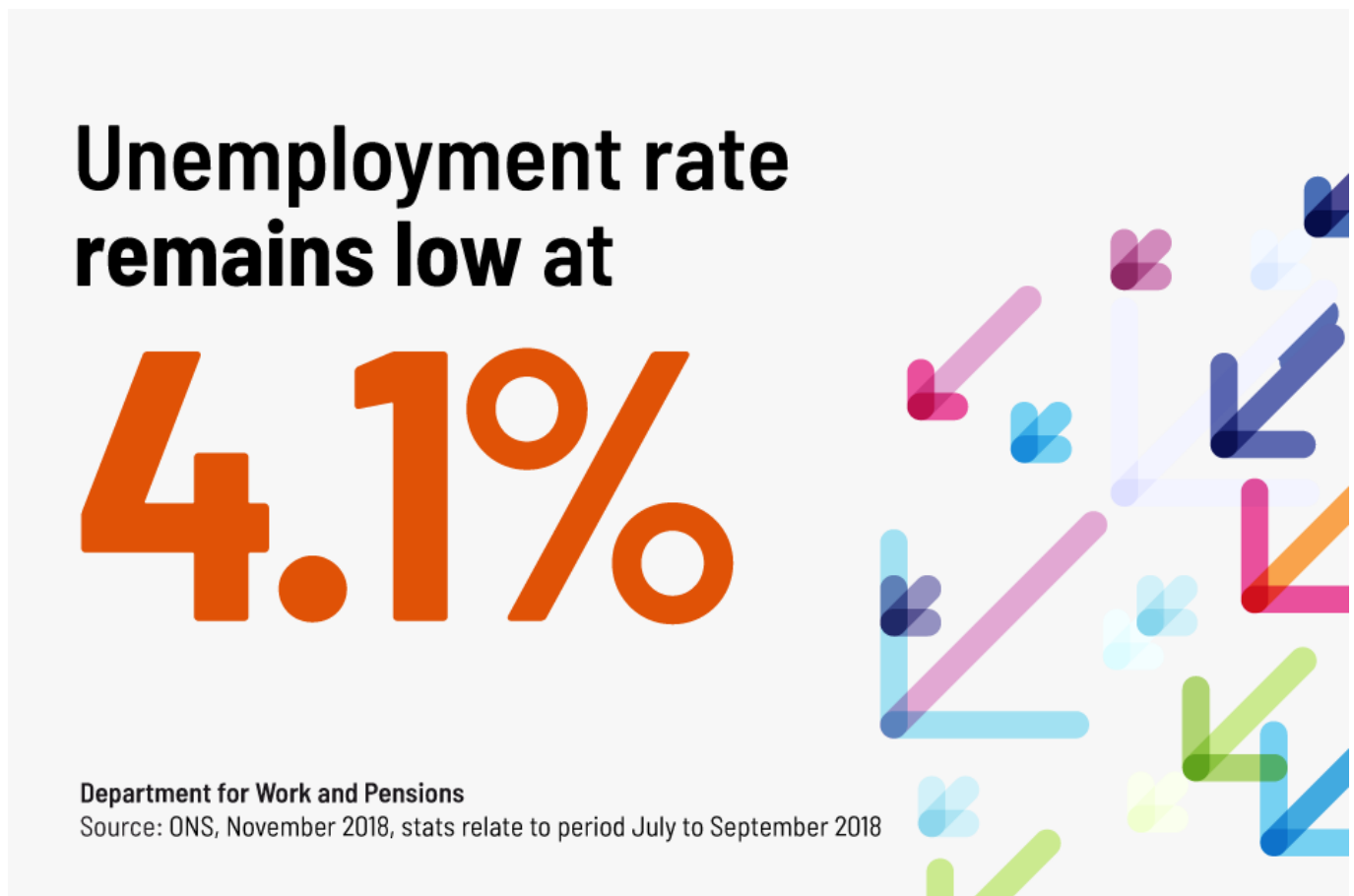


Press release: Eighth month of UK wage growth with disabled employment at record high

As the UK celebrates its first ever 'Purple Tuesday' highlighting the huge potential of disabled consumers' £249bn spending power, new figures show more than half of disabled people are now in work, outnumbering those who are workless.

In a further boost to the economy and consumer spending, wage growth outpaced inflation for an eighth month in a row, rising 0.9% in real terms (against CPIH inflation). Regular pay before inflation grew at its fastest in almost a decade, 3.2%.

The UK's unemployment rate has also nearly halved since 2010, now at 4.1%.



The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics also revealed the employment rate remains high, at 75.5%, with a record number of people in employment – and over 3.3 million more people in work since 2010.

Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey said:

As we celebrate the anniversary of Disability Confident, we can see

seismic shifts in opportunities for disabled people, with 973,000 more in work since 2013.

That's empowering hundreds of thousands more disabled people with new career opportunities, and creating a brighter future.

Since 2010, employment has risen and unemployment has fallen in every single region of the UK. And with an average of 1,000 people moving into work each and every day, and three quarters of all new jobs in permanent, full time and high skilled roles, this shows our welfare reforms are working and delivering for people across the country.

Employment Minister Alok Sharma said:

Once again, the benefits of a strong jobs market are paying off, with the eighth month of real-terms wage growth for UK workers and the highest regular pay growth in almost a decade.

With more people now in work than ever before and unemployment almost halving since 2010, we are delivering an economy that gives people the opportunity of a better future.

And it's worth noting that of the over 3.3 million jobs created in the British economy since 2010, three quarters are permanent, full time and in higher level occupations.

Figures also show three quarters of jobs created since 2010 are full time, permanent roles that are in higher skilled occupations, which typically bring higher earnings – all ambitions of the government's Industrial Strategy which seeks to create better, well-paying jobs fit for the future.

This month also marked the anniversary of the anniversary of the [Disability Confident scheme](#), which helps to transform business attitudes across the country and make our workplaces more inclusive. Over 9,000 businesses have signed up so far.

The government is helping even more people benefit from a well-paid job by:

- backing businesses to create good jobs with our modern Industrial Strategy, while ensuring they play by the rules, so we are closing tax loopholes, strengthening workers' rights, and tightening the rules big businesses must follow
- investing in the infrastructure, training and apprenticeships we need for our future, with public investment at the highest sustained level in 40 years
- introducing Universal Credit which is helping people move into work faster and stay in it longer, while recent Budget measures mean 2.4 million families will keep an extra £630 per year of what they earn
- helping people stay in work longer with our [Fuller Working Lives](#)

[strategy](#), which supports employers to recruit, re-train and retain older workers

- tackling inequalities in employment highlighted by the [Race Disparity Audit](#), through targeted support in 20 areas around the country and £90 million announced by the Prime Minister to help young people
- arranging work experience sessions for students through Jobcentre Plus, in over 1,400 schools

The work experience scheme is being rolled out across the country, to ensure young disadvantaged kids aged 12 to 18 get opportunities including work experience to learn about the world of work and consider future career options. So far, the partnership between Jobcentre Plus and local schools has resulted in around 12,000 sessions for pupils, parents and teachers helping to prepare pupils for the world of work.

Read the latest [labour market statistics](#) from the Office for National Statistics.

Contact Press Office

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5106

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Unemployment rate remains low at

4.1%

Department for Work and Pensions

Source: ONS, November 2018, stats relate to period July to September 2018

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[Press release: The Future of ASEAN-UK Cooperation, Post-Brexit: Minister Field](#)

Speaking to academics and think-tanks in attendance Minister Field said:

Good morning and thank you to Chatham House and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs for hosting this expert gathering. I know a great deal of time and effort has gone into arranging it, and it could not have been better timed.

The UK is making greater efforts than ever to broaden our international horizons and deepen our global partnerships, preparing the way for a new approach once we have left the EU.

Strengthening our relationship with the ASEAN community is a really important part of that, so I am delighted to have the chance to hear your thoughts on how we might go about it.

There is an excellent range of topics on your agenda today. Over the next 15 minutes or so I should like to touch on just some of them, to offer some food for thought.

UK-ASEAN

Since being appointed as Minister for Asia and the Pacific almost 18 months ago I have made it my personal mission to visit as many countries of the region as humanly possible, and to engage, face to face, with my ministerial counterparts.

Within the first or so I achieved my key ambition of visiting all ten members of ASEAN at least once.

This is already my second visit to Singapore, and over the course of two frantic weeks in August, I visited Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

In Jakarta I set out our 'All of Asia' policy, through which we are engaging actively with all countries in the region, working with them to promote

regional security, to build prosperity, and to strengthen the values which underpin the links between our people.

Today I hope that we can substantively build on this work – as I say, taking the opportunity to discuss and explore together the ways in which the UK can remain the strongest of partners to ASEAN – maintaining and strengthening our common areas of interest – after we leave the EU.

Our vision is of a genuine deep, comprehensive partnership – one that builds up our already excellent cooperation right across the board. I will say more about that in a moment.

It is really up to all of us – the UK and all the ASEAN community – to decide how we go about it.

I would like us to be really ambitious – to see where the UK-ASEAN relationship is now, to imagine how it might look in the future and to chart a course towards that goal.

Education

Let's start with education – for the university academics among you, surely a subject close to your hearts.

I'm sure you don't need me to tell you how open ASEAN as a whole is to education opportunities of all kinds.

I am pleased to say that UK institutions and qualifications seem particularly popular: more than 42,000 students from the region attended UK universities in 2016/17.

That includes some 8,000 Singaporeans and 17,000 Malaysians.

In fact Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand all rank in the top 10 countries from outside the EU for sending students to the UK.

However, more and more of your young people do not even need to leave home to get UK qualifications.

Approximately 130,000 young people are pursuing UK certified higher education courses right here in the region.

Respected British universities such as Nottingham, Newcastle, Herriot Watt and Coventry are all expanding their partnerships here.

I saw evidence of this first-hand in Vientiane earlier this year, when I had the pleasure of opening a new International Education Center at Panyathip School, hosting not one, but three UK institutions: Nottingham University, the Wimbledon School of English, and the Royal Academy of Dance.

It showed that our links are not just at tertiary level education – more and more schools across the ASEAN region are now teaching the British international school curriculum.

Education is a significant part of our relationship with ASEAN and I can see

it really taking off over the coming years.

Research and Innovation

The same goes for research and innovation – where the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’ offers huge opportunities for collaboration.

Some of you may be familiar with the work that has flowed from our Newton Fund for science and innovation, which has been running since 2014.

The UK is investing £735 million in the Fund worldwide through to 2021, with matched funding from partner countries. In ASEAN we are partnering with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, and these partnerships are delivering results.

They have already produced some outstanding research on sustainable rice production and food security, and we are working together to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities, improve forecasting of extreme weather, and tackle common diseases.

The range of our collaboration is truly out of this world. Through our Space Agency we are supporting research into the use of satellite technology to help our partners tackle problems ranging from illegal fishing in Indonesia to early warning of dengue outbreaks in Vietnam, and reducing illegal logging in Malaysia.

It may sound like science-fiction, but together with Singapore we are now firmly pushing the frontiers of ‘science fact’, with a £10 million joint initiative to build and fly a satellite quantum key distribution test-bed.

I won’t try to explain in detail what that is, I can’t claim to match Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau’s knowledge of quantum theory .

However I can say that it is a significant commitment to cyber technology and will open up a global market estimated to be worth more than £11 billion over the next ten years.

Research and innovation is already an integral part of the UK-ASEAN relationship and this latest project demonstrates just how far-reaching the opportunities could be in the future.

Trade and Investment

Trade is another area where I see huge scope for cooperation and two-way growth – and for using our departure from the EU as an opportunity for us all to redesign and strengthen our existing relationships.

It is something that our Prime Minister Theresa May was keen to emphasise at the recent Asia Europe Meeting in Brussels, which I also attended.

Take our investment in Singapore for instance.

Over 4,000 British companies have a presence here, employing over 50,000 people.

The UK is the second largest European investor in Singapore, and sixth largest overall.

There is a similarly positive picture across the ASEAN region.

In 2017, trade between the UK and the region was worth over £36.5 billion.

The UK remains ASEAN's second largest source of investment, and we invest three times as much as Germany or France in wider Southeast Asia.

UK goods exports to ASEAN grew by 19.9% between 2016 and 2017. Our overall exports were more than double those to India.

More than ever, we are urging and supporting UK companies to take advantage of opportunities overseas, and we are attracting inward investment into the UK too – not least for UK Smart Cities projects and align ourselves with the ASEAN Smart Cities Network.

We are also helping countries of the region to make themselves more attractive to foreign investment – using our Prosperity Fund programmes to cut red-tape, tackle corruption and promote a fair business environment. From within the EU we have been a cheerleader for its Free Trade Agreements with Singapore and Vietnam.

We are determined to ensure that these trade benefits are transitioned into bilateral arrangements immediately after we leave.

Alongside our bilateral agreements, we are also exploring accession to the CPTPP and ways to further develop trade and investment between us. We are doing all this with one goal in mind, to strengthen our partnership economically, diplomatically and politically with ASEAN.

Challenges

Alongside all these areas of positive collaboration, we recognise that there are also challenges.

I make no bones about our concern over the direction some countries are taking on democratic values or human rights.

The 'war on drugs' in the Philippines and the recent flawed elections in Cambodia are two such causes of concern.

The despicable treatment of the Rohingya community by the Burmese military also remains high on the agenda of the UK and indeed many other nations the world over, not least here in South East Asia.

We do not hide our views on these subjects or row back from our firm commitment to uphold a rules-based international system, upon which prosperity, security and freedom for us all depends.

We continue to encourage others to remain equally committed, and my colleagues and I continue to press for positive change. We will continue to do so after we leave the EU.

Security

Of course many of the challenges we face are shared, and they are challenges that we shall face together, because the UK is committed to the security of this region.

We demonstrate that commitment in a number of ways – including our permanent military presence in Brunei, our participation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the deployment of Royal Navy ships to the region – three this year alone.

All of them have participated in joint exercises – a key part of our support for the development and integration of the region's defence capabilities and our commitment to help address future security challenges.

Even in the defence sphere, our education links shine through. In the last five years, just under one hundred officers from ASEAN member states have graduated from UK defence establishments.

Today, the active Service Chiefs in four ASEAN countries studied in Britain.

It is not all ships, planes and people in uniform though. Our security cooperation is much broader than this, and cyber is a key element of it.

As you may know, Singapore, as the Chair of ASEAN, is spearheading an initiative to strengthen the cyberspace capabilities of all ASEAN states.

I am delighted that they have invited us to take part – we will be the only non-Dialogue Partner involved.

Counter Terrorism is another important element of our security collaboration.

We have established a regional Counter-Terrorism Unit to enhance the links between agencies and governments.

We have done extensive work in this area with Indonesia. We were a critical part of the JCLEC process that led to hundreds of arrests – by Indonesian officers drawing on skills learned from the UK.

Conclusion

I hope that I have given you a good idea of the breadth and depth of the UK's engagement in ASEAN.

Not only that – I hope you have also got a sense of our ambition for our future relationship.

I have seen first-hand what it is like now, and I know there is a huge appetite from both sides to maintain and strengthen this precious relationship after we leave the EU.

I believe we can afford to think ambitiously and I hope today's discussions allow you to do that.

I wish you a productive day and I look forward to hearing how you have got on when I come back this evening!

Thank you.

[News story: New guidance for fishermen ahead of full discard ban](#)

The final phase of the [landing obligation](#), also known as the 'discard ban', comes into force in from 1 January 2019.

The Marine Management Organisation has provided guidance for the fishing industry to help them comply and to manage challenges with quota. Under the full [discard ban](#), fishermen must retain and land all quota species; non-quota species can continue to be discarded as can any fish that may represent a health hazard.

There are also specific optional exemptions to the discard ban for some quota species and these are set out in the regulations. Prohibited species and undersized specimens of non-quota species must be discarded.

There are also a number of specific gear technical requirements being introduced in 2019. These are mandatory for some Irish Sea fisheries from 1 January 2019 and for Celtic Sea fisheries from 1 July 2019. In addition, other optional technical gears can be used if fishermen want to meet exemptions which allow fish to be discarded.

For 2019, the UK Government has worked to maintain, and in some cases extend, exemptions allowing fish with high survival rates to be discarded as well as some unwanted catches that are difficult to avoid. In addition, the MMO will continue to apply a fair and proportionate approach to enforcement.

This the final phase of the discard ban and will bring an end to the practice of throwing dead fish back into the sea. The landing obligation was initially introduced in January 2015 for certain pelagic fisheries.

Fishermen are advised to check the guidance regularly as there may be further changes to the regulations following the December Council. Guidance on the landing obligation can also be found on the [European Commission's website](#).

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