

EMPLOYER INFORMATION

Introduction

The Moray Employer Recruitment Incentive (MERI) supports people with the greatest barriers to employment find and sustain work. It is coordinated by the Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership, funded in line with the Scottish Government's [No One Left Behind](#) strategy and administered by the Moray Council employability team.

Employers from private, public and third sector organisations can apply for MERI funding which can provide up to £10,000 for a newly created post. The fund provides financial support towards the costs of employing an eligible candidate, including:

- wages
- training
- initial travel-to-work costs
- supervisory costs

The initiative has proven to be positive and effective over previous years, supporting the Moray Pathways objective of improving employability outcomes for people in Moray, with an enhanced focus on priority groups. Previous opportunities with supportive employers have enabled local people to move into sustained employment, gain skills, confidence and experience.

Funding

The amount which can be awarded is as follows:

Hours	12 month award	6 month award
10-15 contracted hours per week at start date	£4000	£2000
16-20 contracted hours per week at start date	£6000	£3000
21-29 contracted hours per week at start date	£8000	£4000
30+ contracted hours per week at start date	£10,000	£5000

Funding will be paid in instalments as per the following table for 12 month grants. Shorter terms will be paid pro rata and the instalment breakdown will be confirmed in the grant offer letter.

	4 weeks	13 weeks	26 weeks	39 weeks	52 weeks	Total
10-15 hours	£500	£1000	£1000	£750	£750	£4000
16-20 hours	£500	£1750	£1750	£1000	£1000	£6000
21-29 hours	£500	£2250	£2250	£1500	£1500	£8000
30+ hours	£750	£2500	£2750	£2000	£2000	£10,000

- To be eligible for a 12-month funding grant the funded post must commence before 1st October 2026.
- Payments will be made as outlined, following the submission of a completed invoice template and supporting wage slip evidence. It may take up to 30 days for payment to be processed.
- Funding is subject to availability and approved application

Application Process

The MERI application form is available at <https://moraypathways.co.uk/employers/#meri> . Applications will be scored against various criteria to ensure meaningful and sustainable opportunities for those we are working with. We aim to score applications within 10 working days of submission. Due to demand and limited funding the number of positions is capped at 2 per organisation and each position requires a separate application.

Recruitment

The role will be shared within the Moray Pathways partnership – initially for 2 weeks then reviewed - with a view of finding suitable applicants. Applicants will contact you directly by your chosen method. An appropriate and fair recruitment process should always be carried out. The final recruitment decision is always yours.

A new employee should be in post within 8 weeks of funding approval. If this timeframe is not met, the grant offer may be withdrawn or reduced, however we will liaise with you throughout.

We will use and store your information to process your application. If unsuccessful, we will remove it from our systems.

Eligibility

Employers must:

- not be planning redundancies
- not receive other public funds to support the creation of this post
- recruit clients of the Moray Pathways partnership
- have appropriate Employer's Liability insurance
- embed Fair Work practices in line with the [Scottish Government's Fair Work Convention](#).

The role must:

- guarantee a minimum of 8 hours employment per week
- pay at least Real Living Wage (£13.45)
- intend to continue beyond the funded period
- offer flexibility to meet the needs of the employee
- be a new position and not used to cover redundancy, existing staff sickness or maternity leave
- provide the employee with training and experience to develop their skills
- not have been previously funded by MERI

Employees must live in Moray and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- disabled people and people with a long-term health condition
- those at risk of long-term unemployment and in receipt of reserved benefits

Participants must not start employment until application approval has been confirmed.

Support

A Moray Pathways keyworker will be allocated to the employee to provide support and oversee overall progress. They will hold monthly review meetings with employer and employee to facilitate this and discuss any wider need.

Contact

For more information or to discuss further, please contact kailie.walsh@moray.gov.uk