

**Developing the Young Workforce - Interesting Practice in Skills (3-18) exemplar:**

**Flexible Pathways Programme (2+3 pilot – East Ayrshire Council)**

The following document provides a brief summary of the key elements of this project.

For more information please access this exemplar on the National Improvement Hub here: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/dyw7-2plus3programme.aspx>

**1. Introduction**

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| **Establishment / title** | East Ayrshire Council: Flexible Pathways Initiative |
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| **About the programme** |  |
| **Main tags** | Secondary,  Employability  Employer engagement  Training provider  3rd sector  Equalities and inclusion  Parents  Senior phase |

**2. Project information:**

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| **Overview** | The Flexible Pathways Initiative (FPI)) is aimed at pupils currently in the senior phase of their education (S4-S6). Learners attend school at least two days a week and go out on placement, either to a workplace or partner agency, for the remainder. The initiative runs for a full school session and gives pupils the opportunity to experience an employment sector of their choice for 10 weeks over 3 separate rotations (Oct-Dec/Jan-March/April-June). These rotations do not run consecutively as time is allocated after the end of each for learners to build on and consolidate learning gained during placement; to plan for subsequent placements; to reflect on their experience and fully evaluate it.  The 2+3 initiative offered a targeted group of senior phase pupils with a history of non-attendance at school, personal learning pathways where 2 days were spent in full-time education (at both school and college) and 3 days spent gaining experience in the world of work. Flexible timetabling meant that young people were able to access their core curriculum for two days a week and gain SQA accredited awards related to both literacy and numeracy as well as access to vocational courses at college. For the other three days a week, young people undertook a minimum of three working rotations over the course of the academic year which complemented their school work and related to their career aspirations. |
| **Impact** | The FPI is designed to provide every participant a coherent and agreed personal learning pathway and deliver a range of progressions on completion which may include training, further learning, employment or a return to a full-time school curriculum.  The FPI looks to re-engage these young people and keep them in school longer, by responding to their individual curricular needs while building employability skills and moving them closer to the world of work.  As a result of this initiative the following positive aspects are emerging:  • Young people are re-engaging with education  • Attendance rates have improved significantly  • Young people develop essential life and employability skills;  • Parents confirm improvements in attitude, motivation, behaviour etc. and skills development.  For more information on the impact of this project please access the film clips part of this interesting practices exemplar on the National Improvement Hub. |
| **Lessons learnt** | **I**n school, FPI participants can be taught as a discrete group and, through flexibility of timetabling, undertake a programme of learning that, as well as covering all core skills, connects directly to the workplace. The volume of work experience undertaken as part of the programme means a greater range of SQA employability awards are able to be delivered in school and the small cohort of FPI learners provides opportunities to establish an ideal learning environment to develop team building skills and self-confidence. As learners are required to commit to the programme for a whole school year, statutory winter leavers would not normally be considered as appropriate candidates for the FPI. However, should a winter leaver decide that the personal learning pathways offered through the programme provide them with an incentive to stay on in school past their statutory leaving date, they would then qualify for referral. |
| **Wider DYW context** | This provides learners with valuable work placements as envisaged by the newly developed Work Placements Standard. Participants are exposed to a variety of work related environments including working in hotel/catering industry, motor industry, engineering companies with a direct link to career pathways. |
| **Partnerships** | A number of strong partnerships have been forged as a result of this initiative. The FPI brings together a broad range of partners who include the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Ayrshire College, local employers including (STAGECOACH, EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL, Power Transport, Avenue Childcare, , Smart Car Valeting, First Class, Willowbank School and Onthank Primary School.)  The Prince’s Trust, Skills Development Scotland and other training providers and partner organisations. This partner network supports young people on the programme by offering a variety of work based learning which includes work tasters and employability skills training. |
| **Next steps** | There are plans to roll out this programme across all secondary schools within East Ayrshire Council. The project will then be referred to as ‘Flexible Pathways Initiative’ |
| **Comments** | Comments from participants:   * **Learner 1** feels the work experience is invaluable to get a job after leaving school. The learner would not have attended school if not for the programme and wants to stay on to achieve National 5 qualifications. * **Learner 2** talks about an improvement in well-being and feels comfortable on the course, stating that it has helped focus on a career. * **Learner 3** has enjoyed the work placement and feels it has been the most important part. * **Learner 4** feels that the combination of school and work placements is working well. * **Learner 5** talks about an improvement in behaviour and attitude and says the course has introduced a career path that can be followed.      * **Learner 6** feels the course has been a great opportunity and the work experience has been useful, although the learner has not enjoyed the college input and finds the college work difficult. * Without the programme, **Learner 7** talks about the probability of disengaging completely if it meant a full time timetable in school. * **Learner 8** feels that the course has helped attendance and improved well-being. * **Learner 9** feels that the course has helped build confidence and has enjoyed meeting new people. * **Learner 10** feels supported and states that the bus passes are key to attendance. .      * **Learner 11** is enjoying the course and feels that the bus passes are an important support. * **Learner 12** feels the course is working well and would not attend school at all if not for the programme. Prefers working . |