

# **Apprenticeship scheme scrapped after only two employers sign up**

**A scheme aimed at getting more disadvantaged young people in Edinburgh into apprenticeships has been scrapped by the council – after just two employers signed up.**

The Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI) was launched by the council last year in a bid to enhance employment opportunities for youngsters living in the most deprived parts of the city.

Councillors agreed not to extend the programme following a lack of uptake, as it was found youngsters were “reluctant to commit” to modern apprenticeships.

However, a scheme which has run in tandem offering six-month paid placements within the council to care-experienced young people will be continued and expanded to include those living in areas of poverty.

The ERI was established last March using £100,000 of Scottish Government funding and employers were invited to join the scheme. Awards ranging from £2,000 to £6,000 were made available to help meet the costs of paying the living wage.

As the scheme was aimed at the ‘most disadvantaged’ young people, employers were only able to offer modern apprenticeship roles to those living in a Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile area 1 or 2, living in a

jobless household or care experienced.

A council report states: "To date, only two employers have taken advantage of the enhanced offer and only one of the two young people remains in employment.

"Both employers are in the third sector, one charity and one social enterprise, and both would otherwise would have paid the employees £4.81 per hour.

It said employers who declined to the offer said they "could not sustain this beyond the funded period to enable them to offer an apprenticeship".

Young people who were involved, it added, said they felt "unsure what career route to take and reluctant to commit fully, both time-wise and emotionally, to an MA without knowing this is the right route for them".

The report continued: "Anecdotal evidence suggests that they prefer to undertake a paid work experience to get an understanding of what the job will be like before exploring their next steps."

Meanwhile, 'Promising Young People' (PYP), a separate programme launched using the Government funding which provides six-month paid placements for care experienced young people within the council, proved more successful.

"To date, we have had eight care experienced young people taking up paid placements through this programme and feedback has been very positive, with all participants expressing that it has been a helpful experience which has allowed them to 'trial' jobs which they have considered and make an informed decision on how they wish to progress with their career plans."

The council's housing, homelessness and fair work committee agreed on Thursday "not to extend the ERI pilot" but instead

continue the PYP programme “and extended to encompass young people from jobless households and/or who reside in a SIMD decile area 1 or 2”.

**by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter**

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