Bid to boost job and exam hopes for Furness youngsters

Thursday 29 February, 2024

Cumbria Community Foundation is leading an initiative to improve exam performance and job opportunities for young people in Furness.

Its research shows that one-in-four of Furness' working-age population have no qualifications while one-in-10 young people are unemployed.

The research also shows that the best way to change this is to get young people involved in extracurricular and enrichment activities that motivate and inspire them.

The Foundation is commissioning a report into youth provision, identifying barriers to participation and making recommendations to influence decision makers in national and local government and to pitch to potential donors, businesses and third-sector organisations.

The work is being funded by Cumbria Community Foundation, BAE Systems and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce.

David Beeby, Chair of Cumbria Community Foundation, said: "We know that, in general, students who take part in extracurricular activities achieve greater academic success, a better character and social development and greater interest in community involvement. All these improve their job prospects.

"What we're talking about here is informal learning, doing something outside the classroom or in addition to the main lesson that enriches and inspires learning, allowing students to explore their interests.

"We are looking to appoint experts to assess current approaches, consult stakeholders, explore best practice and provide recommendations for a more effective, efficient and impactful approach to the delivery of these extracurricular activities across Low and High Furness."

The Foundation has a budget of £35,000, including VAT, for the report, which it hopes to launch by the end of June. Details of the brief can be viewed at: https://www.cumbriafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FES-invitation-to-tender-15.02.24.pdf

Submissions must be received by 10am on Monday, March 18.

Janet Garner, Future Workforce Director at BAE Systems, said: "We know there is a wealth of extra-curricular activity taking place in the local area currently, with lots of organisations working hard to support young people to achieve their full life potential. We are fully supportive of the research project's aims, ensuring we understand better how we can make our collective efforts, as effective as possible, supporting the needs and aspirations of young people and the needs of the local economy also.

The initiative follows a report, Furness Opportunities and Challenges, which the Foundation produced in 2021 highlighting the problems Furness faces.

This led to a Skills Summit involving education providers, employment support agencies, businesses and the third sector, which identified the need for a better approach to extracurricular provision.

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