

KEEPING THE SOUTH EAST WORKING

From Recession to Recovery



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Welcome to the fourth edition of the 'Keeping the South East Working' partner newsletter.

This newsletter contains news, case studies and reports from the key partners involved in the 'Keeping the South East Working' range of activities. The aim is to share crucial information for both individuals and businesses as the economy starts to take steps to move from recession through to recovery

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

Sitting on the Regional Recovery Group are a number of organisations focused on the well-being of individuals. One crucial element of their work is 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' and below we take a look at what this means:

In October 2007, the Government announced an additional investment rising to £173m by 2010/2011 to begin rolling out evidence based psychological therapy services across England for people experiencing depression and anxiety disorders.

Being unemployed or experiencing job insecurity or redundancy can result in feelings of anxiety and depression. Mental health problems are extremely common. One in six of us will have a mental health problem at any one time, and for half of us the problem will last for over a year. There is evidence that talking therapies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective for the treatment of stress, anxiety and depression but access to these services on the NHS has been limited

New services are being developed in the South East. To find out if there is a service in your area visit NHS Choices www.nhs.co.uk. If you or someone you know is experiencing difficulties speak to your GP or contact the NHS Stressline 0300 123 2000

Stressline

If you or someone you know is feeling stressed because of job insecurity, redundancy, debt or financial problems, don't wait for things to get really bad before you seek help. Call the NHS Stressline on 0300 123 2000 The NHS Stressline has trained health advisors who will listen, offer practical advice, guide you to useful online resources and put you in touch with other people who can help such as debt, housing, employment advisors, and talking therapy services

Business Link News

South East SME turnover and recruitment expectations are rising according to Business Link research

18% of South East SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) plan to take on staff during 2010 according to Business Link's research around attitudes to economic recovery published this week. The research also reveals that SME optimism levels, related to growth in their company's turnover, now exceed pre-recession levels. July 2008 48% SMEs expected turnover growth which dipped to 30% in March 2009 and rose to 48% in November 2009.

According to the research, almost one in three SMEs are preparing for better times by training their staff or investigating training opportunities and over half (52%) expect to expand in the medium to long term. The business and financial sector is the most optimistic with 47% expecting their market to improve and 20% of that sector expecting to take on staff; this equates to 170,000 businesses looking to recruit in 2010.

The research identified common characteristics among those businesses expecting to turnover to expand in the next year (48%), these included:

- Happy to use business support (61%)
- Use planning tools, either a business plan, sales & marketing or training plans (77%)

- Have a website (78%)

Ross McNally, Chief Executive, South East England Chambers of Commerce comments on the findings, "Chamber of Commerce members in the South East of England are certainly expressing a positive outlook for 2010 with positive signs of recovery in parts of manufacturing and across key service sectors for the region. They welcome and intend to take full advantage of the business support services available."

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Case Study: Flexibility is key for skinny start up.

After a career as a clinician for the NHS, Julie Van Onselen started to carve out a successful niche role in the dermatology pharmaceutical industry. However, Julie was made redundant in January last year and although she always had a vision of being self employed it was the support around her that encouraged her to take the plunge.

Julie comments: "I had often considered working for myself, even checking local publications for ideas and advice when I was still employed. I therefore had a good idea what support Business Link could offer and didn't hesitate to book onto their start up workshop programme when the news about my redundancy came in. I had also developed some good contacts throughout my career and was fairly confident there was a gap in the market I could fill."

So, Julie Van Onselen founded JVO Consultancy – provider of specialist services in dermatology education for pharmaceutical companies, patient support groups, GPs, advisory boards and the NHS.

"The introductory workshop, Foundations for Success, was frightening...but in a good way. We had to really focus on, and challenge, our objectives. It was made clear that becoming your own boss wasn't just an easy option and gave us a great insight into the kind of things we could expect."

Julie then attended the full series of workshops including planning, finance and marketing.

"I have a Diploma in Marketing and so thought a few of the sessions might cover old ground. However, after making myself attend I realised how important it is to look at everything with a fresh pair of eyes.

The finance workshop was particularly useful for me as it focused on budgeting. One really useful tip was to remember to save enough income to cover your first tax bill in January!

"It's not just about the formal gain from the workshops, it's the informal networking that's really useful too. I am still in touch with one contact I made on the sessions and we meet regularly to discuss our progress and ideas."

Julie has worked hard to develop a full range of services but always stays focussed on her core discipline.

"I soon learnt that my customers had very different requirements, even though the topic was dermatology education. I have therefore developed a very flexible approach to the services I offer. One day I may be training a pharmaceutical company, the next I could be facilitating an advisory board of GPs."

Julie also offers a full range of dermatology specific services including medical writing, sub-editing, film, voice-over and event management.

Since attending the workshops Julie has met face to face with her Business Link Adviser.

"Having a one to one with my adviser gave me the opportunity to apply everything I had learnt on the workshops to my business. Sometimes it's hard to be objective and so it's great to have somebody from the outside looking in. We also highlighted future workshops and networks that I could benefit from.

"For anybody thinking of starting a business, Business Link should be the very first point of contact. I believe I would have made a lot more mistakes if I hadn't attended the workshops. If you work through the start up programme, you will start your business with a great foundation and gain all of the tools and confidence you need to drive your new business forward."

Visit www.jvoconsultancy.co.uk or for free business advice and support call Business Link on 0845 600 900 6.

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■ Learning & Skills Council News

Young Person's Guarantee

The 2009 Budget announced the **Young Person's Guarantee**. This is managed by the

Department for Work and Pensions. This guarantees all 18 to 24 year olds, who have been unemployed for six months:

- An offer of a job (either a new job through the Future Jobs Fund or an existing job in a key employment sector)
- Pre-employment training in one of four employment sectors (delivered by the LSC).
- Work focused training (delivered by the LSC).
- A place on a Community Task Force.

In return for this significant investment the Government will require all eligible young people to accept a job, training or work experience. This will give many thousands of young people invaluable skills and work experience that will help them secure a worthwhile job. This will ensure that no young adult is permanently disadvantaged by the recession.

The LSC is delivering two parts of the Young Person's Guarantee:

1) Routes Into Work – a short course in one of four key sectors: Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, Facilities management and Security. Where possible, most individuals should have a guaranteed interview at the end of their pre-employment training course. But in all cases there will be actual job vacancies in the sectors named above.

There are approximately 12 providers delivering Routes into Work in the South East. The programme has been 'live' since the beginning of November. Many more sectors are to be introduced over the next few months.

2) Work focused training – this is a 3 – 6 month programme of learning which will lead to qualifications at Level 2 or 3 in sectors where there are job vacancies. This programme is only available at present in Surrey, Sussex and Kent& Medway through 6 providers. Other parts of the South East will come on stream throughout this year.

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■ Jobcentre Plus News

Employers in the South East missing out on business benefits of work experience

Employers in the region are missing out on the business benefits of taking on a school leaver or graduate for work experience, according to the recent Populus survey of 500 UK business leaders for the Backing Young Britain campaign. This reveals that although almost nine in 10 employers (87%) view work experience as good practice, over half (55%) feel it only benefits the individual and not their organisation

Two in five businesses (41%) offer no placements at all despite the majority (69%) saying they are more likely to hire someone who has spent time in their organisation. Even work experience completed elsewhere is seen as an asset for 43% of employers. To help employers make the most of work experience, Backing Young Britain has teamed up with the Institute of Directors to produce a factsheet for employers, giving advice and tips on how to ensure placements deliver genuine benefits to their business.

The guide is part of Backing Young Britain's campaign to show how any organisation, large or small, can benefit from offering opportunities to young people. With more than two million businesses in the UK today, just one pledge per organisation will make a big difference. This is why Backing Young Britain is urging all employers to pledge at www.hmg.gov.uk/backingyoungbritain

The IOD factsheet includes contributions from businesses such as McDonalds and Channel 4 as well as entrepreneur Peter Jones and shows employers how they can ensure that their business will benefit from the ambition, motivation and enthusiasm of the next generation.

Top tips include:

- Planning ahead – think about forthcoming projects or staff holidays where a young person could provide essential resource
- Setting expectations – brief the young person in advance rather than once they arrive to save time in the long run
- Giving responsibility – give young people projects that help your business complete work you may not have been able to deliver without their support

The complete factsheet 'Making Work Experience Work' is available to download from the IOD's website at www.iod.com/backingyoungbritain

Backing Young Britain has already created thousands of opportunities for young people: 200 organisations across the country have already registered their support for the campaign. There are seven ways to pledge support for Backing Young Britain:

1. Offering volunteer places or becoming a volunteer mentor for school or university leavers
2. Providing work experience opportunities

3. Offering internships to graduates, 18 year olds and non-graduates
4. Considering a young person for a job through a work trial
5. Supplying apprenticeship opportunities for 16-24 year olds
6. Bidding for one of the 100,000 jobs for young people from the Future Jobs Fund
7. Engaging in a Local Employment Partnership

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■ Alliance of Sector Skills Councils

South East Labour Intelligence Market Co-ordinator

This position was created under the leadership of the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils. The results from this high profile role have been impressive. The document [here](#) outlines the progress made so far.

Wider economic intelligence and research can be found on the SEEDA website [here](#)

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■ SEEDA News

European Regional Development Fund

SEEDA has contracted with Finance South East to deliver a £4 million loan fund scheme, part funded by ERDF, to support green businesses throughout the region as they prepare to prosper in the economic upturn.

The South East Sustainability Loan Fund is an innovative funding solution that provides funding for qualifying companies to deliver products or technologies that will contribute to reducing the region's ecological footprint. Offering loan sizes from £20,000 to £200,000, the fund will deliver much needed funding to improve the competitiveness of micro, small and medium sized businesses in the South East.

The South East has achieved the December 2009 ERDF spend target. The region successfully exceeded the Commission's target by 24%.

Further information on the fund available from [Sally Goodsell](#) at Finance South East Tel 01276 608527

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Labour Market Summary

- Claimant count unemployment in December 2009 was 152,629.
- 32,387 vacancies notified to Jobcentre Plus in December 2009.
- 274,000 unemployed people in the three months to November 2009 – up 10,000 on previous quarter.
- Unemployment rate 6.2% in the 3 months to November 2009 - the lowest of any region.
- Number of people in employment increased by 1,000 in the three months to November.
- Employment rate 76.8% in the three months to November.
- 11,000 more economically active people in November 2009 compared to August. Economic activity rate of 82.1%, up 0.2% on the previous three months.

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Skills timebomb and rise of 'poly-careers'

More than 60% of the working population expect to have two careers or more – with a quarter anticipating having more than four careers, according to new research carried out by ICM on behalf of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA).

The report delves into the rise of 'poly-careers' showing the challenges employers face in attracting and retaining talent in today's marketplace where people may jump from career to career taking skills and talent with them. The report reveals that the credit crunch is failing to stem the fluid jobs market with employees citing jobs that 'make a difference' as important as financial incentives in determining their choice of career. In a list of socially-conscious careers, teaching topped the league table for those considering a move. The trend is also affecting expectations of businesses with almost a third believing that employers should provide schemes to assist staff in changing careers.

The news comes ahead of the formal announcement of the first 48 organisations to back the Government's Transition to Teaching scheme. Announced by the prime minister in March last year, Transition to Teaching encourages top performers from target industries, who are already considering a mid to late career change, to become teachers and share their skills in science, technology, engineering or maths.

The scheme is expected to reap rewards for employers and staff alike, according to research among HR professionals. 58% believe it will tackle skills shortages, 52% expect the scheme will deal effectively with staffing changes and 50% believe the scheme could enhance their company's reputation. A further 33% think the scheme will

attract potential employees and 27% believe the scheme could improve staff relations.

The TDA's Chief Executive, Graham Holley, added: "Around a third of new teachers are already career changers, many of them coming from high-powered business jobs, who bring their own talents and experience to the classroom."

The TDA offers both information and support to companies interested in joining the Transition to Teaching scheme. Call the Transition to Teaching helpline 0845 6026 880 or go to www.teach.gov.uk/transition to find out more.

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■ nextstep Case Study: Ruth Concannon

Working in partnership to make a difference

Ruth was referred to nextstep by her local Jobcentre Plus. Having been made redundant from a managerial position at her previous company, she was put in contact with the Rapid Response Support Group.

Ruth knew that she wanted to be a Project Manager in her next role, and research had shown her that despite having many qualifications, the barrier to achieving this was that she didn't have the Prince2 qualification. The Rapid Response Team at the Jobcentre Plus put Ruth in contact with a dedicated nextstep adviser called David.

When she met with David, Ruth had already undertaken research to find learning centres that were offering Prince2 training and had selected the most appropriate course, with a provider called Skillsolve. She just needed to obtain funding from the Job Focused Training fund that would enable her to take it.

Together, Ruth and David completed a Skills Action Plan and David sent this to the Rapid Response Team where it was urgently processed to enable Ruth to get on to the course on time.

All Ruth's efforts paid off and she passed the Prince2 Foundation and Practitioner examination and secured a permanent position with Affiniti as a Client Services Manager.

Thanking her nextstep and Jobcentre Plus contacts who helped secure the funding for the course, Ruth said "All in all it has been a great couple of weeks and I am incredibly happy. You have all assisted me with the successful end result and for that I am very grateful."

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If anyone has any news or case studies they'd like to share, drop us an email at info@lsc.gov.uk and we'll try and include it in the next issue of the newsletter. Thank you.

www.realhelpnow.gov.uk

Real help now

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