

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Highers and an apprenticeship were just the job

A chat with a school guidance teacher set one Glasgow teenager on a completely different career path

A Foundation Apprenticeship led to Monisha Sandhu deciding on a complete change of career.

The 17-year-old, from Glasgow, had planned to go to university to study psychology but heard about an opportunity to gain an industry recognised qualification in financial services.

"My guidance teacher told me about how I could go to college while I was doing my Highers and I thought that it was different and that I would try it," Monisha says.

Having enrolled in a Foundation Apprenticeship in Financial Services she spent two afternoons every week at City of Glasgow College, as well as more than four weeks on placements at Barclays Stockbrokers.

"It was hard work because we knew we had to study for exams and we had college work as well. At college they know that everyone learns in different ways, so that was really good for me."

While working at Barclay's Stockbrokers she created a proposal to initiate improvements which was presented to senior management. She also held a networking afternoon to get to know her colleagues.

"I had never had a job before and it was such an eye opener," Monisha says.

"After the very first day I thought, 'this is exactly what I want to do and

where I want to be', which seems unbelievable as it wasn't something I had even considered until then."

She gained four Highers alongside her FA in Financial Services and was accepted on the Barclays Stockbrokers' Modern Apprenticeship programme.

Diane Greenlees, Head of Foundation and Graduate Level Apprenticeships at Skills Development Scotland, says: "By combining learning at college and in a real workplace Foundation Apprenticeships are an ideal way for pupils to gain real experience working on real projects with some of Scotland's biggest and best employers."

"A Foundation Apprenticeship is taken alongside school subjects, such as National 5s and Highers, giving young people a taste of their future career before leaving school. This helps them to develop workplace knowledge and skills as they work towards an industry-recognised qualification in key growth sectors of the Scottish economy."

"Foundation Apprenticeships are based on existing Modern Apprenticeships and equip young people with the qualifications, experience and skills that employers want, so individuals who thrive in a work-based setting can complete a related Modern Apprenticeship in less time, helping them to get a head start in their career. They are also recognised qualifications for admission to college and university."

"Foundation Apprenticeships are expanding across Scotland in a range of subjects matched to key growth sectors. If your child is going into S5 and thinking about subject choices and their future career I'd encourage you to go online and find out more."

● Visit apprenticeships.scot/foundation



Monisha Sandhu: "After the very first day I thought, 'this is exactly what I want to do and where I want to be,'" she says

How advisers remain in harmony with pupils' best interests

How careers advisers in schools support pupils to make informed subject choices.

Group activities

Building career management skills, these sessions aim to prepare young people to make confident, informed subject choices. Discussions will explore career pathways, challenge traditional gender stereotypes and introduce the support offered by My World of Work's subject choices tool.

One-to-one sessions

The careers adviser will support the young person in exploring the impact of choices, understand what or who is influencing them and discuss the guidance offered by My World of

Work's subject choices tool. Parents and teachers can get involved in this discussion or at another time.

Drop-in service

In addition to their planned appointments and activities, careers advisers set aside specific time for drop-in sessions. Young people can seek guidance on what they want, such as subject choices, whenever they want and without making an appointment or giving advanced notice.

Guidance supplied by his school career adviser proved invaluable to Fat Brestovca. A rising star of the broadcast world, Fat's way into radio presenting came as a result of support

offered by Kirsty Young, the careers adviser at Hillhead School in Glasgow.

"Unlike a lot of other creative industries the routes into radio weren't as obvious to me," he says. "That's when having a careers adviser who I could talk to really came into its own." Through Kirsty, Fat met a contact at Bauer Radio, leading to the 20-year-old being offered a place at Bauer Academy where he learnt key industry skills. He now hosts a morning radio show.

"As soon as I met Fat I had no doubt he'd succeed in realising his dreams," Kirsty says.

"I just helped by giving a little push with linking up what he wanted to do with the opportunities out there, and helped him to start making contacts."

Family friendly chats point out pupils' strengths

Whatever year you are in, talking to a careers adviser can be helpful — and mum and dad can be useful, too

When Ella Johns was invited to attend an appointment with her school's SDS careers adviser in S2, she knew that having her parents by her side would help her make the best decision.

Along with her classmates at Trinity High, Renfrewshire, the 14-year-old was offered the opportunity to talk over her National 4 and 5 subject choices with her mother and father. For Ella, it proved to be one of the best decisions of her school life.

"We had the chance of opting in and going with your parents, going by ourselves or not going," she explains. "My mum said: 'let's go and see what's happening'."

"When I was there, the adviser spoke to me and showed me My World of Work. She asked what I liked and did not like and what my strongest points were."

Then aged 13, Ella felt uncertain



Talking to her careers adviser helped not only Ella but her mum and dad, too



about what she wanted to do when she finished school. Instead her adviser, Emma, got her to concentrate on those subjects she already enjoyed rather than placing too much pressure on her future.

"Emma was a really nice person," Ella says. "She asked me what I thought I was good at and from there she showed me the different things I could do when I left school, plus combinations of subjects that would be best."

Since primary school Ella knew she loved art and design, so with Emma's help at the appointment she was able to use her preferences to generate ideas she had been unaware of previously.

"Emma brought in the idea of graphic communication, which I really enjoy," Ella explains.

"She also asked me which science subject I wanted to pick. Emma helped me to choose chemistry. It is now one of my overall favourites."

Ella's mother, Audrey, 46, witnessed

first-hand the positive effect of the careers adviser and My World of Work.

"I think 13 is still very young to know what subjects you want to take," Audrey says. "Any help they can get at that age is tremendous."

"If one of Ella's friends had taken physics, she might have taken it, too. But her adviser was able to see that what Ella liked about science, she would like about chemistry."

"It is only a small thing but it shows how advantageous it was for Ella to have that advice because she loves the subject now."

Audrey has also appreciated the extra support when guiding her daughter through school.

"Sometimes when your parents speak to you about what you want to do after school, you don't really take it on board," she says. "So to get back-up from somebody else has been great."

Parents, carers and young people can keep up to date with all the latest information from My World of Work on facebook.com/myworldofwork or [@mywowscotland](https://twitter.com/mywowscotland) on Twitter.

There'll be hints, tips and further info throughout the year on a wide range of career-related subjects.

● www.myworldofwork.co.uk/parents