

Jobs for the young...

The Scottish Government said today it is to invest a further £10 million in 2011-12 to support unemployed young people into work and training opportunities in a new programme, Community Jobs Scotland.

The funding will primarily support 16-24 year olds unemployed for six months or more into a job within a third sector organisation in their community. There will also be opportunities for older unemployed people in those areas where unemployment is highest.

The initiative will be rolled out across Scotland providing young people with six-month contracts of 25 hours or more per week, for at least the minimum wage.

Participants will receive job related training and additional training tailored to help them enhance their general employability – elements designed to support each young person's movement towards permanent full-time employment beyond their involvement in the scheme.

The scheme will deliver job opportunities identified across third sector organisations. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition will work in partnership with the Scottish Government to deliver the scheme. Young people will be referred onto the programme by Jobcentre Plus and Skills Development Scotland. The initiative will provide opportunities for up to 2,000 young people.

✘ Finance Secretary John Swinney said:-“This is a further example of the robust and comprehensive action the Scottish Government is taking through our Budget to support unemployed young people into work. And it underlines our commitment to working with Scotland's third sector to strengthen our communities.

“This initiative will provide job opportunities for those who are finding it hardest to access employment, with training tailored to support each young person’s future efforts to find work in the local job market. The training aspect is particularly important when married with the experience that sustained employment offers to those involved.

“The third sector connects with some of Scotland’s most vulnerable people at a truly local level, so is ideally placed to deliver the job opportunities that this funding will provide. By working with the third sector to deliver this initiative, and increasing core funding for the sector by 16 per cent to £24 million in 2011-12, we are demonstrating that the Scottish Government recognises the sector’s transformational potential and its important contribution to increasing sustainable economic growth.

“The launch of this scheme follows my announcement to Parliament last week, that the 2011-12 Budget will deliver a total of 46,500 training opportunities – including 25,000 modern apprenticeships, the highest ever number in Scotland; and 2,000 flexible training opportunities – taking the total to 7,000, to support smaller businesses seeking to invest in training. And we will deliver a £10 million scheme to support new jobs in small businesses.

“Despite tough economic conditions, the chances of a school leaver going onto further study, training or employment is higher now than before. Moreover, Scotland’s youth employment rate is higher than the UK as a whole; Scotland’s youth unemployment rate is lower than the UK’s, and Scotland is currently the only nation in the UK with rising employment and falling unemployment.

“But Scotland’s recovery remains at a crucial stage – and is threatened by the £1.3 billion in cuts Westminster will impose on Scotland in 2011-12. This underlines the importance of our robust efforts to get young people into work, our newly

refreshed skills strategy, our continuing support for the modern apprenticeship programme and the comprehensive action we are taking to support jobs, skills and training.”

Martin Sime, chief executive of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations said:

“SCVO is delighted to be working with the Scottish Government and the Social Enterprise Coalition in helping young people get jobs which will benefit communities across Scotland.

“This announcement is welcome recognition of the third sector’s experience in tackling unemployment and in helping young people to develop new skills and experience in a tough jobs market. But it is also a welcome boost to charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises who face challenging times as a result of cuts in public expenditure but who could do so much more with the right resources. These young people will get a chance to earn a wage but also make a difference to their communities so this is a win/win proposition.”

Laurie Russell, Chair of the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition said:

“The Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition welcomes the additional funds for the creation of jobs for young people in the third sector in Scotland. We will work in partnership with SCVO to make a difference both to young people, so they can experience working in social enterprises, and to regenerating communities across Scotland. Although the funding is only for a year, if the programme is successful then we believe this approach should be part of the longer term government strategy for revitalising the Scottish economy.”

The SCVO and Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition will work in partnership with Scottish Government to deliver the scheme which provides £10 million in 2011-12 to support:

- * An opportunity for unemployed people to move into a job in the third sector for a minimum of six months which would allow them to make a contribution to their communities;
- * Enhancement of longer term job prospects for participants through concrete job experience;
- * Job specific training;
- * Additional training which enhances the participant's wider prospects of securing a permanent job; and
- * Support for the third sector as it seeks to continue to deliver services to communities across Scotland.

This programme will cost £10 million in 2011-12 and will provide opportunities for up to 2,000 participants.