



SLIM-lines

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

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We've just heard that the latest online version of 'The State of the South West' has now gone live for 2008. This is the definitive guide for regional intelligence and something everyone in the region can take advantage of. If you aren't familiar with it – then you are missing something significant... You can find the report here: <http://www.swo.org.uk/observatory/links-1/state/state-of-the-south-w-1.shtml>

Here at SLIM we have just finished working on two new reports: "Young People in Jobs Without Training in South West England" and "A Review of the Integration of Brokerage Services in the South West". You will find links to both of these on page 3 of this edition. More importantly we're gearing-up for our humbling at the "Really Big Quiz" being organised in support of Exeter Hospital's children's ward. [click here](#). A good cause and well worth suffering the embarrassment that our inevitable trouncing will produce... Needless to say most of our quiz-winning efforts have been focused not upon useful activities like 'watching the news' or 'reading about stuff' but instead largely upon choosing the right team name... I'm pushing for "C.S.I. Budleigh-Salterton"... but I don't hold out much hope... any better suggestions – and crikey there must be plenty out there...will be much appreciated... Have a great weekend! [Andy](#)

South West Regional accounts 2008

The 2008 South West Regional Accounts are now available. The new Accounts present estimates of GVA and other key variables for 1998 to 2005 at a detailed industry level for the South West, London, GB and SW sub-regions. The data set has been fully revised, improving data sources and estimation methodologies across a number of industries; the Accounts make use of the latest ABI/2 data. The structural map of the SW economy and economic impact tool have been updated from 2003 to 2004.

<http://www.swo.org.uk/business/links-2/south-2/south-west-regional.shtml>

LSPs: governance benchmark and health check

Healthy partnerships are crucial to the successful delivery of local area agreement objectives. This new IDEa programme enables local strategic partnerships to understand their current levels of performance and to realise their full potential. <http://list.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/t/12421/76704/2103/0/>

LAAs: 'Partnerships and Places Library'

For evidence of best practice, including case studies, overviews – giving context and background to the issues – and different approaches for dealing with the emerging priorities, visit the new 'Partnerships and Places Library'. This resource is searchable by national indicator or theme.

<http://list.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/t/12006/76704/2058/0/>

LAA national indicators - inclusion

The national picture of local priorities is starting to emerge. This briefing note profiles the most popular national indicators for inclusion in the new local area agreements at the current stage of negotiations.

<http://list.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/t/12006/76704/2083/0/>

Thought for today

I think computer viruses should count as life. I think it says something about human nature that the only form of life we have created so far is purely destructive. We've created life in our own image. Stephen Hawking

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

Newly Updated - State of the South West 2008 - the definitive guide for regional intelligence

The South West Observatory and partners have updated the State of the South West reference guide to environmental, social and economic characteristics of the region. It gives an accurate assessment and analysis of information for the South West, across a broad range of policy themes, presenting key issues and priorities along with supporting data. This is a product for the South West demonstrating collaborative working and drawing on an extensive reservoir of knowledge. Contributors to the report range from academics, researchers and policy analysts. The report not only presents individual topics, but reflects the links between cross-cutting themes, integrating these into the report.

<http://www.swo.org.uk/observatory/links-1/state/state-of-the-south-w-1.shtm>

World Class Aquarium for Bristol's Harbourside

Explore-At-Bristol and its partners the South West of England Regional Development Agency (South West RDA) and Bristol City Council can today announce plans for a new, world-class aquarium in the former Wildwalk and IMAX® building. The £4 million fit out by Blue Reef Leisure Ltd will showcase both native and tropical marine and freshwater creatures in naturally themed habitats designed to inspire deeper understanding of the natural world.

<http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/news/release.asp?releaseid=2459>

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) implementation plan for its FE Workforce Development Strategy

This applies to all providers and staff in the post-16 sector: colleges, work-based learning, adult and community provision and so on. The implementation plan "captures the actions and milestones" for 2008-09, towards the main target of 2011. A summary, with a further hotlink to the full Implementation Plan, and thence to the Strategy itself, is on: <http://www.lluk.org/3263.htm>. To see a summary, and the full standards, click here: <http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org/3381.htm>

RSP Priority highlighted in BBC - 'meet the immigrants'

The show, shown on Monday 14 April, included two examples from the South West:

- Plymouth based taxi company training workers in Bucharest.
- A Latvian going to Lyme Regis to work in a hotel.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/page/item/b009z3r4.shtml>

Local Futures Barometer and deprivation

Local Futures Barometers provide a short analysis of topical policy issues, from a geographical perspective. Our latest Barometer looks at the geography of deprivation, using the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation figures. The article demonstrates the change in relative deprivation within local areas across England and highlights both urban and rural deprivation. <http://www.localfutures.com/index.aspx?pageID=312>. You can analyse the level of deprivation in your own area, down to neighbourhood level, using our Local Knowledge online service. More at:

<http://www.localfutures.com/Homepage/Local Knowledge/Try Local Knowledge/default.aspx>

Link to Sector Skills Councils Alliance website now up

The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils is the employer-driven organisation that articulates the voice of 89% of the UK's employers on skills issues. The Alliance is a new organisation comprising all 25 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). Its core purpose is to:

- Promote understanding of the role of SSCs within the skills system across the four home nations
- Co-ordinate policy positions and strategic work on skills with stakeholders across the UK
- Help build the performance capability of the Sector Skills Councils, to ensure they continue to work effectively on the employer-driven skills agenda
- More about the role and activities of the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils.

<http://www.sscalliance.org>

ANNOUNCEMENT - CALL FOR PAPERS

South West LSRN Annual Conference 2008: "Changing Identities & "Dual Professionalism" in the Learning & Skills Sector" - Thursday 10 July 2008 at The Exchange, Bridgwater

Most of you will know that this annual research festival is well attended by colleagues throughout the region and is always well received. They have secured excellent Keynote Speakers in Ken Spours and Ann Hodgson from the Institute of Education London - whose work on policy and practice in the learning and skills sector will provide a stimulating and challenging backdrop to the day.

<http://www.learning-southwest.org.uk/web/Page3.aspx?PageID=191>

Two new SLIM reports

Not just dead-end kids in dead-end jobs

Young people in jobs without training (JWT) may be seen as lacking in aspirations and prospects. However very little is known about their lives. This group of young people leave school at 16 and move into what is often low-waged and/or casual work. The research is timely, following recent government proposals to implement the Leitch Review recommendation to keep all young people in education and training until age 18. <http://www.swslim.org.uk/downloads/2565.pdf>

A Review of the Integration of Brokerage Services in the South West

This report presents the findings of the research study, *A Review of the Integration of Brokerage Services in the South West*. The Review was commissioned by the South West Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) with funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and undertaken by the South West Skills and Learning Intelligence Module (SLIM) during the autumn of 2007. <http://www.swslim.org.uk/downloads/sl2567.pdf>

New Reports and Publications

Further Education and the delivery of higher level qualifications

Further Education Colleges "*make a highly significant contribution to higher level provision*", according to new research published by the Learning and Skills Council. The research was an analysis of existing research and MI data plus a small number of qualitatively oriented interviews with stakeholders in further education colleges and in professional bodies in order to gain insight into the issues currently facing the sector. These included five college principals or HE coordinators as well as senior representatives of professional bodies with high-enrolling learning aims.

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-286348understandingcontributionoffe-mar08.pdf>

Parents influence on children's choices

New research undertaken by YouGov Plc for the Learning and Skills Councils indicates that 68% of young people turn to their parents for advice about their post 16 options, and that 80% of parents encourage their children to follow traditional academic routes. Linked to these findings, the LSC is encouraging parents to find out more about the different routes that young people can take in post 16 education and training.

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-510parentalknowledge-mar08.pdf>

Research on ESF Objective 3

The Department for Work and Pensions has published a new research report assessing *The effectiveness of European Social Fund Objective 3 Global Grants in increasing the employability of the most disadvantaged*. The research found that the majority of beneficiaries had improved their job specific skills, as well as softer skills, such as self-confidence and motivation, as a result of their participation in the programme. At the time of the survey, 38 per cent of respondents were in some form of employment, compared to 27 per cent prior to the programme. Global Grants are small grants, up to £10,000, that are administered by 'intermediate bodies' who distribute funding to local organisations and community groups for projects to help disadvantaged people move closer to the labour market.

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_473.asp

Four US strategies to overcome barriers to employment

"In the post-welfare reform world, an important policy question has taken new prominence: how to improve employment prospects for the millions of Americans who face serious obstacles to steady work. These individuals, including long-term welfare recipients, people with disabilities, those with health or behavioral health problems, and former prisoners, often become trapped in costly public assistance and enforcement systems and find themselves living in poverty, outside the mainstream in a society that prizes work and self-sufficiency." <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/469/full.pdf>

Local labour market analysis (includes Plymouth)

This report considers the patterns of work and worklessness in the United Kingdom. Analysis is on three levels: national, regional and local. Parts 2 to 4 of the report consider national and regional data looking at labour demand including vacancies by qualification level, occupation, region, and supply - looking at the in-work and out-of-work population and considering a range of factors that are associated with employment disadvantage including qualifications, disability, age, and ethnicity. Parts 5 and 6 of the report take the national and regional analysis to a lower level, examining patterns of work and worklessness in six case study areas: Bradford, Birmingham, Leicester, Liverpool, Plymouth and East London (Tower Hamlets and Newham). http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/070832_local_labour.pdf

New Reports and Publications continued...

Evaluation of the Scottish Executive's "Broadband for Scotland" intervention

Some useful information that we could apply to the South West in this report that investigates the increased take-up and usage of internet services resulting directly from the availability of broadband. Positives include that communities have benefited, in some instances, from the arrival of new families and businesses which would not otherwise have located there, bringing new life and vitality to each affected community. But it also reveals a downside - the impact of online shopping and services on local providers.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/212800/0056576.pdf>

The Learning & Skills Network have just published Employability Skills Explored

This report examines the factors that define employability skills and explores how UK employers perceive the current level of skills of young people entering their first job as well as the type of skills they expect from these young workers. It goes on to reveal employer expectations of skills development and their views on the funding of it. <http://www.lsneducation.org.uk/news/index.aspx?ID=5287>

Review of economic assessment and strategy activity at the local and sub-regional level

Reviews the range of types of economic assessments currently being produced at the local and sub regional level in England, in light of the proposal that a statutory duty is imposed upon all local authorities to assess their local economies. Examines the changing forms of sub regional structures and identifies tensions that need to be addressed in the development of future economic assessments and strategies. Considers the challenges for effective working across spatial scales.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/citiesandregions/economicassessment>

How prepared are local authorities to meet the challenges of the sub national review and economic assessment duty?

Useful Rocket Science Report that comments on local authorities' preparedness for taking on the EAD and the requirement emanating from the SNR. It explores where local authorities position their economic development function and the levels of support required to integrate the duty across other statutory functions. Makes suggestions about the kinds of support local authorities will need from central government and agencies. http://www.rocketsciencelab.co.uk/pdfs/econ_dev_study.pdf

EU and ESF Competitiveness and Convergence latest

Survey on perceptions of quality of life in 75 European countries

Answers to the general questions about satisfaction to live in one's own city are relatively uniformly positive. However, answers to specific questions express much more diverse feelings including some strong dissatisfaction. For example, in many cities, it is not easy to find a good job. And it is difficult to find good housing at a reasonable price.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/urban/survey062007_en.pdf

Cornwall Works WISE Awards

9 May, Watergate Bay Hotel, Watergate Bay, Nr. Newquay

The event will recognise and celebrate excellence in Employment and Skills activity in Cornwall.

di.kemp1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Commission Launches Credit System for Vocational Training

The European Commission has presented plans for a Europe-wide credit system in vocational education and training. This system, called ECVET, would make it easier for citizens to get formal recognition of knowledge, skills and competences they have gained in another country. Member States are encouraged to sign up to this voluntary scheme that does not seek to replace national systems but to facilitate the transfer between them. <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/18178/print>

Three new films on Europe's social concerns

The Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has produced three new video news releases. They all address social issues which are currently high on the agenda.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=384

Latest Labour Market Data

This month's figures show an increase in both the number of people in employment and the employment rate. The number of unemployed people, the unemployment rate and the claimant count have all fallen. The inactivity rate and the number of inactive people of working age have both fallen. The number of vacancies has increased. Growth in average earnings excluding bonuses has increased but earnings growth including bonuses has fallen. In the latest reference period the working age employment rate was 74.9%, up 0.2 percentage points on the previous quarter. The number of people in employment increased by 152,000 over the quarter. The unemployment rate was 5.2%, down 0.1 percentage point from the previous quarter. The number of unemployed people fell by 39,000 over the quarter. The claimant count was 794,300, down 1,200 from the previous month. The number of vacancies was 687,600, up 12,000 from the previous quarter. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0408.pdf>

Immigration has not led to an increase in the overall level of crime

The influx of migrant workers into England and Wales from eastern Europe has not led to the crime wave that some have suggested, a police report says. Since 2004, about 800,000 people have registered for work in Britain from many eastern European countries. The report by two chief constables has been sent to the home secretary ahead of a meeting with senior officers. Please find attached a link to a BBC article <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7349777.stm>. Here is a brief about this on the Association of Chief Police Officers' website:

http://www.acpo.police.uk/pressrelease.asp?PR_GUID={017B1944-5CB2-43F6-BE22-E9AD91364597}

Higher Education at Work – High Skills: High Value

The Government have published their high level skills strategy 'Higher Education at Work – High Skills: High Value'. Through this they will consult employers, learners and higher education providers on what more we need to do to equip the workforce with the skills required for an innovative and competitive economy. The strategy will be driven by demand from employers and learners. With around three quarters of the 2020 workforce having already left compulsory education, new types of higher education provision need to be created to compliment traditional models, including more flexible courses designed and co-funded by employers. Key areas of the consultation include:

- How business, trade unions, employers and employees can work better together to encourage demand for high level skills;
- What incentives are working/required to encourage colleges and universities to be more responsive to business and employer demand;
- What support or incentives would help colleges and universities extend access to work placements to all their students;
- How employers can become more involved in providing careers information, advice and guidance for pupils during their entire education; and
- How to increase the number of people with the specialist qualifications that many businesses desire such as languages and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/con_0408_hlss.html

Social trends no 38. 2008 edition

Societal well-being is the underlying theme in this year's edition, covering issues like wealth, health and life satisfaction. Household net wealth and GDP per head have both increased and many of us take up a role in society through volunteering and attending arts and sports events. However, despite eating more healthily and living longer, more years are spent in poor health. Obesity levels and alcohol-related deaths have risen. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/socialtrends38/>

CBI skills survey

The 2008 CBI/Edexcel education and skills survey (PDF 1.8mb) identifies skills gaps in the workplace, reveals the skills employers value the most and spotlights how employers are managing to source highly skilled people with the right qualifications. Completed by over 700 board-level executives, the survey gives a comprehensive view of business priorities on key education and skills issues. Worryingly, over half (53%) of employers are concerned there will not be enough skilled people in the UK to meet their future recruitment needs. <http://www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/eduskills0408.pdf>

Age and Demography latest from SWOOP

Never Mind the Botox!

The backlash against 'rejuvenation surgery' - has begun according to The Observer. Amongst the sources quoted, American author Valerie Ramsey, a 68-year-old mother of six, grandmother of seven and catwalk model, agrees that skin care, make-up, exercise and nutrition is more effective than surgery and injections. Ramsey says there are four rules to follow: 'The first step is acceptance of the ageing process, it's natural. You still look like you, only a new you. Then you must focus on the positive; the best thing about your age is that you've grown.' <http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,,2275098,00.html>

Ageing Issue 'Ticking Time Bomb'

The financial implications of the ageing UK population have been described as a "ticking time bomb" by the chairman of new group, the Life Trust Foundation set up to study how to deal with the financial impact of longer life spans. Chairman, Lord Hunt of Wirral, said that we were very good at extending life, but not so good at making provision for old age; someone aged 55 had a one-in-two chance of reaching 90, but two-thirds failed to make any financial plans for sustaining themselves later in their retirement. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7350130.stm>

Australian Age Ambassador Appointed

Comedienne Noeline Brown set an example for active older Australians through her energetic performances on 'Dancing with the Stars' (what, no ice involved?). So her latest role as the Federal Government's Ambassador for Ageing should be no stretch for the well-known Southern Highlands performer.

<http://bowral.yourguide.com.au/news/local/general/ambassador-for-ageing-is-in-step-with-seniors/1224726.html>

Local councils face 'staff exodus' over the next ten years

Local councils may struggle to employ enough staff to run services over the next 10 years as a third of its staff retire, according to research from the New Local Government Network (NLGN). The report found that a combination of the "baby-boom" generation retiring and few graduates wanting a career in local government has led to the crisis. The problem is particularly acute in local government as two thirds of employees are over 40, whilst the proportion of those under 25 is half that of the wider economy.

<http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/press-releases/report-forecasts-town-hall-exodus-as-13-of-council-staff-retire/>

Who do you want to be now? Over fifties re-entering the labour market

Considers the difference between the situation of older job-seekers and that of their younger counterparts. Explores the factors that appear to have shaped the paths of five clients of careers advice services who were over fifty and who took part in the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Learning Lives Project. Explains that they all have varying success in their attempts to find second, third and fourth careers. Outlines the background of each of the five clients and their situation at the end of the project. Looks at what they have been learning, its impact on their sense of identity, and what this has meant for career change.

Alan Denbigh, SWOOP Employer's Project Manager. alan.denbigh@ex.ac.uk. www.swoop-project.org.uk

Conferences and Events

Employability+ Skills Festival

13 & 14 May 2008, National Star College

Employability+ is an innovative, interactive skills festival for both disabled people and employers. Last year's event, which was the first of its kind, attracted 200 organisations supporting the event and over 1000 visitors. charber@natstar.ac.uk

Taking Forward Adult Skills Accounts

30 April 2008, Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

The National Evaluation of Sure Start

8 May 2008, Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

Conferences and Events continued...

What do employers want? Employability and skills for a 21st century workforce

12 May, 76 Portland Place, London

www.cesi.org.uk

Employability+ Skills Festival

13 & 14 May 2008, National Star College

Contact: charber@natstar.ac.uk

Schools and Raising the Learning Leaving Age

15 May 2008, Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

ECLO's 2008

15 and 16 May, Danubius Hotel Gellert, Budapest

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

South West Workshop on the Accreditation of Prior Learning

22 May 2008, Somerset College of Art and Technology

cpateman@bournemouth.ac.uk

"Improving the Odds" Sustaining Employment

22 May 2008, Exeter Racecourse, Kennford, Exeter

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

ITQ Conference 2008 - The Next Generation

29 May 2008, QEII Conference Centre, Westminster

<http://www.livegroup.co.uk/ITQconference08>

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

3 June 2008, Westminster.

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

The BILD Annual Conference: Engagement in Learning

12 June 2008, CBI Conference Centre, London WC1

<https://www.swiftpage5.com/symposium.howard/C080331074900/speasapage.aspx?addr=31>

The Guardian 2nd Annual Further Education and Skills Summit 2008

18 June 2008, QEII Conference Centre, London SW1

<http://neilstewart.msgfocus.com/c/1LXtoOCOSQeNrTqa>

Welfare to Work Convention 2008

25/26 June 2008, ICC Birmingham

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

Mindful employer conference

25 September 2008, Thistle Hotel Exeter

E-mail: info@mindfulemployer.net

Tackling Social Exclusion through Partnership - Removing the Barriers

22 October 2008, Westminster:

www.insidegovernment.co.uk/other/social_exclusion/

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