

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 helen.walton@connexions-bs.co.uk



Local news

Pizza franchise due to expand in Midlands

The pizza chain, Domino's, is planning to expand its franchise programme in the West Midlands, with the possible introduction of 6 new stores.

Weatherite Manufacturing expands to meet demand

Weatherite Manufacturing has invested in a new factory and office complex, and the company has taken on 11 staff members.

Weatherite is a manufacturing company, which makes roof-packaged air conditioning systems for large stores such as department stores and supermarkets.

New hotel for NEC complex

A new hotel is due to be established at the NEC, with the conversion of an existing building to a 164 bed Ramada hotel.

Staff members who currently work in the building will move to offices within the main NEC site.

The new hotel is expected to open in the summer of 2008 and will eventually have 75 workers.

Growth of Female Owned Businesses in the West Midlands

According to a recent survey conducted by Barclays, the number of business started by women in the West Midlands in the first half of 2006 was up by 17% on the previous year (for same period).

The average growth rate for England and Wales was 10%

Local

Birmingham's wholesale market on course to move

Birmingham's wholesale market is on course to move from its current Digbeth location. Discussions about the relocation are taking place between the council and market wholesalers.

The move would open up the site for redevelopment, linking Digbeth, Eastside and the City Centre.

The horticulture, fish, poultry and meat market is said to be the largest of its kind in the UK and supports around 1,300 jobs.

Jewellery quarter building gets a facelift

Three new tenants have signed up for the ground floor of the refurbished Chamberlain Building in Birmingham's Jewellery quarter.

The Chamberlain Building is a mixed-use development by MCD. MCD is a Birmingham regeneration specialist.

Midlands to get reduction in EU funding

The allocation of EU structural funds to the Midlands is to be cut. The funds will be concentrated on poorer nations which have joined the EU, such as Poland and Hungary.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an indicator of wealth. There is a big difference in GDP between the UK and poorer new EU joiners, for example:

Poland: GDP - \$12,994 per person

UK: GDP - \$30,436 per person(1)

(1)Figures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

National

Sports car-maker plans to move production to Europe

The sports car maker, TVR, is set to move production to Europe. Although the move may mean the loss of up to 250 jobs, the production of the power trains – engines, clutches and gear boxes will remain in the UK.

Skills shortages pushes up pay

According to a report by IDS, an employment information and research company, skills shortages are pushing up pay in Britain's engineering industry. The report added that the best increases were seen in the motor industry (across most grades).

National

Taxi drives in to Shanghai

Production of the traditional black taxi-cabs is expanding into the Asian car market. The taxis, produced in Coventry since 1948, will also be made in Shanghai, China from 2008.

The taxis are made by London Taxis International, a subsidiary of Manganese Bronze. A joint venture between Manganese Bronze and the Chinese car maker Zhejiang Geely will see 20,000 taxis a year made in Shanghai.

This move will not affect production at Coventry, where 2,500 taxis a year are made.

Financial Services industry grows

Financial services is becoming increasingly important, making up just less than 10% of the country's economy. London is at the centre of the growth, accounting for around 44% of the sector's income. Birmingham's financial service industry is also on the increase.

Labour market statistics

The following trends were identified from the Labour Force Survey data for the West Midlands.

The employment rate has remained almost flat. It is not significantly different from a year ago. However the unemployment rate is increasing and the latest rate is significantly higher than a year ago.

New Vision for Local Government proposes New Skills and Employment Boards in England

The Government has recently published a new white paper entitled "Strong and Prosperous Communities", which sets out a new vision for local government.

The proposals in the paper place a strong emphasis on the need to get local people more involved in the development of public services in a local area. This White Paper builds a new settlement between central government, local government and citizens. It also places an emphasis on the provision of a strong framework of directly accountable government in our councils.

In terms of employment and skills, the White Paper makes a new commitment to joining up action on employment and skills. It raises the possible prospect of new 'Skills and Employment Boards' to assess the current and future skills needs of the labour market at district level. There is no standard model for a Skills and Employment Board set out in the paper, "Some boards being proposed are employer-led, others led by local authorities; some would operate at the local authority level within a well-bounded urban area; others might cover a city-region to reflect travel to work areas and wider market interactions".

Full details of the White paper can be found via the Communities and Local Government website, www.communities.gov.uk

About the Financial and Professional sector

This sector covers banking, insurance, financial services and stockbrokers (referred to as financial services), accountancy, advertising, PR and media (referred to as professional services).

Typical jobs in this sector include call centre workers, financial advisers, accountants, bank officer workers, tax advisers and many, many others.

Facts and figures about this sector

The financial services sector is one of the fastest growing industries in the UK, making up just less than 10% of the UK's economy. The sector has a long history in the Midlands - Lloyds Bank started out in Birmingham in 1765.

The growth of the sector at the local economy is in line with the overall positive trend at national trend, with financial services becoming an increasingly important part of Birmingham and Solihull economy and a driver of regional employment growth.

Who works in this sector?

16.7% of those employed in the West Midlands are employed in financial & business services (1). Predictions for the region's economy suggest that up to 87,000 new jobs could be created in the business and other services sector, and up to 62,000 in distribution and transport (2)

Professional services, computing services, other business services as well as others are predicted to see major employment increases between 2001 and 2015 in Birmingham

Birmingham is the key centre for a number of professional and financial services. In particular Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire are together a key centre for ICT and related activity.

1. Office for National Statistics (ONS)'s 2002 Regional Survey
2. State of the Region Report 2004.

Labour market

Career Paths of Former Apprentices

The Learning and Skills Network report looks at the career paths taken by apprentices after they complete their training, and the extent to which their apprenticeships has been influential in their future success.

The research reveals that people who complete an apprenticeship earn more money, stay longer with their employer and are more likely to rise to a management job than people who don't do an apprenticeship.

For more information, visit the Learning and Skills Network website, www.lsneducation.org.uk

Gender and the Labour Market

Gender Differences among Europe's Knowledge Workers

This paper entitled: Measuring gender differences among Europe's knowledge workers was recently produced by Eurostat.

Eurostat is the Statistical Office of the European Community. Eurostat's task is to provide the European Union with statistics that enable comparisons between countries and regions. Eurostat does not collect data, but consolidates data already collected and tries to arrive at a common statistical 'language' that embraces concepts, methods, structures and technical standards.

The main findings from the paper are:

In 2004, 50.4% of human resources in science and technology core (HRSTC) in Europe were female: for comparison the female share in total employment of the 25-64 age group was only 44.1%.

In Europe, only 29% of the Scientists and Engineers were female in 2004

Three out of six Polish regions had a share of female HRSTC greater than 60%

Differences between female and male unemployment are decreasing over the years.

Working practices

The research findings from the ESRC Programme 'The Future of Work' have been published via a series of 14 books.

Working in the Twenty-First Century, is a timely and challenging contribution to contemporary debates about the changing world or work. It draws upon the latest research produced by social scientists, particularly from the ESRC Future of Work Programme. The book looks at contemporary changes in work and future prospects. It describes recent trends, what will drive future developments and the implications of the emerging landscape. It is written for people in management, trade unions, government, research, education and the professions who want to increase their understanding of the workplace or need to make policy affecting it.

Intelligence Newsletter, October 2006, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

Newsletter sources and miscellaneous items

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 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 October 2006, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

Involve Newsletter, Issue 147, October 2006, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

Involve Newsletter, Issue 151, October 2006, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

Disclaimer

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