

Edinburgh firms should seek funds from Skills Development Scotland

✘ Employers in Edinburgh are being encouraged to take on people with barriers to getting in to work by using assistance from Scotland's Skills body, Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

The Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI) is delivered by SDS and offers businesses up to £2000 when they employ someone who has been out of work for some time or faced barriers in the past.

When in employment, these individuals may prove invaluable, and many go on to take up Modern Apprenticeships.

One employer, car retail giant, Arnold Clark, has recruited a number of employees with support from the ERI initiative.

Among those to benefit from the initiative is 17-year-old Peter Finnigen who was recently taken on as an apprentice by the company's Linwood branch, in Glasgow.

Peter, from Kilmarnock, had always hoped to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather by learning a trade and securing a job in a garage.

During his school holidays, Peter spent time volunteering in his local garage to gain experience. But when he left full time education he struggled to secure a positive opportunity in the motor trade.

"I was always desperate for a trade and had my heart set on mechanics but was unsure of the best way to achieve this," Peter explained. "I spoke to my local careers adviser for advice and she told me about Modern Apprenticeships and the

different college courses available.”

Peter was also encouraged by his SDS careers adviser to take part in the employability programme, Get Ready for Work (GRfW). This programme is delivered by SDS and aims to provide young people with the confidence and transferable skills to gain a positive and sustained job opportunity.

Peter added: “Through the GRfW course I went on a placement to Arnold Clark for a couple of months. I had a great experience and it made me more determined to become a mechanic.”

Shortly after his placement, Peter was invited to attend an interview and a one day work trial with Arnold Clark. He was then quickly offered a Modern Apprenticeship with the company who gained support from the ERI scheme.

“I am really enjoying it and grateful for the opportunity to do what I’ve always wanted to do,” Peter said. “It is great to know that I will have a trade at the end of the apprenticeship.”

Ricky Tonner, Service Manager at Arnold Clark, is delighted to have taken on such a motivated employee and praised the SDS Modern Apprenticeship programme and the Employer Recruitment Initiative.

“The Modern Apprenticeship programme is excellent and our trainees really benefit from learning in a classroom environment as well as having the opportunity to learn on the job.

“Peter is an exceptional apprentice; he is very committed and determined. I have no doubt he has a great future ahead of him and that he will progress well from this apprenticeship.

“To have someone on the team as enthusiastic as Peter, highlights the value and benefit of Modern Apprenticeships and the Employer Recruitment Incentive. I would encourage other

companies to get involved.