



From mountain to sea

Work Placement Unit

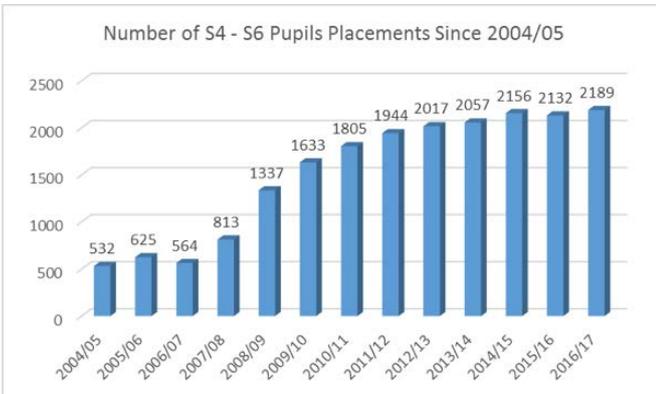
Newsletter 2018



Welcome to the 2018 Edition of the Aberdeenshire Council Work Placement Unit (WPU) newsletter.

Following a slight dip in 2016 due to the downturn in the oil and gas industry, the number of work placements arranged for Aberdeenshire's young people reached an all-time high in 2017.

While all our academies continue to embrace the



traditional Monday to Friday work experience week, there has been a rise in demand for flexible placements. One of the reasons for this has been an increase in S5 and S6 placements arranged through the Work Related Learning programme at Ellon Academy and the Wider Studies Programme at Fraserburgh Academy (see back page for more details about the latter).

Within the Work Placement Unit we've revised the procedure used when our colleagues from Health & Safety visit an employer to perform a workplace assessment. The old paper-based system has been replaced by a new system using hand-held tablet computers. Further details can be found on page 7.

Finally, we would once again like to extend our gratitude to all of the companies and organisations which provided work placements to Aberdeenshire's young people during 2017. Your continued support is essential to the success of the work placement programme.

Message from Maria Walker Director of Education & Children's Services

I am delighted to commend this newsletter to you and am very much encouraged to see the record number of placements being arranged for school pupils in Aberdeenshire. Surveys have shown that young people are more likely to be successful in their job hunt if they have undertaken some work experience and the Work Placement Unit is here to help make the experience successful.

An increase in pupils arranging a work placement in S5 and S6 is a welcome development, particularly when it is part of a wider programme to enhance their employability skills.

Equally encouraging is seeing DYW Aberdeenshire cementing its role in the area through the launch of a website and social media presence and with a series of events across Aberdeenshire, including a highly-regarded seminar on the construction industry.

I hope you enjoy reading the placement experiences of our young people and I would like to thank everyone involved in the work placement programme for another successful year.



Turriff Academy Celebrates Pupils' Participation in Work Placements



In November 2017, Turriff Academy pupils who had participated in the school's work experience week were presented with certificates to mark their successful completion of a placement.

The S4 and S5 pupils experienced a wide variety of opportunities during the work experience week in

October 2017 including a veterinary nurse, a farm worker, a playgroup assistant, an aeronautical engineer, an I.T. consultant and a tour guide at Fyvie Castle.

The certificates were presented to pupils by their guidance teachers at a school assembly which was led by Depute Head Teacher Jane Bisset.

AWPR GOALS and Industry Experience Week

In her role as the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) manager for the 36 mile (58 km) long Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie to Tippetty project - one of the largest construction projects in Britain - Yvonne Gilfillan wanted to offer young people aged under 18 an opportunity which would give them valuable experience working alongside the project team.

The AWPR GOALS and Industry Experience Week was the result. GOALS UK is a Community Interest Company (CIC) and social enterprise responsible for creating the GOALS for Young People motivational training programme that challenges youths to think and behave differently. The programme is designed for 13-19 year olds with a main focus on developing self-esteem and an overall sense of responsibility. Young people leave the course feeling empowered and focused on the future.

The first three days of the course covered the GOALS programme while the fourth and fifth days were devoted to AWPR related exercises driven by the Community Liaison Team which included:

- An AWPR project overview with an emphasis on the variety of roles available to young people and the differing methods of entry into construction
- Communication and team-building exercises
- A workshop on local geology and the environment
- The use of modern equipment such as satellite technology, noise and vibration monitors and software programmes such as Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Planning and project management workshops
- Demonstrating the use of GOALS and knowledge learned earlier in the week by project managing, constructing and presenting a team design for a model bridge to cross the River Dee using K'nex building kits. To challenge the students, no design manuals are allowed for reference as the bridge design had to be "freestyle"

- Mock interviews by a panel of two Community Liaison Officers for a job chosen by the student. Followed by debriefing and suggestions on how to prepare for future interviews

The first course was held in January 2017 at the AWPR Project Office and Visitor Centre at Mains of Ury in Stonehaven with six pupils from Mackie Academy attending. Yvonne Gilfillan confirmed that despite there being some scepticism from the pupils before



The team with their completed bridge model

the programme started with some displaying a lack of confidence, all had committed to fully participating in the intensive, challenging week. Yvonne added: "I'm pleased to say that all of them rose to the challenge and have proven to be a credit to their school".

Feedback from the young people was very positive.

Ronell Paterson said, "It was good to learn new things, it was exciting." Lewis Christie added, "It was really worth it and I would recommend it to other people, you definitely learn a lot. It was awesome and helpful."

Kieran Kenny, Depute Head Teacher and the senior management team at Mackie Academy were impressed with the programme. Kieran said, "I met with a parent of a pupil who attended the GOALS programme and she was very complimentary about the work undertaken on the programme and of the very positive and lasting impact it has had on her son. She feels that it has given

him greater skills and confidence which she can see will benefit him in his transition from Mackie Academy into the world of work."

A second course was held at Meldrum Academy in June 2017 and a third with pupils from Mackie Academy at the Mains of Ury office in August 2017.



The students who completed Goals Training (l-r Henry Evans, Lewis Christie, Aidan McConville, Ronell Paterson and Reece Hunter)

Speech & Language Therapist Placement with NHS Grampian

In July 2017, Jodie Robertson, a fifth year pupil at Fraserburgh Academy, had a work placement with NHS Grampian shadowing a Speech and Language Therapist. Below Jodie tells us about her placement:



"I have wanted to pursue the career of Speech and Language Therapist since the end of my S3 year. In my summer holidays this year, I organised to visit two different hospitals in the North East to have experience of shadowing a Speech and Language Therapist. I did this with the help of my Guidance Teacher, Miss Glen, who helped me organise the placement. I was very grateful for this opportunity.

The work experience really helped me be certain of the course I would like to go on to hopefully study at University. During my time on placement, the staff I was working with were ever so helpful and gave me advice on more things I could do to achieve my goals in my future career. I had the opportunity to work with both children and adults; I found this very helpful as it reassured me which area of Speech and Language Therapy that I would enjoy most and like to specialise in.

This work experience placement has given me further confidence as I had to speak with lots of new people and it gave me an understanding of how professionals work with patients. It also developed my organisation and leadership skills as well as demonstrating my passion for this role as I had to have the motivation to do this work experience in my own time, during the summer holidays. Overall, I enjoyed the experience and it gave me a real insight to what the job entails.

I would recommend doing work experience specifically related to the job you would like to go on to pursue after school, as it gave me an enhanced knowledge of the profession. Since my work experience in the summer holidays, I have gone on to secure more work experience working with younger children in a nursery and may be able to work with children that have speech difficulties. All of these related work experiences will support me in the future as I move on to university.

I would like to thank all of the staff who made my work experience placement so enjoyable."

Work Placement at Fennel Media, Kintore

For his work placement week in September 2017, Meldrum Academy pupil Ruaraidh Williams spent a week with Fennel Media, a TV, film and video production company based in Kintore.

"On my first day I was thrown in at the deep end, editing a video for social media from the longest Strip the Willow world record attempt at Castle Fraser! Having already used Adobe Premier Pro, it didn't take me long to get used to the editing suite. With a bit of help from the creative director Kevin, the video was complete in two days.

On the Wednesday I accompanied Bill (the owner of Fennel Media) and Kevin (creative director and editor) on a drone shoot. One of Fennel Media's specialities is drone footage – they have two trained drone pilots. My role was to spot any flying hazards while the drones were in the air, noting shots and map reading for shot locations.

On Thursday I was back in the office, editing projects for Meldrum House and two other clients – cutting together footage, editing music and colour grading footage.

Finally, on Friday I polished and finalised the remaining projects I had been working on and sent them off. The public project I worked on (the Strip the Willow world record attempt) now has over 15,000 views and 150 shares on Facebook. I thoroughly enjoyed my work experience – the team at Fennel Media were very friendly and helpful and gave me lots of tips on using editing software. It was an amazing, fun week!"



Ruaraidh pictured in the Fennel Studio editing footage under the supervision of Kevin Stride (Creative Director and Editor)

'Our Family Firm' Case Study

Our Family Firm is part of the wider Corporate Parenting approach Aberdeenshire Council takes to support 'looked after' children and young people who have, or have had, experience of care in Aberdeenshire.

Gary Ross left school in May 2017 with a college place at NESCOL in Fraserburgh lined up for September. As part of Aberdeenshire Council's 'Our Family Firm' corporate parenting initiative, a work placement as a Litter Patrol Assistant was arranged for Gary over the summer with the Waste Team in Banff. Claire Loney (Team Leader – Collections and Cleansing) was instrumental in setting up this opportunity which was to run for one day per week.

Based at the Tannery Street depot, Gary's role was to accompany the driver of one of the Council's litter patrol vehicles and help empty waste bins in places like Banff, Macduff, Crovie, Pennan and Gardenstown.

Under the watchful eye of his supervisors, Mike Duncan and Mike Ross, Gary was kitted out with Personal Protective Equipment and given an exhaustive training session on what he was expected to do.

Despite a 7am start for his placement day, Gary's timekeeping and attendance were very good. Following a satisfactory review in June the placement was extended for a further eight weeks, with Gary being paired up with driver Lee Bellingham. In late August, the placement was extended again with a different route (Turriff - Cuminstown – New Deer) and a switch of day from Tuesday to Thursday to fit in with Gary's college course which he commenced at the end of the month.

Although Gary found combining his four days at college along with his Litter Patrol Assistant role initially challenging, he was enjoying the placement so much that he asked for the placement to continue until mid-December.



Gary Ross with the litter collection vehicle which he was assigned to

Claire Loney said: *"We were pleased to be able to offer Gary a placement with us as we feel it is important to offer young people an opportunity to experience the workplace."*

Work Placements – An Employer's Perspective

Margo Robertson, Commercial Director with Clark Integrated Technologies, gives an employer's view of work placements and the benefits it offers to young people.



"In 2017 we were delighted to accept two work placement students into our Business. The students were interested in a career in IT and it was our pleasure to introduce them to our operation."

We are an IT Managed Service Provider, delivering support, Cyber Security, networking and projects to the SME market in Scotland, we continue to develop our services to ensure our Clients are safe and secure – our number one priority.

Taking students into our business has given them an insight into what IT at the ground level looks like, how we deal with user support and how we manage the infrastructure for our clients. There's no doubt there's work involved with work placements, however we feel that providing a placement really benefits both the student and our team.

The gain for the youngster is obvious, but for us, it's a great opportunity to build the skills of our team and gain a fresh approach and sometimes ideas from the students. The team provides mentoring and support and this enhances their learning and confidence and allows them to participate in the experience. We realise that the "world of work" is dramatically different when coming from a learning environment, and part of our ethos is to ensure we support the pupils as best we can for the short time they are with us. We look for individuals who have good communication skills and are genuinely looking for guidance and work experience. Our Service Delivery Manager manages their time during the placement and ensures that the students have access to our different department to gain as much as they can from their placement.

We are also able to identify those who will be stars of the future who would ultimately be of great benefit for our business – whether that be as apprentices or as trainees depending on their experiences and passion.

I would encourage any business to consider work placements as part of their HR focus; after all, these students are our workforce of the future."

Mintlaw Academy Work Placements



In September 2017, 129 pupils from Mintlaw Academy had the opportunity to have a work experience placement.

Two of the pupils, Findlay McAdam and Rhimini Kerr, share their experiences.

Findlay McAdam writes:

"I had been looking forward to my work placement for quite some time as I knew it would be a brand-new experience for me and would help me in deciding what I would like to do after leaving school. I have a passion for drama therefore I knew I'd want to do something along that route. After thinking, I thought I'd like to be a Secondary School Drama Teacher so a placement in a school would be ideal for me. I chose Ellon Academy as it wasn't too close to Mintlaw (like Fraserburgh and Peterhead) yet was still within travelling distance. It was also an unfamiliar environment as I only knew two pupils there and had never stepped foot inside the school before.

On the first day I was nervous, just like everybody else. I had my outfit planned (smart shirt, tie, black dress trousers and a cardigan), packed my lunch and arranged for my mum to take me to Mintlaw to meet my friend (who was also going to Ellon) and to get the bus. We arrived at the school and my friend showed us to reception. We were then shown to the department base and met Mr. Birse as well as other teachers we would be working with. What really made me feel like a teacher was the fact that I was added to the staff timetable along with

the other teachers in the department. My first class was a National 5 Drama class. This lesson took place in the theatre which I was extremely impressed with. Although being in with people my own age was odd, I did feel like a professional as students had to call me Mr. McAdam. I got to explore the theatre and see facilities such as the lighting and sound booth as well as seeing pupils perform.

As the week progressed I had a taste of what it was like seeing every year group. I was assisting with all levels (S 1,2,3, National 5, Higher & Advanced Higher) which showed me how teaching styles vary throughout the different stages. On the Wednesday I was invited to observe the after-school drama club. It was interesting to see such a high volume of pupils attend the club and it made me confident that people have a passion for drama.

On the last day of my work placement I was really sad to leave. I handed my work placement diary to Mr. Birse in the morning as he had to give an evaluation of how I progressed throughout the week. It was such an amazing week for me, it couldn't have gone any better. Before I left, Mr. Birse handed me my diary with an extremely positive evaluation.

Coming back to school after the week made me realise I wanted to go into teaching and that I had the right qualities to become a drama teacher. The week taught me what working in education was really like. Now I am focusing on my Drama studies (as well as my other subjects) and future education plans so that I can become a Drama teacher – this experience has helped me set a positive attitude for whatever is to come."

Rhimini Kerr wrote:

"In November 2016, I was one of four people selected by my school to represent Mintlaw Academy at a 'Pathology Day' workshop on the campus of Robert Gordon University.

Two weeks later, it was time to start thinking where I would like to do my S4 work experience. I knew where I wanted to go..... RGU. I emailed the Head of the Department of the 'School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences' – the same laboratory where I attended the pathology workshop – and asked if I could go there for my work experience placement.

My first day at RGU meant an early start. Lessons began at nine, so I had to be up around 6:30 every morning throughout the week. Although this was a challenge, it really gave me an insight to the life of a student, as well as developing new key skills such as organisation and time management.

Our hours for the day were from 9am-4pm, so it was planned that we would take part in around eight different science activities, and each from a new branch of science that we hadn't previously met before and included solving a murder mystery using forensics.

This experience further developed my knowledge and understanding of the techniques used in real life to solve crimes. I also took part in a microbiology workshop and threshold taste tests with food nutrition. I worked for two hours on preparing an experiment for each of our taste buds as we were testing our threshold for sweetness, sourness, saltiness and bitterness. This morning was also by far my favourite activity from the whole week since staff from RGU cooked us chips at 10:30 in the morning.

My week had been very eventful, and I wanted to leave with a key idea of a possible career path for myself, and moreover, a range of new skills that I developed over the course of the week.

For anyone considering a career in science, I would strongly recommend RGU. My week's work experience placement was the best experience in this area that I have had, and it also gave me the independence and confidence to realise the maturity and effort required to be a student at university. It has also benefitted me because I have been able to gain more confidence in myself, while also developing my communication skills."



Career Ready

Career Ready is an employer-led charity that helps raise young people's aspirations and life chances by bridging the gap between education and work by giving them access to real experience of the world of work.

For more information visit: www.careerready.org.uk or email robert.allan@careerready.org.uk

An integral part of the Career Ready programme is the four week paid internship which takes place over the summer.



Turriff Academy pupil Karla Sinclair was placed with Aberdeen Journals and was mentored by 'Evening Express' journalist and columnist, Scott Begbie.

"During my placement, I was given an insight to the various roles and areas that are

involved in the creation of a newspaper. This further broadened my knowledge of the industry and helped me recognise the area that was most appealing to me personally. I had the opportunity to complete several items that went on to be featured in the Evening Express newspaper, including articles ranging from recommended upcoming entertainment/radio broadcasts to speaking about public viewpoints on a number of current topics. I was also taken out with the office to find further information on these pieces and be a part of the photography team. Through doing this and working alongside professional employees/mentors, I gained key skills, contacts, and grew as an individual. I found the internship an unforgettable experience that was very rewarding.

"It also gave me the confidence necessary to push myself to achieve my full potential, which resulted in an offer of employment with the Press & Journal newspaper Overall, Career Ready was an extremely beneficial experience that opened up opportunities I originally did not expect would be on offer. I now look forward to fulfilling my goal of working within the field of journalism and beginning my apprenticeship following my time in school."



Lucinda Church pictured with her Career Ready mentor, Stuart Grant

Fellow Turriff Academy pupil Lucinda Church's mentor was Stuart Grant, one of Aberdeenshire Council's Community Leisure Officers.

Lucinda summarises her involvement with Career Ready below:

"Career Ready for me was a positive and rewarding experience. Within my placement and meetings with my mentor I felt myself flourish and my confidence develop dramatically. Before my internship began, my mentor and I discussed what activities could be included and how he could be of help to me. For this, Stuart put me through my NPLQ (National Pool Lifeguard Qualification) enabling me to be a lifeguard, a netball teaching course and volunteering at nursery ball games.

On my placement with Aberdeenshire Council at the Turriff Swimming Pool & Sports Centre and at the Gateway Community Centre, I experienced and learnt about the day to day running of the facility. On the last day of my placement I had to give a speech in Aberdeen to members of Career Ready and the council. Although I was very nervous at the prospect of public speaking, with the support from my mentor I got through my speech and received many compliments on my speaking.

Now the internship is over I have a permanent contract job with the council as a lifeguard and leisure assistant. Within this I have just completed my swimming teacher qualification and have a job at the pool teaching. For me Career Ready was very beneficial and I would highly recommend this opportunity."

Work Placement Unit–New Process for H&S Workplace Assessments

The Work Placement Unit (WPU) is responsible for ensuring that all employers, who participate in the work placement program for Aberdeenshire Council school pupils, are aware of the legislation governing the employment of young people under the age of eighteen, operate in a safe manner and have the appropriate insurance. To achieve this, our Workplace Assessors, Jackie Spence and Maggie Kidd from the Council's Health and Safety Unit, visit more than seven hundred employers each year.

A review of the processes involved looked at ways to reduce the amount of time and paperwork required in order to get placement checks completed. As a result of this, the WPU have now adopted the use of hand-held

tablets which allow on-screen signing of documents by employers during placement assessment visits.

A new visit form was also developed for use with the tablets to replace two existing forms thus reducing the amount of paperwork required.

The WPU expects that these changes will reduce the time an assessment visit takes, the associated administration needed both before and after a visit and also the amount of consumables we use.



H&S Workplace Assessor Jackie Spence with one of the tablets which are used when visiting employers



DYW Aberdeenshire supports children and young people to prepare for the world of work and connect with employers. In addition to launching its own website and social media in 2017, DYW Aberdeenshire organised a number of events including a construction seminar and a number of DYW support days for primary and secondary schools.

The DYW construction seminar, held in November 2017 at Woodhill House, brought together construction industry representatives and stakeholders who have a role to play in supporting pathways for young people into construction. Feedback from the event was extremely positive and a key recommendation is closer co-operation between the construction industry, Aberdeenshire Council and schools to identify and promote opportunities in the sector.

The DYW support days were designed to help schools (both primary and secondary) share good practice in implementing DYW and to clarify the key improvement priorities and the support available. The events were well-received, with pupils' accounts of their experience in the workplace coming in for particular praise.

Additionally, an extensive Developing the Young Workforce Satellite Event was arranged at Ellon Academy on Tuesday 13th February 2018 organised by Aberdeenshire Council staff as part of the Northern Alliance Learning Festival.

The DYW Aberdeenshire website is at www.dywaberdeenshire.org where background information, available support and examples of good practice can be found.

Wider Studies Programme at Fraserburgh Academy

Fraserburgh Academy aims to provide a curriculum that is both inclusive and ambitious for all as well as being both academically challenging and providing opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work.

The curriculum is adapted continuously over time to meet the needs of pupils and includes the introduction of the Wider Studies Programme for pupils in S5/6. A key element of the Programme offers pupils the opportunity to attend schools link courses at NESCOL (North East of Scotland College) and to accommodate this the changes to the timetable resulted in the opportunity for pupils to benefit from extended work experience placements.

In 2017/18, forty-one extended work placements were arranged for pupils in 5th and 6th year, usually for two

afternoons per week. This allowed them to get valuable experience over several terms.

Depute HT Ed Walton described it as "an unexpected win from a change in timetabling to suit NESCOL (North East of Scotland College) skills for work afternoons."

The Wider Studies programme is to continue for session 2018/19. Pupils will begin sourcing placements in June with a view to starting in August.



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