

Alister Jack responds to December 2019 labour market figures

Commenting on the latest Labour Market figures the Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

It is encouraging that Scotland's unemployment figures have fallen slightly, with the overall UK rate now at its lowest since 1974. However, I remain concerned that employment has also fallen in Scotland.

The UK Government will work flat out to ensure that Scotland and every part of the UK grows and prospers. Getting Brexit done by January 31st will bring new opportunities, including helping Scottish businesses, farmers and fishermen unleash their full potential.

The UK Government has invested more than £1.4 billion in city and growth deals – with more to come – these projects will bring transformation and regeneration to our communities, helping to create tens of thousands of jobs.

I urge the Scottish Government to use their extensive powers to improve the lives of people across Scotland rather than stoking grievance and conflict by trying to railroad through another independence referendum.

Overview

For the three months to October, Scotland's overall labour market is sending mixed signals: employment fell robustly (-21,000) and unemployment fell moderately (9,000), furthermore, activity decreased robustly too (-30,000).

In addition, monthly claimant count numbers are worsening over the month of November, as there are 115,800 people in Scotland claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and out-of-work Universal Credit (seasonally adjusted); this is up 2,400 on the month of October (revised) and 18,100 up on the year before.

As a result, Scotland's unemployment rate at 3.7% is now back to the rate we had around 12 months ago and somewhat up on the recent record low at the start of the year.

Also, Scotland's unemployment rate is now just below that of the UK as a whole at 3.8%, which remained unchanged over the last quarter.

Furthermore, the number of people employed at 2,648,000 in Scotland is somewhat down on the recent record high at 2,702,000. This means that Scotland's employment rate, at 74.5%, remains below the UK's rate at 76.2%.