

Focus

on the Labour Market

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

Birmingham and Solihull

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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 helen.walton@connexions-bs.co.uk



Local news

Airbus decision a boost for Midlands

This article reported that Global aerospace giant Airbus is planning to set up a specialist engineering design centre in the Midlands. It is understood the design centre could be opened in early 2006 and fully operational by the end of the year. Airbus will be in good company.

The article also noted that the Midlands already is home to the R&D facilities of some of the world's leading aerospace companies, including Derby-based Rolls-Royce, Smiths Aerospace, Goodrich, Meggitt/Dunlop and Alstom.
Birmingham Post October 27th 2005

Birmingham-based company up for national award

Birmingham-based The Works Retail has made it through to the final of both The Employer of the Year Award and The Investors in People Award for Business Improvement Through People. In addition, The Works Retail has been highly commended in two of the award categories - The CMS Cameron Mckenna Business of the Year Award and The Orange Award for Bright Business.

These are independent annual awards that recognise business excellence and focus on success, innovation and ethics.

Birmingham graduate launches website

James Eder, a graduate from The University of Birmingham, launched his own student offers website called studentbeans.com after graduating in July.

The website, which has a blue jelly bean as its mascot, gives students access to businesses they may not have otherwise approached.

The website has already signed up over 120 companies. Also the response to the website has been fast, with 200 to 400 hits received a day.

Pallasades Shopping Centre sold

The Pallasades Shopping Centre, located in Birmingham has been sold. The Pallasades is home to 88 stores, including Peacocks, Argos, JJB Sports, HMV and Woolworths.

A new property fund called Agora Max was reported to have been set up to buy the shopping centre. This fund is a joint venture between Warner and Bank of Scotland and will be used to purchase other city shopping centres throughout the UK.

Birmingham Post October 25th 2005 (webpages)

New Gym for Birmingham City Centre

National health and fitness chain Virgin Active is to open a new gym in Birmingham city centre at Broadway Plaza.

The gym will also provide free internet access, a cafe/bar, a creche and free on-site parking for up to three hours in Broadway Plaza's 1,300 space car park.

Birmingham Post October 25th 2005 (webpages)

Stability fears hit bottom lines

This article reported that nearly two-thirds of the Midlands' SMEs are struggling to cope with unnecessary paperwork and the burden of overregulation, one of the highest figures of any region in the UK.

Research conducted by B2B Portfolio, business event organisers, suggests that Midland businesses are increasingly concerned with the UK's financial stability.

Full article available

Birmingham Post 19th October 2005 (webpages)

National news

Public sector employment is still growing, but more slowly.

Employment in the public sector rose by 95,000 in the year to June 2005, compared with an increase of 113,000 in the previous year to June 2004. The largest increase in public sector employment in the year to June 2005 was in health and social services (up by 60,000 employees). There were also increases in education (19,000), in public administration (17,000), and in the police service (including civilians) (12,000). Read *Public sector employment: growth slows in 04-05*, Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2005, at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
Skills and Education Network Newsletter
October 2005

Survey points to downward trend

The CBI's quarterly industrial trends survey found orders and output for manufacturers fell faster than had been expected over the past three months.

More details found at:
www.cbi.org.uk

Key Worker Living Programme

The findings from the "Key Worker Living Evaluation: Early Findings", published by ODPM, found that the Government's Key Worker Living Programme (KWL) is making a positive contribution towards improving recruitment and retention of key workers, such as teachers, nurses and police.

Another finding is that the programme was seen as offering good value for money for key workers through its low risk access to the housing market.

The report concludes that a majority of employers interviewed thought KWL was having a positive effect on improving their recruitment and retention situation, as well as bringing improvements to their services in the medium and long-term.

The final report, due in 2006, will provide more detailed information on the impact of the programme.

The Labour Market Impact of Offshoring Call Centres

This article in *Intelligence* reported on the labour market impact of offshoring call centres as reported in *September's Labour Market Trends*.

The article reported that employment growth in call centre-related occupations in the UK has been nearly three times the overall growth in employment. In spring 2005 UK employment in IT and call centre occupations stood at 1.05 million. It had grown by 8.8 per cent in the previous four years, compared with overall employment growth of 3.2 per cent.

Also the employment data by region for these occupations do not show any major variation from this trend, which suggests that the offshoring that has happened has had minimal effect on the employment prospects of IT-enabled occupations by region.

Full details available

Intelligence Newsletter October 2005, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

Word Puzzle

There are 12 words hidden in the puzzle, connected to the construction industry. How many can you find?

Hint: The words can be spelt horizontally, vertically or diagonally and can be in any direction.

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

Answers can be found on page 8

Prior qualifications of adult learners in further education

Of the 3.1 million adult further education learners in 2003/04, 162,000 were undertaking a full Level 2 qualification. It is estimated that 59,000 learners were working towards their first full Level 2 qualification. In addition, there were 24,000 learners undertaking a full Level 3 qualification who either had no prior qualifications or whose prior qualifications were below Level 2. This information profiling adult learners is complemented by more in-depth details throughout the report, which draws on a survey of 8,988 adults undertaking LSC-funded further education learning in November 2003. Read *Prior qualifications of adult learners in further education*, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005, at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>
Skills and Education Network Newsletter, October 2005

Growing number of training managers using e-learning.

This year, for the first time, more than half (54 per cent) of training managers taking part in this survey said that they use e-learning. Some 39 per cent of those not currently using it plan to implement it in the next 12 months. This report provides data on the emerging trends in training and development. There are a variety of findings on topics such as apprenticeships, leadership development, and attitudes to training. For instance, some two-thirds said there is a shortage of leaders in the UK (65 per cent) and 85 per cent said that they are pursuing leadership and development activities. The majority of respondents believe that line managers take training seriously (60 per cent), but only 48 per cent believed that senior management is committed to it. These findings are based on an analysis of 664 questionnaires. Read *Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) annual survey report, 2005: training and development, 2005*, at Skills and Education Network Newsletter, October 2005

Non-accredited learning

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) reports on successful practice in non-accredited learning. *Unqualified success: a report on non-accredited learning*

This report identifies the key ingredients of good non-accredited learning by offering examples of successful provision in this area. Below are just a few of the elements of successful non-accredited learning provision.

Make sure the course meets learners' individual needs.

- Gather information about learners ahead of time, including their homecare arrangements and personal goals.
- Listen and react to what learners want.
- Use your imagination when responding to their needs, a yoga class can also be an opportunity to learn English as a second language.
- Plan provision only after close consultation with learners.
- Get ideas on how to improve your own provision. Read this review in full at

<http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/reviews/bigreview/september2005leadership2.cfm>

Or read *Unqualified success: a report on non-accredited learning*, Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), 2005, at

<http://docs.ali.gov.uk/talisman/SupplementFINALSept05.pdf>

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has published statistics on the qualifications adults had achieved before entering further education.
Skills and Education Network Newsletter, October 2005

Newsletter sources and miscellaneous items

Miscellaneous items

Answers : 1. Electrician; 2. Road; 3. Design; 4. Survey; 5. Office; 6. Hardhat; 7. Carpenter; 8. Scaffolding; 9. On-site training; 10. Architect; 11. Bridge; & 12. Slab.

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 October 2005

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 October 2005 Sector Skills Development Agency SSDA

Skills and Education Network Newsletter, October 2005

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