

DRCSearch

Market Insights Update: January 2026 Market & Insights Trend



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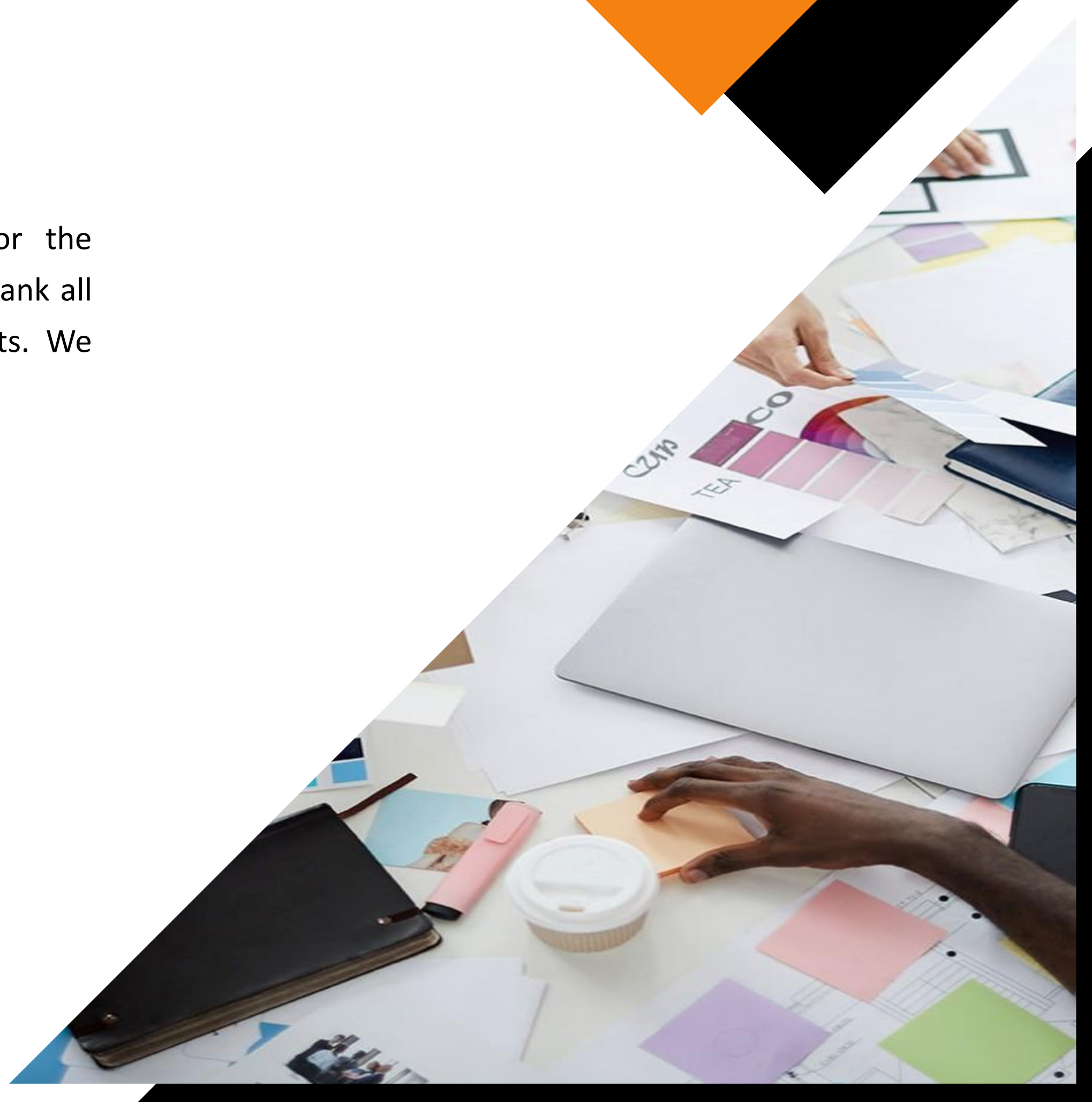


Welcome to our Monthly Market Insights update for the Technology/Digital/Marketing sector. We would like to thank all those who participated to produce the monthly reports. We hope you find this report useful.

If you have any questions please get in touch!

Best wishes,

Toby Day - CEO
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Who We Are

About DRC Search

DRC Search is the executive search division of The Digital Recruitment Company, specialising in senior management and C-suite appointments. We partner with high-growth, investor-backed and transformation-focused businesses, helping them attract and retain leadership talent that drives growth.

Our Specialisms:

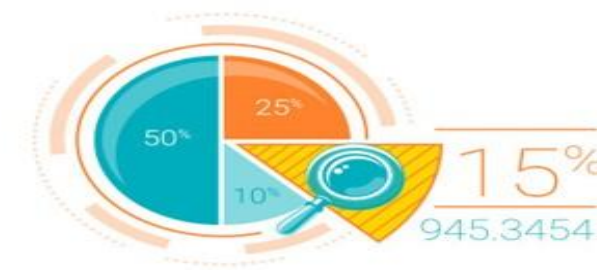
- All C-Suite & Leadership Roles: NED, Board Advisory, Chief Data, Chief Marketing, Chief Digital, Chief Information, Chief Technology, Chief Revenue, etc
- Non-Executive & Advisory Appointments: Access to our **exclusive NED Library** for board, growth, M&A and scale-up expertise.

Geographic Coverage: UK, East Coast US, and major European tech hubs.

About The Digital Recruitment Company

The Digital Recruitment Company was founded in London in 2010 and has become a leading provider of global recruitment solutions across the Technology, Marketing, Product, Data and Creative sectors.

The team focuses on mid-level to senior hires, providing permanent, freelance and fixed-term recruitment, as well as payroll management and market insight consulting.



What We Do

We work across the Technology, Marketing, Product & Data Sector in both the UK & Internationally. We aim to create long-lasting partnerships with our clients.

We work across the following specialisms:

Client Services, Sales, AI, Creative Software, Developers, Engineers, Data & Analytics, Executive Appointments, Innovation & Service Design, Insight & Research, CRM, Strategy, Tech & UX. Marketing, Media Planning & Buying, Performance Media, Project Management / Product Management.

We supply permanent hires, executive search, freelance & fixed term contracts and payroll management services.



Our Service

With our clients we work alongside them not to only recruit but to consult on the current market, how best to structure, hire and retain new Marketing, Creative, Technology, Sales, Digital & Data & Insights divisions.

Our service is split into two distinct services:

Our Purpose is to strengthen the target market so that the business will increase

- **Initial consulting** - a scoping of your requirements and a follow up document putting forward our recommendations on market insights, department structure, salaries, packages etc - this is completely free of charge and does not come with any obligation to use us for the hiring.
- **Recruitment & Retention** – delivery of a recruitment strategy and hiring plan to identify, attract and retain the ideal talent for your organisational culture and goals. Our fee structure is based upon the scale of any project.



Key Insights

Improving conversion offsets falling volumes | Across both markets, efficiency ratios strengthened notably in December. Placements per CV rose in contract and permanent, even as overall activity fell, indicating that when hiring does occur it is increasingly decisive. This suggests recruiters are working with tighter but more committed pipelines, supporting delivery despite lower activity.

Contract hiring continues to underpin market resilience | Despite the December pullback, contract remains the standout performer when viewed across the year. Strong year on year growth in jobs, placements and sales reflects sustained demand for flexible hiring, reinforcing contract recruitment as the most reliable source of volume and revenue stability for agencies.

Sales revenue diverges across markets | Contract sales dipped 10% after several months of growth, while permanent revenue edged higher. This indicates differing billing or invoicing patterns between the two segments, rather than a fall in underlying demand.

Permanent market constrained more by pipeline than demand | Permanent hiring softened again in December, but relatively modest year on year declines in placements and sales contrast with a much sharper reduction in CV volumes. This points to pipeline contraction, rather than a collapse in client demand, as the key drag on permanent performance.

Seasonal slowdown masks a stronger underlying year end position |

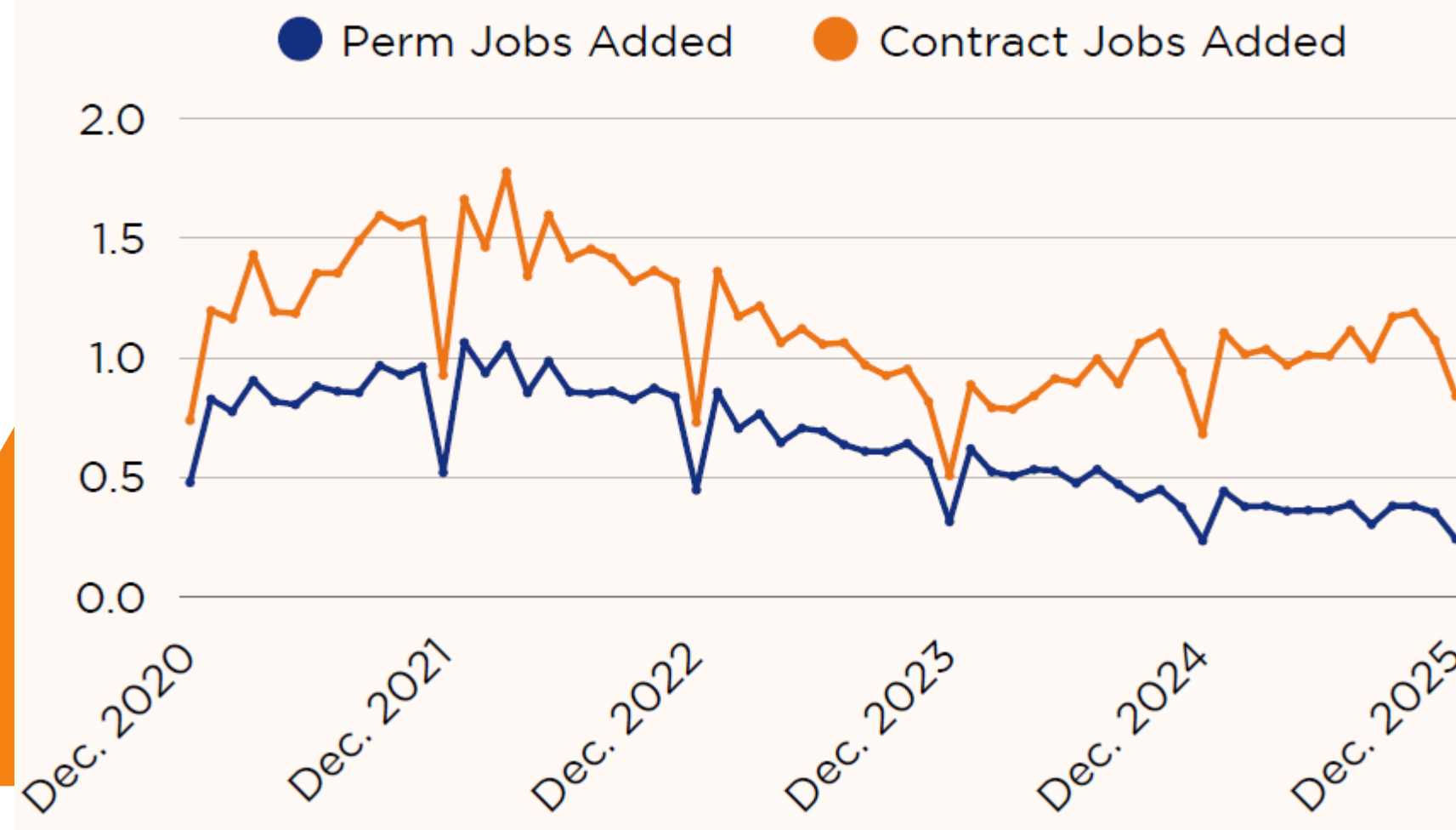
December followed a familiar seasonal pattern, with sharp month on month declines across jobs, placements and CV activity. However, stronger year on year comparisons, particularly in contract, show that recruiters entered the year end from a firmer footing than in 2024.



Vacancies

December saw a sharp seasonal slowdown across both markets. Contract jobs added fell 21.8% month on month, while permanent vacancies declined more steeply at 31.4%. Despite this, year on year demand remains positive, with contract jobs up 23.3% and permanent roles 2.9% higher than December 2024.

Perm Jobs Added vs Contract Jobs Added



Permanent Month-on-Month	31.4%	▼
Permanent Year-on-Year	2.9%	▲
Contract Month-on-Month	21.8%	▼
Contract Year-on-Year	23.3%	▲

Placements

Placement activity also eased as the year closed. Contract placements dropped 22.1% month on month and permanent placements declined 10.9%, though both markets remain ahead of last year, up 13.7% and 4.7% year on year respectively.

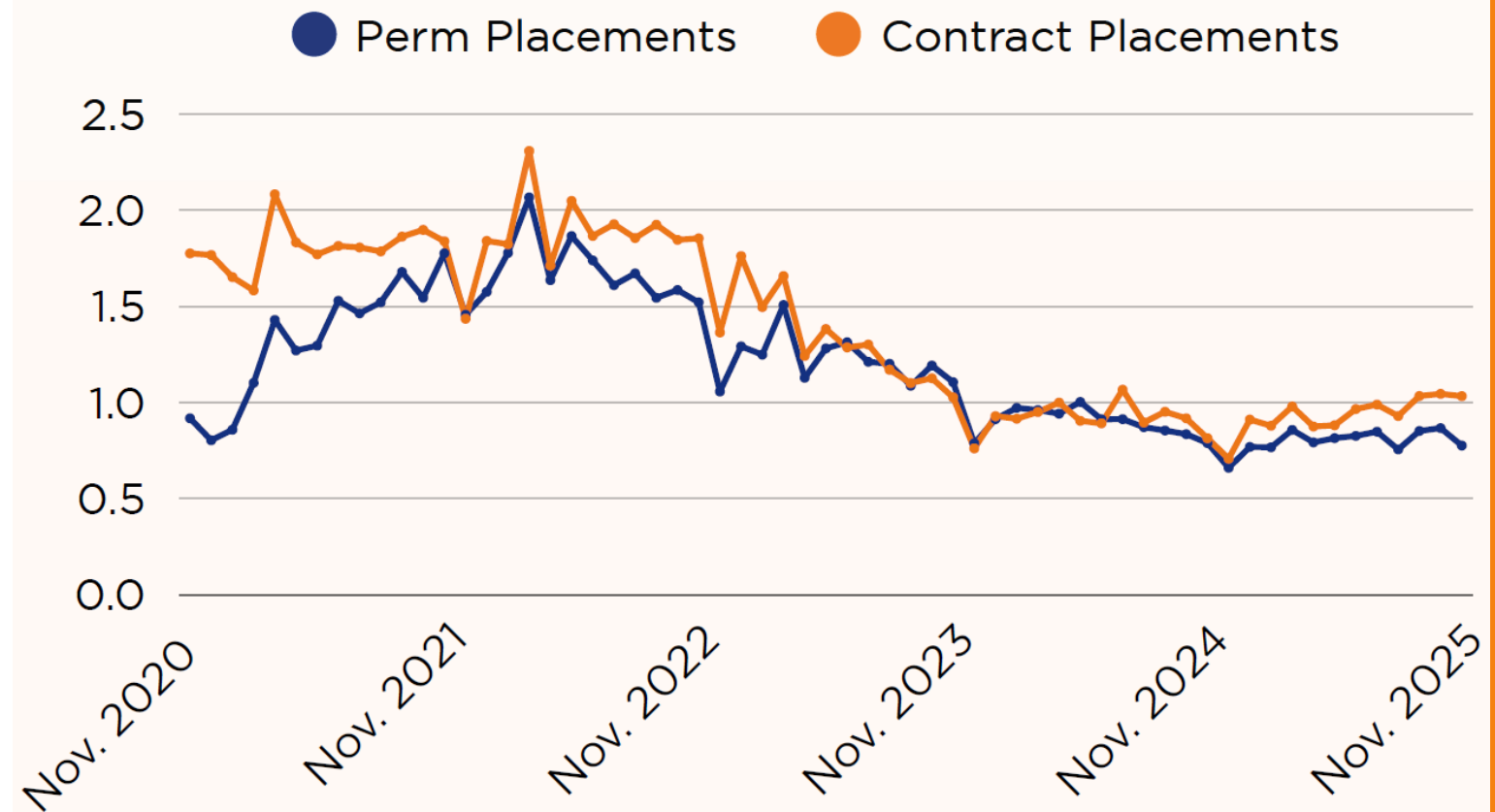
Permanent | Month-on-Month **10.9%** ▼

Permanent | Year-on-Year **4.7%** ▲

Contract | Month-on-Month **22.1%** ▼

Contract | Year-on-Year **13.7%** ▲

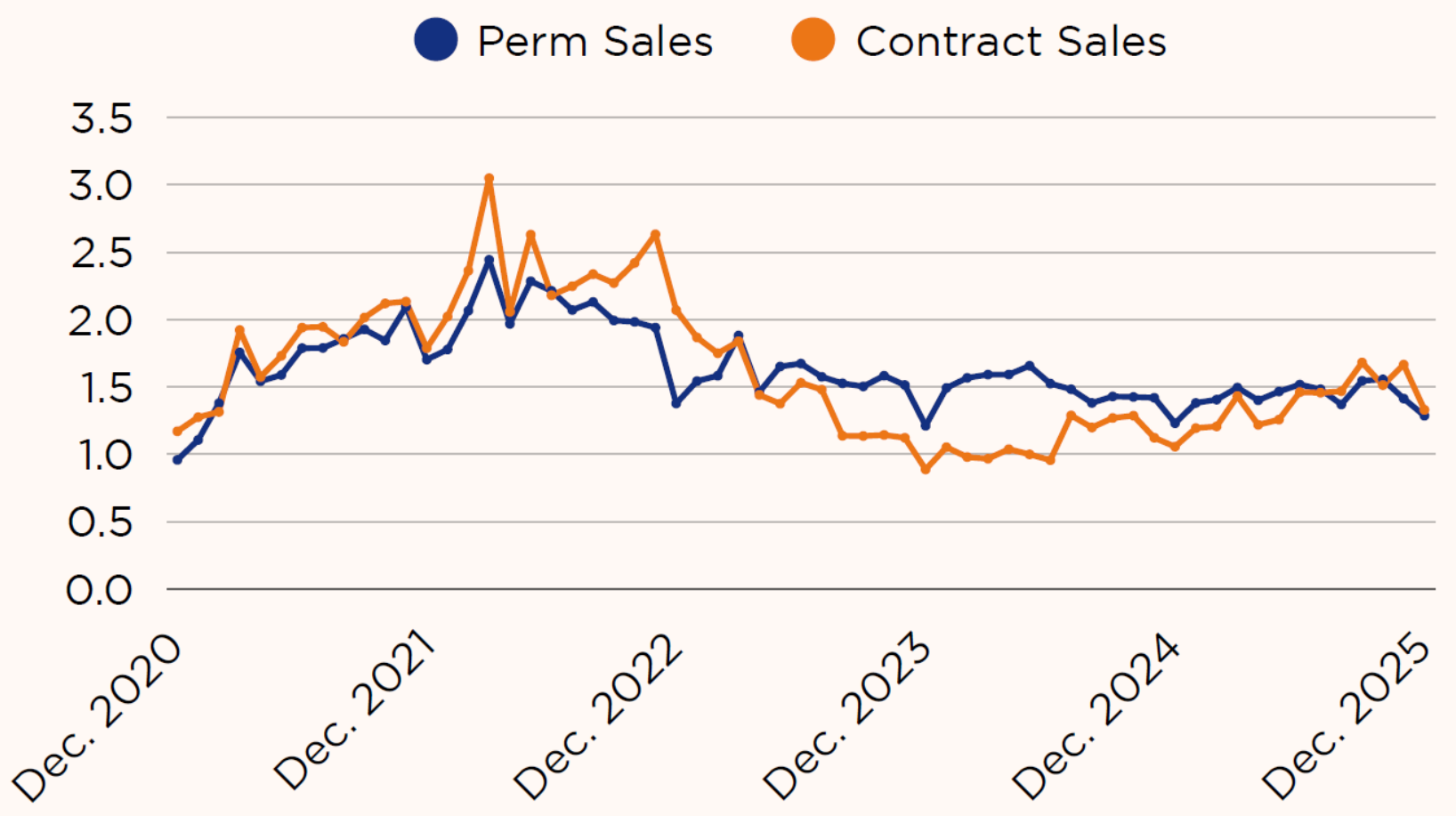
Perm Placements vs Contract Placements



Sales Revenue



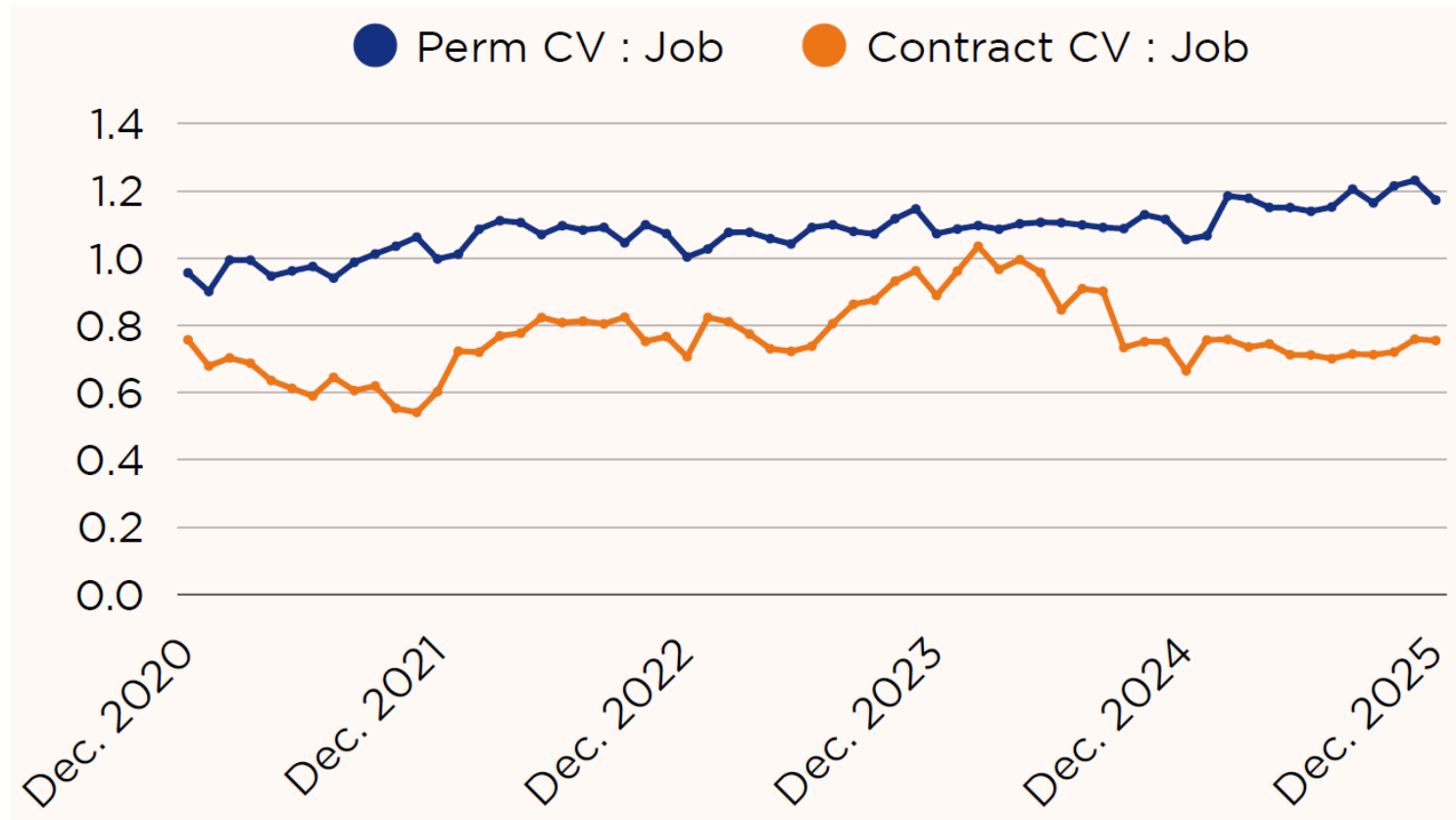
Sales followed the downturn in volumes. Contract revenue decreased 20.1% month on month and permanent sales fell 9.0%, yet annual performance remains stronger, led by contract sales growth of 25.9% year on year and permanent revenue up 4.5%.



Permanent Month-on-Month	9%	▼
Permanent Year-on-Year	4.5%	▲
Contract Month-on-Month	20.1%	▼
Contract Year-on-Year	25.9%	▲

Job Coverage

Coverage levels shifted only marginally despite over activity. Contract CVs per job edged down .5% month on month but remain 13.5% higher than last year, while permanent coverage fell .7% monthly and is up 11.1% year on year.



Permanent Month-on-Month	4.7%	▼
Permanent Year-on-Year	11.1%	▲
Contract Month-on-Month	0.5%	▼
Contract Year-on-Year	13.5%	▲

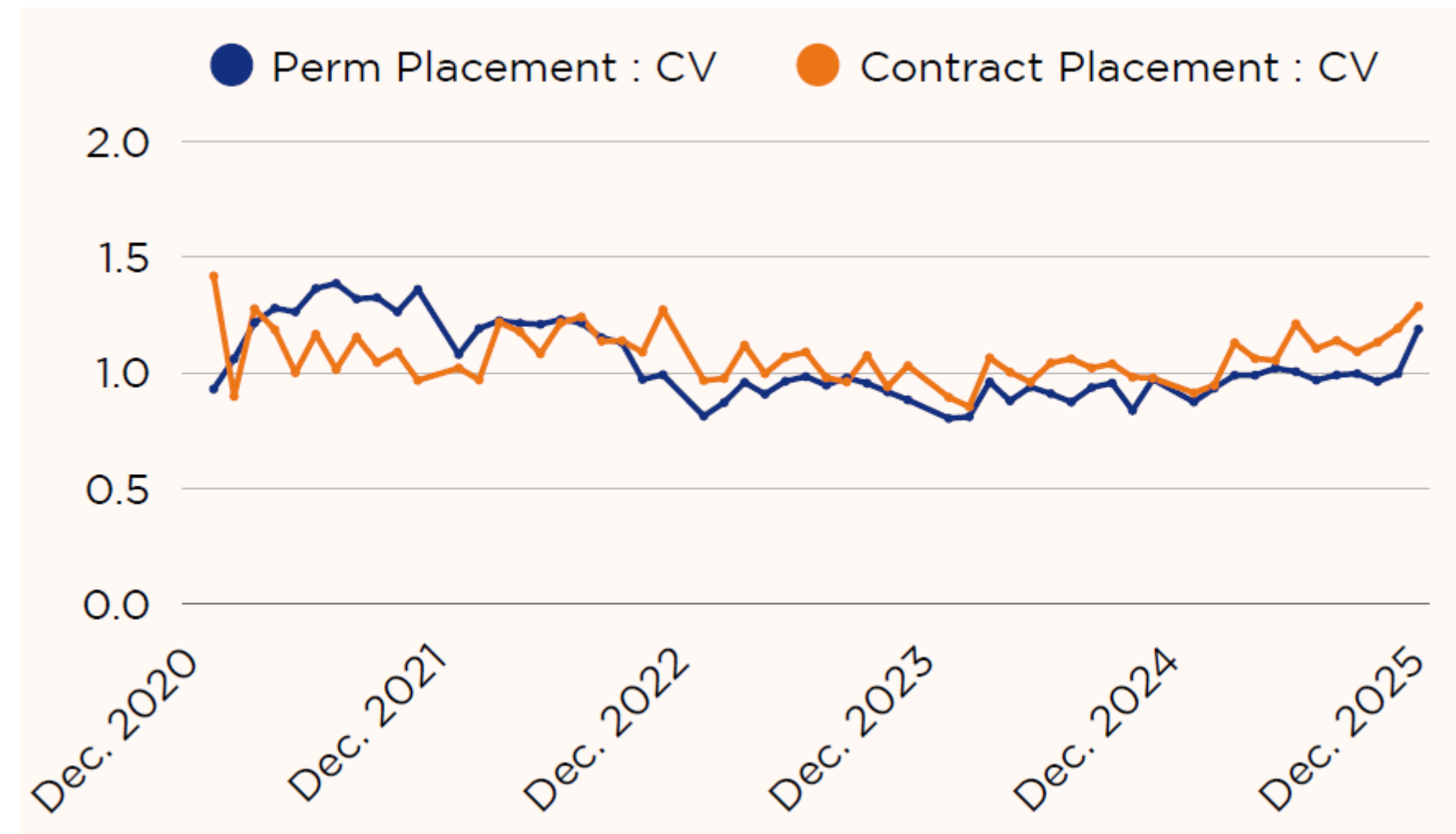


Placements Per CV

Efficiency strengthened as pipelines tightened. Contract placements per CV rose 7.9% month on month, while permanent efficiency increased by 19.3%, indicating stronger conversion despite reduced volumes.

Permanent | Month-on-Month **19.3%** ▲

Contract | Month-on-Month **7.9%** ▲



Thank You



We hope you've enjoyed our Market Insight Survey. If you would like to discuss the survey or would like to work with us on your next hire or your next career move, then please get in touch.



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