

Future Sparks from Edinburgh get passport to sporting careers

Pupils from Edinburgh took a break from their studies for a unique work experience opportunity at Hampden Park, the home of Scottish football. The young learners from Children's University Scotland spent a day in the shoes of medical staff and football coaches, giving them a glimpse into the lives of people who work behind the scenes at the heart of Scotland's national team.



The event was part of Future Sparks, a new initiative created by the Scottish Power Foundation to celebrate its ongoing partnership with Children's University Scotland. The scheme aims to give young people a look inside the real world of work, experience careers they can consider in the future, and help to broaden their horizons.

With sport top of the agenda this summer, thanks to the Olympic Games and the European Championship, Children's University Scotland is using this legacy to get its learners interested in the many careers associated with sport. The young learners were joined by official doctor of the Scotland National Team, Dr John MacLean, before delving in to a fun packed hour long session. They were then shown the importance of science in every aspect of football both on and off the field. They also took part in fitness tests with sports scientists, Dr Katy Stewart and Seamus McCafferty from the Hampden Sports Clinic, followed by lessons with Scottish FA coaches, Paul Brennan and Alan Milne.

Keith Anderson, ScottishPower Foundation Trustee, said: "We have awarded funding to Children's University Scotland for the

past three years now as part of our commitment to the advancement of education and supporting young people. It was great to take part in the Future Sparks session at Hampden and see firsthand the amazing work that Children's University does to help children grow their skills and have bright, inspiring futures."

Mary de la Pena, CEO, Children's University Scotland, said: "The Future Sparks campaign is a great opportunity to spend 'a day in the life' of many interesting professionals and for young learners to start thinking differently about their futures. We'd like to thank the ScottishPower Foundation for its continued support and passion. Hampden is one of our most unique learning destinations so we are delighted to kick-off the campaign here and inspire the next generation of coaches, medical staff and more."

Donna Martin, Scottish FA Child Wellbeing and Protection Manager, said: "We are delighted that Hampden Park is a Children's University Scotland learning destination. Today we met with lots of bright young people, who love sport and are very committed to their studies. As well as having a kick-about in the warm-up area, where the Scotland team prepare for their matches at Hampden, I'm sure the learners will have taken away lots of valuable skills and insight into what we do behind the scenes."

Hampden is just one of Children's University Scotland's network of 744 learning destinations, spanning the length and breadth of the country. So far 5,443 children have benefited from the initiative. The programme has been funded by the ScottishPower Foundation since its inception in 2012.