

**ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme  
Programme summary  
2010/11**

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**Introduction**

The ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme is the North Forum’s schools programme and has begun a new phase of work from academic year 2010/11. As part of this, a new programme of activities has been developed for delivery to selected cohorts of S3 to S6 pupils in ten target schools across the North of Scotland: this programme is outlined on pages 3 to 10.

The ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme is part of the national Schools for Higher Education Programme, funded by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC). Its aim is to deliver a national entitlement for disadvantaged school pupils to raise expectation, increase staying on rates and progression rates to higher education. SFC is providing funding to the four Scottish Forums (of which the North Forum is one) to develop a systematic programme of generic guidance and support to school pupils from S3 to S5/6 within schools in the lowest quintile for progression to higher education in Scotland. This funding is

provided for three years in the first instance (2010/11–2012/13), with a review of impact after two years.

The programme is designed to target support on those pupils who have the potential to achieve higher education entry, but are at risk of not achieving this potential, or who are achieving but don't recognise their potential for progression to higher education. The ASPIRENorth programme activities will provide targeted and sustained support to pupils to achieve progression to higher education (in college or university).

## Schools programme activity

Within each of the ten target schools, a programme of activities will be delivered to selected cohorts of pupils from S3 to S6, to raise their awareness of the value of higher education, provide impartial and relevant information and advice, and deliver a programme of activities which motivate, encourage aspiration and build self-confidence. Cohorts of 20 pupils in each year group in each school will take part in the programme (800 pupils in total), with at least four engagements for all pupils each year.

The overall programme aims are to:

- raise awareness, aspirations and expectations of higher education in target schools, with selected cohorts of pupils
- acknowledge and reflect best widening participation practice across Scotland
- work to promote positive attitudes to learning and improve the skills, knowledge and confidence of the young people the programme works with
- work to build strong relationships with all partners and in developing activities will also be mindful of the need both to enhance what already exists and look towards longer-term embedding and sustainability
- monitor progression to further and higher education within the target schools, take cognizance of the sector-wide targets, and engage with regional partners as appropriate to contribute to the achievement of these
- monitor and evaluate programmes and activities to provide meaningful evidence of their quality and effectiveness in relation to the strategic aims of the programme

This programme of engagement is summarised on the following pages (pages 3 to 10). For each year group (S3, S4, S5 and S6), there is a table showing the aims, activities and outcomes, and a page showing how that part of the programme relates to *Curriculum for Excellence*.

**ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme: programme outline for delivery from August 2010**

**S3 activities (ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme)**

Target group: cohorts of 20 pupils in each of the 10 target schools (200 pupils in all)

Aims of the S3 phase of the programme:	Activities in S3 (with all pupils in cohorts):	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a positive working relationship in each cohort of S3 pupils.</li> <li>• Create an ASPIRENorth identity within each S3 cohort and within the ASPIRENorth team.</li> <li>• Raise pupils' awareness of post-school opportunities and how to access appropriate information.</li> <li>• Create an awareness of personal skills and attributes in the pupils.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introductory in-school session to incorporate icebreaker, prospectus search and fun and teambuilding elements. (Will include initial benchmarking using PRS – personal response system – equipment.)</li> <li>2. Activity highlighting post-school opportunities (including issues raised through prospectus search activity), and preparing for campus visit.</li> <li>3. Campus visit and taster day at partner institution (range of tasters of subjects available at higher education level).</li> <li>4. Away day for pupils, including one-to-one action planning with member of ASPIRENorth staff, to create portfolio/record of achievement (to be used throughout programme involvement – to S6).</li> </ol> <p><i>Student volunteers will participate in the campus visit and taster day to provide positive role models for pupils to question and interact with. Existing student volunteers will be used, and new volunteers recruited through a variety of channels (through partner institutions and other organisations). Volunteers will have clearly defined roles within activities.</i></p> <p><i>Peer mentoring will be introduced for S3 pupils: their peer mentors will be senior pupils (from S5) and will mentor them through S3 and S4. Peer mentoring will be piloted in 2010/11, with different approaches (including student mentoring) piloted in different areas to meet the needs of schools.</i></p> <p><i>Pupil forums made up of representatives from the various schools will be created to help shape the programme and to provide feedback.</i></p>	<p>By the end of S3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ASPIRENorth team will have established a positive working relationship with all 200 S3 pupils, who will continue to work with us until S6.</li> <li>• our pupils will be engaged and will recognise the value of their skills and their contribution to school and post-school life.</li> <li>• our pupils will have developed an understanding of post-school opportunities and how to access these.</li> </ul> <p><b>Measuring success</b></p> <p>Benchmarking using PRS (personal response system) – to measure pupils' awareness of HE opportunities and how they feel about their potential to go on to HE. (PRS can retain information about respondents, so that this can be followed up and added to in future years' activities.)</p>

### **S3 Programme and Curriculum for Excellence**

The work of the ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme relates well to the entitlements of *Curriculum for Excellence*, which include:

- Opportunities for developing **skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work** with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- Personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which *Curriculum for Excellence* can provide
- Support in moving into **positive and sustained destinations** beyond school

(*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: a Framework for Learning and Teaching, 2008, p. 11*)

In particular, the programme of activities will provide personal support to pupils to enable them to:

- review their learning and plan for next steps
- gain access to learning activities which will meet their needs
- plan for opportunities for personal achievement
- prepare for changes and choices and be supported through changes and choices

(*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: a Framework for Learning and Teaching, 2008, p. 17*)

As *Curriculum for Excellence* notes, “Young people themselves should be at the centre of this planning, as active participants in their learning and development” (ibid., p. 17), and this is a key principle of the ASPIRENorth programme.

Specific third and fourth level outcomes that will be gained by S3 pupils through participation in the programme include:

“I am developing the skills and attributes which I will need for learning, life and work. I am gaining understanding of the relevance of my current learning to future opportunities. This is helping me to make informed choices about my life and learning.” HWB 3-19a

“Based on my interests, skills, strengths and preferences, I am supported to make suitable, realistic and informed choices, set manageable goals and plan for my further transitions.” HWB 4-19a

(*Curriculum for Excellence: Health and Wellbeing across Learning: Responsibilities of All: Experiences and Outcomes.*)

## S4 activities (ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme)

Target group: cohorts of 20 pupils in each of the 10 target schools (200 pupils in all)

Aims of the S4 phase of the programme:	Activities in S4 (with all pupils in cohorts):	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils continue to develop positive learning relationships.</li> <li>• Create an awareness of the links between subjects at school and the graduate workplace.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of college and university life – looking at qualifications, courses and articulation routes.</li> <li>• Develop pupils’ study, presentation and research skills.</li> </ul>	<p>Note: for first year, 2010/11, with a new S4 cohort who have not been through earlier years of the programme, an introductory activity will be held to introduce the programme and the team and to provide an introduction to one-to-one action planning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate workplace/employer linking workshop allowing pupils to consider how their school subjects and individual strengths relate to future study and graduate employment.</li> <li>2. Residential preparation workshop (pupils contribute to planning and decision making, developing these skills).</li> <li>3. Residential ‘Student Life Experience’ event (to include study and exam skills sessions and focused sessions on 2+2 articulation routes) – bringing together pupils from different schools. (2 or 3 separate residential events, to accommodate 200 pupils in total.) To include PRS (personal response system) evaluation exercise to measure progress from initial S3 level.</li> <li>4. Continued individual pupil action planning and planning for summer. (One-to-one action planning with member of ASPIRENorth staff, to create portfolio/record of achievement, to be used throughout programme involvement).</li> <li>5. Contact participants in exam results week.</li> </ol> <p><i>Student volunteers will participate in the residential ‘Student Life Experience’ to provide positive role models for pupils to question and interact with.</i></p> <p><i>Pupil forums made up of representatives from the various schools will help shape the programme and provide feedback on activities and events.</i></p>	<p>By the end of S4 our pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a better understanding of how their current learning relates to their post-school learning and subsequent positive contribution to the workplace and society.</li> <li>• have developed enhanced planning, presentation, study and research skills.</li> <li>• demonstrate a better understanding of self in relation to pupils from other schools and areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Measuring success</b></p> <p>PRS (personal response system) evaluation exercise – allowing comparison of results from initial S3 benchmarking – to consider changes in awareness and aspirations.</p> <p>Voxur (video interview system) footage of sample of pupils discussing changes in awareness and aspirations.</p> <p>Testimonials from participants and teachers.</p>

#### **S4 Programme and *Curriculum for Excellence***

In S4, the pupils will have moved into the senior phase of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The purposes of the senior phase include the following points, which are all closely linked with the work that the ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme will be carrying out.

The purposes of the senior phase are to provide all learners with

- An experience which builds on their learning in S1 to S3 with scope to develop their individual potential
- A broad preparation for adult life (including higher education)
- Opportunities to extend their own abilities and interests
- Opportunities for a range of personal achievements, in or out of school
- Recognition of achievement, both attainment of qualifications and wider achievements
- Continued emphasis on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and the development of a wide range of skills for life and skills for work.

(*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: a Framework for Learning and Teaching*, 2008, summary of relevant points from p. 40)

*Curriculum for Excellence* notes that ‘every young person is entitled to support in moving into a positive and sustained destination’, and this programme provides this support for pupils who have been identified as needing additional support and encouragement in this area. The ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme provides impartial and focused information, advice and guidance to the pupils to enable them to plan and prepare for higher education. As *Curriculum for Excellence* acknowledges:

“Young people must also have the right information, advice and guidance from Skills Development Scotland and other support agencies to help them make the right choices. Some may need ongoing support to help them sustain and progress their learning.” (*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: a Framework for Learning and Teaching*, 2008, p. 19)

## S5 activities (ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme)

Target group: cohorts of 20 pupils in each of the 10 target schools (200 pupils in all)

Aims of the S5 phase of the programme:	Activities in S5 (with all pupils in cohorts):	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise pupils' S4 achievements and carry out action planning for their future.</li> <li>• Increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of how learning takes place in a post-school setting.</li> <li>• Increase pupils' awareness of the importance of being an active student, fully participating in all aspects of student life.</li> <li>• Enhance pupils' awareness of the application process and how to add value to the UCAS personal statement.</li> </ul>	<p>Note: for first year, 2010/11, with a new S5 cohort who have not been through earlier years of the programme, an introductory activity will be held to introduce the programme and the team and to provide an introduction to action planning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One-to-one review of achievements and re-evaluation of action plan. To include benchmarking using PRS (personal response system).</li> <li>2. Subject-specific taster day at partner institution (in depth), including student association session.</li> <li>3. UCAS personal statement workshop.</li> <li>4. One-to-one action planning – to include planning for over summer period; portfolio development and S6 preparation.</li> <li>5. Contact participants in exam results week.</li> </ol> <p><i>Student volunteers will participate in the subject-specific taster day and the UCAS personal statement workshop to provide positive role models for pupils to question and interact with.</i></p> <p><i>S5 pupils will act as peer mentors for S3 pupils; this mentoring will continue through to the end of S6. This peer mentoring will be piloted in 2010/11 to allow the most effective approaches to be developed; the approach used may vary from school to school. Peer mentors who progress on to higher education in a local institution will be encouraged to become student volunteers.</i></p> <p><i>Pupil forums made up of representatives from the various schools will help shape the programme and provide feedback on activities and events.</i></p>	<p>By the end of S5 our pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have experienced specific subject content in an HE setting.</li> <li>• have a recognition of their personal achievements and developed skills to confidently plan for the future.</li> <li>• have a clear understanding of the UCAS application process and the value of an effective personal statement.</li> <li>• have made a plan to develop personal skills and experiences during the summer period in preparation for applying to HE.</li> </ul> <p><b>Measuring success</b></p> <p>PRS (personal response system) used at beginning of S5 in order to provide benchmark for some pupils at end of S6 – to show increased knowledge of application process, personal statement.</p> <p>Consideration of 'staying-on' rates in cohort.</p>

### **S5 Programme and *Curriculum for Excellence***

S5 pupils will be continuing in the senior phase of *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the senior phase, pupils ‘must continue to have opportunities that reinforce their broader learning and achievements through a range of experiences including enhancing skills for life and skills for work’ (*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: a Framework for Learning and Teaching, 2008, p. 7*)

The ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme particularly addresses the enhancement of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These are identified as:

- Literacy across learning
- Numeracy across learning
- Thinking skills across learning
- Health and wellbeing across learning
- Personal learning planning and career management
- Working with others
- Leadership
- Physical co-ordination and movement
- Enterprise and employability

All of these skills are addressed through the programme to some extent, but with a particular focus on personal learning planning and career management, to achieve the outcomes identified in *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* (2009, p. 13):

By talking about and planning their own learning from early years onwards, children and young people will develop the skills to

- Identify, discuss and reflect on their own evidence of learning
- Use appropriate language for self-evaluation
- Take responsibility for managing their own learning
- Help to plan their own next steps in learning and set their own learning goals
- Make informed choices and decisions about their future learning

## S6 activities (ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme)

Target group: cohorts of 20 pupils in each of the 10 target schools (200 pupils in all)

Aims of the S6 phase of the programme:	Activities in S6 (with all pupils in cohorts):	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise pupils' S5 achievements and carry out action planning for their future.</li> <li>• Create a better awareness of the issues around funding student life for pupils and their parents/carers.</li> <li>• Enhance pupils' awareness of study skills processes and issues.</li> <li>• Help to prepare pupils for the practicalities of and transition to student life.</li> <li>• Offer support at exam results time.</li> </ul>	<p>For the first year of the programme, 2010/11, with a new S6 cohort who have not been through earlier years of the programme, the residential activity (1, below) will be replaced by an away day to introduce the programme, action planning and key interview skills.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overnight residential event at the beginning of S6 (July) involving workshops on interview preparation (including mock interview), budgeting, study/life balance, housekeeping, and living and studying with others.</li> <li>2. One-to-one review of achievements and re-evaluation of individual action plans. To include PRS (personal response system) evaluation exercise to measure progress.</li> <li>3. Expert workshop for pupils and their parents/carers on the realities of funding student life.</li> <li>4. Workshop on study skills and student support.</li> <li>5. Contact all participants in exam results week.</li> </ol> <p><i>Student volunteers will contribute to the workshop on student funding to provide a 'real-life' example of the issues involved. They will also participate in the residential event to provide positive role models for pupils to question and interact with.</i></p> <p><i>Pupil forums made up of representatives from the various schools will help shape the programme and provide feedback on activities and events.</i></p>	<p>By the end of S6 we expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• our pupils to be successful learners and to progress to HE.</li> <li>• our pupils to be equipped with the necessary academic and life skills to be confident contributors in HE and beyond.</li> </ul> <p><b>Measuring success</b></p> <p>Tracking of pupils through personal contact and through SDS.</p> <p>Analysing destination statistics from SDS to show increased progression rates to HE.</p> <p>PRS re-evaluation – analysis against initial pupil benchmark to show increased knowledge, awareness and aspirations.</p> <p>Analysing sample group of ASPIRENorth Schools for HE cohort against pupils who haven't participated in other schools – to show value added in terms of confidence, aspirations and readiness and thoughts for the future.</p>

### **S6 Programme and *Curriculum for Excellence***

The S6 element of the ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme will continue to provide support for young people in moving into a positive and sustained destination, and continue to provide the information, advice and guidance to help them make the right choices.

*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3: a Framework for Learning and Teaching* (2008) notes that:

“The senior phase of the curriculum offers extensive opportunity for personalisation and choice for young people. It is the period of learning where young people are expected to make informed choices, based on appropriate information and advice from a wide range of sources.” (p. 40)

The ASPIRENorth Schools for Higher Education Programme will continue to provide information and context for the young people to make informed and suitable choices for their post-school education. It will also equip the young people with the skills that are needed for them to move on from their school life to higher education. *Curriculum for Excellence* recognises that:

“Outwith the qualifications framework, interdisciplinary activities could also provide an opportunity to deepen learning, develop research and presentation skills and prepare for the next stage of lifelong learning.” (ibid., p. 41)

The programme will provide these kinds of opportunity to prepare and equip pupils for the next stage of their learning journeys, into positive and sustained destinations.

## Target schools

There are ten schools in the North Forum area in the lowest quintile (by progression rate to HE) nationally. The average progression rates to HE over both a 3-year and a 5-year period are shown in the table below. (On SFC advice, the 'cut-off' point for school inclusion is up to an average of 22%; and this equates in the case of schools in the North Forum area to schools in the lowest quintile nationally.)

Local authority	School name	Progression rates to Higher Education					average - 5 years 04/05 to 08/09	average - 3 years 06/07 to 08/09
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09		
Aberdeen City	Northfield Academy	9	11	8	7	11	9.2	8.7
Highland	Inverness High School	9	12	8	24	10	12.6	14.0
Aberdeen City	Torry Academy	11	14	10	16	19	14	15.0
Aberdeen City	St Machar Academy	16	21	18	18	21	18.8	19.0
Moray	Lossiemouth High School	16	25	14	17	25	19.4	18.7
Highland	Alness Academy	23	19	22	18	17	19.8	19.0
Aberdeen City	Kincorth Academy	19	24	15	17	27	20.4	19.7
Moray	Elgin High School	25	21	18	18	25	21.4	20.3
Highland	Wick High School	23	25	22	20	18	21.6	20.0
Highland	Kinlochleven High School	**	33	13	16	26	22.0	18.3

### Note on progression rate statistics:

As this table shows, the progression rates for some schools can vary a lot from year to year: this is particularly the case in some of the smaller schools with which we work in the North Forum area, where a few pupils progressing or not progressing can have a large impact on the total percentage progression rates. However, even in the larger city schools, progression rates can fluctuate greatly from year to year. The work of ASPIRENorth is only one of many factors impacting on progression rates in schools: other factors within schools (quality of teaching, leadership, focus on attainment) also impact on progression. This means that care must always be taken in considering changes in overall progression rates in relation to the impact of schools programmes. For this reason, we will also evaluate the impact of activities on participants, gauging their effect on the pupils' awareness of higher education and their plans to participate in further study after school. We believe that ASPIRENorth's contribution will continue to be important in raising awareness of and aspirations towards participation in post-compulsory education.

## Outcomes (defined by SFC)

The following information has been provided by our funders, the SFC, to describe the outcomes from the Schools for Higher Education Programme across Scotland, of which the ASPIRE North Schools for Higher Education Programme is part.

**Aim: To deliver a national entitlement for disadvantaged school pupils to raise expectation, increase staying on rates and progression rates to higher education.**

**Funding will:** Develop a systematic programme of generic guidance and support to school pupils from S3-S5/6 within those schools with 20% or less progression to higher education in Scotland.

It will target support on those pupils who are:

- with potential to achieve HE entry, but at risk of not achieving this potential; or
- achieving but don't recognise their potential for progression to higher education.

Activity will focus on targeted and sustained support to pupils to achieve progression to HE (in both college and university) and will involve strategic agreements with local authorities and agreements on the tracking of pupil progression with SDS.

### **Impact to be achieved:**

#### **The forums will contribute to:**

- an increase in the % of pupils progressing to HE (full and part time) from within target schools;
- closing the gap between the progression rates to HE in the schools with less than 20% progression to HE and the rest of the schools within the region; and
- Increase in the numbers of pupils staying on at school.

#### **Between September 2010 and August 2012\* the forums will demonstrate:**

- an **increase** in pupil progression rates to HE achieved on average across the target schools; and
- an increase in the staying on rate achieved on average across the target schools.

\*N.B. performance impact to be measured in January 2013, following the publication of the required data in December 2012.

Recognising that the forums are only one contributory factor toward the intended impact it is expected that the forums will also demonstrate:

- an above 20% progression rate to HE achieved on average by those pupils within an identified cohort across the target schools; and
- a % change in awareness of higher education among a sample of pupils recorded before and after participation at S3 and S4

