

Half a million Scots jobs reliant on rUK market – experts

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Half a million Scots jobs reliant on rUK market – experts

20 Apr 2017



More than 500,000 Scottish jobs rely on barrier-free trade with the rest of Britain, experts have warned.

The respected Fraser of Allander Institute has produced analysis showing the jobs of 530,000 people north of the border are “supported by demand for our goods and services from the rest of the UK”.

It is the latest piece of analysis highlighting the importance of the wider UK market to Scotland’s economy.

Yet that’s the very market the SNP wants to jeopardise with its drive for separation, shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser warned.

The Fraser of Allander report showed 528,707 jobs are supported by the rUK market, 177,553 by exports to the rest of the world, and a further 125,206 from European exports.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“This is more in-depth analysis showing the importance of the UK market to Scotland’s economy.

“Hundreds of thousands of jobs rely on the fact there are no trade barriers between Scotland and the rest of Britain.

“Yet the SNP wants to destroy this arrangement with its reckless gamble, making life harder for businesses and workers.

“The Scottish Government cannot afford to ignore stark evidence like this, however inconvenient it is for its separation drive.”

To see the full Fraser of Allander report, visit:

<https://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/economics/fraser/20170420/Exports-and-Employment-Scotland.pdf>

Ruth to back UK aid

19 Apr 2017



Ruth Davidson will today use a major event in London to argue that Britain's commitment to aid and development can demonstrate it intends to remain a "good, global citizen" as we leave the European Union.

The Scottish Conservative leader will be addressing an audience at the Royal United Services Institute to make the continuing case for aid and development spending.

Entitled 'Global Leadership: How Britain Can Use Overseas Aid to Save Lives and Keep us Safe', Ruth will be responding to a keynote speech by Bill Gates, who is the main speaker at the event.

Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Mr Gates will be speaking about the partnership between his foundation and the UK Government on improving global health and ending extreme poverty.

He will also speak to the importance of continued UK leadership on aid to ensure a safer and healthier world.

Also speaking at the event will be former foreign secretary Lord Hague.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson is expected to say:

"As one of the world's major economies, Britain has a responsibility to act – a responsibility that is all the greater now that we are leaving the European Union.

"Our friends and allies are asking whether the United Kingdom is still the outward facing nation they know it to be.

"We must show, more than ever, that we intend to remain a good global citizen.

"From its bases in London and East Kilbride, UK Aid delivers major development programmes to some of the poorest and most unstable regions of the world.

"From mine clearance to economic development to the education of girls, the UK makes a huge and positive impact.

"Clearing landmines doesn't just make a region safer, it returns land to commercial use, helps create and sustain employment of men at risk of terrorist recruitment and aids economic recovery of post-war nations.

“The education of women helps reduce infant mortality, increases economic development and makes a huge impact in improving public health.

“Both are gamechangers in the countries being helped, but equally, both help make a safer, more stable, more equitable world which helps us all.

“The UK Government is undertaking a root and branch review of the way contracts are handled within DFID, and that is absolutely correct.

“Misuse of aid funds not only means that vital support does not go to the people who need it in some of the poorest nations on the planet, it also risks eroding public support for our aid commitment here at home.

“We must now ensure that every penny goes where it is needed.”

[Scottish Conservative launch Local Government manifesto](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Scottish Conservative launch Local Government manifesto

19 Apr 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have launched their manifesto for the Local Government elections on the 4th of May.

The manifesto – entitled ‘Localism for Growth’ – will set out the party’s plan to oppose a second referendum on independence, and reverse a decade of SNP centralisation.

Commenting today, party leader Ruth Davidson said:

“The council elections are a chance for people to make clear the priorities they want in Scotland.

“It’s to ensure we have local councils focused on your school and your local services, not on a divisive referendum campaign most people don’t want.

“We have two key points to make at this election. After ten years of SNP centralisation, we want to make the case for localism – so decisions are put back in the hands of your local community.

“And, after a decade of constitutional division, we want to send a message to the SNP: we don’t want your unwanted independence referendum. Every Scottish

Conservative councillor who is elected on May 4th will demand nothing less.”

In today’s manifesto, local government spokesman Graham Simpson added:

“Scotland is fast becoming one of the most centralised countries in the western world.

“The SNP Government reserves for itself the right to make the vast majority of economic decisions, so local authorities have been relegated to mere service providers.

“We need to empower councils and give them a renewed sense of meaning and purpose. They can and must be the engines of growth”.

You can read the manifesto [here](#).

[Ruth’s reaction to General Election announcement](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Ruth’s reaction to General Election announcement

18 Apr 2017



Please see below a comment from Ruth following the announcement from the Prime Minister regarding a General Election this June.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“I very much welcome the Prime Minister’s announcement. The Scottish Conservatives are ready for a campaign, we are organised, and we are optimistic about the prospect of increasing our number of seats.

“In Scotland, we will have a clear election message – only a vote for the Scottish Conservatives will ensure we get the strong leadership we need to get the best Brexit deal for the whole country.

“And only a vote for the Scottish Conservatives will send a strong message that we oppose SNP’s divisive plan for a second referendum.

“We know the SNP will use this campaign to try and manufacture a case for separation. And with Jeremy Corbyn having already said he is ‘absolutely

fine' with an immediate referendum, we also know that Labour can't be relied to stand up to them.

"By contrast, the Scottish Conservatives have the strength right across Scotland to stand up for people who oppose the SNP's plans.

"The choice is simple: it's between a strong government led by Theresa May working to get the best Brexit deal, or a weak Labour government, led by Jeremy Corbyn, which cannot stand up to the SNP.

"The Scottish Conservatives will be fighting a Scotland-wide campaign in this election. Our aim is to gain support all over the country. We will be fighting for every vote."

[SNP must crack down on drug driving menace](#)

18 Apr 2017



The Scottish Conservatives are today launching a new campaign to demand tougher laws to crack down on drug-driving – amid growing evidence of the havoc it is wreaking on our roads.

The number of people on drugs dying at the wheel is now the same as the number fatalities who test positive for alcohol, new research has revealed.

Yet, despite this, the law and standard practice in Scotland lags significantly behind other parts of the UK.

Today, the Scottish Conservatives are setting out their own plan for action, and demanding that the SNP Government acts to deliver without delay.

The calls back those made by parents whose children have been killed by drug drivers in Scotland, such as Janice Ward.

Her 20-year old daughter Rachael was killed by a man driving at over 70 mph on the wrong side of the road, high on amphetamines.

Across the UK, including in Scotland, it is an offence to drive 'impaired by drugs'.

But, unlike in England and Wales there is no specific drug limit for motorists, and police do not have standard access to roadside drug testing equipment.

Furthermore, in Scotland, if a case makes it to court, it is not enough to show that a driver had a specific amount of intoxicants in their bloodstream – instead prosecutors have to prove that a driver was ‘impaired’ by drug intake.

The Scottish Conservatives are now calling for 3 reforms to be taken immediately.

1. A prescribed limit for legal drugs – making it easier to prosecute motorists who put other road users at risk by taking dangerous levels of medicinal drugs.
2. Zero tolerance to driving on illegal drugs – effective use of new and existing legislation to reduce the prevalence of drug abusers getting behind the wheel.
3. Roadside drug testing kits – new roadside drug equipment to be supplied for quicker and easier detection of offenders.

Douglas Ross, the Scottish Conservatives’ justice spokesman said:

“The evidence is clear – drug driving is just as dangerous as drink driving. Yet in Scotland, the government has simply failed to respond to this menace on our roads.

“We need immediate action now to bring a halt to the growing number of deaths and injuries caused by people on drugs getting behind the wheel.

“That means improved legislation to tackle driving under the influence of all dangerous substances, and a zero tolerance approach to anyone foolish enough to drive having taken drugs.

“We must also give our police the resources and equipment to put this into practice.

“Quite simply, Scotland has lagged behind other parts of the UK in failing to tackle this issue. The SNP Government needs to take action without further delay.”

1. The Current Framework

Across the UK, including Scotland, it is an offence to drive ‘impaired by drugs’, but unlike in England & Wales there is no specific drug limit for motorists in Scotland, and police do not have access to roadside drug testing equipment. The current approach has many difficulties and fails to identify and prosecute motorists who are putting other road users at risk.

When confronted by a driver they believe is intoxicated by illicit substances, the police in Scotland can only conduct what is known as a ‘field impairment test’ at the roadside, which requires the driver to demonstrate their co-ordination by doing things like walking in a straight line or standing on one leg. If the person fails this test, the police officer has to take the person all the way to a police station to conduct a blood test, which can then be relied on in court.

If the case makes it to court, it is not enough to show that the driver had any or even at least a specific amount of intoxicants in their bloodstream. Under Section 4(5) of the Road Traffic Act 1998, prosecutors must prove that a driver was 'impaired' by the drugs in their system.

Field impairment tests, originally designed for testing levels of alcohol intoxication, are impractical, inefficient and unreliable. They do not offer a dependable way of distinguishing between drugs and alcohol. Put simply, they are not fit for purpose in a modern police force.

Similarly, the current legislation used to convict drug-drivers in Scotland is not tough enough. More effective laws and enforcement could reduce drug-related deaths on our roads.

In England & Wales, Section 56 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 inserted a new Section (5A) into the Road Traffic Act 1998. This created a new offence of driving in excess of a prescribed limit of seventeen drugs, so that driving over the limit of these drugs became illegal in a similar way to alcohol. This came into force in early 2015.

Police in England and Wales also now have access to roadside drug kits to swab for cannabis and cocaine in a motorist's saliva. These so-called 'drugalyser' devices have the potential to increase the detection of drug-driving in Scotland.

It is clear that Scotland is lagging behind in the way we deal with drug-drivers. The changes that have been made in other parts of the United Kingdom should be adapted into Scots law. Now is the time to take action to crack down on offenders, deter future driving on drugs and make Scotland's roads safer.

2. Why We Need Change

Although it is already an offence to drive while impaired by drugs in Scotland, there is a need for this legislation to be built upon. There is evidence both of the scale of the problem in Scotland and the positive impact that change can have.

A recently published article in *Forensic Science International* demonstrated the shocking prevalence of drug-driving in Scotland. The analysis revealed that driving under the influence of cannabis and drink-driving led to the same number of deaths between 2012 and 2015. Out of 118 cases of driver and motorcyclist fatalities examined, 24 (20 per cent) tested positive for alcohol and 24 (20 per cent) tested positive for cannabis. The study also showed a sharp rise in the number of fatalities who had taken drugs alone without any alcohol between 2013 and 2015. The lead author of the study, Dr Hilary Hamnett, has highlighted how far behind Scotland is compared to Scandinavian countries when it comes to drug-driving.

A Transport Scotland study, *Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2015*, demonstrated that a driver or rider being impaired by drugs was possibly or very likely to be a contributory factor in 55 road accidents in 2015.

There is also evidence that changes of the sort introduced in England & Wales will have a real impact. Drug-driving arrests soared 800 per cent in the first year in one force area after new legislation was brought into force, and it was reported that almost 14,000 arrests were made across England & Wales in the same time period. Conviction rates have also increased.

Parents of drug driving victims recently called for new laws to be introduced in Scotland

<http://tinyurl.com/n2mx7j6>

There have also been calls for action by road safety charities such as I Am RoadSmart

<https://www.iamroadsmart.com/media-and-policy/news-and-insights/advice-and-insights/2017/02/09/drug-driving-high-time-we-took-note>