



## Fireskills Training – Orkney Islands Council

### A youth work approach to supporting young people's careers journeys

Orkney Islands Council youth work team collaborate with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to deliver a ten-week Fireskills course for a group of young people, aged 14-17. The course is offered specifically to young people from smaller islands to encourage future recruitment to support a sustainable local fire service. Rural isolation has a significant impact on the opportunities available to young people taking part in after-school activities, so there is a very positive response from young people wanting to access the programme.

The Fireskills course focuses on building safety skills, while promoting positive citizenship. Through various experiential learning experiences, young participants on the programme build their social and communication skills as well as learning fire safety protocol. A number of young people involved in the programme face barriers to learning including social anxiety and exclusion. Their confidence in themselves grows, as they work with Firefighters and with their peers, tackling tricky situations and pushing themselves out of their comfort zone.

This year, all nine young people involved in the programme:

- Developed new skills – particularly interpersonal skills and team-working skills.
- Experienced an improvement in health and wellbeing, building positive relationships with staff and peers, developing friendships that continued outwith the Fireskills programme and creating connections within the community allowing them to access other opportunities.
- Achieved a Dynamic Youth Award and a First Aid accreditation.



**SCOTTISH**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland

. As a result of this experience, three young people are applying to pursue a career in the fire services

## Young people's reflections on the experience:

*"I was really interested in the Fire Service already and learned so many new skills while taking part in the Fireskills course. Having a better knowledge of what they do and having a glimpse of their training has supported me to have the confidence to apply to join the Fire and Rescue Service once I turn 18."*

*"The Fireskills course has helped me come out of my shell and got me speaking to new people while learning to work in a team safely."*

*"The skills I've learned through Fireskills which include communication, teamwork and First Aid will be really good for my CV. I'm glad I did the course."*



## Partner reflections on the experience:

*"Throughout the course, students immersed themselves in a transformative journey, not only acquiring firefighting skills but also honing in on respect, discipline, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills. A holistic approach is taken in preparing these individuals for the demanding and crucial role of a firefighter and all future employment opportunities."*

Phillip Morrison, Crew Commander, SFRS Orkney

*"Working together, Fireskills provides a fantastic platform for young people to boost their confidence and employability and learn skills to carry themselves and their communities through challenging times."*

Gwenda Shearer, Chair of Orkney Islands Council's Education, Leisure and Housing Committee

*"I'm always so impressed by the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service crew that provide the Fireskills Employability Course for our young people and by the young people themselves. Over a ten-week period the transformation in the young people is remarkable, they grow so much in confidence and build positive relationships with their instructors and peers through working as a team. Often, they overcome personal barriers and doubts to the best of their ability, showing adaptability and resilience which will serve them well in any future career they choose."*

Lianne Taylor, Youth & Family Learning Worker, CLD

