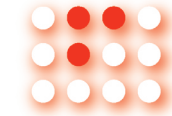


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## Manufacturing's green shoots grow stronger

Manufacturing continued its recovery into the start of 2010, according to the latest official figures.

The output of the UK's manufacturing sector rose by 1.0% in the three months to January 2010 on the previous three-month period and was at its highest level for the year in the fourth quarter.

There was a 4.2% quarter-on-quarter rise in the engineering and allied industries and a 1.0% increase in base metals and other products. However, the food, drink and tobacco industries showed a 0.4% fall, while the textile, leather and clothing industries posted a fall of 5.3%.

The index of manufacturing showed a 2.3% fall on the same three-month period a year earlier.

The more volatile monthly figures produced by the Office for National Statistics showed that in January 2010 manufacturing output rose by 0.2% on January 2009.

Output rose in four of the 13 manufacturing sub-sectors and fell in the other nine. The largest increase 17.0% was in transport equipment industries. Within this sub-sector there were particularly strong rises

of 38.9% in car manufacture and 14.1% in "aircraft and spacecraft".

Output of the production industries (manufacturing, mining and utilities) rose by 1.0% in the three months to January 2010 on the previous three-month period, but was 3.7% down on the same three-month period a year earlier. On a monthly basis, production was down by 1.5% on a year earlier.

[www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/iop0310.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/iop0310.pdf)

## Blacklisting law comes into force

New regulations to outlaw blacklisting of trade unionists came into force on 2 March. However, they have come under attack from unions as not doing enough.

Construction union UCATT have argued that the regulations were deficient as they did not make blacklisting a specific criminal offence and only prevented workers from being blacklisted for undertaking, the narrowly defined, "trade union activities".

The government has given the green light to employers to blacklist workers for undertaking unofficial industrial action, which could include stopping work due to safety fears or a refusal to undertake voluntary overtime, the union said.

**LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT**

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Alan Ritchie, general secretary of UCATT, said: "The government has entirely rejected all UCATT submissions and attempts to have the regulations amended to ensure that blacklisting was stamped out. Fortunately for Lord Young blacklisting doesn't occur in the House of Lords but ordinary construction workers are not so privileged."

The regulations also fail to grant an automatic right to compensation for any worker who discovers that they have been blacklisted. If a blacklist is discovered workers will not be automatically told that they had been blacklisted.

Ritchie, added: "Cynical construction employers will recognise the weakness of the regulations and could continue to blacklist workers. They know that they are unlikely to get caught and if they do they will merely get a slap on the wrist. UCATT will continue to campaign to have the regulations overhauled so that they are truly effective in stamping out this despicable practice once and for all."

[www.ucatt.info/content/blogcategory/19/30/](http://www.ucatt.info/content/blogcategory/19/30/)

The link to a copy of the regulations is [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/plain/uksi\\_20100493\\_en](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/plain/uksi_20100493_en)

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## How to protect public staff from violence

Scotland's local authorities have come together to protect staff from violence in the workplace following the launch of new guidelines.

The Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives has teamed up with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) in an effort to stamp out the risk of physical and verbal abuse.

They have drawn together good practice to form guidelines published in *Managing occupational violence and aggression in the workplace: tools and strategies*. They are believed to be the first of its kind in the UK, which aim to provide a tool for those working in local authorities, whether they are practitioners, managers, individual workers or elected members.

The new guidelines will allow local authorities to compare recommendations against their existing standards and encourage the involvement of staff in agreeing and monitoring procedures.

It is estimated that more than one in three (38%) of people working in a public-facing occupation in

Scotland have suffered verbal abuse by a member of the public in the last 12 months. The number of assaults reported against people working in local government rose from 9,121 to 9,910 in 2009.

Over a million people in Scotland deal with the public as part of the daily working routine and those who face possible verbal or physical abuse can include classroom assistants, refuse collectors, care workers and councillors.

Many incidents, however, go unreported due to a lack of robust reporting procedures or perceptions that being abused is part of the job.

Dave Watson, Scottish organiser for public sector union UNISON, said: "Any act of violence on a member of staff providing vital public services is completely unacceptable.

"It is clear that where rigorous monitoring and active preventative measures are in place, this has resulted in improved staff safety. This new guidance will give local authorities the tools to make real progress in tackling this issue."

[www.unison-scotland.org.uk/news/2010/janfeb/2402.htm](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/news/2010/janfeb/2402.htm)

[www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/execgroups/hr/hr090917item06bappendix1.doc](http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/execgroups/hr/hr090917item06bappendix1.doc)

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## Public spending cuts would hit women hard

Deep public spending cuts would lead to heavy job losses for women and substantially reduce their income in retirement, according to a TUC report.

The report, *Women and the recession – one year on*, warns that early public spending cuts would hit female employment hardest because around four in 10 women work in public sector occupations, compared to less than two in 10 men.

The report identifies Wales (47%), the North East (46%) and Scotland (43%) as the areas where the highest proportion of women work in the public sector. Women working in these areas are most vulnerable to job losses resulting from public spending cuts, the report says.

Female unemployment has varied greatly between regions during the recession. For example, Yorkshire and the Humber has had the biggest increase in women's unemployment since the start of the recession (+3.1 percentage points), followed by London (+2.8 percentage points) and Wales (+2.2 percentage points). London is the only area of the

UK where female unemployment has increased faster than men's.

The report shows that many areas with a high proportion of female public sector workers also have higher than average male unemployment rates, so spending cuts could leave many families with both parents out of work.

Cuts to public sector pensions would also increase the gender divide in retirement income and lead to greater poverty for female pensioners, the report warns.

Women's average income in retirement is a third less than men's, and it would be far worse were it not for the superior record of the public sector in providing decent pensions for women and lower-paid staff, the report says. It warns that women hold nearly two-thirds (65%) of defined benefit schemes in the public sector so any cuts to pensions would disproportionately fall on them.

The report shows that women in the public sector are currently doing around £5 billion worth of unpaid overtime a year. With public services already under strain, further job losses would leave staff even more stretched, the report says.

[www.tuc.org.uk/extras/womenandrecessiononeyearon.pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/womenandrecessiononeyearon.pdf)

## Take-home pay index hits all-time low

Take-home pay for February has continued January's downward spiral to hit an all-time low of 1.0%, according to the index figures produced by pay processor Vocalink.

The combination of the two recent consecutive falls has nearly halved the index during that period, taking it from 1.9% in December to 1.0% in February, signifying the Index's lowest level since its inception in September 2004.

A slower than expected recovery in manufacturing production has contributed to the significant decrease in the manufacturing index which also fell to its lowest level on record by tumbling from 1.1% in January to 0.4% in February.

Services sector pay growth followed the downward trend with a drop of 0.3 percentage points to reach 1.3% in February. Though the reduction is relatively modest, a fall of this size is still significant given the index's current low level.

The VocaLink manufacturing index fell sharply for the second consecutive month, losing 0.7 percentage points in February after tumbling by 0.9 percentage points in January. So after retaining its highest level for 2009 in both November and December at 2.0%, the manufacturing index is now at one-fifth of that level and has fallen to a record low of 0.4%.

The Vocalink statistics are based on private companies in the FTSE 350 and so some trends, which affect relatively larger firms differently, may have a disproportionate impact on the VocaLink Take-Home Pay Index compared with the government's official Average Earnings Index (AEI).

[www.vocalink.com/en/AboutUs/Press%20room/Take%20home%20pay%20index/2010archive/Pages/VocaLinkTakeHomePayIndexslumpstolowestlevelonrecord.aspx](http://www.vocalink.com/en/AboutUs/Press%20room/Take%20home%20pay%20index/2010archive/Pages/VocaLinkTakeHomePayIndexslumpstolowestlevelonrecord.aspx)

## Challenge is laid down on staff well-being

The concept of "good work" is not just about ensuring that jobs do not make people ill; it is about organising work in a way that actually promotes good physical and mental health. This is not a new idea, but in the UK there is no consensus about how exactly good work should be defined, let alone how to achieve it.

The government and employers have been challenged by the TUC to ensure that workplaces don't just prevent staff from becoming ill, but actively promote good health and well-being through "good work".

The latest in a series of TUC Touchstone Extra reports – *In sickness and in health?* – argues that around one-third of our waking hours are spent at work, and that our working lives help to define who we are, where and how well we live, and even how long we live.

"Good work", says the report, goes much further than simply ensuring that jobs do not make people ill, and is more about organising working in a way that promotes good physical and mental health. Reputable employers will have risk assessments in place to prevent workers being made ill or injured by their jobs, and sickness absence policies to support those who are ill, but the TUC believes much more can be done.

There is a danger, the report warns, that employers and workers see work as an economic process where employees come to work simply to earn a

wage. Work is far more than that, says the pamphlet, and as well as providing an income, work offers social contact for many people and is one of the main factors in determining a person's identity and general physical and emotional well-being.

"Good work" can be rewarding and fulfilling for employees, leading to improved performance. For employers, it can increase productivity and help them attract and retain staff.

The report highlights factors that contribute to a better working environment such as being in control of workload, having good quality line managers, and having good health and safety standards. Other factors include: a friendly and flexible workplace culture, equality and fair treatment, development and training opportunities, sensible hours of work and manageable work intensity, along with job security and a healthy work-life balance culture.

Factors that can constitute "bad work" include: a lack of control over work, poverty pay, repetitive or monotonous work, a lack of respect at work, incompetent line managers, too much – or too little – work, a lack of training, unsafe working conditions, long hours and bullying.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The economic rewards of a national 'good work' culture could be huge.

"Every year around 170 million working days are lost in the UK because people are too ill to go to work and the cost of this sickness absence runs into tens of billions of pounds. The benefits to individual workers of leading more fulfilled and healthier lives are also enormous."

[www.tuc.org.uk/extras/goodwork.pdf](http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/goodwork.pdf)  
[www.tuc.org.uk/newsroom/tuc-17643-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/newsroom/tuc-17643-f0.cfm)

## Millions are wasted on rail franchises

The rail franchising system could be costing the industry over £25 million a year.

Between 2005 and 2009, the Department for Transport spent £33.8 million to "design and tender" rail franchises, according to a parliamentary answer. This was made up of £15.3 million for departmental staff, administration and advisers to "review documentation" and £18.5 million in fees paid to "external advisors".

In addition to this, each company bidding for a franchise spends between £1 million and £4 million. Given that eight franchises were let and that each franchise attracted three or four bidders, franchise expenditure rockets to over £100 million.

Money that could have been used to improve our railways has been utterly wasted and lost to the industry forever by rail franchising, said Keith Norman, general secretary of rail union ASLEF.

"It is incredible that anyone still clings to this profligate and discredited system. Franchising might be good for accountants and consultants – but it is a disaster for passengers and staff."

[www.aslef.org.uk/information/117586/franchises\\_\\_cost\\_uk\\_railways\\_\\_25\\_million\\_a\\_year/](http://www.aslef.org.uk/information/117586/franchises__cost_uk_railways__25_million_a_year/)  
[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100203/text/100203w0024.htm#100203111000039](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100203/text/100203w0024.htm#100203111000039)

## Industrial action – new LRD legal guide

Knowledge of the law of industrial action is vital for trade unionists as the consequences of a failure to observe the provisions of the *Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992* when going out on strike are severe.

*Industrial action – a legal guide* explains all the legal aspects and possible consequences of taking industrial action in clear and concise language, using examples from case law to illustrate points where relevant.

The new LRD booklet explains about immunities, the procedure for balloting, taking and stopping industrial action, the law on picketing, dismissal and industrial action and the effects on terms and conditions.

As *Fact Service* reported last week, judges have been blocking industrial action – British Airways and Milford Docks are two good examples.

And the number of injunctions brought by employers under the Act over the past year has nearly trebled, according to newspaper reports.

*Industrial action – a legal guide*, £5.05 a copy incl p&p from Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF or order online at [www.lrdpublications.org.uk/publications.php?pub=BK&iss=1496](http://www.lrdpublications.org.uk/publications.php?pub=BK&iss=1496)