

Engage with a member.



The employment scene locally is particularly difficult for residents as they not only have to compete with the student population but also with those coming to B & H for a better lifestyle. One of our members, Claire Mitchell, runs a company called *Engage Employment Solutions Ltd* that specialises in helping local residents who get left behind in the employment race. We invited her, in her own words, to tell us more.

“Recruitment – the real costs and getting it right in the community

Employment issues cost UK companies £2.4 billion every year (FPB). A recent FSB survey found that smaller-business employers spend:

- £259m per year on work associated with dismissals and redundancy.
- £391m on absence control and management,
- £237m on maternity,
- £333m on disciplinary issues
- £1,175m on holidays and any other remaining aspects of employment legislation.
- Average time per month spent on all of these different aspects of employment law was found to be around 10 hours for each small business

Companies in the South East were found to spend the most on employment law, out of 12 of the regions surveyed, at £361 million per year. Partly, because 72% of employees with problems are prepared to seek advice or information for their problem (2008 Fair Treatment at Work Survey (FTWS))

Brighton & Hove is an interesting City with so many diametrically opposed demographics it can be a challenge getting the right staff for business and getting recruitment right.

There are 32,000 students in the City with 7,000 graduating each year; of which a large percentage prefer to remain in the city for a time. They compete with the local unemployed residents, (11,000 of whom are, looking for work) for low skills jobs and to employers they often look like the safer option. However, they bring transience to the workforce which has a detrimental effect on the quality of customer service in the City. Given that one of our main industry sectors is tourism this is not a desirable outcome.



My work at *Engage Employment Solutions Ltd*. predominately involves trying to marry up businesses with local unemployed residents to raise the economy. I run a number of networks aimed at matching up local businesses with the right local staff and to provide the continuing good HR support. I also facilitate communications between business and the third and public sectors, who all speak a different language but can clearly benefit from understanding and working with each other.”

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South East Policy Unit (SEPU)

SEPU held one of its regular meetings at Kingswood on 1 November to consider policy activity within the South East Area. On the agenda were a few items that affect us in B & H.

Management of Business Link locally has now passed from Sussex Enterprise to SERCO. It will be interesting to see how this impacts on services. If you have any dealings with Business Link please tell us about your experiences so that we may pass them on to SEPU.



The latest position on Business Crime also came up for discussion. What business finds annoying is that the crime that affects it is not separated out in the statistics and so fails to record the true impact. Unlike crime on single households the economic impact upon business and the local community is wider and can be quite devastating. If business fails as a result of crime the cost to the local economy can be massive. The after shock can show itself in higher un-employment, fewer services and larger bills for the local authority in lost rates, trade and ancillary income. However, with your support the FSB can get the message home to the politicians so that they start to ask the right questions and do more to tackle this issue.

Sietske De Groot, the FSB Senior EU and International Policy Adviser, came along to give a presentation about the role that the European Union plays in UK legislation. She explained how the FSB is lobbying to influence the politicians and the Commission before anything hits the statute books, to make sure that small businesses needs are considered.

Sitske also explained the new Point of Single Contact procedure that is being introduced Europe wide. This is due to go live at the end of December and is designed to make accessing government requirements easier. For the UK the web portal will be through ‘Business Link’.

Sitske De Groot with Roger House (SEPU Chairman) and Andy Barter (SEPU Policy Manager)



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