

# Thousands of jobs lost in UK

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Thousands of workers are losing their jobs across all sectors of the UK economy.

The losses belie the latest figures, hailed a miracle achievement by Prime Minister David Cameron, registering unemployment as dropping to a seven-year low of 5.5 percent. The figures only register the growth in low-paid, part-time, temporary and zero-hours contract jobs as the government drives people into cheap-labour employment in welfare to work programmes.

The latest onslaught of redundancies come before austerity measures, planned by the newly-elected Tory government comprising tens of billions of pounds in further spending cuts, have begun to be implemented.

Following the loss of 90,000 public-sector jobs in the last parliament, resulting in the lowest employment in the sector since the Second World War, a further 100,000 jobs are set to go over the next five years.

On Monday, rail freight-company DB Schenker announced plans to cut 234 jobs, mainly across the north of England. The firm plans to close its depot in Worksop and merge depots in Gateshead and on Teesside. Jobs may go at DB Schenker's headquarters in Doncaster and at sites in Carlisle and Warrington.

On June 17, joint administrators Baker Tilly announced that 55 of the 79 employees at the Dobson & Crowther Limited printing company, based in Llangollen, Wales, would be laid off.

In April, Tullis Russel, a papermaker based in Fife, Scotland, went into receivership. Some 325 workers were made redundant at the company formed in 1809. This month, almost all the remaining workforce was made redundant, totaling some 475 jobs lost. The administrators cited weakening global demand for printed materials, rising raw material costs and the strengthening of sterling against the euro.

Also in Scotland, hundreds of workers at two nuclear plants due to be decommissioned face redundancy.

There are 238 workers at the Hunterston A plant near Ayrshire and 422 at the Chapelcross plant near Dumfries. These losses are part of 16,000 jobs to be axed at 12 nuclear plants in the UK.

UK retail giant Boots announced it is to axe 700 jobs, half of which will be from their headquarters in Beeston, Nottingham, which employs 4,000. Boots, founded in 1849, has 60,000 employees across a chain of 2,500 stores. The redundancies follow the merger last December between Alliance Boots and the US-based pharmacy group Walgreens.

Workers at the Wigan site of breadmaker Hovis face 48 redundancies. Owned jointly by the Gores Group and Premier Food plc, Hovis employs 3,800 people nationally at 10 bakeries, six flour mills and two regional distribution centres. The job cuts follow 900 redundancies made since November 2012, after the closure of four sites nationally. Two years ago, workers at the factory struck in a dispute over the use of agency workers and zero-hour contracts.

High street bank National Westminster is to close 11 branches across Wales and replace them with mobile van branch services to the rural districts. The bank cited the increased use of Internet and telephone banking for the closures, due in September.

These follow the announcement earlier this month by HSBC Holdings bank that around 8,000 jobs are to be lost in the UK as part of major global restructuring operation. Some 25,000 jobs are to be lost internationally, with a further 25,000 threatened.

The insurance sector is not spared, with market leader Aviva to shut three offices by the end of 2016. These currently employ a workforce of 780 in Salisbury, Stretford and Salford. More job losses are to follow in Dorking, Exeter and Manchester over the next 18 months.

20 workers out of a remaining workforce of 98 face redundancies at the Ensus bio-ethanol plant near

Redcar, in the north east of England. The plant uses wheat to create bio-ethanol, which is added to petrol. The remaining protein and grain is used to make thousands of tonnes of animal feed and carbon dioxide for soft drinks.

The factory, part of the German Crop Energus group and considered vital to the UK meeting renewable fuel targets, was closed four months ago, after bio-ethanol prices were hit by lower oil prices and falling demand in Europe.

Next month, 200 out of 700 jobs are to go at the Kellingley coal mine near Knottingley, Yorkshire. Kellingley, along with Thoresby, are two of the UK's three remaining pits and face complete closure in the next year. Thoresby employs 600 miners. In 1983, just prior to the year-long miners' strike, there were 174 deep pit coal mines in the UK, employing 180,000.

Huge cuts to education are planned by the Conservative government. On June 4, Chancellor George Osborne announced almost a billion pounds in cuts to the budgets of the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Both departments were instructed to make £450 million in savings in the 2015-16 financial year. A Treasury statement disclosed there would be "savings in higher education and further education budgets in BIS, and savings in the administration of arms lengths bodies in the Department for Education."

Job losses in the sector are proceeding apace ahead of these cuts. Some 25 lecturers face redundancy at Sheffield College. Staff struck for 24 hours on June 10, in an ongoing dispute over job losses precipitated by £3 million in cuts to government funding. Earlier this year, 15 staff were made redundant.

London Metropolitan University plans to shed 165 academic and support posts. This month, teaching and support staff staged a one-day strike in protest.

At Exeter University, more than 200 jobs, including academic posts and support staff, out of a total workforce of almost 4,400, are being shed.

At the University of Birmingham, 49 staff in the Neuroscience and Pharmacology departments at the Medical School and 59 Engineering Department employees are threatened with redundancy.

Earlier this year, 700 job cuts were announced in six of the newly-formed private Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) run by Sodexo. The CRCs were set

up in April as a result of the privatisation of the UK's probation services.

The *Guardian* reported that an increase in "non-standard employment" (temporary jobs, zero hours contracts, self-employment and part-time work) accounted for all net jobs growth in the UK since 1995.

This is part of a growing international phenomenon. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 50 percent of all new employment in its 34 member countries, also since 1995, comprised non-standard jobs, which it declared was a contributory factor in growing inequality.

Poorly paid jobs, record numbers of families reliant on food banks, and little investment characterise the British economy. At the other pole, vast amounts of wealth are being accumulated through rampant financial speculation.

The Bank of England recently reported that any growth in employment in the past two years was confined to growth in lower skills occupations.

Youth unemployment remains high, with 943,000 young adults aged between 16 and 24, for the period January to March 2015, classed as not in education, employment or training.

The trade unions play a critical role in facilitating these job losses. After not lifting a finger over the last five years in the face of mass austerity, the unions have begun where they left off before the general election. In just the first few weeks since the Conservatives election victory, they have already sabotaged national disputes by rail workers, probation staff and steel workers.



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