

Unemployment falls across Scotland



The First Minister the Rt Hon Alex Salmond called what may be his penultimate press conference in the position this morning at Bute House to give the press two pieces of good news.

Accompanied by the Chief Commercial Officer of Flybe, Paul Simmons, the First Minister heralded the reinstatement of a Flybe base in Aberdeen next year where 100 direct jobs will be created, and confirmed that Scotland is firmly out of recession by announcing the unemployment figures.

When announcing any airline related news, the First Minister takes the opportunity to raise the matter of Air Passenger Duty, claiming this morning that APD is responsible for the latest private failure of Prestwick Airport.

The First Minister said: "APD in the short term is a 100% tax. For long haul international flights it is a smaller percentage of the fare, so for domestic flights it is iniquitous. It is a priority for the Scottish Government that this is devolved."

The figures published by the Office for National Statistics show a drop in the number of people unemployed of 50,000 in the last year, but also show an increase in employment over the period July to September 2014.

Alex Salmond was quick to point out that employment among women has risen by 45,000 and the Scottish unemployment figure among women is less than that south of the border. Here the female unemployment rate stands at 4.8% whereas the UK rate is 5.7%.

The young are also among those sectors who enjoy a higher rate

of employment and the First Minister said this was largely down to the Government policy of Modern Apprenticeships.

They show that Scotland has the highest employment and economic activity rates and lowest unemployment rate of the 4 nations of the UK.

Scotland's employment rate of 73.8 per cent is higher than the UK rate of 73.0 per cent, whilst Scotland's unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent is lower than the equivalent UK rate of 6.0 per cent.



Commenting on the figures First Minister Alex Salmond said:

“Scotland is outperforming the UK on employment, unemployment and inactivity rates, which demonstrates the commitment of the Scottish Government in supporting our economy.

“I am particularly pleased to see the progress we are making on narrowing the gender gap.

“The figures show that despite the global recession the Scottish economy continues to strengthen with overall employment now 43,000 higher than the 3-month period April-June 2007, with female employment 66,000 higher over the same period.

“With discussion on further powers for the Scottish Parliament now taking place it is essential that we have the full tools we need to support employment opportunities for everyone in Scotland.”