

SPRING 2008

NORTH•FORUM

# NEWS

## Welcome!

**W**elcome to the latest edition of the North Forum newsletter, where you can find out about what the North Forum has been doing over the past year, what we're planning to do in the future, and how you can get involved.

The North Forum works

to widen participation in post-compulsory education in the north of Scotland, and we've just completed a period of planning for the next five years of this work. The result is our strategic plan for 2008/09 to 2012/13, which sets out our key priorities for the coming years. A summary of this

plan is included on the back of this newsletter for your information. Essentially, this one-page summary explains what the North Forum is, what we do, and how we do it. If you'd like a copy of the full plan, please get in touch with us.

The North Forum works in partnership: our members include all the colleges and higher education institutions in the north of Scotland, along with a range of voluntary organisations and

local authorities. Inside this newsletter, you'll find a list of all the organisations that are currently members of the Forum, along with the names of the representatives from each organisation. If you're interested in finding out more about anything in this newsletter, or in getting involved in any of our areas of work, talk to your local representative, or get in touch with the Forum Manager, Caitriona Maciver, on [c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk)

## NEWS

**The North Forum continues to work in three main areas: schools, communities and transitions. This page and the next provide an update on some of the projects and work that we've recently carried out in these three areas. All of these projects run right across the Forum's geographic area.**



### Schools

#### ASPIRENorth

**O**ur biggest project is ASPIRENorth, which works with P7-S4 pupils in schools that have historically low higher education progression rates. The team runs a comprehensive programme of activities in 24 target secondary schools across the north of Scotland. This programme has been running for almost two years, and has already received much positive feedback about its effectiveness and impact. Lots more information about ASPIRENorth's work can be found on their website at <http://www.scotland-aspirenorth.ac.uk>

#### DVD

**T**he North Forum recently produced a high-quality DVD called 'What's Next?'. This produced wonderful case studies of a range of students from across the north of Scotland to provide potential learners with ideas and inspiration about possible routes into higher and further education. These DVDs have been distributed to all schools and other relevant organisations across the North Forum area. If you'd like a copy, contact the ASPIRENorth team: details for this are on their website at <http://www.scotland-aspirenorth.ac.uk>



An 'Engaging Men' digital camera workshop being held on the island of Eday, which has a population of around 65.

## Communities

### Engaging Men

This is the second year of the Forum's project to engage men in learning through local learning centres. The project set out to identify, develop and disseminate good practice in encouraging men to engage with learning through local learning centres in some of the most remote communities across the north of Scotland. The project has proved to be very successful and is making a positive difference to the lives and aspirations of many of the men involved.

Getting more men involved in post-compulsory education is a national priority for Scotland, as there is a real gap in participation rates between men and women; the North Forum is keen to continue its involvement in this key area of work, so if you have any more ideas on how we can work in partnership on this, let us know.

### Course You Can ([www.courseyoucan.org.uk](http://www.courseyoucan.org.uk))

The Forum is about to re-launch its access route planner website 'Course You Can', which provides coverage of both formal and informal course provision, giving information for potential learners and careers and guidance advisors on the entry points and routes into and through further and higher education in the north of Scotland. The site has been upgraded and improved by a project team based at

the Robert Gordon University, to allow individual institutions to update their own entries easily and securely and to promote forthcoming events.

Other improvements have also been made to the functionality, accessibility and look of the site. Look out for the re-launch events: the first will take place on 31 January 2008 at the Art Gallery, Schoolhill, Aberdeen at 5.30pm; Highlands and Islands events are also being planned.

## Transitions

The Forum has recently carried out research in the area of easing transition to and within colleges. One project examined the issue of easing transition from schools to colleges – there are lots of useful

recommendations from this for institutions to consider, as well as many examples of good practice in this area. Another project looked at the development of individual learning in colleges. You can see the full reports for these projects on the North Forum

website – <http://www.scotland-northforum.ac.uk> – or request them from the North Forum Manager.

Also ongoing has been work to promote effective articulation between colleges and higher education institutions in the subject areas

of computing and engineering.

This project has produced material to support students in their transitions: for example, to develop students' skills in report-writing and making presentations. If you are interested in finding out more about this material, get in touch.

# North Forum: how does it work?

All of the North Forum members meet up twice each year at a full Forum meeting: in November, this is held in Inverness; in June, it is held in Aberdeen. These meetings are a chance for everyone involved to review progress over the past six months and to plan future work. Our next meeting is being held on Wednesday 25 June 2008 in Aberdeen.

The Forum also has an Executive Group, which meets every two months to oversee the work, finance and management of

the Forum and to provide direction for Forum projects. The Forum is chaired by Rob Wallen, Director of Learning and Teaching at Aberdeen College, and the Vice-Chair is Iain Morrison, Head of Lifelong Learning, Student Support and Development at UHI Millennium Institute. There is also a Forum Manager, Caitriona Maciver, who works with the Forum and the Executive Group to ensure that the Forum runs smoothly and to provide a point of contact for all the different elements of the Forum's work programme.

## Introducing the North Forum Manager



I'm Caitriona Maciver, and I've recently started working with the North Forum. It's an exciting time to join the Forum, as we've just finished setting out our plans for what we want to do over the next five years. I hope to see many of you as I travel around the Forum area, and I'd be delighted to hear from any of you at any time if you have comments or feedback.

In particular, we're looking at ways to make the North Forum work better for all our partners, and we want to get all our partner organisations more involved. If you have ideas or suggestions as to what you want to get out of the North Forum, and how you think the Forum can work better with you, please get in touch.

Caitriona Maciver, [c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk)

# Forum members

This table shows the organisations who are currently members of the North Forum and lists the people who represent each of these organisations at full Forum meetings. If you are based at one of these organisations, please feel free to contact your representative with your comments, questions or ideas about the Forum's work. Alternatively, you can contact the Forum Manager at [c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk)

FORUM MEMBER	REPRESENTATIVE
Aberdeen City Council – Education Department	Pete Hamilton
Aberdeen College	Rob Wallen
Aberdeenshire Council	Anne Simpson
Argyll College	Michael Breslin
ASPIRENorth	Janet Rougvie
Banff and Buchan College	Paul Sherrington
Careers Scotland (Highlands and Islands) / Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Liz Galashan
Careers Scotland (Scottish Enterprise Grampian) / Scottish Enterprise Grampian	Moira F. Whyte
Highland Council	Julie Simmons
Highland Theological College	Kevin Sinclair
Inverness College	John Spencer
LEAD Scotland	Sue Mitchell
Lews Castle College	David Green
Lochaber College	Laurence Young
Moray College	Edna Cameron
Moray Council	Alexander Ross
NAFC Marine Centre	Peter Dryburgh
Orkney College	Bill Ross
Scottish Agricultural College	Suzanne Stockwell
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	John Norman MacLeod
Shetland College	George Smith
The North Highland College	Rosemary Thompson
The Open University in Scotland	Pete Cannell
The Robert Gordon University	John Harper
UHI Millennium Institute	Iain Morrison
University of Aberdeen	Donald Paterson
WEA	Alison Morrison, Hilary Lawson

## North Forum newsletter

If there is any issue that you would like to see covered in future editions of this newsletter, please contact the Forum Manager, or the newsletter editor, the Forum's Vice-Chair, Iain Morrison, at [iain.m.morrison@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:iain.m.morrison@uhi.ac.uk)

 <b>THE NORTH FORUM FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION</b>			
<b>STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/09–2012/13: OVERVIEW</b>			
<b>Mission</b>	<b>To work in partnership to increase the number of people from under-represented groups in the north of Scotland who progress on to post-compulsory education and to work together to reduce barriers to progression between all education sectors</b>		
<b>Partners</b>	<b>Aberdeen City Council; Aberdeen College; Aberdeenshire Council; Argyll College; Banff &amp; Buchan College; Careers Scotland (Highlands and Islands Enterprise area) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Careers Scotland (Scottish Enterprise Grampian) and Scottish Enterprise Grampian; Highland Theological College; Highland Council; Inverness College; LEAD Scotland; Lews Castle College; Lochaber College; Moray College; Moray Council; NAFC Marine Centre; Orkney College; Sabhal Mòr Ostaig; Scottish Agricultural College; Shetland College; The North Highland College; The Open University in Scotland; The Robert Gordon University; UHI Millennium Institute; University of Aberdeen; WEA.</b>		
<b>Principles</b>	<b>learner-focused</b> <b>builds capacity in existing agencies</b> <b>engages partners; benefits partners</b> <b>benefits whole geographical area</b>		
<b>What we do: three key areas of work</b>	<b>COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<b>TRANSITIONS</b>
	<b>Promoting the development of educational opportunities in community locations which will encourage non-participatory groups to engage with learning and provide clear progression routes into more formal certificated learning</b>	<b>Providing motivation and information for pupils in schools who do not aspire to participate in post-compulsory education to enable them to see the value of participation</b>	<b>Easing transition for people moving between stages in education – from school to college or university, from college to university, from informal community based education to more formal education and so on</b>
<b>How we do it</b>	<b>Developing and running programmes of activity in the three key areas of work: communities, schools and transitions</b> <b>Working in partnership, engaging all of the partners across the Forum area in order to meet the needs of learners and potential learners in the north of Scotland</b> <b>Evaluating, implementing and building on the outcomes of activities and projects</b> <b>Building capacity within Forum partners, through staff development and sharing of resources and information</b> <b>Liaising with partners nationally to share good practice and to influence and engage with the national agenda for widening participation</b>		
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="http://www.scotland-northforum.ac.uk">www.scotland-northforum.ac.uk</a>		<a href="mailto:c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk">c.maciver@abdn.ac.uk</a>