

Edinburgh MP speaks out on youth unemployment



In the House of Commons this week Mark Lazarowicz MP for Edinburgh North and Leith spoke out on the fear and despair felt by many young people looking for work. He called for concrete action from Government to offer hope to the 1 in 5 young Scots now out of work.

Mark said:

“Youth unemployment rose 18% over the last year in Edinburgh North and Leith and getting your first job or apprenticeship is incredibly tough whether you are leaving school, college or university. I know from meetings and surgeries in my constituency the reality is that so many young people are desperate to work but just can’t find a job.

“Instead, they are starting their adult lives, sometimes facing an uncertain future on benefits which makes it difficult to get housing as well. The current Coalition Government axed the Future Jobs programme aimed specifically at young people which the last Government created. It should act now to put an alternative in its place however late so that young people out of work are not just abandoned to a life on benefits.”

When the financial crisis first hit Lazarowicz called for a green jobs programme with councils working hand in hand with voluntary organisations to identify work that needed to be done in local communities.

In his Budget for 2009, the then Chancellor, Alistair Darling, set aside funding for a programme of this type to employ young people in a range of areas such as maintaining local roads and parks, home insulation, and social care.

That Government offered a guarantee of either paid work or a place in training for all young people out of work for a year or more. The aim was to ensure that young people starting out from school or college would gain or retain the skills and self-discipline to find more permanent work in the long-term.

According to Lazarowicz the current UK Coalition has yet to give youth unemployment a similar priority. He added: "This is an issue where government at **all** levels should be working together – UK government, Scottish government, and local government."