

Spring statement “must reject austerity”

Finance Secretary Shona Robison has said that this week’s UK Spring Statement should “reject austerity” and protect public services,

Ms Robison talks about her concerns around the cuts to the welfare system proposed by the UK Government, and warned that public services and businesses are facing significant costs of meeting the upcoming rise in employer National Insurance contributions.

Speaking ahead of [Wednesday’s statement](#) by UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves, Ms Robison said: “The failed approach of austerity must be rejected, with vital funding for public services and infrastructure prioritised. If the Chancellor makes cuts to public spending then this will affect the funding we have in Scotland.

“Disability organisations have been frank in their fears that welfare changes will harm the most vulnerable in society. A proper consultation must be carried out urgently to ensure people’s incomes and wellbeing are protected.

“It is vital that the UK Government works with the Scottish Government to provide clarity given the potential impact of their changes on the delivery of our devolved benefits and our budget.

“These cuts to the support for disabled people comes on top of the deep concern that remains across the public sector, third sector and businesses in Scotland about the impact of changes

to employer National Insurance contributions.

“We have estimated that this will cost public services in Scotland more than £700 million. The additional funding that we expect to receive, which is yet to be confirmed, falls far short of this and puts at risk services such as GPs, dentists, social care and universities. I again call on the Chancellor to fully fund these additional costs.”

The Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, will present the Spring Statement in Westminster after the Office of Budget Responsibility publishes its revised forecasts for the UK public finances and the economy. Ms Reeves may also make announcements on tax, although that was not her original plan as she only wanted to make major tax announcements once a year. But in light of world politics, the UK has just announced increased spending on defence, and the UK economy is not growing as much as previously thought, although the government says it is prioritising this area.

The government did announce last week potential savings of £5 billion on its benefits spending in a Green Paper [which you can read here.](#)



Deputy First Minister Shona Robison PHOTO courtesy of The Scottish Government