

Scottish Labour Market Statistics for three months to August 2020

News story

Unemployment in Scotland rose by 12,000 over the last 12 months.



Responding to today's [13 October 2020] Labour Market Statistics, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Today's unemployment figures continue to be a concern, and we know that there will be further challenges to come.

The UK Government is doing everything possible to protect jobs and livelihoods in the face of the global pandemic.

We are supporting nearly half a million jobs in Scotland through our furlough and self-employed schemes and have committed a further £9 billion to help employers keep workers on.

We are also investing billions in those looking for work, including our £2 billion Kickstart scheme for young people and doubling the number of work coaches.

On top of extensive direct UK Government support to people and businesses across Scotland, we are also providing the devolved administration in Scotland with an additional £7.2 billion to help them get through the pandemic.

Scotland's key indicators seem to be in a stable position, however, the claimant count rate is now at 8.0% (Sep). This is up from 4.0% pre-lockdown. An increase in unemployment by 12,000 over the last twelve months. We have seen from last month's furlough figures that over 366,700 employments are paused and around 126,000 self-employed people in Scotland received UK Government support.

The UK overall experienced a somewhat accelerating decrease in employment (-153,000 and its rate fell by 0.3 p.p.) over the last three months and over the same period unemployment increased at a faster pace too, with an increase of 138,000 (+0.4p.p). Over the year, the UK's employment is now down (-102,000).

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Judge-led review to provide greater certainty for troops being investigated

The review, to be led by a retired judge, will make sure the guidance and policy framework for investigating allegations during overseas operations is fit for the future. This will help ensure that all allegations are taken forward in a timely manner, providing reassurance to victims and closure to innocent personnel caught up in investigations. It will not reconsider past investigations or prosecutorial decisions or reopen historical cases but will look at how processes can be strengthened going forward.

The review will complement the reforms made under the Overseas Operations Bill, which is currently going through parliament. Together they will provide service personnel on future operations with greater clarity and certainty.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Nobody wants to see service personnel subjected to drawn-out investigations, only for the allegations to prove to be false or unfounded.

At the same time, credible allegations against those who fall short of our high standards must be investigated quickly and efficiently.

This review, which will run in tandem with our Overseas Operations Bill and build on the recommendations of the Service Justice System Review, will help future-proof investigations and provide greater certainty to both victims and service personnel.

The review will begin in the coming months and will consider whether we have the skills and processes in place for all elements of the investigative process, from allegations through to prosecutions. It will look at whether there is enough cooperation between independent investigators and prosecutors to increase the speed of decision-making, as well as the extent to which such

investigations are hampered by organisational culture.

Recommendations from the review will build on existing measures to improve the efficiency of Service Police investigations following the [Service Justice System Review](#) conducted by HH Shaun Lyons and Sir John Murphy, published earlier this year.

Measures introduced following that review included setting up a Defence Serious Crime Unit to bring together individual Special Investigation Bureau units, similar to civilian police forces which deal in regional crime, to remove the duplication of work and enhance operational effectiveness.

This announcement follows [the Second Reading of the Overseas Operations Bill](#) last month. The Bill will enable stronger legal protections for service personnel and veterans facing the threat of repeated investigations and potential prosecution.

The Bill delivers on the government's manifesto commitment to tackle vexatious claims and end the cycle of reinvestigations against our armed forces.

[Adapting to 4°C of global warming](#)

Before I start my speech, I'd like to add my condolences to the Committee on Climate Change and everyone who knew Professor Dame Georgina Mace.

Georgina's work assessing the impacts of climate change and the effect of adaptation on the natural environment has never been more important.

Her contribution will help every one of us shape a more resilient world in the future.

That goal is what my speech today is all about.

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When you look out of a train window, the trees up-close fly by in a blur, the fields in the middle distance glide past, and the far-off hills don't appear to move at all.

Similarly, in public life: newspaper headlines fly by in a blur, political shifts glide past, and the natural world doesn't appear to move at all.

Or so it was... until the climate crisis began to distort and accelerate environmental change.

Today, it is as if when we look out of the train window, we can see the far-off hills gathering speed and catching up with our train.

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Without adaptation, climate change could depress growth in global agriculture yields up to 30 percent by 2050, disproportionately affecting small farms around the world.

The number of people who lack sufficient water, at least one month per year, could soar from 3.6 billion today, to more than 5 billion by 2050. We take the first line of COVID defence – washing our hands – for granted in the UK, but Water Aid point out this is a luxury that billions of people can't afford.

Rising seas could force hundreds of millions of people in coastal cities from their homes, with total costs of more than one trillion dollars each year by 2050.

Climate change could also push more than 100 million people in developing countries below the poverty line by 2030.

No wonder more and more people are experiencing “eco-anxiety”.

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I want to thank:

- The Committee on Climate Change;
- The National Centre for Atmospheric Research;
- And, the UK's Climate Resilience Champions...

...for inviting me, for hosting this event, and for showing leadership on adaptation.

And, I want to apologise if I've made everyone's eco-anxiety worse.

What I really want to do is raise the profile of the UK's expertise on adapting to climate change.

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There are many things to be optimistic about.

We definitely have the knowledge in this country to deliver on the Prime Minister's ambition for a green industrial revolution that “will create hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of jobs”.

That said, any discussion of the green recovery automatically infers the possibility of significant climate shocks.

The Committee on Climate Change and the Adaptation Committee do a superb job of integrating both agendas.

I hope the Environment Agency's goal to become a net-zero organisation by 2030, will also demonstrate how to do both at the same time.

And, the joining of the FCO and DFID is an opportunity to improve these links in Government.

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As we know, countries most vulnerable to climate risk often criticise developed nations for being too focussed on reducing emissions, rather than helping them prepare.

The new FCDO potentially means we can better unite work to enhance the world's green economy, with helping our neighbours prepare for the humanitarian impacts of climate change.

Last week, Dr Saleemul Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development at the Independent University, Bangladesh, commended the UK's push to begin a "race to zero emissions" at COP26, and suggested:

"There could also be a race to zero vulnerability of every country by 2030 as an equivalent to the race to zero emissions."

Treating mitigation and adaptation as two sides of the same coin is key to the success of the green recovery from coronavirus...

...and also the UK's ability to inspire a game-changing international agreement at COP26.

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Here in England, the Environment Agency has been criticised for saying we are helping the country prepare for 4 degrees of global warming.

The accusation is that we are suggesting such a future will be manageable, and so we are protecting the status quo by overstating our abilities.

Today's conference feels like an appropriate place to address that.

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In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said we have 12 years to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

Last year, the insurance giant Aviva measured investments in its equities portfolios against the goals of the 2015 Paris agreement, and found they are on track for a 3.4 degree rise.

As a result, they have announced a new 2050 net-zero carbon emissions target for their auto-enrolment default pension funds.

And they should be applauded for that leadership.

But, distressingly, their analysis – calculated using Carbon Delta's warming potential metric – said the FTSE 100 index as a whole is heading towards 3.9 degrees.

To be reductive, my view is this:

No government or government agency can possibly know what the status quo looks like in either a 1.5 degree or even a 3.9 degree world... but if we don't take significant action to both reduce emissions and adapt right now, we're on a hiding to nothing.

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Even though the Environment Agency has a huge amount of practical, place based expertise to lend to this effort: it would be daft to suggest that we, or even the Government, can do this alone.

Creating a more resilient country depends on listening, collaboration and action from local communities, through national government and the private sector, to the international stage.

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Last month – which (incidentally) was the warmest September on record globally – the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy finished its journey through Parliament.

Which means we can now put it into practice.

To do this we need individuals, communities, charities, businesses, farmers, land managers, and infrastructure providers, to build up the resilience of millions more homes and businesses.

This means the construction of hard flood defences, river channel maintenance and sustainable drainage systems, nature based solutions, property level resilience, and alternative land management practices...

We will work with anyone and everyone – even the beavers – to identify the best combination of measures to tackle unique risks in specific places.

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Our work got a significant boost this year, when the Government announced a record £5.2 billion long-term investment to accelerate flood scheme construction in England.

It is money well spent: for every £1 used to improve protection from flooding and coastal erosion, we avoid around £5 of property damages.

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The Infrastructure and Projects Authority say that between £29 billion and £37 billion of infrastructure projects will be brought to market in the remainder of this financial year.

If even a small portion of those investments is dedicated to resilience, the long term benefits will reward local communities as well as shareholders.

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I read the other day that the wildfires in northern California have expanded beyond 1 million acres.

This means the fire can no longer be called a “megafire” but needs a new classification: it’s a “gigafire”.

Last month, the State of California joined the Coalition for Climate-Resilient Investment, launched by Alok Sharma at the UN General Assembly last year.

The CCRI is made up of businesses and organisations that now represent over 10 trillion dollars in assets.

That kind of crazy money shows that adaptation is no longer a niche topic of green finance: people in the City increasingly get it.

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Just over a week ago, Storm Alex brought over a month’s worth of rain to some parts of the country... we were lucky it didn’t hit us as it did France and Italy.

But, it’s only mid-October and there’s already a lot of water in the ground.

Everyone needs to be ready this winter, so please check your flood risk and look up what to do in a flood.

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The Environment Agency is ready.

During the height of the coronavirus lockdown, we developed safe ways of working enabling more than 90% of flood schemes across the country to continue.

And, consultations continue to be carried out virtually with communities.

The flood schemes will better protect people.

For example, the £11 million scheme in Lancaster, ensuring that flood risk in the city is significantly reduced...

...and the £4.8 million Marton West Beck scheme that will protect 485 homes in central Middlesbrough against flooding from the beck, the sea, and surface water.

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Whether too much water in the form of floods; too little in the form of droughts; or poor water quality from pollution...people’s relationship with water is threatened by changes we see today.

These changes are linked, so our response should be joined up too.

It doesn't make sense to deal with flood protection and environmental improvements in separate silos.

At the Environment Agency, these teams work closely together, sharing information and expertise...

...not to mention offices and depots...

...because it's vital to take an integrated approach to water management in catchments.

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The River Severn Partnership takes a collaborative approach to deliver resilient development in an area with low productivity but a significant rural economy.

We are working with the community, business and government to make the economy more resilient to flood and drought, while potentially giving the area an annual £11.4 billion uplift.

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In London, we've worked on an innovative regulatory approach to the new super sewer – The Thames Tideway – to help deliver an enormous infrastructure project that will not only lead to improved water quality and habitats...

...but has created 2,800 jobs in construction, will increase flood resilience, and create new riverside public spaces.

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The coronavirus has held the world's attention in 2020, but this was also a year when so many powerful storms formed over the Atlantic, the US National Hurricane Center ran out of names for them.

Adapting to multiple changes all at once can't be done by looking at the world from one perspective.

In June, the former President of Ireland Mary Robinson wrote:

"It is imperative that the recovery from COVID-19 is completely aligned with addressing the urgency of the climate crisis.

"We need to listen to the young people, to climate-vulnerable states, to indigenous peoples, to women, to the scientists, to environmental defenders, and we need to ensure the global community is supportive of their needs, including action on the provision of climate finance."

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I hope we get our act together in this "climate decade" so we are only

heading for a 1.5 degree world, but the economic analysis suggests we're heading for a 3.9 degree world.

And yet! There are reasons to be positive, as David Attenborough and Prince William's "Earthshot" prize will no doubt demonstrate.

I look with optimism towards a green recovery from coronavirus in which we both reduce emissions, and also adapt.

But, at the Environment Agency we don't just hope, we're getting on with it.

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Thank you very much.

[Creating Climate Resilient Places: a new direction for a nation](#)

Introduction

I'm very pleased to be joining you all this morning for this exciting and innovative edition of Flood and Coast, and am privileged to be sitting at least virtually alongside such an esteemed host and panel. Thank you for inviting me, and thank you in particular to our friends and partners at CIWEM for leading this year's Flood and Coast Event: for obvious reasons, it hasn't been easy – but it is a success.

Flooding: the facts

I know this is an expert audience, but let me start by reaffirming three key facts about flooding which are always good to remember.

Fact one: the risks are big: one in six homes and businesses in England (over 5.2 million properties) are at risk from flooding and coastal erosion. Flooding is the second highest risk on the national risk register – beaten only to the number one spot by the risk of a pandemic – which tells you something about how serious a threat flooding is.

Fact two: the risks are rising: climate change means sea levels could rise by over a metre by the end of the century – seriously worrying in a country like ours in which so many communities are by the coast. Climate change means we could see nearly 60% more winter rainfall by 2050 – seriously worrying for a country with so many rivers, and so many communities in the flood plains of those rivers. And it's not just more winter flooding we need to worry about: while summers will be hotter and drier in the future, when summer rains come they will be 25% more intense than now.

Fact three: flood defence works: while we can never prevent all flooding all of the time, we can and do protect most people most of the time. Most of the 2.7m homes in England which are at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea now have some form of flood defence. Every time there is heavy rainfall or a high tide, Environment Agency defences protect thousands of people, most of whom don't even notice. The new defences we've built over the last decade mean we've seen significantly fewer homes flooded during that period: in 2007, 55,000 homes and businesses flooded. Last winter, despite record breaking rain (February 2020 was England's wettest February ever), the number of properties flooded was much lower – 5,000 (and we must never forget that every one of those is a personal tragedy), with around 130,000 protected as a direct result of our flood defences.

Not only are we seeing less flooding of homes and businesses, we are also seeing much less loss of life. Stronger defences and better warnings – both the responsibility of the EA – mean that very few people now die directly as a result of flooding. That was not always the case: in 1953 an East coast storm surge killed over 300 people. When a similar surge happened in 2013, nobody died.

That is why we are going to keep on investing in flood defences. The EA is close to completing our current six year £2.6bn building programme which will better protect another 300,000 homes and businesses by April 2021. And we are preparing to launch the next six year investment programme with double the amount of money, £5.2 bn, which will better protect a further 336,000 properties with some 2,000 new schemes.

The climate emergency is a game changer

It is bringing more extreme weather, more frequent storms, more rain and more flood risk. In these circumstances more communities will flood more often, and there will be some places which will become effectively impossible to protect. So we need a new approach. And we need it quickly, because our thinking needs to change faster than the climate.

What's new about the Environment Agency flood strategy

That new thinking is what the new EA Flood Strategy, approved last month by Parliament, seeks to deliver. I am sure everyone in this audience can quote all 118 pages of the Strategy backwards. But for everyone else, here's the short version of what you need to know. The Strategy contains a lot that is new, indeed revolutionary. Let me single out the five most important new things:

Resilience as well as protection. While we must and will continue to build and maintain strong defences to reduce the risk of flooding, in the face of climate change we also need to make our places more resilient so that when flooding and coastal change does happen it causes less harm to people, does less damage, and life can get back to normal quicker. After floods we need to build back better, so properties, infrastructure and the local economy are

better able to cope with future flooding. We need to design our houses, cities and infrastructure to be more resilient to the more violent weather climate change is bringing.

Not just hard defences: Hard defences will still be at the heart of our approach to flood risk. But they will no longer be enough on their own. We will need a broader range of actions to ensure climate resilient places. That includes avoiding the wrong development in the flood plain; taking a whole catchment approach to how we manage water, to reduce the risks of both flooding and drought; using nature-based solutions to slow the flow of rivers and store flood waters upstream away from communities; better preparation for and response to flooding through timely and effective forecasting, warning and evacuation; and more property level protection.

Even greater emphasis on tackling climate change. Mitigating the extent of climate change and adapting to its consequences is a fundamental part of reducing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. As the Prime Minister has said, there are opportunities for the UK to be a world leader here, including by delivering the government's target of making the UK net zero for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The EA is playing its part in that: we aim to be a net zero organisation by 2030.

Greater emphasis on growth. The Strategy aims to ensure all spending on flood and coastal resilience contributes to job creation and sustainable growth in local places. One of the points about flood defence is that it's great value for money: for every £1 we invest we save £5 or more in damages avoided; and done right it generates jobs, growth, prosperity and enhances nature – all of which are doubly important as we seek a green recovery after Coronavirus.

Protecting ourselves against flooding is everyone's job. The EA has and will continue to have a key role to play: we build, maintain and operate flood defences; warn and inform communities when flooding threatens; and come to their aid when it happens. The government has and will continue to have a key role to play too: it sets the overall flood policy for the nation and it funds most of the work to deliver it. But we will only succeed in future in managing the growing levels of flood risk, and tackling all the other effects of the climate emergency, if we all do our bit. The Strategy seeks to build a nation of people who all understand their own flood risk, their responsibility for managing it, and what they need to do to succeed.

Conclusion: first maintain the Wall

Let me conclude with a reminder that ultimately what we do to manage the risk of flooding and coastal erosion is not a dry technical exercise but about the lives and livelihoods of our fellow human beings.

Many of you may know Dymchurch in the beautiful Romney Marshes. Those marshes, and most of the communities that have been there for centuries, owe their existence to the Dymchurch Wall, a sea defence that was probably first built in Roman times and has been improved and looked after by the locals ever since. There was a saying in Dymchurch passed down over generations, and it was this: Serve God, honour the King, but first maintain the Wall.

Today there are many walls that protect our communities up and down the country. Some of those walls are real – hard flood defences, property level protection that reduces the risk of flooding happening and the damage when it does. Some walls are human – for example, the Environment Agency staff who turn out in all weathers to protect communities against flooding. Some of those walls are virtual – for example the EA’s digital flood warnings that are accessed today by one in ten of the population. And some of those protective walls, perhaps the most important, are in our own heads – the understanding we now have of how we can reduce our own flood risk, and how we can adapt and live safely in a climate changed world.

All of us have a role to play in reducing flood risk and tackling the climate emergency. So remember: there is more than one kind of Wall. But whatever kind you are responsible for, maintain it.

Consultation launches for A417 ‘Missing Link’ designs

Highways England has today (Tuesday, 13 October) launched a consultation on its updated designs for the ‘A417 Missing Link’.

The planned upgrade of the A417, a key route linking the South West and Midlands, will see a single lane stretch of carriageway between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout in Gloucestershire, upgraded to dual carriageway, considerably benefitting road users, local communities and businesses.

Michael Goddard, Senior Project Manager for the A417 Missing Link scheme, said:

As a result of your feedback, we’ve made some improvements to our proposals which will benefit local connectivity, accessibility and reduce the scheme’s impact on communities, the environment, and the local landscape. As part of the planning process, we’re required to consult on our proposed design.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

The proposed upgrades to the A417 will benefit all road users in Gloucestershire by boosting capacity, cutting congestion, and improving connectivity between local economies. Highways England is keen to hear residents’ feedback on the changes, and are committed to getting the project under way as swiftly as possible.

The supplementary statutory consultation runs from today (Tuesday, 13 October) to Thursday, 12 November with feedback helping Highways England develop its application for a Development Consent Order to be submitted early next year.

One of the best ways to find out more about our proposals and have your say is to visit our online exhibition. You can access this via our [A417 Missing Link web page](#) – there are dedicated times when you can chat with members of the project team who'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If you do not have access to the internet or experience problems downloading the consultation materials, Highways England can send free of charge one printed copy of documents including the consultation booklet, feedback questionnaire, and a Freepost return envelope to your home, which are available on request by calling 0300 123 5000 or emailing A417MissingLinkatAirBalloon@highwaysengland.co.uk.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.