

Positive Destinations

Coordinated Public Sector Provision

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Contact for Enquiries

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Summary and Background

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises its role as the largest employer in the region and is determined to maximise its capability and capacity to support youth unemployment at a time of reducing public sector resources, whilst using the experience of the Employability and Skills Service to facilitate and coordinate initiatives that can support our objectives and priorities across the wider public sector.

‘Experience Works’ was a collaborative project created and funded by Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partners: Police; Fire; NHS and Council to promote, develop and coordinate a network of safe, sustainable work experience opportunities across the public sector designed to provide young people from across Dumfries and Galloway with the experience they need to support them into paid employment, education or training. This has evolved and become embedded in the service provided by the Employability and Skills team, delivering safe and appropriate work placement opportunities for a range of young people.

Actions and Approach

Dumfries and Galloway Council in conjunction with their community planning partners recognised the difficulties in the region of the availability of safe and sustainable work experience opportunities for the development of our young people and adult returners to the job market. Research identified that there was a dearth of open and available opportunities right across the region for those wishing to broaden their work experience and work place skills that was fully inclusive for all potential service users including young people with additional support needs and care experienced young people.

The project coordination unit has worked closely with public sector senior management teams to identify key services and departments for the development of opportunities.

Results

A very positive case study that fully illustrates the value of Experience Works as a joined up practice relates to a young man who was struggling to get the most from his school experience

and was lacking a secure positive destination. With support, he was accepted onto an extended placement with the Scottish Wildlife Trust where he excelled. His development, motivation and leadership skills enhanced through positive role modelling and mentoring within the Trust enabled him, after 2 months, to achieve a paid position with the Trust. He is keen to develop himself further and is considering attending a relevant course at Scotland's Rural College, Barony Campus.

Work Experience Coordination is part of the delivery of our Dumfries and Galloway Youth Guarantee and is now aligned to the Developing Young Workforce Recommendations. Within the Employability and Skills team we have developed a holistic approach to work experience. Key staff work with partners, creating opportunities that promote a worthwhile experience to young people. The aim is to provide an awareness of a chosen career area or a more involved extended experience designed to develop their personal qualities and competencies whilst being empathetic to the needs of employers. The highly effective communication, relationship building and reflective practice supplied by the project staff have ensured a high level of consistency and quality has underpinned this approach. We also now offer a customised, Dumfries and Galloway Employability Award, endorsed by employers, to accredit extended work experience with an SQA qualification.

How Do You Know It Worked?

The Looked After Young People programme was specifically designed for care experienced young people whereby they undertake six months work experience within Dumfries and Galloway Council paid at the living wage. To December 2017, 16 young people have completed the Programme and a further 2 are still engaged in a placement.

The Work Experience project has supported 641 school pupils in Dumfries and Galloway into work experience opportunities during the 2016/17 academic year, an increase from the 400 opportunities provided in 2013/14. The numbers are expected to further grow due to schools having access to the Hanlon system, which is a database of all employers who are willing to provide work placements throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

The Dumfries and Galloway Employability Award is a customised qualification allowing young people between the ages of 16-24 and those who are returning to the workplace gain an accredited Award at SCQF level 3 or 4. Working in partnership with employers who offer work experience allows the candidates to gain core competencies and achieve the Award. As of January 18 there are 98 candidates participating in the Award.