

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Thursday 20 December

### Nissan announces Infiniti manufacturing to start at Sunderland plant

Nissan has announced that it will begin manufacturing Infiniti vehicles in the UK at its Sunderland facility from 2015. The announcement represents an investment of around £250 million into the plant and is expected to secure a further 1,000 jobs at Sunderland and across the UK. When production begins, Infiniti will become the first new car brand to be manufactured in the UK on this scale in 23 years. Attending a ceremony at Sunderland to mark the news, Business Secretary Vince Cable said, "Today's news is a strong endorsement of the quality of Britain's car industry, which is creating jobs, taking on apprentices and contributing to building a stronger economy. The auto sector is living up to being one of the great success stories of our industrial strategy and a testimony to government and private sector working together in close partnership". (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/12/infiniti-manufacturing-to-start-at-sunderland-plant/>

### Cable announces measures to help support growth through innovation

Business Secretary Vince Cable has set out new plans to ensure that UK creativity and innovation supports growth. Speaking at The Big Innovation Centre, Dr Cable launched a range of measures that aim to improve services to business, strengthen enforcement, and help consumers get the most out of creative products and services. The plans include: launching a superfast patent processing service to deliver patents in just 90 days and a faster trade marks examination service which will deliver a full examination report in five days, instead of 10; a campaign to educate smaller businesses about getting the best value from their creativity and innovation; working with key partners, such as the City of London Police, to tackle IP crime such as counterfeiting and online piracy. In addition, The IPO will also expand the way it operates, moving beyond granting rights to doing more to support businesses in

understanding the opportunities available to them at home and abroad. This will include piloting an IP advisory service for small and medium businesses with high-growth potential. The IPO will also work more closely with organisations where businesses already go for advice such as trade associations, UKTI, chambers of commerce, banks and accountants. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cable-announces-step-change-to-turn-ideas-into-growth>



### Government announces changes to rules on collective redundancy

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has published a written ministerial statement on the government response on changes to the rules on collective redundancies, stating its intention to introduce a statutory change to reduce the current 90-day minimum period before very large redundancies can take place to 45 days. Government has stated that this change will allow businesses to restructure more effectively, and give them flexibility to respond to changing market conditions. Government has also decided to legislate to exclude fixed term contracts which have reached their agreed termination point from collective redundancy consultation obligations. Responses to government's consultation demonstrated that employers, particularly in Higher Education Institutes, struggle with existing uncertainty around whether the natural ending of fixed-term contracts triggers a requirement for collective

redundancy consultation. Legislative change will be through secondary legislation, subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. In addition, Acas will produce non-statutory guidance that addresses key contentious issues raised during consultation. The aim will be to promote good quality consultation and engagement between employers and employees.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/press-release-boost-for-business-as-government-sets-out-plans-to-update-employment-legislation>

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## Government publishes data detailing bank lending through EFG scheme

Government has published new data detailing lending by specific banks through the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme. This data provides a breakdown by individual lenders, allowing businesses to identify which banks are making most use of government assistance to increase access to finance. Business Minister Michael Fallon wrote to the Chief Executives of the five main high street banks in September to encourage them to increase their use of the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme as lending levels have been below expectations since peaking in 2009. Commenting on the publication of the new data, Mr. Fallon stated: "It is crucial that banks play their part in making finance available to businesses and support growth in the economy. Banks have to lend responsibly but it is clear that a number of lenders need to up their game".

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/michael-fallon-urges-banks-not-to-let-small-businesses-down>



## Week ahead

**The House of Commons is on recess until Monday 7 January**

**The House of Lords is on recess until Tuesday 8 January**