

# Alister Jack responds to December GDP figures

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack said:

“We know that the latest lockdown continues to have a significant impact on people and businesses which is why the UK Government continues to provide direct support. Our £280 billion economic package has protected nearly one million jobs and 100,000 businesses in Scotland through our furlough, business loans and self-employed schemes. This direct support is on top of £9.7 billion additional funding provided to the Scottish Government.

“We are also taking direct action to support economic recovery in Scotland, investing billions in our Plan for Jobs, initiatives such as City and Region Growth Deals and in the supply of vaccines which are important in lifting restrictions and reopening the economy.

“At the Budget next week, the Chancellor will set out the next stage of our support for the remainder of the pandemic and our recovery.”

## **Background**

- The UK Government furlough scheme, paying 80 per cent of wages, will run until the end of April. The self-employed support scheme has also been extended to the end of March and with an increase from 55% to 80% of average profits – up to £7,500. At their peak in summer 2020 our furlough and self-employed support schemes were supporting more than 930,000 jobs in Scotland.
- More than 90,000 businesses in Scotland have been supported from UK Government business loans worth £3.4 billion.
- The UK Government is investing billions to help people of all ages back into work – including our £2 billion Kickstart scheme for young people, sector work experience programmes and recruitment of thousands of extra Work Coaches.
- The UK Government has provided billions in extra funding for the welfare system for those unable to access other forms of support.
- This support is on top of an additional £9.7 billion upfront funding given to the Scottish Government this financial year for their covid response.
- The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of covid testing in Scotland and has moved quickly to buy vaccines, securing more than 400 million doses from seven developers with Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines currently being distributed in Scotland.