

Focus

Birmingham and Solihull

on the Labour Market

This monthly newsletter provides information and news about labour markets, covering areas such as job vacancies, employment trends 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 aims to keep you informed about trends and news relating to the labour market. It 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.

We hope you find it useful and informative

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email please contact helen.walton@connexions-bs.co.uk



Local news

New Midlands's mail centre creates 20 jobs

A new mail centre opened in the West Midlands is set to create 20 jobs. Located in Sutton Coldfield, it will employ up to 20 people initially, and is expected to double in size over the next year.

The new service, called Smartmail Citispeed, offers mail collection from any business in the UK, and delivery within designated postcodes in the Midlands, London, and the North-west.

The Birmingham operation is the second DHL mail centre to open in six weeks, following one in the North West in April. Birmingham Post 21st June 2005 (webpages)

Brindleyplace celebrates 10th anniversary

Brindleyplace celebrated its tenth anniversary yesterday, marking the opening of The Water's Edge in 1995.

Brindleyplace is home to more than 8,500 employees, who work for 25 businesses. There are also 30 bars, restaurants, shops and cafes as well as a selection of the city's most popular leisure venues.

Birmingham Post 21st June 2005 (webpages)

Shock in store

A pioneering programme has helped throw a lifeline to shoppers visiting Touchwood Shopping Centre.

On Monday the centre unveiled three automated external defibrillators as part of a £6 million National Defibrillator Programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund to help save people who have suffered a cardiac arrest.

The popular town centre destination is the first to benefit from a life-saving partnership between the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and West Midlands Ambulance Service. The initiative, which was launched in February 2004, will now be rolled out to other public areas.

icsolihull 17th June 2005. Accessed from icsolihull.icnetwork.co.uk icsolihull is produced in association with Solihull News and Solihull Times.

US foods giant Heinz buys HP

US foods giant Heinz yesterday snapped up the maker of HP Foods. This puts HP and Lea & Perrins sauces under the same roof as its own Heinz Ketchup brand.

HP produces its famous brown source at its factory in Aston, Birmingham, while Lea & Perrins sauces are produced in Worcester. Heinz already operates from five regional centres in the UK and employs more than 5,000 staff.

Birmingham Post 21th June 2005(webpages)

Initiative to promote media innovation

Anne Wood, creative director and founder of Ragdoll, the company behind Brum and Teletubbies, will be launching UCE Birmingham's cutting-edge Screen Media Lab on June 28.

Set up to promote ideas using the latest technology, the lab will form a major bedrock from which to build the region's reputation as a hub for new media.

Based in Bromley Street, Birmingham, the Screen Media Lab provides the latest research, design, and training facilities, supporting the West Midlands with leading-edge facilities.

Birmingham Post 20th June 2005 (webpages)

Brum wins £1.3m for green energy scheme

Birmingham has won £1.3m from the government for a community energy scheme based in Eastside aimed at improving energy performance and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Summary of press release 28th June, Birmingham City Council. Full press release available through News Headlines from Birmingham City Council – accessed www.birmingham.gov.uk

'Expansion helps our standing in science'

Expansion at Aston Science Park is strengthening Birmingham's role as a key 'Science City' in Europe, according to Coun Mike Whitby, leader of Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham Post 17th June 2005 (webpages)

Boost for estate

The sale of a major site in Longbridge is set to offer new housing opportunities for locals as well as kick-start the regeneration of land owned by MG Rover.

Cabinet approved the sale of the site this month.

Full article available - Forward Newspaper June 2005, Birmingham City Council

Celebrate the best Midland companies

Birmingham Post teamed up with Advantage West Midlands and Best Companies to highlight organisations in the region that are committed to vision and values.

The organisations were evaluated in a number of areas, including leadership style, respect for the individual, benefits, training and development, reward and recognition, work/life balance, and environment.

The article noted that all of the companies shortlisted will be featured in a supplement - West Midlands 25 Best Companies To Work For - which will be free with The Birmingham Post on Tuesday, June 28. Birmingham Post 20th June 2005 (webpages)

Waterside homes get go-ahead

A new high-quality canalside re-development of around 100 homes for rent, sale and shared ownership has been announced for Warstock – with over half earmarked for young families and single people looking to join the property ladder.

Full article available - Forward Newspaper June 2005, Birmingham City Council

Gap in the heating market gave entrepreneurs a red hot idea

An all-female Redditch firm supplying spare parts to central heating and gas engineers has been named one of Britain's top 50 brightest new businesses in this year's HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards Birmingham Post 22nd June 2005 (webpages)

National news

Primary school teachers finding it harder to get jobs

An article entitled 'Teachers' job shortage warning' reported on the findings from a BBC survey conducted with teacher training colleges in England and Wales. This survey found that almost two thirds of the 44 colleges said new teachers were finding the jobs market more of a struggle than before.

The article also noted that the situation is particularly acute in the South West, North and North East of England, which have been hit by falling primary school rolls. It added that there will be 60,000 fewer primary children in schools across England as a whole, but in the North East rolls are expected to fall by 10%.

BBC News Education website (webpages)

Skills shortage threatens historic buildings

The first major piece of research into England's traditional building craft sector identified that England's listed and historic buildings are under threat from a shortage of traditional building craft skills

The article noted that in order to meet the current demand for the conservation and restoration of historic buildings – on which £3.5 billion is spent every year – the built heritage sector needs to recruit over 500 speciality bricklayers, carpenters and slate and tile roofers; 400 joiners, lead workers and stonemasons; and 300, painters & decorators and thatchers over the next year.

8th June 2005 National Heritage Training Group website - www.nhtg.org.uk.

Full article and link to report available.

EU's 'absurd' sun proposal

A proposed EU directive which will force bosses to make daily risk assessments on the strength of the sun, has been slammed as unworkable and absurd by a leading business pressure group.

Under the proposed EU Directive on optical radiation, being discussed this week by the European Parliament, all employers with staff working outdoors would be forced to make daily 'risk assessments' of the levels of UV radiation to which their employees could be exposed.

This would mean assembling complex meteorological information and analysing its implications for employees.

Birmingham Post 22nd June 2005 (webpages)

Measures to Support Ethnic Minority Employment

The National Employment Panel (NEP) has published a report on increasing the employment and business growth of ethnic minority groups. Entitled "Enterprising People, Enterprising Places", the report makes 10 main recommendations to improve ethnic minority employment rates, including:

Better targeting of resources to five cities, where two thirds of ethnic minorities live - London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leicester, and Leeds/Bradford
an integrated, employer-led employment and skills framework in each of the five cities

outreach support focused on those ethnic minority people currently excluded from the labour market.

The NEP also recommends that English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision should be better targeted through the Learning and Skills Council, and that Centres of Vocational Excellence for Entrepreneurship should be established to develop the talent and entrepreneurship of ethnic minority communities.

Full details available through
Intelligence Newsletter June 2005
Sector Skills Development Agency SSDA

EU Workers - Contribution To The UK Economy

Workers from the eight accession states are continuing to take up hard to fill job vacancies in the UK a year after they joined the EU, according to the latest Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) figures published by the Home Office.

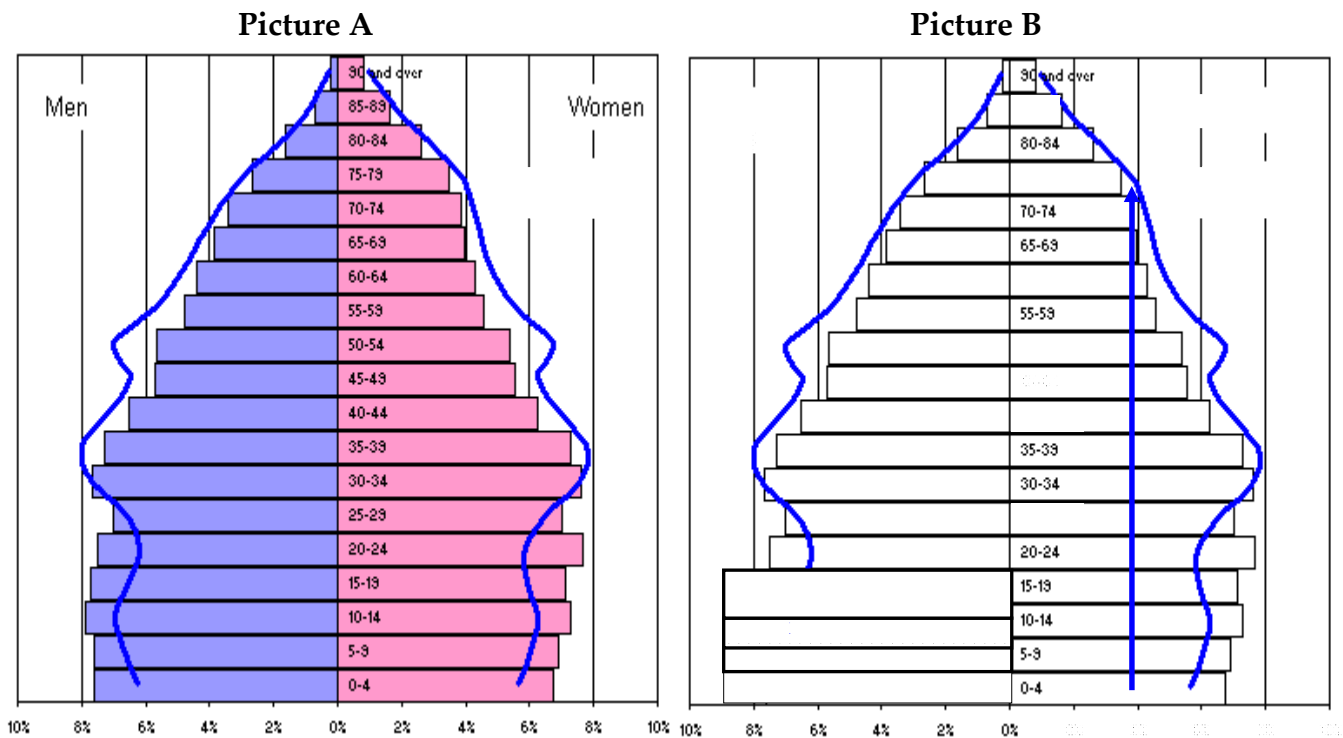
The latest quarterly statistics show just over 40,000 people from the new European states applied to the scheme between January and March 2005. This brought the total number of applicants since May 2004 to 176,000, though many workers may only have stayed in the UK for a short period of time. The figures also show the majority of workers are aged between 18 and 34, with just two per cent registering dependents aged under 17, reinforcing evidence that the use of health care and education by accession nationals is low.

Workers from Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia, who form the majority of those registering for work, are joining fellow accession state nationals to take up jobs as factory workers, kitchen and catering assistants and as farm workers, as well as working in a host of other industries and high and low skill professions across the UK.

Full details available through
Intelligence Newsletter June 2005
Sector Skills Development Agency SSDA

Spot the difference!

There are 7 differences between Picture A and Picture B, can you spot them?



Note

This type of pyramid diagram is used to show how many males and females fall into each age group. The percentages on the pyramid represent the percentage of 'all males' (in the darker shade to the left) and the percentage of 'all females' (in the lighter shade to the right) that are in that age group.

Picture A and B: developed for the sole purposes of this quiz.

Answers can be found on page 10

Labour market

Workers are key to business success

A survey of the West Midlands' top entrepreneurs by accountants Ernst & Young saw 59 per cent agree that staff are the key to topping business rivals, but 55 per cent said that finding the right people is the biggest stumbling block when trying to respond to new market opportunities and increased competition.

Amid rising concerns among employers about the growing skills shortage, the Enterprise Survey has revealed that leading business leaders are investing more time and money in structured career development and fringe benefits, which are helping them to retain quality staff.

Full article available

Birmingham Post 22nd June 2005 (webpages)

Government figures on labour market for April

Labour Market Trends

Labour market statistics show a continued improvement in employment levels for April 2005. This issue of Labour Market Trends has the latest news and a special feature on the employment of disabled people in the public sector. It also has figures on numbers of learners on Government funded training schemes. The number of those doing Apprenticeships at Level 2 has risen. Read Labour Market Trends, Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2005, at

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

Skills and Education Network Newsletter June 2005 <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/reviews/labourmarket/latest.cfm>

NIACE survey on adult participation in learning 2005

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has published its adult learning survey 2005. According to this survey there has been an increase in the number of skilled workers taking part in education. However, professional and managerial groups (56 per cent) are twice as likely to participate as unskilled and unwaged groups (26 per cent). As in previous years of this survey, the age divide in participation is clearly shown, with a marked drop for people over-55 (22 per cent). This survey continues an annual series which documents adult participation in learning in the UK. Using responses of around 5,000 adults in the UK, it offers key findings, trends in participation and future intentions to learn by gender, class, age, and region.

The NIACE survey on adult participation in learning 2005 can be ordered through the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), (priced publication), at

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

Skills and Education Network Newsletter June 2005 <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/reviews/labourmarket/latest.cfm>

Adult learners relish new languages

A new survey of LEA provision has found that there is strong demand for adult language classes, and the English are learning a wider range of languages than ever before. However the high proportion of learners at the early stages of language learning makes provision vulnerable in a funding regime which prioritises Level 2 courses.

The survey, which took place from December 2004 to February 2005, was carried out by CILT, the National Centre for Languages in collaboration with the Association for Language Learning and NIACE.

NIACE -accessed through www.niace.org.uk/news

Other research

IAG makes a difference

Intermediate impacts of advice and guidance

Individuals who have received Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) are significantly more likely to have undergone changes as a result of the help they received. The aim of this study was to test whether the provision of IAG makes a difference to the work and learning outcomes of individuals. It found that recipients of IAG were more likely to feel they have improved their work and/or learning situation. In addition, their confidence, motivation and opportunity awareness have also improved. The results presented are those of a telephone survey of over 4,000 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) recipients. Read Intermediate impacts of advice and guidance, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005, at

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>

Skills and Education Network Newsletter June 2005

Events

The events section will provide details about forthcoming events of interest to nextstep members.

Adult Education and Mental Health Supporting social inclusion through adult learning Friday 8 July 2005

This third international conference to be hosted by the PASCAL Observatory on place management, social capital and learning regions provides an opportunity for all with an interest in policy and programme development to share their knowledge and experiences in policy-making, community-building, regeneration and sustainability projects with others from a wide range of fields at local, regional, national and international level.

The conference aims to examine the implications for policy and practice of contemporary research in different models of place management, the role of social capital and the development of learning regions, and to raise fresh questions from practice for further research.

The conference is aimed at public policy-makers and managers, community development leaders, academic researchers, stakeholders and partners from all sectors working in the fields of place management, social capital and lifelong learning particularly those with an interest in:

- Sharing success with other policy makers and practitioners from across the world.
- Learning how to create constructive partnerships at local, regional, national and international level.
- Demonstrating the value of policy makers and practitioners from public, private and NGOs working with academic institutions.
- Networking with people tackling similar community development issues.
- Facing the challenges of changing demographics.
- Disseminating applied research findings to end users.
- Demonstrating engagement with community networks for social change.
- What research can tell us about place management, social capital and lifelong learning in building strong and sustainable communities.

For more information about this event visit NIACE website at www.niace.org.uk

Newsletter sources and miscellaneous items

Miscellaneous items

Spot the difference answers:

1. Pyramid B is not shaded
2. No percentage figures at bottom on the RHS of picture B
3. Straight arrow pointing upwards on the RHS of picture B
4. Labels saying men and women are missing from picture B
5. There is a diagonal arrow above the pyramid on the LHS of picture B
6. The curvy line (noting the average) is missing at the bottom on the LHS of picture B
7. The bars showing the percentage of men between ages 0 and 19 years are different between pictures A and B.

Sources

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

Forward Newspaper June 2005, Birmingham City Council

National Heritage Training Group website - www.nhtg.org.uk

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

Skills and Education Network Newsletter June 2005

BBC News Education webpages website

NOMIS (National On-line Manpower Information System) www.nomisweb.co.uk

Intelligence Newsletter June 2005 Sector Skills Development Agency SSDA

icsolihull.icnetwork.co.uk (in association with Solihull News and Solihull Times)

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

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

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - England and Wales (NIACE) events and conferences web pages at www.niace.org.uk.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this newsletter is collected from different sources and may include opinions or views which do not necessarily reflect those of **nextstep**.

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