

Report

Report to:	Education Committee
Date of Meeting:	9 November 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Youth Employability and Work Based Learning
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ♦ provide an update on the progress of the Youth Employability Service's targeted employability and senior-phase work-based learning programmes including how the service has continued to respond to the challenges presented by Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress of youth employability and work-based learning be noted.

3. Background

3.1. The Youth Employability Service supports young people at school in the senior phase and post-school up to age 19 (26 if care experienced) to develop and achieve the skills, experience and qualifications to progress to positive and sustained post-school destinations. The service comprises of 5 key programmes:

- ♦ Aspire
- ♦ AspireWorks
- ♦ GRADU8
- ♦ Gradu8 work Experience
- ♦ Foundation Apprenticeships

3.2. These programmes achieve positive outcomes for young people and have made a significant contribution to South Lanarkshire's consistently high positive school leaver destinations and post-school participation measure over recent years. The most recent School Leaver Destination Report (SLDR) for 2019/2020 saw 94.8% of school leavers achieve an initial positive destination. This rate saw South Lanarkshire achieve the joint 4th highest rate in Scotland and although a slight decrease from the previous year, following the national trend, maintained the target to be above the national rate (93.3%) for the 7th consecutive year.

3.3. Since the last update to Education Committee in January 2021, the Youth Employability Service has continued to adapt to the current challenging conditions by working flexibly with schools and partner agencies to ensure that programmes can be delivered safely while meeting the needs of young people.

- 3.4. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge for the delivery of the youth employability programmes for 2020/2021. A great deal of revised planning, risk assessment and partnership working has been required to ensure that programmes can be delivered safely and meet the needs of young people. This has been possible due to the positive partnership relations between the service, schools and partners including local colleges and Skills Development Scotland. The service has worked hard to ensure that vulnerable young people, who are likely to be significantly disadvantaged due to the economic challenges which the Covid-19 pandemic will cause, are supported.

4. Aspire

- 4.1. The Aspire programme provides targeted employability support to vulnerable young people who require assistance to move to a positive destination. Aspire is funded by a combination of European Structural Funds, Scottish Government's No-One Left Behind and Young People's Guarantee, Clyde Windfarm Community Development Fund and Education Resource's core budget and provides flexible employability support for young people aged from the last 6 months of school to age 19 (26 if care experienced) who are at risk of becoming unemployed.
- 4.2. All young people supported by Aspire have a dedicated Vocational Development Worker who supports them to develop an individualised action plan designed to address barriers to employment. The action plan may include 1-2-1 support, personal development and confidence building activities, work experience and vocational tasters and individual supports. The worker also ensures support to access and co-ordinate services from Council services and other key partners, where appropriate, such as housing, counselling and money and benefits advice. Young people progressing through the programme are followed up with aftercare support to sustain positive destinations.
- 4.3. In 2020/21, 542 young people were referred to Aspire for support, the majority were referred through school 16+ meetings. During 2020/2021 the programme achieved a positive destination rate of 91% with 195 young people completing Aspire and progressing to a positive destination of employment, further learning, or training. The remaining 346 young people continue to engage with the programme and are being supported to complete individual action plans designed to progress to a positive destination. For the 21 young people who disengaged early and did not progress to a positive destination, partnership working with Skills Development Scotland and other partners takes place to track destinations and offer support at an appropriate time.
- 4.4. The Aspire service has continued to respond flexibly to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain support to young people. During the second lockdown in early 2021, the team moved to provide remote support to young people. This included an increased focus on online delivery of groupwork and following consultation with young people, a programme was developed and delivered. The programme included issue-based groupwork focusing on employability, mental health and wellbeing and career information sessions focusing on construction, early ears, social care and hair and beauty with inputs from local employers and SLC services. Routes to Work South delivered an 8-week online RISE personal development programme which was attended remotely by young people.
- 4.5. The relaxing of some restrictions from late spring 2021 enabled the team to re-establish face-to-face support with young people, using outdoor space where possible to reduce risks. The full relaxation of restrictions has enabled groupwork to resume and Routes to Work South commenced delivery of two 12-week RISE

personal development programmes in September to young people with a further 2 planned. A procurement exercise has recently been completed to provide a range of options for young people including construction tasters and supported volunteering.

- 4.6. Case studies of young people who took part in the Aspire programme are at Appendix 1

5. Aspire Works

- 5.1. The Youth Employability Service has recently established a new employment-focused programme through Scottish Government's Young People's Guarantee funding. AspireWorks has been designed as a progression route from Aspire as well as an option for post-school referrals aged 16-19 and supports young people to develop employability skills through a flexible programme of work placements, employer engagement and accredited employability focused learning.
- 5.2. A new team was recruited in the spring and has been working to develop the programme, with a particular focus on building relations with local employers and identifying suitable placements. Placements are for between 2-4 days per week and all young people taking part receive a training allowance.
- 5.3. In addition to work placements, a young person's plan may include participation on an employability focused groupwork programme. An initial pilot groupwork programme was developed following consultation with young people and was delivered in both Hamilton and Cambuslang Universal Connections with a focus on strengths, skills and qualities, CV building and job search techniques.
- 5.4. Developing a new service during the pandemic has been a challenge, particularly in terms of identifying work placements and delivering groupwork. However, excellent progress has been made under these circumstances and, to date, 81 young people have been referred to AspireWorks. 62 young people are currently being supported and 15 have progressed to employment since the programme was established.
- 5.5. Case studies of Aspire Works participants are included at Appendix 2.

6. GRADU8

- 6.1. The Gradu8 programme gives young people in the senior phase an opportunity to study towards a vocational qualification in an area of work they may wish to pursue after leaving school as well as an opportunity to experience a different way of learning and an introduction to college. Young people attend college or a local training provider for one-day-a week and work towards qualifications which provide opportunities to develop skills and knowledge and progress to college, employment or to continue their learning through a foundation or modern apprenticeship. The programme is supported by Vocational Development Workers from the Youth Employment Service who are on-campus to support young people's engagement, liaise with schools and learning providers and support young people's progressions.
- 6.2. During academic year 2020/2021, the GradU8 programme was delivered at a reduced scale to meet social distancing requirements at the time and between January and March, the majority of learning was moved online with young people taking part from home. The programme supported 500 young people across 10 vocational subjects as well as 55 young people who took part in winter and summer leavers programmes. The delivery of GradU8 within the Covid restrictions was challenging for the youth employability team, colleges and particularly for young people and was only possible due to the excellent partnership working relationships and the commitment of young people. Of the 500 young people who took part, 427

completed the programme, which given the challenging circumstances is very positive and highlights the importance of the support provided.

- 6.3. Planning for the 2021/2022 programmes was challenging as guidance for colleges on social distancing was not finalised until after the end of the 2020/2021 school term. However, the relaxation of most restrictions has enabled the 2021/2022 programme to commence from August with the full range of courses available and full cohorts within classrooms. In order to ensure all school and pupils have access to the 12 vocational subjects, the programme has been extended to delivery across 8 delivery location, all of which are supported by on-site Youth Employability staff. This planning has enabled 925 places to be made available to pupils.
- 6.4. The GradU8 programme also provides learning opportunities for winter leavers due to leave school in December 2021. The winter leavers' programme is being delivered at both South Lanarkshire College and New College Lanarkshire with young people attending 3 days a week to experience a rotational programme across either construction trades or creative industries.
- 6.5. The Gradu8 construction programme includes the delivery of the SCQF level 5 Foundation Apprenticeship which is funded by Skills Development Scotland and includes young people's participation in a work-based challenge led by a local employer.
- 6.6. **GradU8 locations:**
- ◆ South Lanarkshire College
 - ◆ South Lanarkshire College – John Wright Sports Centre
 - ◆ New College Lanarkshire
 - ◆ First Steps Rural Connections
 - ◆ Tigers Training Ltd
 - ◆ City of Glasgow College – Riverside Campus
 - ◆ City of Glasgow College – Cathedral St Campus
 - ◆ Glasgow Kelvin College
- 6.7. **GradU8 subjects:**
- ◆ Beauty Skills
 - ◆ Business & Marketing
 - ◆ Construction
 - ◆ Digital and media
 - ◆ Early years and Childcare
 - ◆ Engineering
 - ◆ Hair & Barber
 - ◆ Health and Social care
 - ◆ Hospitality
 - ◆ Make Up Artistry
 - ◆ Sports Fitness
 - ◆ Uniformed Services
- 6.8. Case studies of young people involved in the GradU8 programme are at Appendix 3.

7. GradU8 Work Experience

- 7.1. As part of the Council's Learning Recovery and Renewal Programme, the Youth Employability team has worked with schools to develop a pilot GradU8 Work Experience programme. This involves young people taking part in a one-day-a-week

work experience placements on their school's timetabled GradU8 day of either Monday or Friday.

- 7.2. The Youth Employability team worked closely with schools to identify young people and 62 young people were matched to placements, which commenced in early October. Placements have been matched with both local employers and SLC services. SLC Placements include early years, social care, fleet services, facilities as well as South Lanarkshire Leisure. Placements with local employers include construction, mechanics, restaurants, hairdressers, stables, admin and sport and leisure.
- 7.3. All young people engaging with the programme are allocated a link Vocational Development Worker who will provide ongoing support and preparation for next steps. Young people will be supported by their school to complete linked work-based qualifications.
- 7.4. Case studies of young people are highlighted in Appendix 3.

8. Foundation Apprenticeships Level 6

- 8.1. Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) are a national senior phase option, funded by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and designed to allow young people to gain valuable, real-world work experience and access work-based learning while they are still at school. The programme supports progressions to modern and graduate apprenticeships or to further and higher education. Foundation Apprenticeships are delivered at SCQF level 6 and pupils can choose to study over 1 or 2 years with part of the qualification based on a work placement.
- 8.2. South Lanarkshire's FA delivery model is designed to ensure pupils have access to all Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks. This includes the delivery of South Lanarkshire's FA consortium programme in partnership with South Lanarkshire College and access to the Glasgow College's FA consortium. The Council is not directly involved in the delivery or management of the Glasgow programme but provides support to schools and pupils and arranges all transport provision.
- 8.3. The delivery of FAs during academic year 2020/2021 was impacted significantly by Covid, with young people engaging remotely for periods of the year due to lockdown and alternative assessment methods were developed to ensure young people were able to achieve their qualifications in those circumstances where work placements were not able to go ahead. The Youth Employability Service worked closely with South Lanarkshire College and the Glasgow FA consortium to support young people to complete.
- 8.4. For the South Lanarkshire FA consortium programme, 77 young people were due to finish their Foundation Apprenticeship in June 2021. Despite the challenges of online delivery, 71 successfully completed and achieved their apprenticeship. All 77 pupils who participated progressed to a positive post-school destination.
- 8.5. 2020/2021 South Lanarkshire FA Consortium destinations

Remained at school	1
Further Education	11
Employment	3
Employment - Modern Apprenticeship	12
Higher Education	50

8.6. Unlike the South Lanarkshire Consortium programme, the Glasgow FA programme was delivered almost entirely remotely throughout the 2020/21 session with young people engaging online either from school or at home. 62 young people completed the programme and the destinations are provided below.

8.7. 2020/2021 Glasgow College Consortium FA destinations (SLC pupils)

Further Education	28
Employment	3
Employment - Modern Apprenticeship	5
Employment - Graduate Apprenticeship	2
Higher Education	18
Unemployed / unconfirmed	6

8.8. The 2021/2022 programme commenced in September with the majority of courses resuming with face-to-face teaching. South Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire College deliver 5 FA frameworks through a consortium model. The South Lanarkshire FA consortium has a particular focus on subjects which provide progression routes to employment with the Council including early years, business skills, accountancy, creative and digital media, early years and social care. Learning takes place at South Lanarkshire College in East Kilbride and at FA Hubs established at Duncanrig High School, Calderglen High School, Trinity High School and Holy Cross High School. As in previous years SLC pupils can also access the Glasgow Colleges FA consortium which is delivered across Glasgow college campuses.

8.9. South Lanarkshire FA Consortium participants 2021/22

	1 year starts	2 year starts	2nd year returners	Total
Accountancy			4	4
Business Skills	3	5	9	17
Creative and Digital Media	13	14		27
Children and Young People	22	38	27	87
Healthcare	14	20	11	45
Total	52	77	51	180

8.10. Glasgow College Consortium FA participants 2021/22

	1 year starts	2 year starts	2nd year returners	Total
Accountancy		9		9
Business Skills	1			1
Civil Engineering	5	23	10	38
Creative and Digital Media			15	15
Engineering Systems		6	4	10
Financial Services	1	5	2	8
ICT Software	8	20	9	37
Mechanical Engineering		19	8	27
Scientific Technologies	1	1	4	6
Total	16	83	52	151

8.11. Case studies of young people completing Foundation Apprenticeships are at Appendix 4

9. Care Experienced tracking

9.1. The Youth Employability service continues to maintain a focus on young people who are care experienced and works closely with Social Work and Skills Development Scotland to track the destinations of care leavers. In 2020/2021 the service supported 99 care experienced young people to complete an Aspire action plan. Of these young people, 50 progressed to a positive destination, 33 continued to be supported and tracked, 3 returned to school and 13 were not ready for employability support.

10. Employee Implications

10.1. The programmes described in this report are delivered and managed by the Youth Employability Service. External funding supports approximately 28 of the 40 staff. 10 of the staff team are currently on temporary contracts until March 2022.

11. Financial Implications

11.1. The service is resourced by a blend of funding which includes core education resources, European Structural Funds, Scottish Government No-one Left Behind and Young People's Guarantee and Skills Development Scotland Foundation Apprenticeship contracts. European funding is in place until June 2023 and Scottish Government grants and SDS contracts are in place until April 2022.

11.2. There is likely to be significant change in employability funding in the coming years following the end of European funding associated with Brexit and changes in Scottish Government employability funding from April 2022 when increased resources will be allocated to local government and its partners through No-one Left Behind.

12. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

12.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability on the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

13. Other Implications

13.1. There are no significant risk implications in terms of the information contained within this report.

14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

14.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

14 October 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

- Education Resources Committee – January 2021

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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Aspire Case Studies

(all names have been changed)

Connor

Connor was referred to the Aspire service by Skills Development Scotland after disengaging from school. He was linked with a Vocational Development worker from the team who identified that he needed support to develop a routine, build employability skills and develop a plan for his future. An action plan was developed and after building a relationship with his worker Connor took part in construction training with First Steps Future Training. He was supported to prepare for and sit his CSCS test which he passed with flying colours. A placement was arranged but had to be postponed due to the second lockdown. Connor maintained contact with his worker and the placement, with a local glazing company commenced after restrictions eased. Following an 8-week placement, during which Connor impressed due to his work ethic and character, he was kept on as a full-time employee.

Josh

Josh was referred to Aspire by the pupil support teacher at his school as he required support to progress to a positive destination when leaving school. Josh, who had been diagnosed as ASD struggled with social situations and was particularly anxious around people. As Josh wasn't able to leave home without being accompanied by his Mum, his link Vocational Development Worker arranged to meet him outside his house initially. Following several visits his worker established trust and began to build a relationship, supporting Josh to apply for Educational Maintenance Allowance and open a bank account.

Josh had previously played piano and found this therapeutic and with support from his worker, successfully applied for an Independent Living Fund Scotland grant to purchase a laptop, keyboard and music lessons. Josh applied to the Skills Exchange Lets Grow programme and was supported with travel training to build his confidence to attend. After engaging successfully, Josh progressed to an Employability Fund programme and ultimately progresses to a modern apprenticeship with a local butcher.

Courtney

Courtney left school in June 2021 and was referred to Aspire as she had disengaged from school and her GradU8 college course during lockdown. Courtney's Vocational Development Worker initially found it very challenging to build a relationship but linked in with her mum to discuss Courtney's circumstances and agree how best to support her.

Courtney had been attending a beauty course through GradU8 but after building trust with her link worker identified a goal to study to become a nail technician. As Courtney is looked after at home, her worker liaised with social work colleagues and developed a plan. Courtney was supported to apply for a Nail Technicians course at New College Lanarkshire, including writing a personal statement, applying for a bursary and opening a bank account. Courtney was accepted onto the course, which she started in August.

AspireWorks Case Studies

(all names have been changed)

Ryan

When Ryan was referred to AspireWorks he developed an action plan with his worker designed to meet his main aim of finding work in the construction industry. An assessment was carried out to identify his strengths and weaknesses and to identify the actions needed to progress to employment. This included preparing for a CSCS test, developing communication skills and taking part in work placement to gain valuable experience in working as part of a team and following instructions.

Ryan worked hard on practice CSCS tests and was supported to develop a CV, complete job applications and take part in mock interviews. A work placement with a local car wash was sourced and Ryan took part while being supported to contact construction employers to source vacancies.

After a few weeks on placement a company Ryan had approach confirmed that they would consider taking him on once he passed his CSCS test. After passing the test first time Ryan contacted the company and started work as a labourer the following week.

Ross

Ross became involved with the AspireWorks programme after turning up at the Youth Employability offices in Rutherglen looking for help finding work. He had previously had a job with McDonalds and had been furloughed but left as he realised that working there wasn't what he wanted to do as a career.

Ross was interested in construction work but had no experience of this and felt he needed help with employability skills. Ross began to engage with an AspireWorks keyworker and developed an action plan which included obtaining a CSCS card through ITA funding so he could work on-site. Ross' worker supported him to prepare an up-to-date CV and contacted a local fencing and landscaping company who agreed to support with work experience, 3 days per week for a period of up to 6 weeks.

After 2 weeks on placement the company offered James a permanent position which he was delighted to accept.

David

David was referred to AspireWorks after having previously been engaged with the Aspire service after a period of non-activity due to the pandemic. David was frustrated but eager to find and sustain employment but recognised that he needed support in securing this. Initially David was supported to set and achieve goals including developing a CV and opening a bank account. After a period of positive engagement David took part in the pilot AspireWorks employability groupwork programme where he engaged well and developed his confidence.

David and his link Vocational Development Worker discussed the benefits of a work placement to support David to develop work readiness skills and he was supported to independently contact employers. A work placement with a window fabrication company in his local area was identified and after a health and safety risk assessment was carried out David started a work placement in September 2021.

GradU8 Case Studies

(all names have been changed)

Finn

Finn took part in the GradU8 construction course at South Lanarkshire College. After experiencing some challenges around behaviour in the early stages, the Youth Employability Team supported him to maintain engagement including taking part in the online elements during lockdown. Finn maintained a good level of attendance throughout and was one of the first to pupils complete the qualification.

'I enjoyed being on the GradU8 Level 5 Construction Crafts at South Lanarkshire College. The course is very enjoyable, and it is a great way to explore different areas of construction. By completing the Construction Crafts course, it has given me the skills and experience to progress onto a City and Guilds Pre-Apprenticeship at New College Lanarkshire. I enjoyed the course because it is a mature environment, and you get a better experience. I would say to anyone with the opportunity to take part in GradU8 to take it. Go for it - but put effort into the course. Do not use the course to have an excuse to carry on. Take it seriously because you never know when you are going to need the skills you learn from this course.'

Siobhan

Siobhan excelled in her GradU8 engineering course at New College Lanarkshire. After completing the course she progressed directly to an Engineering college course at New College Lanarkshire.

The link Vocational Development Worker said:

'Siobhan is a great ambassador and a terrific example for other young females who hope to enter a career in this sector.'

Kyle

Kyle Performed very well on the construction GradU8 programme. He successfully completed the Level 5 programme and maintained his attendance online throughout the lockdown period.

A vocational development worker from the Youth Employability team supported Kyle to complete his application to college and he was successful in gaining a place on the plumbing pre-apprenticeship course at South Lanarkshire College where his is doing well and continuing to progress.

Foundation Apprenticeships Case Studies

(all names have been changed)

Kerry

Kerry took part in the two-year Business Skills Foundation Apprenticeship programme. She started the course in August 2019 but wasn't particularly focused and considered leaving after one of her friends dropped out. Kerry found the period of lockdown particularly challenging but was encouraged and supported to maintain her engagement on the programme by the Youth Employability team. She excelled in the work-based challenge which was developed in partnership with the Council's election team and involved producing marketing materials encouraged young people to vote. This had a really positive effect on Kerry's self-confidence. At the end of her Foundation Apprenticeship, Kerry successfully applied for a Business Skills Modern Apprenticeship with the Council. Kerry has now successfully secured a permanent role with the council in Housing and Technical Resources.

Social care – customised units

Restrictions in some sectors due to covid have meant that some young people have been unable to take part in work placements as part of their Foundation Apprenticeship. In response Skills Development Scotland and SQA developed alternative methods of accreditation and assessment to replace the work placement to ensure young people could achieve their full FA qualification while also developing the skills and experiences required. The lockdown in January 2021 meant that planned placements in SLC care homes and day centres were unable to go ahead. In response, the Youth Employability team worked closely with South Lanarkshire College and Social Work to develop a work-based project around a 'day in the life of' video diaries. This included the pupils working with a community nurse to plan and record videos detailing their role in working with homeless people and people with addictions and an online Q&A session with students. The young people fed back that they really enjoyed the project, particularly the opportunity to work together collaboratively.