

Joint call from finance ministers in all devolved nations

Finance Ministers from all three devolved nations have joined forces to make the same appeal to the UK Government for flexibility, fairness and clarity.

For the first time, all three finance ministers – Kate Forbes, Rebecca Evans and Conor Murphy – today made co-ordinated statements in their respective legislatures.

The ministers are asking the UK Government for greater fiscal flexibility to manage the implications of coronavirus, meaningful involvement in the Spending Review to enable planning of budgets, and an assurance that lost EU funding will be replaced in full and brought under the control of devolved administrations.



Kate Forbes MSP Finance Secretary arriving for “Topical Questions” at the Covid-19 social distancing Scottish Parliament 26 May 2020. PHOTO FRASER BREMNER

Ms Forbes said: “Today the finance ministers of the devolved administrations are taking this unprecedented step to demonstrate the level of concern we share across the different nations of the UK, across different parties and across different legislatures.

“The importance of these issues cannot be overstated. They

directly impact our ability to respond to COVID-19, to manage our nations' finances and to support our communities and businesses during the pandemic.

"As representatives of our three nations, we are calling for the UK Government to provide the clarity, certainty and flexibility we require. These calls must not go unanswered."

Ms Evans said: "I am focused on protecting the people of Wales from the worst impacts of the pandemic, while laying the foundations for recovery based on jobs, our young people and the environment.

"However, the Chancellor's decision to cancel the UK autumn budget, alongside the uncertainty of the Spending Review and the complete lack of information on replacement EU funding, all contribute to making our task harder still.

"Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are today calling on the UK government to provide the fairness, flexibility and clarity we need to support and protect our communities and businesses."

Speaking in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr Murphy said: "As Finance Ministers we represent over 10 million people and today we speak with one voice. We are calling for more fiscal flexibility to manage the implications of COVID-19.

"We are calling for proper involvement in the Spending Review so we can plan our Budgets. We are also calling for lost EU funding to be replaced in full, and brought under local control."