

Alister Jack responds to September 2019 labour market figures

Commenting on the latest labour market figures for Scotland, published on the 10th September 2019, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

It is disappointing to see a sharp increase in unemployment after a period of encouraging figures.

It shows we cannot be complacent. One of our key priorities is to work with the Scottish Government to boost the Scottish economy and create jobs.

The UK Government is investing £1.4 billion in city and growth deals and we are preparing to take advantage of the opportunities that will arise when we leave the EU on October 31.

But I would urge the Scottish Government to use their powers to best effect.

Making Scotland the highest taxed part of the UK and creating uncertainty by threatening a second independence referendum are holding Scotland back.

Overview

For the three months to July, Scotland's overall labour market is weakening: employment fell substantially (-33,000) and unemployment increased robustly (+19,000) and activity decreased (+15,000). In addition, monthly claimant count numbers are worsening over the month of August, as there are 112,100 people in Scotland claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and out-of-work Universal Credit (seasonally adjusted); this is up 2,300 on the month of July (revised) and 20,000 up on the year before.

As a result, Scotland's unemployment rate at 4.0% is now back to the rate we had 12 month ago and up on the recent record low at the start of the year. Also, Scotland's unemployment rate is now above that of the UK as a whole at 3.8%, which remained unchanged over the last quarter. Furthermore, the number of people employed at 2,669,000 in Scotland is somewhat down on the recent record high at 2,702,000. This means that Scotland's employment rate, at 74.9%, remains below the UK's rate at 76.1%.