

# Youth work and employability

A Youth Scotland magnet supplement 2015



Through a vibrant Scottish youth work sector, young people have access to employability opportunities that complement and build on formal education.



**Investment in young Scots today is an investment in a better future for us all and a better now for young people. Youth work organisations are making a significant contribution by providing young people with opportunities to grow their ambitions, their sense of achievement and the skills they need to succeed in life.**

We often overlook the informal training that young people experience through their community, volunteering activities and youth work. This Youth Scotland Magnet supplement aims to showcase some of the many employability options available to young people through the valuable work of the youth work sector and agencies like Skills Development Scotland.

Youth work supports young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These are qualities highly sought after by employers, along with soft skills like teamwork, communication, problem solving and time management. There is no doubt that a youth work approach helps young people to develop these skills and attributes, in turn giving

them better employability options once they are ready to step into the world of work.

After all, today's young people are tomorrow's business leaders, entrepreneurs and decision makers. And we all know that there is more to success than formal qualifications like exam results. Confidence, dedication, well-developed soft skills and positive outlooks on life go a long way.

Whether young people achieve and develop through non-formal learning awards like the Youth Achievement Awards, voluntary leadership roles within the local community or by engaging in youth group programmes and activities, we know as youth workers that we are helping them to get the best start in life.

Best wishes

Ian McLaughlan,  
Chief Executive  
Youth Scotland



# Preparing for work with Skills Development Scotland

As young people explore their options for further learning and work, it is important that they identify their skills to help them make good decisions. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) can help with this process, as the national skills body that delivers face-to-face career information, advice and guidance, as well as offering online support through [myworldofwork.co.uk](http://myworldofwork.co.uk) to help people on their career journey. My World of Work is packed full of information on subject choices, exam results, preparing for further study, preparing for a job and Modern Apprenticeships.

SDS also works with partners such as colleges, local authorities and training providers, to deliver a range of funding and training support to help young people at each step of their career. From the Certificate of Work Readiness for those with limited experience of the workplace, to Modern Apprenticeships that allow people to earn while they learn, SDS helps young people gain practical on-the-job experience and an industry recognised qualification.

To discuss your options, go to [www.skillsdevelopmentScotland.co.uk](http://www.skillsdevelopmentScotland.co.uk), visit your local SDS centre or call 0800 917 8000.



## The Certificate of Work Readiness in action

**Andrew, an 18 year old from Govan is on his way to a career as an accountant thanks to the Certificate of Work Readiness. He is now completing his Modern Apprenticeship with Glasgow firm Ace Accounting Services and said:**

“I have always liked working with numbers so I hoped I could do something like accountancy when I left school. I wasn’t sure how to go about it and the Certificate of Work Readiness really helped me prepare. I’m learning a lot from the team here and it’s been a brilliant experience.”

Andrew’s boss Irene explained: “Andrew is brilliant – very clever and enthusiastic and keen to learn. Andrew joined us at the busiest time of the year, just before Christmas when all the self-assessment tax returns are due, and he handled it extremely well. He has picked up skills very quickly and is a valuable member of staff.”



## Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce

**In December 2014, the Scottish Government published a new youth employment strategy to reflect changing economic conditions and the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce report earlier that year.**

The strategy aims to enable young people to succeed in a stronger and fairer society. Funding of £28.6m will be invested by the Government in the first two years of a seven year programme, with a target of reducing youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 through introducing:

- Increased uptake of work-related learning and qualifications in the senior phase of school
- Earlier careers guidance from 2015/16
- New standard for work experience by 2015/16
- New ‘pre-apprenticeship’ pilot to help those furthest from the labour market by 2015/16
- All secondary schools to have active partnerships with employers by 2018/19.

The aim is to create high quality learning opportunities, linked to skills needs and employer demands, taken up by young people who are empowered and supported to make smart decisions about their best career route. The key test is not whether the learning takes place in college, at work or in university; it’s whether the learning is relevant, engaging and widens their opportunities.

The programme builds on Curriculum for Excellence, and its implementation will support the aims of CfE. The programmes being delivered by the Youth Scotland network in the development of young people’s wide range of employability skills will have a valuable role to play in the implementation of these recommendations.

Download the Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce Strategy from [www.bit.ly/ScotlandsYoungWorkforce](http://www.bit.ly/ScotlandsYoungWorkforce)

## The value of non-formal learning awards

**Any job needs a range of 'soft skills' and employers consistently say they are needed for an effective workforce. These skills – such as leadership, teamwork, and enterprise – often don't come with a formal academic diploma or degree attached to them.**

Non-formal learning award programmes offer young people opportunities to build these skills for life, learning and work. We know that young people who are involved build their confidence, increase their motivation and aspirations, contribute to their communities and develop leadership roles.

The youth work sector offers young people a wide range of awards and non-formal qualifications, in turn making a serious contribution to improving the life chances and employment prospects for young people.

To see the huge variety of non-formal learning opportunities on offer, access the Awards Network online: <http://www.awardsnetwork.org>



## Taking part to leading – one young person's employability journey

**At age 13, Stuart asked if he could volunteer at his local Falkirk youth club. Contact with the Falkirk project led to more opportunities, including some part-time paid youth work and Stuart used this experience to accredit activities and responsibilities; he was awarded a Platinum Youth Achievement Award for his efforts.**

"When I first started I was less confident and saw myself as a quiet person. Through involvement in youth work I have learnt new skills; how to deal with issues that crop up; how to adapt a session to meet needs and ability. It is very rewarding."

In 2012, Youth Scotland made a successful application to The Rank Foundation and The Robertson Trust to participate in their Youth Work in Sport Initiative (YWiS). This led to the three year appointment of Stuart as Youth Active Trainee (2012-2015).

"[The traineeship] was my next step. I wanted to be a youth development worker and I wanted to be able to help young people have the opportunities that I had."

As part of the traineeship, Stuart was involved in the Diploma in Youth Work Practice, a distance learning programme. In the second year, Stuart was given the choice to continue on an academic degree route or take a sports coaching route. After careful consideration, he decided to go with coaching. However, he then faced his biggest challenge.

"A knee injury saw me off work for six months. This was a difficult time. I lost direction. I was really nervous about doing my first session back but I was surprised. Getting back into it

helped me to remember why I do it. Also, I found that because I was more limited physically, I had to get better at communicating. This was a really positive aspect which I had not thought about."

The third year of the programme put the learning into practice; Stuart supported young people and local youth clubs. He took responsibility for the StreetGames project, leading and supporting a team of 12 young leaders as they followed their own Platinum Youth Achievement Award journey.

Now at the end of his time as a YWiS trainee, Stuart has acquired many qualifications and skills, including the Diploma in Youth Work Practice, the PDA in Youth Work, Sports Leaders UK, Trail Cycle Leader, a Platinum Youth Achievement Award and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. His qualifications and experience have directly contributed to him securing a new youth worker role based in Fife.

"For me, youth work means giving every young person opportunities and skills – and to enjoy life! Youth work is about learning informally and leads to young people achieving their potential. As a role model for other young people I hope they see my journey as something they can learn from and aspire to."



## The Scottish Candidate Number - the personal passport to achievements

In April 2015, the Youth Achievement Awards (YAA) became a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) customised award, providing young people with SQA recognition of their achievements. Young people's YAAs will now appear on their Scottish qualifications certificate alongside formal qualifications gained in school or college.

The Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) is used to record SQA qualifications and as Youth Achievement Awards is now a customised SQA award, young people will need to know their SCN is in order to receive a certificate from SQA. The SCN is provided by the young person's school or college and is a unique personal identification number. Young people should only have one SCN.

If young people don't know their SCN, complete and submit a candidate enquiry form at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/38676.html>.

## Life and employability skills through outdoor learning

SYHA Hostelling Scotland and ScottishPower Foundation have teamed up to develop and deliver an innovative new employability project. So far, around 80 young people have taken part.

Taking place at Rowardennan Youth Hostel, the programme offers young people from social and economic areas of disadvantage the opportunity to experience an action-packed trip away from home whilst learning valuable new skills. Designed to inspire participants to think differently about their future pathways within and beyond formal education, the programme uses a renewable energy theme to offer a range of practical hands-on challenges with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum subjects.

Keith Legge, CEO, SYHA Hostelling Scotland said: "These curriculum-led programmes offer young people the chance to venture beyond their own backyard and experience the great Scottish outdoors, but really it's about getting them to realise their full potential, build confidence and grow self-esteem. The positive impact on the young people that participate is clearly visible and for some it proves to be a life changing experience."

Youth workers looking to express an interest in any of the SYHA Hostelling Scotland youth programmes should contact Donna Thompson, [dthompson@syha.org.uk](mailto:dthompson@syha.org.uk)



[www.syha.org.uk](http://www.syha.org.uk)



## More information on youth work and employability

There is a wide range of support available for young people looking to improve their employability skills. The following agencies are a good place to start.

**The Awards Network** - Organisations that offer non-formal learning awards across Scotland in the 12 to 25 age group, using youth work approaches. [www.awardsnetwork.org](http://www.awardsnetwork.org)

**Education Scotland** - The national body in Scotland for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching. [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)

**The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)** - Scotland's national qualifications framework, supporting lifelong learning and helping people of all ages to access education and training. [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

**Skills Development Scotland (SDS)** - The national skills body supporting the people and businesses to develop and apply their skills. [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk)

**Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)** - National body in Scotland responsible for the development, accreditation, assessment, and certification of qualifications other than degrees. [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

**Young Scot** - Scottish youth information for 11-26 year olds. [www.youngscot.org](http://www.youngscot.org)

**Youth Scotland** - Scotland's largest non-uniformed youth organisation. [www.youthscotland.org.uk](http://www.youthscotland.org.uk)