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This project is partially funded by the European Social Fund



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Investing in jobs and skills

## Welcome to the April e-newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of our **50+ Matters** e-newsletter. This month, among other things, we cover the latest news on the ongoing signs of recovery in the UK jobs market; a report from the House of Lords' European Union Committee on the working of the European Social Fund; a report that shows the least qualified are still the least likely to receive training at work; and an announcement from the Government that job guarantees are going to be extended to long-term, unemployed adults.

We welcome your views and comments about the content of this e-newsletter and any suggestions you have for items and features you would like to see included in future.

## Fastest Rise in Recruitment for 12 Years

During March, the jobs market in the UK continued its recent recovery with the recruitment of permanent staff rising at its fastest rate for over 12 years. At the same time, recruitment of temporary and contract staff increased at its fastest pace for nearly three years. These are the key findings from the latest report on Jobs from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and KPMG.



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The report, which is based on a monthly survey of 400 employment agencies, also found that the number of permanent vacancies placed by employers had increased, albeit at the slowest pace for three months.

The increased recruitment activity occurred across both private and public sectors, but the report strikes a cautionary note as it seems that much of the increase was still in the public sector, despite the prospect of major funding cuts in the sector in the near future.

Commenting on the report's findings, Bernard Brown, Head of Business Services at KPMG, said: "The UK jobs market seems to be going from strength to strength with permanent job placements growing at the fastest rate for over 12 years. These figures show that private sector confidence is returning and that the UK is exiting recession at a pace. However, a lot of

the current hiring activity is going on in the public sector. The public sector recession which clearly is on the cards hasn't hit the jobs market yet but when it does, the upwards trend we have seen over the last couple of months may come to a halt."

Kevin Green, Chief Executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, added that the rise in temporary and contract work shows they provide vital flexibility for UK businesses as well as a valuable route back into work for jobseekers.



**These figures show that private sector confidence is returning and that the UK is exiting recession at a pace.**

## House of Lords Committee Supports Value of ESF Programmes

In its new *Making it work: the European Social Fund* report, the House of Lords European Union Committee publishes the results of its inquiry into the effectiveness of ESF programmes in the UK.

It concludes that ESF is an important tool at EU Member States' disposal to help improve employment opportunities for disadvantaged workers and that it is a key component of the EU's broader social and economic cohesion policy.

It says ESF is funding particularly valuable work with the hardest to reach and least skilled and it wants priority to be given to safeguarding that aspect of the ESF's role. However, it is concerned that potential 'cherry-picking' by providers may mean they focus on those who are easiest to place in the labour market, at the expense of the hardest to reach. It recommends that delivery bodies should be contractually required to demonstrate they are still delivering to the hardest to reach.

In the report, the Committee stresses that it is essential that, in parallel to Member States' efforts to make more people employable, there are sufficient jobs available for people to move into.

As part of its inquiry, the Committee visited and heard from a number of ESF projects. The visits included one to a Tomorrow's People Trust project in Bow in London targeted at 'hardest to help' people in east London such as lone parents, the over-50s, participants with disability or health problems, ex-offenders and the long-term unemployed. It also visited the *Step-up* project aimed at 14-18 year olds who are excluded from school, which is running in south east London.

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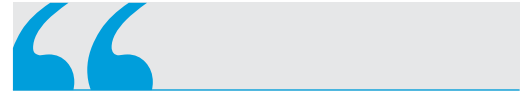
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Amongst the 21 recommendations contained in its report, the Committee emphasises the need for regional flexibility to be built into the ESF programmes currently running in the UK. Such flexibility is required, it says, to enable the regions to provide effective support for people in their area, for example by tailoring support and targeting funding according to local employment patterns and skills needs.

It would like to see more emphasis on 'soft outcomes' in contracting and evaluation, in addition to the 'hard' outcomes of the number of people helped to find work.

Finally, the Committee believes that ESF support should continue in the UK beyond the end of the 2007-13 programme.



**The House of Lords Committee would like to see more emphasis on 'soft outcomes' in addition to the number of people helped to find work.**

## Equality Bill Becomes Law

In the final few days before its dissolution, Parliament passed the Equality Bill and it has now received Royal Assent.

The main provisions of the Equality Act, as it is now known, will come into force in October this year, however implementation of some of its provisions are being staggered over the next three years to allow organisations across the private and public sectors to prepare.

A key feature of the Act is the harmonisation and extension of existing discrimination law covering age, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief and, in many but not all instances, marriage and civil partnerships.

Among other things, the Act introduces a new public sector duty to consider reducing socio-economic inequalities; puts a new integrated Equality Duty on public bodies; uses public procurement to improve equality; bans age discrimination outside the workplace; protects carers from discrimination; strengthens protection for disabled people from discrimination; protects people from dual discrimination; extends the scope of positive action; requires publication of information on gender pay and employment equality and strengthens the powers of employment tribunals.

The new Act is intended to have a significant impact on recruitment and employment practices. Apart from introduction of gender pay audits, two particular aspects of the new law have attracted publicity. The first is the ban on pre-employment health questionnaires, which means that for the first time employers will be prevented from asking candidates questions about their health that are unrelated to the job role. The second is the provision concerning 'positive action' in recruitment and promotion. The Act will enable employers to favour under-represented groups during recruitment processes - provided the candidates are of equal suitability - to increase the diversity of their workforces.

The new integrated public sector Equality Duty, the socio-economic duty and dual discrimination provisions will come into effect in April 2011. The ban on age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities, services and public functions comes into effect in 2012.

Finally, in 2013, the private and voluntary sector gender pay transparency regulations and provisions requiring political parties to publish diversity data will be implemented.

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# Unqualified Still Less Likely to Receive Training

According to the latest information from the Office for National Statistics, fewer than one in ten employees without a qualification are offered regular training at work. Furthermore, the position in this respect has worsened slightly over the last decade.

Despite all the emphasis put on the need to upskill the UK's workforce and the genuine achievements of programmes such as Skills for Life, Train to Gain and others, it remains the case that one of the main factors affecting the likelihood of employees accessing regular job-related training is their existing education or skill level.

In 2009, 9% of unqualified employees said they received regular training compared to 10% in 2000. However, for people at the other end of the qualifications scale, 38% of graduate employees were undertaking regular training at work in 2009.

The findings are highlighted in a report from the TUC analysing the latest trends in workforce training.

Drawing on the latest data from the ONS's Labour Force Survey, the analysis shows that there has been no improvement in the proportion of employees receiving regular job-related training during the past decade. In 2000, 29% of employees said they received regular training, compared with 28% who said they did so in 2009. However, the proportion of employees accessing regular training at work remained stable during the recession.

The report also found that:

- there has been a significant decline in the proportion of young employees receiving regular training at work (down from 36% to 31%);
- the proportion of older employees (aged 50 years+) having access to regular training has slightly increased (up from 22% in 2000 to 24% in 2009);

- a regional/national breakdown of trends in training shows that access to regular training is significantly lower in Northern Ireland (21%) compared with other parts of the UK. The highest levels of training are found in Wales (32%) and the South West region (30%).

The TUC's report has been published to coincide with the implementation of the new right for 'Time to Train' which came into effect on 6 April.

Under the new 'Time to Train' right, employees working in businesses employing more than 250 people are able to ask their employers for time off for training on an accredited programme leading to a qualification, or unaccredited training to help them develop skills relevant to their job, workplace or business.

From April 2011, the right will be extended to cover employees in businesses of all sizes. However, only employees who have worked continuously for that employer for 26 weeks will be eligible to make a request.

A survey conducted for unionlearn found that over two-fifths (42%) of workers said they were 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' to use the new right to ask for more training from their employer.



**In 2009, 9% of unqualified employees said they had received regular training at work compared with 38% of graduate employees.**

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## News Briefs

Other recent news items at a glance...

### Jobcentre Plus Website Content Moved

As part of a broader Government IT rationalisation initiative, the Jobcentre Plus website was closed at the end of March and its content transferred to other sites.

Information for individuals, including job vacancies and advice on looking for work, can now be found at: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). Employer information and placing job vacancies is at: [www.businesslink.gov.uk/jobcentreplus](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/jobcentreplus). Partnership, stakeholder and corporate information is at: [www.dwp.gov.uk/jobcentreplus](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/jobcentreplus).

### Goodbye LSC, Hello SFA

Following the demise of the Learning and Skills Council, a new system for allocating Government funding for further education and training in England has come into effect. From the start of April, the new Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will fund and regulate adult further education and skills in England.

There will be four direct routes into training for employers and learners: Train to Gain, the National Apprenticeship Service, and the Adult Advancement and Careers Service, as well as further education colleges and training organisations.

Commenting on the changes, Further Education and Skills Minister Kevin Brennan said: "It has never been more important to make sure the right people have the right skills to get into new industries and get on in their careers.

"Anyone who wants to get access to some of the fantastic training available should simply get in touch with their local college."

### Job Guarantees for the Long-term Unemployed

The Government has announced plans to give long-term Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants the guarantee of a job or work placement as part of the next stage of welfare reform.

In its Command (Policy) Paper *Building Bridges to Work*, published at the end of March, the Government said it proposes to offer all JSA claimants who have been out of work for two years a guaranteed job or work placement to prevent long-term unemployment as the economy recovers.

Claimants will be required to take up the offer if they cannot find other work. The jobs will be provided through extending the Future Jobs Fund as well as private sector and voluntary sector internships and work placements.

The initiative aims to make sure that people who have lost their jobs during the recession are not left to a life on benefits.

### Jobseekers to be Encouraged to Volunteer

Jobcentre Plus and Volunteering England have signed an agreement to promote the value of volunteering to jobseekers in England and tackle any barriers they might face to volunteering.

Volunteering is part of a major package of support for people who have been unemployed for six months. However, some jobseekers face barriers which discourage them from volunteering, including not receiving enough advice about receiving benefits while volunteering.

Volunteering England point out that people on state benefits can be volunteers and in nearly all cases their benefits will not be affected.

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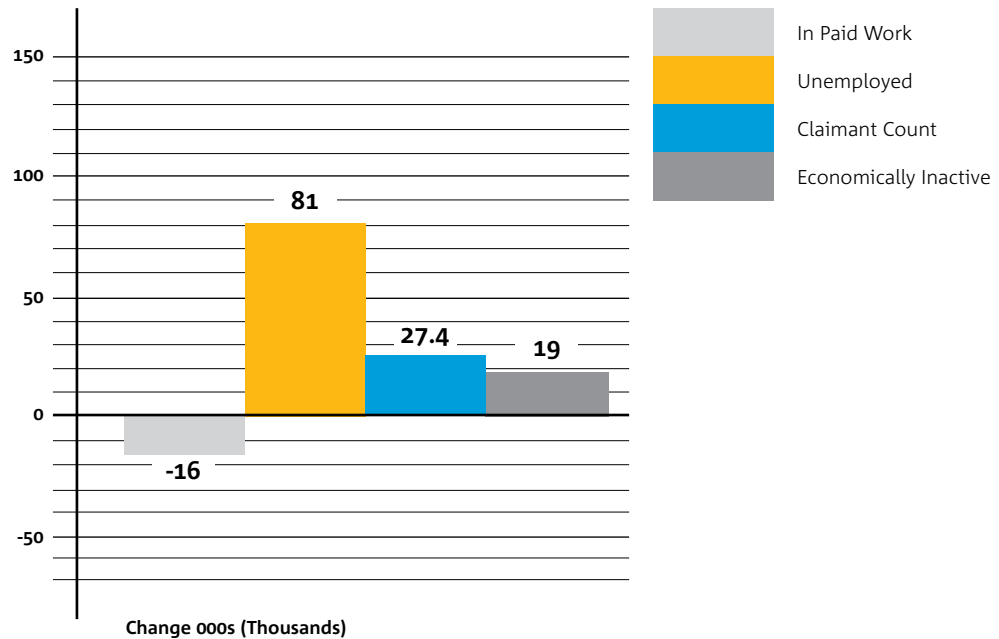
# 50+ Labour Market Spotlight

A monthly look at the 50 to state pension age employment figures and a specific item of interest regarding older workers.

## Latest 50-State Pension Age Employment Figures

Nov-Jan 2010: Changes versus same period last year.

Source: Office for National Statistics



## Older Learners Achieving N/SVQs in Government Office Regions in 2008/09

Source: TAEN from Statistical First Release, March 2010: The Data Service, ONS

| Government Office Region | All 16+ Total in the Region | Learners aged 41-59 | % of Regional Total | Learners aged 60+ | % of Regional Total |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| East of England          | 66,500                      | 16,700              | 25.2%               | 1,260             | 1.9%                |
| East Midlands            | 94,290                      | 28,870              | 30.6%               | 2,150             | 2.3%                |
| London                   | 77,630                      | 21,580              | 27.8%               | 1,320             | 1.7%                |
| North East               | 67,640                      | 21,120              | 31.2%               | 1,430             | 2.1%                |
| North West               | 140,210                     | 36,290              | 25.9%               | 2,590             | 1.8%                |
| South East               | 110,840                     | 27,130              | 24.5%               | 1,910             | 1.7%                |
| South West               | 79,960                      | 19,300              | 24.1%               | 1,710             | 2.1%                |
| West Midlands            | 109,100                     | 32,190              | 29.5%               | 2,750             | 2.5%                |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 102,610                     | 27,930              | 27.2%               | 1,930             | 1.9%                |

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## Ask TAEN

The column that answers a selection of questions we've received...  
In this edition:

### What sectors in the UK employ the highest and lowest proportions of older workers?

#### Sectors with Highest Percentage of Older Workers

Source: TAEN from UK Employment and Skills Almanac 2009; UKCES

| Sector  | Sector Skills Council           | Total employment 2008 (000s) | % aged 45-59 | % aged 60-64 | % 65 and over | Total % aged 45 and over |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Adult education Sector incl FE & HE                 | Lifelong Learning UK            | 1644.7                       | 41.4%        | 7.1%         | 2.5%          | 51%                      |
| Environmental and land-based industries             | Lantra                          | 455.6                        | 32.1%        | 9.0%         | 9.2%          | 50.3%                    |
| Passenger transport                                 | Goskills                        | 734.5                        | 38%          | 7.3%         | 2.9%          | 48.2%                    |
| NHS, independent and voluntary health organisations | Skills for Health               | 2074.1                       | 37.5%        | 5.5%         | 2.2%          | 45.2%                    |
| Central government                                  | Government Skills               | 1550.3                       | 37.5%        | 5.3%         | 1.5%          | 44.3%                    |
| Social care (including children and families)       | Skills for care and development | 1418.2                       | 36%          | 5.9%         | 2.3%          | 44.2%                    |

It should not be assumed that a low proportion of older workers in any overall sector means that employers in that particular sector, or the sub-sectors within it, are less kindly disposed towards the recruitment of older jobseekers. For instance, although both the Financial Services and Retail sectors appear in the list below, there are well known examples of 'household name' employers within both sectors who are nationally recognised for their age friendly employment policies.

#### Sectors with the Lowest Percentage of Older Workers

Source: TAEN from UK Employment and Skills Almanac 2009; UKCES

| Sector                                      | Sector Skills Council | Total employment 2008 (000s) | % aged 45-59 | % aged 60-64 | % 65 and over | Total % aged 45 and over |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism    | People 1st            | 1430.3                       | 19.6%        | 3.7%         | 2.0%          | 25.3%                    |
| Financial services, accountancy and finance | Financial Services    | 1231.1                       | 23.7%        | 2.0%         | 0.6%          | 26.3%                    |
| Active leisure and learning                 | Skills Active         | 346.3                        | 22.4%        | 3.0%         | 3.7%          | 29.1%                    |
| Business and information technology         | E-Skills UK           | 811.6                        | 27.4%        | 2.2%         | 0.6%          | 30.2%                    |
| Creative media                              | Skillset              | 528.5                        | 23.8%        | 4.5%         | 3.1%          | 31.4%                    |
| Retail                                      | Skillsmart Retail     | 2960.2                       | 24.3%        | 5.0%         | 2.6%          | 31.9%                    |

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## Did You Know?

A random selection of demographic, labour market and age and employment statistics that caught our eye over the last month:

### Pensioners Incomes: 2007-08

Source: ONS Pensioners Incomes Series 2007-08

#### In 2007-08:

Nearly all (95%) of pensioner units\* received some income from the State Pension (including widow's benefits). The average amount received was £130 per week (£108 for single pensioners and £157 for couples).

The average net income of pensioner couples was £416 per week after housing

costs were taken into account, whilst it was £193 per week for single pensioners. The proportion of pensioner units\* with some income from occupational pensions was 59% and the average amount received was £160 per week.

\* A pensioner unit is defined as a single (non-cohabiting) person over state pension age or a couple (married or co-habiting) where one or more members is over state pension age.

## ESF News

### Latest Details of Our 50+ Matters Seminar Series

Our *50+ Matters: Working Effectively with Older Workers* seminar series continues next month with an event for managers and supervisors from all ESF-involved organisations in the East Midlands.

To book for the seminar taking place in Nottingham on 18 May click here <http://taen.org.uk/esf/events/view/15/50-Matters-Working-Effectively-with-Older-Clients>

### Good Practice Guide - Can You Help ?

As reported in last month's edition, we have been commissioned by the DWP to research, compile and disseminate a good practice guide for frontline employment service providers who may find themselves working with 50+ clients. The guide is being produced to help underpin the Government's new support measures for older jobseekers which are being rolled out from this month.

If you are willing to contribute knowledge, expertise, experience, examples of good practice and / or case studies, please contact us.



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TAEN The Age and Employment Network, 207-221 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9UZ  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7843 1590 Email: [info@taen.org.uk](mailto:info@taen.org.uk) Web: [www.taen.org.uk](http://www.taen.org.uk)