

## New car growth set to continue in 2013

SMMT has published its new car registrations and vans forecast for 2013, with both set to improve on 2012 figures. The new car forecast has been set at 2.057 million units, which is more than 10,000 units up on 2012. Last year, the new car market grew 5.3% to 2.044 million units, and SMMT's latest forecast suggests the 2013 market will build on this positive trend, ending 0.6% higher than 2012. The outlook for the van market in 2013 is also positive, with SMMT forecasts predicting a recovery from the drop in demand in 2012 with an increase of 4.7% to 251,000 units. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/01/new-car-growth-set-to-continue-in-2013/>



## Significant rise in engineering and manufacturing apprentices

Figures released by Semta, the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing, has shown that Apprenticeship starts in engineering and advanced manufacturing have increased by more than 85% in the past two years. Every region in England has seen a significant rise in new apprentices in the past two years with the West Midlands (227%), East Midlands (174%), North East (133%) and Yorkshire and Humber (109%) leading the way, with the figures also illustrating that most of the new starts have been at intermediate level

(142%), with a smaller rise (23%) in the number of advanced and higher level apprentices. Commenting on the data, Semta Chief Executive Sarah Sillars stated: "These figures are extremely encouraging. These are real jobs, many paying well above the national average, with young people earning as they learn new skills. But we shouldn't rest on our laurels. Engineering and manufacturing still has an image problem – we need more teachers and parents to understand apprenticeships will benefit their children and not somebody else's. The sector needs to recruit 82,000 people just to cover retirements up to 2016 so there is a real opportunity for young people so much more needs to be done to attract them into engineering and advanced manufacturing."

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/01/new-figures-reveal-significant-rise-in-engineering-and-manufacturing-apprentices/>

## Treasury Committee states government must restore primacy of Budget

The Treasury Committee has published a report containing a number of conclusions and recommendations for action following its inquiry into government's Autumn Statement. The key recommendation outlined in the report is that the Treasury should re-establish the annual Budget as the main focus of fiscal and economic policy making, stating that the Autumn Statement is not, nor should be, a second Budget, but that in recent years it has come to read like one. The Committee goes on to note that the case for two Budgets is weak, and an additional one can create uncertainty recommend that Treasury and business managers ensure that the House has a longer period than in 2012 between the publication of the Finance Bill and its Second Reading and, particularly, between Second Reading and Committee of the Whole House, stating: "Adequate Parliamentary time must be given to allow proper scrutiny of the Finance Bill. The time provided in 2012 fell well short of what was required." With regards the Funding for Lending Scheme, the Committee noted its concern over reports that there may be a bias in the effect of the Scheme that favours lending for

mortgages rather than lending to SMEs, noting that the Funding for Lending Scheme was designed to boost the provision of credit to the economy. The Committee recommend that the Bank of England and the Treasury should assess whether this is the case and report their findings and any proposed action to the Treasury Committee. (Source: Treasury Committee) [www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/treasury/crc-Autumn-Statement-hc%2018-Volume%201.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/treasury/crc-Autumn-Statement-hc%2018-Volume%201.pdf)



## OFT report points to competition working well in UK road fuel sector

A report from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has found that rises in pump prices for petrol and diesel over the last 10 years have been caused largely by higher crude oil prices and increases in tax and duty and not a lack of competition. The evidence gathered by the OFT suggests that at national level competition is working well in the UK road fuel sector, although it has identified an absence of pricing information on motorways as a concern and does not rule out taking action in some local markets if there is persuasive evidence of anti-competitive behaviour. The OFT launched a call for information on the UK road fuel sector in September last year to determine whether there are competition problems that need to be addressed. In addition to assessing the information submitted to it, the OFT has undertaken detailed analysis of pricing data to investigate claims that the £47bn market is not working well. The OFT found that, pre-tax, the UK has some of the cheapest road fuel prices in Europe. In the 10 years between 2003 and 2012 pump prices increased from 76 pence per litre (ppl) to 136ppl for petrol, and from 78ppl to 142ppl for diesel, caused largely by an increase of nearly 24ppl in tax and duty and 33ppl in the cost of crude oil. (Source: OFT)

<http://www.of.gov.uk/OFTwork/markets-work/othermarketswork/road-fuel-CFI/>

## BIS publish 'The Impact of FE Learning' report

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has published 'The Impact of FE Learning' report. The key finding from the report was that a third of men and nearly a third of women who participated in further education (FE) got a better job as a result. Other findings include that following completion of FE courses: 18% of men and 12% of women got promoted; 58% indicated that they were getting more satisfaction from their job; 80% indicated that they had gained self-confidence or self-esteem. Commenting on the report, Skills Minister, Matthew Hancock stated: "Further education and training is essential for equipping people of all ages with the skills employers need to prosper and compete. I encourage employers and employees alike to note the findings, and make the most of the many development opportunities available." (Source: gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/it-s-official-learning-improves-career-prospects>

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## Week ahead

### Commons Chamber

Thursday 7 February

Business, innovation and skills questions (9:30am)

### Commons Committees

Tuesday 5 February

Liaison Committee (4:00pm, Grimond room)

Evidence from the Deputy Prime Minister

Wednesday 6 February

Energy and Climate Change Committee (9:00am, room 5) – Green deal watching brief

Wednesday 6 February

Foreign Affairs Committee (2:30am, Boothroyd room)

The future of the European Union: UK government policy

### Lords Committees

Monday 4 February

Internal Market, Infrastructure and Employment (EU Sub-Committee B) (4.00pm, room 2)

Research and Innovation

### Westminster Hall

No relevant activity