

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

Nurses hit by struggle to find first jobs

Dozens of nurses in Birmingham have been unable to find work since qualifying this year, according to the Royal College of Nurses.

About 40 nurses have been unsuccessful in finding work in their chosen field since gaining their diplomas and degrees in nursing.

One newly qualified mental health nurse has spent six months looking for a first job, despite a national shortage of such specialists.

A regional representative for student nurses said most had been compelled to take agency work, jobs in fields unrelated to nursing or leave the medical profession. Full article available
Birmingham Post 25th Aug 2005 (webpages)

Poundland opens distribution centre as part of expansion

Poundland has opened an additional 300,000 sq ft distribution centre at Bilston as part of an expansion strategy which will see it open 30 stores per annum for five years.

Some 320 workers have transferred to the facility on Springvale Avenue from the existing 240,000 sq ft distribution centre at the company's headquarters in Willenhall. Full article available
Birmingham Post Aug 23rd 2005 (webpages)

Sofa so good for Ultra Furniture workforce

A West Midlands furniture company which completed a management buyout shortly before the Christie-Tyler Group collapsed into receivership has a bright future, it was claimed yesterday.

Ultra Furniture, based in Kingswinford, has sales of over £15 million a year, selling sofas and allied products to the major furniture retailers and the independent sector.

A total of 220 jobs were saved when the transaction went through just days before the failure.

Birmingham Post 18th Aug 2005 (webpages)

Telford investment brings 150 jobs

Nearly 150 new jobs are coming to Telford thanks to two multi-million pound investments.

The Telford site will become the head office for Masterplug and other companies within the group with functions such as finance, sales and marketing, quality control and graphic design all under one roof.

Birmingham Post Sep 2nd 2005 (webpages)

AWM gets go-ahead to start work on Bromsgrove Technology Park

Advantage West Midlands has received the green light from Bromsgrove District Council to move ahead with construction work on the 23-acre Bromsgrove Technology Park.

Bromsgrove Technology Park is one of the flagship projects in the Central Technology Belt and is the first site under the scheme to have gained planning approval to begin construction. The Belt is a high technology corridor linking Birmingham with South Worcestershire which aims to create long term technology-driven business opportunities for the region.

The Park is expected to create around 350 jobs. Infrastructure on the site is set for completion in summer 2006 and plots, ranging up to five acres, are now being marketed to owner-occupiers or developers.

Other strategic sites in the Central Technology Belt include the Longbridge Technology Park and the Malvern Hills Science Park.

Full article available
Birmingham Post 23rd Aug 2005 (webpages)

Huge regeneration project promises Solihull jobs bonanza

Hundreds of construction jobs will be created in the Midlands by one of the biggest regeneration schemes in the UK, it was revealed today.

The 15 to 20 year project in North Solihull could bring in up to £1.8 billion - and breathe new life into an area hit by "pockets of deprivation".

The regeneration scheme is aimed at bridging the economic divide between wards in North Solihull, some of the most deprived in the country, and wards in South Solihull which are among the most affluent. Full article available
Birmingham Post August 16th 2005 (webpages)

Jobs backing for locals at former IMI site development

Unskilled and unemployed people in north-west Birmingham could benefit from a city council initiative to match job vacancies at the former IMI Witton site to local applicants.

Cabinet regeneration member Ken Hardeman has approved a £380,000 scheme to bring employers and jobseeks together as the £150 million development of one of the city's largest brownfield sites starts.

The council will work with Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and Connexions to make the most of opportunities at the IMI Witton site by developing an employment hub. Full article available
Sunday Mercury Aug 16th 2005. Accessed via icbirmingham.icnetwork.co.uk.

Safe and Green

Residents in Northfield are to benefit from a 300,000 package of community safety and environmental improvement.

Full article available

Forward Newspaper September 2005

National news

A levels and GCSE results

GCSE pass rate improved by 0.2% this year with a 1% improvement in pupils achieving A-star and A grades and a 2% improvement in A-stars to Cs. Boys continued to lag behind girls and failed to repeat the trend seen in A-levels when they slightly narrowed that gap.

There was a rise in the overall A level pass rate (grades A-E) by 0.2 percentage points from 96% to 96.2%. Also a rise of 0.4 percentage points in A grades at A level from 22.4% to 22.8%.

Sources: Guardian and Department for Education and Skills website, News section.

Unemployment rises again

The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance has risen for the sixth month in a row - the longest stretch of increases in nearly 13 years, official figures showed yesterday.

The so-called claimant count rose by 2,800 in July to 866,000, an increase of 27,800 from a year ago, 2.8 per cent of the workforce. Total unemployment, including people not eligible for benefit, rose by 27,000 over the quarter to June to 1.42 million. The rise affected mainly women.

The West Midlands seasonally adjusted jobs total hit 96,900, up 1,000, 3.6 per cent of the workforce. The unadjusted equivalent was 97,800, up 2,300, also 3.6 per cent of the workforce.

On the wider rate, West Midlands unemployment was 120,000, down 3,000, 4.6 per cent of the workforce. The East Midlands equivalent was 94,000, up 1,000, 4.3 per cent.

Full Article available

Birmingham Post 18th Aug 2005

New survey shows UK divide is growing

The UK's North-South divide is set to widen as southern parts of the country experience some of the strongest economic growth rates in Western Europe, it was predicted yesterday.

London and the South-east can expect to see average GDP growth of around three per cent a year between 2005 and 2015, according to economic forecasting group Experian.

This compares with average annual growth of 2.5 per cent for the UK as a whole, and is well up on the 2.1 per cent predicted for Western Europe.

The West Midlands along with Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire will see average annual growth of 2.2 per cent.

The article noted that Experian also expects southern regions to outperform northern ones when it comes to employment growth.

Full article available

Birmingham Post Aug 25th 2005

LSC announces radical change for the further education sector

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Agenda for Change prospectus contains proposals around six themes relating to skills, quality, funding, data, business excellence and reputation. It is the culmination of more than a year's work to develop a blueprint to transform the further education sector. Read this review in full at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/reviews/bigreview/august2005policy4.cfm>

Or read Learning and skills - the Agenda for Change: the prospectus, Learning and Skills Council

at <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk>
Skills and Education Network Newsletter, August 2005.

Government publishes Youth Green Paper - Youth matters

Teenagers are to be offered more say over what they can do in their spare time, with the launch of Youth Matters, the Government's Green Paper for young people. The Government is consulting on a package designed to make services for young people more integrated and responsive to what young people and their parents want. Proposals include an 'opportunity card' which will offer young people credit to spend on sport and other productive activities.

Younger teenagers from disadvantaged families will get a top-up from the Government that will be withdrawn from those who engage in unacceptable or anti-social behaviour. Other proposals include an opportunity fund of up to £30,000 to be spent on local projects that young people want, such as running a sports league.

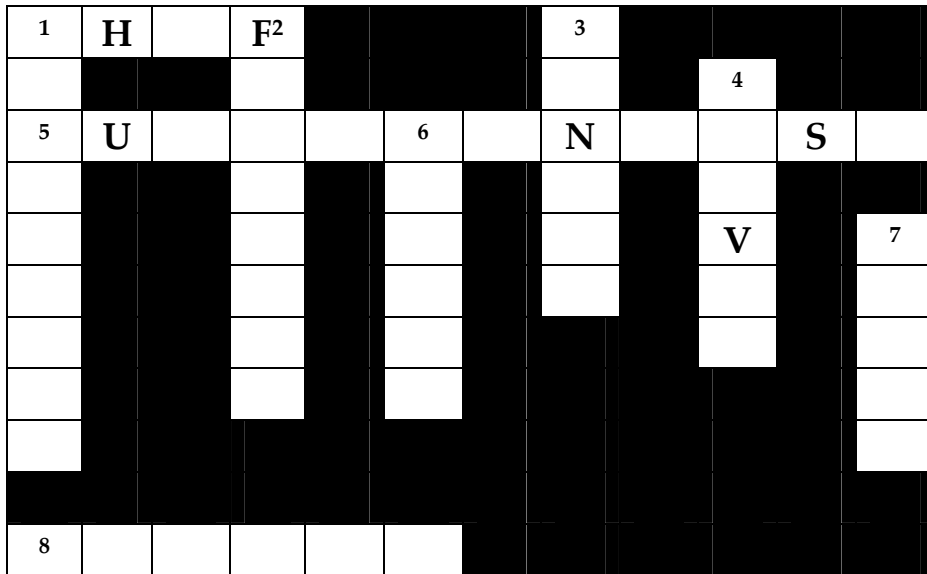
Read this review in full at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/reviews/bigreview/august2005policy.cfm>

Or read Youth Matters, Green Paper, Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005, at

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/skillsandeducationnetworknewsletter>
August

Skills and Education Network Newsletter, August 2005.

Occupations Crossword



Across

- 1 Prepares food (4)
- 5 Cares for children (7, 5)
- 8 Estimates and examines the price of a goods (6)

Down

- 1 Directs a group of musicians (9)
- 2 Catches water living creatures (9)
- 3 Performs dance routines (6)
- 4 Transport goods and people (6)
- 6 Writes materials for newspapers (8)
- 7 Navigates aircraft (4)

All the answers are types of occupations e.g. Doctor. Some letters have already been inserted.

Answers can be found on page 9.

Research and Publications

Determining what makes career guidance useful

What is effective career guidance? Evidence from longitudinal case studies in England. Findings from this study suggest that career guidance is useful to clients when it:

- provides support and safety;
- gives access to relevant resources;
- continues over a period of time;
- brings about positive change(s).

Of the fifty clients who participated in this research, all but one said that they had found the guidance they had received useful. 'Useful' guidance relates to the outcomes of the guidance process and how it developed the skills of the client.

What is effective career guidance? Evidence from longitudinal case studies in England, Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER), 2005, at

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk>

Skills and education network newsletter August

Breaking down barriers to learning for the hard to reach

Breaking down the barriers: success in widening participation — a toolkit approach

A guide to help recruit more adults from under-represented groups into education has been produced by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA). It contains 25 case studies showing the strategies that different organisations have used to motivate groups ranging from ethnic minorities to ex-offenders. Tips include: working in partnership makes it easier to reach target groups, adults from hard to reach groups need support with practical issues such as childcare, and the curriculum must be tailored to the needs of individuals.

Read Breaking down the barriers: success in widening participation — a toolkit approach, Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), 2005, at

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

Skills and education network newsletter August

Campaigns

Sign Up Now, a nationwide campaign to encourage adults into learning, will start next month organised by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Francisca Martinez, campaign officer, said: "The difference learning can make to your life is enormous. It can give a boost to your confidence, your career, your health and your social life, culminating in a much happier and more fulfilled you."

To find out what's on offer where you are, call learndirect free on 0800 100 900.

Source: Guardian webpages at <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Newsletter sources and miscellaneous items

Miscellaneous items

Quiz Answers

Across: 1 Chef, 5 Nursery nurse, 8 Valuer

Down: 1 Conductor, 2 Fisherman, 3 Dancer, 4 Driver, 6 Reporter, 7 Pilot

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 August 2005

BBC News Education webpages website

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

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

Department for Education and Skills

<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

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.

