

News story: Multi-billion pound boost for Scotland's railways

Ministers have revealed the Scottish Government will receive more than £3.6 billion over five years from 2019/20 – an increase of £600 million on the previous period.

Alongside this, the Scottish Government is also being given greater control over how its rail is funded. So it can choose how best to use this money to improve the reliability of services for passengers, fund upgrades and invest in faster and more comfortable trains.

This new funding settlement is on top of the significant additional Barnett funding the Scottish Government now receives to spend on its priorities, including transport. The Scottish Government has been allocated £1.2 billion since Autumn Statement 2016 and will also get Barnett Formula funding following the UK's investment in HS2. The Scottish Government will decide how much of this Barnett funding should be spent on the Scottish railway network.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Elizabeth Truss said:

This multi-billion pound UK government funding is a prime example of how Scotland benefits from the UK's broad shoulders.

Our record investment for railways across the UK means a settlement for Scotland that could improve the entire network.

We are backing Scotland for its future success and it's now up to the Scottish Government to ensure maximum benefit for the public.

As a result of UK government decisions in other areas, Scotland has benefited from an additional £2 billion funding since the 2015 Spending Review.

Through the Scotland Act, the Scottish Parliament now has the ability to set devolved taxes in Scotland, making it one of the most powerful devolved Parliaments in the world.

Scotland also benefits from the strength of the UK economy, which was the second fastest growing major advanced economy last year.

Other recent UK government commitments for Scotland:

- the UK government has invested almost £1 billion in Scottish City Deals and we're planning further deals for Stirling, the Borderlands and the Tay Cities
- Scotland will benefit from the UK government's investment in areas that are key to boosting productivity, such as research and development, science and innovation

- the National Productivity Investment Fund will invest an extra £23 billion across the UK between 2016/17 and 2021/22
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Press release: International Charter space data to support Red Cross and Red Crescent disaster relief efforts

The world's largest humanitarian network of 190 national societies will now have access to disaster mapping services based on satellite data supplied by the International Charter members.

Sune Bülow, Team Leader, Emergency Operations and Information Management at IFRC said:

Having immediate access to data and derived analysis for disaster prevention, response and recovery, is of vital importance to the IFRC. Both in the first hours of a sudden-onset event and throughout response to protracted crises, the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies are often among the first disaster responders, and access to the International Charter will only improve the already formidable partnership with UNOSAT and ensure that we are also among the first to receive and analyse information.

Since 2000 the International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters' has been using space data to provide help to those affected by disasters.

The Charter, a group of space agencies, works to mitigate the effects on human life and property by providing rapid access to satellite data to assist rescue authorities in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.

Einar Bjorgo, Manager of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research stated:

We need to ensure maximum impact from Earth Observation data during disasters. Being able to support the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and their national members, with satellite image analysis derived from Charter data will greatly contribute to this goal.

Chris Lee, Head of International Policy at the UK Space Agency and outgoing Chair of the Disasters Charter noted:

We are proud to have agreed this new relationship with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This is a fantastic opportunity for the Charter to make a real difference to communities and disaster management efforts on the ground, made possible through our work with the United Nations.

Recent activations

Requests for Charter support for emergencies have included Hurricane Irma, which hit the United States and parts of the Caribbean in early September and Hurricane Maria, a devastating storm that affected the Caribbean just a couple of weeks later.

Hurricane Irma, a Category 5 storm, ploughed through the Caribbean on 6 and 7 September 2017. In the Caribbean the storm left at least 44 dead and thousands of people were made homeless. In the United States at least 80 people were killed and the storm left flooding and damage to infrastructure in its wake.

The Charter was involved in the planning and coordination of the emergency response operation by providing satellite-derived analysis of building damage, flooding and mapping.

Hurricane Maria followed in the wake of Hurricane Irma and affected some of the same countries, with devastating results to some of the islands. Maria made landfall in Dominica on 19 September with the giant storm totally engulfing the island. It left 15 dead and devastated the island.

It then caused flooding and landslides in the Dominican Republic where at least two people were killed and 10,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes. In Puerto Rico 15 people were killed and the entire island was left without power. In the U.S. Virgin Islands one person was killed, while two people were killed in Guadeloupe. Again, the Charter helped by providing damage assessment and information on flooding and damage assessment.

[News story: London Seminar: Achieving better outcomes for young people affected by sexual exploitation \(1 Nov 2017\)](#)

Wednesday, 1 November, 2017

featuring

Dr Lucie Shuker

Senior Research Fellow, The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking, The University of Bedfordshire

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[News story: Manchester seminar: 'Cooperating Out of Crime?' What can cooperatives bring to prisoner rehabilitation? \(21 Nov\)](#)

Tuesday, 21 November

featuring

Dave Nicholson

Director, Cooperative and Mutual Solutions

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Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Finland

2016 – present FC0, Head, Counter Terrorism Department 2013 – 2015 FC0, Head, South East Asia Department 2011 – 2012 Cabinet Office, Deputy Chief Assessments Staff, Joint Intelligence Organisation 2009 – 2010 Kabul, Deputy Ambassador 2007 – 2008 Home Office, Head of Border & Visa Policy, UK Border Agency 2006 – 2007 Home Office, International Delivery Director & Europe Director, Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2005 Home Office, Deputy Director, European Policy, Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2005 Cabinet Office, Desk Officer, Civil Contingencies Secretariat 2004 Basra, Deputy Consul General 2001 – 2003 Cabinet Office, Desk Officer (Asia & Middle East), Overseas and Defence Secretariat 1998 – 2001 Cabinet Office, Desk Officer (Asia), Joint Intelligence Organisation 1991 – 1998 House of Commons Research Service, Assistant and later Senior Clerk, International Affairs and Defence Section