

BCC comments on labour market statistics for March 2017

Head of Economics, Suren Thiru, comments on the labour market statistics published today.

15th March 2017

Commenting on the labour market statistics for March 2017, published today by the Office for National Statistics, Suren Thiru, Head of Economics at the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

“The UK’s jobs market is going from strength to strength, with the number of people in work continuing to rise and unemployment also falling.

“UK labour market conditions may cool over the next few years as the expected slowdown in growth and the rising burden of upfront business costs stifle firms’ hiring intentions. That said, we expect that the UK unemployment rate will reach a peak of 5.3% next year, still some way below the historical average.

“However, average pay growth continues to slow, and it appears increasingly likely that inflation will outstrip earnings growth in the coming months, which will put further pressure on consumer’s spending power.

“With Article 50 set to be triggered shortly, it is vital that more is done to provide greater clarity and stability for firms, including certainty on the residence rights of their existing EU workers, and clarity on the regime for hiring from EU countries during the negotiation period. Further action is also needed to ease the burden of upfront costs and taxes of doing business in the UK, which limit companies’ ability to invest and grow.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

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New teacher training changes to attract the best to the profession – Kirsty Williams

The Welsh Government has revealed changes for initial teacher education (ITE) that include strengthening how schools and universities work together and increasing the role of research.

The latest accreditation criteria are part of the Welsh Government's national mission to reform education and include:

- An increased role for schools.
- A clearer role for universities.
- Structured opportunities to link school and university learning.
- A greater emphasis on research.

The changes come after the recently published new professional teaching and leadership standards.

Kirsty Williams said:

“I want teaching in Wales to be a first choice profession so that we can attract the very best. For this to happen, we must get our initial teacher education offer right.

“The new accreditation standards are part of our national mission to raise the standards and standing of the profession.

“The teaching profession can only make its proper contribution to raising standards of education in our schools if our initial teacher training offers our future teachers the skills, knowledge and appetite to lead the change required.

“This is about our schools and universities working together, using the best research available, so our teachers have the right skills to deliver our new curriculum for the benefit of all our pupils.”

The Education Secretary also announced that the Education Workforce Council (EWC), through the establishment of the Initial School Teacher Training Committee (the Board) will accredit individual ITE programmes.

She added:

“I am delighted to announce that the public appointment process for the Chair, and Deputy Chair, of the EWC ‘Board’ is now open. The establishment of the Board will enable more specific consideration of how ITE programmes will raise the quality of provision – attracting the right people with the right qualifications and an aptitude for teaching, to enter the profession.”

The Education Secretary wants international evidence and best practice to help guide Wales’ education reforms. From today the OECD will be holding an international workshop in Cardiff to help further develop ITE in Wales.

Ministers urgently need to come up with credible and comprehensive strategy to minimise prevalence of lung diseases – Sharon Hodgson

Sharon

Hodgson MP, Labour’s Shadow Minister for Public Health, reacting to the British Lung Foundation’s report into the economic cost of lung disease in the UK, said:

“Lung disease is a major health issue here in our country. The British Lung Foundation’s eye-opening report today is an important step in highlighting the staggering and rising cost of this illness. There is not only a financial toll for our society but for the NHS as well. It is so important that we do all we can to address the various lung-related illnesses and diseases that people face and make inroads into improving respiratory health.

“Ministers urgently need to come up with a credible and comprehensive strategy to minimise the prevalence of lung diseases in our country, and also to reduce the costs of this illness on our society and our already stretched NHS.

“The cost of lung disease in the UK is getting worse by the year and this enormous human and financial impact just can’t be allowed to continue. The Government must be much more proactive in raising

awareness among the public and investing in preventative health measures which can head off the risks of lung disease in years to come.”

Edinburgh student represents Scotland U18s in international rugby match

Andrew Nimmo has returned to his studies at SRUC following an exciting weekend representing Scotland U18s rugby team against England.

Friends of Wighton update

With thanks to Sheena Wellington, here's the latest update from Friends of Wighton :

**Wighton Heritage Centre, Central Library – Saturday 18th March at 11am
(doors open 10.30am)**



Cappuccino Concert with singer/songwriter Bob Knight

Bob Knight is a singer from Aberdeen who has slowly but surely been making a name for himself in the world of folk and traditional music. He comes from a long line of traditional singers and musicians, and is related to many of the great traditional singers from North East Scotland.

He is well known in North East Scotland folk circles as a singer and writer of songs in traditional style, having performed at most of the local clubs, and festivals, including many events at Aberdeen University's Elphinstone Institute.

Bob doesn't just confine himself to his home patch though, and has played all over Scotland, including Edinburgh Folk club, The Scottish Storytelling Centre ,(Edinburgh) The Rolling Hills Folk Festival in Melrose, the Portsoy Boat Festival, Dougie McLean's Perthshire Amber festival, and Celtic Connections in Glasgow. In August 2012 and then again in 2013, he performed in a series of highly successful concerts at the prestigious Whitby Folk Week, in Yorkshire.

In August 2013, Bob released his second CD, "Songs From My Tradition," this time ringing the changes by recording Scottish traditional unaccompanied songs. Future projects include another CD, of Scottish folk favourites, "Fields Of Home," recorded with his brother Willie Knight, and the eagerly awaited third solo album, which will feature Bob's best known and requested original songs.

Tickets £5 at door. Tea/coffee available for small donation.