

# Finance Minister visits Edinburgh software company

An Edinburgh software solutions and web design company met with Finance Minister John Swinney this week as he announced record levels of employment for Scotland.

[Lyles-Sutherland](#) has grown from just two employees to 11 in the space of a year after taking on two contracts a week for, SME Professional, its specialist property lettings software.

It has also expanded into other industries, as diverse as the elderly care market and genealogy research after founders University of Edinburgh graduates Robin Lyles and Fraser Sutherland found a niche for their IT skills.

Lyles, 30, said: "It was a fantastic opportunity to meet the minister who came to see us because companies like ours are doing so well. It's heartening to know that after a long recession small businesses are starting to grow again.

"We have expanded rapidly over the last 12 months as our software solutions – particularly for the property industry – have really taken off.

"In Edinburgh alone we have 30 property lettings agents on our books and in Scotland we have a 10 per cent market share. We are signing up lettings agents at a rate of two a week at the moment. Not only that but we are preparing for launching our services into the Middle East."

Mr Swinney visited the shared office hub – at the Creative Exchange in Leith – where he met with both Robin and Fraser for a 30-minute briefing.

Lyles added: "I think he was impressed at the power of our software systems and how it can benefit the SME market as a

whole, from his knowledge of the sector.

“We showed him our software system and he was interested and asked a lot of pertinent questions; he could see we offered value for money and how we could expand easily into other areas.”

The Finance Secretary’s meeting with the pair coincided with the release of new labour market data statistics which show employment now at a ‘record level’ in Scotland.

According to the ONS data covering the period March-May 2014 employment in Scotland rose by 76,000 over the year to reach a record 2,587,000.

And National Statistics published by the Scottish Government indicated that the economy has now grown past its peak pre-recession levels.

Employment in Scotland has now increased over the quarter for 17 consecutive monthly releases, the longest ever unbroken run of increasing quarterly employment.

Mr Swinney said: “Today’s figures mark an important stage in our recovery.

“These positive output figures show that Scotland’s economy continues to go from strength to strength with growth of 1.0 per cent over the quarter and 2.6 per cent over the year – the fastest annual growth in over three years.

“Nearly six years on from the start of the financial crisis, our economy is now larger than before the downturn. Output in Scotland is at record levels and we have exceeded our pre-recession peak at least one quarter ahead of the UK.”

Submitted by [Robin Lyles](#)