

PM: Union stronger than ever

- Marking one year as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson will today visit Scotland to reaffirm his commitment to supporting all parts of the UK through the pandemic
- During the visit, the PM will meet local businesses to discuss how they are getting back on their feet; entrepreneurs to see how green technology is driving innovation across Scotland and military to thank them for their efforts in the coronavirus response
- Ahead of the visit, the Prime Minister pledged £50 million to Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to the union, marking one year as Prime Minister with a visit to Scotland and pledging further support for Scottish communities.

Ahead of the visit, the Prime Minister reiterated how the coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated, more than ever, that each part of the UK benefits from being together and the strength of the union has helped us through this crisis.

In Scotland, the UK Treasury has protected over 900,000 jobs and granted thousands of businesses loans; the UK's armed forces has airlifted critically ill patients from some of the most remote communities, helped convert the temporary hospitals and ran mobile testing sites; and the Department of Health and Social Care has procured millions of pieces of PPE to keep Scottish frontline workers safe. This is on top of £4.6 billion we have given straight to the Scottish administration to help tackle coronavirus.

The Prime Minister has also announced further support to Scottish communities, committing £50 million to Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, to help develop the islands' economic potential. The announcement means that every part of Scotland is now covered by the innovative growth deals and takes the UK Government's investment in these to more than £1.5 billion.

The multi-million-pound pot for the islands will lead to investment in local projects, driving sustainable economic growth and creating jobs. Projects set to be supported by the Islands Growth deal could include those developing space technology and others researching new renewable energy systems.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

When I stood on the steps of Downing Street one year ago, I pledged to be a Prime Minister for every corner of the United Kingdom. Whether you are from East Kilbride or Dumfries, Motherwell or Paisley, I promised to level up across Britain and close the opportunity gap.

The last six months have shown exactly why the historic and heartfelt bond that ties the four nations of our country together is so important and the sheer might of our union has been proven once again.

In Scotland, the UK's magnificent armed forces have been on the ground doing vital work to support the NHS, from setting up and running mobile testing sites to airlifting critically ill patients to hospitals from some of Scotland's most remote communities. And the UK Treasury stepped in to save the jobs of a third of Scotland's entire workforce and kept the wolves at bay for tens of thousands of Scottish businesses.

More than ever, this shows what we can achieve when we stand together, as one United Kingdom.

During the PM's visit, he will meet with members of the military based in Scotland and their families to thank them for their ongoing work in the coronavirus response.

Following the Islands Deal announcement, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

The City Region and Growth Deals will be crucial to our economic recovery from coronavirus. Today's announcement means that every corner of Scotland will benefit from these and takes the UK Government's investment in growth deals across Scotland to more than £1.5 billion.

These deals are just part of the unprecedented support that the UK Government is providing to people and businesses in Scotland during this time. We have supported 900,000 jobs in Scotland with our furlough and self-employed schemes, including 11,600 across the islands.

We look forward to working with our partners across the islands and the devolved administration in Scotland to develop innovative and effective proposals.

Notes to editors

The UK Government has been working flat out to help Scotland deal with the pandemic.

People and businesses in Scotland benefiting from UK-wide support schemes from the UK Treasury include:

- Through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme 736,500 jobs in Scotland were supported.
- The Self-employment Income Support Scheme 155,000 self-employed people

in Scotland were supported, at a cost of £449 million.

- Thousands of Scottish businesses will benefit from a £330 billion package of loans and guarantees to help them survive the economic fallout from coronavirus.

Scottish jobs will also be protected by:

- A VAT cut for tourism and hospitality businesses.
- Deferring VAT and Income Tax payments.
- A Statutory Sick Pay relief package
- Making Universal Credit easier to access.
- A financial support package for the ferry freight routes in and out of Cairnryan.

The UK Treasury is providing additional funding to the Scottish administration through the Barnett Formula – £4.6 billion.

The UK Department of Health and Social Care is supporting coronavirus testing with a national strategy. That testing strategy includes:

- Funding and operating six drive through testing facilities (Prestwick, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth).
- The military are providing the Scottish Government with pop up mobile testing sites throughout Scotland.
- We are funding a new 'megalab' in Glasgow, operated by Glasgow University, which is now mass processing those coronavirus tests for key workers across Scotland.

The UK Department of Health and Social Care is supporting the development of a coronavirus vaccine, and has secured early access to 90 million doses for the whole of the UK. As a result, Scotland will have enough to vaccinate and protect priority groups such as frontline health and social care workers and those at increased health risk.

Our nationwide PPE procurement strategy is delivering kit to frontline workers right across the UK. So far, more than six million pieces of PPE have been delivered to Scotland.

The UK's military has played a key role supporting the fight to tackle coronavirus in Scotland. That includes:

- A team of military planning personnel supporting the Scottish Government's emergency co-ordination centre, based at St Andrew's House in Edinburgh.
- Officers working with each of Scotland's 14 NHS boards.
- Three Puma helicopters deployed to Kinloss Barracks to support the NHS in medical transports to airlift critically ill patients from the Scottish islands.
- The army supported the set-up of drive-through coronavirus testing facilities in Scotland, and were on site to support the start of testing at the Glasgow facility. The military are also operating 'pop up' mobile testing sites across Scotland.

- The military have distributed essential equipment, including PPE and ventilators, to hospitals across Scotland, and were instrumental in getting vital set-up equipment to the new testing megalab in Glasgow.
- The army assisted Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board with PPE fitting and testing for staff.
- The military helped NHS Scotland with initial work on the development of the temporary hospital at the Scottish Exhibition Centre.