

Young Scots Demand More Apprenticeship Opportunities

Wednesday 21 May, 2014

- Scottish business community needs to create more apprenticeships as demand outstrips supply
- A sixth (15.6%) of young Scots said they thought there weren't any apprenticeships available in Scotland, whilst two thirds (65.2%) said there were some available but it was difficult to secure a place
- 80% of Scots aged 16 - 24 said the lack of apprenticeship opportunities available to them was the biggest barrier to exploring the option
- Almost half (44.6%) of Scots aged 16 – 24 said they planned to undertake an apprenticeship, were undertaking an apprenticeship or had completed one

The Scottish business community needs to do much more to support youth employment in Scotland through dedicated apprenticeship schemes, according to research* by Scottish Gas published today (21 May), highlighting the frustrations of young people (aged 16-24) in Scotland at the lack of opportunities available.

Despite signs of economic recovery, youth unemployment is still a major concern with 18.8%** of 16 – 24 year olds in Scotland currently unemployed. It is hoped that the current Scottish Apprenticeship Week will advise youngsters of the opportunities available and encourage businesses to create more schemes for tomorrow's workforce.

Scottish Gas, which receives approximately 50 applications for each apprenticeship, launched its 2014 recruitment drive in February. More than 500 apprentices have been recruited and trained over the past ten years by Scottish Gas, with around £30,000 invested in each apprentice. Across Scotland, the company employs around 3,500 people, of whom 900 are fully qualified engineers.

Kevin Roxburgh, Managing Director at Scottish Gas, said: "Having invested in apprenticeship schemes for more than 10 years, Scottish Gas knows first-hand how they can change lives. There has been good progress in Scotland over the past two years, with many more apprenticeships schemes being developed.

"But there's clearly a strong demand for places - and youth unemployment remains a serious issue. With an economic recovery underway, now is a good time for employers across Scotland to consider whether they're doing their part and to invest more in apprenticeships where they can.

"Almost 50 apprentices are currently in training across Scottish Gas -- we're proud to invest millions of pounds each year in developing skills for our people and the future economic success of the economy."

The research was published as Scottish Gas showcased apprenticeship opportunities to the public at its award-winning Academy in Hamilton as part of Scottish Apprenticeship Week. As part of the open day, some of the apprentices at Scottish Gas' Academy in Hamilton will share their experiences with young people visiting the training facility throughout the day.

The Academy in Hamilton is one of six award-winning facilities which the business uses to train apprentices and up-skill existing engineers on new technologies and appliances. In 2013, the company invested £13m in its six UK training academies and apprentices.

Three case studies are available - Craig Sinclair, David Crawford, Martin Cairney and Vicky Smith.

For further information on apprenticeships, visit www.britishgasjobs.co.uk or follow @britishgasjobs on Twitter.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

* The One Poll research was commissioned by British Gas and surveyed approximately 1,200 young people from across the UK in February 2014.

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** Skills Development Scotland, National Monthly Unemployment Update

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