

Sunak confirms Hunt will still be chancellor at next election despite criticism ahead of budget

Rishi Sunak has said Jeremy Hunt will still be chancellor at the next election after criticism his number two did not have enough economic vision.

The prime minister, for the first time, confirmed to Sky News that Mr Hunt will remain chancellor when the next general election comes around in January 2025.

“Of course,” Mr Sunak said when asked by Sky News’ deputy political editor Sam Coates.

Mr Hunt was criticised by businesses following a keynote speech in January about the government’s plan to boost economic growth as they complained it offered no new policies.

The chancellor also signalled the upcoming spring budget, [to be announced by him on Wednesday](#), will not contain big tax cuts – despite calls from some Tory MPs – because of the need to focus on curbing high inflation.

But Mr Sunak insisted the budget will deliver on the three economic pledges he set out when he became prime minister: to halve inflation, grow the economy and reduce debt.

“It’s important to get public sector pay settlements right, important to reduce debt to make sure we’re not passing on burdens for the next generation,” he said.

“It also ensures we’re reducing inflation and keeping interest rates low.”

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Mr Sunak acknowledged that recent high interest rates have caused "damage" for banks, in reference to the UK arm of Silicon Valley Bank having to be rescued on Monday after its parent company in the US, SVB America, collapsed.

The PM said the government – and Mr Hunt – are focused on growing the economy in "the best way to provide jobs for people around the country".

"That's what the chancellor is going to deliver on Wednesday, what the government will deliver," he added.

"People should be confident we've already delivered, we've brought about enormous improvement since I took over as prime minister last year and we'll continue to deliver."