

Speech: A jobs Brexit

Earlier this week another employment rate record high was broken – the sixteenth record broken since 2010.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics on Tuesday showed that [since 2010, over 3.2 million more people have moved into work](#) – that's over 1,000 people entering employment a day, every day.

We now have the lowest unemployment rate for 42 years at 4.2%, and additionally wages are now outpacing inflation, meaning more money in people's pockets. This reality is a far cry from the predictions made at the time of the Brexit vote.

In fact the jobs record is extending across the whole of the country, with the employment rate having risen – and the unemployment rate having fallen – in every region of the UK since 2010.

These headline figures don't just sound impressive – they are and should be celebrated.

Jobs transform lives, and each job gives more people the security that comes from a regular wage for them and their family. A job provides for career progression and with it wage progression which benefits and unemployment don't. It is therefore important that the government is prepared for the future, and grasps the opportunities Brexit brings.

And this is exactly what we are doing as we move forward in our progress to leave the European Union, positioning ourselves as a global country that is open to working with the world.

This week we welcomed 52 leaders to London from the Commonwealth – where we discussed the importance of free and fair trade for us all. And with 90% of global growth coming from outside the EU in the coming years it's key that we prioritise/unlock our relationships with these growing economies – boosting our trade links to prosper post-Brexit and delivering jobs and growth at home and for the Commonwealth.

And we have strong foundations to build on. Our manufacturing sector is enjoying its longest unbroken run of growth for 50 years, and order books for British manufacturers are stronger than at any time since August 1988.

With less than a year to go until we leave the EU, our work continues to improve and liberalise trading markets to capitalise on future trends.

With the digital economy growing 32% faster than the wider economy and creating jobs 3 times more quickly, e-commerce offers previously unknown possibilities for SMEs and individuals, particularly women, to take part in the globalised economy. Etsy, the online marketplace, recently announced that 87% of its sellers are women.

Technology has always fundamentally changed the jobs market and this will continue as we see new developments. Just as in the past the employment market adapted to the invention of technologies such as the cash machine, we too need to adapt and embrace new innovations such as artificial intelligence, 3D printing, and virtual reality. Yet, tech also becomes an enabler and allows the jobs market to be far more inclusive – supporting employment across the board.

The pace of change we see in robotics, automation and the rise of social media and the gig economy has introduced seismic and revolutionary changes in the jobs market already which shows no sign of slowing down. Indeed, the World Economic Forum suggests that 65% of children entering primary school today will end up working in a job that doesn't exist yet.

Post-Brexit, we must not only recognise the trading possibilities available, but ensure we, as a nation, are able to unlock the full opportunity they provide. That is why we need to know where the jobs of the future will be, and make sure UK citizens are equipped to benefit. And that is exactly what we are doing. Working across government – and with industry – looking at the growth areas of the future.

For the government the priority is not just about getting people into work, but actively supporting people to progress and develop within their career and changes in career as people re-train throughout their lives. Building up resilience to cope with the pace of change in the jobs market.

We can do that through the new benefit, [Universal Credit](#), providing personalised support through work coaches which is responsive to changes in employment status.

The world of work is rapidly changing with new jobs emerging all the time – and that is as much due to technological advancements as it is Brexit. However, whilst the former may be the catalyst, it is Brexit that provides the opportunity to cope with these changes.

We need to ensure our labour market remains the envy of the world and that is how we must shape our Brexit vision. Together, we are working across government to ensure we are prepared to support people, places and businesses to adapt to and benefit from new technology and other changes to the world of work.