

Further £1.1 billion boost for Scotland's response to COVID-19

The UK Government has provided the Scottish Government with an additional £1.1 billion to support people, businesses and public services affected by coronavirus.

This funding brings the total allocated through the Barnett formula to the Scottish Government since the start of the pandemic to £9.7 billion.

In recognition of the exceptional circumstances and in response to calls for flexibility, the Scottish Government will be able to carry over any of the £1.1 billion not spent this year into the 2021/22 financial year on top of their existing tools to transfer funding between years.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

From the outset of this crisis people and businesses in Scotland have been able to rely on the UK Government.

UK Treasury schemes such as furlough, support for the self-employed and business loans have helped to protect jobs and livelihoods.

The UK Government will continue to offer this support and to give the Scottish Government the resources and flexibility it needs to fulfil its responsibilities to the people of Scotland.

I would urge the Scottish Government to make the full and best use of this funding as well as their devolved powers to support people, businesses and public services.

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack said:

This new £1.1 billion funding from the UK Treasury for Scotland's Covid response is good news and will provide further certainty to the Scottish Government.

This now brings our additional funding to Scotland to £9.7 billion this financial year on top of direct UK Government support to people and businesses in Scotland.

This includes supporting over 900,000 Scottish jobs through our furlough and self-employed income schemes, backing £3.4 billion in loans to Scottish businesses, helping thousands get back into work and investing millions in the development of and supplying vaccines.

The strength of the union and support offered by the UK Treasury has never been more important.

Following the previous update on 24 December, this is expected to be the final update for 2020-21 as part of the process for finalising departmental funding at Supplementary Estimates.

Any changes to devolved funding are normally confirmed towards the end of the financial year at Supplementary Estimates – but in July 2020 the UK Government introduced an unprecedented upfront guarantee to provide the devolved administrations with funding certainty to respond to COVID-19 this year. A full explanation of the Barnett guarantee can be found [here](#).

The agreed arrangements the devolved administrations have to move funding between years is set out in Chapter 10 of the [Statement of Funding Policy](#).

Further explanation of the Supplementary Estimates process can be found [here](#).

£300M FUNDING BOOST FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Press release

UK Government provides Northern Ireland Executive with additional £300 million to help tackle coronavirus



The UK Government has provided the Northern Ireland Executive with an additional £300 million to support people, businesses and public services affected by coronavirus.

This funding brings the total allocated through the Barnett formula to the Northern Ireland Executive since the start of the pandemic to £3.3 billion.

In recognition of the exceptional circumstances and in response to calls for

flexibility, the Northern Ireland Executive will be able to carry over any of the £300 million not spent this year into the 2021/22 financial year on top of their existing tools to transfer funding between years.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

“UK Treasury schemes such as furlough, support for the self-employed and business loans have helped to protect jobs and livelihoods across Northern Ireland.

“But we recognise that the Northern Ireland Executive also has a vital role to play, which is why we are continuing to give them the resources and flexibility they need to support people and businesses through this pandemic.

“I would urge the Executive to use this additional £300 million to help those most in need in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis said:

“The UK Government has stood side by side with people and businesses across Northern Ireland throughout the coronavirus pandemic – shielding them from its worst effects.

“The Northern Ireland Executive has received unprecedented levels of funding from the UK Government this year and this additional money, which can be carried over into the next financial year, will give the Executive the certainty and flexibility to deliver on its priorities for the benefit of all in Northern Ireland.”

Following the previous update on 24 December, this is expected to be the final update for 2020-21 as part of the process for finalising departmental funding at Supplementary Estimates.

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First preparatory meeting of the 29th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum: UK statement

Dear Secretary General Schmid, Ambassador Funered, distinguished speakers, excellencies, fellow delegates, dear friends,

The UK would like to thank you Ambassador Funered and your able team for the work that has gone in to preparing the agenda for this first preparatory meeting of the 29th Economic and Environmental Forum. The UK wholeheartedly

welcomes your chosen topic of women's economic empowerment as the overarching theme of the Forum this year.

We consider this a pressing and serious issue. The World Bank estimates that even today over 2.7 billion women worldwide – many of them living in the OSCE region – are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men, and so have limitations to their equal access to economic prosperity unfairly placed upon them. Women are also less likely than men to participate in the labour market around the world. UN Women estimate that labour force participation rates for women aged between 25-54 are 63 per cent. For men, however, they are 94 per cent.

From a supply-side perspective, economic growth depends on the growth and skills of the labour force; the movement of people from low- to high-productivity activities; innovation and entrepreneurship; and investment in the education and skills of future generations.

A recent OECD study shows how gender-based discrimination in social institutions reduces productivity and economic growth by lowering both human capital investment and labour force participation.

So if our collective societies' prosperity is to be maximised, and therefore act as effectively as possible against the threat of instability and conflict, it is right that we focus our attention on these important topics. Beyond the gains for economic growth, gender equality can reduce poverty and foster a more equitable distribution of income – all elements that can prevent conflict. The link, therefore, between security and women's economic empowerment, is clear.

We all hope that 2021 will see the end of the COVID pandemic, which is why we support in particular the 2021 Chairpersonship in Office addressing this issue now. Globally, women will have been disproportionately economically impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Women are only half as likely as men to have full-time paid jobs in the formal economy, and certain sectors in which women are over-represented continue to be particularly hard hit. It is right that recovery measures prioritise gender equality to capitalise on this crisis and build back more just and inclusive economies and societies.

Ambassador Funered,

You can rely on the UK Delegation to contribute constructively, and support you wherever we are able. We welcome your typically inclusive approach, to bring together representatives from the business and scientific communities, as well as civil society and international organizations. Sharing the insights and expertise of these groups can only enhance our chances of success. We look forward to participating in, and learning from, a salient and interesting series of events you have prepared.

Thank you.

Robust border regime comes into force

From today (Monday 15 February), if you have been in a high risk destination on the [UK's 'red list'](#) – comprised of 33 hotspots with COVID variants in circulation – you will have to enter England through a designated port and have [pre-booked a quarantine package](#) to stay at one of the government's managed quarantine facilities.

Those arriving from today onwards that have not visited a red list country must still quarantine for 10 days at home and complete 2 mandatory COVID-19 tests on the second and eighth day after arriving.

The government has tough measures already in place requiring all travellers into the UK, from any location, to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 3 days before departure and non-UK residents from the 33 red list countries are already banned from entering Britain.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

As this deadly virus evolves, so must our defences. We have already taken tough action to limit the spread, protect people and save lives.

With the emergence of new variants, we must go further. The rules coming into force today will bolster the quarantine system and provide another layer of security against new variants at the border.

These new measures are important to protect our vaccination programme, which has now seen 15 million people vaccinated, we all work towards restoring normal life.

The new measures that have come in to force today will further strengthen the UK's borders, limit the spread of new COVID-19 variants and potentially save lives.

The tougher quarantine restrictions also carry heavier fines and penalties with potential prison sentences of up to 10 years.

Enforcement of new regulations

The government has also put in place new regulations equipping Border Force and police staff with the powers needed to ensure people arriving in England conform to the new rules.

Border Force have the power to issue fixed penalty notices to individuals suspected of lying on their [passenger locator form](#) and where necessary detain

them for up to 3 hours.

As part of the regulations, a requirement for quarantining individuals to self-isolate in their room is set out in law. There will be also be a visible security presence at the managed quarantine facilities to ensure that people are obeying these rules.

The government has struck deals with 16 hotels so far, providing 4,963 rooms for the new quarantine system, with a further 58,000 rooms currently on standby.

All hotel staff will be fully trained in COVID-secure practices, and all contractors have been instructed to ensure their facilities and services are provided in a COVID-secure way. This includes plastic shields and PPE where necessary.

Nearly zero energy buildings requirements for new buildings

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