

NEWS

BUOYANT JOBS MARKET CONTINUES TO DEFY ECONOMIC GRAVITY

The latest official labour market statistics, published last week by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), show another big rise in the number of people in employment (up 152,000 in the three months to February), increased job vacancies, fewer redundancies and welcome falls in both the number of people unemployed (down 39,000 in the quarter) and those economically inactive (down 36,000). Yet despite this pay pressures remain subdued.

According to John Philpott, Chief Economist at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the jobs, unemployment and pay figures will provide some comfort to the Government after a run of poor economic statistics and reassure the Bank of England that pay rises pose little threat to inflation. However, Dr Philpott warned that the latest official figures were at odds with other indicators of the strength of demand for workers which could spell tougher times ahead.

Dr Philpott commented as follows:

"Even allowing for lags between output, jobs and unemployment the UK labour market is still behaving as though the economy were chugging along very nicely rather than on the verge of a significant slowdown. This could bode well for the resilience of employment in the coming months – especially with pay pressures sufficiently subdued not to deter further cuts in interest rates – which would greatly protect the UK economy from the possibility of a period of outright recession.

If so we could be in for a repeat of what happened during the last economic slowdown in 2005 when employer concerns about talent shortages led to 'labour hoarding.' Employment levels generally held up, with employers cutting hours worked by staff and curbing average pay rises rather than resorting to layoffs. Today's ONS figures showing a substantial reduction in average hours worked by full-time staff would support this possibility as would signs of continued pay restraint.

"It is still too early, however, to breathe a sigh of relief. Much will depend on the severity of the economic slowdown and the impact this has on business and consumer confidence. Indeed the official jobs statistics paint a far rosier picture of the state of the labour market than independent surveys, including those conducted regularly by the CIPD and KPMG. These point to weaker hiring intentions and the prospect of substantial job losses – and are somewhat more in keeping with news emerging daily from the City and those parts of retail sector hardest hit when increasingly cash strapped households cut back on non-essential spending. It is also surprising that the ONS finds continuing big falls in the number of temporary employees when independent surveys suggest that employers cautious about the business outlook are turning to temps rather than hiring staff on permanent contracts.

"One thing likely to concern the Government from the latest labour market statistics is that pay inflation has in recent months picked up in the public sector. Although ministers may have been somewhat misleading in claiming that tighter control of public sector pay was needed to curb price inflation in the economy – rather than to contain public spending and borrowing – the Government will be somewhat embarrassed to find that public sector employers are doing less well than their private sector counterparts at keeping pay rises in check."

LABOUR MARKET STILL LOOKS SOLID

Despite the jittery atmosphere about the economic outlook at the moment, the labour market still looks very solid at the moment. Employment growth across the private sector has been strong and unemployment has fallen. The only real signs of the credit crunch are much weaker City bonuses this year and a slight fall in employment in business services – a key UK strength - at the end of last year.

These are of course backward looking numbers – they tell us what was happening between December and February, not what might be happening now.

We can expect worse news to come, but as far as the labour market is concerned there is nothing to suggest we are on the verge of a recession.'

HALF OF FREELANCERS DON'T PLAN FOR BUSINESS

The latest poll on <http://www.PeoplePerHour.com>, the leading online skills marketplace, shows that just over half of the freelancers polled (51.8%) have a business plan. Just under a third didn't have a business plan (32.1%). The 16.1% who ticked the 'What's a Business Plan?' option can probably be added to the ones that don't plan, making the business plan haves (51.8%) and the have nots (48.2%) almost equal.

Xenios Thrasyvoulou, CEO of PeoplePerHour.com says: "Conventional wisdom in business says you must plan for success: that failure to plan is planning to fail. But these findings back up earlier polls that indicate that, for around half our freelancers, achieving a work-life balance is an equally important measure of success in life. "Creating a business plan usually indicates a commitment to more serious business development or intent to secure extra cash to expand. "Our last poll showed that most freelancers are not in it for the money. Just 22.9% earned more than they did before and 59.3% claimed they went freelance to achieve a better work-life balance.

WOMEN MORE LIKELY TO GIVE AWAY PASSWORDS FOR CHOCOLATE

A survey by Infosecurity Europe (www.infosec.co.uk) of 576 office workers have found that women far more likely to give away their passwords to total strangers than their male counterparts, with 45% of women versus 10% of men prepared to give away their password, to strangers masquerading as market researchers with the lure of a chocolate bar as an incentive for filling in the survey. The survey was actually part of a social engineering exercise to raise awareness about information security. The survey was conducted outside Liverpool Street Station in the City of London.

This year's survey results were significantly better than previous years. In 2007 64% of people were prepared to give away their passwords for a chocolate bar, this year it had dropped to just 21% so at last the message is getting through to be more infosecurity savvy. The researchers also asked the office workers for their dates of birth to validate that they had carried out the survey here the workers were very naïve with 61% revealing their date of birth. Another slightly worrying fact discovered by researchers is that over half of people questioned use the same password for everything (e.g. work, banking, web, etc.)

"Our researchers also asked for workers names and telephone numbers so that they could be entered into a draw to go to Paris, with this incentive 60% of men and 62% of women gave us their contact information", said Claire Sellick, Event Director, Infosecurity Europe.

As she revealed her details to our researchers one woman said, "even though I have just been to Paris for the weekend I would love to go again."

Sellick continued, "that promise of a trip could cost you dear, as once a criminal has your date of birth, name and phone number they are well on the way to carrying out more sophisticated social

engineering attacks on you, such as pretending to be from your bank or phone company and extracting more valuable information that can be used in ID theft or fraud.”

Workers were also queried about their use of passwords at work, half said that they knew their colleagues passwords and when asked if they would give their passwords to someone who phoned and said they were from the IT department, 58% said they would. Researchers also asked workers if they thought other people in their company knew their CEO's password. 35% them thought that someone else did with Personal Assistants and IT staff being the most likely suspects.

“This research shows that it’s pretty simple for a perpetrator to gain access to information that is restricted by having a chat around the coffee machine, getting a temporary job as a PA or pretending to be from the IT department.” Sellick continued, “This type of social engineering technique is often used by hackers targeting a specific organisation with valuable data or assets such as a government department or a bank.”

One man said, ‘I work for a government department, I would never give my password to anyone else, it could cost me my job’.

Most people used only one (31%), two (31%) or three (16%) passwords at work, but a few poor souls had to use as many as 32! It was also found that 43% of people rarely or never change their password which is very poor security practice.

After the survey was completed, each worker was told ‘We do not really want your personal information this is part of an exercise to raise awareness about information security as part of Information Security Awareness Week which runs from the 21-25 April 2008. We will tabulate results to find out how good people are at securing their information.’ At this one man told one of our pretty researchers you look so well dressed and honest I did not think you could be a criminal, which was a sentiment echoed by many others.

Claire Sellick continued “This is precisely the problem, whether a criminal approaches you on the street or online, they will often not be who they appear to be, a criminal can often look very presentable. Many of the social engineering techniques used by face-to-face fraudsters have been adopted by criminals to encourage people to open spam emails or visit websites that are infected with viruses, trojans or malware collectively known as crimeware. The crimeware silently takes control of PCs and other devices then steal identities and cash or in many cases joins the PCs to a network of controlled PCs as part of a “BOTNET” to launch attacks on other people or organisations.”

The survey was carried out as part of the run up to Information Security Awareness week which starts on the 21st April. Infosecurity Europe is part of the week’s activities and is the event where those responsible for securing their organisations information can find all the latest technology, services and advice from over 300 of the top security companies from across the globe exhibiting.

WORK OPPORTUNITIES

PR ACCOUNT MANAGER

Fed up with commuting and want to be part of a highly successful specialist team? This fast-growing, niche consultancy has a prestigious portfolio of clients including property developers, design consultancies and architectural practices. Their philosophy is built around their deep understanding of their clients' business, offering a range of bespoke services including strategy, marketing and public relations.

Led by a small but highly experienced, energetic team, their client base has grown hugely over the past year and they are now looking to take on a highly organised, ambitious account manager. Working closely with a director, you will play a key role in providing advice and PR support to a range of clients. This consultancy offers a supportive, friendly non-hierarchical culture, the opportunity to progress quickly, take on a great deal of responsibility and an unusual level of flexibility. You will be provided with the infrastructure to **work effectively from home**, with monthly meetings held in central London.

Understandably, this is an extremely close-knit and cohesive team: far from being isolated and out of the loop, everyone is constantly in contact and you will be given all the support you need to excel in this role and make it your own. Creativity, flexibility and a conscientious approach together with a good sense of humour are all key criteria. You will need to be strategic, intuitive and hands-on and with industry knowledge gained through working with relevant clients, this is a plum role for a highly self-motivated, superbly organised individual. Salary up to £35,000. <http://tinyurl.com/4b6zfa>

BUSINESS ADVISORS/CONSULTANTS – self employed

The IIB's Executive Associates offer practical business advice and skills support to small and medium sized companies. In order to be suitable for the role and to meet the Institute's rigorous entry standards, there is a four-stage selection process with training provided, culminating in accreditation as an Associate. If you have worked at director level or in a senior management position, you could be an ideal candidate.

Business Advisor/Consultant roles are suited to any person who meets our Client's criteria and would like:

- An immediate return to work as a self-employed consultant.
- A change in career direction and a new challenge.
- The resumption of a business career, after time out.
- Additional retirement income, whether now or in the future.
- An increase in income from existing consultancy work.
- Flexibility in working arrangements, allowing more leisure time.
- Better work/life balance.
- Build a career, **working from home**.
- Appointments with business owners and directors made for you by the IIB's in-house service.

The Institute for Independent Business was established in 1984, and with over 4000 Accredited Associates, the Institute (www.iib.org.ws) is now believed to be the largest organisation of its type in the world and the largest resource of executive business experience available to UK business owners and directors. Accredited Associates, each with their own core skill set, deliver general and specialist business advice to businesses. When an SME client requires a specialist skill outside an associate's core skill set, that associate draws on the skills of other Associates. Operating your own practice, typically from home, means that relocation is not necessary and the amount of work that an Associate takes on is entirely up to the individual which affords the flexibility to work full-time or part-time, as many hours as you wish.

<http://tinyurl.com/4ojq3k>

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The National Society for Epilepsy is the UK's largest epilepsy charity providing medical and care services, support and information, and undertaking world class research.

This is an exciting opportunity to join the National Society for Epilepsy (NSE) in a high profile role, as the charity becomes more nationally focused. You will increase the awareness of epilepsy and

the work we do to the widest possible audiences by ensuring successful delivery of our communications and information services strategies.

Educated to degree level or equivalent, you will have at least 5 years' experience in communications, at least two of which have been at management level. Proven experience in marketing, public relations and managing a diverse team are essential, as are exceptional interpersonal, written communication and organisational skills. There is a choice of work base; our HQ in South Bucks, **or at home** (including at least 2 days p/w at our HQ). Salary circa £42,000. <http://tinyurl.com/4czuez>

VOLUNTEERING ADVISER (GROUPS)

The support of the National Trust's 49,000 volunteers is vital to our continued success as the UK's largest conservation charity. This is an exciting opportunity to join the central volunteering team and lead our work supporting 200 volunteer led groups.

A graduate in a related discipline, or equivalent, with a strong background in working with volunteers, you will work closely with property and regional community, learning and volunteering teams across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In this key role you will be responsible for developing resources and managing both people and budgets. Excellent project management, communication and leadership skills are therefore essential.

In return, benefits include free entry to all our properties, staff discounts, 25 days' holiday a year and discounts in our shops and catering outlets. Based in Central Office, Heelis, Swindon but with opportunity for flexible and **home working**. Starting salary in the range £29,000 - £32,000. <http://tinyurl.com/3of9mn>

ACCOMMODATION ADVICE SERVICE MANAGER

Rainer works with young people, aged between 10 and 25, who live on the margins of society and who struggle without adequate support and protection. We provide services nationally, helping young people to get the most from their education, to find a job and set up a home. In the past year we have worked with over 18,000 young people, and we have ambitious plans for growth. You can help.

The National Leaving Care Advisory Service and What Makes the Difference project provide policy and practice advice, information and support to those responsible for older young people in care and care leavers.

Join us on a one-year contract and you'll be part of an initiative funded by the Government Department of Children, Schools and Families, which aims to improve accommodation options for young people leaving care. You'll help to develop effective policies and embed best practice across the board, as well as work closely with local authorities and other service providers, giving them expert information, advice and guidance.

Your track record of providing housing services to young people, or in a general housing/homelessness role, will have given you an in-depth understanding of legislation and regulatory frameworks in this area - as well as the management issues involved. Superb policy development and relationship building skills are equally important. We will consider candidates on secondment. London EC1 or **Home Based**. Salary up to £37,800 (12 month fixed term contract). <http://tinyurl.com/4d5wdt>

CHAIR OF ADOPTION PANEL

Essex Adoption Agency continually strives to set high standards placing children's needs at the centre of the process. An independent person is required to chair six adoption Panels per month (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings) based in Colchester, Basildon and Harlow. You must have substantial professional experience in family placement work and chairing complex meetings. Recent experience of adoption panel work would be an advantage.

Remuneration is £400 per panel which includes: preparation time, ensuring clear and accurate minutes and liaison with Agency Decision Maker. Additional responsibilities such as contributing to training, panel members' reviews, and recruitment of panel members will be paid at an additional £50 per hour.

You must hold a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure Certificate. The duties of this job require you to travel throughout Essex for which mileage allowance will be paid. **Home based.** <http://tinyurl.com/3gb77k>

CO-ORDINATOR – CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT

The UK resource centre for women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC) is the government's lead organisation dedicated to increasing the numbers of women working in these industries. With new exciting opportunities available, we are looking for an inspired and committed individual to join the team. If you're interested in work that's varied, challenging and about making an impact on society - then this role could be for you.

Where you live is not an issue as we work nationwide - with offices in Bradford, Edinburgh, Oxford, Cardiff - and we provide flexible working conditions including the opportunity to **work from home**. To find out more about us, visit www.ukrc4setwomen.org. In this role you will contribute to the Services for Women strategy and achievement of key targets and outcomes by:

- Developing routes to employment for women wishing to return to SET or enter SET sectors for the first time.
- Developing services that help women in their career advancement.
- Linking with the UKRC employers team, identifying and exploiting employer links for the benefit of individual women.

Benefits include:

- Final Salary Pension Scheme - Generous leave entitlement
- On-site fitness suite - Excellent learning opportunities - Nursery facilities

Salary £27,222 - £31,085 (pro-rata). <http://tinyurl.com/3og6pm>

SCHOOLS LIAISON MANAGERS

The e-Learning Foundation is an education charity, with significant private and public sector backing, set up to ensure that schoolchildren have equality of home access to ICT - with a special emphasis on disadvantaged communities. Our mission is that all schoolchildren should have access to learning technologies to support their learning, when and where they need them.

With many schools already on board, you will be responsible for developing and sustaining productive relationships with schools across London or Midlands and the South West. Your objective will be to inspire and support schools to launch an e-learning programme that reflects the core values of the Foundation which are equity of access, sustainability of funding and home access. Reporting to the Operations Director you will enjoy the support of a committed team and a highly influential Board of Trustees. **Home based**, you should be willing to travel, and will be occasionally required to work in the evening and weekend.

You should have excellent influencing skills, with the ability to present your arguments clearly and with conviction. Knowledge of the role that ICT can play in schools would be invaluable. Working

from home, you should be prepared to work independently and unsupervised but as a member of a team. As a creative thinker who can translate ideas into action, you will have a hands-on approach to selling a vision, and then supporting schools to implement it.

Salary £32,000 - £35,000 + £2K LWA + PHI + contributory pension.

<http://tinyurl.com/4m5amy>

PROJECT WORKER

With member unions representing over six and a half million working people, the TUC campaigns for a fair deal at work and for social justice at home and abroad. The Organisation and Services Department aims to win a better deal for working people by building membership and organisation and stronger links between unions. We also lead on a range of policy areas including: skills and learning, devolution, health and safety, the union modernisation fund, young people and students, practical support for unions, organising and the TUC Organising Academy, TUC organisation in the regions and in Wales, Learning Services and the Regional Education Service for union reps.

The South West Green Workplaces Project is designed to tackle climate change and energy issues and to raise awareness and build capacity within workplaces in the region by changing business behaviour. The project will help reduce environmental damage in the South West, cut carbon use, promote renewable energies, recycling, green transport plans and other positive practices in response to climate change.

The post holder will work to develop the trade union contribution to reducing the environmental impact of workplaces across the South West. Under the direction of the Green Workplaces Project Leader your main duties will be to engage workplace representatives to utilise the reach and authority of trade unions in the South West to achieve positive business practices in response to climate change; help organise events related to the project, encourage the recruitment of workplace environmental reps and organise training for them. As well as having experience of working with trade union and environmental issues, the successful candidate will need to demonstrate:

- excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- organisational skills, including record keeping and financial records
- knowledge of the trade unions, TUC and measures to reduce environmental impact
- ability to work to targets and deadlines without close supervision

This post is based at South West TUC, Bristol BS34 7BD (**remote working** within region an option as appropriate)

Fixed term contracts. Part time 17.5 hours. Salary £27,842 pro rata.

<http://tinyurl.com/4fbzqx>

WASTE PLANNER

An opportunity has arisen for a Planner with a thorough understanding of Waste issues to deliver a project for four Unitary authorities relating to a sub regional waste core strategy.

The successful individual will be required to work closely with the four authorities to ensure all targets are met and the project delivered on time. This is a contract position of around 18mths in duration. There is the option of **home working** as long as you can attend meetings on site as necessary.

Contract. Salary negotiable circa £25 per hour. <http://tinyurl.com/4r7I5w>

MRC - EXPERT REFEREE SELECTOR

As part of the Medical Research Council's peer review process, research grant and fellowship applications are assessed by independent referees. The MRC is seeking to contract qualified

scientists who are familiar with the peer review process to select expert referees for the Research Boards and Panels.

MRC Research Board and Panel meetings occur several times a year and if you are successful you will be contracted to select referees for up to 20 applications per meeting. You will be paid £80 per 2, 3 and 4yr grant application successfully refereed and £120 per 5yr grant application. You will work externally to MRC, **possibly from home** and must have broadband access to the internet and be readily contactable.

We need Expert Referee Selector positions to be filled across the MRC's Boards, Panels and Programmes. You will be familiar with medical research and will have research experience relevant to the areas covered by our boards and panels, but in particular one or more of the following:-

- Epidemiology
- Public Health – intervention, prevention and behavioural research
- Methodology research, including clinical trials, biostatistics and health economics
- Mathematical modelling
- Bioethics
- Microbiology and tropical medicine
- Gastrointestinal research
- Metabolic biochemistry and nutrition
- Clinical cancer research
- Pharmacology
- Medical sociology

You will possess a postgraduate qualification in a relevant scientific discipline and have at least four years experience of internationally/nationally competitive research. Knowledge of the peer review process would be an advantage, as would a demonstrable broad interest in biomedical research. You will also:

- possess good written and verbal communication skills;
- have a methodical approach to work;
- have the ability to work independently and to deadline.

<http://tinyurl.com/48z8bf>

SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR/PA

Our client is a not-for-profit, corporate membership based organisation that wishes to appoint a Senior Administrator, ideally based around the Norfolk/Suffolk border in the Waverney Valley, to assist its existing small national team on a 4 days per week basis. The requirement is for an independent and experienced person to manage the central corporate administration for both members and staff. Reporting to the Director General who is based near Harleston and often working closely with the Board, the Senior Administrator will help to proactively maintain and improve the administration of the business as a whole. The Senior Administrator is the primary central point of contact for administration and bookkeeping (although there is an Accountant) requirements of the company and its members. The Senior Administrator will support the DG to manage existing member and staff corporate communications, rules and procedures.

The working location will be a combination of **mostly home based working** and some working in different office locations in Harleston, London and around the UK. The Senior Administrator must attend and help to arrange company meetings and events of relevance to members and the Board of Directors. These meetings and events will initially be within the UK but may later involve international locations. Travel and meetings away from home will therefore, be necessary.

You will need experience of being a Board Secretary and Constitution Advisor and be able to manage and Minute all Board meetings and be familiar with corporate legal documents. It is important that you are able to ensure that Board matters are handled properly, including

preparation of pre-meeting materials, task functioning, and the nomination and recruitment of new Board members. Other duties will include management of Membership Fees, Cash Management, Staff Employment Administration, Corporate documentation, Business Communication & Reporting and Management of your own budgets. The Senior Administrator will prepare his/her own performance targets and agree them with the DG.

So what will you need to be able to carry out this big role? You will be very experienced as a Senior PA, Administration and Board Level Secretary – that is without question. You will exude independence, maturity and confidence to take proactive responsibility for administrative decisions within a small and mobile team. You will have advanced IT skills using Microsoft Office including Excel and Outlook. Great inter-personal and strong communication skills are, of course, going to be essential along with an out-going, friendly personality. While you won't be a qualified Accountant you will have company bookkeeping and basic financial accounting knowledge.

The part-time role is for the equivalent of 4 days per week and will be mainly a combination of home-based working and working from offices in Harleston (where the DG reside and works) and London. All reasonably attributable out of pocket office, telephone, mobile, broadband and standard class travel expenses will be reimbursed. All IT equipment for work will be provided by the company.

What about the package? There will be an initial salary of £20,000 pa for 4 days (equivalent to £25,000 pa full time). Holiday terms to be agreed, dependent on the pattern of work agreed based on normal full time equivalent of 25 days plus standard UK public holidays. Hours of working to be agreed but the team normally works from 9:30am to 5:30pm. Benefits will include a 10% contribution to personal pension. <http://tinyurl.com/3nrplt>