

APPRENTICESHIP FREEZE CAUSES CLOSURE FEARS FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

Training providers who deliver apprenticeships in Scotland will have to make redundancies – or completely close their business - in the next few months without Scottish Government intervention.

And these closures will result in some young people not being able to complete their apprenticeship on schedule.

These are two of the findings from a survey of members of the Scottish Training Federation (STF) carried out this week.

A recent announcement from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) that the number of apprenticeship places available has been frozen – and the budgets for training providers delivering these programmes have also been frozen – will mean that some providers will be unable to offer apprenticeships until April 2023.

The sudden loss of income for these training providers – many of which are small and micro businesses – will be catastrophic and result in redundancies or full business closure.

The six-month freeze of apprenticeship places will also mean that many young people will be denied the opportunity to access an apprenticeship. And for those already in training, there is a risk of disruption and delay with certification where businesses close.

The freezing of places and budgets comes at a time when training providers are reporting high employer demand for apprenticeships with clear evidence that an immediate increase in the number of places available is required.

STF is calling on Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government to ensure – as a matter of urgency – that the freeze on apprenticeship places and budgets is removed – and a further 2,000 apprenticeships are funded in the next six months to meet significant employer demand.

STF Chief Executive, Stuart McKenna, said: ‘This is the wrong time to put the brakes on apprenticeship funding. We have strong demand from employers who want to upskill their staff – and strong demand from young people looking to better themselves.’

‘I’m really worried that some apprenticeship training providers will be forced to close their business because of the sudden funding freeze. Training providers need regular business throughout the year to maintain cash flow – shutting operations down for six months is simply not an option.’

‘Delivering quality apprenticeship training isn’t like turning a tap on and off – it takes companies many years to build up the expertise, skills and employer contacts. We can’t afford to lose apprenticeship training providers - they are hard to replace and a vital part of Scotland’s economic recovery.’

‘We urgently need SDS and Scottish Government to commit to lift the freeze on apprenticeship places and budgets and to provide 2,000 more apprenticeship places to meet employer demand. Without this, some businesses will be forced to close, and apprenticeship training will be disrupted.’

Ends

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