

New productivity institute part of £37m investment to boost UK wage growth and living standards

- £32 million investment for new UK Productivity Institute in Manchester, supporting the government's drive to build back better, and level up wages and living standards across the country
- a further £5 million backing for the London School of Economics to identify how the UK's most innovative products, services and technologies can be distributed more evenly across the economy
- package is the largest economic and social research investment ever in the UK, as part of country's continued economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

A new institute in Manchester will boost ground-breaking research to explore how to increase productivity, boost wages and support the economic recovery across the UK backed by a £37 million investment, the government announced today (21 August 2020).

This new state-of-the-art Productivity Institute based at the University of Manchester will be supported by £32 million of government and industry funding to identify barriers to increase productivity levels across the UK following the coronavirus crisis.

From September, over 40 researchers from leading UK institutions to work directly with policy makers and businesses to examine the UK's productivity levels and the issues that impact productivity, such as working from home, workers' well-being and lack of diversity in the workplace to identify key policies that could be implemented to unlock growth and deliver jobs.

Areas of research could involve understanding the supply and demand for labour and skills across regions and sectors, looking at how companies can implement new technologies and efficient processes to increase competition, improve working conditions, and accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy to future-proof industry and lower prices for consumers.

It comes alongside a new £5 million research programme at the London School of Economics (LSE) to accompany the Institute, which will identify ways that the UK's most innovative products and services can be distributed more evenly across each sector of the economy to increase productivity.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

Improving productivity is central to driving forward our long-term economic recovery and ensuring that we level up wages and living standards across every part of the UK.

The new Productivity Institute and LSE's innovative research will bring together the very best of our researchers, boosting our understanding of the different drivers of productivity and helping people and businesses earn more in every area of our economy.

Led by esteemed economist Professor Bart van Ark of the Alliance Manchester Business School, the Productivity Institute will seek to identify solutions that address imbalances in productivity between sectors and regions, as well as improving management practices. In doing so, they will also be working with eight partners including the Universities of Glasgow, Queen's University Belfast and Cardiff.

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Executive Chair, Professor Jennifer Rubin, said:

The Institute at Manchester and the LSE research programme address what is arguably the UK's biggest economic challenge. This funding represents the largest economic and social research investment ever in the UK, befitting its enormous potential to improve lives for millions of people.

The aim is to ensure that advances in knowledge inform the significant decisions and interventions that policy makers, businesses and individuals must make to improve productivity, and to achieve the attendant improvements in wages and living conditions that doing so can drive.

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Manchester, said:

This is a landmark investment by the government. It demonstrates how serious the government is about solving the UK's productivity puzzle and importantly, it signals a commitment to help create an economy that works for everyone, with growth that is sustainable, inclusive and regionally distributed.

We are proud to lead a group of some of the UK's most prestigious institutions to tackle what is perhaps the greatest economic challenge of our times and to do so from our region, with its rich heritage in productive growth.

Professor van Ark of the Alliance Manchester Business School said:

For many years the UK has grappled with how to create better jobs and boost productivity, thereby increasing people's prosperity around the country. The COVID-19 recession makes it time for a fresh look at these challenges.

If we are to reboot the economy, we need jobs that create high value, use economic and natural resources efficiently, and drive sustained growth through technological change and innovation. Productive jobs will pay more and improve people's well-being.

Working closely with businesses, policymakers and other stakeholders across the nation and sharing insights with other countries, we aim through our research and engagement to develop practices and policies to encourage more productive and inclusive growth across the UK.

The new Programme on Innovation and Diffusion (POID) at the London School of Economics (LSE) will be led by world-leading economist Professor John Van Reenen. The Programme will work to identify ways in which the UK's most innovative products, services and technologies can be distributed more evenly across the economy to industries that have been slower to adopt modern practices that will help increase productivity.

Notes to editors

The Productivity Institute will be headquartered at the Alliance Manchester Business School.

Funding for the Productivity institute and the Programme on Innovation and Diffusion (POID) is being delivered through the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), part of UK Research and Innovation and through its [Strategic Priorities Fund](#). It will run for 5 years, starting on 1 September 2020.

Of the £32 million provided for the Productivity Institute, ESRC will provide £26 million, with £6 million being provided by the Alliance Manchester Business School-led consortium.

ESRC will provide £4 million of the funding for the Programme on Innovation and Diffusion (POID), with an additional £1 million provided by the London School of Economics.

[Third Woodland Carbon Guarantee auction now open for applications](#)

- £10m available from the scheme's £50m pot for farmers and land managers to create new woodlands to help tackle the effects of climate change.
- Scheme gives land managers the option to sell Woodland Carbon Units to the government at a guaranteed price protected against inflation.
- Previous auction helped stimulate 1,517 hectares of tree planting.

Farmers and land managers across England are encouraged to [apply for the Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme](#) by 11 October, ahead of the next auction which will take place online between 26 October to 1 November.

The Woodland Carbon Guarantee is a Forestry Commission administered £50 million scheme that aims to help accelerate woodland planting rates and permanently remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

New tree planting projects are eligible for long-term payments for the amount of carbon a new woodland will store, providing new income for farmers and land managers.

Following an online auction process, successful bidders will be offered the option to sell woodland carbon in the form of Woodland Carbon Units – a financial value given to each tonne of carbon stored – to the government over 35 years at a guaranteed price protected against inflation. The scheme reflects the government's confidence in the continued growth of markets for woodland carbon, as landowners will have a revenue stream in future from selling carbon on the domestic market.

This announcement follows the success of the second auction which closed in June 2020 and saw 27 contracts offered by the Forestry Commission to help stimulate the creation of 1,517 hectares of new woodland specifically to help combat climate change.

Sir William Worsley, Chair of the Forestry Commission, said:

This pioneering scheme could be the perfect fit for many farmers and land managers looking to help tackle the climate and nature crises now upon us.

Results from the second auction show the scheme is growing in its success, providing more land managers with long-term income support for creating new woodland.

I strongly encourage anyone thinking about planting to sign up ahead of the next auction in October.

Encouraging diverse woodland types and tree species is a key factor in the Forestry Commission's efforts to increase tree planting rates in England. This scheme aims to achieve a varied range of projects across different locations and scales.

The outcome of the second auction, along with the first, showed positive signs of encouraging projects in parts of the country such as South West and East England where tree planting has been lower in recent years. The average price of bids accepted in the second auction was £19.71 per woodland carbon unit.

Speaking of the benefits of the Guarantee, Forestry Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

This scheme provides landowners with the long-term certainty of a guaranteed payment rate for carbon, which their trees lock up and store.

From helping to reduce carbon emissions, encouraging biodiversity and nature recovery, and improving people's health and wellbeing, the benefits of trees are undeniable.

I urge all land managers to consider planting roots and to sign up to the Woodland Carbon Guarantee as we rebuild our country to ensure a greener and more resilient future.

Before applying for the Guarantee, land managers will need to have registered with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#), which provides the tools and information required to verify and record the carbon they are capturing and can sell in future.

The government manifesto commits to increase planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025. The government is currently [consulting on a new England Tree Strategy](#) which concludes on 11 September. Farmers and land managers are encouraged to engage with this to help shape policies to increase tree planting and woodland management, including how we can build on the Woodland Carbon Guarantee to encourage private investment in trees and woodlands.

[Apply for the Guarantee here.](#)

Notes to editors:

- The prices accepted in previous auctions should not be taken as a firm indicator of acceptable bids in any future auction. Applicants should also be aware that the auction is a competitive process and lower bids are more likely to be successful.
- Before you apply for the Guarantee, you will need to have registered with the [Woodland Carbon Code](#), which provides the tools and information required to plan your woodland and calculate the amount of carbon that it will remove from the atmosphere. The woodland will also need to comply with the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard.
- [More information on the scheme and how to apply can be found here.](#) For frequently asked questions please see this [Q&A](#).

[E3 Foreign Ministers' Statement on the JCPoA](#)



On 20 August, the US sent a letter to the UN Security Council requesting to initiate the 'snapback' mechanism, which allows a participant to the JCPoA to seek the reimposition against Iran of the multilateral sanctions lifted in 2015 in accordance with resolution 2231, adopted by the UN Security Council.

France, Germany and the United Kingdom ("the E3") note that the US ceased to be a participant to the JCPoA following their withdrawal from the deal on 8 May, 2018. Our position regarding the effectiveness of the US notification pursuant to resolution 2231 has consequently been very clearly expressed to the Presidency and all UNSC members. We cannot therefore support this action which is incompatible with our current efforts to support the JCPoA.

The E3 are committed to preserving the processes and institutions which constitute the foundation of multilateralism. We remain guided by the objective of upholding the authority and integrity of the United Nations Security Council. We call on all UNSC members to refrain from any action that would only deepen divisions in the Security Council or that would have serious adverse consequences on its work.

We remain committed to the JCPoA despite the significant challenges caused by US withdrawal. We believe that we should address the current issue of systematic Iranian non-compliance with its JCPoA obligations through dialogue between JCPoA participants, including through the Joint Commission and use of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism. In order to preserve the agreement, we urge Iran to reverse all measures inconsistent with its nuclear commitments and return to full compliance without delay.

As we have already underlined, including in our 19 June statement, we have serious concerns regarding the implications for regional security of the scheduled expiry of the UN conventional arms embargo, particularly given Iran's destabilising activities, which continue unabated. The E3 are determined to bring adequate answers to these challenges and will continue to work with all UNSC members and stakeholders to seek a path forward that preserves space for further diplomacy. Our efforts will be guided by the need to uphold the authority and integrity of the UN Security Council and to advance regional security and stability.

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1. 22 August 2020

Added translation

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[The importance of fair elections, security and humanitarian assistance in Somalia](#)

Mr President, on behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to first express my condolences to the family and friends of those killed in the recent Al-Shabaab attack in the Elite Hotel in Mogadishu. I want also to reaffirm our solidarity with all Somalis in the face of such attacks. Deplorably, these attacks, despite Covid-19 and the Secretary-General's call for a ceasefire, continue to undermine peace and security in Somalia. We condemn these attacks and we pay tribute to the ongoing commitment and sacrifices of AMISOM troop-contributing countries and the efforts of the Somalia Security Forces to counter Al-Shabaab.

Mr President, as we have heard today, Somalia is at a critical juncture on its journey towards a long-term political settlement and the peace, security and stability that it will enable. Somali leaders and international partners have committed to supporting and advancing democracy in Somalia. With the deadline for elections fast approaching, an agreement on a way forward is urgently needed.

A timely and inclusive way forward is also critical – a way forward that respects the principles and commitments agreed to in the Mutual Accountability Framework, including at least a 30 percent quota for women

parliamentarians. This agreement should represent clear progress from the 2016 election model, moving Somalia away from clan-based selection processes to direct elections and enable as many citizens to vote as possible, as set out in the Provisional Federal Constitution. And so we welcome the ongoing consultations between leaders of the Federal Government and the Federal Member States in Dhusamareb. We have always been clear that the electoral model will require broad based support among all Somali stakeholders.

To that end, we regret, as SRSB Swan and Ambassador Madeira both said, that President Dani of Puntland and also President Madobe of Jubaland have not yet joined the talks. We call for them to attend as a matter of urgency. It is vital that all stakeholders, the Federal Government, Federal Member States, Parliament, the Electoral Committee and Joint Parliamentary Committee work together in a spirit of compromise to reach agreement and avoid unilateral or provocative acts that would undermine the hard-won stability in Somalia and the partnership with the international community. We stand ready to support agreed outcomes that strengthen inclusive politics and include a significant element of direct voting.

Mr President, turning to the human rights situation, we too share the concerns expressed by the UN and indeed the SRSB today about the "sexual intercourse related crimes bill." It was encouraging to see so many Somalis speak out against it. We urge Parliament to give first reading to the original Sexual Offences Bill submitted by Cabinet. Any bill passed by the Somali Parliament must reflect its international obligations and commitments on the protection of children, women and girls.

Mr President, I want also to express our deep concern about attacks on freedom of expression and against journalists and media workers in Somalia. Media freedom is a vital component of our democratic society, and the media has a vital role to play in Somalia. We call for journalists and media workers to be able to perform their work freely and safely.

Mr President, Somalia faces a protracted climate and conflict-induced humanitarian crisis. This crisis has been exacerbated by the global Covid-19 pandemic, floods and locust infestation. We call on the international community to provide more funding for the humanitarian response and to step up efforts to build resilience and mitigate the long-term effects of climate change. The United Kingdom gave \$420 million in the last financial year to Somalia and is now working to support the Covid-19 response. It is vital that the Federal Government and Member States facilitate the delivery of relief aid to all those in need and ensure the safety of aid workers in line with international humanitarian law.

I return finally to the security situation in Somalia. Somalia has made important progress in recent years, but the security situation, as we've heard, remains difficult. Next year's deadline for transition of greater responsibility to the Somalia security authorities presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

Mr President, it is vital that all those who have invested in supporting AMISOM and building Somalia's security forces now work together to agree to a

future of international support to Somalia's security. Without this, we risk wasting the progress and sacrifices made to date the UN-led independent assessment on post-2021 security should offer the forum for these discussions, and I urge all partners to engage proactively with it.

In conclusion, Mr President, I want to emphasise three points:

First, I want to reiterate our call, which the Security Council has made many times, for the Federal Government and all Federal Member States to come together and reach a decisive and inclusive agreement on elections soon.

Secondly, I want to underline the importance of this Council, the United Nations, the AU, and wider international community continuing to support Somalia to achieve progress on political and security reform.

And finally, I want to stress the importance of a united response supporting Somalia in its fight against Covid-19 and protracted humanitarian crises.

Mr President, Somalia, through the determination of its people and the support to the international community, has come a long way. We shouldn't lose sight of this. We stand ready to lend our support to navigate this next stage and to help Somalia realise its goal of peace and security.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Driving lessons and driving tests to restart in Scotland](#)



The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and Scottish Government have announced that:

- learner drivers can resume training in Scotland from Monday 24 August
- vocational and car and trailer driving tests will resume on Monday 31 August
- car driving tests will start again on Monday 14 September
- driving instructor testing and standards checks will restart on Monday

14 September

DVSA and the Scottish Government previously announced the restart of theory tests from 22 July 2020, and motorcycle tests and tractor driving tests from 3 August 2020.

Car driving tests will restart in Scotland on Monday 14 September, which will give learner drivers time to have refresher lessons and practice before taking their test.

When lessons and tests will restart

When services restart depends on what vehicle you're learning to drive or ride.

Car

| Service | Date |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Driving lessons | Monday 24 August 2020 |
| Theory tests | Monday 22 July 2020 |
| Driving tests | Monday 14 September 2020 |

Motorcycle and moped

| Service | Date |
|--|----------------------|
| Motorcycle and moped compulsory basic training (CBT) | Monday 27 July 2020 |
| Motorcycle direct access scheme (DAS) training | Monday 3 August 2020 |
| Theory tests | Monday 3 August 2020 |
| Motorcycle and moped module 1 and module 2 tests | Monday 3 August 2020 |

Lorry, bus and coach

| Service | Date |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Driver training | Monday 24 August 2020 |
| Theory tests | Monday 3 August 2020 |
| Driving tests | Monday 31 August 2020 |

Car and trailer

| Service | Date |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Driver training | Monday 24 August 2020 |
| Driving tests | Monday 31 August 2020 |

Tractor and specialist vehicle

| Service | Date |
|-----------------|--|
| Driver training | Monday 22 July 2020 |
| Driving tests | Monday 3 August 2020 (for tractors), Monday 14 September 2020 (for other vehicles) |

Approved driving instructor (ADI)

| Service | Date |
|---|-------------------------|
| Driving instructor training | Monday 24 August 2020 |
| ADI part 1 test (theory) | Monday 22 July 2020 |
| ADI part 2 test (driving ability) | Monday 7 September 2020 |
| ADI part 3 test (instructional ability) | Monday 14 September |
| ADI standards check | Monday 14 September |

Motorcycle trainer

| Service | Date |
|--|----------------------|
| DVSA enhanced rider scheme trainer theory test | Monday 3 August 2020 |

Helping the country to get moving again

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

It has been vital that lessons and tests only resume when safe to do so and in line with the government's advice.

We know this has been a tough time for the whole country including learners and instructors but I am pleased to announce the first step in restarting some of our services in Scotland.

Tests for critical workers have continued during the lockdown and I would like to thank all those instructors and examiners who have continued to work to help deliver tests for those who have done so much to help us during this terrible pandemic.

More information

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1. 20 August 2020

Added the dates that car driving lessons and car driving tests will restart in Scotland.

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