

# Scotland halfway to recession under the SNP

5 Apr 2017



Scotland's economy contracted over the last quarter, meaning the country is now on the path to recession under the SNP.

Statistics released today showed a 0.2 per cent dip in the fourth quarter of 2016.

If that performance is mirrored in the first three months of 2017, Scotland will officially be in recession.

In contrast, the rest of the UK's economy grew by 0.7 per cent in the final quarter of last year.

It comes as First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has been accused of neglecting the day job by touring the US to talk about Scotland's place in the world, and predicting separation from the UK in years to come.

Today's figures also revealed that Scottish GDP per person contracted by 0.3 per cent during October, November and December, while production and construction were the main sectors to struggle.

The statistics do not take into account revenues from North Sea oil.

## **Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:**

"These are deeply worrying figures which show that Scotland under the SNP is now on the brink of a recession.

"Nicola Sturgeon's Scottish Government must take responsibility for this mess.

"She has made Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK and created more instability and uncertainty with her threat of a second referendum.

"Now we see the real-life impact of her mismanagement.

"These figures also smash the SNP's claim that Brexit is to blame for a slowdown.

"If that was the case, why is the rest of the UK powering ahead, while Scotland comes to a standstill?

"More than ever, Scotland needs a First Minister in charge who gets back to her desk, ends her obsession with a second referendum, and focuses on her day job.

“Scotland’s economy is facing a crisis. We need a Scottish Government in charge, not a campaign for independence.”

**Notes to editors:**

For more on the figures, visit:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516361.pdf>

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## **Tories’ promise to be “most family friendly Government we’ve ever had” lies in tatters: one third of Sure Start Children’s Centres have been lost since 2010**

Jeremy

Corbyn will, on Wednesday 5 April, set out how Labour will stand up for working

families. He will contrast Labour’s commitment with new evidence that the Tories have broken their promise to support families, slashing Sure Start schemes nationwide.

The Tories famously pledged to be the

“most family friendly Government we’ve ever had” before the 2010 election. As part of this claim they said they would protect Sure Start, the transformative

early years programme introduced by Labour to give young children the best start in life. But new research, based on Freedom of Information requests to councils, reveals the Tories have broken their promise. It shows:

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**There are now over 1,240 fewer designated Sure Start children’s centres than when the Tories took office – a fall of around 34 per cent since 2010.**

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**Over 230 have been lost in the last year alone.**

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**The North East and London have seen the biggest fall in numbers, with over 40 per cent of Sure Start Centres lost.**

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**Two local authorities, Swindon and Solihull, reported that they have no designated Children's Centres in their areas left.**

Jeremy

Corbyn will highlight these figures as he sets out how Labour will stand up for working families during a visit on Wednesday.

**Angela**

**Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary,** commenting on the closures, said:

"The Tories claim they're protecting Sure Start, but they're not. They use tricky accounting methods – like pointing to buildings which are still open but which are running much reduced services – to try to pull the wool over people's eyes. But the facts speak for themselves. On the same measure that was used in 2010, Sure Start has been slashed.

"There are a third fewer designated centres than there were when the Tories came to office. We know that because we asked local authorities, those tasked with running these vital services, and that's what they told us.

"The Tories are taking us backwards. It's a scandal that parents and children are paying the price."

**Ends**

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## **Barefoot boost for computing science in Welsh primary schools**

A new national project to help boost the computing skills of Welsh primary school children has been launched today (Weds 5 Apr) by Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams.

The Barefoot Computing project in Wales aims to help primary school teachers get to grips with computing so that they can inspire and excite pupils aged from five about the world of IT.

The initiative is funded and led by BT, which has worked closely with the Welsh Government to ensure resources for the project in Wales are closely aligned to the Digital Competence Framework and are available bilingually via the Hwb digital learning platform.

Kirsty Williams visited Cadoxton Primary School in Barry to see a Barefoot workshop in action and unveiled the new online resources for teachers, which have been tailored to the Welsh curriculum in both English and Welsh.

The free, bilingual, downloadable resources and lesson plans are targeted to help primary school teachers across Wales, some of whom may not have specialist computing knowledge.

The resources focus on concepts such as algorithms, abstraction, programming and data structures and provide ideas on how they can be used in the classroom.

Kirsty Williams said,

“Since becoming Education Secretary, one of my key priorities has been to raise the aspirations for all our children and young people, broadening horizons and developing ambition so that all can achieve. The DCF is an important milestone in achieving this goal as it provides the fundamental skills our children need in the modern world. I am therefore delighted to launch these free-to-use, creative resources which perfectly illustrate how digital skills can be integrated into the Welsh curriculum.”

Every primary school head teacher in Wales will be contacted by the Barefoot team to highlight the new resources, which have already won acclaim from teachers elsewhere in the UK.

More than one million primary school pupils across the UK have already benefited from Barefoot since being launched in 2014. It forms part of BT’s long-term commitment to help build a culture of tech literacy and reach five million young people in the UK by 2020.

Alwen Williams, regional director for BT Cymru Wales, said:

“Computing is a vital skill for the future prosperity of Wales.

“Young people need these skills in order to thrive in our increasingly competitive and digital world while businesses and organisations of all sizes need recruits that are tech literate in order to succeed.

“Our children grow up surrounded by technology, but too many have little idea how it all works – their knowledge is only screen-deep.

“BT’s tech literacy programme is designed to inspire young people to ‘get’ tech concepts and to find them exciting and relevant, but we’re also aware that teachers need to feel confident to support young people.

“That’s where the Barefoot Computing project comes in, and we’re looking forward to seeing it take shape in Wales and having a real impact in our primary schools.”

Bill Mitchell, director of education at BCS, which was responsible for originally creating Barefoot Computing in collaboration with the Department for Education, Raspberry Pi and BT, said:

“It’s essential that all children develop computational thinking skills right from the start of primary school, which is why the Barefoot Computing project is so important as it gives teachers the educational tools they need to develop these skills in their pupils.”

“By backing the Barefoot Computing project the Welsh Government has shown the leadership and vision necessary to ensure all primary schoolchildren in Wales now have the chance to develop those skills and as adults successfully compete in the global digital economy.”

Pupils and practitioners in Wales can access the bilingual materials at [hwb.wales.gov.uk](http://hwb.wales.gov.uk) Schools will soon be able request a workshop to demonstrate how the resources and lesson plans can be used.

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## **[News story: DIT roundtable boosts UK business opportunities in Pakistan](#)**

China is supporting \$51 billion of infrastructure development in Pakistan as part of the ‘China Pakistan Economic Corridor’ (CPEC) to develop key infrastructure projects like roads, railways and power stations which will modernise Pakistan’s economy and boost access to trade.

It is part of China’s broader ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ to replicate the ancient Silk Road trade routes with modern trading relationships and investments across Asia, the Middle East and into Europe.

Greg Hands met yesterday (4 April) with leading UK businesses, policy experts and senior representatives of the Chinese and Pakistani governments as the UK is poised to be a key partner of CPEC, ahead of a larger CPEC conference in Islamabad in May being hosted by the UK.

International Trade Minister Greg Hands said:

Britain is a country of free-trade influence and can be an important partner for China and Pakistan in the delivery of huge infrastructure projects that are being planned between the 2 countries.

As part of an outward looking Global Britain, we have a clear ambition to increase trade with both China and Pakistan and UK businesses are well placed to capitalise on the new opportunities the region.

Participants in the roundtable included the Chinese Ambassador, Pakistani High Commissioner to the UK and UK High Commissioner to Pakistan. As well as experts from CityUK, the Royal United Services Institute and the China Britain Business Council. Businesses including HSBC, Deloitte and Standard Chartered also discussed how they and other British firms can support the delivery of CPEC.

A joint statement in 2015 between the UK and Chinese governments committed both countries to support each other's commercial co-operation in new markets, including the Belt and Road, and the \$51 billion being invested by China in Pakistan presents big opportunities for UK businesses in the next few years.

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## **Press release: Charity Commission responds to ICO issuing penalties to 11 charities**

Charity Commission confirms that it has open compliance cases.

Following the Information Commissioner's Office [announcement today](#) (5 April 2017) that it has issued monetary penalties to 11 charities for contraventions of the Data Protection Act and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Act, the Charity Commission confirms that it has open compliance cases into the following charities:

The charity regulator is assessing whether the trustees of each charity have acted in accordance with their duties under charity law. The Commission's guidance to trustees on fundraising makes it clear that trustees need to understand and comply with the relevant data protection laws and requirements.

The Commission has met with all 11 charities who acted properly in reporting the ICO investigations and notice of financial penalties and are cooperating

with the Commission.

**David Holdsworth, Chief Operating Officer at the Charity Commission, said:**

It is regrettable that further charities have been found in contravention of data protection requirements in this way. Charities must learn the lessons from these fines and breaches.

The generous British public expect charities to safeguard their data and raise funds responsibly, and in return they donate in their millions. Sadly in these cases charities have not kept their side of the bargain. We are working with the charities concerned, the Information Commissioner and the Fundraising Regulator to ensure that any necessary remedial action is taken.

The charities were investigated by the ICO as part of a wider operation into data protection practices. There are no other outstanding investigations into charities as part of that operation. The Charity Commission continues to work with the ICO and the Fundraising Regulator to ensure the wider lessons from these cases are shared, and charities are meeting their responsibilities to protect donors' personal data.

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PR 30/17

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**Notes to editors**

1. Fundraising is subject to a self-regulatory system which sets and enforces clear standards of conduct for fundraising in the Code of Fundraising Practice. [The Fundraising Regulator](#) was set up in 2016 to regulate all types of fundraising by charities based in England and Wales and adjudicate concerns and complaints about fundraising against the Code of Fundraising Practice.
2. The Charity Commission has a role in fundraising regulation where there is evidence that trustee actions or failings, in fulfilling their duties towards their charity, pose a serious risk to the charity, to charitable funds, or to public trust and confidence. This role, and trustee responsibilities for fundraising, are set out in the Commission's guidance [Charity fundraising: a guide to trustee duties (CC20)]. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-fundraising-cc20>)
3. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
4. Search for charities on our [online register](#).