

Aberdeen City Council
Education, Culture & Sport
Evaluation of Travel Afternoons

Section 1 - Evaluation of 2011-12 Provision – Full Year

Young people who had participated in the Travel Afternoon programme during session 2011-12 were invited to respond to the following six questions in September and October 2012. The following responses represent the range of comments which were made.

- 1. Having spent session 2011-2012 participating in an Advanced Higher course which was delivered in Aberdeen Grammar School or Harlaw Academy to students from across the city, what do you consider were the advantages in this approach?**

Responses

- Good to mix with students from other schools
- Increased range of subjects available
- Good to experience a different learning environment
- Keen to represent my 'home school' positively
- It was a breath of fresh air to be away from 'home' school
- Access to very helpful staff who gave good guidance
- I got to do the courses I wanted.

- 2. What do you consider were the disadvantages of this approach which need to be addressed by Aberdeen City Council?**

Responses

- Time and cost of travel were issues. (part of almost all responses)
- The Graphic Communication equipment in Harlaw was in a poorer condition than in our own school.
- It was difficult to send project work by e-mail.
- Difficult to receive help from the teacher outwith travel times.
- I attended a course at Harlaw which had more Cults pupils in it. Could make sense to run courses in the schools with the most participants.
- More communication between schools is needed
- Study leave between schools was difficult to manage as it took place at different times.

- 3. Did you achieve the grade you expected in your Advanced Higher Course(s)?**

Responses

- Most responses indicated that what was predicted was achieved
- Some respondents enjoyed just trying the courses.

- 4. Now that you have left school, what are your plans for session 2012-13?**

Responses

- Almost all respondents are following courses at university

- Taking a gap year then applying for Biomedical Sciences
- To work before I decide which university course to apply for

5. What impact did your Advanced Higher course(s) have on your intended destination beyond school?

Responses

- Had received unconditional offers from universities so Advanced Highers had no direct impact
- Had an unconditional offer but had I not received this they would have been vital.
- The Advanced Higher History course set me on a good path of study habits.

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

Responses

- Better selling of the programme so that young people are not reluctant to go to other schools.
- I think the grades we achieved should be credited to the teacher who taught us rather than the school we come from
- My own teacher had taught the Advanced Higher for 10 years compared to the one year's experience of the teacher we got.
- I am pleased this is being audited so that improvements can be made
- This is a worthwhile project but all teachers must be prepared to put the effort in for all pupils
- This is a good way of keeping Advanced Higher course on offer within the city.

Section 2 – Progress by ACC since the Interim Evaluation (January 2012)

Following the interim evaluation of the Travel Afternoons undertaken in December 2011 and January 2012, various recommendations were made to the ECS service. These recommendations fell into four areas – communication, support, staffing and transport costs. The following statements describe progress which has been made

Communication

- The ECS Service has produced and distributed to all schools a clear overview of the Travel Afternoon programme so that there is consistency of information. This has helped to ensure that young people and their families understand what is involved before they make course choice decisions.
- A key contact for the Travel Afternoons has been identified in each school.
- Clear criteria for gaining a place in a Travel Afternoon class have been established in the event that it is over-subscribed.
- 'Home' schools have undertaken to share information regarding any additional support needs of young people attending Travel Afternoon classes.
- Clear procedures have been established to provide 'home' schools with prompt information on attendance, concerns, progress and predicted grades.

- Responsibilities have been agreed for writing pupil reports and contributing to UCAS applications.
- Expectations of support have been agreed for students with investigations and dissertations have been planned in both the 'home' and 'host' schools.
- Roles and responsibilities have been identified to manage and communicate any student disciplinary issues.
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that young people do not travel unnecessarily in the event of teacher absence.
- Inclement weather procedures have been introduced.
- The flow of information to parents has been improved, particularly in relation to parents' evenings.

Support

- Induction meetings took place in June 2012 in order that young people feel welcome in the 'host' schools.

Staffing

- The ECS Service has considered enhancing staff professional development by inviting expressions of interest from teachers who are keen to deliver AH courses as part of the Travel Afternoon programme. For the time being, these courses will continue to be delivered by a slightly enhanced staffing complement at Aberdeen Grammar School and Harlaw Academy.

Transport Costs

- The ECS service has organised travel cards in negotiation with First Aberdeen for all young people attending Travel Afternoon classes during 2012-13.

Section 3 – Next steps (Session 2013-2014)

Plans are in place for the City Campus Travel Afternoons to continue in session 2013-14 with continued provision and further learning opportunities for pupils, particularly in the upper stage of secondary schools.

Work would continue under the above broad headings of Communication, Support, Staffing and Transport Costs to ensure that the City Campus provision and success was enhanced. One significant development will be the proposed launch of an e Prospectus and booking system for staff and students which will enhance the operational effectiveness of the programme.