

GENERAL ELECTION HURTS HIRING CONFIDENCE IN WALES

MANPOWERGROUP EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SURVEY REVEALS HIRING OUTLOOK IN WALES IS THE LOWEST OF ALL THE REGIONS

- **Outlook of 0% for the region**
- **Revival in the number of contact centre opportunities**
- **Demand for higher quality candidates drives up salaries by thousands**

13 JUNE 2017: In the first employment survey to be published since the General Election, Wales has shown to be the least confident region, according to ManpowerGroup, the world's workforce experts. With an Outlook that has dropped two points to 0%, hiring optimism is far below the national average of 5%. However, despite this there is still hope for the region as more businesses choose to re-shore their call centres in Wales.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is based on responses from 2,109 UK employers. It asks whether employers intend to hire additional workers or reduce the size of their workforce in the coming quarter. It is the most comprehensive, forward-looking employment survey of its kind and is used as a key economic statistic by both the Bank of England and the UK government.

Simon Edwards, Operations Director at Manpower, said: "Once again, employers in Wales are pessimistic about hiring and the region's Outlook is at its lowest level since 2014. For some, a snap general election being held just over a week before Brexit negotiations begin has led them to be even more cautious in their hiring plans. But low confidence in hiring isn't something that's new to the region - Wales' hiring confidence has been below the national average every quarter for the past year."

"However, there are still reasons for the region to be hopeful. Large regional employers are hiring in Cardiff, and we are noticing that a lot of financial services companies are choosing to re-shore their call centres in Wales. Due to the nature of the financial services industry, these call centre agents are expected to take on additional responsibility such as fraud prevention, driving up salaries by thousands of pounds. Call centre agents might previously have expected to be paid between £14,000 and £16,000 but now many employers are offering up to £22,000."

Nationally, companies are demonstrating cautious optimism with an Outlook of +5%, despite a triple whammy of uncertainty over the last few months - a snap election, the triggering of Article 50, and weak economic data for the first half of 2017. Whilst on first glance the election uncertainty might appear unhelpful to employers, ManpowerGroup believes that the shock result could offer hope for businesses who had feared the impact of a hard Brexit on hiring.

James Hick, ManpowerGroup Solutions Managing Director: "You might have expected hiring confidence to have taken a real hit, but employers have been standing firm. However, unquestionably they feared the outcome of a hard Brexit on the jobs market. The election

result throws into question the Conservative commitment to slash immigration to the “tens of thousands” and double the levy on non-EU workers to £2,000. The simple truth is that some sectors will stall without skilled workers from overseas, which could result in the UK economy entering a tailspin.”

Hick continues: “People might be surprised to learn that in the last year 80,000 Bulgarians and Romanians entered the UK workforce, while the size of the UK-born workforce did not increase at all¹ – demonstrating just how accustomed we have become to a steady stream of labour from overseas. Slamming the door shut will leave us seriously exposed.”

It is a diverse picture across the regions this quarter. Yorkshire and Humber is top of the regional charts on +11%, its highest level since 2014. London is also riding high, with a five point jump this quarter, to +8%. It’s a mixed picture in the west: the West Midlands is up four points to +9%. But the South West is down three points to +1% (its lowest level in since 2014), and the North West is also down three points to +3%. In the east of the country it’s also a pretty uneven picture: the North East and East of England are both in line with the national average (+5%) whereas the South East is up five points to +9%, but the East Midlands has slipped to +3%, its least optimistic outlook in over six years. Northern Ireland (+4%) and Scotland (+2%) are both below the national average.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

A ‘Net Employment Outlook’ is calculated by subtracting those employers who plan to reduce staffing levels from those who plan to hire staff. A positive result indicates that more employers plan to increase rather than decrease staffing levels; a negative result reflects the opposite. [% increase - % decrease]

Commentary and full details on every sector and region can be found in the survey report at manpowergroup.co.uk/meos, or by calling the Press Office on 0207 404 5959/ manpower@brunswickgroup.com

For international comparisons and visual library with graphs, visit manpowergroup.com

Commentary is based on seasonally adjusted data where available. Full survey results for each of the 42 countries and territories included in this quarter’s survey, plus regional and global comparisons, can be found in the ManpowerGroup Press Room at www.manpowergroup.com/meos. In addition, all tables and graphs from the full report are available to be downloaded for use in publication or broadcast from the ManpowerGroup Web site at: <http://www.manpowergroup.com/press/meos.cfm>

Note that in Quarter 2 2008, the Survey adopted the TRAMO-SEATS model for seasonal adjustment of data. As a result, you may notice some seasonally adjusted data points change slightly from previous reports. This model is recommended by the Eurostat department of the European Union and the European Central Bank, and is widely used internationally.

About the Survey

The world leader in innovative workforce solutions, ManpowerGroup releases the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey quarterly to measure employers’ intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. It is the longest running, most extensive, forward-looking employment survey in the world, polling nearly 59,000 employers in 42 countries and territories. The survey serves as a bellwether of labour market trends and activities and is regularly used to inform the Bank of England’s Inflation Reports, as well as a regular data source for the European Commission, informing its EU Employment Situation and Social Outlook report the *Monthly Monitor*. ManpowerGroup’s independent survey data is also sourced by financial analysts and economists around the world to help determine where labour markets are headed.

¹ Office for National Statistics, UK labour market statistical bulletin, May 2017.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/employmentbycountryofbirthandnationalityemp06>

About ManpowerGroup

ManpowerGroup™ (NYSE: MAN) has been the world's workforce expert, creating innovative workforce solutions, for nearly 70 years. As workforce experts, we connect more than 600,000 men and women to meaningful work across a wide range of skills and industries every day. Through our ManpowerGroup family of brands – Manpower®, Experis™, Right Management® and ManpowerGroup™ Solutions – we help more than 400,000 clients in 80 countries and territories address their critical talent needs, providing comprehensive solutions to resource, manage and develop talent. In 2016, ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the sixth consecutive year and one of Fortune's Most Admired Companies, confirming our position as the most trusted and admired brand in the industry. See how ManpowerGroup makes powering the world of work humanly possible: www.manpowergroup.com.