

# GREATER BIRMINGHAM & SOLIHULL

## LMI SUMMARY



**UKCES**

UK COMMISSION FOR  
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

# ABOUT

This document provides a summary of key findings for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area, based on findings from three major UKCES research products: Working Futures, the Employer Skills Survey (ESS) and the Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS).

Throughout the document, findings for the LEP area are compared with England or the UK as a whole. For ESS and EPS differences are only reported when they are statistically significant; when figures are described as 'similar' or 'no different', this means that there is no statistically significant difference. Whilst the percentages may differ slightly between the figure for the LEP area and England/the UK, when we say 'similar' it means that we cannot be confident that the difference is due to anything more than chance. In the case of Working Futures statistical significance is a more complex issue, since the analysis is forward-looking. The published guidelines relating to the interpretation of this dataset have been followed.



## Working Futures

Working Futures uses robust sources of national data on demographics, education, employment and the economy to make projections of the UK labour market. Whilst not a crystal-ball, Working Futures moves beyond anecdotal guesses to provide rigorous, evidence-based projections through the application of proven models.



## Employer Skills Survey

The Employer Skills Survey is the UK's definitive source of intelligence on employer investment. Exploring the skills challenges that employers face, the levels and nature of training investment, recruitment of young people and the relationship between skills challenges and business strategy, the ESS gives us a reliable, timely and valuable insight into the skills issues employers face.



## Employer Perspectives Survey

The Employer Perspectives Survey provides insights into the thoughts and behaviour of UK Employers as they make decisions about how to engage with training providers, schools, colleges and individuals in the wider skills system, to get the skills they need.

# WORKING FUTURES

2012 - 2022

## Jobs and the economy

- The overall picture for the UK economy over the next decade (2012-2022) is one of gradual upturn, but with no quick return to long term trends as observed following previous recessions.
- Overall, the number of jobs in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area is projected to rise by around 39,000 over the next decade (2012-2022), an average annual rate of growth of 0.4 per cent. This is slightly lower than the UK average rate (0.6 per cent).

## Sectors

- The sector profile of the LEP area is similar to the UK as a whole. However, the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area is somewhat “over-represented”, relative to the UK, in support services and manufacturing (excluding engineering). It is “under-represented” in professional services and media.
- Private sector services as a whole are expected to contribute 89 per cent of the net job growth in the LEP area between 2012 and 2022, slightly higher than the UK average of 85 per cent.
- The leading sources of employment growth in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area (in absolute terms) are forecast to be health & social work (+12,000), support services (+8,000), and professional services (+7,000).
- Public administration is projected to see a net decline in its level of employment between 2012 and 2022 in the LEP area (loss of 5,000 jobs, equivalent to a fall of 11 per cent); this decline is in line with the overall UK picture.
- Manufacturing (including engineering and food & drink manufacturing) is projected to see a continued decline in jobs (with a loss of 6,000 jobs – the equivalent of a fall of 7 per cent - over the decade in the LEP area). This decline is slightly less than for the UK as a whole (-9 per cent).

## Occupations

- The Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area has a lower representation of employment in higher skilled occupations, compared with the UK as a whole. In the LEP area, 39 per cent of employment is in the three high skilled occupational groups: managers, professionals and associate professionals. This compares with a UK average of 43 per cent. The figure is much higher in London (57 per cent).
- The proportion of employment in the three lowest-skilled occupations is broadly in line with the UK average. In the LEP area, 26 per cent of employment is in sales or customer service, plant/process operatives and elementary roles, compared with a UK average of 25 per cent.
- The proportion employed in middle-ranking occupations is higher than the UK average: jobs in administrative, skilled trades and caring/leisure roles account for 35 per cent of employment in the LEP area, compared with 32 per cent in the UK.
- As with the wider UK picture, Working Futures projections indicate job growth concentrated in higher level roles, as well as in lower level roles relating to care. The projections for the LEP area are for:
  - 59,000 additional high level jobs (for managers, professionals and associate professionals), with around half of these in professional roles. Higher skilled jobs are expected to grow at broadly the same rate as in the UK as a whole (16 per cent in Greater Birmingham & Solihull compared with 17 per cent in the UK over the course of the decade).
  - 27,000 fewer jobs in middle ranking administrative, secretarial and skilled trades occupations. Nevertheless, these areas of decline are expected to remain significant sources of employment by the end of the decade. For example, there are still expected to be around 113,000 administrative and secretarial jobs in 2022 in the LEP area, despite the loss of around 15,000 jobs in the previous decade.

- Around 20,000 additional jobs in caring or leisure roles.
- Women are expected to take almost three-quarters of the additional high level jobs created in the LEP area over the decade, as well as most of the additional jobs in caring roles. However, female workers will be hit by the losses noted above in sales, administrative and elementary jobs.

## Qualifications

- As a result of supply and demand factors, the qualification profile of employment is expected to shift markedly in the LEP area:
  - The proportion of jobs held by people qualified at a higher level (level 4 and above) is projected to increase from 36 per cent to 47 per cent between 2012 and 2022.
  - Workers with low qualifications (below level 2) are expected to decline from 21 per cent to 14 per cent of the total workforce over this period.

## Replacement Demands

- We estimate that replacement demands (i.e. job openings created by people leaving the labour force temporarily or permanently) will contribute almost ten times as many job openings as net job growth over the next decade: 368,000 openings compared with 40,000.
- Replacement demands mean that there will be a need to recruit suitably skilled people across all broad occupational groups, including those projected to decline:
  - For some occupational groups (mostly higher skilled ones), we expect to see strong net growth in the number of jobs, supplemented by large replacement demands. For example, net growth of 29,000 jobs in professional roles is projected to be supplemented by 66,000 job openings arising from replacement demands.
  - For those occupational areas in which we expect to see a net decline in the number of jobs, replacement demands mean that we can still expect a strong supply of job openings. For example, in administrative occupations, it is projected that a net loss of around 4,000 jobs will be more than offset by 41,000 job openings resulting from replacement demands.

# EMPLOYER SKILLS SURVEY

## 2013

### Skill shortages

- In total, 15 per cent of employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area reported vacancies at the time of the survey (March to July 2013). This is the same as the proportion found in England as a whole.
- While in most cases demand for skills is met through successful recruitment, around a quarter of vacancies in the LEP area (24 per cent) are reported to be hard-to-fill. This is slightly lower than the rate found across England as a whole (28 per cent).
- When asked (without prompting) about the main reasons for hard-to-fill vacancies in their establishment, the low number of applicants with the required skills is seen as the main reason (31 per cent) in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area. This was, however, lower than the corresponding figure across England as a whole (41 per cent). Employers in the LEP area also reported a low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality as the second highest reason for the existence of hard to fill vacancies.
- Overall, 'skill-shortage' vacancies represent 18 per cent of all vacancies in the LEP area, which is also slightly lower than the England-wide figure of 22 per cent.

### Skill gaps

- Most employers say that they have a proficient workforce with no skill gaps. The proportion reporting skills gaps is similar in the LEP area to that in England as a whole: 14 per cent compared with 15 per cent. This represents four per cent of the total workforce in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area, similar to the figure for the whole of England (five per cent).
- In most cases, proficiency problems are due at least in part to employees being new in their roles and/or still in training for their roles. These factors account at least in part for 75 per cent of all skills gaps in the LEP area, which is the same as in England as a whole. In addition, employers in the LEP area also attribute workforce proficiency problems to being unable to recruit people with the right skills, and this factor features broadly the same in the LEP area as in England generally (25 per cent in both).
- In the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area, and in England more widely, the main impact of proficiency problems is an increased workload for other staff.
- In the LEP area, (internal) skills gaps are most prominent in sales & customer service roles and among associate professionals, while the greatest density of (external) skill shortages are among skilled trades, as well as caring, leisure and other services and associate professionals. In England as a whole, (internal) skills gaps are focused on elementary staff as well as sales and customer services; the England-wide picture for (external) skill shortages shows a focus of skill shortages in skilled trades.
- In general, employers tend to be challenged either in terms of having inadequate skills among some of their existing workforce or struggling to find new recruits with the skills that the vacant positions require. It is very rare for employers to be challenged from both directions; just one per cent of all employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area experience both skill-shortage vacancies and skills gaps; this is the same level as in England as a whole.
- Just under half of employers in the LEP area (46 per cent) report skills under-use (i.e. they have staff who are over-skilled and over-qualified for the jobs that they are currently doing); this is broadly the same as in both the West Midlands region and England where the figures stand at 44 per cent and 47 per cent respectively.

### Training and Workforce Development

- Most employers fund or arrange training for their staff: in the LEP area; almost two-thirds had done so over the previous 12 months (63 per cent). This was slightly lower than the figure found across England as a whole (66 per cent).

- Almost half of employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area provide off-the-job training (45 per cent), while one in six offer on-the-job training only (18 per cent). The proportion providing off-the-job training is slightly lower than the England-wide average figure (48 per cent).
- The number of staff receiving training in the LEP area (61 per cent) was very similar to that in England generally (62 per cent). The number of days training per trainee was also very similar to that found nationally. Each person trained received an average of 6.9 days training over the previous 12 months, compared with 6.7 days on average in England.
- While most employers could be described as being in 'training equilibrium' having been able to provide all the training that they wanted over the previous 12 months, two-fifths of all employers in the LEP area (39 per cent, including non-trainers that had not delivered any) wanted to provide more training than they had been able to do. The proportion in England as a whole was slightly higher at 42 per cent.

## Recruitment of Young People

- A little over a quarter of employers in the LEP area (29 per cent) recruited at least one education leaver in the two to three years preceding the survey, similar to the England-wide figure (27 per cent). Specifically:
  - Eight per cent had recruited a 16 year-old school leaver (the same as the England-wide average);
  - 11 per cent had recruited a 17-18 year old school leaver (the same as the England-wide figure);
  - 14 per cent had recruited a 17-18 year old college leaver (slightly higher the England-wide figure of 12 per cent);
  - 15 per cent had recruited someone from a university or HEI (in line with the England figure of 14 per cent).

## High Performance Working practices and Product Market Strategies

- High Performance Working (HPW) is defined by the UK Commission as 'a general approach to managing organisations that aims to stimulate more effective employee involvement and commitment in order to achieve high levels of performance' (UKCES 2009).
- The survey identifies a minority of employers – 18 per cent in the LEP area – who are "HPW employers" in the sense that they adopt a number of HPW practices. This is somewhat higher than the proportion in England as a whole (12 per cent).
- Product Market Strategies (PMS) are defined within the survey by aggregating responses to a series of questions exploring pricing strategies, approaches to innovation and the nature of the product market (the extent to which the market attracts a "premium" and the extent of customisation of products and services in the market).
- Aggregating these responses classifies almost half (47 per cent) of private sector employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull area as having a high or very high product market strategy, indicating that their competitive success is not dependent on price, they pursue innovation, they compete on quality and/or that they offer customised goods or services. This is broadly in line with the 45 per cent found in England as a whole.

# EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES SURVEY 2014

## Employer Perspectives on Recruitment

- Just over half (52 per cent) of employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area recorded at least one vacancy in the 12 months preceding the survey. This is similar to the proportion across England as a whole.
- Relevant work experience was rated by two-thirds of recruiting employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull area (65 per cent) as being a critical or significant factor looked for in candidates. Having at least GCSE Maths and English followed next, rated as critical or significant by 56 per cent of recruiting employers. Half of recruiting employers rated candidates having relevant vocational qualifications as critical or significant (50 per cent), while slightly less than half (47 per cent) said this about academic qualifications. These priorities reflect the wider picture across England. Over time, the survey as a whole has seen an increasing importance placed on both academic and vocational qualifications by recruiting employers.
- Overall, 31 per cent of employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area had taken on someone under the age of 25 in the previous 12 months. This was the same figure as seen across England as a whole. At the other end of the age spectrum, roughly one in seven employers had taken on someone aged 50 years or older (14 per cent as compared to 13 per cent in England as a whole).

## Employer Perspectives on Work Experience

- Two-fifths of employers in the LEP area (41 per cent) had provided individuals with work placements in the previous 12 months, while 18 per cent had conducted 'work inspiration' activities with people in education (such as mock interviews, delivering talks and holding site visits for students); this proportion is similar to the average figure across England.
- EPS 2014 canvassed employers' awareness of Traineeships and found that almost two-thirds of employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area (63 per cent) had heard of the scheme, similar to the figure for England. However, the survey as a whole indicated that many of these employers had limited knowledge of the scheme.

## Employer Perspectives on People Development

- Two-fifths of employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area offered external training (41 per cent), although internal training provision was more common (57 per cent). The LEP figures for external training and internal training are both broadly in line with those found across England as a whole.
- Employers most commonly look to private providers (private sector training firms or third sector providers) when they are looking outside of their own organisation to deliver training: 35 per cent of all employers in the LEP area engaged the services of private providers (significantly lower than the England-wide figure of 41 per cent), while nine per cent used FE Colleges, which was very similar to the eight per cent seen England-wide. When it comes to higher education providers, five per cent of local employers had used them to deliver training which was also very similar to that seen across England (four per cent). Nationally, the survey as a whole indicates that the gap between use of private and public provision has widened in recent years.
- Around a third of establishments in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area (31 per cent) offered training that is designed to lead to a vocational qualification (compared 26 per cent in England as a whole).
- Around one in seven employers in the LEP area (14 per cent) had worked with other employers to access, develop or share expertise on skills and training (compared with 17 per cent in England as a whole). In general, the survey found that the nature of these relationships was equally likely to be formal or informal/ad hoc.

- One quarter of establishments in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area (24 per cent) had sought external information, advice or other practical help on skills and training-related issues in the last 12 months. This is similar to the England-wide figure (27 per cent).
- National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and understanding they need to meet that standard consistently. Broadly speaking, there was some awareness of the standards: around two-fifths of all employers in the LEP area (38 per cent) had heard of National Occupational Standards; this was broadly similar to the proportion in England generally, where the figure was 39 per cent.

## Employer Perspectives on Apprenticeships

- One in five employers in the LEP area (19 per cent) offered formal Apprenticeships (following a framework and designed to lead to a nationally recognised qualification), similar to the England-wide figure of 15 per cent.
- At the time of the survey, around two-fifths of all employers in the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP area were expecting to offer formal Apprenticeships in the future (37 per cent, broadly in line with the figure of 35 per cent for England as a whole).



A top-down view of a meeting around a wooden table. Several people are gathered around the table, looking at various documents and charts. A laptop is open on the right side of the table. The documents feature various data visualizations, including pie charts, bar charts, and line graphs. One prominent pie chart is divided into three segments: dark blue, green, and light blue. Another document shows a bar chart with the word 'MARKET' at the top. A line graph is also visible on one of the documents. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment focused on data analysis and business strategy.

UK Commission for  
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