

Focus

Birmingham and Solihull

on the Labour Market

This monthly newsletter provides information and news about labour markets, covering areas such as, employment trends, research and training.

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Welcome

Welcome to the current edition of **FOCUS**, a monthly newsletter covering labour market information and news for the Birmingham and Solihull area.

This newsletter covers many areas such as labour market news, employment figures, and training. Useful information sources and links are also provided.

Who is this newsletter for?

This newsletter will be of interest to any adults wanting or giving advice on learning and work.

If you want to find out about the latest news – turn to page 2.

We hope you find it useful and informative

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email please contact

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Local news

Company news

New hotel opens in Birmingham

The Radisson SAS hotel opened in Birmingham this January. The hotel occupies the first 18 floors of the tallest building in Birmingham - Beetham Tower in Holloway Circus.

New car factory opens in Staffordshire

A new £6 million automotive factory that will create more than 150 jobs at Trentham Lakes in Staffordshire has been opened. The plant will supply carpets and acoustical trim components to all the major car producers in the UK.

Stoke-on-Trent Regeneration, the joint venture between Birmingham-based developers St Modwen and Stoke-on-Trent council, formally handed over the keys to Swiss firm Rieter Automotive GB for the new factory.

Company announces expansion plans

Planning and design consultancy Turley Associates announced plans to expand its Birmingham office, adding to its team of planners and urban designers. The company has been involved in projects covering the commercial, residential, educational, health care and cultural sectors.

Plans for Midlands iconic structure

Plans for a triangular structure made of black granite representing the traditional historic industries of the West Midlands have been drawn up. The structure would be located in Staffordshire at the junction of M6 and M6 Toll near Cannock.

Developments

Proposed Tyre Factory development

£150 million scheme to transform the bulk of the Goodyear tyre site in Wolverhampton into a new urban village with homes, shops, a park and a school has been unveiled.

More information available from article:
Birmingham Post 17th January 2006

New development unveiled

Plans for a new shop and leisure development for Lichfield have been unveiled. The scheme will link the Birmingham Road area to other shopping site in the historic cathedral city. The proposal includes a cinema hotel, shops, restaurants, and a new transport hub. More information available in article from Birmingham Mail 26th January 2006

Birmingham regeneration project in line for an award

Optima Community Association's regeneration of the Attwood Green estate has made it into the final to the final four of the Deputy Prime Minister's Award for Sustainable Communities. Optima is one of the UK's largest regeneration schemes and was formed in 1999 to create a mixed-tenure, socially inclusive and vibrant community at
More information can be found at Birmingham Post 23rd January 2006

Kings Heath

Plans to transform Kings Heath have been given the go-ahead. The idea is to attract specialist craft shops and restaurants to the area. The plan also proposes better leisure facilities and the introduction of a farmers' market.
More information can be found at:
Birmingham Post 10th January 2006

Brownfield sites

Plans for a development of 600 new homes at Rugeley in Staffordshire have been agreed by Advantage West Midlands and RWE npower with housebuilder Persimmon. The residential development is located on 60 acres of brownfield land previously used as the coal stocking yards for the former Rugeley 'A' Power Station.

More information can be found at:
Birmingham Post 10th January 2006

National news

December employment figures

Labour market statistics
December's figures show an increase in the number of people in employment but a fall in the employment rate. The number of unemployed people, the unemployment rate and the claimant count have all increased. The number of job vacancies has fallen. Growth in average earnings has fallen. The number of people in employment rose by 58,000 over the quarter. Read Labour market statistics: December 2005, Office for National Statistics (ONS), at
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
Skills and Education Network Newsletter, January 2005

Green paper on Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment

This green paper jointly produced by DfES, the Home Office and DWP establishes the case for action on re-skilling ex-offenders and outlines main areas for action.

For more information about the green paper go to www.dfes.gov.uk

A single inspectorate for children and learners: the Government's response to consultation

This publication reports that the consultation on inspectorates generated a very significant response, especially on the issue of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). There was widespread appreciation of the work undertaken by ALI. The number of responses was fairly evenly matched between those supporting the proposal to form a single inspectorate and those rejecting it, with a similar number remaining not sure. Many respondents were prepared to support the proposal if safeguards could be put in place to ensure the best of ALI's work remained. A large number of respondents stressed the critical importance of retaining existing ALI expertise. The majority of employers and private providers who responded tended to prefer keeping ALI separate, while colleges tended to support the proposals. Read *A single inspectorate for children and learners: the Government's response to consultation*, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), December 2005, at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations> Skills and Education Network Newsletter, January 2006

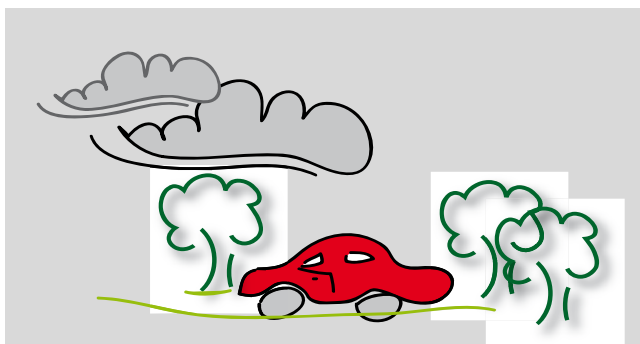
Word Puzzle

The two puzzles below are linked to the theme of driving

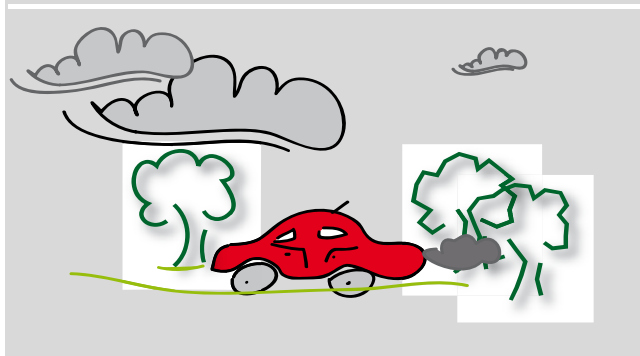
Can you spot all the differences (Puzzle 1) and find all the hidden words (Puzzle2)?

Answers can be found on page 7

Puzzle 1: Spot the Difference



Picture A



Picture B

There are 7 differences between Picture A and Picture B.

Can you spot all of them?

Puzzle 2: Word Find

T	E	R	Y	D	I	L	S	P
R	B	L	O	S	R	O	A	D
A	U	S	C	R	A	W	O	R
N	I	T	A	E	R	E	W	I
S	L	O	R	R	Y	R	A	V
P	D	Q	S	I	I	S	R	I
O	I	A	A	L	P	E	E	N
R	N	S	X	W	L	R	H	G
T	G	K	C	H	O	W	O	L
R	S	A	F	E	T	Y	U	I
E	I	T	R	E	R	A	S	C
P	T	N	U	L	U	S	E	E
A	E	P	P	S	C	B	N	N
P	R	E	B	I	K	L	C	C
M	O	T	O	R	B	I	K	E

There are 10 words hidden in the puzzle. Can you find all of them?

Hint: The words can be spelt horizontally, vertically or diagonally and can be in any direction. The word 'TRANSPORT' has been highlighted for you as an example

Employer's needs

ALI Employer Training Pilot survey

Employer Training Pilots created close liaison between trainers and employers, says this report. It points out areas for improvement, but is positive overall. It says that some very effective training has taken place entirely on employers' premises. Training providers have adapted well to the need for on-the-job training and assessment. Although almost all learners now have an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills, the quality of the assessment varies. Accreditation of prior learning is not used particularly well and useful individual learning plans are rare. Many of the training programmes involve the accreditation of existing skills in experienced workers, rather than building on these skills and gaining new ones. However, employers and employees are enthusiastic about the programme. Read ALI Employer Training Pilot survey, Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), December 2005, at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>
Skills and Education Network Newsletter, January 2005

Learner's needs

Motivating learners on vocational courses

Practical strategies for learning and teaching on vocational programmes
This publication offers a menu of ideas to help learners become successful on vocational courses. Underpinning the learning techniques suggested is the idea of adopting strategies that will meet learners' individual needs and helping people to become independent learners. To do this, educators must give learners the necessary knowledge and skills to build their confidence. For instance, during assessment activities, teachers can express confidence in the learner's ability to achieve. Also giving specific, rather than general, feedback can help learners improve. The report explains techniques such as mind mapping and suggests a variety of ways of working with learners who have different learning styles. Read Practical strategies for learning and teaching on vocational programmes, Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), 2005, at <http://www.lsda.org.uk>
Skills and Education Network Newsletter, Jan 2005

Participation in learning and training

Widening adult participation in learning

The findings from this research have been published by The Learning and Skills Development Agency. The research presents a systematic review of academic research on widening participation. A range of strategies and interventions designed to promote retention, success and progression are identified and analysed.
Full details can be found at www.lsda.org.uk

Labour market, training and age profiles of the Sector Skills Councils

NIACE are offering a collection of briefings looking at qualifications, incidence of job-related training, age and ethnic background across a range of industries covered by six Sector Skills Councils and compares them with the UK workforce as a whole.

Produced by the Centre for Labour Market Studies with funding from the European Social Fund, the briefings profile Asset Skills (property and facilities), Improve (food and drink), Construction Skills and others.

You may be able to obtain free copies from NIACE. Full details can be found at

<http://www.niace.org.uk>

[Go to Campaigns, then Adult Learners Week, then Themes, and then Workplace].

Newsletter sources and miscellaneous items

Miscellaneous items

Answers

Puzzle 1: Trees on the left hand side are rougher on picture 2; Small cloud appears at top on the left hand side of picture 2; car has an aerial on picture 2; car has an extra door on picture 2; smoke appears to be coming from the back of the car on picture 2; there are dots at the centre of the wheels on picture 2.

Puzzle 2: Driving Licence; Car; Truck; Motorbike; Lorry; Wheels; Road; Warehouse, Safety; Building site, Transport (highlighted example)

Sources

The following information sources were used to put together this newsletter:

News Headlines from Birmingham City Council – accessed via www.birmingham.gov.uk

Skills and Education Network Newsletter January 2006, Learning and Skills Council
icsolihull.icnetwork.co.uk (in association with Solihull News and Solihull Times)

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualifications/news.cfm?page=0&id=101>

Birmingham Post; <http://icbirmingham.icnetwork.co.uk/birminghampost/business>

Birmingham Evening news; <http://icbirmingham.icnetwork.co.uk/mail/news>

The Guardian website; <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Forward Newspaper, Birmingham City Council <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk>

Intelligence Newsletter January 2006 Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

Skills and Education Network Newsletter, January 2006

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