

Chancellor sees Plan for Jobs in action at local brewery

- The Chancellor visited Pillars Brewery in London as they gear up for the return of indoor hospitality next week
- our Plan for Jobs is working: almost 2 million fewer people are expected to be out of work than initially forecast
- the economy grew by 2.1% in March, an optimistic sign of recovery

As new figures show the economy grew by 2.1% in March and performed better than previous forecasts for the first three months of the year as a whole, Rishi Sunak visited Pillars Brewery in Walthamstow to see how they are preparing for the reopening of indoor hospitality next week and responding to an increase in demand for their products as the economy recovers.

Like many other businesses in the food and drink industry, Pillars have taken advantage of several aspects of the support available under the Government's Plan for Jobs including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and local business grants. Pillars are also recruiting a Kickstarter under the Government-backed scheme to help young people find new jobs.

On the visit, the Chancellor was welcomed by co-founders of Pillars Brewery Gavin Litton and Omar Razaq, who spoke to the Chancellor about their business and showed him how the brewing process works.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

It's great to see businesses like Pillars who have been supported by the government through the pandemic get back on their feet as the economy begins to recover.

Despite a difficult start to the year, the figures released this morning showing economic growth in March are a promising sign of things to come.

Our Plan for Jobs is working – following the comprehensive package we put in place, almost 2 million fewer people are expected to be out of work than initially forecast, and the UK economy is in a strong position to grow quickly as we emerge from the pandemic.

Even with this positive news, we know that many businesses and people still need our help, and that's why I want to reassure everyone today that our Plan for Jobs will continue to create, support and protect jobs in the coming months. We have extended the

self-employed and furlough schemes until September whilst schemes like Kickstart are already helping to create thousands of new jobs for young people – it's great to see companies like Pillars creating jobs under this scheme.

As we cautiously reopen the economy, I will continue to take all the steps necessary to support our recovery.

Pillars Brewery said:

It was great to welcome the Chancellor to Pillars Brewery today and talk to him about the challenges our business has faced, and how we've found reopening so far. It's been a relief to welcome our staff back from furlough and we are also recruiting new team members through the government's Kickstart scheme.

Today's visit comes as ONS GDP figures, released this morning, show that GDP grew by 2.1% in March. This morning's release also showed that GDP fell by 1.5% in Q1 2021 – significantly better than the 3.8% fall the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast in March. Last week, the Bank of England upgraded their forecast for the UK economy and are now expecting that the economy will return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of this year.

Established in 2016, Pillars was the first craft lager brewery in London. Pillars recently scored a Gold Medal Award for their Icebock in the 2021 London Beer Competition, and their three core lagers (Hop Lager, Helles and Pilsner) were awarded silver.