

# Newsletter

## Earn & Learn: supporting young people and employers in Dundee

Discover Work partnership are delighted to celebrate the success of young people and employers on the first round of Earn & Learn Opportunities this year. As part of wider [efforts to help more young people in Dundee find a positive destination](#), Discover Work partners created 18 month paid trainee positions within their organisations to offer young people the chance to earn a wage whilst completing a vocational qualification (SVQ).

[Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce](#), [The Circle](#), [Dundee & Angus College](#) and [Developing the Young Workforce Tay Cities](#) took on 6 young people in January 2026, with [Dundee City Council](#) set to take on up to 15 young people later this year.



Maisie (left) and her manager Gillian (right)

With [young people facing an increasingly tough job market](#), Discover Work partner organisations have worked to create business, administration, youth work and marketing opportunities in their teams alongside Modern Apprenticeship frameworks to suit the roles.

Maisie, who took on the role of Membership Administrator at Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce took some time to reflect on her experience so far:

*"Before this apprenticeship I was working part time at an ice cream shop in Dundee city centre. They told the staff they were to close over the festive period which left me without work, so I got in touch with Owen from Barnardo's [...] and told him about the situation I was in."*

On the rewards of the apprenticeship, Maisie said: *"I have gained skills in an area of work which I had little to no experience in and grown with my confidence in using these skills. Also with the amazing team at the chamber, I have more self-belief in that I can do the tasks I do here at the chamber and I am capable of doing things I didn't know I could do before."*



Jon at his workplace, The Circle

Offering her thoughts for others in a similar position Maisie continued: *"[An apprenticeship] gives you the work experience and support to learn valuable skills while in the workplace and having the protected time to complete college work is so helpful as it means you have the support from college to get the work done for the qualification."*

Jon and Grace, who took up roles with community interest company The Circle also have roles related to business administration, playing a key role in interacting with the public and managing spaces in the building.

Jon, who previously volunteered one day a week whilst looking for new opportunities. Reflected on what was challenging and rewarding so far:

*"A big life change, going from one Friday morning a week to now 4.5 days a week was a struggle at first but a rewarding one. The feeling of doing something with my week and feeling accomplished with my week's work at the end."*

Grace, was also very positive about her time at The Circle so far: *"What I have found most challenging was adapting to working full time, as I came straight from school this was a big change for me, however I feel like I have settled in really well. I have felt that being part of the team and being involved in important tasks has been very rewarding for me."*

Martin Cleary, Dundee Hub Manager for The Circle, who is Grace and Jon's line manager added: *"Both of our apprentices are a real asset to the team and have settled in well while remaining super enthusiastic. I couldn't recommend the programme more as an employer."*

Chloe, who took up a trainee role in the Student Funding team at Dundee & Angus College went from being unemployed to helping students access funds.

Having some prior knowledge of database software Excel is helping her navigate the various finance and computer systems in her role, but Chloe also finds other rewards to taking up the trainee position:

*"Meeting new people within my team, learning new experiences and hopefully while in the background being of help to students at College. [...] My advice [to other young people] would be to try something new, before starting this role I would never have thought I would have enjoyed working in an office environment."*



Grace taking calls at The Circle

# North East drop-in service supporting local families



Nicola (left) and Jade (right) at Greenfield Academy

Discover Work partner organisations, including Dundee City Council (DCC) teams are making an impact in the North East area of Dundee with their new approach to a monthly drop-in service for young people and their families.

Staff from [Skills Development Scotland](#) (SDS), [Dundee & Angus College](#), [King's Trust](#) and Dundee City Council teams; [Greenfield Academy](#), [Employability Team](#), [Literacies](#) and [Community Learning and Development](#) (CLD) team are all contributing to a drop-in service focussed on engaging young people in the Greenfields Academy catchment area. Nicola McPhail, Key Worker for DCC's Employability Service described the approach:

*"Young people are identified weekly through [...] meetings with Greenfields Academy [...] and SDS staff. During these meetings, we review young people who are unemployed, economically inactive, unknown, or at risk of disengaging completely. This approach ensures no young person is missed and that those most in need of support are prioritised.*

*Jade [Key Worker at DCC Employability] and I then carry out door-knocking to engage young people on their doorstep. This allows us to speak with the young person and their parents or carers, explain the purpose of the drop-in, and discuss the support available. Meeting young people at home helps reduce anxiety and breaks down the initial barrier to accessing support, especially for those who have been isolated or disengaged since leaving school."*

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The approach has highlighted challenges for many of the young people and their families. Nicola continues:

*“Many young people live in households experiencing long term unemployment and poverty. Some families require support with benefits, debt, financial pressures and general wellbeing. We often link them to the Pathfinders in [Douglas](#) / [Linlathen](#) or their local community centre, where they can access wider support.*

*Several young people are isolated, do not leave their homes, or struggle with anxiety and depression. While not all are ready for full engagement, we can introduce them to services such as [Enable Works](#) and [Barnardo's](#) so they know support is available whenever they feel ready. Or encourage them to attend their doctors.*

*Many young people do not know where to start with job searching, CVs, applications or aren't aware of what support exists.*

*To take away any worries, we offer to meet young people before attending the drop-in, and parents are welcome to come along too. Once at the drop-in, we take young people around each partner service, introducing them to staff and allowing them to hear directly what each organisation can offer. Allowing the young person to decide what support feels right for them. Building relationships is key to our approach, even if a young person does not progress into a positive destination immediately, they now know the staff, understand the services, and can continue to be [..] supported.”*

### **Support available includes:**

- Careers advice, guidance and goal setting
- Job searching, CVs, applications, interview skills
- Confidence building and activities
- Funding for travel, clothing, training and qualifications
- College course information and application support

### **Key information:**

Who: 16-24 year olds living in the North East area of Dundee and their families

When: 1.10pm to 3pm, first Monday of every month (confirm via contact details below)

Where: Drumgeith Community Campus, Drumgeith Park, DD4 0NX

### **Contact details:**

Email: [nicola.mcphail@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.mcphail@dundeecity.gov.uk) / [jade.ramsay@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:jade.ramsay@dundeecity.gov.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/discover.opps>

# Sport & Leisure Academy

**8 week introduction to the sport and leisure industry:**

- Gain qualifications in sports coaching, gym instruction and more
- Work experience with Active Dundee
- Experience a variety of sport and leisure activities
- Free sports kit included
- Money/benefits, business start-up & career pathways advice
- Part-time hours – 3 days a week, 9.30am – 2.30pm
- Course dates: 4<sup>th</sup> May to 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- For Dundee residents aged 16+
- Apply via QR code or email [contact@discoverworkdundee.co.uk](mailto:contact@discoverworkdundee.co.uk)



# Kaitlin starts admin career with help from Barnardo's



Kaitlin (28) lives with her young daughter in the Coldside area of Dundee. In 2024 she first contacted Barnardo's Works looking for some help to get back into work. Although she had a lot to deal with in addition to the pressures of being a single parent, Kaitlin and her key worker, Gill worked towards achievable goals, step by step.

Gill was able to connect Kaitlin with support from various local charities, which took the pressure off the household costs including food and clothing. Support is also available to help parents with stress, anxiety and other mental health factors that can effect us all.

By offering a flexible service depending on her availability throughout a difficult time, Barnardo's supported Kaitlin to complete a range of employability training, boosting her skills and confidence in the process:

CV workshops, application writing, food & hygiene training and an online administration course. Kaitlin was also able to access funds to purchase a laptop to help her with training and job searching.

With new training and skills at her disposal, Kaitlin was able to secure a work trial with local company [Dundee Removals](#) for the role of Administration Assistant. The company were able to offer parent friendly hours for the work placement (10am – 2.30pm, 3 days a week), which made attending possible alongside school drop-offs and pick-ups. Whilst on placement, Kaitlin developed her confidence and skills to a point where the employer offered her a part-time position with hours to suit her parental commitments.

Now thriving and loving her job, Kaitlin gives credit to her employer and colleagues for going above and beyond to accommodate her and make her feel welcome in the team. Feeling valued and respected, Kaitlin is more confident and is proud to set an example for her daughter growing up.