

SP News Link

Southampton
Partnership



John Beer

John Beer, Chair, Southampton Information, Training & Employment Services (SITES)

SITES-Southampton Information, Training and Employment Services, is a practical demonstration of the collective commitment of public, private and voluntary sector providers across the employment support and training sectors in Southampton. It seeks to close the gaps in social inclusion and economic performance by raising aspirations, opportunities and participation in the local labour market. The SITES partnership is linked to the Southampton Partnership through the Skills and Employability Board and the Economy and Enterprise Board.

The SITES Board and partnership are focused on two main aims:

- Tackling worklessness
- Engaging Employers

Most recently with the impact of the credit crunch and economic downturn rippling out to Southampton, the number of people registering as unemployed is rising. This makes our task in getting people back into work even more vital and we must ensure that the long term unemployed are not sidelined during the current economic situation whilst also supporting the increased number of people experiencing job loss and redundancy.

IKEA Recruitment Campaign

One of the very practical ways SITES partners have supported unemployed Southampton residents back into work is by negotiating employment and training plans with developers and employers. Most recently this has seen SITES partners supporting recruitment at the new IKEA store in Southampton. This is expected to generate around 500 jobs in the city. SITES partner involvement included facilitating the two day job fayre in September where over 2,000 people turned up to register their interest in finding employment at the new store. Staff from Jobcentre Plus, the City Council, and IKEA, were on hand to tell them more about the jobs on offer as well as pass on information on issues such as money advice, transport, debt, and childcare.



Copyright IKEA

In partnership with IKEA, the City Council's Adult Learning and Skills team and Jobcentre Plus negotiated free pre-employment training courses for unemployed residents, with funding from the Learning and Skills Council. The two day course provided participants with interview skills training, confidence building, and more information about IKEA to give them a strong understanding of IKEA's recruitment process. All those who successfully completed the programme were offered a place at an IKEA assessment session. Courses ran in a variety of locations across the city in September and over 100 residents completed the programme.

Feedback to date indicates that 24 residents who attended the pre-employment training have been offered a job with IKEA, with others going on to find jobs through other employers.



Funding success through the Interreg 2 Seas Programme

City Limits & the Regeneration & Renewal Teams at Southampton City Council have been successful in their bid to the new EU INTERREG fund; the 2 Seas Programme. The total project value is € 2.31million. The project will run for 3 years until 2011, & is a partnership of three public authorities; Southampton City Council, Stad Gent and Stad Rotterdam.

The cities will work together to:

- Look at the most important factors in social inclusion, with the focus of this project being those excluded from the labour market and job opportunities
- Bring together professionals who work to combat social exclusion (both directly and indirectly), and
- Test innovative methods of improving the position of those who suffer from exclusion in our respective areas.

Rotterdam intends to focus on young people accessing the labour market, and Gent will focus on improving access to jobs and services for disabled people.

The project aims to solve common problems identified by the partners, improving services that are delivered to the public and providing a record of successful projects, policies and schemes which are transferable to the wider 2 Seas programme area and beyond. The areas and groups which have been identified in terms of exclusion from society are those excluded from the labour market and job opportunities.

SAFE - Southampton Action for Employment

SAFE - Choices Course

SAFE is a charity based in Southampton, setup in 1993. It seeks to help isolated and disadvantaged people rethink their lives and find new ways forward using talking therapy type support based on the principals of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, (CBT).

One of their programmes – Choices, has been developed as a unique intervention aimed at those who are not working and face mental health concerns, alongside significant barriers and disadvantage. It is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and is a “vocational CBT course”. ‘CBT’ involves disputing unhealthy beliefs. ‘Course’ means it is highly relational and involves group work. ‘Vocational’ involves identifying strengths and focussing on goals and hope. A vocational focus for CBT is quite unique, a first for Southampton, and has lead to a research project with the University of Southampton.

The research involves a randomised control trial led by Dr Nick Maguire of the University’s Psychology department. The trial follows NHS ethics, with all candidates being screened under the supervision of a clinical psychologist.

While the sample is still small, the preliminary findings indicate that levels of depression for those within the Choices programme group went down compared to the control group; their levels of anxiety went down compared to the control. Levels of self esteem within the programme group went up compared to the control, as did their job search self efficacy (confidence in job hunting). These are extremely encouraging findings, not least because this is a very hard to reach group, with complex health and social problems being faced. The final findings will be published when the trial is completed.

More candidates are welcome to join the trial. For more information about the Choices course or the research please contact David Phillips at SAFE:
david.phillips@safe.org.uk or 023 8042 1001

Southampton students benefit from building works

Students at Southampton City College are benefitting from a new building before it has even taken shape. Construction students have been getting valuable hands-on experience as they learn from contractors working on the latest phase of the college’s multi-million pound redevelopment project.

The company behind the latest stage of work, specialist educational builders Leadbitter, has been working with the college to take the students’ vocational course to the next level. Among the initiatives the college and the firm have set up are Q&A sessions with construction workers, work experience opportunities and health and safety training on the site of the new building.

Principal, Lindsey Noble, said: “It is exciting to see that students are benefitting from the redevelopment even before the building has gone up. Leadbitter is supporting us in helping to develop and train the next generation of workers for the construction industry and this partnership helps us achieve our mission of giving students an experience that’s as close to the real world of work as possible.”

Students from many other courses will benefit once the building programme is complete as it will house state-of-the-art facilities to enhance their education. A three-storey hub will be built, containing exceptional facilities including television and radio studios, a theatre available for community use, green room, set design area and rehearsal space, meaning the college will be able to set up its own theatre production company.

The new building will also contain a central hub, which will be used as a dedicated student guidance area as well as for enrolment events, exhibitions and conferences. Highly glazed links will join the hub to ‘Block 2’, a new three-storey building that will provide up-to-date facilities for catering, hair and beauty learning. Block 2 will also house a fitness suite for staff and students, seminar rooms and a new student/staff bistro.



Southampton City Shopmobility celebrates ten years of service



Southampton City Shopmobility will be celebrating ten years of serving the people of Southampton on 27th January 2009. The project, based at Castle Way, Southampton offers hire of electric and manual wheelchairs as well as a Shopping Companion service to enable people to shop and use city centre facilities independently.

City Shopmobility was set up in 1999 after demand from local disabled people and disabled peoples groups. It has gone from strength to strength over the ten years of its existence, with usage nearly trebling since its first year of operation.

The service is open to anyone with walking difficulties, be they temporary or permanent, and full training is offered on the use of the vehicles to anyone who requires it. Under the management of Southampton Voluntary Services the service also works in partnership with other agencies and Shopmobilities in the local area to promote equal access for disabled people.

The tenth anniversary will be marked with a birthday party on 27th January to which volunteers and supporters of the charity will be invited. The day is also an ‘open house’ to anyone who wants to know more about the project.

If you would like to know more about City Shopmobility and the services it provides please call 02380631263 or email city.shopmobility@southamptonvs.org.uk



New Economic Report released by the Hampshire Economic Partnership

The HEP Research & Intelligence Task Group recently launched 'informing our future' 2008 revealing the opportunities and challenges facing Hampshire's economy.

In terms of global competitiveness, Hampshire is better equipped than most counties to survive the current economic downturn. This is because its business-base is already highly diversified and strategically located at a major gateway to Europe and beyond. However, its businesses need to remain globally competitive.

For many local companies survival will hinge on innovation and creativity. Maintaining and increasing levels of research and investment will maintain a competitive edge and ensure continuing demand for products. Continuing attraction and retention of investment will be vital and public infrastructure is both appropriate to business needs and deliver real benefits.

Hampshire's economic growth needs to be smarter. An engaged, educated and effective workforce is essential but so is a spirit of enterprise. Evidence shows that many employers are committed to improving training but a wealth of latent entrepreneurial talent still needs to be unlocked. The barriers preventing people, particularly women, from starting their own business must be reduced if the County is to reap the full benefit of any subsequent upturn.

Grouping businesses within modern, business parks makes good business sense. This facilitates inward investment and enables clusters of innovation and co-operation to flourish. Smarter ways of working and moving around have the potential to deliver both economic benefits and improved lifestyles.

Sustainable prosperity means living within our physical and economic means. Enlightened companies in Hampshire are finding that meeting sustainable standards is cost effective. For example, significant energy savings can be made without substantial investment and using space more effectively reduces the need for physical expansion.

The report concludes with a health check identifying the progress made against targets set by the Regional Economic Strategy. There is evidence of improvements in innovation and skills and many examples of good practice but more needs to be done to increase investment, knowledge transfer, and levels of qualification in the workforce.



Southampton's Maritime Centre of Excellence gains planning approval

Southampton is set to become the UK's leading maritime research city with the council resolving to grant detailed planning approval for the first phase of the Maritime Centre of Excellence. This will be based at the University of Southampton's Boldrewood Campus and is subject to approval by the Government Office of the South East. The new campus is the result of a vision shared by the University of Southampton and Lloyd's Register, the world-renowned maritime organisation.

Outline planning approval for the redevelopment of the campus was granted in June 2008, and the first phase will deliver two high-quality buildings, an extension to an existing building, and landscaping of the site which respects the proximity of the campus to the Common. One of these buildings will be occupied by the marine professionals of Lloyd's Register together with the University's maritime engineers.

This significant strategic investment by Lloyd's Register will enhance the University's position at the leading edge of maritime education and research and will also greatly benefit the city's economy, reinforcing Southampton's status as one of the worlds leading maritime centres.



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Calendar of Activity

January

24th – Surviving Redundancy Event (hosted by SITES)

25th – Chinese New Year Celebrations

26th – LDF Core Strategy Stakeholder Briefing

February

2nd – Southampton Heritage & Arts People (SHAPe) Conference

11th – South Hampshire Skills Festival - Choices Conference

March

19th – City Brand Symposium