

Livingston Designer Outlet career programme finishes with top marks

Livingston Designer Outlet's careers programme with James Young High School has ended on a high after three years, benefiting more than 50 students from West Lothian.

The pilot project, which launched in 2016, gave students from the Outlet's local community real-life insight into the world of retail with hands-on work experience, hoping to inspire and educate them on a potential career in the retail sector in the future. The initiative mirrors the Scottish Government's pledge to reduce youth unemployment across the country by improving careers advice and work experience available to the next generation.



Pupils from James Young High School involved with Livingston Designer Outlet's careers programme

The first year of the initiative worked with students from James Young High School gave them an introduction to job

roles, along with a back of house tour and incorporated a “how to become a visual merchandiser” practical session. The second year then delved into a full career day which involved CV presentation skills, one-to-one interviews, group interview sessions and personality questionnaires to help identify their work style and values.

During the final year, pupils were given the chance to shadow the Outlet’s marketing manager, customer service manager, visual merchandiser, administration team and social media manager for four weeks giving pupils first-hand experience in the working world. The programme culminates during this year’s Year of Young People campaign which aims to champion and support Scotland’s young talent.



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Karen Stewart, Centre Manager at Livingston Designer Outlet said: “The biggest barrier for young people entering the retail sector is a misconception of how big the opportunities are. Our partnership with James Young High School has given us the chance to challenge those misconceptions and showcase the retail sector as a viable career path to the next generation.

We hope that some of the pupils we have worked with over the past three years choose to pursue a career in retail but ultimately have learned a number of skills setting them up for a successful future.

“2018 is a hugely important year for Scotland as it celebrates the Year of Young People and sees the success of the government’s pledged to reduce unemployment. Following such a successful pilot, we will look to continue a similar scheme with another school in the local community which will help us support even more young people within the community.”

Dean Moore, a pupil at The James Young High School, said: “I was able to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the work and effort that goes into running the Outlet during my work shadowing. Seeing the inner workings that ordinary customers don’t get the opportunity to see was fantastic. I’ve learned about the day-to-day work of a Customer Service Manager, as well as the unique challenges that make the job demanding, yet extremely rewarding. I’d highly recommend the experience to anyone that gets the chance.”

Clare McTiernan, Acting DHT Curriculum at The James Young High School, said: “Our main goal here at The James Young High School is to ensure our pupils are post-school ready. Working with Livingston Designer Outlet has given us the opportunity to help support that aim. Pupils have been able to experience working life first hand and offered insight into what career options are out there through opportunities such as work shadowing and recruitment sessions. The partnership has been a great success and we hope to continue working with the Outlet in the future.”

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