

## Scheduled Visits

### 1) Outline the project or initiative and what makes it innovative and inspiring (max 300 words).

In recent years, Shetland College UHI has made a concerted effort to develop and strengthen relationships with external agencies. Academic year 2012-13 was a trial period for an initiative to invite local organisations into the college to set up information stands in the canteen over break and/or lunchtime. There were three main aims of this initiative – to give learners access to volunteer opportunities, make them more aware of careers in the voluntary sector and increase awareness of support services which are available to the people of Shetland. A wide range of local businesses, voluntary organisations, support services and charities were engaged.



Following positive feedback from staff, visitors and learners, this initiative was continued in academic years 2013-14 and 2014-15.

This is an innovative approach because the college has provided a regular commitment to promoting local organisations – one slot is offered per week throughout the academic year. Through feedback we know that our learners have found the visits very useful for identifying volunteer opportunities and also making contact with support services.

From 2012 to date, 27 local organisations have visited the college (most more than once):

- The Credit Union
- Active Schools
- The Shetland Befriending Scheme
- Voluntary Action Shetland
- The Citizens Advice Bureau
- The NHS Healthcare Improvement Team
- Mind Your Head (mental health awareness)
- The Samaritans
- The Scottish Health Council
- SIC Youth Services
- The Shetland Youth Information Service
- The Territorial Army
- Scottish Women's Aid
- Yes Shetland
- Better Together
- The Community Mediation Team
- Family Mediation Shetland
- OPEN Peer Workshops
- Sexual Abuse Survivors
- Trading Standards
- SIC Environment and Energy Services
- The Royal Bank of Scotland



- Tesco
- The NHS Shetland Legal Highs Working Group
- Police Scotland
- Specsavers Opticians
- The Shetland Recreational Trust

**2) Detail how the project or initiative was delivered, from the planning stage through to its successful conclusion (max 300 words). Include details of timing\* and funding.**

In 2012-13 the Communications and Student Engagement Assistant contacted a wide range of local organisations to see if they were interested in visiting the college. Following some successful visits, word spread and several groups contacted the college directly to book slots. In total, 17 local organisations visited the college over 2012-13, with some visiting more than once. In some cases visits were planned to coincide with awareness campaigns; for example, when OPEN peer educators visited on World AIDs day, or when the NHS Healthcare Improvement Team visited to promote their drink aware campaign just before Up Helly Aa. The feedback from visitors was consistently positive, as they considered it a good awareness exercise even if learners didn't engage with their stand directly.

Despite the disruption of ongoing building works, we were able to facilitate 15 visits over academic year 2013-14. Towards the start of semester one, the Royal Bank of Scotland, The Credit Union and The Scottish Health Council were invited to have stands in the college for 'Welfare Week' and OPEN peer educators visited the college as part of national 'Mental Health Awareness Week.' In addition to the groups contacted previously, representatives from the Community Mediation Team, SIC Environment and Energy Services, Trading Standards and Family Mediation Shetland also visited over 2013-14.



Building on these successes, a total of 16 visits were scheduled for semester one of 2014-15 and the semester two list is currently being compiled. As well as returning visitors, 2014-15 has also seen visits from The Shetland Recreational Trust, Police Scotland, The NHS Legal Highs Working Group and Specsavers Opticians. RSPB contacted us to arrange a stand, but unfortunately we were already fully booked in semester one. An alternative date in 2015 is being confirmed.

**3) Outline the project or initiative's outcome(s) within the university and beyond with relevant supporting evidence, metrics or testimony where appropriate (max 400 words).**

Engaging with outside agencies and inviting them to Shetland College UHI has benefited learners by making them aware of the role played by local community groups and charities, which increases a sense of citizenship. It has also increased awareness of useful volunteer opportunities, available sources of support, and future career options in various fields. In some cases this has benefited specific subject areas – such as when a representative from Tesco (and two past learners who now work for the company) had



a class discussion with learners on business and digital media courses.

From the 2012-13 trial period onwards there has been steady evidence of engagement with visitors. When Women's Aid visited the college to promote White Ribbon Day, sixty staff and students signed their pledge; fourteen students made enquiries when Voluntary Action Shetland had their first stand; and four students signed up to volunteer with the Samaritans when they visited the college as part of UHI Mental Health Awareness Day. When the NHS Legal Highs Working Group visited the college in 2014-15 they reported that around 60 students and staff interacted with their stand.

As well as high levels of interaction, there have also been indications of students seeking support. For example, Women's Aid noted that a helpline number had been torn from one of their leaflets when they were packing up after their visit in 2012-13. Similarly, when Sexual Abuse Survivors visited the college one student specifically told them *'I've seen your ad in the paper every week, but it is so good to meet you in person.'* These learners may have found it difficult to make contact with these support services had they not been invited into college.



Even though some stands report low numbers of learners speaking directly with them, they are always keen to raise awareness and leave materials behind for learners' to access. Without exception all visitors to the college have been happy to return with some particularly keen to set up a regular slot.

As well as providing these benefits to learners' this initiative has also developed a culture of collaboration between Shetland College UHI and a wide network of local organisations, which is also extremely beneficial to the college as a whole.


Shetland College  
University of the  
Highlands and Islands

**In the canteen this  
THURSDAY**

**Sexual  
Abuse  
Survivors**

This group provides support for those who are affected by sexual abuse.

**10.00am to 1.15pm  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2014**



Shetland College  
University of the  
Highlands and Islands

**In Briggistanes  
TODAY!**

**Community  
Mediation  
Team**

- Community Mediation
- Restorative Justice
- Restorative Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

**9.00am to 1.30pm  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2014**



Shetland College  
University of the  
Highlands and Islands

**In the canteen this  
FRIDAY!**

**active schools  
NETWORK**

Plan and deliver sports activities with young people across Shetland.

**A great volunteer opportunity!**

**10.00am to 1.30pm  
27<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

