

Scottish unemployment falls

Finance and Employment Secretary John Swinney this week welcomed a further fall in Scottish unemployment as new figures showed unemployment in Scotland declined by 10,000 over the three-month period February-April 2011 – the seventh consecutive reported fall.

The latest Labour Market Statistics show that the unemployment rate fell by 0.3 per cent to 7.7 per cent in Scotland – the same level as the UK as a whole. The level of total employment (for the population aged 16 and over) increased by 43,000 over the year in Scotland – which represents an increase of 1.1 per cent over the year, nearly three-times the UK-wide increase of 0.4 per cent. Scotland's employment rate is 70.9 per cent – higher than the UK figure of 70.6 per cent.

The new figures also show that the economic inactivity rate in Scotland in the three month period February-April 2011 was 23.1 per cent – lower than 23.3 per cent across the UK. The claimant count rate in Scotland was unchanged in May at 5.2 per cent.

Mr Swinney said:-“The Scottish Government is committed to securing new jobs, investment and economic growth, and I welcome this further fall in unemployment. This marks the seventh consecutive reported fall in unemployment in Scotland, a decline of 10,000 during the three month period February-April 2011.

The figures also show that our employment rate is above the UK as a whole, and our economic inactivity rate remains lower than the rest of the UK.

The economic policy we are delivering in Scotland within our current powers – including maximising infrastructure investment as a driver of recovery – has resulted in workforce construction employment increasing by 11.6 per cent in the

year to March, compared to a fall of 0.2 per cent across the UK as a whole.

But while I welcome continued falling unemployment, there can be no grounds for complacency and more needs to be done to support jobs, secure investment and boost economic activity across Scotland. That is why this Government is seeking new job-creating powers in the Scotland Bill, so that we can do more to support economic recovery and advance the interests of the people and economy of Scotland.”