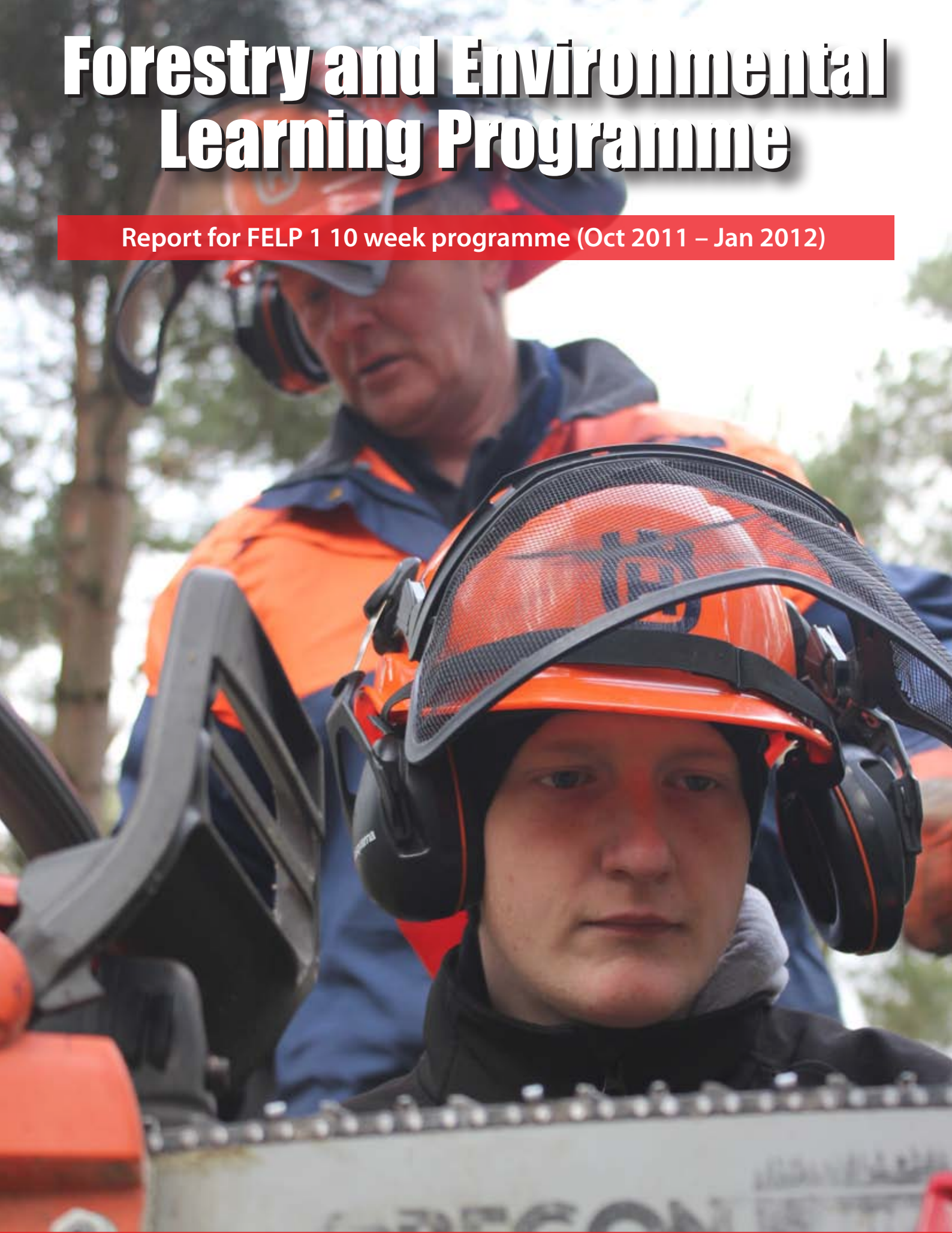


Forestry and Environmental Learning Programme

Report for FELP 1 10 week programme (Oct 2011 – Jan 2012)





The Forestry and Environment Learning Programme (FELP) is a ten week training programme, designed by BTCV Scotland, for 16-25 year olds which aims to increase employability and opportunities for career development in the environment and forestry sector. FELP offers a wide range of stimulating classroom or on the job training opportunities for young people who might otherwise not get the chance, training and support to get a job and work in the environmental industry. Each trainee has his/her own mentor who stays in touch on a weekly basis for the duration of the programme in order to stay abreast with progress and how the trainee is feeling in terms of confidence and progression. All of the formal training courses are accredited and hands on learning takes place at key FCS sites. In addition the programme includes an accredited employability 5 day course, called Empower, which has been a firm favourite with the trainees. This programme has included all the main ingredients for preparing for work and is specifically designed for the 16-25 age range. Areas covered have included goal setting, writing a CV, job search, communication and preparing for a "live" interview for a Forestry position. This training was complemented by a week-long placement with an external company/organisation.





Lisa Wright - 19

Unemployed. Keen to get going on programme as currently in job search with minimal exposure to the outdoors. Keen to learn new skills though not sure yet on goals and career ideas for the future. Some anxieties around transport and getting to courses on time.

"The programme has given me my sense of achievement back.. I have confidence now to follow up plans for my future".

We have secured further funding to develop Lisa's role.



Jamie Raeburn - 17

Left school at 16. Referred through Citadel ("a place to stop people hanging about the street and getting into trouble"). Some previous experience working for Greenscape. Very keen on programme and looking forward to the chainsaw training as being a tree surgeon is one of his goals for the future. No CV as yet.

Jamie's confidence has grown considerably over the 10 weeks and he is currently looking at options for future education and employment. He completed his first ever CV and mock interview as part of the Empower programme and did really well. He is keen to complete training he missed owing to accommodation difficulties and ill health.



Nathan Scott - 19

Unemployed and desperate for a job. Currently spending all time doing Job Search or on computer. In answer to questions about ideas and goals for the future Nathan said simply "To get a good job..." Referred through Fife Council Employment Development. Some anxieties around travel and finding places on time using public transport. In a "scatter flat" and awaiting confirmation of council flat.

Nathan has shown great potential during this programme and has a very keen interest in pursuing a career in forestry. He particularly enjoyed his placement with FCS and is keen for more opportunities. "A great experience with a boost of skills and qualities in my life which I can also use in day to day life".

We have secured further funding to develop Nathan's role within BTCV. He has an external interview.



Willie Richardson - 19

Unemployed and referred through Venture Trust with whom he previously has done residential outdoor camps. Currently fairly sedentary existence at the moment watching TV or playing Xbox. Looking forward to chainsaw course. Some anxieties around paying for any transport required for the programme up front.

Willie has really grown in confidence and ability over the 10 weeks. He spoke little at the start and his attendance was sporadic. Over the latter five weeks Willie started to improve his contribution, completed courses and passed assessments including, most recently, the full chainsaw certificate. We are extremely delighted with his progress and keen to offer Willie more support and volunteer opportunities.



Kieran Gilgun - 17

Referred through Citadel Youth Centre. Interested in garden landscaping and tree surgery- likes working with people. More into practical learning and working with hands. Dyslexic, therefore form filling etc. very challenging. Described sitting around indoors a fair bit playing computer games.

Kieran started well and completed a number of courses/site days but, after his placement week, he has not been contactable. Further attempts at contact will be made beyond the programme to ensure Kieran receives certificates.



Rachel Edmans - 24

Rachel was referred onto the programme through BTCV and after the first 3 weeks decided it wasn't for her. Rachel is well qualified and whilst unemployed, felt that the training wasn't really what she was looking for and decided to leave early so that her place could be given to someone else in round 2. She has since interviewed for placements in two other BTCV/Lottery funded programmes

Programme to date

Week 1

31.10.11 – Introduction day with BTCV Staff and FCS staff plus induction, forms and PPE4 days of FCS Site practical work – at Callander Woods and Nethercroy doing vegetation and pond clearance:

“The week was fun-filled. It was a really good surprise to be outside doing stuff.” (Willie)

Nathan was very positive about week 1 - he said it was great and he loved the working outside bit. He felt a sense of progression and achievement. “I’m going home tired at the end of the day but it’s a good tired!” He says he’s looking forward to the next challenge and is feeling very motivated by what he has described as “a very unique training opportunity”.

“I know Jamie has already been thinking about being a tree surgeon but with no idea of how to go about it. So it would be great to line up a suitable placement for him.”



Week 2

7.11.11 – Cutting and grinding course at Kings Park farm, LANTRA

8-9.11.11 – Intro to Environmental Conservation (NCFE), two days at Hermitage of Braid, Edinburgh

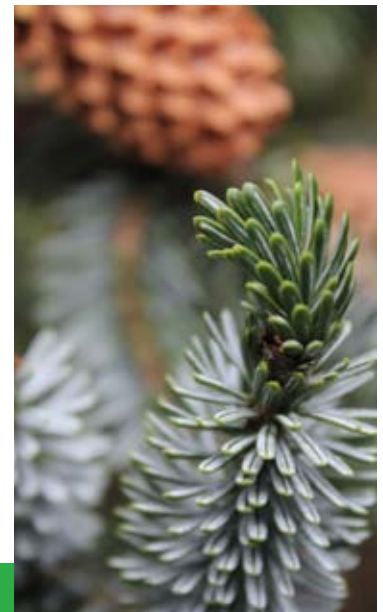
“One thing I learned about conservation this week is that a grey squirrel is “an alien species”, (...Keiran found this hilarious)... the trainer for our conservation course was brilliant...”

10-11.11 – FCS Sites

“The week went well and it has been great fun. Really seemed to fly by. Worked at Nethercroy clearing vegetation from the pond. Saw some frogs and moved them away from the area we were working in” (Willie)

“A lot of brain power was used this week! ” (Lisa)

“I really enjoyed learning about Wildlife and habitats” (Lisa)



Week 3

14-15.11.11 – Leadership skills training

16-18.11.11 – Pesticides training (PA1 and PA6) - LANTRA

“I thought it would be worth letting you know that I was really impressed by Lisa and Nathan’s contributions on the leadership training last week. Lisa is a smart cookie and I think will do really well. Nathan has his head screwed on and offers valuable input to group discussions.” Leadership Course feedback from the Trainer.

“I found the pesticide training really hard to start with – my brain was in a real puzzle!...But I was so excited when I passed cos it was really hard!” (Lisa)



Week 4

21.11.11 – Empower Employability training (SCQF level 4) included: cost of living, motivation, goal setting.

22-23.11.11 – FCS site activities

24-25.11.11 – Green Gym training

“I really enjoyed the Green Gym training and have been thinking about doing more of this kind of training in the future” (Lisa)

Empower training showed us S1 jobs - an easier way to find jobs anywhere.” (Kieran)

Week 5

28.11.11 – Pesticide assessment for Lisa and Willie/FCS site activity for Jamie, Kieran and Nathan

29.11.11 – FCS site activities

“I now know how to make different cuts when felling trees with hand tools.” (Jamie)

30.11.11 – FCS site activities

1.12.11 – Empower training: How a positive attitude can help me, the rules of searching for a job

2.12.11 – Empower training: Understanding telephone communication, What is career positioning?
Creating a strong CV.

“Feel I can now go out and look for a job and can do it all on my own without depending on other people.” (Jamie)

“This week I have been learning how to clean and maintain tools correctly and doing van checks. I also helped to cut back conifers at Callander Woods to open up space. Thursday and Friday was Empower training. Best of all the training. I learnt how to make a CV... Never done that before in my life! Finding it really, really great and I want to do more.” (Jamie)

“Feel I can now go out and look for a job and can do it all on my own without depending on other people..” (Jamie)



Week 7 - Placement Week

All five trainees were placed with an external agency on a 'work placement' for five days. This provided an opportunity to learn new skills and travel to new places – as well as cope with the daily necessity of getting out of bed at a very early hour! To help support the younger of the trainees a pick up/drop off system was arranged through Andy MacDonald who was employed to film the trainees whilst out on placement. Lisa was unable to attend her placement week owing to temporary homelessness. She rejoined the programme when it resumed in the New Year. Nathan and Willie greatly enjoyed their week with FCS – possibly more than anything else –and are both inspired to pursue a career in forestry as a result. Both passed their chainsaw assessments in the New year.

Lisa	Jamie	Nathan	Willie	Kieran
Working with Edinburgh Council Ranger Service at Hermitage of Braid: to be re-run in 2012	Frontier Forestry Ltd urban & rural tree surgeons	Forestry Commission Scotland	Forestry Commission Scotland	Stephen Ogilvie Garden Design, Edinburgh

Referral Agency Feedback

"I wanted to contribute a little feedback to BTCV for the tremendous support and 'stickability' to Lisa and the other young people taking part in FELP. I work with young people who have been looked after and accommodated by the local authority and therefore have a fair amount of knowledge of the hurdles faced by young people on a daily basis. Even just getting fares or a bus can pose significant trauma and despite this BTCV were completely committed to ensuring their young people got to base camp. Lisa had four addresses over the ten weeks period as she has not had a secure base for a number of years. Julia and colleagues made every attempt to contact Lisa, to pick her up and provide support when she experienced a particularly emotional time prior to the Christmas break when she was unable to attend a work placement. Lisa automatically assumed that she had blown it, as previous experience from other training providers has proven this to be the case. Young people are often not given the chance to prove themselves, and thought of as unmotivated with little work ethic- it can appear to young people as 'two strikes and you're out' and this is generally the case. Lisa and I were delighted when BTCV asked Lisa to return in January, with no need to explain, proving their concern and commitment to Lisa's learning. Lisa has thoroughly enjoyed the training, her self confidence and belief in herself have returned and in my opinion it has been from this unique experience. Lisa has always been sociable and communicative however has lacked confidence in herself in larger groups of people. I accompanied Lisa to the YES project, a contact Lisa made through the FELP programme. I was so proud to watch her walk into the building as if she has worked there for years, she openly chatted to a group of young people who were in the throws of business planning with no hesitation! Lisa appears to have made an impression and the fact that BTCV are committed to continue to provide opportunity to their young people is amazing. I cannot thank you all enough for the opportunity and the confidence you have in Lisa.

During the presentation I was also very impressed by the confidence and feedback from the other young people, particularly being younger than Lisa, they too were able to contribute to group discussion, filming and face to face social interaction with a group of strangers. The presentation was also so supportive and a total celebration of the young peoples achievement, even small detail such as framing their certificates has shown BTCV to be in a different league from other training providers! Lisa is so full of potential and without a doubt, this experience will contribute to Lisa reaching hers."

Katie Matthews

Social Worker
Throughcare and Aftercare Team
East Renfrewshire Social Work Department

Qualifications	Lisa	Jamie	Nathan	Willie	Kieran
Qualifications to Environmental Conservation (NCFE) -2 days	Passed assessment	Passed assessment	Passed assessment	Passed assessment	Passed assessment
Cutting and Grinding (LANTRA) -1 day	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed
Pesticides (PA1 and PA6) LANTRA 3 days	Passed	Absent	Absent	Failed but keen to try again	Absent
Leadership Skills 2 days	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Green Gym 2 days	Completed	Completed, 1st day	Completed, 1st day	Completed, 1st day	Completed, 1st day
Empower Employability (SCQF level 4) 5 days	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Attended 3 out of 5 days
1st Aid at Work	Passed	Absent	Absent	Passed	Absent
Woodchipper	Absent	Absent	Absent	Passed	Absent
Chainsaw Training NPTC	Completed 4 out of 5 days and injured hand	Completed 3 out of 5 days and passed cross saw maintenance	Passed	Passed	Absent

Challenges and Successes

The Forestry and Environment Learning Programme (FELP) is a highly ambitious project which has been both rewarding and challenging to deliver. Most rewarding is the feedback we are getting from our trainees who are rapidly gaining confidence and skills and repeatedly thank us for this opportunity. Working with the trainees and getting to know them has been both enjoyable and educational as we gain a better understanding of how they learn, their backgrounds and what is difficult and challenging for them.

Difficulties have arisen around public transport and the cost/complications of travelling to training events using public transport, prior to reimbursements being paid. In the first four weeks we realised belatedly that our trainees simply could not afford the regular bus and train fares required and simply could not "afford" to attend some of the earlier training unless expenses were paid on a daily basis. BTCV does not operate a large petty cash system and like most organisations, is not in the habit of handing out large amount of cash. So floats were arranged for each of the trainees. Three of the trainees didn't have bank accounts at the start of the programme and these had to be set up quickly so that they could be paid.

Overall we believe this programme to be a fantastic and completely unique opportunity for young people who might otherwise not get the chance, training and support to get a job and work in the environmental industry. The programme offers a diverse range of accredited training and on the job experiential hands on learning – on FSC sites.

