

**Minister for Economic Development's update - 17 October 2002**

In addition to my Written Report, I also raised the following items under Agenda Item 2.

**Labour Market Statistics published 16 October**

- ILO unemployment for Wales fell by 11,000 in the 3 months to August compared with the previous 3 months, with the rate falling by 0.8% to 5.3%
- Inactivity in Wales was down 5,000 in the 3 months up to August when compared to the previous 3 months with the rate down by 0.3% to 26.2%
- Wales has seen the second largest fall of all the UK regions over the last year in ILO unemployment (down 0.5%) after the North East (down 0.9%) – the claimant count change (down 0.2%) was only surpassed by Northern Ireland (down 0.4%) and the North East (down 0.3%)
- The data shows that despite current economic uncertainties, unemployment in Wales remains at levels not seen since the mid-1970s – also employment in Wales has risen in year to August despite the very real difficulties in manufacturing
- Although there have been lots of reports of job losses in manufacturing and gross job losses over the last year are at around 30,000, the net loss is only 5,000 as around 25,000 new manufacturing jobs have been created in other industries

**British Chambers of Commerce Quarterly Survey published 17 October 2002**

This shows :

- Overall confidence remains high and in manufacturing is well above UK levels
- Strong Welsh performance in export market continues
- Indicators of investment in plant and machinery remain well above UK levels