

Alister Jack responds to December 2020 Labour Market Figures

Press release

Scottish Secretary responds to December 2020 Labour Market Statistics for Scotland



Responding to today's [15 December 2020] Labour Market Statistics, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Despite the slight decrease in today's figures, these reflect a period when restrictions were eased. We are now facing new restrictions across the UK.

The UK Government continues to respond, taking unprecedented action to support jobs with the extension of the furlough and self-employed schemes, providing loans to Scottish businesses and supporting our hospitality and tourism sectors.

For those looking for work, we are investing billions as part of our Plan for Jobs including recruitment of Work Coaches, expansion of sector training schemes and £2 billion Kickstart scheme for young people.

In the Spending Review last month, the Chancellor set out how we will work to ensure our economy recovers. That includes support for growth deals in Scotland and investment in our defence and R&D sectors, money to help communities prepare for a new Shared Prosperity Fund, and an increase in the national living wage.

Hope is on the horizon, with the UK Government procuring vaccines on behalf of the whole of the UK. Never has the strength of the union and UK Treasury been more important.

Background

- Many of our communities are living under changing tier restrictions. The UK Government furlough scheme, paying 80 per cent of wages, will run UK-wide until the end of March. The self-employed support scheme has also been extended to the end of March and will increase from 55% to 80% of average profits – up to £7,500. At their peak in the summer our furlough and self-employed support schemes were supporting more than 930,000 jobs in Scotland and will continue to provide a vital safety net for businesses and their employees over the winter.
- More than 76,000 businesses in Scotland have benefitted from UK Government loan schemes, worth more than £2.9 billion. Scotland's hospitality and tourism businesses are benefitting from a VAT cut which will run till March 2021.
- The Scottish Government has been allocated an additional £9.5 billion from the UK Government since March 2020 for COVID-19 response. This is on top of the block grant and in addition to direct UK Government support to people and businesses in Scotland.
- The UK Government is investing billions to help people back into work, including through our £2 billion Kickstart scheme to get young people into jobs, expansion of our sector-based work academy programme and recruitment of thousands of Work Coaches in Jobcentres helping unemployed people of all ages back into work.
- The UK Government has provided extra funding for welfare system to help those unable to access other forms of support. These temporary welfare measures include a £20 per week increase for everyone on Universal Credit. The Scottish Government also holds significant devolved welfare powers.
- The UK Government is providing the bulk of covid testing in Scotland including lateral flow tests used in community and student testing. The UK was the first country in the world to approve Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine with 40 million doses secured by the UK Government for distribution across all parts of the UK.

Analysis

Scotland's key indicators are improving, with unemployment falling (-15,000) at 4.2% (down 0.6%) for Aug – Oct 20 compared to the three months before May – Jul 20. This is the strongest result of any region of the UK with Scotland's unemployment rate of 4.2% now below that of the UK overall at 4.9%.

We have seen from last month's furlough figures that over 183,000 employments are paused and around 142,000 self-employed people in Scotland received UK Government support.

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Top award for Collaborative working

News story

Our dedication to working as one team with our supply chain has been recognised with a national award.



The supply chain category award

On Thursday the Institute for Collaborative Working presented us with an award under the supply chain category at a ceremony in London.

2020 has been the year we've attained ISO44001 certification for our commitment to collaborative working, and we have continued to embed this through the year, successfully navigating third party audits around "living with certification to ISO44001".

We've also seen the continued success of the Programme and Project Partners (PPP), a ground-breaking 20 year partnership that will deliver the major infrastructure needed to complete our mission.

Alan Hartley, head of procurement and supply chain delivery, attended the socially distanced event. He said:

The supply chain is over half of our £2.2 billion annual expenditure – so collaborative working is central to delivering: greater innovation, long term investment and sustainable relationships.

By collaborating we have and continue to learn from our supply chain, we no longer assume we have the 'best' solution.

We want to work with them to create and realise mutual value. With long-term partnerships attracting investment and commitment to small and medium sized enterprises and innovation, our supply chain is key to how we will create a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Our entry for the awards highlighted the wide range of collaborative practices we have been involved with – including:

- work by the Decommissioning Delivery Partnership and Legacy Ponds team to develop an effective way of removing waste from tanks so they can be re-sealed
- the introduction of a concrete batcher by PPP, which was procured through our supply chain saving time and money
- links to our communities through our collaborative Social Impact programme, SiX

Collaborative working programme lead, Stephen Scott said:

Developing collaborative working is a key ingredient and a golden thread in support of our manifesto.

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Companies House customers encouraged to file online due to paper processing delays

News story

The water supply issue at our Cardiff office has been resolved, but it's a busy time with many companies due to file annual accounts before the end of December.



The water supply issue at our Cardiff office has now been resolved.

However, we still have very limited numbers in the office due to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions. This means it's taking longer than usual to process paper documents, forms and letters.

It's a particularly busy time at Companies House with many companies due to file annual accounts before their deadline at the end of the month. We're also preparing for [the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December](#).

Our digital services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. We encourage all customers to [file online](#) before your deadline to make sure your documents are processed quickly and on time.

If you cannot file online, please make sure you file your accounts as early as possible to meet your deadline and to avoid a late filing penalty.

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[UK Foreign Secretary sets out ambition for closer relationship with India](#)

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Independent decision-making Board for Sports Winter Survival Package confirmed

News story

Following the Government's announcement of a £300 million Sports Winter Survival Package to protect the immediate futures of major spectator sports affected by coronavirus restrictions in England, the composition of the independent decision-making Board has been confirmed.



The Board, which will meet over the coming weeks to oversee final funding allocations with the administrative support of Sport England, will be formed of:

- Sir Ian Cheshire (Chair), Chairman of Barclays Bank UK PLC
- Lord Patel of Bradford, Chairman of Social Work England
- Denise Lewis, OBE, British sports presenter and Olympic heptathlon gold medalist
- Nick Timothy CBE, non-executive board member of the Department for Education and member of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee
- Ben Dean, Director of Sport, Gambling and Ceremonials, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- Tim Hollingsworth, OBE, Chief Executive, Sport England
- Sally Munday MBE, Chief Executive, UK Sport
- Natalie Ceeney CBE, Vice-Chair of Sport England and chair of Innovate Finance

Preliminary allocations [announced by the Government last month](#) have been made on a needs based assessment basis and reflect the submissions made to DCMS from the individual sports.

Each sport will now need to go through an application process to access the

support they are eligible for under the final design of the scheme, with the final decisions being made by the independent decision-making board. More details will be announced by Sport England in due course.

It is expected that the first tranche of funding will be distributed in the coming weeks.

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