

BILLION POUND BOOST BOLSTERS NORTHERN HIRE-LAND

MANPOWERGROUP EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SURVEY REVEALS REGION'S EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK HAS JUMPED AHEAD OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

- **Outlook of +7% for the region**
- **£1 billion cash injection boosts manufacturing and transport sectors**
- **Good news tempered by Brexit-related concerns around the border and skills shortages**

12 SEPTEMBER 2017: Northern Ireland's jobs market has been a big winner following the UK General Election in June, according to ManpowerGroup, the world's workforce experts. The DUP-negotiated "supply and demand" deal resulting in a cash injection of at least £1 billion for the region has already boosted hiring optimism in Northern Ireland, where employers have reported a surprise jump ahead of the UK national average to +7% this quarter.

The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey is based on responses from 2,100 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.

Jason Greaves, Operations Director at Manpower, said: "Now the dust has settled on the General Election, we are starting to see some longer term benefits of the promised £1 billion boost to Northern Ireland's economy. Both the manufacturing and automotive and transport sectors have seen particularly high demand for skilled candidates and this is translating to higher rates of pay for candidates. In manufacturing, clients are crying out for experienced welders, and clever candidates are making the most of this strong position by pushing for higher salaries (around £15 an hour for a welder) and the job security of being employed on a permanent basis. However, once in post, candidates are increasingly liable to switch jobs if a better opportunity arises, so employers are having to rethink their whole approach to candidate attraction and retention, making it much more centred around the candidate experience and longer term career progression."

"Despite this quarter's good news story, we still remain concerned about the impact of Brexit on the region's jobs market. The future of the border with Ireland is at the forefront of Brexit discussions and many employers need certainty around this issue before they make any big hiring decisions. We have also seen the region lose its appeal for some EU workers who are already here, but are finding that the weakened pound makes their work much less lucrative. We are aware of companies that are keen to retain skilled EU workers and have even offered free accommodation but have found that it is not enough of a financial incentive to retain these colleagues."

Nationally, employers have recorded a one point uptick in optimism with a national Outlook of +6%. A surge in positivity among public sector employers is a key factor in the improved national picture, with hiring intentions in this sector up 4 points to +2%, the biggest rise since 2015.

James Hick, ManpowerGroup Solutions Managing Director: "This is the first time in over a year that public sector hiring plans have been in positive territory. June's general election outcome was seen in part as a rejection of austerity, and it looks like the public sector is powering on, as hiring ramps up. At the beginning of the year there were 86,000 vacancies in the NHS; the government recently announced that it will train an additional 1500 doctors a year and create 20,000 new mental health posts. However, with the health service so heavily dependent on EU nationals, these hiring targets are going to be extremely difficult to meet. And that's just the NHS; there are tens of thousands of vacancies in other government departments."

Hick explains: "The tough reality lurking beneath all these positive indicators is that these hiring intentions may not come to fruition because of difficulties attracting and retaining skilled employees. Take construction, where companies are reporting a stronger pipeline of work than they have for years with an Outlook this quarter of +11%, up six points from last quarter. However, without a pool of skilled workers to actually do the work, buildings will go unbuilt and projects will flounder. There is lots of talk around what we need to do to fix the UK's ailing housing market at present but politicians' promises are just hot air without the essential skilled talent needed to deliver these programmes."

Regionally, confidence in London, where housing and the broader cost of living is the highest, has halved to +4% since last quarter. The East of England forecast tops the charts at +11%, while employers in the South East maintain their confident streak with an Outlook of +10%.

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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.

About ManpowerGroup

ManpowerGroup® (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for over 400,000 clients and connect 3+ million people to meaningful, sustainable work across a wide range of industries and skills. Our expert family of brands – Manpower®, Experis®, Right Management® and ManpowerGroup® Solutions – creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across 80 countries and territories and has done so for nearly 70 years. In 2017, ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the seventh 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 is powering the future of work: www.manpowergroup.com