

# Work Placement Unit newsletter 2016

## Welcome to the 2016 edition of the Aberdeenshire Council Work Placement Unit (WPU) newsletter.

2015 was both a rewarding and challenging year for the WPU. During the year several key events and developments took place, one of which was a workshop attended by guidance staff from Aberdeenshire's academies.

The workshop was very well-received and as well as allowing the participants to share best practice, it enhanced the lines of communication between all parties thus ensuring the WPU could offer better support to the schools objectives, aims and strategies in relation to work placements.

Other significant developments in 2015 were the launch of the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) North East Scotland group, which was established following the Wood Commission reports on Scotland's young workforce (see page 2), and the launch of Education Scotland's Work Placements Standard which sets out expectations for the main parties involved in work placements.

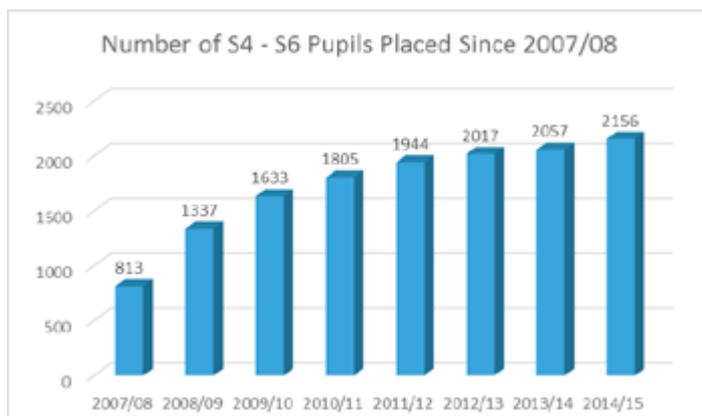
A more challenging aspect of the year was the downturn in the oil and gas industry which was reflected in a contraction in the number of work placements offered by companies in this sector. This has reinforced the need for new sources of work placements to be found.

This requirement is addressed to some degree by the WPU's role in the development of the work placement toolkit (see page 2). The toolkit, which was developed in conjunction with Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Skills Development Scotland and Aberdeen City Council, is designed to make arranging work placements easier for employers across the north east.

In addition the WPU now has a greater role in assisting schools with their careers events and over the course of 2015 we attended twelve careers fairs across Aberdeenshire. This has enabled us to canvass pupils about their work placements, meet teachers involved in the placement process and speak to companies and organisations about work placements.

Despite the challenges faced this year it is encouraging to note that the number of pupils placed in 2014/15 again increased over the previous academic year. Extended placements have become more popular, especially those which allow pupils to tailor their timetables to incorporate day-release style work placements.

Finally we would like to thank all of the companies and organisations that have provided placements during 2015. This is a vital role in the development of our young people and your continued support is greatly appreciated.



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

The launch of Education Scotland's Work Placements Standard is an important development in the evolution of work experience, as is the launch of the work placement toolkit. The continued support of employers across the north east, as you will read over the following pages, remains essential in engaging young people with the world of work. I would like to say thank you to all concerned with making the work placement programme a success.

# Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy - Developing the Young Workforce

A key element of the implementation of the Developing Young Workforce programme is employer engagement. This requires a meaningful and sustained expansion of employers' engagement with education and of their focus on young people within their recruitment planning. This featured significantly in the conclusions drawn up during the work of the Wood Commission.

As a result the Commission made a number of recommendations specifically aimed at encouraging and supporting our employers to do more. A number of these are already being taken forward including:

- better targeting of recruitment incentives toward small employers and toward the employment of those young people who face significant barriers to getting a job even as youth unemployment falls
- the introduction of a framework and an accolade - Invest in Youth, via Investors in People Scotland - that focusses on supporting and celebrating the work of those employers who are committed to supporting young people's transition from education into work
- specialist workplace support for employers recruiting young people with a disability and those coming out of care
- focused supported employment opportunities for those care leavers, those who have disabilities and those who face other barriers to employment.

The success of this approach is that it is employer driven. The focus of the regional groups is to get more employers to engage for the long term. Scotland needs a permanent change in the culture. That has to come from industry itself and has to be led by employers, with private sector employers in particular taking on an active leadership role.

We are looking to encourage a high level of buy in from regional partners. There would be no point in establishing groups which are not directly plugged into the school and college system at a high level. For this reason we are also looking for increased support and commitment from local authorities and colleges in each region. In essence these are groups which will bring together the education and employer communities to ensure that we enable both sides to work together productively in pursuit of the priorities in each region.

To ensure continued involvement over the long term, we have to move to a place where industry values the role of the local groups and is prepared to contribute to their ongoing sustainability, and a basis for supporting all of our young people to make a successful transition into sustainable and rewarding careers.

## Work Placement Toolkit



August, 2015 saw the launch of a Work Placement Toolkit at the Skills Network Steering Group Meeting of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC).

The toolkit was developed as a joint initiative by AGCC, Skills Development Scotland, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. It aims to support employers in hosting more

work placements for young people of school age, as well as encouraging those not currently hosting placements to begin doing so.

AGCC identified work placements for school pupils as a key area where the Chamber could make a difference to skills development in the North East as work placements allow young people to improve their work readiness and can highlight different career opportunities available.

Chamber membership network manager Mary Holland, who coordinates the skills network group, said: "The toolkit has been created in such a way that it is useful for businesses of all types, sectors, shapes and sizes and provides simple guidance on hosting all types of placement, demonstrating how easy it can be to become involved."

In addition to the Toolkit, in September, 2015 Education Scotland issued its first National Work Experience Standard. The standard recognises the rich learning that a young person can experience when they use and develop their skills in a work environment. It recognises that a work placement should help a young person to make informed career choices. The standard sets out expectations for the young person, employer, school and local authority and parent/carer before, during and after work placements. Implementation of the standard will significantly improve the quality of learning undertaken in the workplace.

A copy of the standard can be downloaded from Education Scotland's website:

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/developingtheyoungworkforce](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/developingtheyoungworkforce)

Currently, only 24% of AGCC members offer work placements but it is hoped that with the help of the Toolkit, this will be increased to 50% over the next twelve months.

All members of the Chamber have received a copy of the Toolkit. It may also be viewed on the AGCC website at:

<http://www.agcc.co.uk/chamber-network/skills>



## Employability Launch Event at Fraserburgh Academy

53 pupils at Fraserburgh Academy are now being given the opportunity to take part in a new course entitled *Employability*; this will be a core subject which all S3 pupils will receive. The course will include:

- Unit 1: Review and evaluate personal attributes and employment skills.
- Unit 2: Application forms and CV's
- Unit 3: Money management
- Unit 4: Employment legislation

An 'Employability Event' was held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 at the Academy to launch the new course. A number of organisations including Score, Total, Clydesdale Bank, Skills Development Scotland, Johnston Carmichael, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, NESCOL and RGU have offered their support and were in attendance.

Each of the partner organisations arranged an activity for the pupils which ranged from how to dress appropriately for an interview to how to budget your wages.



The aim of the event was to give pupils an introduction into employability skills, highlighting their importance and relevance. The skills introduced during the event will be further developed during the course.

The pupils involved thoroughly enjoyed the event and all Fraserburgh Academy staff involved were grateful for the assistance of the organisations which made the morning such a success.



## Pupils Visit Baker Hughes on Global Manufacturing Day

Global Manufacturing Day is held on the first Friday of October and is a celebration of modern manufacturing intended to inspire the next generation of manufacturers and engineers.

As part of Global Manufacturing Day 2015, Baker Hughes offered schools a tour of its facility at Woodside Road, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen.

Pupils from Mackie, Mintlaw and Peterhead Academies attended this event and were able to learn about the type of manufacturing and engineering work in which Baker Hughes is involved.

Feedback about this visit was positive, with both teaching staff and pupils finding the tour interesting, informative and inspiring.

Below are some pupils from Mackie Academy during their tour of Baker Hughes.





The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Balmedie to Tipperty) is currently one of the biggest construction projects in Britain.

It is expected to be completed in winter 2017 with the Craibstone and Dyce junctions scheduled to open by autumn 2016 and the Balmedie to Tipperty section by spring 2017.

The construction joint venture partners - Balfour Beatty, Morrison Construction and Carillion - are in a position to accommodate work placements and it is anticipated that a range of opportunities will be available across the project's North, Central and South sections.

Work placements are likely to be offered in the following disciplines:

- Environment and Sustainability
- Community Liaison and Communications
- Finance and Procurement
- Administration and Document Control
- Laboratory
- Facilities
- Civil Engineering Design
- Engineering
- Management

## Aberdeenshire Council Crowns Second "Apprentice of the Year"



On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015, during "Scottish Apprentice Week", Aberdeenshire Council honoured its second "Apprentice of the Year". The winner of the coveted title for 2015 is Mason Fawcett who works in ICT.

Below he writes about what attracted him to become a modern apprentice.

*My name is Mason Fawcett. I am an ICT Modern Apprentice within Support. I joined at the age of 17, leaving school close to the end of what would have been my last year in school. I achieved a C within Higher Computing, however my ambition to go places within the IT field kicked in. I was alerted to the presence of apprenticeship opportunities throughout the shire in all kinds of areas of work, ICT catching my eye.*

*Apprenticeships are a work and learn at the same time scheme, which have become a huge trend within most employers. For my apprenticeship, the qualification which is the ultimate goal is to achieve an SVQ level 3, regarded as an IT Diploma. The program is run through an external company called Youtrain. The course itself is an online portfolio, with various units laying out questions about each aspect of*

*an IT and Telecoms Professional's job ("Have you tried turning it off and on again?")*

*I am now at the end of my Apprenticeship and have been taken on board as an ICT Support Analyst. Overall the apprenticeship was superb, and I have learned more than I could imagine. I would recommend apprenticeship schemes to anyone who is nearing the end of their school years, and those who want to get a foot in the door of their desired profession.*



## Score Group Continues to Support Work Placements

Score (Europe) Limited has been actively engaged with work experience placements with local schools for many years. The company believes it is an essential part of the school curriculum and gives pupils an opportunity to develop both confidence and knowledge of the world of work. Over the years there have been many successful apprenticeship applications from pupils who have undertaken work experience with the company.

In September 2014, 24 pupils from Mintlaw Academy were invited for work experience at the Peterhead base. Following this, applications for apprenticeships were received from 7 of the pupils and 3 were offered places on the company's scheme. This is a small but important part of the organisation's recruitment drive, however all of the pupils benefit from their experience within Score and can inform their future career choices. Score benefits from the insight gained on individuals during their visit.

Fiona Johnston, Apprentice Co-ordinator said:

*Sometimes pupils arrive with little or no idea of what is expected in the working environment, it is rewarding to have an impact on pupils to open their eyes to the possibilities an apprenticeship can offer.*

*Score (Europe) Limited is a significant employer in the area and has a sustainable desire to support the local schools including offering work placements, engagement in mentoring programmes, attending career/recruitment events, and other activities within schools, colleges as well as at our facilities.*

*We recognise that the future success of Score relies on recruiting and developing talented individuals with drive and good work ethic.*



# Shaping the Future Through Work Experience



**Aidan Shillan, 15, Mearns Academy, PPU**

"My work experience at EnerMech in the Process, Pipeline & Umbilical Department (PPU), was an enjoyable experience. I feel I gained a good insight into the work involved when delivering jobs for clients offshore. I hope that in the near future I can receive an apprenticeship in order to work my way up to going offshore or overseas to work within the industry."

**"As an organisation we are committed to working as a good neighbour, providing employment and participating in the community. School placements allow us to work closely with those who may work for us in the future, providing us with the opportunity to showcase exactly what we do here at EnerMech. Within the Process, Pipeline and Umbilical department, the students have worked alongside our maintenance and mobilisation teams and it has been great to see that there are so many young people out there who are genuinely interested in what we do and who show a great work ethic and willingness to learn."**

**Ross Conn, 16, Turriff Academy, Hydraulics**

"My work experience week at EnerMech was great. From the moment I walked in the door, I was welcomed by the staff, who were all very helpful and friendly. I learned about many aspects of the work they do, including pressure testing and the process of their work packages. I particularly enjoyed my time in the workshops. It has certainly given me a better understanding of the work involved"

Established in 2008, we have a 40-year heritage through acquisition, and offer all of our services in over 35 facilities across 7 regions. We now have over 2300 personnel working both on – and offshore across the globe. Our growth has been achieved by both acquisition and strategically planned and managed organic expansion into new service lines and territories.

EnerMech have been involved with Aberdeenshire Council's work experience program since 2013, and we have been

able to provide 11 pupils with placements since January 2015 across our various business lines.

We pride ourselves on working with pupils to build their industry knowledge, both in the workshop and office environment, which may assist them with their future career aspirations.

In addition to current experience of the industry, all pupils are provided with a company information pack which allows them to learn more about our mission, purpose, values and opportunities that

may arise on completion of their school career.

EnerMech offer a competitive apprenticeship scheme for school leavers, which pupils are encouraged to apply for if they are looking for a future in Mechanical Engineering. Completed over four years, our apprentices are provided with a full learning experience, split between college attendance and hands-on experience across all areas of the business.

For more information on EnerMech or any of the opportunities that we provide, visit our company website: [www.enermech.com/careers-opportunities](http://www.enermech.com/careers-opportunities).



# Aberdeenshire student outshines competition to win UK-wide AstraZeneca Award



## Former Peterhead Academy student fulfils dream of visiting the Large Hadron Collider at CERN

Callum Christie, a former student from Peterhead Academy, is one of just three students across the UK to win an all-expenses-paid trip to Geneva to visit the Large Hadron Collider at CERN (European Centre for Nuclear Research in Geneva) – his prize in the Career Ready STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Student of the Year Award 2015.

The award, generously sponsored by AstraZeneca, recognises students who have been transformed by their experience on the Career Ready programme. Nine finalists from across the UK were selected in three categories: Engineering, Technology and Science. Callum, who also won this year's Sir Winfried Bischoff area prize for Aberdeenshire, was awarded first place in the engineering category in recognition of the outstanding progress he made during his internship at Centrica.

Callum said:

*I am totally astounded and immensely proud to have won the prestigious AstraZeneca STEM award and am tremendously excited to be visiting the Large Hadron Collider – it is an engineer's dream to visit the largest scientific experiment designed by thousands of engineers worldwide.*

*My internship was extremely rewarding and with the excellent feedback I received, I felt engineering was definitely the career for me. My mentor, Mustafa, also gave me invaluable career and business advice and gave up so much of his own time to guide me, giving me the confidence, courage and determination to pursue a Mechanical Engineering degree. Everyone should definitely have a "Mustafa" in their team – he is truly inspirational!*

Mustafa Mohamed, Callum's Career Ready mentor and a Process Engineer at Centrica, said:

*I am so proud of Callum for winning this award, which is great recognition of the hard work he has put in throughout his time on the Career Ready programme.*

*It has been a genuine pleasure working with Callum and he has shown a real flair for engineering, particularly during his time as an intern with Centrica, and I am sure this will lead him to a fantastic career in the oil and gas industry.*

Career Ready is a national charity that links education with businesses to help prepare young people for the world of work. Now working with more than 60 schools across six local authorities in Scotland, the charity aims to bridge the gap between education and the world of work by giving young people access to real experience, through mentoring, an internship, master classes and workplace visits.

Isobel Maughan, Regional Manager for Career Ready in North East Scotland, said:

*Our programme aims to give young people across Scotland the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to succeed in their future careers. Callum is a fantastic example of how the programme can help a student to understand the range of roles available in different sectors and give them the opportunity to learn directly from real people in those roles. He is an inspiration for other students in Aberdeenshire and has really earned the visit to the Hadron Collider – what an amazing way to conclude his Career Ready experience.*

Callum continued:

*I would like to thank AstraZeneca for this award and everyone at Career Ready for such a transformation. The Career Ready programme can help you accomplish amazing achievements and I genuinely hope to be in a position to help someone else realise their ambitions in the future.*

For more information visit: [www.careerready.org.uk](http://www.careerready.org.uk)



## Scott Horn – Mechanic at I&K Motors, Inverurie

Scott Horn, an Inverurie Academy pupil, has wanted to be a motor mechanic since primary school and selected I&K Motors for his work experience placement as it is a well-known local company and because his parents were satisfied customers.



His initial placement, in the service department, was for one week in September 2014 and Scott enjoyed his time at I&K Motors so much that he was very keen to return. With the company more than happy to have him back, Inverurie Academy and the Work Placement Unit created a flexible placement which allowed him to return every Wednesday from January to July 2015.

As well as being given the opportunity to experience what a mechanic's job involves, Scott has enjoyed working as part of a team. He has recently been working in the company's tyre department which has allowed him to work with many different types of vehicles.

In August 2015 Scott returned to I&K Motors to begin a five days per week extended placement. This will combine four days within the company workshops with one day at college. This day release at college will also form part of his apprenticeship with I&K Motors, which will begin when he leaves school in December 2015.

Brian Poppe, who has been mentoring Scott on his placement, is very supportive of the Aberdeenshire Council work placement scheme and acknowledged that this complements I&K Motors' policy of recruiting and training local young people (or "Growing their own" as Brian puts it). Although I&K Motors have been offering work experience opportunities for a number of years, Scott is the first work placement pupil to be recruited as an apprentice.



## Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Placement at Subsea 7

Subsea 7's Aberdeen office, located at Arnhall Business Park, Westhill has supported work experience placements for Aberdeenshire pupils for many years, offering a wide variety of work placement opportunities.

In 2015, Portlethen Academy pupil Adam Bain undertook a work experience placement as a Health, Safety and Environmental assistant there. During his placement, Adam experienced a variety of tasks including assembling a diving tank, learning about remotely-operated underwater vehicles (ROVs) and doing a rope access course (pictured.)

On the last day of his placement, Adam gave a presentation to colleagues detailing what he'd achieved during his time with them.

One of Adams's aims during his placement had been to discover more about Subsea 7 and how it operates; he feels that his placement achieved this, as well as providing an invaluable understanding of the world of work.





PROVIDING SAFETY CRITICAL SOLUTIONS

## Mearns Academy Pupil Blazes Trail to Work after Prince's Trust Course

When he was in S4, Mearns Academy pupil Andrew Young went on a work placement with Blaze Manufacturing Solutions Ltd in Laurencekirk.

Blaze Manufacturing Solutions Ltd are a specialist provider of safety systems to the oil and gas industry and Andrew worked with Engineering Support which gave him an opportunity to spend time shadowing engineers in the workshop and also observing the work of the design team.

Andrew thoroughly enjoyed his placement and returned to school aware of what he needed to do in order to secure a similar position.

On leaving school, he embarked on a Get into Oil & Gas programme organised through the Prince's Trust. This was a skills-based vocational course which covered such areas as pipe fitting, electrics, bench fitting and machining.

Following completion of this month-long course, he returned to Blaze for another placement and was then delighted to be offered the position of Trainee Workshop Technician.

Andrew is pictured below with his Get into Oil & Gas certificate which he received at a Prince's Trust Awards ceremony.



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

For Portlethen Academy pupil Lewis Esslemont, there was no question about where he wanted to go for his work placement.

*The decision about who to approach was an easy decision for me; my passion lies with politics, so I made contact with my local MSP, Maureen Watt, straightaway.*

*Following a meeting at my local SNP office with Maureen Watt and her assistant they accepted my application to work with them as a constituency intern.*

*My week at the SNP was very varied; my duties involved replying to queries via email and carrying out research.*

*The highlight of my week was being given the opportunity to travel down to Edinburgh on the Thursday to attend First Minister's Questions (FMQs) at the Scottish Parliament.*

*During my day there, I began with some work tasks which involved carrying out research as requested, then I attended FMQs in the chamber. I was also treated to a very nice lunch in the Parliament restaurant where I sat with MSPs and fellow guests.*



*On my final day I got to work alongside Callum McCaig, the newly elected MP for Aberdeen South (pictured with Lewis above).*

*I'll take this experience with me in to my future career and feel it has been a great insight.*

## Openreach Welcomes their First Aberdeenshire Work Placement Pupils

In May 2015, Openreach Service Delivery - North East Scotland, received its first two pupils on work placements: Adam Reid (Alford Academy) and Cameron Skinner (Portlethen Academy). Their first day was spent completing a Safety Induction and introducing Adam and Cameron to their respective Buddies.

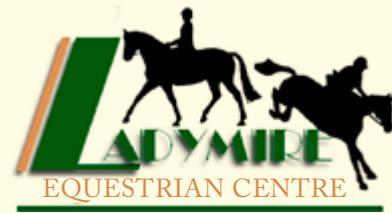


Above: Cameron Skinner checks a street cabinet while on his Openreach placement

There were some activities that Adam and Cameron were unable to do in the course of their week, such as climbing telephone poles. However this did not prevent them from taking part in a variety of tasks which included connecting customers at the exchange or one of the on street cabinets, visiting customers' premises and helping the engineer to repair or install the telephone line and resolve issues with their broadband. Adam and Cameron were shown how to complete the diagnostic tests on the line in order to locate the faults.

Openreach has 25000 engineers whose job is to service the UK's local access network – the fibre, cables and wires that run from homes and businesses to the local exchange. Their network spans the length and breadth of the country. It connects millions of phone, broadband and TV customers and premises across the UK, through 5,500 telephone exchanges.

At BT there are opportunities to gain an apprenticeship on both business and technical roles - to find out more please visit the BT Apprentice website at [www.bt4me.co.uk](http://www.bt4me.co.uk)



## Saddle Up World Wide Ltd.

Chloe Leslie of Peterhead Academy had a wonderful work experience placement at Saddle Up World Wide Ltd. Here is what she had to say about her placement:

*During my work experience week I went to Saddle Up World Wide Ltd. at the Ladymire Equestrian Centre in Ellon as an Equestrian Assistant. I thought this would be a suitable placement as I enjoy working with horses as I have two of my own.*

*My daily duties included mucking out stalls, filling hay nets, grooming, tacking up, feeding and riding. All the staff at Saddle Up were very friendly and welcoming.*

*I enjoyed my placement as it gave me a further insight into how an equestrian centre functions and I also learned some new things that I now use with my own horses.*



## Our future teachers?

Placements as Teaching Assistants within the authority's Primary Schools continue to be a popular option for many of our pupils. This is very positive news, considering the difficulties being experienced in recruiting teachers in the Aberdeenshire area.

Mintlaw Academy pupils Lillee May and Taylor Erridge recently chose to take part in a placement at Crimond Primary School. During their time there they clearly made a favourable impression on head teacher Hilda Creighton who commented that Lillee,

*"had a lovely manner with the children and showed initiative and enthusiasm" and that Taylor "was a tremendous help in the lessons where she encouraged our youngest pupils to try something quite difficult and new."*

It is hoped that the positive experience the girls sampled during their placement will encourage them to pursue a teaching career in the future.



Above: Lillee May (left) and Taylor Erridge back at primary school for their placements



Former Westhill Academy pupil Gwen Vicca decided she wanted to work with cars and successfully applied for the Arnold Clark apprenticeship scheme. Gwen recently spoke about her experience:

*I've always been into cars – I enjoy working with my hands and practical work like taking things apart and putting them back together. I knew a career with cars was what I was looking for.*

*Once I found out I got the apprenticeship, I was slightly apprehensive being the only girl on my course but it's not intimidating and I get on well with everyone.*

*I plan to develop into a fully qualified technician, potentially working towards a qualification as a diagnostic technician. I'd encourage anyone interested in mechanics to consider an apprenticeship.*

If you are interested in applying for an apprenticeship programme please visit [www.gtg.co.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.gtg.co.uk/apprenticeships) or call 0141 950 5600.





## OPITO Work Experience Programme in Oil and Gas – June 2015

Over sixty Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire pupils took part in the week-long OPITO Work Experience Programme in June 2015.

Sponsored by Energy Skills Scotland, the five day programme was designed to give pupils a comprehensive overview of the oil and gas industry and promote the wide variety of career paths and opportunities available within this dynamic sector. Over twenty oil and gas companies and organisations are involved in the programme.

OPITO's Managing Director, John McDonald said:

*Young people are the future workforce for the oil and gas industry, not just here in the UK but all over the world. The industry is currently going through some challenging times with the reduction in oil price, but this week has shown the dedication of oil and gas companies willing to engage with school pupils to ensure we have a strong future workforce for the sector.*

The format and focus varied from day to day with each host concentrating on a different area of the industry. Pupils took part in a range of industry experiences including offshore survival training and drilling simulations. As well as practical industry-based experiences, pupils had the opportunity to develop the skills they will need to present themselves to businesses, through working on CV writing and interview techniques.

The complex world of drilling came to life at Maersk Training, where pupils manned the sophisticated high-tech simulator while the professionals explained the range of drilling techniques used within the industry – one of the most popular sessions within the programme.



Above: Pupils learn about drilling at RGU's Energy Centre

A wide range of career pathways featured throughout the week. Young business professionals and engineering graduates from hosting companies shared their experiences and the challenges they had overcome to get to where they are today. Showcasing the range of roles and disciplines within the industry gave pupils something to think about when it comes to subject choices and career options.



Above: Some of the training required to work offshore was showcased at Survivex

Day four saw eight oil and gas companies take smaller groups of pupils to cover more specialised areas. Schlumberger hosted a group at their Pitmedden North facility with a focus on geology and wireline drilling, and Survivex facilitated an interactive afternoon showcasing the range of industry training that is required to work offshore.

The University of Aberdeen's School of Education hosted a variety of masterclasses which focussed on the world of work. Pupils were given an insight in to the uses of social media in business, an overview of the global industry and the opportunities available, followed by hints and tips on CV writing and interview techniques. Over twenty oil and gas industry professionals from a range of career backgrounds gathered for a careers networking session, where pupils were encouraged to ask questions and delve further into their educational backgrounds and work experience.



Above: Pupils networking with industry professionals at Nexen

Feedback from both pupils and the organisations involved has been very positive. Kirsty Webster from The Gordon Schools commented on the week as

*"one of the most amazing opportunities I've ever had, gauging new experiences, learning lots of new skills, making lots of friends and learning more about what I want to do in the future."*

An image gallery from the week appears on the OPITO Facebook page.

To build on the success of the June programme, OPITO will be hosting further programmes throughout 2016 for pupils who are aged sixteen or over.



The Scottish Traditional Skills Training Centre's Secondary Schools Programme continues to go from strength to strength.

This ever-popular course, which is held four times per year in February, April, August and November, offers pupils a unique opportunity to increase their confidence and obtain valuable experience of what it's like to work in a rural environment.

In academic session 2014/15, forty-four pupils from seven academies were able to experience such diverse activities as building dry stone walls, countryside maintenance, gardening work, wood turning and surveying wildlife habitats. They also got the opportunity to explore the history of Fyvie Castle where the course is based.

Marc Ellington, who is the co-ordinator of the course, said:

*The Scottish Traditional Skills Training Centres' highly successful, Work Experience and Skills Training Programme for Secondary School Students throughout Aberdeenshire, is actively contributing to enabling young people to achieve their full potential. The Programme, which is the first of its kind in the UK,*

*is delivered with support from Aberdeenshire Council's Education & Children's Services. A number of young people who have attended the courses have obtained employment that matches their ability and potential, and relates directly to the Skills Training and Work Experience received.*

*Pictured below while on a visit to Mackie's of Scotland at Westertown, Rothienorman are pupils from Banff, Inverurie, Meldrum, and Turriff Academies who received their certificates from course co-ordinator Marc Ellington (centre).*



## Doctors at Work Programme

"Doctors at Work" is the preferred placement model for pupils seeking more information to support applications for medicine. This week long programme includes shadowing named senior clinicians as part of an overview of NHS Grampian designed with advice from The University of Aberdeen Medical School. The programme has received favourable reviews in the Times Education Supplement (Scotland).

Banchory Academy pupils Olivia Churchfield and Lucy Grimble were on this very popular course during summer 2015. Here are their thoughts on their time there:

*So often medicine is viewed as a career where one individual works in isolation with little outside involvement from other specialties. Through the Doctors at Work programme we quickly realised just how different reality in the healthcare environment is. During the week a group of about thirty 6th year students engaged in interactive lectures on a range of topics such as hand hygiene, pathology and general practice. This was designed to broaden our understanding of what we are really getting ourselves into by choosing to be doctors and gave us an insight into the everyday life and work of medical professionals.*

*Teamwork, communication and confidentiality were areas of the career that were heavily emphasised by the many of speakers throughout the week. During our week we were fully exposed to the vast range of different professions and specialities involved in the care of each individual patient. On trying to measure the extent of this, those counting gave up after it was shown that a single patient can come into contact with over 100 different types of employees from the ambulance drivers and the cleaners to the surgeons themselves, all working together to provide the essential and efficient treatment needed. As part of the week we got to experience this in action through a two day placement in an area of the health campus shadowing a doctor or a surgeon. We were allocated to the orthopaedic and breast departments and got to observe surgery and speak to the wide range of staff and specialities.*

*Making sure the patient receives the all-round best care for them is the main goal of a health care system. To make this possible it is the responsibility of the medical professional to adapt their approach to interacting with different patients depending on their personal needs. We saw the extent of this first hand in clinics as every patient comes with their own unique conditions and circumstances. Through this we learnt about the crucial nature of patient confidentiality and the severity with which it is upheld.*

*We found Doctors at Work to be an invaluable experience for anyone considering a medical career as it exposed us to the real-life workings of the NHS and the daily life of doctors, surgeons and medical students. This eye-opening and enjoyable week confirmed and strengthened our ambitions to study medicine and become part of this fundamental service.*



## Brodies LLP & PRIME – Aberdeen Programme 2015



*The PRIME students during their visit to Aberdeen University (Picture Courtesy of Aberdeen University)*

Brodies LLP is a founding member of PRIME, a pioneering initiative by the UK's leading law firms to encourage greater diversity in the legal profession by offering quality work experience and continuing support to young people from less privileged backgrounds. They are committed each year to offering students aged 13-17 the opportunity to take part in a structured work experience programme that is co-ordinated and delivered by Brodies LLP staff representing departments across the business.

In June 2015 seven pupils from the Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City area joined Brodies LLP for a work experience week in their new Aberdeen office as part of the PRIME initiative.

It gave them the chance to work with lawyers and support staff from a variety of departments ranging from employment and family law, to IT and HR. The aim of the week was to ensure that those taking part have an opportunity to learn about all the facets that combine to make a successful law firm, in addition to getting them thinking about the options that exist for their own futures.

In order to give the students a better understanding of the journey that young hopeful lawyers undertake, existing trainees talked to the pupils about their experiences of going from studying in school and university, to obtaining

a position as a trainee solicitor in a law firm. The pupils also learned about the multitude of other careers that exist within and out-with law firms, and how best to sell themselves in future applications and interviews.

As part of the PRIME programme, pupils visited Aberdeen University where they met with Dr Susan Stokeld, who heads up the Diploma in Legal practice programme there. Susan and her team provided the pupils with a great insight into what Universities look for in applicants and an overview of the skills that the pupils should try to develop should they want to study at university.

The pupils also attended Aberdeen Sherriff Court and the Justice of the Peace Court to experience a live court in session, before then running through a mock court case to give them the opportunity to try their hand at acting as litigators.

There's been some excellent feedback from those pupils who took part, commending the experience and the people they had the opportunity to meet and work with.

After the success of the first PRIME programme in Aberdeen, Brodies LLP is very much looking forward to seeing the programme develop for 2016 and beyond.



## Aberdeenshire Girls Get Into Energy!

The Girls Into Energy programme is a skills for work course run by North East Scotland College (NESCOL). The one year course is designed to open young women's eyes to the energy industry's wealth of career opportunities and is offered to young women aged 14 – 17 in secondary education. During the year pupils are given weekly classes in school and the opportunity to visit a number of different companies including Shell, Subsea 7, Survivex and CHC Helicopters.

*Pictured below are some of the girls on their visit to CHC Helicopters.*



Each year the students are given the opportunity to undergo an interview and selection process to secure one of up to 20 places on a two-week industry experience placement that Shell offers at their offices in Aberdeen. The students get to meet over one hundred people from the oil and gas sector, where they can hear first-hand about the various roles and challenges in support of the exploration, development and production activities.

As part of the placement, the pupils were given the opportunity to visit the chemistry labs at the Shell base in Tullos which opened the eyes of S4 pupil Monique Uri who said, *"I just love chemistry, and I wish there were more opportunities like this."*

The Shell experience also allows them to visit the gas plant at St Fergus (pictured below) and was described by one pupil as *"Amazing! It was great to see it all in action and how everything works."*



marine scotland



Until his retirement in December 2015, John Dunn was a Researcher at the Marine Scotland Laboratory in Torry, Aberdeen. He was also Work Placement Co-ordinator and supervised dozens of pupils on work experience. Below John recounts an anecdote from his last ever careers fair...

*I have attended careers nights at Meldrum Academy virtually since it opened, and I didn't think I would attend another one. However, I was deputising for Professor Moffat, and attended what was my last careers night on Thursday 12th November 2015.*

*The assembly hall and concourse were packed with all sorts of companies, organisations, universities, and of course a large number of pupils and parents.*

*During the course of the evening a mum and dad and their young son resplendent in full school uniform stopped at the desk and enquired if Marine Scotland Science still did work placements? I replied that I was fairly certain that this would be continuing.*

*The mum then asked what my name was. I still had my name tag on so I quickly turned it round. "Oh," she said with a very broad smile across her face, "you're John Dunn. I've wanted to meet you!"*

*She then told me that a few years ago her eldest son had met me at a careers night at a time when he was unsure of what he wanted to do, and was not really making very much effort at school despite being quite able. I had suggested that he try work experience, and sure enough he got a placement at the lab in Torry.*

*His mum said that his attitude to school changed completely after that week and he applied himself to his studies with renewed vigour and managed to get into university and completed a degree in Marine Science.*

*I commented that I was delighted that we were able to help and enquired what he was doing now? "Oh," she replied, "he is working at Dunstaffnage laboratory in Oban and in fact he is currently up in Svalbard doing some research. Thank you for inspiring my son to follow a career he really loves and enjoys."*

*I was encouraged to hear that their youngest son is also interested in pursuing a career in marine science too.*

*They returned about twenty minutes later with a small parcel. "We would like you to have this by way of thank you." It was a beautiful book of photographs of seascapes and local coastlines by local teacher and photographer, Andy Hall. Inside they had written: "Good luck on your retirement, you will be missed, and thank you for making the difference!"*

*I will admit to feeling a lump in my throat and my eyes were a bit watery, but it was a very wild and windy night!*

# Contact Details

## Work Placement Team



*(L to R): Karon Cheyne (Work Placement Co-ordinator), Fraser Mitchell (Work Placement Officer), Brian Ritchie (Work Placement Co-ordinator) and Lisa Cumming (Work Placement Co-ordinator)  
(Not featured in the photo is Work Placement Co-ordinator, Theresa Conachan, who job-shares with Karon Cheyne)*

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