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Unemployment figures still startling says MP

North East Bedfordshire MP Alistair Burt, commenting on the latest unemployment figures for his constituency released at the end of January, has said that they continue to make "startling reading". The figures show that in the last year the number of unemployed claimants in North East Bedfordshire rose by 51.7%, and the change from 1997 to date is 118.1%, a figure which gives the 15th largest rise out of nearly 650 Parliamentary constituencies.

Alistair Burt says "The complacency of Government and Labour figures is quite startling. Since Labour came to office the rise of 118% in unemployment stands as stark evidence of failure of both economic and employment policy. We should also consider that the number of those who are classed as "economically inactive" has also risen markedly, and we have taken a worse hit than most.

The failure to get money from state-funded banks to small business, which will be the engine of our recovery, has helped depress the employment figures, and this miserable situation seems accepted far too easily by Government and its supporters. The Loan Support Guarantee Scheme which I and my colleagues have called for for so long should be introduced without delay to help speed improved prospects for small businesses, and with it better chances of employment for all".

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