

# 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 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](mailto:helen.walton@connexions-bs.co.uk)



## Local news

### **Asda plans for flagship Birmingham store**

Asda has submitted plans to expand a flagship Birmingham store at Great Barr outlet, which could create 230 additional jobs.

### **Barclays job cuts**

Barclays, is revamping its high-street operations with all Woolwich branches being re-branded as Barclays. 1,200 job losses are anticipated as part of the revamp.

The closure of offices in Bexleyheath (Kent), Clacton in Essex and Dudley in the West Midlands are expected.

### **International law firm moves to Solihull**

Reed Smith, one of the world's top 20 largest law firms has taken a space at Blythe Valley.

Blythe Valley is a prestigious new development based on Solihull's Blythe Valley Park, close to junction four of M42.

### **Production for BMW mini engines to move to Birmingham**

BMW has announced that it was switching production of the engines for its new Mini from Brazil to Birmingham.

BMW announced that £200m is to be invested with the creation of 450 new jobs at its plant at Cowley, near Oxford to produce the next-generation Mini.

### **Age discrimination legislation comes into force**

New laws came into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 that will protect workers from discrimination on the basis of age in relation to recruitment, promotion and training.

## National news

### **Honda to expand in the UK**

The Japanese car company, Honda, has announced that it will take on more staff and increase car production levels in the UK.

Honda, along with Nissan and Nissan make up almost a half of all cars produced in the UK.

### **More construction teachers needed to keep up with demand**

ConstructionSkills has forecast the need for 348,000 more employees in the sector by 2010 but says there needs to be greater investment in teacher recruitment and retention to keep up with this demand.

For more information go to the Sector Skills Development Agency website

[www.ssda.org.uk](http://www.ssda.org.uk)

### **Unemployment**

The number of people claiming Unemployment Benefit fell in January. The claimant count in January stood at 904,200.

However the International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure of unemployment rose to 5.1% in the three months to December, its highest level since early 2003.

### **New Asda stores**

Asda, the UK's second biggest supermarket group, has announced that it will open 25 new stores and create 7,000 new jobs.

The first of these new stores will be in Fleetwood and Lancashire. Preparations are also being made to open the first of the group's new format stores, called Asda Essentials and to add to its non-food stores, called Asda Living.

## About Self Employment

### About Self Employment

Self-employment can be really exciting and rewarding but it needs courage and commitment. There are many benefits to being self employed such as relying on your own strengths and efforts, being your own boss, making the decisions yourself and nurturing your own business.

Business life is not just about having the highest marks or best qualifications, it requires a broader range of skills. Here are some of the type of skills/quality needed for self employment; self-confidence, ability to plan ahead, flexibility and adaptability, ability to network and to communicate with customers and suppliers, determination and motivation , initiative and imagination and persuasion and negotiation.

There are different ways to run your own business: sole trader, partnership, limited company and franchises. Areas of work where self employment is common include construction, IT, sales and distribution, the media (producer, camera people), some areas of health (family doctor).

### Who is self employed in the UK?

According to the latest figures, around three and a half million people in the UK are self-employed, which is just less than 13% per cent of the total employment.

Men are more likely to be self employed than women and the proportion of women in self-employment in Britain has not changed a lot since the 1990's. A recent study commissioned by Vodafone UK found that men over the age of 50 were most likely to work for themselves.

A programme for women in business called W:ISE provides training workshops, a network of contacts, one-to-one mentoring as well as other types of support. For more information [www.wise4women.co.uk](http://www.wise4women.co.uk).

### For more general information about self employment:

Business Insight [www.bestforbusiness.com](http://www.bestforbusiness.com)

Business Link [www.birmingham-chamber.com](http://www.birmingham-chamber.com)

Jobcentre Plus [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

Inland Revenue - Starting Business [www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/startingu](http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/startingu)

Princes Trust [www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)

Mustard [www.mustard.uk.com](http://www.mustard.uk.com)

Prowess [www.prowess.org.uk](http://www.prowess.org.uk)

# Self Employment Word Puzzle

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

## Word Puzzle - part 1

The following words associated with self employment are hidden in the puzzle. *Can you find them all?*

1. Cash flow
2. Determination
3. Franchise
4. Competition
5. Customers

## Word Puzzle - part 2

Solve the clues and find the word in the puzzle

6. Writing this document may help someone in self employment to plan ahead by setting out aims and objectives for their business (2 words: 8, 4).
7. Self employed people pay this differently to employed people (1 word: 3). It goes to the Inland Revenue.
8. This process helps to keep an accurate record of a business accounts and transactions (1 word: 11 letters).

*Answers are on page 8*

## Policy Developments

### **New report supports government drive**

The government's drive to reform further education and make greater use of competition to improve standards has been supported by a new report from the Confederation of British Industry entitled, "Further Skills for Success: Competition Delivers for Learners. The report also mentions a concern about progress being made towards implementation.

Full details are available from the CBI website.

*Article source: SSSA Intelligence July 2006*

## Research and Publications

### **Employer's needs**

### **Learning and learner's needs**

#### **Relating adults' lives and learning: participation and engagement in different settings**

There has been an increase in the number of settings in which literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) programmes are being delivered. They are being delivered by LLN specialists working in partnership with community workers, by community workers themselves, or through other means such as learndirect. This publication reveals the current situation and the key issues. It explains that provision needs to recognise and respond to people's practical constraints. Also, what is funded and what is not funded can have a significant impact on possibilities for engaging in learning, such as travel and childcare. In addition, people experienced a range of barriers on engaging in learning, including physical, mental, social and emotional constraints.

Read *Relating adults' lives and learning: participation and engagement in different settings*, National Research and Development Centre, April 2006, at [nrdc.org.uk](http://nrdc.org.uk)

*Skills and Education Network (SENET)*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2006

### **Labour market**

#### **Regional Employment and Skills in the Knowledge Economy**

This is the second report that Local Futures has prepared for the DTI on regional employment and skills in Britain from the perspective of the knowledge economy. The Government wants to build a world-class knowledge economy that delivers more balanced regional development in Britain. It recognises that to achieve this, Britain must have a flexible, highly skilled workforce in every region. The report states that skills and job quality divides exist throughout Britain, and 'skills poverty' (people living without basic qualifications) is as extensive in London as it is in Merseyside and South Yorkshire. There is an increasing awareness that skills and skills policy have to be embedded in wider strategies for knowledge-driven economic development at all levels.

Read Regional Employment and Skills in the Knowledge Economy, Department of Trade and Industry, 2006, at [dti.gov.uk](http://dti.gov.uk)

*Skills and Education Network (SENET), Learning and Skills Council, September 2006*

### **Barriers to engagement in education, training and employment**

This research sought to obtain an accurate picture of the current levels of participation in education, training and employment, then to examine the barriers to engagement that are faced both by young people and the staff responsible. The evidence suggests that early and sustained intervention to maintain attachment and attainment has a greater chance of success than trying to equip older young people with literacy and numeracy skills once they have become detached from mainstream learning. This research details findings both from previous literature and from original interviews with young people and staff from custodial settings. Having identified certain barriers, the authors also make recommendations for the future.

Read Barriers to engagement in education, training and employment, Youth Justice Board, 2006, at [youth-justice-board.gov.uk](http://youth-justice-board.gov.uk)

*Skills and Education Network (SENET), Learning and Skills Council, September 2006*

### **Equal Opportunities and gender**

#### **Encouraging an increase in the employment of women returners in areas of skill shortage in traditionally male industries**

This research, conducted by the Institute of Work Psychology (IWP), reveals that for women returning to work, training is important. Women are particularly concerned about receiving adequate training for a new job. They, and employers, strongly believe there is a need for funded government /employer training programmes to ensure adequate retraining that fits in with childcare responsibilities.

Women also feel that the Government should provide free pre-employment skills training for women returners. Employers agree. This information is based on a survey of 280 'women returners' and 40 consultations with employers and their representatives. To read Encouraging an increase in the employment of women returners in areas of skill shortage in traditionally male industries, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), March 2006, go to: [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)  
Skills and Education Issue 49, July 2006

# Newsletter sources and miscellaneous

## Miscellaneous items

### Word Puzzle

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

The following words associated with self employment are hidden in the puzzle.

1. Cash flow
2. Determination
3. Franchise
4. Competition
5. Customers

Solve the clues and find the word in the puzzle

6. Business Plan
7. Tax
8. Bookkeeping

## Sources

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

News Headlines from Birmingham City Council – accessed via [www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk)

Skills and Education Network (SENET) September 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>

Intelligence Newsletter September 2006 Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)

NIACE website, [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

Joseph Rountree Foundation (JRF) website, [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.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**.

Whilst we hope you find the contents of this newsletter interesting and informative, the contents are for general information purposes only and do not constitute advice. We believe the contents to be true and accurate as at the date of writing. **nextstep** cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the sources.

