

Plan for jobs one year on: Chancellor visits Wolverhampton as over a million West Midlands jobs protected through the pandemic

- Latest figures show the UK Government has supported over 1.2 million jobs and individuals in the West Midlands since the pandemic began – and more than a third of the working population nationwide
- Statistics revealed on one-year anniversary of Plan for Jobs – with Chancellor Rishi Sunak visiting four businesses in Wolverhampton which have benefited
- Part of unprecedented £352 billion support package which helped safeguard jobs, businesses and public services in every region and nation of the UK

Since the beginning of the crisis, the government has rolled out one of the most generous packages of support in the world to safeguard businesses and livelihoods across the UK – including the furlough and self-employment support schemes which have helped 1.2 million West Midlands workers.

Yesterday (7 July) the Chancellor visited four businesses in Wolverhampton which have benefited from the government support as part of the Plan for Jobs. These include three companies which taken on new staff through the government's Kickstart scheme which provides funding to employers to create jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit.

The companies visited by the Chancellor were Robinson's Manufacturing, which makes high-quality timber products and has taken on 30 new workers, Arnold Clark, the UK's biggest independently-owned car retailer, which has taken on 7, and the Wolverhampton branch of PureGym, the UK's largest gym company, which put 2,700 workers on furlough, protecting their jobs.

The Chancellor also visited Wolverhampton Art Gallery, which received a £160,000 Capital Kickstart grant as part of the government £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, that has helped cultural organisations across the country.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

This time last year we faced a potential tidal wave of job losses with the UK on the brink of a financial crisis like no other in

history.

But we made a Plan for Jobs, we stuck to that plan and it's working – supporting more than 14.5 million jobs to date and helping people in Wolverhampton, the West Midlands and across the UK gain the skills they need to get back into work.

We know the job is not yet done and our economy needs to recover – which is why we are continuing our support to give everyone the best chance of moving on from this crisis.

Exactly a year ago today, Chancellor Rishi Sunak set out the government's Plan for Jobs – an ambitious blueprint to protect, support and create jobs across the UK and help people gain the skills they need to get into work through scheme such Kickstart, apprenticeships and traineeships which have helped businesses throughout the West Midlands.

Rebecca Passmore, UK Managing Director of PureGym, said:

The last year has been devastating for PureGym but we are delighted to now be open so our members can work out and progress their health and wellbeing journey. The furlough scheme was a real lifeline for PureGym enabling us to effectively mothball the business so that we could preserve jobs and then ramp up operations as restrictions eased.

Looking ahead, we are delighted to be trading in our 287 gyms across the UK, which includes 14 brand new facilities that opened since April, with more to come. We have seen incredible demand from existing and new members since re-opening underscoring the increasing importance the public place on their health and fitness.

Pauline Marshall, GTG Group Commercial Operations Manager said:

After a challenging year, we launched our Kickstart Scheme because we wanted to use our facilities, experience and skills to help young unemployed adults improve their chances of finding long-term work. Our aim has always been to invest in the future workforce; to help people learn the skills they need to enjoy successful careers in the automotive, transport and health and safety industries. We're always thinking of new and innovative ways to meet the needs of our apprentices, clients, delegates and staff, and we hope to continue this success in the future.

City of Wolverhampton Council Director for Regeneration, Richard Lawrence, said:

City of Wolverhampton Council has a five-year plan to bring the very best art, music and sport to Wolverhampton to boost the city's economy, create new jobs, give visitors an experience to remember and build an outstanding cultural reputation.

Culture forms a key part of our Covid recovery strategy and the improvements to Wolverhampton Art Gallery will ensure it remains a major attraction and provides new opportunities.

One of the first events the new-look Wolverhampton Art Gallery will welcome is the prestigious British Art Show 9 in January 2022 – kicking-off a bumper year of major events in the city, including the Commonwealth Games cycling time trial, Creation Day Festival in West Park, Wolverhampton Literature Festival and big-name gigs at the newly refurbished Civic Halls.

As part of an unprecedented £352 billion support package, the Plan for Jobs has supported and created jobs across the country. Across the UK, 11.6 million jobs have been protected through the furlough scheme and 2.9 million self-employed workers have received £25.2 billion in government grants. 1.06 million of those jobs were in the West Midlands, with 224,000 self-employed workers in the region receiving self-employment grants.

The £2 billion Kickstart scheme is helping to create new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the UK.

Further information

- Read more about the Plan for Jobs at [gov.uk/planforjobs](https://www.gov.uk/planforjobs)
- Photos of the Chancellor's Wolverhampton visit will be available [here](#)
- 33.1m is the UK's working population

The 1.2 million jobs and individuals protected in the West Midlands breaks down as follows:

- 1.06 million employments furloughed
- 224,000 self-employed individuals receiving government grants

The breakdown of the 14.5 million individuals and jobs protected nationwide is as follows:

- 11.6 million employments furloughed
- 2.9 million self-employed individuals supported with government grants
- 8,800 traineeship starts recorded in the first two quarters of 2020/21
- 65,000 people in England and Scotland have enrolled in the Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) since March 2020