**Since 2014 there has been a new way to get qualified — while pupils are still at school. Foundation Apprenticeships allow young-ster in 33 to get industry-recognised qualifications while spending valuable time in the workplace. They usually take two years to complete, with pupils spending part of the week out of school, getting hands-on experi-ence at college and with a local employer. They work on real projects with some of Scotland’s biggest and best employers — from Barclays’ stockbrokers to Network Rail and NHS Scotland.**

Available in a range of subjects matched to growing industries, they can allow for accelerated entry into Modern Apprenticeships and are also recognised for admission for many colleges and universities. And they have gone from strength to strength since their introduction.

Diane Greenlees, Head of Foundation and Graduate Level Apprenticeships at SDS, said: “By combining learning at college and with some of Scotland’s top employers, Foundation Apprenticeships are an ideal way for young people to gain knowledge and skills that are applied in real work-pla-ces as they work towards an industry-recog-nised qualification.”

“A Foundation Apprenticeship is taken alongside other school subjects, like Na-tional 5s and Highers, and gives young people a taste of their future career before they leave school. They open up options so when people leave school whether they want to continue an Apprenticeship, apply to college or uni or go into a job, they have the skills and experience an employer wants.”

She added: “Foundation Apprenticeships are expanding across Scotland in a range of subjects. If your child is going into S5, visit apprenticeships.scot/foundation and find out more.”

**Connor** Waldron signed up to the first Foundation Apprenticeship in Engineering in 2014 and is now a Modern Apprentice with his local authority. Connor, 18, a former pupil at St Kenti-gem’s Academy in Bathgate, West Lothian, said: “When I was at school I thought I didn’t need a qualification to show people that I can work hard.”

“Then I was really surprised when I got to go to college.”

“I felt it was a make-or-break situation for me, but I wanted to make a go of it.”

Connor spent time at West Lothian Coll- and completed the work-based ele-ments of his Foundation Apprenticeship in Fleet Services at West Lothian Council.

Last November, Connor’s achieve-ment was recognised when he became the very first Foundation Apprentice of the Year at the Scottish Apprenticeship Awards, organised by Skills Development Scotland.

Having completed his Foundation Appren-ticeship in summer he is now employed as a Modern Apprentice in HGV Vehicle Maintenance at West Lothian Council. A normal working day involves replacing tyr-es, fixing brakes and carrying out repairs, keeping the coun-cil’s vehicles on the road.

Joe Drew, Fleet and Commu-nity Transport Manager at West Lothian Council, said: “We were really impressed with the level of maturity and commitment to study demonstrated by Connor during his Founda-tion Apprenticeship.”

“Connor had already completed a Foundation Apprenticeship with us and demonstrated his enthusiasm and com-mitment over a two-year period put him in a very strong position at interview.”

“Not only does Connor have industry-relevant knowledge, skills and experience, he also understands what it takes to succeed in a busy workshop. Connor has hit the ground running and we’re delighted that he’s chosen to develop his career with West Lothian Council. “For more information visit apprenticeships.scot/foundation

**LEARN WORK SKILLS AS A FOUNDATION APPRENTICE**

**You have tools to succeed**

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**ADVICE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE AT ANY AGE**

Skills Development Scotland has an array of qualified careers advisers in centres and schools helping young people realise their potential — for free.

Careers adviser Erin Bartley has been work-ing with youngsters for 11 years and has seen how extra support from the My World of Work web service helps those feeling a bit lost.

She said: “My World of Work builds on what we’re working with them on, helping them to understand themselves a bit more and their strengths, skills and areas they could develop. It helps open them up to seeing careers that never occurred to them. It also helps them with key skills, like building their CV, applications and job searching.”

Erin, inset, is passionate about the role she plays with SDS. She said: “I love my job. I get to talk, be creative and every day I get to hear about people’s lives, their hopes, dreams and aspirations — and get to help them achieve them.”

Young people are faced with a lot of nega-tivity, they often hear the word ‘no’ and are told how difficult life can be. My job lets me say ‘yes, you can!’ and support them. Our job as a careers adviser is not to tell people what they can or cannot do but hopefully we open their eyes to the possibilities they can reach for. The exciting part is helping them to broaden their career ideas and look at differ-ent routes to achieving their goals.”

“My World of Work proved to be a lifeline for a pupil whose dreams came crushing down when she failed to get into uni.”

Erin said: “One girl I worked with wanted to be a PE teacher but didn’t get the grades she needed to get straight into university. She was devastated. I worked with her on explor-ing other routes that enabled her to go to coll-ege, earn uni and she’s about to qualify as a PE teacher.”

Erin works in schools providing a mix of groups that are applied to drop-in services to support kids. She sees a change in trend with young-sters realising uni isn’t the only option and it isn’t the end of the world if they choose a different path.

Meanwhile, work coach Navid Siddiq- below, supports young people aged 15-19 from SDS careers centres.

But My World of Work still plays a big role in his day-to-day working life.

He said: “The web service is there to help pupils, parents and adults who want assist-ance with career planning.”

“We try to deliver the right support and guidance so they can make positive steps towards improving their prospects.”

Working from an SDS careers centre, Navid gets referrals from the organisation, col-leagues in schools, partner organisations, parents and through word-of-mouth.

But My World of Work isn’t just for young-sters. He said: “It is a good resource for adults to use too — the web service is really for anyone who needs a bit of career information and advice.”

See myworldofwork.co.uk/centres to find your local SDS careers centre or speak to your school careers adviser.

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