

Press release: October 2017 labour market statistics for Scotland

Commenting on today's labour market statistics for Scotland, Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

It is encouraging to see an increase in employment, which remains close to record levels.

But the rise in unemployment is disappointing and shows we must remain focused on boosting Scotland's economy.

Growth in Scotland lags behinds the rest of the UK and I'd urge the Scottish Government to use their considerable economic levers more effectively.

The statistics can be accessed on the ONS website.

Further information

- Employment in Scotland increased by 35,000 over the quarter, and increased by 40,000 over the year to stand at 2,655,000.
- The Scots employment rate increased over the quarter to stand at 75.3 per cent. The rate is now at a near record high and is above the UK average of 75.1 per cent.
- Unemployment in Scotland increased by 9,000 over the quarter and is down 15,000 over the year. The level now stands at 113,000.
- At 4.1 per cent, the Scots unemployment rate is below that for the UK as a whole.
- Economic activity increased by 44,000 over the quarter and now stands at 2,767,000. The economic activity rate increased over the quarter to stand at 78.5 per cent.
- In September 2017, the number of people out of work and claiming out-of-work benefit – Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) – was 80,500, up 500 over the month. The claimant count level is now 700 higher compared to one year ago.

News story: Rule changes to promote competition in structural warranties market

The revision to existing National House Building Council (NHBC) undertakings, which currently cover over 1.6 million homes in the UK, will protect and encourage growing competition in the structural warranties market.

On 29 June 2017, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced – as part of its review of legally binding commitments (known as ‘undertakings’) given by the NHBC in 1995 – that it would consult on whether or not to amend the NHBC’s undertakings to bring them up to date with today’s market conditions.

This proposal reflected the CMA’s provisional finding that, although competition in the market has grown and house builders are now purchasing some or all of their structural warranties from a range of suppliers, the NHBC has retained a very high market share compared to its competitors.

Having carefully considered responses to its consultation, the CMA has determined in the [final decision](#) on its review to seek new undertakings that are more focused and closely targeted on encouraging effective competition than those given in 1995.

The CMA is now consulting on the new undertakings that have been offered by the NHBC. These proposals would oblige the NHBC to clearly display on its website that builders who are members of the NHBC can source structural warranties from both the NHBC and other providers, or from another provider alone. Given regulatory developments, these proposals would also remove any requirement on the NHBC to oversee warranties provided by its competitors.

The proposed new undertakings would replace the previous undertakings and remain in force for 15 years. They are set out in Annex 1 of the CMA’s final decision.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposed undertakings should do so by 1 November by emailing structural.warranties@cma.gsi.gov.uk or writing to:

Structural Warranties Review
Competition and Markets Authority
Victoria House
Southampton Row
WC1B 4AD

Press release: Unemployment remains at lowest rate since 1975

The figures, released by the Office for National Statistics, also show that there are now 32.10 million people in work, 317,000 more than last year.

These figures have been driven by increases in full-time and permanent work, and in the last year there are 20,000 fewer people relying on zero hour contracts.

The female employment rate is also at a near record 70.7%, with over 15 million women in work. However, mothers aged between 16 and 49 are still less likely to be in employment than women without dependent children of the same age.

One area of focus for the government is therefore getting more women into work, and in the process boosting their pay income.

Minister for Employment, Damian Hinds said:

Our economy is helping to create full time, permanent jobs which are giving people across the UK the chance of securing a reliable income.

We've boosted the income for people on the lowest pay by increasing the National Living Wage and delivered the fastest pay rise for the lowest earners in 20 years.

That's great progress and we're determined to help more people flourish in the world of work.

For example we've launched our new returnship programme to help more women get into good jobs after taking time out, and to keep their career progressing.

Nancy Wood, 34, is an Associate at BuroHappold who has returned to work after 10 months out. She helps to lead the BuroHappold Engineering Sustainability and Building Physics team in London. She is looking to further her career in sustainability consultancy and has attended a returners course organised by WISE, an organisation set up to achieve a better gender balance in science, technology and engineering.

Nancy said:

I went on the returnship programme to help reignite my career. I'm

ambitious, and after 10 months out I have valued learning how to successfully balance work and home life.

The course was extremely helpful and provided some really useful techniques. I already feel more confident in my ability and empowered to do my job well, and have set a clear career path to help me achieve my ambitions.

Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that time out of the labour market has a substantial impact on women's salaries. On returning to work, women earn around 2% less on average for every year spent out of paid work.

According to research by PwC, addressing the career break penalty could provide a £1.7 billion boost to our annual economic output.

In the [2017 Spring Budget](#) £5 million was allocated to increase the number of schemes in the public and private sector for people returning to work after a career break caring for children or family members.

Today's employment figures also show:

- there are a near record 783,000 vacancies in the economy at any one time
- the number of people in employment has increased by over 3 million since 2010
- the UK has the 3rd highest employment rate in the G7
- the number of workers aged 50 and over has reached a record 9.97 million
- youth unemployment has fallen by over 40% since 2010
- the proportion of young people who are unemployed and not in full time education remains below 5%

As part of the government's response to the recent [Race Disparity Audit](#), the Department for Work and Pensions will target 20 hotspots where ethnic minority people are more likely to be unemployed. Measures in these areas could include mentoring schemes to help those in ethnic minorities into work, and traineeships for 16 to 24 year olds, offering English, maths and vocational training alongside work placements.

Separate figures out today show [1.4 million claims have been made to Universal Credit](#). There are 610,000 people on Universal Credit, with 37% in employment.

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News story: Unemployment rate in Wales fall below the UK average

Alun Cairns has welcomed the latest job figures which show that unemployment rates in Wales have dropped in the last quarter and are now below the rest of the UK.

It is great to see the unemployment rate in Wales fall below the UK average. The UK Government is working hard to create the right conditions for economic growth, investment and jobs in Wales and this month's statistics demonstrate the strength of the Welsh economy.

There is, however, more that needs to be done to increase the rate of employment. I'm convinced that increasing exports to new markets will not only grow the Welsh economy but will create jobs across Wales. I'm doing everything I can to help companies in Wales maximise their exporting potential.

News story: Civil news: questions deadline on face to face and CLA tenders

You have until 23.59 on 19 October 2017 to ask questions about the 2018 face to face and CLA tenders.

We have set a deadline of 23.59 on 19 October 2017 for you to ask questions about 2018 civil contracts in the following areas of work:

- face to face contracts
- specialist CLA telephone advice

Your questions should be raised through the e-Tendering system and focus on the procurement process or the Information for Applicants (IFA) document.

Questions of wider interest will then be collated and answered through a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document.

This will be published on our 'civil tender 2018' webpage in the week beginning 30 October 2017.

Further information

[e-Tendering system](#) – for submitting bids and using the message boards for questions about the process

[Legal aid civil tender 2018](#) – information for potential applicants

Email help@bravosolution.co.uk or telephone 0800 0698630 for technical questions about using the e-Tendering system

[Tender process for 2018 contracts opens](#) – GOV.UK news story on 19 September 2017