

Alister Jack responds to February Labour Market Statistics

News story

Scottish Secretary responds to the latest ONS employment figures



Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack said:

Today's figures reflect the challenges we continue to face as a result of this global pandemic.

The UK Government has taken quick and decisive action to support jobs and businesses across all parts of the UK. Our £280 billion support package which includes furlough, business loans and self employed schemes have so far protected nearly one million jobs and 100,000 businesses in Scotland.

This direct support is on top of £9.7 billion additional funding provided to the Scottish Government.

We are also taking action to create new jobs and support economic recovery in Scotland. Investing billions as part of our Plan for Jobs, City and Region Deals, a new Shared Prosperity Fund 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 plan to support and create jobs in all corners of the UK.

- 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 will increase from 55% to 80% of average profits – up to £7,500. At their peak in the summer 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, expansion of sector work experience programmes and recruitment of thousands of Work Coaches in Jobcentres.
- 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 across all parts of the UK.

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