

Glasgow on Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships are increasing opportunities for young people and fundamentally changing the way schools, learning providers and employers are developing the young workforce.

Why Foundation Apprenticeships?

Glasgow City Council has a well-established collaborative partnership with the three local colleges; Glasgow Clyde, Glasgow Kelvin and City of Glasgow.

Education Services and the three colleges had offered scholarship National Certificate/ National Qualification level courses to S6 pupils as part of joint delivery within the senior phase from as early as 2014.

These courses were the precursor to enhancing the existing partnership between schools and colleges by adding industry recognised work-based learning qualifications to the work placement aspects of the provision.

The introduction of the Foundation Apprenticeship model ramped up the SCQF level so that pupils who were aiming towards SCQF level 6 attainment could also be involved.

The portfolio of Foundation Apprenticeships also increased the range of subject areas available.

Encouraging schools to provide Foundation Apprenticeships

Schools have been very receptive to a new skills-based qualification in growth industry sectors.

Skills Development Scotland colleagues and key development staff who support city-wide employability initiatives prepared background information for Secondary Head Teachers, Leadership Teams, classroom practitioners and multi-disciplinary partners.

Time was set aside at various Head Teacher forums, specialist teacher network events and area meetings, to allow discussion about Foundation Apprenticeships and how the product was a ground-breaking catalyst for change.

The rationale for increasing employer-led experiences for learners was exemplified. Some of the challenges around timetabling and duration of the programme were debated at length, allowing for some of the issues to be addressed prior to pupils participating.

The strong reputation of the three colleges involved, plus the innovative collaboration of joint consortium arrangements meant that there was a high level of confidence within the local authority regarding the quality delivery of the provision.

The involvement of Skills Development Scotland also proved to be significant, as working with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government made it easy to make the connections between the ambitions for Foundation Apprenticeships and the achievement of many of the aims of Curriculum for Excellence, Smarter Scotland, the DYW agenda and our local economic strategies.

Most importantly, we took our lead from the senior phase pupils themselves, who had indicated a desire for more work-based learning opportunities as part of their school curriculum.

Gaining support from teachers and senior school leadership

Much of the enthusiasm for Foundation Apprenticeships has come from our network of Deputy Head Teachers and Pastoral Care Principal Teachers, who have recognised the need for a learning package, which combines part-time attendance at school alongside college and work-based learning.

The flexible pattern of attendance has been welcomed by our teachers and school colleagues.

Education Services chair an operational group, where school representatives meet bi-monthly to plan and review the provision and we also have a Foundation Apprenticeship Programme Board, where senior representatives from all stakeholders meet as a further tier of governance for such a new product.

We have provided a lot of technical detail on the SVQ awards and units involved and used labour market information to give an evidence base for the economic need for increasing the interest in the industry areas which are predicted to be growing.

Building capacity in schools to support Foundation Apprenticeships

The central Employment and Skills Partnership Team have streamlined the arrangements for booking and allocating transportation to and from school to college, using the most time efficient and cost-effective method, bus/ train/ taxi as appropriate.

We also have some additional support from our regional Developing the Young Workforce group to help facilitate further development of the best possible arrangements to engage employers within the work-based learning element.

Going forward, we are exploring new ways of using specialist subject teachers and lectures to offer additional tuition/ twilight sessions in some of the more tricky parts of the courses, for example maths and science units.

Promoting the offer and benefits of Foundation Apprenticeships to pupils and parents or carers

There is a good range of supporting materials which explain the mechanics of Foundation Apprenticeships, which are readily available for schools to use and customise for use at any relevant session with pupils and parents.

We have also set up city-wide information sessions in the February of the year before the Foundation Apprenticeship starts, in order that parents and carers as well as pupils and teachers can speak directly with course leaders and tutors on the college premises, before applying to the course.

All partners have helped to create case studies, learner journey illustrations and video clips, leaflets showing pupils' and employers' participation and feedback.

Award winners and finalists for accolades such as City Business Awards, SQA Star Awards and Foundation Apprentice of the Year are also good ways of promoting the provision.

Induction sessions are very thorough and include some visits to the college between March and June. Pupils, teachers and parents can speak with the course leaders and lecturers about the course content and all arrangements for learning, teaching etc.

Towards the end of the session we held a celebration event for pupils and parents/ carers in the City Chambers. This event was also opened out to include candidates for new starts and offered a chance for current students to talk about their experiences.

We have also considered introducing keep- in – touch days with a social element during the summer break.

Foundation Apprenticeships supporting Curriculum for Excellence, Developing the Young Workforce and the council's ambitions for participation and attainment

All the relevant education and economic policies are aligned to support individual learners to achieve all they can and to diversify the range of pathways so that work-based learning has parity of esteem with academic learning routes.

The range of tariff points across all the different FA frameworks have a comparable rate with Highers and it is vital that pupils can use the achievements within FAs as a stepping stone towards fast track within Modern Apprenticeship opportunities as well as access to Higher Education at college and university.

We need to show these developments in the future. We also need to better articulate the Insight tariff points within the benchmarking tool, so that schools and colleges can genuinely share the attribution of the attainment for learners.

The FA programme is an excellent vehicle for learners to develop their skills for learning life and work and to exemplify their career management skills. The more pupils participate in the programme and schools are able to generate feedback, the more all partners can collaborate to achieve ongoing improvement.

We are seeing more reference to Foundation Apprenticeships and DYW agenda within school improvement plans and this shows that we are trying really hard to link the relevant policies together.

We are committed to ensuring that senior phase pupils have access to high quality work placements and meaningful engagement with employers. Again, the FA programme helps to provide this.

Benefits to schools and pupils of greater employer engagement through Foundation Apprenticeships

Our regional DYW group commissioned a piece of work from Consultancy, Rocket Science; The Impact of Employer Engagement in Education, summarising a number of pieces of national and international research, which highlight the complexity of young people's transitions to school and the part that employers play in supporting this.

The more competitive the labour market becomes and the more fast-moving job profiles and occupational competencies develop, the more difficult it is for individuals to keep up to date with the changing needs of the workplace.

Direct employer involvement with young people at school can help to provide a better understanding of job roles and equip young people with the resilience and skills to better compete for the available opportunities.

Employers can also contribute to adapting workplace learning techniques to school and college-based learning environments.

Young people are also able to test out a career interest in a broad industry -specific area, helping to alleviate any potential mismatch between career aspirations and possible demand for jobs.

All in all, employers can very effectively enhance the acquisition of career management skills in individuals from an early age.

Employers are the real experts in recruitment and selection procedures. They can advise candidates, on a first-hand basis, about the successful processes to apply for positions within companies, to better manage selection interviews and to provide mentoring for prospective, current and future candidates.

We have also been very proactive in negotiating placements with a range of local employers which are recruiting for Modern Apprenticeships.

Employers can see the Foundation Apprenticeship route as a pipeline towards employment and continued training.

Tackling challenges in introducing and embedding Foundation Apprenticeships in the curriculum

There are challenges associated with introducing such a revolutionary product. The biggest being the necessary awareness of all delivery and participating stakeholders.

In Glasgow, there are very strong partnerships between the City Council Education Services, Economic Development Services with our City Council DRS department, Skills Development Scotland, our local colleges and our regional DYW group, which have helped to facilitate the introduction and growth of participants within FAs.

There are some schools whose timetabling restrictions mean that delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships are challenging and we are working directly with these schools to review existing arrangements so pupils can become involved.

We have been successful in adapting the two-year model to also include some one year provision within selected frameworks and subject areas so that, where possible flexible arrangements, which meet industry, provider and participant needs can be further developed.

This approach is also being explored further so that the work-based learning, skills-based qualification package can also be delivered at different SCQF levels, more appropriate for different occupational areas.

Part achievement of some aspects of the total FA package must also be carefully monitored and logged if successful, so that all learner achievement is recognised and can be considered when continuing through learning, whether at school, college, university or in the workplace.

We did have to work very hard with teachers and colleges to ensure that there was consistency across all the different campuses for start and finish times, suitable feedback to schools and parents and logistical challenges such as travel arrangements and work placement details.

The central Foundation Apprenticeship Coordination Team, based within the college consortium has worked well to find solutions to all challenges faced.

There are still challenges to overcome regarding the true embedding of the Foundation Apprenticeship model into the senior phase curriculum, so that the range of qualifications any candidate can achieve alongside the FA package is given as much focus and credibility.

Plan to support the future growth in the number of Foundation Apprenticeship opportunities

Glasgow City Council is fully committed to supporting future growth of Foundation Apprenticeships. We intend to do this by further embedding FAs into the curriculum, and the learner pathways for pupils.

The range of frameworks will be better integrated into subject and career choices for learners, so they can plan a rounded S5 and S6 timetable, which truly blends school, college and work based learning, enhancing the long term prospects for learners.

We are keen to explore more flexible delivery models, including both one and two year programmes, with progression from existing vocational industry recognised qualifications, which our S4 pupils are attaining.

In- school delivery is also being considered in more outlying areas, such as Drumchapel.

Promoting the success and benefits

In June, the Glasgow Foundation Apprenticeship Consortium held a celebration event at Glasgow City Chambers to recognise 52 pupils from Glasgow and the west of Scotland completing their two-year apprenticeship.

The consortium is a collaboration between Glasgow Kelvin, Glasgow Clyde and City of Glasgow Colleges, as well as Glasgow City, East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire Councils.

The joint approach means pupils from 46 schools across the three council areas have access to all 12 FAs, which range from Engineering, ICT, Care, Life Science, Finance and Business.

Employers of all sizes such as DELL, Morgan Sindall and Scottish Water are involved in Foundation Apprenticeship delivery with the Glasgow consortium, to offer work-based learning.

To encourage further uptake and partnerships, parents, pupils and employers from across the local authorities were invited to attend and hear from completers and existing employer partners through Q&A sessions and presentations on the benefits of FAs.

