

Perth & Kinross 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?

It was an obvious option for us to get involved with delivering Foundation Apprenticeships as it's a Scottish Government initiative that would offer the potential for us to offer more vocational programmes and to provide suitably challenging vocational learning options with progression pathways beyond the traditional 'higher education' route.

We already have close partnership working between schools and the college and so it made sense to incorporate another option.

We have both city and rural schools who could be offered more than the Skills for Work programme options.

Encouraging schools to provide Foundation Apprenticeships

It is a big change for schools and it was about providing encouragement and instigating discussions with Headteachers and the college.

We have a school/college liaison group with representation from teaching staff and the college, so this was a route to get buy in.

There is a strategic group, which would discuss how any activity would fit into our overarching objectives and an operational group that looks at the practicalities of embedding it into the curriculum, for example, looking at any travel requirements and how it would fit in the timetable.

The main issued we needed to consider was how a Foundation Apprenticeship could be delivered over two years, to fit in with timetable, and provide guidance to practitioners on how they can best promote the benefits of Foundation Apprenticeships.

Gaining support from teachers and senior school leadership

For us it was about gaining their buy in, in terms of extending the offer. This was managed in a cascade model, by liaising with Headteachers and Depute Heads who would take the offer, key messages and information to school improvement teams which would then communicate information to teaching staff.

The focus of messaging to encourage support was how FAs fit in with the 4 capacities and the 7 principles of design of the Curriculum for Excellence and incorporating it into the vocational booklet for all pupils across the local authority.

At the moment, FAs are available in 10 schools and the aim is to ensure they are embedded well within those and then building up the offer.

Building capacity in schools to support Foundation Apprenticeships

We have supported schools by providing them with additional funding for staffing to support Developing the Young Workforce.

It's as simple way to make sure the support to deliver DYW can be offered and addressed.

It is up to the schools to decide how they use the funding and those schools who have embedded FAs into the curriculum will therefore, be able to use this time to cover their delivery within subject duties.

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

The council is currently updating its employability strategy into a DYW strategy and so developing awareness and uptake of FAs will be incorporated into this.

We have devolved the promotion of Foundation Apprenticeships to schools, who share information on their school websites and their own subject choice booklets, to take into account the different subjects offered in each.

It is important for us to be able to devolve resources and to gives schools autonomy to meet the needs of their learners. We focus on setting up the opportunities and the schools then need to get behind them and deliver against the specific needs of the young people in their schools. Each school will have a better understanding of the needs of the local economy and what options will support their own pupils' pathways.

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

Foundation Apprenticeships are one piece of the jigsaw, in terms of the options and choices we want to make available to our young people. We aim to give all young people in Perth & Kinross the best start in life and providing opportunities to build the 4 capacities of CfE and learn skills for life and work through the opportunities delivered. We are also steering schools to look at the relevant local and national labour market information to ensure the curriculum reflects this.

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

There's benefits in enabling young people to gain greater experience and understanding of the world of work and broaden their networks whilst they are still at school.

Schools have the ability to include other options to subject choice if it supports the needs of their pupils. It's early days, in terms of offering Foundation Apprenticeships, and so we are yet to see the throughput and impact.

In terms of employers, anything that will get them engaged in education is a positive step. The FA programme provides opportunities to build long term relationships with industry partners which can, in turn, lead to more meaningful and impactful long term strategic partnerships between schools, the college and employers.

Schools have a range of relationships with employers across the local authority but there's an opportunity through FAs to understand what the college can bring, in terms of building better links with the business community.

Tackling challenges in introducing and embedding Foundation Apprenticeships in the curriculum

Educating parents has been a focus, to ensure they understand the offer, the benefits and that they don't confuse the level of learning with anything they have been familiar with from their own experience of school.

It's important that young people and parents are clear about the choices on offer and there is clear choice about taking a Foundation Apprenticeship or any other subject.

Timetabling continues to be a challenge as there is not one set timetable across our schools. The structure that the college has chosen doesn't necessarily suits schools – having students out of school for a whole day means that they miss other subject delivery so it's not perfect.

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

Our ambition is to scale up the offer of Foundation Apprenticeships as we have the capacity to increase the offer. Subject diversity – broadening to include other subject areas

A focus is on ensuring young people choose it if it is the right and appropriate option for them.

School/College partnership

The School/College partnership in Perth and Kinross has been established for over eight years and allows school pupils from S3 to S6 greater choice in a variety of subject areas to develop vocational, practical and academic skills.

The courses range from SCQF Level 4 to 7, and are delivered in several Perth and Kinross schools as well as college premises, and for some programmes, online.

Through the partnership, a new School Prospectus was developed to include information about the range of Foundation Apprenticeships available in the region.

FAs currently available to S5 pupils in the area are in Engineering, Civil Engineering, Business Skills, Scientific Technologies and Social Services – Children and Young People, Accountancy, Creative and Digital Media and Food and Drink Operation.

Currently Perth College has two groups on work placement from the 2016/18 FA cohort for Children and Young People and for Engineering.

From September next year, the college is looking to gain placements for the 2017/19 group of FA students across Engineering, Civil Engineering, Children and Young People and Business.

