

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 28 May 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out Falkirk Council's strategies to implement 'Opportunities for All' within the authority and improve outcomes for all young people.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 'Opportunities for All' was officially launched by the Scottish Government on 1 April 2012. It brings together a range of existing national and local policies and strategies as a single focus to improve young people's participation in post 16 learning or training, and ultimately employment. This will be achieved through appropriate interventions and support until at least their 20th birthday.
- 2.2 This strategy builds on and adds impetus to existing entitlements to support youth employment through the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence, as outlined in a similar report to Education Executive. It includes the development of skills for learning, life and work, robust transitions through 16+ Learning Choices and the targeted support through More Choices, More Chances.
- 2.3 'Opportunities for All' is an explicit commitment to offer a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not currently in employment, education or training. It ensures access for all Falkirk Council's young people to a range of opportunities, including:
- staying on at school
 - college and university courses
 - educational training programmes,
 - Activity Agreements
 - additional opportunities offered through Community Jobs Scotland, Real Jobs Scotland and Jobcentre Plus.
- 2.5 'Opportunities for All' enhances Falkirk Council's endorsement of GIRFEC (Getting it right for every child).

3. DELIVERY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL - Strategic Overview

3.1 The Scottish Government has provided a package of financial and practical support for local authorities. These include:

- Grant funding to co-ordinate the local delivery of Opportunities for All. Within Falkirk Council, in partnership with corporate services, this has been used to second a Depute Headteacher from a secondary school who has the strategic responsibility to work with partner agencies and the Local Employability Partnership to make sure a viable offer is made to all 16-19 year old young people.
- 16+ Learning Choices seeks to ensure that all young people, well in advance of reaching their statutory leaving date, are made an offer of appropriate post-16 learning. This development is central to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in realising Falkirk Council's commitment to improving participation rates and learning post-16.
- Funding of Activity Agreements. These are offers for post school young people who on leaving school have not secured a positive destination. These agreements are targeted at vulnerable groups of young people aged 16-19 to support their transition into learning, training or employment. Within Falkirk Council these opportunities are organised and led by the Community Learning and Development Team.

3.2 Curriculum for Excellence - The Senior Phase

3.2.1 Every young person is entitled to a Senior Phase which:

- Provides opportunities for specialisation, depth and rigour.
- Prepares them for achieving a range of qualifications at the highest level of which they are capable.
- Develops skills for life, work and learning.
- Provides a range of activities which develop the four capacities.
- Facilitates an appropriate offer of post-16 learning for their chosen pathway.
- Supports them to achieve a positive sustained destination.
- Is delivered through motivating coherent learning programmes.
- Provides opportunities to contribute to decision making.
- Provides an opportunity to experience the workplace at an appropriate point within the senior phase.
- Provides access to vocational and academic learning experiences.
- Provides access to careers information, advice and guidance.

3.2.2 Through these entitlements schools are building a flexible system that offers personalisation and choice to meet the needs of all young people, wherever their learning is taking place. During the Senior Phase, it will be increasingly common for a young person to learn through a range of providers, including schools, colleges, community learning and development and other less formal settings. These entitlements will continue to prepare young people with the necessary skills required to move on to a positive destination.

3.3 Local Employability Partnership

To enable systematic planning for transitions, The Falkirk Council Local Employability Partnership, which includes officers from the Employment Training Unit, Education Services, Community Learning and Development, Forth Valley College, Skills Development Scotland, Job Centre Plus and the Voluntary Sector, sets out to:

- Systematically plan for transitions.
- Work with a wide range of providers to ensure sufficient high quality learning/training opportunities and supports are available locally
- Ensure all relevant partners identify, track and monitor young people up to their 20th birthday
- Co-ordinate and ensure that young people most at risk of not entering a positive destination progress along the Strategic Skills Pipeline with the ultimate aim that they will go into full time sustainable employment. The Strategic Skills Pipeline is the Scottish Government tool to gauge the progress of young people as they move towards sustained employment. It has five stages with stage one aimed at those furthest away from employment and stage five being for those on Modern Apprenticeships.

4. DELIVERY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL - Operational Overview

4.1 Outlined below are some of the developments to ensure that all young people within Falkirk are given an opportunity to progress to a positive destination.

4.2 16+ School Transition Groups

4.2.1 These groups identify young people most at risk of not entering a positive destination. The group has representatives from key agencies and will identify potential pathways through the senior phase and start planning for when they leave school.

4.2.2 This information will then be used by the Youth Transitions Workstream, which is part of the Falkirk Local Employability Partnership, to provide intelligence on what future provision will be required to enable these young people to enter a positive destination.

4.2 16+ Authority Transition Groups

4.3.1 These groups are set up at authority level to discuss young people at risk of not entering a positive destination but are not attending mainstream education. This would include young people:

- looked after away from home
- at residential schools
- at secure units
- with complex and significant disabilities.

4.2.1 The groups will collate relevant information on the young people and to identify appropriate opportunities for them to progress into a positive destination.

4.3 Data Capture

- 4.3.1 Each secondary school will collate all relevant information on each young person. This 16+ Leaver Destination Data will be entered onto each school's management system and updated on a regular basis.
- 4.3.2 Information is extracted centrally on a fortnightly basis to the 16+ Learning Choices Data Exchange Portal (The Data Hub). Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is able to extract the information from The Data Hub which informs them of the potential career aspirations of young people. It will also inform them of areas of concern eg young people at risk of not going into a positive destination and share this information with appropriate partners such as the Employment Training Unit and Community Learning and Development.

5. **SCHOOLS/FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP**

- 5.1 Consortium arrangements between Falkirk Council Secondary schools and Forth Valley College have been ongoing since 2001 and allow young people opportunities to attend college during the school day to gain qualifications in subjects that schools have been unable to deliver. These include:
- Skills for Work Courses in, Engineering, Creative Industries, Early Education and Childcare and Construction Crafts.
 - Courses not readily available within schools such as Psychology, Mechatronics, Introduction to Hair and Beauty and Media Studies.
 - The interdisciplinary project as part of the Scottish Science Baccalaureate.
- 5.2 To improve the number of young people going on to further education a strategic working group was set up to identify new opportunities for young people to attend Forth Valley College. Two areas have now been taken forward.
- 5.3 The SCOTS Course (Schools-College Opportunities to Succeed Course) is designed for young people who are not sure whether college is an option for them **or** not sure what they would do if they applied.
- In year one, young people will attend Forth Valley College one afternoon a week to participate in a range of three week 'Taster' courses to cover the many varied and diverse courses available. These will include construction; hair and beauty; care; engineering; business, administration and tourism; fitness, health and exercise and science and computing. During this year, within their schools, young people will also work on their Skills for Work, and Employability Skills. It is envisaged that they would complete some of the accredited units as part of the Falkirk Employability Award.
 - In year two, young people who successfully complete the 'Taster Year' will have the opportunity to apply, through the consortium, for a Skills for Work course in their favourite subject area and to gain appropriate SQA accreditation.
 - In year three, young people who successfully complete the Year 2 course would, if eligible, be fully supported in applying for a full time course.

- For those young people who are unsuccessful in completing either year one or year two, relevant information will be passed on to Skills Development Scotland, the Falkirk Employment Training Unit, Community Learning and Development and any other relevant partner to assist in making sure an appropriate offer of a positive destination is secured.

5.4 HNC Mechanical/Electrical Engineering - This course is designed for young people keen to pursue a career in the engineering industry. It allows:

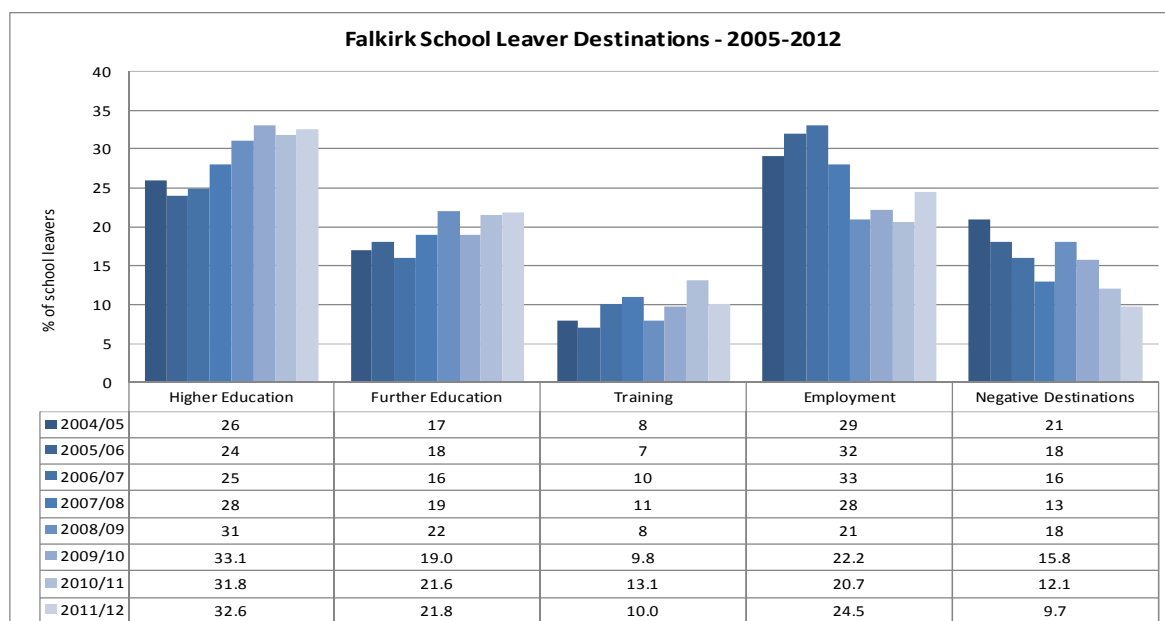
- The potential for a young person to complete an HNC in either Electrical or Mechanical Engineering along with their other school qualifications, by attending Forth Valley College one day a week during their S5 and S6 years. This would enable a 'fast track' route to an HND/Degree in an area of Engineering.
- Opportunities within the senior phase for young people to complete some engineering units which would assist if they were considering engineering as a potential career option. An example of an appropriate unit would be 'Mathematics for Engineering.'

6. MEASURING SUCCESS

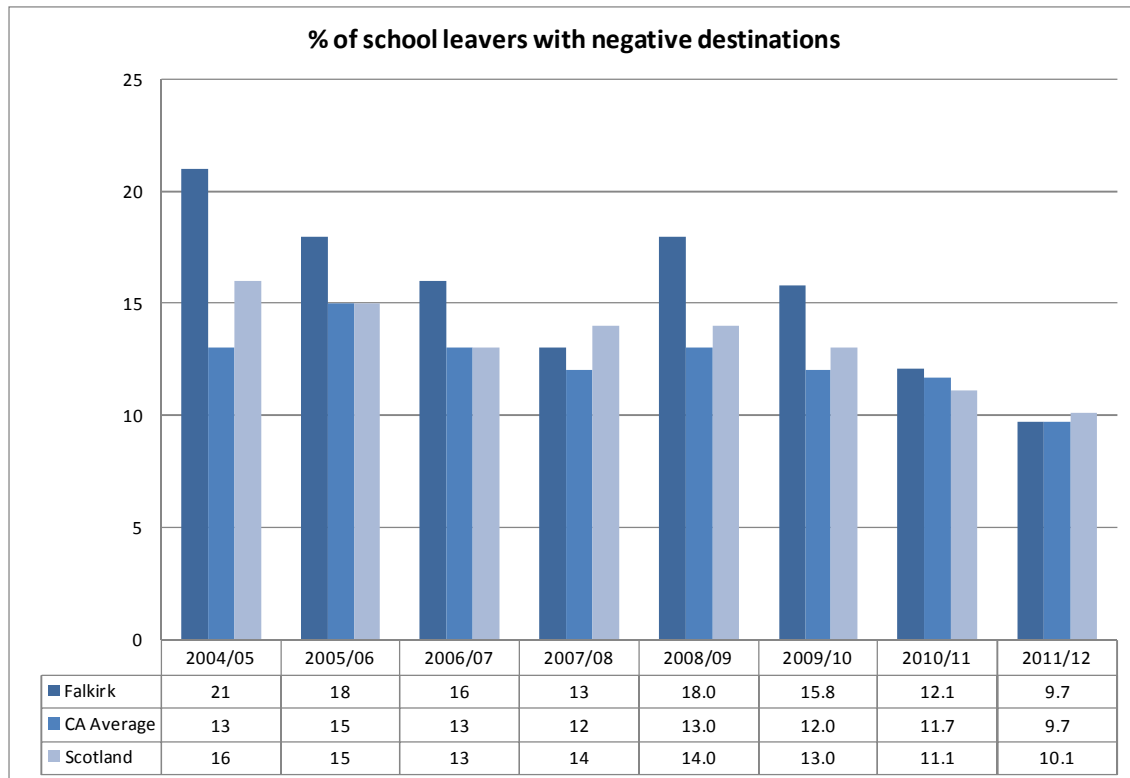
6.1 At present Skills Development Scotland produce an annual report on the leaver destinations of young people. The School Leavers Destination Report (SLDR) shows the destination of young people who leave publicly funded mainstream secondary schools. It categorises the destination of young people into the following areas:

- Higher Education
- Further Education
- Training
- Employment
- Negative Destination

6.2 The table below shows the Falkirk School Leaver Destinations from 2005 through to 2012:

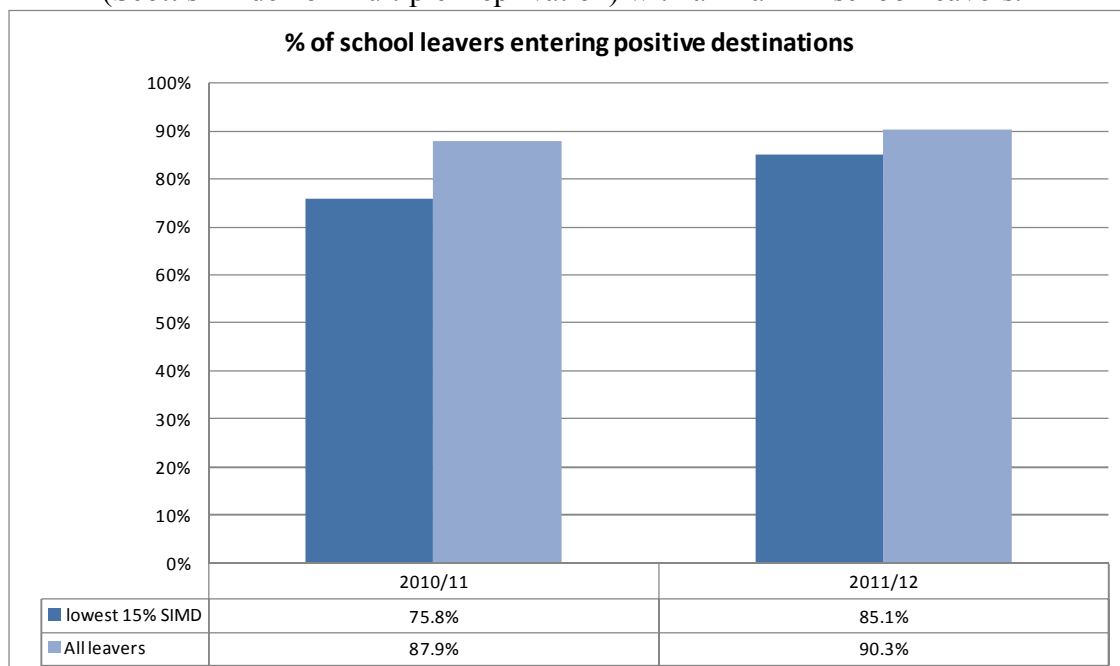


- 6.3 The chart below shows the percentage of Falkirk Pupils leaving school with a negative destination compared with the Scottish average and the average of our comparator authorities.



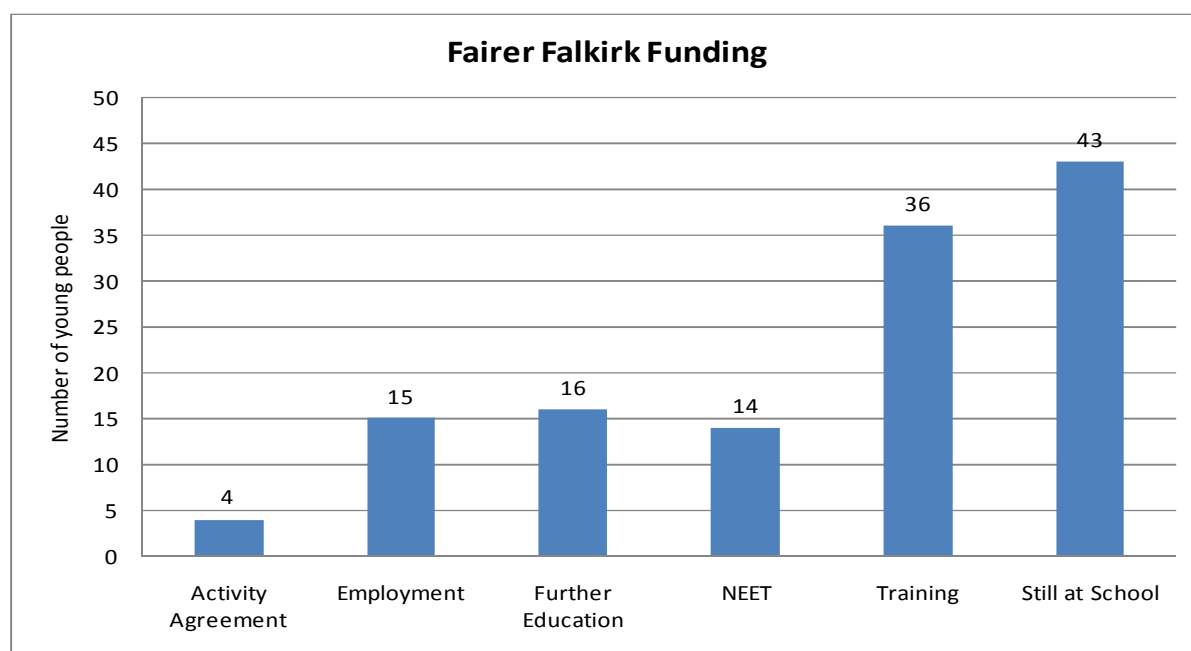
This session 2011/12, Falkirk's negative destinations figure is lower than the average and for the first time, equals the average of our comparator authorities.

- 6.4 The chart below shows the percentage of pupils entering positive destinations over the past 2 years, and compares those Falkirk pupils living in the lowest 15% SIMD areas (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) with all Falkirk school leavers.



Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 there was a 2.4% increase in the number of Falkirk school leavers entering positive destinations. Of those pupils living in the lowest 15% SIMD areas, the increase was much greater (9.3%).

- 6.5 Falkirk Secondary Schools were able to use Fairer Falkirk Funding to help a total of 137 young people. These young people were identified by secondary schools as those most at risk of not going into a positive destination. The funding was used by schools to create innovative courses and opportunities for young people to improve their core literacy and numeracy skills and develop employability skills. 128 of these young people were included in the SLDR and their leaver destinations are shown in the chart below.



114 young people out of the 128 included in the SLDR figures went into a positive destination (89.1%). This is 1.2% lower than the authority figure for all leavers but 4% higher than those in the bottom 15% SIMD. 43, (31%) young people decided to stay on at school to continue to gain additional qualifications.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Over the last few years, despite severe economic difficulties across the country, the positive destinations of young people within Falkirk Council have continued to rise.
- 7.2 With secondary schools entering the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, more opportunities for flexible learning will be available to meet the needs of all learners.
- 7.3 Improved links between Secondary Schools and Forth Valley College will lead to an increase in the number of young people moving on to further education as their first priority.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 That Education Executive:

- (i) notes the further development of close partnership working between Education Services, the Employment Training Unit, Skills Development Scotland and Forth Valley College; and**
- (ii) approves the strategies adopted further to improve the positive destination profile of all young people in Falkirk up to the age of 20 as set out in the objectives of 'Opportunities for All'.**

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Director of Education

Date: 16 May 2013

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL