

**Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments Council Extended
Communiqué**

10 November 2022

The Prime Minister for UK Government (Chair) - Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, the Chancellor of the Exchequer - Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations - Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the First Minister for Scotland - Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP and the First Minister for Wales - Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS met at the inaugural meeting of the Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments Council on 10 November in Blackpool.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP and the Rt Hon First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford MS joined virtually. In the current absence of a First and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive, officials from the Northern Ireland Civil Service attended the meeting in an observational capacity.

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the economic outlook, and how the governments should work together to address the challenges from rising inflation affecting all citizens of the UK. Ministers acknowledged the challenging economic context, and that there were difficult decisions to take. Fairness, opportunity and ensuring that the most vulnerable remain supported would be at the heart of decision making. All ministers welcomed the Council as a frank and open forum where dialogue and engagement can take place even when views may differ.

In particular ministers discussed pressures on the NHS across the UK, agreeing that it was the number one public service priority and required longer-term thinking, but that the immediate focus was the pressure on NHS through winter. Ministers outlined common challenges across the UK, and noted the opportunity for collaboration. Ministers committed that respective Health and Social Care departments should work together on shared issues and consider how to address NHS pressures. The Scottish Government committed to share initial thinking to aid future discussions.

Ministers also discussed economic inactivity, agreeing that it is a UK-wide issue with often different drivers which would require a multifaceted response. There is an opportunity across the administrations to develop an active strategy to increase the workforce, helping individuals get back into the job market and combatting labour shortages. There was a commitment for the governments to take forward work looking at how to approach addressing economic inactivity.

There was a discussion on a number of other specific measures which would look to help the most vulnerable, such as looking to help those on prepayment meters,

measures to avoid individuals seeking out damaging and costly forms of credit, and on supporting families at risk of homelessness to remain in their homes.

All governments committed to ongoing work on these key issues, and working together to tackle shared challenges across the UK.