

Standard Life take part in the Edinburgh Guarantee

Standard Life has teamed up with the Council, through the Edinburgh Guarantee programme, to provide up to 12 paid work placements for young people. The company is the first to contribute to the 'Edinburgh 100' target which aims to offer 100 young people six months paid work experience, personal development and mentoring at city businesses.

The Council unveiled the Edinburgh Guarantee earlier this year and brought together employers and other organisations at a summit with the aim of creating employment, training and further education opportunities for Edinburgh's school leavers.

A number of other businesses have shown interest but Standard Life is the first to formally sign up and offer roles for young people.

City Economic Development Leader Councillor Tom Buchanan said:

"Ensuring that Edinburgh's young people have opportunities is vital for the economic success of our city. Getting Standard Life on board as the first to commit to the project is fantastic news and we hope that more companies will follow their lead. The Edinburgh Guarantee programme will make a real difference to many young lives and I'm confident that we'll see a big improvement in the number of young people moving to a positive destination after school."

City Education Leader Councillor MacLaren said:

"Whether it's employment, apprenticeships or training, young people need to move out of school and into a positive destination quickly. If there is too much delay then the impact on their self-esteem can be serious so we're working

hard, with Edinburgh businesses, to make sure that doesn't happen."

Standard Life's Group People and Operations Director Sandy Begbie said:

"Youth unemployment is the biggest social challenge the UK faces and it requires bold and imaginative policy solutions in which business has a key role to play. Standard Life supports a wide range of activity aimed at helping young people to develop their workplace skills and improve their chances of employment.

"We regard Edinburgh 100 as a major contribution providing school leavers with opportunities in education, training or employment. We are strongly committed to participating in this initiative and would urge other employers to do whatever they can to support it."

Standard Life are offering a range of roles in a variety of different departments including finance, HR, communications and sales. They will also support the young people at the end of the six months to develop their CVs and interview skills to help them find their next role.

In addition to the Edinburgh 100, the Edinburgh Guarantee will also provide other opportunities for young people to help tackle rising levels of youth unemployment. The Council has committed to creating 50 new apprenticeships and to providing training support for a further 80 school leavers, with at least 20 being looked after children. The Council is also working with further education colleges to look at ways of providing more training opportunities.

Recent reports show that 538 young people left school last year without a positive destination. The number of unemployed young people in Edinburgh has risen significantly in the last

ten years, with 82.5% going to positive destinations after school in 09/10 compared with 87% in 99/00. The average unemployment rate among young people is nearly 16% while the average for the city as a whole is 4%.

The Scottish Government will publish 2011 school leaver destination stats on 7th December.