

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack comments on 2021-22 GERS figures

News story

The Government Expenditure & Revenue Scotland figures show the difference between total revenue and total public sector expenditure in Scotland.



Commenting on the Scottish Government's [Government Expenditure & Revenue Scotland figures](#), Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Today's Scottish Government figures show how people and their families benefit massively from being part of a strong, resilient UK.

Scotland's deficit – the shortfall between taxes raised here, including oil, and public spending – stands at £23.7bn. But as part of the UK, we can rely on the Treasury to step up to support us in plugging the gap.

At a time of unprecedented challenges, sharing resources around the UK has never been more important.

As we continue to recover from the pandemic and confront global pressures on prices and the cost of living, it is clear we need a shared and a relentless focus on boosting the economy.

- Total expenditure for the benefit of Scotland fell from £98,439 million in 2020-21, to £97,502 million in 2021-22.
- The decline in spending reflects a reduction in spending associated with coronavirus support schemes.
- Although spending as a share of GDP has fallen from the peaks seen

during 2020-21, it remains above 50% of GDP, and around 5 percentage points higher than prior to the pandemic.

- On top of receiving additional Barnett consequential for the Scottish Government for 2021-22, these figures account for Scotland having benefited from at least an additional £3.7 billion in reserved spending, down from £9.4 billion in 2020-21.
- The figures from the Scottish Government show that Scotland's notional deficit fell from £35,774 billion in 2020-21 to £23,727 billion in 2021-22. This is more than Scotland's entire health, education, economic development, tourism and culture budget for the year, which was a cumulative £23.4 billion in 2021-22.
- Public expenditure per person in Scotland in 2021-22 was £1,963 higher than the UK average. This was an increase from £1,530 in 2020-21.
- Revenue per person in Scotland remained below the UK average. In 2021-22, including an illustrative geographical share of North Sea revenue, revenue per person was £221 lower than the UK average. In 2020-21 when revenue per head was £395 lower than the UK average. This shows the higher variability when North Sea revenues are included.
- The 'Union dividend' per person in Scotland (the combined value of higher spending and lower revenue) was £2,184 in 2021-22. This was an increase from £1,924 in 2020-21 (revised).
- Although spending on the pandemic fell in 2021-22, this has mostly been offset by increases in the cost of servicing public sector debt.

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Students told to get up to date with vaccinations ahead of Freshers' Week

Students heading to university in September are being encouraged to ensure they are up to date with their vaccinations ahead of Freshers' Week to protect themselves against a range of life-threatening illnesses.

First year or returning students can be at increased risk of serious diseases such as meningitis, septicaemia and measles as they mix with large numbers of other students from around the country and overseas.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and meningitis charities are urging parents and students to ensure they are protected before the term begins as many of these illnesses arise at the start of the academic year.

The 3 vaccines students should get up to date with are:

1. MenACWY – protecting against 4 common strains causing meningitis and septicaemia
2. MMR – protecting against measles, mumps, rubella

3. HPV (for female students) – protecting against cervical and other cancers caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV) together with genital warts

Dr Shamez Ladhani, Consultant Epidemiologist at UKHSA, said:

We know that colleges and universities can be hotspots for the spread of diseases such as meningitis and measles.

At the top of any list of essential things to get for college should be any missed vaccines – it could save your life. If unsure check with your GP to make sure that you are up to date with the MenACWY, MMR and HPV vaccinations before term starts.

And all students need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia. Don't assume it's just a hangover or freshers' flu. If you're poorly make sure a friend knows and stay in touch regularly with friends who are ill. These diseases can progress rapidly so urgent action in getting medical attention is critical – call NHS 111 straight away.

Anyone who is unsure about their vaccine status can check with their GP practice to see if they are up to date and fully protected. Ideally, students should have any vaccines they have missed at least 2 weeks before leaving for university. If that's not possible, they should arrange to have any missed vaccines as soon as possible with their current GP or their new GP practice if they are moving to a new university.

The MenACWY vaccine is routinely offered to those in school years 9 and 10 but some students will have missed out. Anyone who has missed out can still get a free jab with their GP until their 25th birthday.

The vaccine provides high protection against 4 common strains that cause meningococcal disease (meningitis and septicaemia) – MenA, MenC, MenW and MenY – but does not protect against all strains, like MenB.

Although numbers of cases have remained at relatively low levels across the country, there has been a small increase in meningococcal disease due to MenB among young adults (60 confirmed cases in 19 to 22 year-olds during the 2021 to 2022 academic year in England) since the easing of coronavirus (COVID-19) social restrictions in July 2021.

The UK began offering routine vaccination against MenB to infants in 2015, but teenagers and current university students will not have received this vaccine so it is important they are aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia so they can urgently seek medical care if needed.

Meningitis and septicaemia can develop suddenly. Symptoms include a blotchy rash that doesn't fade when a glass is rolled over it, fever, headache, aching muscles and joints and a stiff neck. The MenW strain can also cause vomiting and diarrhoea in teenagers and young adults. Urgent antibiotic

treatment and hospitalisation are critical.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can also have serious consequences. It can be more severe in teenagers and young adults, often leading to hospital admissions. Measles starts with cold-like symptoms and sore red eyes, followed by a high temperature and a red-brown blotchy rash.

Claire Wright, Head of Evidence and Policy at Meningitis Research Foundation, said:

Meningitis can kill healthy people within hours and is difficult to distinguish from a bad hangover or more common milder illnesses in the early stages.

By taking up the free MenACWY vaccine, school leavers are not only protecting themselves but also protecting others by stopping the bacteria from being passed on.

For those who have already been vaccinated it remains important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis because the free vaccine does not protect against MenB, which is the most common cause of life-threatening meningitis amongst this age group.

Michelle Bresnahan, who founded meningitis awareness charity A Life for a Cure following the sudden death of her son Ryan to MenB, said:

It's important to make sure that getting up to date with your vaccinations is on your to-do list as you begin your preparations for university.

No-one wants to fall ill in the first few months and checking with your GP that you have these 3 vaccines is a quick and easy way to keep yourself safe.

Remember though, not all types of meningococcal disease are covered by the vaccine, including MenB. So it's vital you get to know the signs and symptoms, including a blotchy rash that doesn't fade when a glass is rolled over it, fever, aching muscles and joints and a stiff neck. Doing so could save your life or that of a friend.

Meningitis Now chief executive, Dr Tom Nutt, said:

It's vital that young people take up the opportunity to get vaccinated against MenACWY while at school. In addition, very few young people will have been vaccinated against MenB, which is the strain that causes the most cases of bacterial meningitis in the UK.

Although many young people will have been vaccinated against

MenACWY at school, our estimates show that up to half a million under-25s may have missed this important vaccination. If that's you, contact your GP and see if you can get up to date with your vaccinations. This is particularly important if you are going on to higher education and university halls of residence. You can find out more information about the signs and symptoms of meningitis at meningitisnow.org.

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[Russia's continued war increases](#)

collective outrage: UK statement to the OSCE

Mr. Chair, today we should solely be celebrating with Ukraine as they mark 31 years of independence. Instead, we have also gathered here at this Special Council to once again condemn Russia's unprovoked, full-scale and illegal invasion of Ukraine. These have been six long, dark months. The Russian government anticipated a three-day war – it is fitting that exactly six months on, we celebrate the indomitable spirit of the proud nation of Ukraine that refuses to yield to President Putin's imperialism. We congratulate our Ukrainian colleagues and all the people of Ukraine on their national day, and look forward to many more to come.

Yesterday, politicians met for the International Crimea Platform. Since 2014, the people of Crimea have endured a brutal and systematic campaign of human rights abuses by the Russian authorities, including the persecution of the Tatars, arbitrary arrests, and the restriction of land ownership. Let us remember that the 24th February was an escalation in Putin's hostilities against Ukraine; not the beginning. It has never been more important to emphasise that Crimea is Ukraine.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Ukraine, pay tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives in the face of evil and tyranny, and express our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of the ongoing aggression against Ukraine. 6.5 million people have become refugees across Europe, with one third of Ukrainians forced from their homes. As of Monday, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 13,477 civilian casualties, of which over 5,500 are fatalities. Behind each of these numbers is a human being – with a name, a face and family and friends who love them. And the true figure is almost certainly significantly higher, rising every day as Russia continues to target civilians and critical infrastructure – including recent indiscriminate shelling in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Donetsk.

Russia's disregard for international law, and its lack of humanity has appalled the international community. The world was horrified to learn of reports of war crimes and atrocities committed by Russian forces in places such as Irpin and Bucha. I and many of my colleagues here have repeatedly emphasised the callousness and blatant illegality of Russia's tactics. Tactics which include the exploitation of prisoners of war and civilian detainees for political purposes; we've heard reports of torture and mistreatment, and the use of sham trials – all in a clear breach of the Geneva conventions. By continuing to wage this war of brutality, Russia does not make us accustomed to its inhuman methods – it only increases our collective outrage. The UK is committed to ensuring that those who commit war crimes in Ukraine are brought to justice.

Having been humiliated militarily and failing in his initial war aims, President Putin has shown his true colours and resorted to the use of food

and energy as weapons, threatening global food security and pushing some of the world's most vulnerable populations to the brink of famine. We remain gravely concerned about the implications of Russia's illegal invasion for nuclear safety and security. Since February, nuclear facilities in Ukraine have experienced significant disruptions to operations, posing a grave threat to the populations of Ukraine and wider Europe. Specifically, Russia must immediately restore full control of Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities and ensure that the International Atomic Energy Agency has appropriate access to address critical safety, security and safeguard concerns. Failure to comply would be an exceptionally costly act of desperation. Though let us be clear – the quickest path to restoring nuclear safety and security in Ukraine is the immediate and complete withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Since the invasion started, the [UK has provided economic, humanitarian and military assistance totalling over £3 billion](#), including towards holding those responsible for war crimes to account and an unprecedented package of sanctions on those facilitating this invasion. We will continue to use all the tools available to ensure that Ukraine succeeds in the face of President Putin's unprovoked, premediated and unjustified war.

On this Ukrainian Independence Day, we resolutely reaffirm that we remain committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, extending to its territorial waters. Today, once again, we reiterate our demand for the immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, of all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and the full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine. Ukraine – we stand with you.