

Redundancies rise as skills and employability budgets remain in limbo.

Scottish Government delays in confirming budgets for skills and employability programmes has resulted in training providers making 40 staff redundancies recently – with a further 30 expected in the next few months.

One training provider has already closed its doors with another three expected to follow in the next three months if budgets are not in place.

These are two findings from a member survey carried out by STF this week.

Delays in confirming the budget for No One Left Behind employability programmes with councils has stopped the procurement of employability provision aimed at helping people into the workplace. Budgets are now two weeks overdue, and it is unclear when the situation will be resolved.

And the budget for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) – aimed at improving the skills of those actively seeking employment or who are currently in low paid work and are looking to progress – has also still to be agreed.

Training providers employing staff to deliver these programmes have already been forced to make redundancies and several are at risk of closure unless the budgets are agreed soon.

STF member, Right Track Scotland, closed its doors in March making 20 staff redundant. Since its launch in 1983, the organisation supported young people aged 12-18 with the most challenging of difficulties to participate positively in employment, training or further education. Delays in budget setting and commissioning of programmes played a big part in the company having to close down.

STF is calling on the Scottish Government to agree the budgets for No One Left Behind employability programmes – and ITAs – as a matter of urgency.

STF Chief Executive, Stuart McKenna, said: 'Scottish Government delays in setting its skills and employability budgets again this year is having a devastating impact on training providers. Several have already made staff redundant, and a few are on the brink of closure. We have members like Right Track Scotland who have been delivering high quality training for more than 40 years now facing closure because of the delays.'

'And it's not just training providers who are affected by this – it's disadvantaging people who are looking to develop their skills and improve their employment opportunities.'

'Good quality skills and employability provision are crucial for the economic wellbeing of Scotland. Yet we've had delays with the Apprenticeship, No One Left Behind and ITA budgets. We need the skills and employability budgets agreed as a matter of urgency.'

Ends

Issued by STF on 12 April 2024

Notes to Editors

The Scottish Training Federation (STF) represents over 140 training providers operating in the field of work-based training across Scotland.

STF members comprise a broad mix of independent training providers, group training associations, colleges and local authority training departments – and cover a wide range of occupational areas, from traditional craft apprenticeships through to service sector occupations.

The majority of STF members are involved in the delivery of government funded training including Modern Apprenticeships and employability programmes in Scotland.

STF is widely regarded as the ‘voice of training providers in Scotland’ operating in the work-based training industry and is regularly consulted by all of the key stakeholders on policy development and implementation.

The STF Chief Executive and Board Members have regular meetings with senior staff at Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Government to lobby on behalf of members.

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