

Second Canal College sails closer

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Participants on the first ever canal college celebrate at The Falkirk Wheel

A major skills and employability programme centred on three of Scotland's historic canals has had a major boost thanks to players of the National Lottery.

A grant of £1.125million from HLF will help disadvantaged 16-30 year olds by teaching them practical and environmental skills.

Known as Canal College, this unique outdoor employability programme has been designed by the Scottish Waterways Trust to help address youth unemployment. Between 2013 and 2015 Canal College helped 162 young people who faced significant barriers in their lives. It resulted in 72% moving into work, further education, training or volunteering on completion.

Abby, Canal College participant, now studying in the creative industries, said: "One of the main reasons I started canal college was my social anxiety, I would never talk to anyone. I wouldn't even make eye contact, and now I'm doing that and I feel as if I've taken leaps and bounds. It's been very helpful. I've built up so much confidence"

The charity aims to reach twice as many young people (360 participants) as the first, successful Canal College programme by extending the age criteria and the number of locations where it will be offered to Falkirk, Inverness and West Dunbartonshire.

Learning through practical projects in the unique outdoor environment of Scotland's canals, volunteers will be offered the opportunity to receive first-hand experience of working with the natural heritage, learning a range of new skills.

[quote=Lucy Casot, Head of the HLF Scotland]"Thanks to players of the National Lottery, the canals will provide powerful and memorable experiences for young people, making learning fun and opening their eyes to the heritage which surrounds them."[/quote]

Karen Moore, Chief Executive, Scottish Waterways Trust, said: "We are delighted to receive this incredible support from HLF. Following the outstanding success of the original canal college, we were inspired to significantly grow the scale and scope of the project to reach twice as many young unemployed adults who have faced significant barriers in their life, whether that be mental health problems or challenging home lives.

Lucy Casot, Head of the HLF Scotland, said: "Our heritage offers a rich resource for skills and education so HLF is delighted to support canal college where it is being used in such an innovative way. Thanks to players of the National Lottery, the canals will provide powerful and memorable experiences for young people, making learning fun and opening their eyes to the heritage which surrounds them. We know from the success of the last project that the newly-learned skills will not only make a positive difference to their own lives but will play an important part in looking after Scotland's canal network."



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[**Plans for Canal College sail closer**](#)