

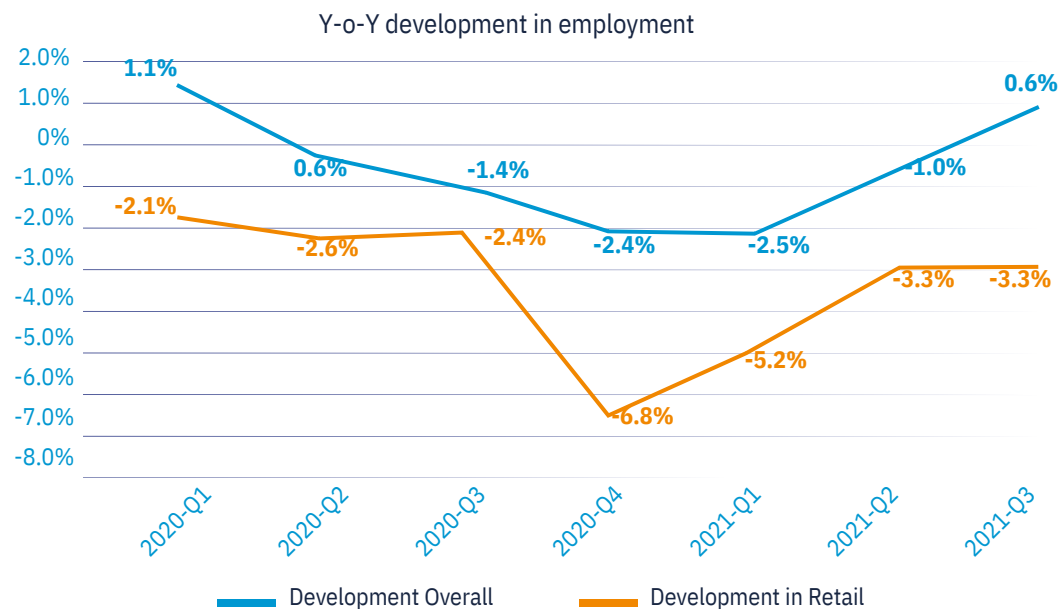
JOBS DATA ANALYSIS 2022

# UK Retail Employment Numbers Remain Low, Despite High Demand for New Personnel



The latest numbers from Textkernel's [Jobfeed, now Jobs Data](#), tool show that the UK retail industry saw a decline in the retail workforce in Q3 of 2021, with 129,000 fewer jobs than the same time in 2020. According to the British Retail Consortium, the fall in jobs reflects the decline in staffing at large city center retailers, which cut back on staff during the pandemic (BRC, 2022).

Understandably, given that the pandemic shut down many stores and prevented foot-traffic, the development in the UK retail industry has consistently lagged behind the development of the UK's total employment figures, as the graph below shows. (Note as well that over the course of the pandemic UK consumers have tended to spend more money on expensive, one-off purchases, including travel and leisure goods. (The Guardian, 2022))





Nevertheless, the demand for new personnel in the UK retail sector remains very high. In the fourth quarter of 2021, there were 355,000 retail job openings, an increase of 90% compared to the same quarter last year. Furthermore, 10% of all job postings in the UK are for retail positions.

One important insight from the data is that the retail industry in the UK is currently experiencing a high level of turn-over, as employment rates decrease while the number of job postings is increasing quickly. Quit rates were highest heading into the holiday season, with over 720,000 retail workers quitting their jobs in August (Charged Retail, 2021), though workers continue to leave the sector, with a recent survey suggesting that 28% of all retail employees in the UK want to quit their jobs (InsightDIY, 2022).

Given this context, the consistent underperformance of the UK retail sector suggests a challenging feedback loop has been reached - failure to hire more workers puts additional pressure on a company's employees, who in turn are more likely to quit as a result. And in fact, the same survey found that 46% of shift workers surveyed have had to work additional shifts owing to their company's inability to hire new workers (InsightDIY, 2022).

### Continued demand for sales personnel, and the rise of hospitality

With more than 66,000 job openings, sales and trading personnel are in the highest demand, signaling that retailers in the UK are still struggling

to fill customer-facing positions. At the same time, there's also been high demand for administration and customer service positions, with 28,000 openings, and ICT positions, with 23,000 openings.

The biggest and most dramatic increase in demand when compared to the same time last year is in the hospitality sector, which now has 3x the open positions it did last year. Again, this observation is in line with the tendency of UK consumers to spend savings they might have amassed during the pandemic on big-ticket items like international travel.

| Job Category                         | 2021-Q4        | Share | Y-o-Y 2021-Q4 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------------|
| Sales and Related                    | 66.027         | 19%   | 80%           |
| Administrative and Customer Service  | 27.699         | 8%    | 126%          |
| Information and Communication Techn. | 22.816         | 6%    | 82%           |
| Management, Policy and Governance    | 22.248         | 6%    | 113%          |
| Procurement and Warehouse Managem.   | 21.122         | 6%    | 109%          |
| Hospitality                          | 15.765         | 4%    | 306%          |
| Transport and Traffic                | 14.745         | 4%    | 74%           |
| Communication, Marketing and PR      | 14.222         | 4%    | 100%          |
| Insurance and Finance                | 12.771         | 4%    | 98%           |
| Legal, HR and Social Services        | 11.870         | 3%    | 90%           |
| <b>Totals</b>                        | <b>355.414</b> |       | <b>91%</b>    |

## Big companies, bigger demand

The top 10 retail organizations in the UK when it comes to open positions are together responsible for 15% of all demand in the industry, which makes sense. Tech giant Amazon leads the pack with more than 10,000 open positions. For large organizations with the resources to offer them, better benefits packages with paid time off are increasingly being used to attract more workers.

As some outlets have noted, smaller retail outlets have been doing well in the UK over the past several months. Compared with the US, where 70% of the demand for retail labor is accounted for by mid-size to smaller

| Organization               | Jobs in Q4 2021 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Amazon.com, Inc.           | 10.388          |
| Tesco PLC                  | 8.693           |
| Sainsbury's Group          | 7.261           |
| Co-operative Group Limited | 5.621           |
| Asda Stores Ltd.           | 4.224           |
| Iceland Food Ltd           | 3.764           |
| Hermès International       | 3.629           |
| Avon Products              | 3.569           |
| Boots Company PLC          | 3.503           |
| Specsavers                 | 3.098           |



organizations, 85% of the retail job openings in the UK come from 36,000 smaller companies.

## More people, more demand

In general, the larger the employment base of the region, the higher the demand for retail workers. For major metropolitan centers in the UK, there's naturally a higher demand for labor. Manchester (14,000 openings) and the West Midlands (11,500 openings) are two regions with some of the highest numbers of openings — unsurprisingly, they're also two of the most populous regions in the country.

In particular, the Greater London area, the country's most populous region, has a demand of 55,000 open positions, which accounts for 15% of all retail job openings in the country. That represents a slight increase (106%) over the demand for jobs in the Greater London area at the same time last year, indicating a continued struggle to find retail workers and to keep them on the payroll.

|                           | No. of Retail Jobs in Q4 | 21 Y-o-Y 2021-Q4 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Greater London            | 54,983                   | 106%             |
| Manchester                | 13,842                   | 89%              |
| West Midlands             | 11,493                   | 96%              |
| City and Borough of Leeds | 9,280                    | 87%              |
| Hertfordshire             | 8,018                    | 115%             |
| Kent                      | 7,469                    | 106%             |
| Surrey                    | 6,763                    | 126%             |
| Hampshire                 | 6,529                    | 96%              |
| Oxfordshire               | 5,523                    | 124%             |
| Essex                     | 5,418                    | 78%              |





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