

# Alister Jack responds to January Labour Market Statistics

News story

Scottish Secretary responds to the latest ONS employment figures



Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Today's figures show signs of resilience in Scotland during the Autumn months, however we continue to live in challenging times.

Throughout the pandemic, the UK Government has taken quick and decisive action to protect jobs and support businesses, providing more than £280 billion in support including the furlough scheme, business loans and self-employed income support.

For those looking for work our Plan for Jobs is delivering skills development and creating new jobs through Kickstart for young people, sector work programmes and recruitment of thousands of work coaches.

This direct support is on top of £8.6 billion additional funding given to the Scottish Government.

We are also looking ahead to a way out of the pandemic, securing and paying for vaccines and taking steps to kick start economic recovery and create new jobs. In Scotland this includes City and Region Growth Deals, Freeports, a new Shared Prosperity Fund and investing in our broadband, research and defence sectors.

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 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.
- The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of covid testing in Scotland and has moved quickly to buy vaccines, securing 367 million doses from seven developers with Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines currently being rolled out across the UK.
- This support is on top of an additional £8.6 billion upfront funding given to the Scottish Government this financial year for their covid response.

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