



Weekly Monitoring
25th November
2022



Political Update

Things still appear rocky for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as an onslaught of strikes have been announced across a number of sectors. More than 70,000 university staff are expected to strike next week; thousands of postal workers were on strike for 48-hours ahead of Black Friday; further RMT strikes are expected in the run-up to Christmas; and nurses are planning to undertake industrial action of their own on the 15th and 20th December.

Added to this, the OECD has declared that the UK will be among the worst performing economies of the developed world. Both Rishi Sunak and Leader of the Opposition, Keir Starmer gave speeches at the Confederation of British Industry's conference this week. The general consensus was disappointment in the lack of immediate solutions to the skills shortage across both speeches – namely the failure to acknowledge the potential of fixed-term visas – with Starmer in his speech stating a need for the UK to wean itself off immigration dependency.

News

DIT welcomes extension of Swiss visa agreement

The Department for International Trade has announced that the UK and Switzerland and have agreed a three-year extension to the Services Mobility Agreement which enables UK professionals to work in Switzerland without a permit for up to 90 days. This extension has been welcomed, in particular, by the UK services industry – ranging from accountants and lawyers to advertising creatives. This news comes ahead of negotiations on an ambitious new trade deal between the two services superpowers in 2023.

DCMS finalises landmark data decision with South Korea

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has finalised legislation with the South Korean Government which will help to unlock millions in economic growth. Businesses in both countries will be able to share data without restrictions by the end of the year. It is estimated this will generate £14.8 million in annual business savings and increased exports.

Westminster Hall Debate on Supporting UK Artists and Culture

Conservative MP for Gosport, Dame Caroline Dinenage, tabled a Westminster Hall Debate entitled 'Supporting UK Artists and Culture' and argued arts and culture could be a significant driver of levelling up if "done in a way that supports investments in projects and organisations that can genuinely start a snowball of growth".

Minister for Sport, Tourism and Civil Society, Stuart Andrew, responding on behalf of the Government stated:

"The Government are not currently pursuing an export office, but continue to support creatives exporting to Europe and the world with a range of export support programmes [...] We will continue to work with the Department for International Trade on these important issues. [...] I am aware of the impact of the pandemic on the arts and culture workforce and how many left the sector as a result. The best way we can bring those people back and attract new people in is to help drive growth. Ultimately, we want to drive that growth across the entire country."

Parliament

House of Commons

Oral questions to department for Transport on Northern Powerhouse Rail and Leamside Line

Labour MP for South Shields, Emma Lewell-Buck asked the Secretary of State for Transport "what steps his Department is taking to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Leamside line."

Minister of State for Rail and HS2, Huw Merriman replied:

"As set out in the autumn statement, the Government are committed to delivering the Northern Powerhouse Rail core network outlined in the integrated rail plan. Reopening of the Leamside line would be best considered by north-east partners as part of a future city region settlement."

House of Lords

Debate on Counterterrorism: Martyn's Law

Chair of the National Preparedness Commission, Lord Toby Harris of Harringey asked His Majesty's Government, "further to the letter from senior police officers to the Prime Minister on 21 November calling for the introduction of "Martyn's Law", when they intend to introduce counterterrorism legislation to improve the safety and security of public venues."

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Home Office, Lord Sharpe of Epsom responded:

"the duty will enhance public security by introducing new requirements for certain public places to ensure preparedness. It is necessary: there is no disagreement about that. It will come forward as soon as parliamentary time allows."

Grand Committee debate Young People: Skills (Youth Unemployment Committee Report)

Liberal Democrat Peer, Lord Shipley put forth to the House of Lords Grand Committee the Report from the Youth Unemployment Committee *Skills for every young person* and laid out the findings and recommendations of the report and also reiterated that “[s]kills are the bedrock of a thriving labour market”.

Minister for the School System and Student Finance, Baroness Barran, on behalf of the Government outlined all the measures the Government had undertaken thus far and concluded:

“In closing, we are rightly proud of our successes, and we absolutely recognise that some young people continue to face additional barriers to employment, including those from ethnic minority communities and those with special educational needs and disabilities. The reforms and measures I have outlined are about every young person fulfilling their potential, as well as equipping young people for the future workforce. They aim to give young people the opportunity to progress, whatever their choices and wherever they live. They are about better prospects for disadvantaged young people, because we share the commitment in your Lordships’ report that no young person should be left behind.”

Key dates

December 2022: Publication of Energy Bill Relief Scheme review outcome



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