



From mountain to sea

Work Placement Unit

Newsletter 2019



Message from Laurence Findlay Director of Education & Children's Services

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of our Work Placement Unit newsletter. It is tremendous to see just how many work placements have been organised and undertaken across Aberdeenshire and a huge team effort is required for this, so many thanks first of all to everyone for making it happen. What is particularly pleasing is to read the young people's own accounts of their work placements and how these have inspired them in relation to their career or choice and also how they have given them an insight into the "real world" of work. It is also fantastic to read about how young people's skills have developed through the work placement experience and how some of them have clearly gained confidence through their time in the workplace.

This, of course, is why work based learning and work placements are so vitally important to Aberdeenshire and our schools. They are a central component of Developing the Young Workforce and huge thanks must go to all the local employers who are so keen to take young people into their work places, to develop them and to help them on their journey towards the world of work.

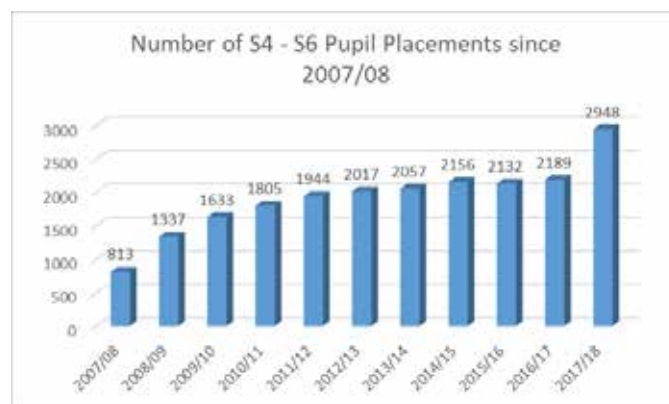
In this edition of the newsletter you will also read of an interesting innovation at Mintlaw Academy, with teachers going on work placements out with the school setting and seeing this as central to how they as a school continue to develop the young workforce.

Many thanks to all those who have shared their stories with us in this edition of the newsletter.

Happy reading!

Welcome to the 2019 Edition of the Aberdeenshire Council Work Placement Unit (WPU) newsletter.

Work Placements Arranged in 2017/18



As you can see in the graph above, 2017/18 was a very busy year for the Work Placement Unit: a total of 2948 placements were arranged for our young people, an increase of 759 on the previous period. While part of the reason for this was that 3 academies changed the timing of their placement weeks - so they had in effect two separate placement weeks for S4 pupils instead of one - there was also a 50% increase in the number of flexible placements arranged. Much of this increase is attributed to placements arranged in conjunction with a work-related learning or wider studies programme.

A New Team Member Joins the Work Placement Unit



Hello everyone, my name is Frances Ekwue, one of the Work Placement Co-ordinators in the Work Placement Unit.

In my new role, I feel like a pupil going on their first work placement! There are so many different aspects of the job, each bringing its own challenges but thoroughly entertaining as I get to meet new faces and names every day. On certain days I'm learning alongside a pupil currently on their placement, and on other days I'm networking at engaging career events.

Since joining the Work Placement Unit I've attended a couple of careers fairs where I got to speak to many of the pupils face to face, engage with the guidance teachers

as well as the Head Teacher, and introduce myself to many types of businesses, both big and small.

Careers fairs are organised by many academies in Aberdeenshire and they represent an excellent way for employers to make pupils aware of opportunities in their organisation - particularly for those pupils that are planning to move into employment at the end of the school year.

If your company or organisation is interested in attending a careers event, then please contact the Work Placement Unit - contact details on the back page of the newsletter.

I'm looking forward to liaising and networking with you all.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court & Justice of the Peace Court



In September 2018 Meldrum Academy pupil Amy Gough went to court – for her S4 work experience week. Below



Amy tells us what she got up to during her placement.

My name is Amy Gough and in September 2018 I attended a work experience placement at Aberdeen Sheriff Court & Justice of the Peace Court.

During my week I observed many of the personnel who perform a variety of different roles in the court; it was a very busy week, and every day was very different and exceptionally interesting.

One day I spent time in the crime office where I was taught how the IT system works.

I also got to see how the custodial sentences are laid out and filled in. I helped to sort papers for the courts being used on the days I was there and made sure they were in the correct trays in the right courts, ready for the sheriff, lawyers and solicitors etc.

I also was shown what happens when the public come in to pay their fines or if they have just been in court and need to fill out papers. I helped to sort mail for the different buildings and was shown how cheques were processed.

Whilst I was there, I observed a number of trials and got to see how the fifteen jury members were selected and what their roles included. I also met some of the court officers who told me about their roles.

I was able to meet and spend time with two of the Sheriffs. It was very interesting to get their input on how the courts run and finding out how they got to the positions they're in.

I was fortunate to shadow a senior Solicitor at the court. I got to spend a day with him, and he was kind enough to take me to see the cells. I watched some of his trials and got to speak to one of his clients.

I also spent time with the Court Officers and when I was with them, I had the role of signing in witnesses which was my favourite thing to do. I sat at reception with them and they showed me all the different tasks that went on there. I took the court papers due for that day to the relevant courts they were needed in. We made sure evidence needed was in the correct locations and I got to make a trip to the post office.

I am very grateful for the time I spent at the Sherriff Courts and I am thankful to everyone who supported me. More importantly, the whole experience has convinced me that working in an area of law is the career route for me.

Amy's placement supervisor had this to say about her work experience:

"Amy's conduct over the course of the week was exemplary, she turned up on time and showed suitable initiative to let me know if she was ready to learn something new or wished to sit in a particular court etc. In any dealings with the court staff, Sheriffs and solicitors, Amy mixed well, demonstrating a polite and sociable manner. Amy is clearly very interested in the law and was suitably motivated each day to learn as much as possible from her placement."

Peterhead Academy Pupils Impress Grangepark Care Home

In May 2018, Erin Keller (right) and Rhys Buchan (below) from Peterhead Academy went to Grangepark Care Home in Meethill Road for their S4 work placement week.



Erin's role was an Activities Assistant while Rhys was a Kitchen/Cook's Assistant.

This is what Grangepark manager Jennifer Lauder had to say about their week:

"This year has been especially successful with both placements bringing their personalities and good work ethic into our team."

Rhys Buchan has been a pleasure in the kitchen where he has inspired us with his enthusiasm, and I have

emailed my own manager, to enquire how we are placed to introduce new Modern Apprenticeships in Cooking into our agenda. Rhys now has several cooking skills under his belt and has made what the residents claim were the best welsh cakes they have ever had!!

Erin Keller has blossomed during her placement and has a great caring personality which endeared her to the residents. Her willingness to try everything even led her to the laundry and I'm sure her mum would be astonished to see her ironing skills!!

We have thoroughly enjoyed their time in the home and will be very sorry to see them go. We wish them every success for the future - they were a credit to their school."



Devante George – RWG (Repairs & Overhauls) Ltd



Devante George, a pupil at Banff Academy, went to RWG (Repairs & Overhauls) Ltd in Dyce for his S4 work experience week in November 2018. Below Devante gives us an account of his experience:

“My placement was at a company called RWG (Repair & Overhauls) Ltd in Aberdeen. RWG is a company that repairs and overhauls jet engines and turbines for power plants. While I was there, I was supervised by the Training Officer, John McKee. On the first day another student from a different school and I were taken through the Company Health and Safety procedures. We talked about hazards such as slips, trips, falls, lifting, and moving objects etc. John also gave us a tour of our work place and introduced us to other staff members.

My daily routine

Every morning I woke up at 4:00am to get the bus for 4:30am to get work for 6:45am My work finished at 3:30pm. I got three breaks during the day: one at 9:25am, 11:45am and 2:20pm. Each break was 10 minutes with forty five minutes for lunch. There were lots of amazing refreshments. Here are some tasks I saw in the workshop: I observed the overhead cranes pick up a jet engine, watched someone welding, and putting in the combustion tubes in the jet engine.

My future

Fortunately, I have chosen all the right subjects for being an Aeronautical Engineer. I have been influenced a lot by this work experience and it has made me look seriously into going back to RWG for an apprenticeship.”

The feedback

Gibson Todd (Avon Engines, Aberdeen) said *“I have never met somebody of Devante’s age, who has shown such keen interest and enthusiasm towards work or engineering. It has been a pleasure to have Devante in our workshop and our whole team wish him all the best with his future career in engineering.”*



Devante is pictured next to an Industrial Avon Gas Turbine which is used to power an external turbine to either generate electricity, generate heat, or to pump oil & gas via pipelines either onshore or offshore. The engine is similar to an aircraft gas turbine but has been modified for industrial use.

Score – Fraserburgh Academy Placements



Score (Europe) Ltd have been associated with the Aberdeenshire Council work placement programme for over 20 years. The company has a strong relationship with its local academy, Peterhead, as well as Fraserburgh and Mintlaw Academies, which are located within a 30-minute drive.

For academic session 2017/18, Score provided 76 placements across six different opportunities at three different locations.

In addition to the usual placement weeks scheduled for session 2018/19, Score offered an additional week for Fraserburgh Academy in November 2018. This had been suggested by Ed Walton, DHT at Fraserburgh Academy, following high demand from pupils.

For w/c 12th November, eight pupils – three girls and five boys – attended Score for their placement as Workshop Assistant. Following an intensive Health

& Safety briefing from the training team on the Monday morning, each pupil was introduced to their “buddy” who would be paired up with them for the week.

Stevie Wilson, Score's HSE & Training Manager, said that all the staff who encountered these pupils were very impressed with their dedication, conduct and attitude, and they were a great advert for Fraserburgh Academy.

A survey of 40 apprentices who started with Score over the summer found that one of the main reasons behind their application was a period of work experience with the company while they were at school. This illustrates the benefits of work experience for both pupils and employers.



(from L to R) Ethan Hepburn, Elisha Meadows, Ellis McHattie, Aga Baranek, Jack Smith, Jay Buchan, Ben Rattray & Dylan Rattray.

Mintlaw Academy Teachers Offered Work Placements



In an innovative twist on the conventional work experience model, Mintlaw Academy has given teachers the opportunity to go on a placement. The intention behind this initiative is to allow staff to familiarise themselves with an industry or organisation which is linked to their subject and to highlight the career opportunities which are available to pupils.

Mrs Jennifer Innes, a Technical teacher at Mintlaw Academy, gives us a summary of her placement:

“From High School I went straight into university for teaching training in my subject and didn't have any industrial experience before going into teaching. I always felt that was a disadvantage when I taught engineering

or design as I couldn't draw on any personal experience and put what I was teaching into context for pupils. When the opportunity came up to do a work experience placement, I took advantage of this opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of a popular industry in this community and link it to the subjects I taught.

I shadowed a maintenance coordinator at St Fergus Gas Terminal. This gave me a very complete picture of the running of the gas terminal. What was most beneficial to me was the ability to distinguish the careers and vocations there are within the workings of a gas terminal. This enabled me to put into context any careers that my students were interested in and wind it back to subject choices and then further to the teaching in class.

With an aim to Develop the Young Workforce, I found this experience very beneficial and would encourage any other member of staff to get a better understanding of where their subject could lead young people.”

G5 Technologies Ltd Feedback from a Placement Provider

G5 Technologies Ltd is based in Westhill and has been providing high quality IT business solutions since 2004. For the past few years, the company has offered work placements to pupils from nearby Westhill Academy and in November 2018 they welcomed S4 pupil Harry Armishaw.

Harry's placement supervisor was Carol Imray, who was impressed with Harry during his week-long work experience.

Carol had this to say:

"Being a relatively small company, we do not have a specific work and learning plan for these placements, and it ends up being very much dependent on the workload and team available at the time but Harry took all of this in his stride.

We were able to offer him a variety of roles which provided an insight into the services which we're able to offer. He kept a log of his time throughout the week on our helpdesk system just like our engineers do and completed a variety of IT tasks including:

- Onsite visit to a customer site to identify available ports and patch in additional office phones.
- Onsite visit to student accommodation to identify networking Wi-Fi hardware and to take photos for updating company documentation.
- Conducting a Wi-Fi heat map survey to check for signal strength.

- Helping to prepare multiple access points for a hardware upgrade.
- Securely wiping old staff PC drives ready for disposal.
- Checking incoming stock and assembling a new PC according to build sheet plan from a client.
- Configuring a router with correct IP address for a new broadband line at a client site which was then delivered to the site.
- Working through jobs in the helpdesk and emailing customers with updates directly.
- Looking at the design process for a website and integrating social media tools.



Harry's knowledge of I.T. is very good and his communication skills are excellent, and he fitted in well with the team here. He coped well with working on his own but also having to assist colleagues with something else at short notice.

Following his placement, Harry contacted us to say how much he enjoyed his time with us and to thank everyone for the time which they spent with him.

It was a pleasure to have a young person who worked so well with us all and understood very quickly the work that we do."

Inverurie Academy Group Visit Elliott Group Facility

In December 2018, a group of 10 S4 and S5 pupils from Inverurie Academy visited Elliott Group's purpose-built workshop facility at Inverurie Mills. Elliott Group is a major player in the design, construction and provision of portable buildings and has supplied modules to the Robertson Group, the contractor building the new £55m Inverurie Community Campus.



During their tour – which took place when the workshop was closed so there was no need for them to wear visitor Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.) – the pupils received a presentation from the Site Manager, David Gordon, followed by a talk from their Electrician Norman and Apprentice Electrician Kieran.

The visit was designed to give the pupils an understanding of what it's like being an apprentice as well as getting advice on how to go about securing an apprenticeship. Their walk around the site illustrated how each of the various trade disciplines on site help to contribute to the business.

The pupils were enrolled on the Robertson Trade Group course at Inverurie Academy.

Ross Henderson – Work Placement at Aberdeen Airport

Ross Henderson, a pupil at Westhill Academy, gives an account of his S4 work placement where he spent a very interesting week at Aberdeen Airport.

I have an interest in travelling abroad and enjoy being in airports because people are usually excited and happy about going away on holiday. I was keen on finding out about what all the departments do in the airport. I wanted to see what went on in the background - things that tourists do not really know about.

I organised the placement myself. I phoned the airport and then emailed Margaret McKenzie (to ask if I could get a week's placement for the week beginning 5th November 2018. She said she had one more space and I was delighted to hear that. I felt lucky to be given this opportunity.

Before the placement I phoned and spoke to a colleague of Margaret's to see what the week would entail. She suggested that I would get to experience working in a lot of different departments.

On the first day, I got an introduction from the airport Manager. She walked me through a practice fire drill, and she showed me where the fire assembly point is and he gave me general information on Health and Safety throughout the building. I learnt that you need to be wearing staff badges and hi-vis vests for security.

Overall the work experience at the airport was varied. Here are a few things I got up to:

Aberdeen International Airport



- I spent Tuesday with the people who shoot guns to scare the birds from the runway. This is to make sure they do not fly into the planes' engines. I was told about an incident with a bird which caused a plane to go into a river, though this did not happen in Aberdeen.
- The fire training room was great. I was taken into the fire engine and to the fire training ground. Every Monday there is fire training which involves trying to put fires out in planes.
- The highlight of my week was when I joined the engineering department and I fixed broken automatic doors and a broken light in a car wash. This was something different that I had not experienced before, and I got to fix things for people which I found enjoyable.



I learnt a lot during the week. Before I went, I did not know that there were four runways and that most of them are used as heliports. It was interesting to see how the airport workers communicate through radios and mobile phones and they connect to the car speaker to find out if we need other bits and bobs from the yard. Security do spot checks every day – of the fences and the areas around the runways, as well as in the airport building.

In my opinion, working at the airport is so interesting and satisfying. All the airport staff I met were nice and friendly, and also very helpful. I would like to work in an airport as no two days are ever the same. Everyday can give you a new challenge to try to figure things out. It also gave me new experience in things I had not experienced before in my life. I would like to get onto the courses and training for a job at the airport, and my qualifications may even rise as I am going through this process.

Mackie's of Scotland – Emily Robertson (Alford Academy)



Alford Academy pupil Emily Robertson tells us about her very tasty work placement week at Mackie's of Scotland.

In November 2018 I was given the opportunity to have a week's work experience at Mackie's of Scotland after approaching their Commercial Director, Stuart Common, following a talk which he gave at a Job Fair at Alford Academy.

On the first day of experience we got lost trying to find the farm in Rothienorman but when I arrived, I was warmly welcomed and given a tour of the offices and introduced to everyone. I could already

tell that it was going to be a very interesting week.

After an introduction from Stuart I was set a task to investigate Mackie's competitors in the chocolate market and complete a spreadsheet containing this information. I thoroughly enjoyed this as it involved a day trip to all the big supermarkets in Aberdeen to view the products in the store.

I was also given a tour of the farm which I really enjoyed as I am an active member of my local Young Farmers. It was so interesting to see how Mackie's products are made and how important they view renewable energy.

I expected everything in the production areas to be fully automated but so much of it was still done by hand which I really enjoyed seeing. I was given the chance to make a batch of honeycomb ice cream which - of course - I tasted and it was amazing! Being interested in the food and hospitality industry I would say this was my favourite part of the week.

On the final day I was given the opportunity to attend Mackie's annual report that is open to all staff which was held at a nearby venue. We were given a presentation from all the different departments on what they had done in the previous year, what they were going to improve and their goals for the following year.

At the end of my week in the office I was sent home with a souvenir – a bag of ice cream, crisps and chocolate from the Mackie's factory including a tub of the honeycomb ice cream I had made earlier in the week which definitely didn't last long in our house.

During my very enjoyable and interesting work experience week I developed my IT skills, acquired a knowledge of how production processes in the food industry works, how a typical office works and was taught how to analyse competitors in the chocolate and ice cream market.



Launch of National Progression Award (NPA) in Employability and Enterprise at Portlethen Academy

Jess Copner, Principal Teacher for Developing the Young Workforce, on the launch of their National Progression Awards.

This year marks the start of a new qualification available for young people at Portlethen Academy. The National Progression Award in Employability and Enterprise at Level 4 and 5 gives young people the opportunity to focus on a specific career area that they would like to enter when they leave school, college or university. The students study different units about the world of work and participate in a work placement which give them a unique opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience over the whole year. Students also get input from local businesses who come into school to help with lessons.

This is the first year that Portlethen Academy has offered this opportunity to our senior pupils and it forms part of the school's response to the Scottish Government's 'Developing the Young Workforce' agenda. It has been a concern for many years that educational establishments were not preparing their students well enough to enter the world of work. This course with its focus on work related learning goes some way to addressing this.



from left to right: Holly Robertson, Ross Wood, Danielle Martin, Rebekah Adam, Carly Wilson, Stephanie Wood, Morgan Towler and Alyssa Hay

Part of the requirements for the 'NPA Enterprise and Employability' is that students keep a record of their placement days on aspects such as what skills they used, what went well or not so well and what they have learnt. Students are supported in school and will also be visited on their placement with assessment done over the year.

This year's cohort includes students who are prospective teachers, doctors, social workers plumbers, graphic designers and veterinary nurses. They are completing their work placements in local primary schools, nursing homes and local businesses.

This is what some of the students had to say about the course:

"You make good relationships with the employers"

"You get to know what it's like when you leave school"

"I like that I can choose what I'm doing and I get a qualification out of it"

"It's fun!"

"I like the fact that it gives you an insight into the workplace where you could potentially be working in the future"

"It's good for your personal statement and CV and it's good for helping you to decide what course you want to go on to do"

"It provides an extra qualification for college and university"

The biggest advantage of the NPA award in Employability and Enterprise is that it gives students a meaningful opportunity to explore a career interest and to gain skills and experience. We hope this will be first start of an exciting career for all our students as they progress.

Leaders in Sport Volunteering – Ritchie Laverty (Inverurie Academy)



“My name is Ritchie, I am in S6 and I am a part of Inverurie Academy’s Leaders in Sport which I have been a part of since September 2017.

It all started off when I had a work experience placement with Active Schools during which I spent a day helping out with David Fullerton (Visiting Physical Education Specialist) at Strathburn Primary. A week after my work

experience I decided I wanted to help out with basketball classes at Starthburn. Malcolm Grant (Active Schools Lead Coordinator - Central Aberdeenshire & Inverurie Academy) recruited me as a Leader in Sport so I was able to start helping Mr Fullerton every week for the whole of fifth year.

I also started helping out with the Aberdeenshire Council Basketball which is an extra-curricular activity run by Kenny Gibb every Friday after school.

Because I was helping out at Strathburn and at the Academy, Active Schools wanted to recruit me as a volunteer and a member of Inverurie Academy’s Leaders in Sport. I am also attempting the Saltire awards via Leaders in Sport. In November I completed a Basketball Scotland ‘Make it Happen’ CPD course with help from the Active Schools. This involved us learning how to develop physical movement and technical skills. We were also taught how to coach and referee a basketball game, which I got certified in.

In March 2018 I volunteered as a Marshal at the Run Garioch Junior run at Strathburn Park. During the last week of the summer holidays, I volunteered as a Group

Leader along with two fellow volunteers for the S1 Transition + Programme at Inverurie Academy which

we did for 3 days. This involved us guiding the S1’s to their location and to help out the instructors with the activities.

I have learned a lot from all my volunteering. I have gained new skills such as leadership and communication skills. I have also learned that helping out volunteering with young people really helps make a difference for children.”

Malcolm Grant from Active Schools, who recruited Ritchie as a ‘Leader in Sport’ said: *“Ritchie is a prime example of a young person being given the chance to try something new and then seizing the opportunities that have grown from that initial experience. His confidence has clearly grown over the past year and in a positive way he now has that confident “swagger” when he is volunteering. It is a “swagger” that conveys to me and others that he knows his role and that he is able to engage well with his peer group or those he is working alongside, whilst also retaining his own character which is one his key skills as a volunteer. During Transition + 2018 it was clear that he was able to convey his own enthusiasm whilst balancing it with the responsibilities of the role he has with Active Schools and he clearly bonded with the new S1s which provides Inverurie Academy with a valuable tool during the school year in that younger pupils have another friendly face they can relate to”.*



And now for something rather different...



For his Higher English folio, Meldrum Academy pupil Sam Stuart produced an essay which was based on his S4 work placement with Aberdeenshire Council’s Garioch Ranger Service. Reproduced below is Sam’s evocative and descriptive essay which will

transport you to the slopes of Bennachie, one of Aberdeenshire’s best-known landmarks.

“As I picked up the remains of the trap, I saw its head. Little did I know that this defining moment from my week’s work placement at the Bennachie reserve would have such a big effect on me – and the Ranger. Since I was little, my dream job has been to work with wildlife and more recently to become a ranger. The work experience had been a year in the making getting the arrangements in place, so my excitement was at its peak and by the end of the week I wanted to stay on for another. It was by far one of the best experiences I have ever had.

On day one, it was raining voles and frogs! Even still, we cleared vegetation in the downpour and mud amidst the giant spires of pine trees. It was hard work, we had to cut back bracken and slice prickly bushes to the roots. At this moment, my bubble burst. My picturesque view on the work of a Ranger – sunny days, smiling faces, a bounty of wildlife – had excluded the likelihood of miserable weather stamping on these ideas. Nevertheless, I developed a new understanding of what hard work and payoff means; it isn’t about just making yourself happy, it is about improving the area to make others enjoy it more. Every cut branch felt like I was reclaiming the path from the elements, making it easier to access for anyone who used it in the foreseeable future. This gave me a sense of achievement, small, but for every part reconquered, it boosted me to work harder. It was at this moment I realised that I could not only help the natural environment, through conserving and taking care of it, but also help people as well.

On day two it was time for the climb. As we ascended the steep rocky slope of Bennachie, I was given a tour of the rich, social history of the Bennachie area; from Neolithic sites to crofts dating back only a couple of centuries. Similar to my learning from day one, as much as my interest in the natural world was my priority going into this experience, I could not help but feel that I was growing more interested in human interactions with the environment, not just nature conservation. This gave me an insight into the need to protect and conserve sites of historical significance. My interest in the social history took me by surprise as I thought I was only interested in the natural world instead of human histories and experiences. This enforced my positive feelings towards working as a ranger in the future.

On the third day, we decided to leave the Bennachie area and travel to another reserve to remove old, damaged bird boxes, and this gave me a taste of a different area. This reserve was located in the heart of a suburban community and as a result, through littering and a lack of care by the community, the pond within the reserve was polluted. This had caused the growth of dangerous fungi. I stared at the chalky grey water and was shocked to see it in this state. Due to the amount of effort that had gone into developing and maintaining the reserve, I felt it was such a waste to see a community resource and wildlife reserve affected by such a thing. Upon looking at the pond, it made me want to act more responsibly and think about the waste I generate. This also brought upon me the realisation that while not everyone cares about the natural world, they can still be taught that nature is important and in doing so, change the behaviours of others so that they act more responsibly.

Back on day one, we had gone out and set up camera traps, which we then collected later in the week. The camera trap pictures revealed a rarely seen animal, hidden amidst hundreds of red squirrel photographs, the elusive pine martin. Even on this managed piece of land, to see such an untamed piece of Scotland's wild heritage, made me feel immense pride to know that I was working at such a place. It was a surprise to see it, on this cultivated area, where forests are cut down

every five years and regrown, and it showed that no matter how much the land is worked, nature will always find a way; all it needs is a helping hand, although sometimes no help is needed. This experience furthered my commitment to protect wildlife and taught me that no matter how wild or urban an area, sometimes the most surprising creatures can appear.

On the fourth day we set up mammal traps. As we "spilled" their contents we counted three wood mice, two of which scampered away. However, the traps have a special escape hole at the back, designed for shrews, which you need a licence to catch, as their metabolism is too high to cage them without food access overnight. One of the wood mice was unlucky enough to have its head caught in the hole. A bird had seen or heard the mouse and picked apart the trap and in doing so had killed the mouse in a gruesome manner! The Ranger had joked literally seconds before about this never happening and was just as shocked as I to discover the unfortunate mouse. Ironically, on the first day, we had spent an hour in the morning going over the risk assessment for the work placement and it sure as hell didn't cover a decapitated mouse!

This really did shock me; I had never anticipated that my actions would lead to the death of a mouse, even in such an innocent way as setting a mammal trap. The guilt shadowed me that day. This taught me that, even though my intentions are good, sometimes bad things happen unintentionally. It also showed me that this job requires resilience, as it may present unexpected challenges at any time, human caused, or otherwise.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my woefully short week at the Bennachie Centre Reserve. I learned so much thanks to the local Ranger who inspired me to push harder in my work at school, so I can chase my dream of becoming a Ranger. Although a few moments weren't all rainbows and sunshine (the poor mouse!), sometimes unintentional things do happen even if it is by your own hands. But after all, it's about resilience and being careful and knowledgeable about what you are doing and the risks involved.

And, no matter what, bad weather shouldn't put you off."



Work Placement at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary – Lauren Barrie (Turriff Academy)

Lauren Barrie, an S6 pupil at Turriff Academy, tells us about her inspiring work placement at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

In January 2019 I had 3 days' work experience in the Emergency Department at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary which is one of the most positive experiences I have had.

All the staff were very kind and welcoming to me as I was very nervous. On Day One I was in the emergency department which gave me a very good insight to what kind of cases come to the department and what it was like to deal with patients from all ages and backgrounds. I was assigned to one of the nurses who showed me around the department and gave me an idea of what to expect throughout the day including shadowing her when she was checking the patients in from the ambulance and assessing the patient, then showing me how she

fills in the paper work and what kind of things you have to ask the patient which was very informative; as I am a carer in a care home I knew some of the terminology used and how to deal and speak to patients. I was supposed to finish at 3pm but because I enjoyed working there so much, I carried on a bit longer as there was so much going on.

On Day Two I was working in Ward 101 (the Initial Assessment/Observation Unit) which was another fantastic opportunity as I got to work more closely with the patients and see what happens after they are transferred from the emergency department. It was a very interesting day as I got to be with the patients who were enthusiastic and willing to let me observe how their heart rate, temperature, pulse and their heart trace was taken. I saw how they were checked in to the ward. Working on Ward 101 was very good

as it gave me more time to spend with the patients and all the staff were very helpful and encouraging me and were very understanding if I did need to step out for a second and supported me doing so.

Day Three was a completely different kind of experience as I was working on Ward 103 (Short Stay Medicine). It was more of a quiet day, getting to know the patients and how the nurses are helping them. This was a really good experience as I got to know more about medication and medical procedures.

This whole experience was very rewarding for me as it has improved my confidence and made me realise how much I want to be a nurse in an emergency department, to look after people and make sure they get the best care possible.



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