

Chief executive of Inverness Chamber of Commerce ■

# Stewart **NICOL**

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## More businesses are helping to kickstart careers

**T**he Chamber is dedicated to connecting and representing business across the north to support their growth, so it will be no surprise we are actively involved in the delivery of two key programmes bringing together employers and young people.

These are the UK Government's Kickstart Scheme and the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) which is now a key part of the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme.

Inverness Chamber took the decision to become a regional Kickstart Gateway organisation to support businesses across the Highlands and promoted Kickstart

through our Highland Chamber of Commerce network, particularly Caithness and Lochaber Chambers.

The Kickstart Scheme was designed to create high-quality six month job placements for young people seen to be at risk of long term unemployment. By the time the scheme closed at the end of last month, we had successfully placed 94 young people with 39 employers, helping an impressive 92.5 per cent of the young people we helped achieve a positive outcome.

Our other programme, the Scottish Government's YPG is a key focus of our Developing the Young Workforce project for Inverness & Central Highland (DYWICH). YPG is a commitment to bring together employers, partners and young people and, as such, it aims to connect every 16-24 year old in Scotland to an opportunity, whether a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering.

Last month, across Scotland, we reached the milestone of having over 500 national and local employers signed up to the YPG, which features "5 Asks of Employers":

- Prepare young people for the world of work
- Create opportunities for young people facing the greatest barriers
- Invest in a skilled workforce
- Create jobs and apprenticeships



Careers fairs provide a great opportunity to excite potential future employees.

■ Create an inclusive workplace  
Ten local businesses have already formally signed up to the YPG, with a number of others being supported to plan their engagement over the coming year through the YPG 5 Asks of Employers Proforma.

In Inverness & Central Highland over 110 national and local employers have supported our work in secondary schools over the last quarter by providing work experience opportunities, workplace visits and inspirational talks on their business or sector. Businesses have supported delivering the curriculum to make it more relevant to their industry and have attended career fairs to promote job, apprenticeship and training opportunities. Over the same

period, almost 8500 young people from all of our secondary schools have benefited from some form of employer engagement.

Both Kickstart and DYWICH are being formally reviewed by consultants for the UK and Scottish Governments. I'm looking forward to seeing their final reports as I judge both programmes have been extremely positive for both the participants and businesses involved. I also think the Inverness Chamber team has successfully delivered both to an extremely high level.

While Kickstart has now concluded, if you'd like to consider signing up for the Young Person's Guarantee, please get in touch with us at [info@dywich.co.uk](mailto:info@dywich.co.uk)

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To find out more about our Executive Partner Packages call **Inverness Chamber of Commerce** on 07563381637 or visit [www.inverness-chamber.co.uk](http://www.inverness-chamber.co.uk)



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