



TAKING A
FRESH LOOK
AT QUALIFICATIONS

CASE STUDY: THREE TOWNS' MOTOR PROJECT

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Three Towns' Motor Project

The Three Towns' Motor Project (TTMP) is a youth project run by North Ayrshire Council's Community Learning and Development Youth Services and is located in the west coast town of Ardrossan. The Three Towns' Motor Project is based in a former council vehicle maintenance garage that has been converted into a learning space to teach young people a wide variety of motor-vehicle-related skills. Currently the facilities are used by eight of the mainstream secondary schools in North Ayrshire as part of their flexible curriculum. The project has also provided tuition for pupils from Seafield School (run by Quarriers for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties), and Stanecastle School (for children requiring additional support needs).

The TTMP works in partnership with a number of organisations, agencies and learning providers (including James Watt College) to deliver various programmes and SQA qualifications to young people described as (or are at risk of) not being in education, employment or training. The flexible curriculum includes two SQA Units based around the care and use of hand tools and vehicle layout. They provide the learners with the basic skills required by any person considering working with car mechanics. The programme is structured around the needs of the group and includes personal development and career planning as well as looking at progression routes back into learning.

TTMP has nurtured a good relationship with key partners and stakeholders including Social Services, Police, community workers, and schools in North Ayrshire. TTMP emphasises the importance of



explaining to partners that one of the initial aims is to get the young people 'in the door' by providing a positive learning experience – and then to work on furthering opportunities. One of the keys to the success of the TTMP is the youth work principles which have been adopted. These enable the motor mechanics, and all related activities, to be introduced in partnership with the young person and on the young person's terms, to meet their own specific needs. The overall success of this approach has resulted in many young people going back into the school environment, then moving on to college or further learning opportunities.

Young Drivers' Programme

The project has worked with a variety of partners to deliver a Young Drivers' Programme to young people in the context of More Choices, More Chances. The programme teaches a range of skills which are related to driving and driver-related employment, and includes SQA qualifications. The learners then progress to the local Community Employment Initiative delivered by Community Enterprise in Scotland and Careers Scotland, who support the learners in further training or employment.

A pilot programme was run from March to July 2007 for ten young people from across North Ayrshire. The aims of the course were to improve the confidence and self-esteem of young people categorised as being not in education, employment or training, and to enhance their employment prospects in areas of work where the ability to drive is a pre-requisite.

TTMP welcomed applications from young people aged 14 to 25 who were interested in working with cars. The selection process, which required the young people to complete an application form and to attend an interview, allowed TTMP to identify and offer places to those most likely to benefit from the course.

Those participating learned about driving-related subjects such as vehicle maintenance, map reading and route planning, forklift training, driving theory and driving skills. Activities took place around personal development, job-search skills and first aid that could also be applied to driving/motor vehicles but which are also beneficial for students if they decided to pursue employment in other vocational areas.



By taking part in the programme, students enhanced (or gained) the ability to:

- obtain employment as a vehicle driver
- travel to and from work, increasing employment opportunities and employability
- be a responsible driver
- work as a forklift operator
- offer first aid as a 'bonus' to potential employers
- present a portfolio or CV demonstrating their skills
- complete the SQA Units, Use and Care of Hand Tools in Motor Vehicle Engineering (Intermediate 1), Automotive: Introduction to Vehicle Layout (Intermediate 2)

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Thanks to the success of the pilot programme, funding was obtained to continue to run the course. From 2009 TTMP will also deliver the SQA Safe Road User Award (SCQF level 4) as part of the Young Drivers' Programme. This SQA award, which has been developed in collaboration with the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), stems directly from recent initiatives by the UK Government to bring about changes in driving attitudes in the UK. The award is aimed at road users before they begin to learn to drive.

Other TTMP courses

As well as the Young Drivers' Programme, the TTMP also runs the following shorter courses. These are also aimed at young people aged 14 to 24 living in North Ayrshire. The courses target different areas at different times of the year and are flexible enough to be changed to suit the differing needs and interests of the participants. We are exploring what existing SQA qualifications we could use in order that young people taking these courses attain an SQA certificate when they complete the course.

Basic mechanics

Students learn how to service a vehicle, check brakes and change tyres. They develop their skills in using different tools and equipment in a well-equipped garage.

Emergency first aid

Students learn how to deal confidently with emergency situations.

Map reading and route planning

Using mountain bikes and cars to add a degree of fun, students learn to read a map and plan the most effective route to arrive at their destination safely and on time.

Driving theory test preparation

Using computer programs, students master the intricacies of the Highway Code allowing them to take the theory test with greater confidence.

Night groups

The HMIE report 'Missing Out' identified the need to provide out-of-school-hours activities for young people. TTMP runs night groups for a wide variety of young people, including those who may have already left school as well as those who are non-attendees. The less formal night groups act as 'feeders' for the day programmes. After participating in a night group, young people can join a day group that offers a more structured route and the possibility to gain SQA qualifications.

