

Bridging Project Update

The Forum has been participating in the national bridging project looking specifically at the area of business. A team has been engaged in collecting information from colleges, universities and students to investigate subject specific barriers to the articulation of HN students to degree programmes in business.

A report will be published by the end of June 2006 and a networking event will also be held in June to bring together college and university programme leaders to discuss areas highlighted by the research and explore co-operative measures to overcome these issues.

Further details from Mina Welsh
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College – University Links Research

An event was held on 17 May to disseminate the findings of a research project carried out for the Forum by University of Abertay, Dundee. The project sought to evaluate changes in perceptions held by students progressing from HNQs of their individual preparedness to undertake degree level study.

The research highlighted and reinforced the need for effective transition support over an extended period from the final months of HN programmes and continuing into degree level studies.

At the same time a scoping exercise is being carried out for the Forum to identify current transition programmes in Fife and Tayside and also good practice from other parts of Scotland. This will help inform the development of our strategy in this area.

Business Plan

Following a period of consultation with partners, our business plan for 2006/07 will be prepared and presented to the Forum Executive for approval in August.

Our strategic priorities for 2006/07 will include:

To respond to recommendations in Learning for All report – copies available at: www.sfc.ac.uk

To respond to Scottish Funding Council review of Forums

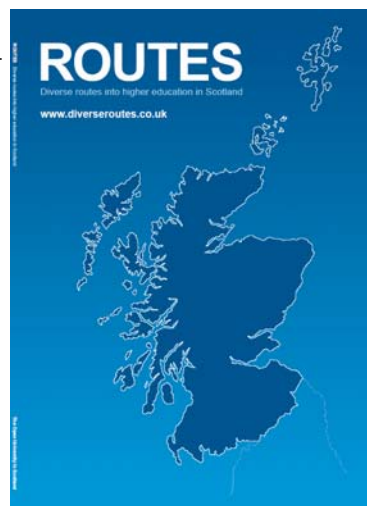
To review membership, structure and operation of Forum
To further develop and strengthen links and relationships between partners

To continue to develop and establish Transitions and Lift-Off themes as vehicle for delivery of Forum strategy

To develop and implement strategy to measure participation and track progression of learners

Diverse Routes into Higher Education

The “Diverse Routes into Higher Education” information pack and website has been produced by the Open University in Scotland and is the first national project to be funded by all four Scottish Wider Access Regional Forums. The pack and website contains information on access courses, ESOL provision, credit transfer and professional development, financial support and further funding for asylum seekers and refugees. The project will be disseminated through staff development workshops for practitioners belonging to or working with minority ethnic groups, including refugees and asylum seekers. These will be held in Fife and Tayside in August and September.



For further information contact Ann Petrie ann.petrie@dundee.ac.uk or Ebony Quinn, e.quinn@open.ac.uk

The Routes website is currently under construction but will be available shortly at www.diverseroutes.co.uk

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If you would like to submit an article for inclusion in our next newsletter please e.mail it to barbara.robertson@abertay.ac.uk by 1 November 2006.



FORUM NEWS

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NEW THEMES – NEW LOOK

The Forum has undergone significant change and growth over the past two years to reflect its more strategic approach to widening participation in Fife and Tayside.

Activities are now grouped under one of two themes, one developing activities aimed at learners at school and the other on post school learners. New logos have been developed to reflect these and information on both these themes is provided throughout this newsletter.



THE LIFT-OFF TEAM

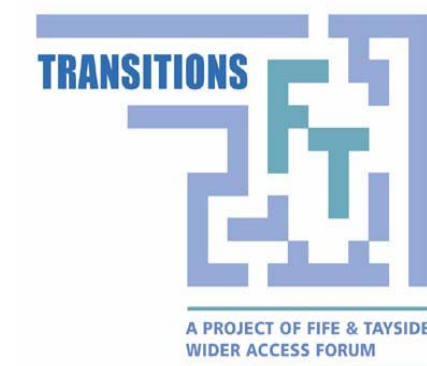
Sarah Morrison leads the Lift-Off team and will shortly be joined by a development worker, Jennifer Shearer and a support officer, Michelle Adamson. The team is based at the Auchterderran Centre, Cardenden—contact - sarah.morrison@fife.gov.uk.

See page 2 for further details of Lift-Off activities



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See page 3 for further details of Transitions Activities



LIFT-OFF

LIFT-Off is the Forum's new schools programme and it has two main objectives:

To provide a strategic forum that brings together all involved in widening participation activities within the school sector. This will include further education colleges, universities, local authorities and other relevant initiatives or projects that work with schools in Fife and Tayside.

and through this;

To deliver a coherent programme of activities that will raise awareness of and aspiration to post school lifelong learning opportunities for young people who through disadvantage would not normally consider such options.

The following activities are being developed through Lift-Off:

S3/S4 Transition Programme This is a major development that will provide a focus for the schools programme in target schools and from which a range of pre and post activities will be developed. Plans are well underway for the first summer programme, "Lift-Off to Success" that will be held in the West Park Centre, Dundee from 6–11 August. 65 pupils from our 13 target schools will participate in an exciting programme of activities in colleges and universities.

Student Shadowing This project has been running since 2000. It will continue to work with target schools.

Information and Guidance A wide range of information, guidance and promotional materials, including a website, is being developed to support schools activities across the region. Stepping Higher 2006 will be available from the beginning of June 2006.

Fife Young Mothers Project This project is led by Fife Council and assists transition to further and higher education for this particularly vulnerable target group.

Am I Bothered? Uses drama and role play as a means to explore and challenge attitudes to achievement and further and higher education. It will also include production of a training video for wider use.

Access to Creative Industries This project will work with S2 pupils to raise awareness of, and aspiration to, careers in creative industries.

Student Ambassadors Develops support and training materials and matches students to pupils to raise aspirations and awareness of FE and HE opportunities



Information Literacy Project To develop information literacy and research skills and through this raise awareness of and aspiration to further and higher education.

WHAN Project Will develop a local network to provide access to a wide range of opportunities within Health and Allied Professions.

Working with Parents Uses drama to explore the issues that face parents in supporting and encouraging aspiration in their children. See report on page 5.

New Developments The following have been identified as development areas within the schools programme and projects to take these forward will be developed during 2006

- ◆ Pilot project to support traveller children progressing to further education. See page 5 for further information
- ◆ Longitudinal tracking of target groups
- ◆ Research into gender issues, particularly under-achievement of boys in schools.
- ◆ Use of digital media to engage young people.
- ◆ Choosing Science is a research project that will increase understanding of reasons pupils choose (or don't choose) to study science in schools across Fife and Tayside and the findings will help inform future developments in this area. This is being carried out for the Forum by the STEM Partnership

LIFT-OFF**Forum's "Forum" theatre hits the right note!**

Access practitioners from the Fife and Tayside Forum and beyond attended a drama performance on the evening of 23rd February at the University of Abertay, Dundee's student centre.

"Surviving Standard Grade: A Parents Guide to Sanity", developed by Alison Muir and Pauline Meikleham at Angus Council as part of LIFT OFF, is a means of engaging with parents whose children are studying for Standard Grades.

Consultation with parents allowed Alison and Pauline to construct a number of scenarios in which actors playing "Mum", "Dad" and their daughter demonstrated some of the issues that can arise at this difficult time, including:

- ◆ the problems of trying to study in an overcrowded house
- ◆ the pressures of having parents with very high expectations
- ◆ the extra choices that arise from unexpectedly good exam results
- ◆ to the distress caused when things don't go to plan

At the end of each scenario, the cast stayed in character giving the audience the opportunity to ask them questions



directly (thus "Forum" theatre). Together, the characters and the audience explored each situation to come up with positive solutions.

Feedback was extremely positive, with many praising the use of humour and the non-critical tone in the performance.

To ensure that we maintain the momentum of this project we have decided to appoint a project worker. Paul Weyer is a student at St Andrews University and joins us through the Link Scheme to look at ways of taking this innovative work forward. Over the summer Paul will prepare a business plan for the development of this project.

Fife Council and Elmwood College - Working with Young Travellers

Fife Council and Elmwood College are to work together on a groundbreaking new project to raise awareness of educational opportunities in the Traveller community in Fife.

Members of the Traveller Education team within the Council have identified that many young people from the Traveller community disengage with education post-primary school. Despite the multitude of full and part time courses available at colleges, many young Travellers are often unaware of these opportunities. Even those who are may not pursue them due to lack of

familiarity with the learning environment.

We are devising a model that will not only increase knowledge of what courses are available, but will also allow small groups of young people to spend time at Elmwood where they will be able to try some hands-on activity.

Although the initial pilot will work with teenagers, it is anticipated that by taking a good experience back home, they may generate interest from the rest of the community.

We are all looking forward to getting started.

TRANSITIONS

Pre-access Communities Project

A great deal of progress has been made on the Transitions theme 'Pre-access Communities Project' since its launch last July. An administrative framework has been established and five courses have been completed in Fife, Dundee and Angus, with six more planned to take place in Fife, Dundee, Angus and Perth & Kinross.

The type and structure of courses has been diverse and has included subject-areas such as, Forensic Science & Criminal Psychology; Child Development; the Environment, and History. All have been delivered in partnership and have prioritised SIMD zones. The breadth of these initiatives has increased our expertise, cultivating a portfolio of best practice in pre-access provision that can be built upon in the next two years. More importantly learners are benefiting from the expanding range of second chance routes into education.

For example, when asked about their participation in the recent 'World of Children' course that ran in North Arbroath, learners unanimously agreed on its benefits. June Thomassen said: "It made me realise that I have a future"; Debbie Nelson agreed, commenting: "It's built my confidence up - getting out and meeting other mothers and finding out you're not on your own." Heather Beattie enjoyed getting an

"overview of childcare work options", and Karen Cargill felt "it was enjoyable, I

learned a lot, I'm glad that we're going to get something else, and it made me feel human again." A more in depth follow up course is scheduled to begin in April and several current pre-access learners intend to enrol in full-time courses at Angus College in the autumn as a direct result.

From a practitioners' point of view, one of the most significant achievements over the last year has been the degree to which partners have co-operated enthusiastically to strengthen local networks and work in partnership. It is anticipated that partners will maintain their commitment and momentum to maximise pre-access provision across communities in Fife and Tayside over the next two years.

For further information please contact Ann Petrie, Transitions Development Officer at a.petrie@dundee.ac.uk

Currently I am working with colleagues in nursing to bring together, in September, a forum to discuss a new course structure that may more closely reflect the changing curriculum needs of the receiving HE institutions.

Other access course developments in the pipeline are: Access to Marine Science with the UHI; Access to Health and Nutrition with Abertay; and Access to Business and Creative Arts.

For further information contact: ian_swapeast@yahoo.co.uk



Participants in the "World of Children" event



Iain Luke, the SWAP East Project Officer and part of the Fife & Tayside Wider Access Forum Transition Team

TRANSITIONS

TRANSITIONS covers all post school learning, its objectives are:

To provide a strategic forum that brings together all involved in post school learning and contribute to community learning and development throughout the Fife and Tayside region through identifying gaps in provision and sharing good practice;

and through this:

To deliver a programme of activities that aims to engage adults and communities in lifelong learning activities and provide information and guidance on progression to further opportunities.

A range of exciting initiatives is planned for 2006/07

Pre-Access Activities

This project has been funded since June

2005 and aims to develop a range of pre-access activities for adults within target groups. It will also carry out a scoping exercise across the region to map existing provision, learning locations and identify gaps and development areas. To date provision has been developed across the region, targeting areas of both urban and rural deprivation. Further report on page 4

SCQF in Community Settings

Will develop and pilot the use of a range of

practical tools including PDP and RPL to help both practitioners and learners understand how the SCQF framework can assist progression. A project officer is currently being appointed to take this forward

Linking Learning to Employment Opportunities

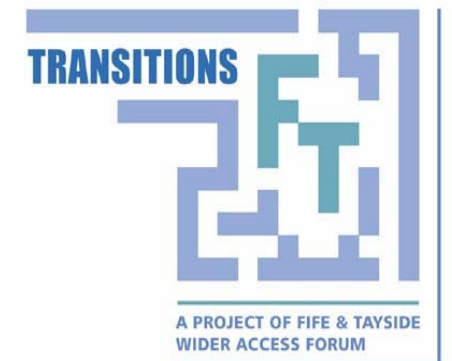
A web based resource that will

map progression routes, entry and exit points and potential destinations related to key growth occupational areas.

Transitional Guidance in Colleges

This will involve peer mentoring by

students on higher level courses, enhanced guidance activities for individuals and groups who are currently under-represented on HE courses and detailed tracking of student destinations.



Transition for Access Students

This programme will introduce students

to university environments through workshops held over two days that will, in addition to providing an insight into learning skills required in university, provide an opportunity to participate in workshops that may be subject specific or of general interest. It will be followed up with shadowing opportunities.

Student Mentoring in Colleges

This project will develop and introduce

student mentoring for non advanced and HN students in colleges.

SWAP-East

In addition to joint funding of the core activities, Fife and

Tayside Forum is funding a project officer whose remit is to work with the institutions in Fife and Tayside to raise awareness of SWAP programmes and identify new developments. SWAP East report on page 4

Diverse Routes to Higher Education

This project, led by the Open University in Scotland,

is being funded by all four Forums. It aims to develop an information pack for black and ethnic minority groups including refugees and asylum seekers. See page 6 for report.