2022 UK Salary Guide](#)
-  [Future Forum](#)
-  [LinkedIn Talent Solutions](#)

# About the Data in this Report

The Wave Recruitment Trends Report for 2023 has been formed using data taken from Wave's multi-poster and analytics tool, WaveTrackR. This data has been collected from across the entirety of 2022 to provide an overview of the jobs market in that year, as well as a more detailed analysis of individual industries.

The graphs used in this report are comprised using anonymous data collected from thousands of jobs posted by recruiters via WaveTrackR. We analysed thousands of jobs and applications to allow us to identify patterns and trends in the recruitment industry.

Other data presented in the report comes from external sources that consolidate our findings.



# What Can You Do With this Report

Make better job posting decisions - using our data on distribution channels and the day of the week and time of day that the majority of candidates are applying for jobs, you can make better informed decisions on where and when to post your jobs.

Achieve a better ROI on your job board contracts by choosing the job boards that are likely to bring you a higher number of quality applications.

Stay informed of market trends so that you can provide better advice to your clients.

Gain a helicopter view of the growth/negative growth of the industry in which you recruit, allowing you to offer clients total talent solutions and help them to workforce plan.

Use the industry data to understand what's happening in your industry and to gain insights into the job boards that might bring you the highest ROI.

## WaveTrackR

WaveTrackR is a data-powered multi-poster that uses analytics to help recruiters to post the best job ads to the right job boards at the right time, maximising your chances of reaching talented candidates.

## RecWebs

With RecWebs, recruiters get a professionally designed and built recruitment website packed full of recruitment features and functionalities, ensuring your online presence attracts candidates to your jobs and new clients to your business.

## WaveMedia

With WaveMedia, recruiters get a media strategising and buying service to help make the most strategic advertising decisions and maximise your media budget.



*Wave*

# Wave attracts more candidates to recruitment agencies.

With Wave you benefit from outstanding client service, cutting-edge technology, and over two decades of industry experience that have cemented our foothold as a leading competitor in candidate attraction technology.

Our three innovative products provide a 360 degree solution for candidate attraction.

# Wave attracts more candidates to recruitment agencies.

Job Distribution  
Recruitment Websites  
Recruitment Media

*Wave*

[wave-rs.co.uk](http://wave-rs.co.uk)