

[News story: November 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 Scotland's employment remaining close to record highs seen earlier in the year.

However, the slight rise in unemployment is disappointing and shows there can be no complacency as we tackle Scotland's economic challenges.

With growth in Scotland continuing to lag behind the rest of the UK, I 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 2,000 over the quarter, and increased by 46,000 over the year to stand at 2,652,000.
- The Scots employment rate remained unchanged over the quarter to stand at 75.2 per cent. The rate remains at near record highs and is just above the UK average of 75.0 per cent.
- Unemployment in Scotland increased by 2,000 over the quarter and is down 20,000 over the year. The level now stands at 109,000.
- At 4.0 per cent, the Scots unemployment rate is below that for the UK as a whole.
- Economic Activity increased by 4,000 over the quarter and now stands at 2,761,000. The Economic Activity rate increased over the quarter to stand at 78.4 per cent.
- In October 2017, the number of people out of work and claiming out-of-work benefit – Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) – was 77,000, down 1,800 over the month. The claimant count level is now 900 higher compared to one year ago.

[News story: Zimbabwe and the political](#)

situation in Harare: November 2017

Information for British nationals in Zimbabwe on where to find guidance following recent developments in Harare.

Due to the uncertain political situation in Harare, including reports of unusual military activity, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office recommend British nationals currently in Harare to remain safely at home or in their accommodation until the situation becomes clearer.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

We are monitoring this situation very closely and our embassy is providing support and advice to UK nationals in Zimbabwe. At the moment it's very fluid and it's hard to say exactly how this will turn out. Everybody wants to see a stable and successful Zimbabwe. We are appealing for everyone to refrain from violence, that is the crucial thing.

We will also share information on the embassy social media accounts:

Simon Thomas, Deputy Head of the UK Mission in Harare, said:

The team at the British Embassy in Harare are obviously following the developments that are unfolding here in Zimbabwe very closely. You'll have seen pictures overnight of military being deployed around the city, and I can confirm that military remain deployed at strategic locations around Harare this morning.

As an embassy, our prime concern is obviously for the safety and security of British nationals, and our advice to any British nationals who are here in Harare, either living, or working or visiting, is to stay at home, stay in your hotel room, wait until things settle down a little bit.

Follow the [travel advice](#) and the general advice that we're putting out on the embassy's social media channels [@UKandZimbabwe \(Twitter\)](#) and [@UKandZimbabwe \(Facebook\)](#). We'll be updating them regularly throughout the day.

[Deputy Head of Mission Simon Thomas update](#)

[Press release: Provisional decision to remove Rough gas storage undertakings](#)

In June this year the facility's operator, Centrica Storage Limited (CSL), [announced](#) that it intended to close the plant due to its age, physical deterioration and the associated safety risks, plus the high cost of refurbishing the facility to make it workable.

The facility's owners, Centrica plc (Centrica) and CSL, requested that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) remove historic undertakings – designed to ensure competition in the sector – as part of the closure process.

These included the legal, financial and physical separation of CSL from Centrica, restrictions on Centrica's access to capacity and ensuring non-discriminatory access to capacity for Rough's customers.

Following a review, the CMA has provisionally decided to release CSL and Centrica from these undertakings. The companies will also need agreement from the Oil and Gas Authority to cease their storage operations.

Martin Cave, CMA chair, said:

CMA panel members made this provisional decision based on the age and degradation of the gas wells and other facilities at Rough, which mean that the assets are no longer capable of safe operation for gas storage without substantial refurbishment.

We also considered present and anticipated market conditions which meant that the level of investment required to meet the legal obligation to operate safely was not economically viable. This has led to our provisional finding that the undertakings are no longer required.

Further details, including the CMA's provisional decision to remove the undertakings, can be found on the [case page](#).

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
2. The Rough undertakings were first given by Centrica Storage Ltd and

Centrica plc following Centrica plc's acquisition in 2002 of the Rough gas storage facility and have been subsequently amended following Competition Commission reviews in 2006 and 2011, and a further review by the CMA in 2016.

3. The Rough undertakings were accepted by the Secretary of State under section 88 of the Fair Trading Act 1973. By virtue of paragraph 16 of Schedule 24 to the Enterprise Act 2002, and The Enterprise Act 2002 (Enforcement Undertakings and Orders) Order 2004 (SI 2004/2181), the CMA has the ability to supersede, vary or release certain undertakings accepted under the Fair Trading Act 1973; this includes the Rough undertakings. This power is exercisable in the same circumstances, and on the same terms and conditions as applied to the Secretary of State under the Fair Trading Act 1973; namely that by reason of any change of circumstances the undertakings are no longer appropriate and need to be varied, superseded or released.
4. The group of CMA panel members acting as decision-makers in the review are [Martin Cave](#) (Chair), [Anne Fletcher](#), [Jayne Scott](#) and [Jon Stern](#).
5. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.

[News story: Government doubles exceptional talent visa offer](#)

As part of its ongoing commitment to welcome talented people from across the globe, and in recognition of the importance of these innovative industries to the UK, the number of visas available through the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route is increasing from 1,000 to 2,000 a year.

This will ensure that more highly skilled people who enhance the UK's economy can come to, and work in, this country. It is a further demonstration of the government's dedication to the global mobility of individuals who will help make sure that the UK remains at the forefront of these world-leading industries.

The Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

I am delighted that we are able to welcome more talented people from across the world to our country. Increasing the number of visas for these sectors will make sure that we continue to be at

the heart of world culture and forefront of digital and scientific advances.

The UK's innovative industries, including the thriving digital technology sector, are at the centre of our industrial strategy and making sure that businesses in these fields have access to exceptional talent from across the world is vitally important.

That is why I will be meeting with technology experts to seek their input on making sure that our visa processes are as efficient as possible.

The 2,000 visas will be made available to individuals who are recognised as existing global leaders or promising future leaders in the digital technology, science, arts and creative sectors by 1 of 5 UK endorsing organisations:

- Tech City UK
- Arts Council England
- The British Academy
- The Royal Society
- The Royal Academy of Engineering

Matt Clifford MBE, Co-founder and CEO of Entrepreneur First said:

We commend the Home Office's decision to increase the number of Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visas.

We cannot ignore the fact that our digital and tech economy cannot survive on home-grown talent alone and is substantially boosted by exceptional foreign individuals who have chosen to build their businesses in the UK.

If London is to continue being the European hub for tech, and if it is to grow to rival other internationally significant tech centres, we must ensure the UK becomes an increasingly welcoming hub for EU and non-EU nationals alike.

The current allocations of the 1,000 visas – which are split between the 5 endorsing organisations – will remain and the additional places will be made available across all of the endorsing bodies dependent on need. The government is keen to ensure that all nations and regions of the UK benefit from this change. The Home Office will look at how it can work with organisations across the UK to ensure wider take up of these visas outside London.

This announcement is part of the government's ongoing reforms to routes to the UK from outside the EU. Ahead of the UK leaving the EU, the Home Office has also commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee to advise on the impact of the UK's exit from the EU on the labour market. The results

of the commission, which was published in July, will help shape the government's decisions on the future immigration system.

[Press release: Unemployment remains at 40-year low](#)

Official figures show that unemployment has remained at 4.3%, the lowest rate since 1975.

The figures, released by the Office for National Statistics, also show that employment remains at a near record high, with 32 million people in work.

Increases in full-time and permanent work are behind the figures. In the last year the number of people on zero hours contracts has fallen by 20,000.

Minister for Employment, Damian Hinds said:

The strength of the economy is driving an increase in full-time, permanent jobs and a near-record number of people are now in work thanks to the government's welfare reforms.

When unemployment fell to 5% early last year, many people thought it couldn't get much lower, and yet it now stands at 4.3%.

Everyone should be given the opportunity to find work and enjoy the stability of a regular pay packet. We've cut income tax for 30 million people since 2010, meaning people keep more of their money each month.

Today's employment figures also show

- the number of people in employment has increased by more than 3 million since 2010
- the UK has the third highest employment rate in the G7
- the number of workers aged 50+ has almost reached 10 million – a record level
- youth unemployment has fallen by over 40% since 2010
- there are a near record 780,000 vacancies in the economy at any one time
- the proportion of young people who are unemployed and not in full time education remains below 5%

Separate figures out today show there are [630,000 people on Universal Credit, with 40% in employment](#).

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