



SOUTH WEST SKILLS NEWSLETTER

The Web Flash

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Hello everyone,

Big news from this week was, of course, the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) - setting out a plan to "transform the UK by spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of it." At the heart of this new way of making and implementing policy will be 12, national missions - all quantifiable and to be achieved by 2030. These missions are the policy objectives for levelling up, and thus form the heart of the government's agenda for the 2020s. Inevitably these will impact on skills and we will seek to keep you informed of developments as the details emerge from the various local Deals.

The [latest labour market intelligence from the Government](#) points to a continuing recovery in the labour market, with a quarterly increase in the employment rate, while the unemployment rate decreased. But we are also seeing other factors too - such as economic inactivity ticking up - which is being driven by older people and young people outside education. Numbers of people leaving the labour market are up - including people entering education - but more worrying are the numbers leaving due to ill-health and early retirement - most pronounced in older women. Job vacancies remain very high and difficult to fill. So plenty for government to mull over - if they are to attract people back into work and fill the vacancies.

In response at the end of last month Government announced a [New Mission to get 500,000 into work](#) Targeted predominantly at those in the intensive work search group on Universal Credit, Way to Work will support people back into work faster than ever before and filling vacancies more quickly.

Around 53 percent of tech companies across the South West say it is impossible or incredibly hard to recruit. That's according to the results of the recent Tech South West talent survey, which reveals the challenges of talent shortages facing the sector across the region.

To discuss and try and help address some of those challenges, TECH SW we are hosting an [online Tech Talent Summit](#) to bring together tech companies, talent experts and recruitment agencies, universities and college groups. It takes place on February 17 from 9.30-11am and is free to join.

Finally, the TUC have just published a paper exploring the [opportunities and threats to the public sector from digitisation](#) - which is a useful summary of the issues and how it will impact on our future working lives.

Best wishes and stay safe

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(Please email me to subscribe and feel free to share the newsletter)

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News



IET Skills Survey Results

This report breaks down the results of our survey into five categories, exploring the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit, skills shortages, recruitment difficulties, sustainability strategies, and new entrants to the workforce. We have also included key recommendations to ensure that current and future workforce needs are met.



Only 2% of levelling-up funding spent on social infrastructure

The Government's existing levelling-up funding programmes are too focused on hard infrastructure projects and neglect social aspects, according to charity think tank NPC. In a white paper, NPC warns that if funding does not offer more support for social infrastructure then the Government's levelling-up programme will fail.



UK could face shortages of 2.6 million workers, according to new ILC research

ILC's latest research, *Plugging the gap*, projects that as a result of population ageing, COVID-19 and Brexit, the UK economy could see a shortfall of 2.6 million workers by 2030 - almost twice the workforce of the NHS.

These shortfalls will affect the whole economy, with manufacturing, retail, construction, transport, health and social care among the sectors projected to be hardest hit.

To plug this gap, Government must introduce a comprehensive Workforce Strategy aimed at:

- Supporting longer and more productive working lives
- Removing barriers to returning to work
- Utilising migration and automation to address workforce gaps



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Plymouth joint fourth ranked city most in need of levelling up

New analysis of England's largest cities and towns shows Plymouth is joint 4th in terms of needing 'levelling Up'. The Levelling Up Opportunity Index compares the performance of the 34 largest towns and cities outside of London to identify places which might have traditionally under performed economically up to now, but which have the size and capacity for substantial future growth.

It is believed the white paper is set to focus on improving living standards, growing the private sector and increasing and spreading opportunity.



Apply now for VocTech Seed

Ufi's £1.5m VocTech Seed grant fund is now open for applications. VocTech Seed grant fund supports the development of new ideas that use digital tools and approaches to transform how people gain skills for work. With grants of between £15,000 and £50,000 now is the time to bring your idea to life.



Centre for Cities "Cities Outlook 2022"

Cities Outlook 2022 looks in-depth at the state of UK high streets to get a sense of the short-term impact of the pandemic on Britain's town and city centres and the long-term consequences and implications this has for the Government's levelling up agenda.

LEP Latest

Cash grants of up to £6,000 are now available to businesses impacted by the COVID 19 Omicron variant

Hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses are able to apply for the one-off grant. Eligible businesses include, but are not limited to, pubs, restaurants (excluding takeaways) cafés, tourist attractions, event venues, museums, theatres, holiday parks, hotels, and campsites.

Funding announced for data analytical and digital innovation projects

The Heart of the South West LEP has identified 'Digital' as the highest priority for investment to deliver clean and inclusive growth, investing over £10 million to support improvements to mobile and digital connectivity, increase digital skills, modernise the area's Further Education College ICT offer, and establish a 5G offshore pilot.

A new £8 million digital investment programme is now being rolled out, with up to £2 million of capital funding available.

Latest building at Exeter Science Park to support 100 new jobs in science and technology

The first tenants to move into the 14,000 square foot George Parker Bidder building, which is built to net zero carbon standards, will cross the road from the Science Park Centre to

embark on the next stage of their business growth.

They include Concept First, Remit Zero, Securious, Edson Tiger, Rx-info and Dashboard, their move freeing up space in the hub for STEMM start-ups.

Launch of Devon's £9.3m Community Renewal Fund programme

An investment of £9.3 million will fund 13 innovative projects over the next six months. The programme will aim to develop environmental initiatives which make the most of the county's natural capital, while also providing support for hard hit small businesses and disadvantaged young people and adults. It will tackle deprivation and disadvantage within Devon's most vulnerable communities, as well as bolster the economic growth of rural and coastal communities.

New Publications and Reports

A Handbook on Strategic City-University partnerships

The University of Exeter is part of an international network that is seeking to advance university-city linkages. This network has pulled together a document on the state-of-the-art in this activity.

Worldwide, there is a growing recognition that strategic partnering between cities and universities can bring substantial benefits for both sides. The big question is how to organize such partnerships successfully.

This new handbook offers insights, best practices and advice for leaders in cities and universities that want to go beyond "ad hoc" projects and take the next step towards a strategic and sustainable partnership. The handbook identifies promising avenues, but also barriers and pitfalls and how to avoid them. Illustrated by a rich variety of examples from European cities, the handbook provides concrete advice on the various stages of strategic city-university collaboration. The handbook was co-developed by the members of the EUniverCities Network and edited by Willem van Winden as lead expert of the network. The handbook intends to provide inspiring practices and guidance to develop strategic interaction between city and university, considering the complex and layered nature of both. Our focus lies on the more strategic, transformational types of collaborations, that are more complex.

The handbook has three parts.

1. Part one offers insights and guidance for setting up collaborations, maintaining them, and reaping their fruits
2. Part two contains detailed case studies that we analysed in-depth during three online workshops, originating from Ghent, Lausanne, Trondheim and Turku.
3. Part three contains a rich collection of case studies that were written by the members of the EUniverCities Network.

Events

The Further Education Management and Leadership Conference 2022

9 February

Hear how managers and leaders are pushing boundaries to enhance provisions and deliver excellence. This event will showcase best practice case studies covering key topics and challenges faced in further education including accessing funding, digital and blended learning, improving inclusivity, creating greener campuses, and collaborating with employers, universities, and other FE institutions. There will also be an opportunity to network with fellow leaders from colleges and adult education centres.

The National Graduate Employability Conference 2022

2 March

Since March 2020, there has been a dramatic fall in the number of graduate job roles advertised across the labour market, and applications for Universal Credit have increased significantly. Students who are set to graduate in 2022 are likely to face a similar set of barriers to the class of 2020, with an influx of graduates into a more competitive job market.

Pre-apprenticeships: Creating opportunities for young people – what works?

Online - 2 March 2022, 2pm – 4.30pm

The pandemic has reinforced existing inequalities, pushing many young people further away from apprenticeships and wider labour market opportunities. When delivered in creative and engaging ways, targeted programmes which prepare young people for apprenticeships and work can enable young people to develop the core skills and experiences that help them to break cycles of unemployment and precarious employment.

Made for Space 2022 - Conference

30 and 31 March

You will be able to explore the latest innovations, technologies, and opportunities being adopted by the Space sector. The conference will focus on key emerging technologies and their alignment to the Government's National Space Strategy including Supply Chain, In-Space Remote Operations, Components and Materials, and wider "art-of-the-possible" technology development.

The Adult and Community Education Conference 2022

29 June

Learn how colleges, adult education providers and local authorities can attract, retain and support adult learners. Engage with a series of best practice case studies from across the UK, showcasing flexible course design, effective collaboration with employers and tips for promoting courses to adults.