



SLIM-lines

The Newsletter of the Skills and Learning Intelligence Module (SLIM)
of the South West Observatory

Vol. 13 No. 10

www.swslim.org.uk

10 March 2008

Hello dear readers – I write this today from my sick-bed... and as I lie here suffering from pneumonia (*he has a cold – Ben*)... I can't help but feel that such commitment probably merits a raise of some kind ... eh Ben? ... Ben? ... Or maybe a conference somewhere hot... Ben?... Typical... Anyway, I hope you have all coped with the 'Severe Gales' last night... now I'm not sure if it's just me, but, hailing from Blackpool – what I see outside is weather that counts as 'a bit blustery', I've seen people sunbathe in worse...no seriously I have... Being cooped-up at home with the washing-up, poorly children and double-pneumonia (Ben! Ben!? Conference in Florida maybe?... bah!) ... at least I have had some time to catch up on my emails and do some 'internet-based study'... which has left me wondering if there really is a place on the first shuttle out of here... try this link for a hobby... <http://blog.wired.com/geekdad/2008/02/chickensaurus-s.html> Poor kid – I'm tempted to call social services... what happens when the school moves onto mammalian and human anatomy?... Now I really am quite scared...

Our SLIM-Cornwall Office are holding a dissemination event for the final report of their impact analysis work into ESF Objective One. It's going to be held at the **Alverton Manor, Truro - Monday 17th March**, starting at 9.30am and aiming to finish at about 1pm. If anyone is interested in booking a place, please could they contact Caroline: c.e.hattam@exeter.ac.uk. The day will include a presentation of findings with shorter presentations by stakeholders involved with ESF Objective One. Now – I'm off sunbathing. CIAO! **Andy**

£31million funding boost over the next 3 years for 3rd sector

£31 million is being made available to about 100 third-sector (that is, voluntary-sector) organisations for a wide range of projects helping children, young people and families around the country. The grants range from £1 million down to £33,000; some of the funded projects are for one year, while others are more 'strategic', and will run for three years. The next Children, Young People and Families Grant funding round will open early summer 2008. http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0027

Useful background statistics to the Govt. pledge on NEETS

This brief from DCSF (Department of Curtains and Soft Furnishings... probably) sets out the available statistics on young people not in education, employment or training. "The DCSF PSA target to reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET by 2% points, from 10% in 2004 to 8% by 2010, is measured using data published annually in the Statistical First Release (SFR) 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England'. This is the definitive source for NEET and NEET figures."

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000751/index.shtml>

Government approves new minimum wage rate

The rate for 18-21 year olds will also increase from £4.60 to £4.77, while the 16-17 year old rate will rise from £3.40 to £3.53. Nearly one million low paid employees, two-thirds of them women, will benefit from the increase. The Government has also boosted funding for enforcement and is planning tough new penalties for rogue employers who underpay staff as part of the Employment Bill, now before the Parliament.

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=357883&NewsAreaID=2>

Thought for today

Youth is like spring, an over-praised season more remarkable for biting winds than genial breezes. Autumn is the mellower season, and what we lose in flowers, we more than gain in fruits. Samuel Butler

The SLIM-lines is made possible thanks to contributions from the Regional Development Agency and the OBJECTIVE 3 (ESF) TA Publicity Fund.

News section

Lloyds TSB Foundations To Share £37.1 Million

£37.1 million will be shared between the four UK Lloyds TSB foundations this calendar year. The funds could benefit those people who work within the charity sector and maintain [sustainable efficiencies](#) and has come in the wake of the financial services firm revealing its latest set of annual results. A total of around £37.1 million is to be distributed by Lloyds TSB's charitable foundations and represents one per cent of the group's annual pre-tax profits averaged over three years. Various charity organisations are set to benefit from the give-away and the cash is designed to help people from underprivileged communities around the UK. <http://news.jobsgopublic.com/2008/02/26/grassroots-charities-receive-funding-boost/>

Disabled staff face discrimination

There has been a systemic failure to take disabled staff working in lifelong learning seriously, which has led to widespread institutional discrimination. That is the headline finding of the NIACE-led Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning in its final report to be published today, Wednesday 5th March 2008. The report - From Compliance to Culture Change - illustrates how many disabled staff members are reluctant to disclose impairments because they fear discrimination. 20 per cent of the adult population have a disability, however the disclosure rate among staff in lifelong learning is only 4 per cent.

<http://www.niace.org.uk/publications/f/from-compliance-culture.asp>

Ministers urged to re-think the value of adult learning

The infrastructure of adult learning is disappearing. Nearly one and a half million adults have been lost from state-funded educational provision since 2005. A collection of essays 'Not Just the Economy' - published by NIACE, - illustrates why policy makers need to re-think urgently on the wider value of adult learning beyond education for access to employment and workforce development. More information on this publication can be found at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/publications/N/Not-economy.asp>

ESRC festival of social science 2008: The wider picture

Social science plays an important part in all our lives. It shows that science is not just test tubes and technology but involves people and society too. It helps us to make sense of the key issues in the changing world around us such as the implications of climate change, nuclear power or nanotechnology; or the implications of social issues such as ageing, immigration and population change. Running from Friday, 7th March, to Sunday 16th March the ESRC Festival of Social Science, organised by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), will celebrate some of the very best British social science research, highlighting the ways in which it makes a difference to all our lives. Further information on the full range of events can be found at: www.esrcfestival.ac.uk

£12m pathfinder for new money guidance service

Up to three-quarters of a million people will get free money guidance on matters like managing debt, planning for retirement or saving for a mortgage deposit, under a new pathfinder. The new scheme is the main recommendation of the Thoresen Review, which is published today. Last year the Government asked Otto Thoresen to look at the provision of financial guidance in the UK. His report finds that many people could benefit from help on money matters at many points in their lives.

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/filter/?item=709741>

LSC ESF Update - Forthcoming Events

Below are details of both forthcoming events relating to both the 2000-2006 ESF funding stream (Objectives 1, 2 and 3) and the 2007-2013 ESF funding stream (Competitiveness and Convergence). There will be one event for each geographic/funding area, as follows:

- Objective 1 and Convergence Event (Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly), Monday 17 March - Alverton Manor - Truro. This event will start at 1.30pm and close at 3.30pm. Tea and coffee will be available from 1.00pm. c.e.hattam@exeter.ac.uk
- Objectives 2 and 3 and Competitiveness Event (the whole SW region except Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly), Tuesday 18 March - The Exchange - Bridgwater. This event will start at 10.30am and close at 12.30pm. Tea and coffee will be available from 10.00am. To book a place please email maria.gammon@lsc.gov.uk

New Reports and Publications

The impact of the minimum wage on the incidence of second job holding in Britain

Examines the impact of the national minimum wage (NMW) on the incidence of second job working in the UK. Looks at the reasons for individuals holding second jobs. Explains the study's methodology and describes the data source. Discusses the relationship between second jobs and low pay and the impact of the NMW on second jobs and working hours. Finds that many second job holders' wages increased following the introduction of the NMW but the overall proportion of second job holders did not decrease notably. Concludes that the lower the weekly wage an individual receives, the more likely s/he is to keep a second job. http://www.cf.ac.uk/carbs/econ/workingpapers/papers/E2006_14.pdf

UK, German and Swedish finance ministries publish Social Bridges II: The importance of human capital for growth and social inclusion

Social Bridges II sets out a policy approach, which combines flexibility and fairness through education and equipping people with the necessary skills they need, and will need. The paper looks at the common challenges that educational systems and labour markets face across Member States, and outlines shared features of possible policy responses to reduce barriers to labour market participation, improve employability and social inclusion. <http://www.info4local.gov.uk/filter/?item=711168>

A review of the economic impact of employment relations services delivered by ACAS

"The six areas of activity covered by this report together generate economic benefits worth nearly £800 million a year. This is without taking into account any ongoing impact in future years. ACAS net annual expenditure (that is expenditure after offsetting expenditure funded by fees and charges) in 2005/06, the year on which the estimates in this report are based, was around £49 million. Therefore, each pound spent by ACAS (including expenditure on activities where no impact has been measured) generates around £16.10 of direct and immediate benefit to the UK economy." <http://www.niesr.ac.uk/pubs/DPS/dp301.pdf>

Beyond the creative industries: mapping the creative economy in the United Kingdom

The creative industries are one of the most important contributors to the UK economy. So it is important that we accurately measure their contribution to economic activity. Doing so can help both policymakers and industry professionals to communicate key concepts, share reliable data and make the case for greater investment. http://www.nesta.org.uk/assets/pdf/beyond_creative_industries_report_NESTA.pdf

Creative Britain: new talents for the new economy

Introduced by the PM - "In the coming years, the creative industries will be important not only for our national prosperity but for Britain's ability to put culture and creativity at the centre of our national life. This is a strategy with the flexibility to adapt to and support a sector that is changing faster now than ever, and I hope it will mark the beginning of a fresh new partnership with our creative industries. But it is just a start: the Government can provide the framework, but we must rely on our country's talent and the vision and commitment of all those working in the field if we are to build an even more creative Britain."

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/096CB847-5E32-4435-9C52-C4D293CDECFD/0/CEPFeb2008.pdf>

Blueprint for UK construction skills 2007-2011

Between 2007 and 2011, the UK construction industry will continue the trend of growth it has enjoyed for the last decade. Although all sectors of the industry are expected to see increases in output growth, infrastructure and public housing will be the most buoyant. In 2005 2.41 million people were employed in construction and that figure is expected to rise to more than 2.8 million by 2011. Over these seven years, this represents an employment increase of 17.5%. To deliver this growth and replace those who will leave the industry over the period, an average of 87,600 new workers will need to be recruited per year.

http://www.constructionskills.net/pdf/research/outputs/UK_LMI.pdf

The role and importance of migrant workers in the cleaning industry

The survey of contract cleaning companies conducted in 2007 found that 37% of employees working within cleaning companies in England were migrant workers. This means that there over 190,000 migrant workers employed within the cleaning industry in England. It also appears that the proportion of migrant workers in the cleaning industry is likely to increase.

http://www.assetskills.org/site/Portals/0/research/Migrant_labour_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

New Reports and Publications continued...

Impact of learning on employability

This report presents findings from a survey on the impact of learning on employability. The survey was conducted between June and August 2007 among learners selected from the individualised learner record (ILR) database who had had fee remission, were aged between 20 and 55 at the end of August 2005, and who had completed their course between 1 August 2005 and 31 July 2006. All of the learners interviewed had either been out of work, or working for less than 16 hours a week, when they started their course. Examines the outcomes of learning in terms of employability and skills.

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Impact_of_Learning_on_Employability_-_main_report.pdf

Small business survey shows steady progress

Releasing the survey, Business Minister, Shriti Vadera said: "The positive findings - of businesses intending to grow and introducing innovation - are indicators of a healthy enterprise environment, but the survey also highlights continuing challenges. We recognise that regulation is a key business concern and this is why we are driving through one of the most ambitious programmes to ease the burden of regulation on business launched by any government." <http://www.info4local.gov.uk/filter/?item=709593>

Rural challenges, local solutions: building on the Rural Delivery Pathfinders in England

The Rural Delivery Pathfinder programme was launched jointly by Defra and local government in March 2005 to look at innovation in rural service delivery, test opportunities for more joined-up approaches to rural delivery and look at local priority setting. Since then, the pathfinders have been engaged in intensive experimenting in numerous aspects of rural delivery. This report is a summary of the outcomes and key messages of the programme. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/pathfinders/rcis-report.pdf>

A new 'university challenge'

In the last five years, eleven towns or wider areas have benefited from new universities and new higher education provision. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has already agreed to support projects that will benefit a further 6 areas, with projects starting in this academic year or later. <http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/documents/university-challenge.pdf>

Flying south for the jobs (graduate retention in the regions)

Discusses the tendency for many university graduates to move away from the UK regions to London. Looks at the reasons why attracting and retaining graduates matters. Discusses how councils can work with local businesses, regional development agencies, and universities to make sure that graduates are aware of local opportunities. Charts graduate retention rates by region covering the English regions, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. *Local Government Chronicle, No 7284 31 Jan 2008*

Campaign for Learning Policy Briefings

[The Webb Review: what England might learn from Wales](#)

13 March 2008, 11am - 1pm, London, Cost: £80 plus VAT

Although the Webb Report, or, to give it its full title 'The Report of the Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales' is the equivalent of the Foster Report in England there are some startling differences in its conclusions. He is both more radical than his English counterparts but also more sensitive to the need for institutional stability and to listen to the voices of learners as well as employers. There is much to be learned from his report for all parts of the UK.

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

Other briefings:

- 12 March AM: [The Leitch agenda 9 months on: problem child or bundle of joy?](#) (Newcastle)
- 12 March PM: [Informal Learning for the 21st Century: responding to the government's consultation](#) (Newcastle)
- 12 March PM: [14-19 Information Systems: Monitoring and Tracking Learners](#) (London)
- 28 March AM & PM: [New guidelines for pre 19 and post 19 funding: the government's machinery of government proposals](#) (London)

Latest Labour Market Data – South West

Labour Force Survey data for the South West indicate that the trend in the employment rate is increasing, but the latest rate is not significantly different from a year ago. The trend in the unemployment rate is close to flat, and the latest rate is not significantly different from a year ago. Data for the three months to December 2007 show the seasonally adjusted employment rate at 79.3%, up 0.9% on a year earlier. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.7%, down 0.1% on a year earlier. The seasonally adjusted claimant count was down in the year to January 2008. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsswest0208.pdf>

Points-based system for migration begins

The Prime Minister launched the first stage of a new points-based system for migrants during a tour of the West Midlands based Fujitsu factory last week. Joined by Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, Gordon Brown met members of the specialist workforce, eight percent of whom are drawn from overseas. New rules for highly skilled foreign workers are designed to attract the most talented workers to the UK ensuring the country remains a global leader in the fields of finance, business, and technological innovation. Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith said: "Migrants benefit this country economically, contributing an estimated £6 billion to our national output, as well as socially and culturally. It is right that we have a system which is fair but firm, accessible but controlled." <http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page14810.asp>

Government responds on the Future of Volunteering with £6 million new funding

The Commission's report includes recommendations for Government, the third and the private sector. Acting on the recommendations to it the Government will:

- Invest £4million in new training programmes for volunteers and volunteer managers.
- Invest £2million to create a new access to volunteering fund for disabled people.
- Produce guidance to help avoid unnecessary criminal records checks being carried out.
- Improve coordination of volunteering by civil servants.
- Support existing events to promote volunteering.

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/filter/?item=716230>

£5 million a year to help women get on at work

Skills Minister, David Lammy today announced more support for recruitment and training to overcome the under-representation of women in five key sectors. All SSCs will be given an opportunity to propose projects that address the needs of women in their sector. The projects will aim to help 5,000 women each year.

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/filter/?item=715965>

Latest from the EU

The Future of Low Wage Work in Europe

Low wage work in the UK increased significantly between the early 1980s and mid 1990s and it is still at an historic high. Rates of low pay are much higher in the UK and Germany than in France, Denmark and the Netherlands, according to a major Russell Sage Foundation project on the future of low wage work in Europe. Why has this happened? And how does the incidence of low wage work compare with trends in the rest of Europe? The findings of this research will be presented at the two conferences in London and Cardiff as part of its Economic and Social Research Council's Festival of Social Science Week organised by the ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE).

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/>

Equal opportunities in Europe's workplaces still not reality

Efforts to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in Europe's labour markets will have limited results unless the support for formal care is increased, as women will no longer necessarily be available to assume the unpaid role of informal carer. To mark International Women's Day - 8 March 2008 - the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is highlighting its recent research and work on women and equality issues. More women are working in paid employment and while men may work long working weeks in their paid jobs, Eurofound's research reveals that women work even longer weekly hours as a result of shouldering the greater part of domestic responsibilities in addition to paid employment. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/gender/internationalwomensday2008.htm>

Age and Demography latest from SWOOP

A reminder that age discrimination works both ways, with another successful case taken by a teenager accused of lacking experience. Clearly employers need to choose their words carefully when assessing employee performance. The Employment Tribunal territory at the other end of the scale apparently consists mainly of people who dispute being retired. In the last issue we covered the response to judges who want to carry on - they started off in a special case - being holders of public office, they weren't covered by the regulations and now have negotiated a stay on until 70. It's starting to get a bit messy, surely increasing the pressure to take away the 'National Retirement Age' of 65 in the review in 2011.

Contact: Alan.Denbigh@ex.ac.uk or Hilary.J.Stevens@ex.ac.uk

Nineteen Year Old Wins 'Too Young' Age Claim

A 19-year-old administrative assistant sacked for being "too young" won an age discrimination case last week. The employment tribunal ruled in her favour, finding that evidence relied on by her Newcastle employers did not show she lacked in performance, and judged she had been discriminated against on the grounds of age. The tribunal said the company had relied on a "stereotypical assumption that capability equals experience and experience equals older age... age was the predominant reason for the decision to dismiss". They were awarded £16,081.12 (£5,000 of which is injury to feelings).

<http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2008/03/04/44684/newcastle-admin-assistant-wins-too-young-age-discrimination-claim.html>

Pregnancy rate among women over 40 reaches record high

The number of women getting pregnant after the age of 40 has reached a record high after doubling over the past 15 years, official figures revealed yesterday. The Office for National Statistics said conceptions in England and Wales rose by 3% in 2006, and the fertility rate increased among women in all age groups over 20. But the biggest leap was among women over 40. About 25,400 of them became pregnant in 2006 - 6.4% more than in 2005 and 109% more than in 1991. London was the pregnancy hotspot for the over-40s, at a rate of 22 women a 1,000, compared with 7.3 a thousand in the north-east. Conceptions among women aged between 35 and 39 also increased sharply, from 110,000 in 2005 to 115,000 in 2006. In 1991 the total was 86,000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/feb/29/health1>

Quarter of Academics Want to Go On

More than a quarter of university staff want to work beyond age 65, according to the preliminary results of a large-scale survey of higher education institutions. The survey, involving 5,023 staff across eight universities, found that 26 per cent of respondents said that they were likely or very likely to ask to stay on past the normal retirement age of 65. The true figure could be higher, as the survey also found that staff have poor knowledge of their rights under age discrimination laws.

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=400714>

45+ Valuing age in business Conference (FREE)

The Northampton Suite City University, London 4th April

Organised by EurExcel, in cooperation with the FAST (Focusing Age Strategies in Policy Making) project consortium. The conference will be host to a number of experienced and influential personnel in the employment sector, and will cover topics relevant to any size of business in any area of work.

www.eurexcel.eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=30

RDA support for sector network transition

Cornwall's business sector networks are to benefit from an investment of up to £500,000 to help them adapt to the changing business support landscape in the county. The South West of England Regional Development Agency (RDA), which has been tasked by Government to lead the simplification of business support in the region, is investing in a one-year project to help existing networks manage change. The project has been developed in partnership with the Cornwall Business Partnership and will be run by Cornwall Enterprise, the economic development service for Cornwall County Council. It will decide which key sectors to support, guided by the Regional Economic Strategy, and aim to achieve better paid jobs and support knowledge-based businesses.

<http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/news/release.asp?ReleaseID=2371>

Conferences and Events

The Leitch agenda 9 months on: problem child or bundle of joy?

12 March 2008, Newcastle

http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/cfl/events/the_leitch_agenda_9_months_on_problem_child_or_bundle_of_joy_12march2008.asp

Learning Forum 2008

13 March 2008, London

<http://www.symposium-events.co.uk/pages/attending/HR062/overview.htm>

Free half-day seminar: Plan, Monitor, Manage - for real!

13 March, 1.15 - 3.30 pm (starting with lunch at 1.15), Environment Agency, Manley House, Kestrel Way, Exeter EX2 7LQ

www.swo.org.uk

14-19 Funding: FE and Local Authorities: Future partnerships

1 April, Central London

<http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/jd200/>

14-19 Diplomas: Signposting the Future

2 April, New Connaught Rooms, WC2

<http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/jd199/>

Expanding and Delivering Apprenticeships

3 April, Thistle Marble Arch Hotel, London WC1

<http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/jd196/>

ECLO's 2008

15 and 16 May, Danubius Hotel Gellert, Budapest

<http://www.eclo.org/>

"IMPROVING THE ODDS" Sustaining Employment

22 May 2008, Exeter Racecourse, Kennford, Exeter

To enable participants to feel more supported and informed in their work with people whose mental health affects their ability to find or sustain employment.

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

South West Workshop on the Accreditation of Prior Learning

22 May 2008, the Taunton Conference Centre, Somerset College of Art and Technology

The SWLLN is joining up with the WVLLN (Western Vocational LLN) to host a free Workshop Day for learning and training providers across the whole of the South West from Cheltenham to Penzance to Bournemouth. The theme is the Accreditation of Prior Learning, both certificated and through experience (AP[E]L). Email: cpateman@bournemouth.ac.uk

A Welfare State Fit for the 21st Century: The Next Steps to Full Employment

3 June 2008, Westminster.

<http://insidegovernment.msgfocus.com/c/15qtEVnzkiClNs8>

Welfare to Work Convention 2008

25/26 June 2008, ICC Birmingham

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/Events/showevone.asp>

End Notes

If you have seen any useful resources, are organising any interesting events, or want to pass on some information through SLIM - contact us at: a.dean@exeter.ac.uk