

Labour Market Newsletter

March 2009 | Issue 6

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Connexions West of England Labour Market Newsletter. An understanding of the labour market is increasingly important for those working in education.

The economy – a local focus

As the recession continues to deepen we are confronted with a range of scenarios. Locally it is difficult to predict quite what will happen.

Bristol has been given an amber ranking in a nationwide economic study, which means that while it is better placed than some cities to cope during the current climate, it does have major vulnerabilities.

Bristol's reliance on jobs in the financial sector will leave it exposed during the recession, experts have warned. Bristol has the fourth largest concentration of banking, finance and insurance jobs – one of the most risky sectors over the coming months – of any British city.

But the 'Centre for Cities' think-tank claims these workers are highly skilled, more flexible and mobile, so are better able to endure the turbulent times. Dermot Finch, Director of the Centre for Cities, a research unit set up to understand how and why economic growth and change takes place in British cities, said: 'UK cities will be hit harder than they think by this recession. Nearly all say they are well-placed to weather the storm – but they can't all be right. The recession will hit our cities in different ways, and some will be hit worse than others.'

Ann O'Driscoll, Head of Business Development for the SW Regional Development Agency said 'Bristol is a key strategic location with good air, road and rail links, a highly skilled workforce, excellent quality of life and strengths in a wide range of sectors such as creative industries and environmental technologies'.

Away from finance, some sectors continue to hold steady – the care sector, for example, while others areas such as environmental technologies and the cheaper end of the retail spectrum are thriving. And with the cheaper pound we are likely to see more people holidaying at home this summer along with an increase in foreign visitors. For a local list of winners and losers see the back page.

Whatever the depth and length of this recession there is one thing we can be sure of: we will need a ready and able skilled workforce to ensure that this period of bust is followed by a period of boom.

Mike Manson

Connexions West of England Annual Activity Survey

This annual survey identifies the current activity of all young people on 1st November following the end of their compulsory education. Here we can see an increase in the number of young people remaining in learning across all four areas, but a slight increase in those not settled/ not active (NEET). The proportion of young people from whom we were unable to obtain a response has improved to a very low 0.6%. Full details below:

	2008 WOE	2007 WOE	2008 B&NES	2007 B&NES	2008 Bristol	2007 Bristol	2008 N Som	2007 N Som	2008 S Glos	2007 S Glos
In learning/work	92.7%	91.4%	95.4%	93.3%	88.3%	86.7%	95.5%	94.4%	93.3%	93.0%
Employment	1.3%	1.9%	0.8%	1.0%	1.9%	3.3%	0.8%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Not settled/not active	4.9%	4.8%	3.1%	3.7%	7.9%	7.3%	2.9%	2.8%	4.5%	4.3%
Moved away	0.5%	0.8%	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%	1.1%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
No response/refused	0.6%	1.3%	0.3%	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%	0.5%	0.9%	0.3%	0.6%

Numbers in learning continue to increase

Statistics from Connexions West of England reveal the following in January 2009:

- The "in learning" rate has again improved over the year – by 3%
- The West of England Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) rate has increased for the first time since the inception of the Connexions service (5.8% compared with 5.6% in 2008)
- We again see a further West of England reduction in 'not known' rates – from 3.6% in January 2008 to 3.1% in 2009
- We have a continued reduction in the 'jobs without training' rate – by 2.8% over the year
- There are overall Employment, Education and Training (EET) and 'not known' improvements across all vulnerable groups.

Labour market information from Connexions West of England

NEW! Work It Out - Guide for young people – introduction to the local labour market; contains local job facts and information on what employers are looking for. <http://www.connexionswest.org.uk/professionals/resources-and-publications/articles/guide-for-young-people-work-facts-work-it-out/>

NEW! Work it Out - Guide for parents/carers – introduction to the local labour market; hints on how you can support your son or daughter. <http://www.connexionswest.org.uk/professionals/resources-and-publications/articles/job-facts-for-parents/>

Local information sheets - detailed local information on 18 of the most popular career areas. Can be downloaded from www.connexionswest.org.uk/professionals/resources-and-publications/articles/local-information-sheets/

Work Matters - contains local occupational profiles. <http://www.connexionswest.org.uk/professionals/resources-and-publications/articles/work-matters/>

Year 9 LMI sheets - <http://www.connexionswest.org.uk/professionals/resources-and-publications/articles/work-matters/>

Engineering Skill Shortages cost South West economy £76 million per year

New research from Semta, the skills council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, reveals that engineering skills vacancies in the South West are costing the regional economy £76 million a year. The news comes as sector employers are urged to stave off the economic downturn by improving the skills of their workforce through productivity and competitiveness training and a £65 million sector funding deal.

Key statistics from the report:

- 21% of engineering establishments in the South West had hard-to-fill vacancies between March 2006/07
- Over the period 2008 – 2014, there is expected to be a net requirement within the engineering industry in the South West for 5,000 employees
- 7% of engineering employees in the South West have no qualifications and many more are under-qualified for their roles.

To help employers to overcome these issues, Semta has secured £65 million funding to deliver urgently required skills training. Through Semta, science, engineering and manufacturing companies in England can get funding support for Apprenticeships, Skills for Life (such as literacy, numeracy and English as a foreign language), Business Improvement Techniques (B-IT) and Management and Leadership training (for companies with between 5 - 250 employees).

Companies interested in finding out more should contact Semta Customer Services on **0845 643 9001** or email customerservices@semta.org.uk

Confidence in rural economy higher than economy as a whole

Only 5% had no confidence in the rural economy, compared to 42% with the economy overall. A further 16% said they expected their rural business to grow over the next 3 to 6 months, while 18% were "quietly confident" in the state of the rural economy.

Country Land and Business Association

Universities have preference for traditional A-levels

A report out by Policy Exchange has shown that 'research-intensive' universities are admitting fewer 'soft' A-levels and are instead accepting students who have taken more traditional A-levels.

However, only Cambridge University and the London School of Economics publish lists of 'non-preferred' A-level subjects. These include:

Accounting, Art and Design, Business Studies, Communication Studies, Design and Technology, Drama and Theatre Studies, Home Economics, Information and Communication Technology, Media Studies, Music Technology, Sports Studies and Travel and Tourism, Dance, Film Studies, Health and Social Care, Leisure Studies, Performance Studies, Performing Arts, Photography and Physical Education.

Many other universities have no clear advice about subject preferences at all.

www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/libimages/466.pdf

Extract from

Aspirations and attainment in deprived communities

A lack of information and advice

Many young people, and their parents, had relatively high aspirations but lacked awareness about the steps needed to achieve them. The parents of an aspiring vet, for example, had no knowledge of the GCSE options, or higher education requirements needed to fulfil this dream.

A lack of understanding about the routes to different occupations can reduce the motivating power of high aspirations. Instead of working towards short-term, instrumental goals or seeking specific and relevant experiences, the young person can be left with only a vague desire to succeed. Without advice, they may also fail to take into account their own aptitudes and abilities.

Evidence shows that young people often start out with high aspirations but little knowledge of how to achieve them (Prince's Trust, 2004). When they realise that they have not taken the right steps or gained the right qualifications to achieve their initial goal, they can become disillusioned and stop aiming high.

Parents, young people and practitioners all complained of a lack of advice and information about career options, especially for younger teenagers.

Aspirations and attainment in deprived communities

Aspirations and attainment in deprived communities is a joint project between the Social Exclusion Task Force, Department for Children School and Families and Communities and Local Government. Key findings:

- Young people in certain types of neighbourhood are less likely to develop high aspirations. These neighbourhoods tend to have high levels of deprivation
- However, not all deprived communities are the same. Analysis has shown that in some very deprived communities – often ethnically diverse, mobile, urban neighbourhoods – young people tend to have high aspirations for the future. In other areas – often traditional working class communities in ex-industrial areas – low aspirations may be preventing young people from achieving their potential
- Certain community characteristics are associated with low aspirations – such as insular social networks, low population mobility and a sense of decline. These may be close knit, strong and cohesive communities. However, people may lack more diverse connections with people and places outside their immediate neighbourhood
- Young people's aspirations have a significant influence on their educational attainment and future outcomes. 11-14 is a key age range, when young people move from idealistic to more realistic ambitions
- Aspirations vary by gender, ethnicity, social class and area deprivation. White boys have the lowest aspirations. The educational attainment of white boys is also failing to improve at the rates of most other ethnic groups
- Parents are the most important influence on children. But young people and their parents are also influenced by the people and places where they live.

These key findings were published in December 2008. Policy recommendations emerging from this analytical work are currently being developed. These will be published as part of the Social Mobility White Paper in the 2009.

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/aspirations.aspx

Language of choice?

Spanish has replaced German as the second most popular language learnt in schools after French, says research by the Centre for Information on Languages Teaching. It was also revealed that the number of state schools offering Mandarin as an option has more than trebled in the past 2 years from one in 25 to more than one in seven.

Key findings

- The decline in participation in language learning in Key Stage 4 has been halted, although there is little sign yet of any overall increase in numbers
- However, the picture nationally is one of change and transition in language teaching with much innovation and new practice as schools attempt to revitalise provision
- There are serious barriers to rebuilding provision for a significant minority of schools – particularly those with high levels of social disadvantage and low educational achievement
- There are growing regional differences in participation rates in languages with the North East giving particular cause for concern
- Provision is becoming more diversified. Spanish, Italian and Mandarin continue to rise in popularity, while French and German are still falling though less steeply than before
- There has been a strong growth in new qualifications. 41% of schools now offer alternatives to GCSE as opposed to 22% in 2006
- The opportunities for languages within the Phase 1 Diplomas are not being fully exploited
- Three years ago, only half of maintained schools offered Spanish: 75% do so today. Provision for Italian has also increased from 7% of schools in 2005 to 18% now, and Mandarin from 2% to 14% in the same period
- Other languages such as Urdu, Russian and Arabic also appear to be generating interest following changed QCA guidelines on which languages schools may offer.

For further information: www.cilt.org.uk/research/language/trends/2008/Language%20Trends%202008.pdf

Labour Market News In development

Work starts at Hengrove Park

Work on the multi-million pound development at Hengrove Park has started. The first phase of the scheme, which is hoped to kick-start the regeneration of South Bristol, will include: the construction of a community hospital; a skills academy; and a new "Healthplex" leisure centre.

04/08/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

£10 million redevelopment in Bristol city centre

Full planning permission has been granted for the demolition of a series of buildings (Southey House, Aylward House and Bliss Cafe Bar) in Wine Street, Union Street and Fairfax Street, at the Western end of Broadmead, Bristol. The replacement building will offer over 15,000 sqm of retail units and commercial office floorspace.

04/08/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Weston receives £1m development fund

Weston-super-Mare has been chosen as one of twelve seaside towns in England to receive a cash boost as part of the Governments Sea Change programme, to spend on cultural and historic projects. 22/10/08 *This is Weston*

Developer appointed for RAF Locking site

St Modwen Properties has been chosen to transform the RAF Locking site, Weston-super-Mare. The aim of Locking Parklands is to help reduce the number of commuters leaving Weston to work. Plans for the new site include a high-tech manufacturing facility, research and development laboratories, office areas and customer hospitality suites. The whole development will take 10-15 years to complete. 30/10/08 *This is Weston*

Number of migrant workers slowly declining

Bristol remains the second most popular destination for migrant workers in the South West although the region has seen an overall decline in the number of workers coming here.

Data on the number of applications for a National Insurance number, which are required to work in UK, show a small increase nationally between 2007 and 2008.

In contrast the South West region had a decline of nearly 7%. An analysis of the Worker Registration Scheme, for Eastern European workers, over the last 18 months shows a fall of more than 25% nationally. Most of this is accounted for by a drop of 32% in applications by Polish workers.

Hotel expansion

Plans to expand a major leisure hotel in the green belt have been given the go-ahead. Two-storey extensions will be built onto Redwood Lodge Hotel and Country Club off Beggar Bush Lane in Failand to create 54 bedrooms. 05/11/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

GKN buys Filton Airbus Factory

A £300-million deal to sell off the manufacturing part of the Airbus factory at Filton to GKN Aerospace has finally been sealed. GKN say the deal will safeguard 1,500 jobs at Filton for the next two decades and help bring even more aviation work to Bristol and the surrounding region.

07/11/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Tropicana given all clear

The multi-million pound regeneration of Weston's Tropicana has cleared its final planning hurdle for work to start in the new year. Communities and Local Government Secretary Hazel Blears has decided not to call a public inquiry into the approved Lifestation@ Tropicana scheme. 03/12/08 *This is Weston*

Millions visit Cabot Circus

Bristol's Cabot Circus received seven million visits in its first three months. According to Richard Belt, the Circus's Director (should that be Ring Master?) Bristol is now back in the top ten shopping destinations in the country. 28/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Apprenticeships at McDonalds

Apprenticeships are to be made available to all employees at McDonald's. In 2009, McDonald's aims to provide apprenticeships for up to 6,000 of its 72,000 UK workforce, and up to 10,000 per year from 2010, providing staff with the opportunity to gain a valuable, nationally-recognised qualification equivalent to five GCSEs grade A*-C. This will make McDonald's the UK's largest apprenticeship provider. 23/01/09 *ICG Newsletter*

Useful Websites

www.connexionswest.org.uk

Careers advice & information

www.intelligencewest.org.uk

West of England statistics

www.swslim.org.uk

The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module provides information and intelligence on skills and learning across the South West.

Labour market news

Job gains

300 extra jobs for Bradley Stoke

A new Tesco Extra store opening in the new Willow Brook shopping centre, Bradley Stoke, Bristol will create 300 new jobs. The old store, where 299 people worked, has been demolished and the new store has been built alongside. A further 90 full-time and 210 part-time staff are being recruited with existing staff relocating to the new store. At 92,000 sq ft, the store will be one of the biggest in Bristol.

01/10/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

New Bristol base for 600 MOD staff

As part of plans to increase the number of MoD staff at Abbey Wood from 6,000 to more than 10,000, the Ministry of Defence has unveiled plans for a £25 million office in Filton which will house 600 staff. The three storey office block will be built at the Abbey Wood Neighbourhood 5 site; it is hoped it will be open in 2 years.

06/10/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Thornbury Business Park

95 per cent of premises at the 60,000 sq ft Thornbury Business Park scheme are either already let, or sold, leaving only one unit remaining. The speculative development provides 18 business units within five miles of the M4/M5 intersection.

21/10/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

New Waitrose store to open in Clifton

Waitrose is to open a new convenience store in the former Fresh & Wild site opposite Clifton Triangle – creating 60 jobs.

01/12/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

New Tesco depot

Tesco confirmed this week it is opening a state-of-the-art distribution centre near Avonmouth, in a move that will bring 750 jobs to the Bristol area.

06/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Carers Needed

Bristol-based firm Brunelcare, which provides care for the elderly, is looking to recruit 100 new staff.

23/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Magnet's new Bristol outlet

Kitchens and joinery merchant Magnet is opening a new trade outlet in Bristol after completing an £890,000 deal to buy a 12,000 sq ft premises in St Philips.

11/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Ryanair's new routes from Bristol Airport

Budget airline Ryanair defied the credit crunch to launch 12 new European routes from Bristol International Airport – creating 100 new jobs.

14/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Greggs on a roll

Bakery chain Greggs is bucking the trend for retailers by announcing rising sales and expansion plans for 2009. Greggs has 21 stores across Bristol.

12/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Job losses

Organic food store closes

Organic food store, Fresh & Wild, based on Clifton Triangle, Bristol, has been forced to close after failing to meet its profitability goals. The store employed a total of 57 staff.

15/08/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Hundreds of defence workers move out of Bath

More than 1,600 defence workers are moving from three defence sites in Bath (Ensleigh in Lansdown, Foxhill, and Warminster Road), to Abbey Wood in Bristol as the Defence Equipment and Support organisation aims to concentrate workers on one site.

17/07/08 *Bath Chronicle*

Bristol building firm folds

Forty jobs have been lost after Bristol based builder Bricknell Construction was forced into administration because of a lack of work.

10/09/08 *Western Daily Press*

Kingswood legal firm folds

Bristol legal firm, Carpe Diem, based in Kingswood has been put into liquidation with debts of £100,000. A downturn in trade has been blamed for the 8 jobs lost.

11/09/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Job fears in Lloyds TSB takeover

Thousand of bank workers in Bristol could face redundancy after Lloyds TSB revealed it is merging with its struggling rival HBOS. Between them, the two banks employ around 7,000 people across the Bristol area. City finance experts predict inevitable redundancies as the newly merged company finds itself with numerous offices and branches in the same neighbourhoods.

18/09/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

MFI jobs go

Up to 60 jobs were lost in the Bristol area after furniture giant MFI confirmed it had called in administrators. The chain has three local stores, in Brislington, Cribbs Causeway and

Weston-super-Mare.

26/11/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Avonmouth chemical company closes factory

Chemical company Sevalco has announced plans to close its Avonmouth factory, with the loss of 88 jobs.

03/12/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Aardman Animations job fears

Up to 35 jobs are being lost at Bristol's Aardman Animations studios. However, new positions in film productions will also be created over the coming months through three new productions.

03/12/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

90 jobs lost at Computershare

Up to 90 jobs are being axed at Computershare – South Bristol's largest employer. The company, which has 1,250 staff at its Bridgwater Road headquarters, Bedminster Down, has been hit by the credit crunch. Two of its largest clients – Bradford and Bingley and HBOS – have been either nationalised or taken over.

15/12/08 *Bristol Evening Post*

Woolworths jobs go

Over 500 people across the Bristol area lost their jobs following the collapse of Woolworths. The firm owns 12 stores locally. It is the largest single round of redundancies in Bristol since St Anne's Board Paper Mill closed in 1980, with the loss of 3,000 jobs. Nationally 27,000 Woolworth's staff were made redundant.

30 jobs to go at Thornbury optical lens firm

Jobs are set to go at optical lens firm Essilor, which employs more than 400 staff in its Thornbury manufacturing site.

09/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Job cuts at the Evening Post and Western Daily Press

About 45 journalists and administrative staff could go on the Bristol Evening Post and Western Daily Press to safeguard the future of the two.

23/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Shoe shops down at heel

About 50 staff at Barratts and Priceless shoe shops in Bristol face the axe after the firms were put into administration.

26/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Port staff face axe

Up to 15 staff at Bristol Port company will lose their jobs because of the drop in car sales.

28/01/09 *Bristol Evening Post*

Please let us know what you would like to be included in the LMI Newsletter. If you have any information you would like featured contact the editor: mike.manson@redbridgesolutions.co.uk. We are grateful for the support of the following in the gathering of information for this digest: LSC West of England; South West Regional Development Agency, SW SLIM; West at Work; Western Intelligence Network.

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