



EURO
CITIES



The Edinburgh Guarantee

Opportunities for Edinburgh's school leavers

Edinburgh has inspired cultural change across the public, private and third sectors to address unemployment among school leavers. A shared vision and strong partnerships are ensuring every young person has the offer of a job, apprenticeship, training or further education.

The recession had a major impact on young people in Edinburgh. By 2011, over 570 school leavers out of a total of 3,500 were not getting into college, employment or training. This figure was the worst in Scotland. Redundancies and scaling back of graduate schemes led to displacement in the labour market as people with higher qualifications or more work experience were taking the jobs that could have been the first step on the ladder for school leavers. The city council decided bold action was needed to prevent this trend impacting the life chances of individuals and the economic vitality of the city.

Joining forces

Edinburgh is home to a significant number of SMEs and some notable large employers. It also already had many networks and pathways into work and training for young people. Yet all were working independently. What the city didn't have was a common vision across all stakeholders about how best to support school pupils and give them all a choice of a 'positive destination' when they leave school. The goal of the Edinburgh Guarantee was to encourage and enable businesses, education and service providers to work together to create this vision and bring it to life. Initially, all that was asked of businesses was simply: 'what can you offer'.

Joining up all the different elements of the employment and skills landscape in this flexible and inclusive way under the Edinburgh Guarantee umbrella has succeeded, where other more prescriptive projects might not, in widespread participation.



Ensuring that Edinburgh's young people have opportunities is vital for the economic success of our city. The year on year improvements that have been achieved since the inception of the Edinburgh Guarantee show that focused collaboration can make a real difference to many young lives.

Councillor Frank Ross, Edinburgh City Council

cities in action

June 2016

where: Edinburgh, UK
what: social affairs
when: 2011-2016

Together, participants, identified the need for four areas of activity:

- increase the number of opportunities for young people
- improve their preparedness for work
- pool resources, knowledge and expertise to fill gaps and enhance service provision
- provide an integrated and tailored service for school pupils, parents, employers, service providers and partners

Tailoring support

The guiding principle behind all these activities was to place the customer at their centre. This has proved particularly helpful in the development of smart, non-competitive ways of working among stakeholders. And also in the development of a wide range of programmes covering diverse customer needs. These include Career Academies within schools enhancing work-focused skills through summer placements and mentoring and Project Search, a supported employment model for young people with autism.

Underpinning and enabling this work is £1m (€1.3m) of funding from the city council, a leadership group led by its chief executive and a partnership support team responsible for coordinating activities. And then there's the Edinburgh Guarantee website. This sits at the heart of the project, connecting school leavers with information, services, support and all the job and training opportunities the initiative has identified and created. Over 1,500 young people are currently registered for job alerts.

Growing influence

The Edinburgh Guarantee has generated a range of impressive statistics like this since its inception in 2011: it has secured the active support of 350 businesses; created over 2,400 opportunities for school leavers; improved the number of positive destinations for young

people to 93.1%, the highest ever achieved in Edinburgh; saved an estimated £4m (€5.25m) in benefit payments; and delivered economic value of £17m (€22.3m) to Edinburgh and £29.4m (€38.6m) to Scotland.



This level of success has created momentum and many more ideas for the future. Partners are already looking at how this local action can be delivered with a regional partnership and there is also an expectation that it will be extended beyond its original five years. Insights from these first years will, in the meantime, be fed back into commerce and public services to refine activities and into education to ensure youth talent is shaped to meet future labour market needs. Plans to create young ambassadors to build the Guarantee brand suggest that it will be embedded into city life for the long term.

“The Edinburgh Guarantee has given me a chance to show that I can shine in the workplace and if Capital Document Solutions wasn't taking part then I'd probably still be handing my CV into stores.”
Bryce Bain, trainee at Capital Document Solutions

