

A stronger Scottish Parliament

The UK government committed to devolve new powers to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish government as agreed by the cross-party Smith Commission. These will increase the accountability of the Scottish Parliament to Scottish voters and devolve significant new tax and welfare powers to Holyrood, complementing existing devolved powers. A new Scotland Bill was put forward in the first Queen's Speech and was the first Bill to be debated in the first session of the new Parliament.

The new powers:

- will make the Scottish Parliament one of the most powerful devolved parliaments in the world
- include the devolution of around £11 billion of income tax and £2.7 billion of welfare powers (on 2014 to 2015 figures)
- mean that for the first time, the Scottish Parliament will be responsible for raising more than half of what it spends

This represents a significant transfer of power, which will increase the Scottish Parliament's responsibility and accountability to people in Scotland. Lord Smith of Kelvin has endorsed the Scotland Bill, stating that it meets the principles set out in his Agreement. He has also endorsed the agreed fiscal framework between both governments in February 2016, noting that it delivered the Commission's recommendations in full.

A strong United Kingdom

Scotland's independence referendum was an historic political event and people in Scotland voted decisively to stay in the United Kingdom. As part of the UK, Scotland benefits from the UK's strength, security and stability. For example:

- As part of the UK, private sector employment is up by 157,000 since 2010 and Scotland has the second highest female employment rate in the EU, beaten only by Sweden.

- The UK is forecast to be the joint fastest growing G7 economy in this year and the second fastest in 2017.
- The UK government continues to invest to support economic growth and vital Scottish and UK industries. A £1 billion Deal was agreed for Glasgow and the Clyde Valley in 2014, and this year the government has agreed a £250 million deal for Aberdeen City Region. Discussions with Inverness are ongoing. The Aberdeen agreement, as with the Glasgow agreement, will see equal funding committed by the UK and Scottish governments. £20 million of new funding has been announced for a second round of new seismic surveys to unlock new exploration activity on the UK Continental Shelf, which is the lifeblood of the basin. To back genuine innovation, the data will be made publically available, with £1 million allocated to award innovative use of data to unlock new fields. This builds on the £1.3 billion package of reforms for the UK Continental Shelf announced in the Budget 2015.
- To ensure work pays the government has committed to raise the personal allowance to £12,500, which will benefit Scottish taxpayers even after the power to set rates and bands is devolved to Holyrood. The new [National Living Wage](#) will mean, by 2020, over £4,800 a year extra in cash terms for someone working full time on the minimum wage. It will give 200,000 people in Scotland a pay rise by 2020.
- The government will increase the basic State Pension by the triple lock for 2016 to 2017. This means a full basic State Pension will rise to £119.30 a week, the biggest real terms increase since 2001.
- The United Kingdom is the only major country in the world to meet both the NATO target of spending 2% of our GDP on defence and the UN target of spending 0.7% of our GNI on [development](#). The UK government has been at the forefront of the international response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. At the Syria conference on 4th February 2016, the Prime Minister announced that the UK will more than double our support in response to the Syria crisis from £1.12 billion to over £2.3 billion, our largest ever humanitarian response to a single crisis. Much of this work is

supported by approximately 600 staff based at the [Department for International Development's](#) joint HQ in East Kilbride.

- The recent Strategic Defence and Security Review and Spending Review announced more than £500 million of investment in Typhoon aircraft, including those based at RAF Lossiemouth, and the procurement of nine new Boeing P8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft, which will be based in Scotland. The Strategic Defence and Security Review also confirmed the government's commitment to maintaining the Trident continuous at sea nuclear deterrent to provide the ultimate guarantee of our safety; Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde is one of the largest employment sites in Scotland, with around 6,800 military and civilian jobs now, increasing to around 8,200 by 2022.
- The [GREAT Britain](#) campaign is now operational in over 240 diplomatic posts in 144 countries around the globe. The posts deliver targeted activity to promote the UK as a world-class destination for trade, tourism, investment and education. Scottish businesses are set to get more help to sell overseas, as the UK government's 'exports roadshow' comes to Scotland, as part of the Exporting is GREAT campaign.