



**ORKNEY**  
ISLANDS COUNCIL

**Item: 14**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 4 June 2025.**

**Developing the Young Workforce.**

**Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.**

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## **1. Overview**

- 1.1. Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Orkney is responsible for improving the link between education and the world of work, increasing young people's career awareness and skills development. This is done by developing employer engagement opportunities for young people, including work placement opportunities, workplace visits, employer talks and careers events. All of this is to help young people better understand their options, the various pathways into careers and enable them to make informed decisions about their future.
- 1.2. DYW Orkney comprises a Project Manager, an Administrative Assistant and three DYW School Co-ordinators who work in the two Secondary Schools and three Junior High Schools. The DYW School Co-ordinators work closely with Skills Development Scotland Careers Advisers, their respective school's Senior Leadership Teams and Guidance staff, as well as other partners, to support young people into a positive post-school destination.
- 1.3. The DYW School Co-ordinators develop employer engagement activities to suit the needs of their individual schools and the school's demographic.
- 1.4. During financial year 2024/25, DYW Orkney has delivered employer engagement activities to 5,415 young people, supported by 146 employers. DYW Orkney is fully funded by the Scottish Government.
- 1.5. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the key activities undertaken by DYW Orkney during 2024/25.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
  - i. Note the key activities of Developing the Young Workforce Orkney during 2024/25. as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

### 3. Next Steps

- 3.1. DYW Orkney has been provided with a full year of funding from the Scottish Government, up to 31 March 2026, of £238,601. Furthermore, the Scottish Government has given indicative funding of £238,601.01 for financial year 2026/27.
- 3.2. This funding will enable the planning and delivery of two more years of activity, including the fourth Orkney Careers Fair in 2026.
- 3.3. DYW Orkney will continue to build on the work undertaken in 2024/25, offering more young people the opportunity to take part in targeted employer engagement activity.
- 3.4. The team will continue to work with local schools, Skills Development Scotland, UHI Orkney, Community Learning, Development and Employability and other key employability partners to develop and deliver employer engagement activity to meet the needs to individuals.

#### **For Further Information please contact:**

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#### **Implications of Report**

- 1. Financial** – DYW Orkney received a grant of £248,026 from the Scottish Government for financial year 2024/25. This funding covers the salaries for all DYW Orkney staff and the activities developed and delivered by the team. Funding of £238,601 has been provided for financial year 2025/26.
- 2. Legal** – Not applicable.
- 3. Corporate Governance** – Not applicable.
- 4. Human Resources** – Not applicable.
- 5. Equalities** – Not applicable.
- 6. Island Communities Impact** – Not applicable.
- 7. Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
  - ☐ Growing our economy.
  - ☐ Strengthening our Communities.
  - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
  - ☐ Transforming our Council.

**8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Priorities:

- ☐ Cost of Living.
- ☐ Sustainable Development.
- ☐ Local Equality.
- ☐ Improving Population Health.

**9. Environmental and Climate Risk** – Not applicable

**10. Risk** - Not applicable.

**11. Procurement** - Not applicable.

**12. Health and Safety** - Not applicable

**13. Property and Assets** - Not applicable

**14. Information Technology** - Not applicable

**15. Cost of Living-** Not applicable

#### **List of Background Papers**

None.

#### **Appendix 1** – DYW Annual Report



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## **Appendix 1 – DYW Annual Report**

### **1. Orkney Careers Fair**

- 1.1. Developed and delivered in partnership with the Orkney Skills Development Scotland (SDS) team, the third Orkney Careers Fair was held in October 2024, in the Arena of the Pickaquoy Centre. A biennial event, it is open to all senior phase pupils, college and university students, parents and carers and, the general public.
- 1.2. A total of 64 stands, featuring 76 exhibitors including local employers, education and training providers and local support services were on hand to speak to those visiting the event.
- 1.3. Employers were on hand to speak about the careers and jobs available in their sector and give advice about training or education routes into those careers as well as the skills they look for when recruiting.
- 1.4. Training providers, universities and colleges were able to give tailored advice about the different courses they offer which may suit a particular career or sector.
- 1.5. Support services were on hand to speak about how they can help individuals take the next step on their career journey.
- 1.6. In the run up to the event, SDS and DYW Orkney staff delivered preparatory sessions to pupils, parents and carers and exhibitors to help them prepare for the event. A dedicated section on the DYW Orkney website was also set up and publicised before the event to help people prepare and plan who they wanted to speak to.
- 1.7. The event was attended by over 900 young people and adults, approximately 550 of whom were senior phase pupils from Stromness Academy, Kirkwall Grammar School and Sanday, Stronsay and Westray Junior High Schools. In addition, two teachers and 13 senior pupils from Farr High School in Bettyhill attend the event.

### **2. Farm to Fork Event**

- 2.1. Delivered in partnership with the Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET), Farm to Fork was an early careers event for S1 pupils developed to help them explore the wider careers associated with the agricultural sector. Pupils were able to speak to exhibitors to learn more about how food is produced by farmers, then used by local food and drink producers in the final product.

- 2.2. Exhibitors included local farmers who produce crops, vegetables, eggs, beef and lamb. They spoke to pupils about the crop growing process, how animals are cared for and fed on the farm and the importance of welfare standards.
- 2.3. Food producers included local butchers, Donaldson's of Orkney, Orkney Cheese and Brough Bakes who all showed pupils how local produce is used in food they may be familiar with in shops and at the dinner table. Pupils could also watch a butchery demonstration and learn more about different cuts of meat.
- 2.4. A total of 230 pupil from local secondary and junior high schools attended the event.

### **3. Stromness Academy Careers Week**

- 3.1. Careers Week is an annual week of activity held at Stromness Academy. Now in its sixth year, it was developed to support S3 pupils as they make their subject choices for fourth year.
- 3.2. Throughout the week, pupils learn about some of the careers available to them in Orkney and hear about the different pathways they can take to achieve their future career. The aim of the week is to inspire pupils and help them make more informed choices for the subjects they want to study in S4 and beyond.
- 3.3. The week's activity included an opening assembly where they heard from an inspirational speaker, took part in games to help them explore careers, and learnt about the support available to them as they prepare to move on from school to further education, training or employment.
- 3.4. A series of workplace visits were offered throughout the week, with pupils choosing from a visit to the Garden Square development; a tour of UHI Orkney's Maritime Department, the MV Graemsay and a pilot boat; Argo's Bakery or, Hamnavoe House. All visits gave pupils a chance to see 'behind the scenes' of a workplace and learn more about the different careers available.
- 3.5. Four 'Lunch with an Employer' sessions were also held, offering a variety of activities to help pupils learn more about some of the skills they may need in a particular business. Employers included Youth Services, Box'd Orkney, BAM Nuttall and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.6. The week concluded with a careers fair held in the school which was attended by 16 exhibitors and open to all S3-S6 pupils, with S1 and S2 pupils attending a drop-in session over break-time.

- 3.7. Throughout the week, S3 pupils had the opportunity to engage with 25 different businesses and organisations, learning about a variety of careers and pathways.

## **4. Health and Wellbeing Marketplace**

- 4.1. Kirkwall Grammar School hosted a health and wellbeing event to support senior pupils in the run up to their exams, which was organised by the school's DYW Co-ordinator and Guidance Team.
- 4.2. The purpose of the event was to encourage pupils to take care of their mental and physical wellbeing while they complete final practical assessments and prepare for their SQA exams.
- 4.3. The event began with an introductory assembly which gave pupils the chance to learn more about the day's activities and hear from three guest speakers. The guest speakers were: Liam McArthur MSP, who opened the event; Musician and Radio Orkney presenter Marcus Cordock and, Gina McMahon from NHS Orkney.
- 4.4. Throughout the morning pupils were taken to a Health and Wellbeing Marketplace in the school where 17 local organisations were on hand to promote the support that is available to help young people to navigate this stage in their life, as well as some of the extracurricular and mindful activities they can access to take care of their physical and mental wellbeing.
- 4.5. During lunch break, a line dancing session was open to all pupils in the school Games Hall, while senior pupils could attend a session with a Personal Trainer in the Fitness Suite.

## **5. Other Activity**

- 5.1. In addition to the above activities, the DYW Orkney team supported 115 pupils to undertake a work placement, supported by 51 employers. This included placements to facilitate apprenticeship or training opportunities when they leave school and placements to give pupils an insight into their preferred career, or to gain experience to help them apply for a job, apprenticeship, college or university course.
- 5.2. 'Lunch with an Employer' continued at Stromness Academy, with 17 employers attending throughout the academic year, engaging with an average of 75 pupils per session. These inputs let pupils engage with employers in an informal, relaxed environment, learning about local businesses and organisations, careers and routes and pathways. They have developed into very interactive sessions, with employers taking along hands on activities for pupils to try out.

- 5.3. A partnership with the Early Learning and Childcare team saw the Solihull Approach for Young People delivered to pupils interested in a career working with babies and young children. The course gives an insight into early childhood development, helping pupils to gain the skills and knowledge they will need in their future career. The course was offered at Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy with 24 pupils across both schools taking part.
- 5.4. The school leavers' programme, Planning for the Future, is delivered in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and offered to pupils who planned to leave school at the end of the academic year. Delivered as a two-day intensive programme, with sessions in Stromness and Kirkwall, the programme helps pupils explore their options, identify their skills and provides them with the tools to write a CV, complete an application form and prepare for an interview. The programme ends with a mock interview session with local employers. This year, 25 pupils attended the programme.
- 5.5. NHS Orkney and GPs from Heilendi Medical Practice offered a Medical Careers Insight session to pupils in S3, S4 and S5 who are studying two or more sciences, the session gave an insight into following a path into the medical profession. Pupils were given tips on how to gain experience and develop transferrable skills to help them when applying to university or when working. There was also a practical element which gave them the chance to learn basic life-saving skills, using a defibrillator and how to help someone who is choking. Forty-seven pupils attended the session.
- 5.6. Heritage Careers Week is a national campaign held annually at the end of October. Kirkwall Grammar School held a careers event for their S3 History classes to learn more about careers in the heritage sector. The event included Tour Guides, local Museums, Orkney Library and Archive, Historic Environment Scotland and UHI Orkney's Archaeology Institute.
- 5.7. To support the senior phase subject choice period, a UHI Orkney Taster Session was held for all S3 pupils so they could learn more about the subjects they can study at the college as part of their school timetable. Departments provided information about courses and the progression they can offer to future learning, training and employment. To help pupils engage in a more relaxed manner, staff put on fun and hands on activities. The event also acts as a soft introduction to the college and a different learning environment.