

Report

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| Report to: | Education Resources Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 19 January 2021 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Education Resources) |

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| 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 and in meeting the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the progress and planning for youth employability and work-based learning for young people in the senior phase and post-school up to age 19 (26 if care experienced) 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 3 key programmes

- ◆ ASPIRE
- ◆ GRADU8
- ◆ Foundation Apprenticeships

3.2. These programmes achieve positive outcomes for young people and have made a significant contribution to South Lanarkshire's high positive school leaver destinations and post-school participation measure over the last 6 years. The most recent School Leaver Destination Report (SLDR) for 2018/2019 saw 95.7% of school leavers achieve an initial positive destination which was above the national rate for the 6th consecutive year. The destinations of the 2019/2020 leavers will be confirmed in March 2021.

3.3. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge for the delivery of the Youth Employability programmes for 2020/21. 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. A great deal of revised planning, risk assessments and partnership working was required to ensure that programmes could 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.

4. ASPIRE (Targeted Employability Support)

- 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 programme, Clyde Windfarm Community Development Fund and Education Resource's core budget and provides a bespoke employability programme 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. Young people are supported in line with Getting It Right for Every Child and Raising Achievement for All Government initiatives, with a dedicated vocational development worker preparing 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 services from other key partners, if appropriate, such as counselling. Key to the success of the programme is the 6/12 month aftercare provision within the programme, to assist young people to sustain a positive destination.
- 4.3. During 2019/2020, 391 young people were supported by ASPIRE and a further 60 referrals were assessed and passed to more appropriate services. Of the young people engaged on an action plan 75% progressed from Aspire to a positive destination of employment, further learning, or training. Those young people who did not make a positive transition during this session continue to be tracked and supported to achieve a positive destination.
- 4.4. The Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown in the spring presented significant challenge and required a dynamic and agile approach to be adopted in order to support young people. The Aspire service continued to engage young people through a flexible approach involving more contact via telephone and online support, due to the limitations on face to face interactions. As restrictions eased during the summer months, the service increased the proportion of face-to-face contact with young people and some groupwork and vocational training activity resumed. This has been a changing scenario with the move between levels 3 and 4 of the Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance.
- 4.5. Although the restrictions have proved challenging both to young people and staff, the team has worked hard to support young people and has achieved significant successes both in assisting young people to progress to positive destinations as well as providing wider support, particularly around health and wellbeing and linking young people and their families with wider support services. The service has secured funding to provide 75 young people with laptops and internet access to support them to engage with their vocational development worker and complete employability learning.
- 4.6. Since April 2020, the demand for the Aspire service has increased. The team held virtual 16+ meetings with all secondary schools in May 2020 and 141 referrals were made for young people anticipated to leave school at Christmas 2020. The restrictions had an impact on college related provision due to social distancing and reduced some of the opportunities that would normally be available for these young people. The Aspire team was able to secure alternative provision including an

accredited winter leavers' construction programme through a local training provider and with the required risk assessments and safety guidance in place.

- 4.7. The Aspire service currently has 527 young people registered and a further 210 summer leavers are expected to require support from early 2021.
- 4.8. The Aspire 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.
- 4.9. In 2019/20, Aspire supported 89 care experienced young people to complete an Aspire action plan. Of these young people 60 progressed to positive destinations. The remaining 29 continued to be supported and tracked, which is an important element of the work of Aspire.
- 4.10. The service also tracks the impact and on young people who live in the most deprived communities. In 2019/20, just over 41% (159) of young people in the bottom 20% lowest data zones achieved a positive destination rate at the same level as the wider Aspire cohort of 75 %
- 4.11 Case studies of young people who took part in the Aspire programme are shown in Appendix 1.

5. Gradu8

- 5.1. 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 SCQF 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.
- 5.2. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, significant consultation and planning had taken place with schools to ensure that the GradU8 programme best met the needs of young people and schools and could be delivered through a timetabled option which minimised the impact on other subjects. This planning resulted in a new locality model with increased subject choice and capacity to offer more than 1000 learning opportunities for pupils starting in August 2020. These plans were significantly altered as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the planning for schools returning. The team and partners have done an exceptional job to get a substantial level of provision established.
- 5.3. The Council, in agreement with delivery partners at South Lanarkshire College and New College Lanarkshire reviewed plans to ensure that a programme could be delivered which met the needs of young people within the context of Covid-19 restrictions. This included a commitment to maximise the face-to-face teaching time in the college rather than a move to a blended approach, given the vocational nature of the programme.
- 5.4. The programme is currently delivering 10 subject choices and a total of 445 places were available and taken up by young people in September 2020.
- 5.5. In 2020/2021, the Council secured additional funding from Skills Development Scotland to deliver the new Level 4 / Level 5 Foundation Apprenticeship in

Construction. Following the award of funding, the programme was delivered within the GradU8 timetable model and has delivered 200 learning opportunities for young people. In addition to the classroom-based learning, young people complete a work based challenge unit with involvement and input from local employers.

A list of starts by subject is provided below. The courses are being delivered by South Lanarkshire College, New College Lanarkshire and First Steps Rural Connections in Lanark.

5.6

| GradU8 Courses 2020/21 | Starts |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Childcare | 77 |
| Construction | 173 |
| Beauty | 40 |
| Make Up Artistry | 41 |
| Hair & Barbering | 44 |
| Health & Social Care | 27 |
| Creative & Digital Media | 12 |
| Business & Marketing | 6 |
| Engineering | 12 |
| Uniform services | 13 |
| Total | 445 |

5.7. A further 30 young people who were due to leave school in December 2020 as winter leavers were supported to complete the L4 / L5 FA in construction. This has given them a unique experience of college based learning and the construction industry. All these young people will get the support of a dedicated vocational development worker to support them to move onto and sustain a positive destination following completion of the course.

5.8 Case studies of young people involved in the GradU8 programme are at Appendix 2.

6. Foundation Apprenticeships

6.1. Foundation Apprenticeships 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 is designed to equip young people with skills, experience and knowledge they need to progress to modern and graduate apprenticeship or further study in their chose fields.

Young people have the option of completing over one or two years, and spend time out of school at college and/or with a local employer to complete the Foundation Apprenticeship which is awarded at SCQF level 6.

6.2. In 2019/2020, 123 young people completed their Foundation Apprenticeship. This included young people completing both 1 and 2 year programmes. The closure of schools in March had a significant impact on FA delivery and the Council and other providers worked with young people to support them to complete their FA, wherever possible. Where young people were unable to complete key elements of the FA due to lockdown and were not able to complete the full qualification, Skills Development Scotland and SQA introduced a 'letter of recognition' which carried the same weight as a full FA and could be used to support UCAS and college applications.

6.3. The Youth Employability Service worked closely with young people, Skills Development Scotland and FA providers to support young people into positive destinations at the end of their FA. 99% of young people completed an FA progressed to a positive destination.

6.4. 2019/2020 FA destinations

| Destination | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Remained at school | 1% |
| College | 57% |
| Employment | 2% |
| Employment - Graduate Apprenticeship | 2% |
| Employment - Modern Apprenticeship | 8% |
| Training | 3% |
| Unemployed | 2% |
| Higher Education | 24% |

6.5 In 2020/2021, South Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire College entered into a consortium arrangement for the delivery of 5 of the 12 Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks with the remainder of the frameworks available to South Lanarkshire Council pupils through the Glasgow college FA consortium. The plan was that these frameworks would be delivered through a mix of 1 and 2 year options with delivery taking place both at the college's campus and in FA Hubs in the Council's secondary schools. Up to 300 places were due to be available for pupils through the South Lanarkshire FA consortium with a further 120 available through the Glasgow colleges.

6.6. Due to the Covid -19 pandemic, the majority of delivery through the South Lanarkshire Consortium was moved from the college to FA hubs in 8 Council secondary schools. Hubs involve South Lanarkshire College lecturers teaching pupils from different schools. In the event that any young people cannot attend due to requirements to self-isolate, arrangements have been made to live-stream the teaching from the hub to ensure they do not miss any learning.

6.7. The Glasgow FA consortium has delivered the FA programme remotely with young people engaging online either from school or at home. The changes for 2020/2021 reduced the capacity of the programme from that planned, however, despite the challenges, the number of young people engaged on a Foundation Apprenticeship has increased to 374 in 2020/2021 from 330 the previous year.

6.8. 2020/2021 Foundation Apprenticeship starts by provider

| Provider | New starts | Returners |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| South Lanarkshire FA Consortium | 123 | 65 |
| Glasgow FA Consortium | 99 | 70 |
| Other | 10 | 7 |
| Total | 232 | 142 |

6.9. 2020/2021 Foundation Apprenticeship starts by subject

| Foundation Apprenticeship Framework | Pupils |
|---|---------------|
| Accountancy | 15 |
| Business skills | 20 |
| Civil Engineering | 35 |
| Creative and Digital Media | 38 |
| Engineering systems | 31 |
| Financial Services | 6 |
| ICT Hardware | 1 |
| ICT Software | 35 |
| Mechanical Engineering | 32 |
| Scientific Technologies | 9 |
| Social Services - Children and Young People | 98 |
| Social Services and Healthcare | 54 |
| Total | 374 |

6.10 Case studies of young people completing Foundation Apprenticeships are at Appendix 3

7. Planning for 2021/2022

7.1 It is anticipated that the demand for youth employability programmes will continue to increase in 2021/22 due to the unique challenges predicted to be faced by young people and the subsequent economic challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.2 **ASPIRE:** Scottish Government Young People's Guarantee funding will support additional capacity in Aspire to support anticipated increase in demand due to expected increases in youth unemployment as the economy responds.

7.3 **GradU8:** Discussions have taken place with colleges to agree delivery plans which are expected to provide up to 1000 vocational based learning opportunities for senior phase pupils

7.4 **Foundation Apprenticeships:** Procurement of the FA programme by Skills Development Scotland has been delayed and confirmation of funding arrangements should be received in January 2021. The South Lanarkshire FA consortium plans to deliver work based learning opportunities to up to 500 young people across a similar subject range to 2020/21 and it is anticipated that pupils will also continue to access opportunities with the Glasgow FA consortium.

8. Employee Implications

8.1. The programmes described in this report are delivered and managed by the Youth Employability Service. External funding supports approximately 25 of the 33 staff and this is likely to be subject to change in the coming years due to changes in European funding associated with Brexit and changes in Scottish Government employability funding. Staff are on temporary contracts until March 2022 and would be redeployed through SWITCH2 processes should the funding come to an end.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. Costs associated with all these programmes are met from the core budget of Education Resources along with the European Social Fund/ Foundation Apprenticeship contract and Scottish Government grants. Funding is in place to secure delivery of the programmes for the 2021/2022 school session. Work will take

place to secure funding for the following 3 years once the Government funding and the UK prosperity fund has been finalised.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

10.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications in terms of the information contained within this report.

11. Other Implications

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

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

12.1. 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.

12.2. Consultation and engagement continues to take place with SDS, colleges, training providers and is a core part of delivering a bespoke programme to suit the needs of young people.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

23 December 2020

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

None

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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Appendix 1

Youth Employability – Case Studies

(some names have been changed)

Aspire Case Studies

Amy

Amy was referred to Aspire by her guidance teacher during the Covid-19 pandemic as they were concerned that she would not progress into a positive destination. Her referral stated that she required assistance to keep her motivated. She had an interest in childcare and had previously taken part in the GradU8 programme.

Amy was assigned to a Vocational Development worker from the Aspire team, who initially found it difficult to make contact and engage with Amy but was able to make contact with her mum and began to hold on-line meetings with Amy. Although Amy lacked motivation and direction on how to get into childcare she began to engage well through remote support and a few face to face meetings. An action plan was agreed which had a focus on adding structure and routine to Amy's day and improving her organisational skills and motivation.

Amy was also supported to take part in employability sessions, set up an email address, and complete a CV. Once Amy felt she was ready her worker supported her to apply to college and prepare for interview after which she was given an unconditional place on a level 5 Childcare and Playwork course.

Despite the challenging circumstances Amy engaged well with Aspire, her confidence, awareness of opportunities and overall motivation improved and she is continuing to engage in her college course.

David

David was referred to Aspire by his Social Worker as he required support to progress to a positive destination. David was also receiving support from the Intensive Family Support Team and Addaction and is on a statutory supervision order.

From the beginning David engaged really well with Aspire. He saw it as a fresh start and was keen to do well. An action plan was drawn up and he met with his worker regularly, developing a positive relationship and working towards his goal of employment. In order to develop his employability skills David agreed to take part in the 'New Horizons' programme delivered by Skills Exchange Scotland. Although he engaged well initially David lost interest and decided, with his worker's support to prioritise job searching and move to employment. His worker supported him to develop a CV and he began to carry out intensive job search including contacting local employers to seek an opportunity.

David's confidence increased and he began job-searching on his own and applying for jobs and managed to secure a couple of interviews although he was unsuccessful, they gave him much needed interview experience. His worker referred David to a full-time opportunity with a blinds company through South Lanarkshire Council's Covid-19 jobs portal. David attended the interview and did very well, being offered a 3 daywork trial and as a result was offered a permanent full time post which he is thoroughly enjoying.

Appendix 2

GradU8 Case studies

Owen

Owen took part in GradU8 2019/20 and went to New College Lanarkshire to study Hospitality at Level 4. On completion of his course Owen was successful in gaining a full time place at New College Lanarkshire studying Craft Bakery. Using a combination of face to face tuition and blended learning Owen is due to complete his course in June 2021.

“The Hospitality course I did with GradU8 helped me realise what I wanted to do as a career, it was a great way to meet new people and to build my social skills. The GradU8 staff were a great support in college and they helped me apply for my Course”

Erin

Erin completed a GradU8 Level 4 Uniform & Services course at New College Lanarkshire during 2018/19, In 2019/20 she progressed into a GradU8 Level 5 Mental Health & Wellbeing course before leaving school and successfully gaining a full time place at New College Lanarkshire studying an Introduction to Teaching. Using a combination of face to face tuition and blended learning Erin is due to complete her course in June 2021.

Erin says:

“The GradU8 programme helped me realise that I wanted to go to college full time instead of another year at School. The programme helped me make new friends and mix with other people and gain new skills for my future, I am grateful to have been given the opportunity. The GradU8 staff were there to help whatever problem or issue we had and the support from the college lecturers was great”

India

India completed GradU8 Level 5 Engineering at New College Lanarkshire during 2019/20. After school she was successful in progressing to a Foundation Apprenticeship Level 6 in Mechanical Engineering with Kelvin College and in the future plans to join the Royal Navy or Air Force to become an engineer. Using a combination of face to face tuition and blended learning India is due to complete her course in June 2021.

India says;

“ I really enjoyed completing my GradU8 Level 4 Engineering Skills course it has given me the skills and experience to progress onto a Foundation Apprenticeship. I am now doing a Foundation Apprenticeship in Mechanical Engineering at Kelvin College and plan to join the Royal Navy or Air Force and become an engineer”

Appendix 3 Foundation Apprenticeship Case Studies

Robert

I chose to do the Foundation Apprenticeship in engineering because at the time I was not really enjoying school and I wanted something that was more like the real world and something that was more practical and hands on, this is when I was told about the Foundation Apprenticeship so I went to the opening evening and the people who were doing the introduction took all of us a tour around the workshop and told everyone what the course actually included. This got me hooked on the idea of this course the fact that most of it was hands on then the written work you were taught you actually put into practice in the workshop made it appeal more to me than just sitting in a class all day long writing.

I enjoyed every aspect of the Foundation Apprenticeship but the part I enjoyed the most was the practical part and being able to learn so much more new things in the workshop that I wasn't able to learn in school like CNC programming and stripping motors and big pumps in the mechanical unit and trying to figure out what was wrong with them and then putting them back together. I enjoyed this part the most because it was all hands on and I was doing something different each day there was not a day in the workshop that I didn't want to go in or that I was bored all day long like I was in school.

This Foundation Apprenticeship really pushed me to do well in the college but school as well. Before I started the FA I wanted to just leave school and get out working but instead I stuck in and just put my head down in school and during the apprenticeship and now I have an electrical apprenticeship with South Lanarkshire Council which I am really enjoying and learning so much on a daily basis. I believe that if I did not do the FA I would have dropped out of school and would not be in as good of a position that I am in now. Starting the FA and keeping my head down to complete it has been one of the best decisions that I have made I do believe that it helped me grow up and help me mature a lot but it has also put me in one of the best positions I could be in as an 18 year old boy.

Chloe

I always knew I wanted a career in Early Learning and Childcare and saw the Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services & Young People as my opportunity to gain a qualification in that subject while I was still at school. The Foundation Apprenticeship gave me the chance to get on the job work experience and knowledge that I wouldn't be able to get in school, as well as a level 6 qualification. While on my work placement in St Mark's Nursery Class I not only gained experience in early learning and childcare but I also gained confidence in myself, I developed my team working skills and enhanced my communication skills through my interactions with co-workers, children and parents. After completing my FA, I applied and gained a place with South Lanarkshire Council as a Graduate Apprentice, where I will work full time in a nursery and attend the University of the West of Scotland on day release to complete my Bachelor of Arts Childhood Practice degree. This is an amazing opportunity which I wouldn't have had the chance to do if I hadn't done a Foundation Apprenticeship, I can't wait to start my career in early years!