



SINCE 2014 there has been a new way to get qualified — while pupils are still at school. Foundation Apprenticeships allow youngsters in S5 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 experience 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-places as they work towards an industry-recognised qualification.

"A Foundation Apprenticeship is taken alongside other school subjects, like National 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 Kentigern'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 College and completed the work-based elements of his Foundation Apprenticeship in Fleet Services at West Lothian Council.

Last November, Connor's achievement was recognised when he became the very first Foundation Apprentice of the Year at the Scottish

You have tools to succeed

LEARN WORK SKILLS AS A FOUNDATION APPRENTICE

Apprenticeship Awards, organised by Skills Development Scotland.

Having completed his Foundation Apprenticeship in summer he is now employed as a Modern Apprentice in HGV Vehicle Maintenance at West Lothian Council. A normal working day involves replacing tyres, fixing brakes and carrying out repairs, keeping the council's vehicles on the road.

Joe Drew, Fleet and Community 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 Foundation Apprenticeship.

"It was obvious that he wanted to pursue a career in engineering and he seemed to thrive in the work environment.

"When the Council decided to recruit two Modern Apprentices the fact that Connor had already completed a Foundation Apprenticeship with us and demonstrated his enthusiasm and commitment 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

Barclays apprentice
Marta
Zalewska



ADVICE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE AT ANY AGE

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

Careers adviser Erin Bartley has been working 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 I get to help them achieve them.

"Young people are faced with a lot of negativity, 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 different routes to achieving their goals."

My World of Work proved to be a lifeline for a pupil whose dreams came crashing 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 exploring other routes that enabled her to go to college, then uni and she's about to qualify as a PE teacher."

Erin works in school providing a mix of group sessions, one-to-one interviews and drop-in services to support kids. She sees a change in trend with youngsters 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 Siddique, *below*, supports young people aged 15-19 from an SDS careers centre.

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 assistance 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, colleagues in schools, partner organisations, parents and through word-of-mouth.

But My World of Work isn't just for youngsters. He said: "It is a good tool 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.

