



## WINTER OUTLOOK REVEALS UK JOBS MARKET SKATING ON THIN ICE

- **No snap Brexit backlash but six out of nine sectors report a fall in jobs optimism**
- **Bellwether sectors signal trouble ahead as finance and construction fall four points**
- **Restricting freedom of movement will damage vital frontline services and the economy**

**13 SEPTEMBER 2016:** On the surface the EU referendum result has done little to dampen employers' immediate hiring plans, but vital early warning signs suggest the UK jobs market could be in for a rough ride, according to ManpowerGroup, the world's workforce experts.

The national seasonally adjusted Net Employment Outlook has remained at +5% for the final three months of the year, defying predictions that the vote for Brexit would trigger an immediate slump in recruitment plans. However, ManpowerGroup is warning that this could be the calm before the storm. Conducted in the weeks following the referendum, the survey shows that while UK job prospects have held firm, cracks in the ice are appearing with six out of nine sectors surveyed reporting a fall in jobs optimism.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is based on responses from 2,102 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.

Mark Cahill, ManpowerGroup UK Managing Director: "After the initial shock of Brexit, we're entering a new phase of prolonged economic uncertainty. The future of freedom of movement across the EU is of particular concern. As UK businesses are reliant on European talent to help fill the skills gap, we urge the government to prioritise maintaining the free movement of people across the EU during its negotiations. This would make sure the UK remains competitive, while sending a powerful message to skilled jobseekers– Britain remains open for business."

The biggest cause for concern is across three industries vital to Britain's long-term prospects. Business and finance services, construction and utilities all reported four point falls in employer optimism. Manufacturing fell two points despite the weak pound and now sits at +4% – its weakest level in three years. Cahill again: "Many finance operations in the City of London depend on the EU 'banking passport' and the fall in hiring intentions could reflect pessimism over the future of this agreement. We've already seen London's competitors like Paris and Frankfurt making overtures to the City's big finance firms. In addition, we've seen an 800% rise in applications for finance positions in Dublin since the Brexit vote."

ManpowerGroup's research also reveals that public sector hiring sentiment has plummeted to -4%, its weakest level in more than four years. Cahill again: "The public sector accounts for almost 10% of employment across the country and a fall of this magnitude would have a damaging effect on frontline services. The government must also prioritise infrastructure investment in the upcoming Autumn Statement to provide a much-needed boost to the construction industry and to businesses in regions hamstrung by aging transport links."

The fall in sterling following the referendum has had a positive impact on the retail, wholesale and hospitality sector, which has risen 3% to +6%. While retail sales are a key factor driving this quarter's +5% Net Employment Outlook, it is too early for a victory lap. Cahill: "For now, people are still spending, meaning retail job prospects remain positive for UK workers. But this looks like a short-term feel good factor that may fall away after the busy summer period and ramp up to Black Friday. The British tourism industry boomed this summer, boosted by the decline in the pound, which may have helped overcome the initial shock to the UK economy. However, over time the weaker sterling could push up the price of imported goods and reduce overall consumer spending power. People returning from foreign holidays have already felt the sharp end of the pound's devaluation."

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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](http://manpowergroup.co.uk/meos), or by calling the Press Office on 0207 404 5959/ [manpower@brunswickgroup.com](mailto:manpower@brunswickgroup.com)

For international comparisons and visual library with graphs, visit [manpowergroup.com](http://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](http://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.

**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](http://www.manpowergroup.com).

**About Manpower UK**

Manpower is the global leader in contingent and permanent recruitment workforce solutions. It is part of ManpowerGroup, the world's workforce expert, which creates and delivers high-impact solutions that enable clients to achieve their business goals and enhance their competitiveness.

With a network of 300 offices in cities across the country, Manpower has provided organisations in the UK with a continuum of staffing solutions from the incidental to the strategic for nearly 60 years, working with businesses such as BT, IBM, Royal Mail and Xerox to help them win.

In the Human Age, where talent has replaced access to capital as the key competitive differentiator, Manpower UK leverages its trusted brand to develop a deep talent pool, providing clients with access to the people they need, fast.

Manpower UK creates powerful connections between organisations and the talent they need to enhance their competitiveness and unleash their workforce potential. By creating these powerful connections, we help everybody achieve more than they imagined, and power the world of work.

For more information, see [www.manpower.co.uk](http://www.manpower.co.uk)