

Alister Jack responds to January Labour Market Statistics

News story

Scottish Secretary responds to the latest ONS employment figures



Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Today's figures show signs of resilience in Scotland during the Autumn months, however we continue to live in challenging times.

Throughout the pandemic, the UK Government has taken quick and decisive action to protect jobs and support businesses, providing more than £280 billion in support including the furlough scheme, business loans and self-employed income support.

For those looking for work our Plan for Jobs is delivering skills development and creating new jobs through Kickstart for young people, sector work programmes and recruitment of thousands of work coaches.

This direct support is on top of £8.6 billion additional funding given to the Scottish Government.

We are also looking ahead to a way out of the pandemic, securing and paying for vaccines and taking steps to kick start economic recovery and create new jobs. In Scotland this includes City and Region Growth Deals, Freeports, a new Shared Prosperity Fund and investing in our broadband, research and defence sectors.

Background

- The UK Government furlough scheme, paying 80 per cent of wages, will run until the end of April. The self-employed support scheme has also been

extended to the of March and will increase from 55% to 80% of average profits – up to £7,500. At their peak in the summer our furlough and self-employed support schemes were supporting more than 930,000 jobs in Scotland.

- More than 90,000 businesses in Scotland have been supported from UK Government business loans worth £3.4 billion.
- The UK Government is investing billions to help people of all ages back into work, including our £2 billion Kickstart scheme for young people, expansion of sector work experience programmes and recruitment of thousands of Work Coaches in Jobcentres.
- The UK Government has provided billions in extra funding for the welfare system for those unable to access other forms of support.
- The UK Government continues to provide the bulk of covid testing in Scotland and has moved quickly to buy vaccines, securing 367 million doses from seven developers with Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines currently being rolled out across the UK.
- This support is on top of an additional £8.6 billion upfront funding given to the Scottish Government this financial year for their covid response.

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UK in Cameroon COVID-19 Relief Caravan

World news story

The British High Commission Yaounde leads the British Business Community in Cameroon to reach out to vulnerable communities with COVID-19 preventive equipment.



UK Government

In solidarity with the Government of Cameroon's efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the British High Commission in Yaounde led the British Business Community in Cameroon on a distribution campaign dubbed, "UK in Cameroon COVID-19 Relief Caravan". The purpose was to handover personal protective equipment (PPE), to over 10,000 persons within semi-urban and rural populations, with focus on vulnerable communities, women and persons living with disability.

This outreach aimed at building resilience in communities through an inclusive strategy of community mobilisation, donation of personal preventive equipment and sensitising/ educating communities in an effort to support the national strategy to combat the spread of COVID-19 in Cameroon.

The British High Commissioner to Cameroon, Rowan Laxton said:

The coronavirus pandemic is a global public health emergency. The disease is life-threatening for people of all ages everywhere in the world. To help save lives and provide support, the UK Government and the British Business Community in Cameroon, together with our implementation partner, Local Youth Corner (LOYOC), is organising a nationwide COVID-19 Relief Caravan.

The Caravan will reach out to some semi-urban and rural areas in the country and touch persons with disabilities. Women and girls will be particularly targeted. We hope the Caravan will also raise

awareness on the importance of inclusion and solidarity towards those experiencing great difficulty in these trying times. Please stay safe!

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Somalia: call for bids for UK Climate Diplomacy Fund

Somalia is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change. The negative effects of climate change are already being felt across the country and are expected to get worse in the future. In the past 30 years, Somalia has suffered 8 major droughts that have caused huge human and economic losses. The Drought Impact Needs Assessment (DINA) in 2018, conducted by the Somali government, found more than USD 3 billion damages or losses, equivalent to 50% of Somalia's GDP. These impacts have been particularly felt by the poorest and most vulnerable. It is therefore imperative that Somalia takes concerted action to address climate change.

The Climate Diplomacy Fund is a new centrally-managed UK government fund with the aim of building the conditions for an ambitious negotiated outcome at COP26 and delivering Country Implementation Plans. In Somalia, this will support either one or both of the two projects detailed below, to address climate change-related challenges facing Somalia.

Requirements

We will consider applications for funding for either one or both of the below proposals. Grants requested under this call must be for a maximum of US\$15,000 (fifteen thousand US dollars).

Applications must be submitted in English. The project proposals will be shortlisted and approved by the British Embassy. To apply for funding, interested organisations must submit a project proposal, activity based budget form and due diligence form (please see attached) to the British Embassy. This will provide the basic information required to enable the Embassy to make an assessment on whether or not the proposal will be shortlisted.

All project proposals must clearly demonstrate how they:

- support the programme priorities;
- deliver value for money (VfM).

The British Embassy Mogadishu will be responsible for supervision and

monitoring of this project to ensure it meets its intended objectives.

Assessment

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Alignment with the below project description and priorities
- Outcomes are achievable within the funding period
- Project design includes clear monitoring and evaluation procedures
- Risk and financial accountability procedures (and ability to meet strict due diligence requirements)
- Overall value for money (VfM)

Process:

1. Project proposals must be received by midnight on Sunday, 7 February 2021. Late proposals will not be considered.
2. Proposals must be submitted using the attached forms only (Project Proposal, Activity Based Budget and Due Diligence Forms). The Project Proposal Form must not exceed 5 pages in length.
3. Proposals must be submitted to [Juliet Field](#) and [Charlotte Dixon](#).
4. Only project proposals selected for further consideration will be notified by Friday, 12 February 2021.
5. The British Embassy aims to sign grant agreements with successful project implementers by the end of February.

Documents

[Project Proposal Form](#) (ODT, 45.4KB)

[Activity Based Budget Template](#) (ODS, 10.3KB)

[Due Diligence Assessment Questions](#) (ODT, 10.4KB)

Deadline for submitting project bids: Sunday, 7 February 2021.

Only successful bidders will be contacted.

Culture secretary and sports minister lead roundtable discussion on future of football

The Culture Secretary and Sports Minister have led a roundtable discussion today with current and former players from the Premier League, English

Football League (EFL), Women's Super League (WSL) and Women's Championship, to get the players' perspective on tackling discrimination and abuse in the game, as part of their series of discussions on the "Future of Football".

Players who shared their views included Liverpool's Jordan Henderson and Rinsola Babajide, Aston Villa's Tyrone Mings and Watford's Troy Deeney, alongside former players including Karen Carney and Anton Ferdinand.

Many of those joining the call shared their powerful experiences of the abuse they or their fellow footballers have faced, and the action they would like to see to tackle this problem. The meeting was called by Ministers ahead of them introducing new laws to hold social media companies to account for online harms, and a fan-led review of football governance.

Ministers listened to players talk about their direct experiences of discrimination in the men's and women's game, and the challenges in reporting and getting help with this. Representatives from the game also talked about the need to drive forward diversity in leadership in the game, and welcomed recent steps taken by clubs to support this.

Ministers in turn shared the plans for changing the law to tackle online harms. The Bill, due to come before Parliament in 2021, will require tech firms to take action so that what is unacceptable in the street and in stands, is unacceptable online too. The Government is taking soundings from a variety of figures in football, prior to formally launching a fan led governance review, as committed to in the 2019 manifesto which will shape reform of the national game. Ministers opened the series in November bringing together leaders from across football where they discussed financial sustainability and governance, diversity and growing the women's game. Following the meeting a financial package was agreed between the Premier League and the EFL, and the Government announced funding for National League and women's football clubs.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said: "To hear players talk about the level of abuse they have faced was humbling. Their input today has strengthened my resolve to bring in new laws to ensure there is much greater accountability from the social media platforms for dealing with such problems.

"As we shape the "Future of Football" and look towards our football governance review, we must tackle issues around discrimination and lack of equality of opportunity head on. I am grateful to this group of players for sharing their experiences and expertise to help the Government's work."

Liverpool FC player and captain Jordan Henderson said:

"The meeting was very important and I'm pleased that those with power and authority to enact change realise the seriousness of the abuse towards players."

Aston Villa FC player Tyrone Mings said:

I was pleased that the Secretary of State wanted to engage with, and listen to, the thoughts of us as players and ex players.

Hopefully this adds context when he attempts to deliver change on behalf of us.

Chair of the Football Association's Inclusion Advisory Board Paul Elliott said:

Just like the stakeholders and clubs have shown by signing up to the diversity code the Secretary of State, DCMS and the Government has evidenced genuine appetite and leadership for change.

Notes to editors:

List of attendees:

[Student Loans Company responds to Skills for Jobs white paper](#)

Press release

SLC welcomes the Government's Skills for Jobs white paper.



The Student Loans Company (SLC) welcomes the Government's Skills for Jobs white paper and the proposed policy reforms, which include the introduction of a Lifelong Learning Entitlement and a move to Post Qualification Admission.

In response to the publication of the white paper, SLC has asked Derek Ross, currently Executive Director of Operations, to transition to the role of Executive Director HE and FE Policy Reform.

David Wallace, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Customer Officer, SLC, said: "The reforms outlined in the Skills for Jobs white paper have the potential

to fundamentally alter student finance and, therefore, how it is delivered by SLC.”

“These proposals are published as SLC starts to implement transformational change; this new role within my team enables SLC to focus on responding to potentially significant reform, while we deliver our shareholders’ existing policy priorities.

“SLC will play a key role in any early discussions, giving us the opportunity to actively shape how any reforms will be delivered. We intend to support Government to ensure these proposals take a holistic view of how any changes might affect our customers, colleagues, processes and technology and Derek’s extensive experience of SLC’s customer operations means that he is well positioned to support me with this activity.”

Derek Ross, SLC’s current Executive Director of Operations, will transition into the new role in the coming months during which time SLC will recruit a new Executive Director to lead its Operations Directorate.

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