

W DUNBARTONSHIRE PROJECT SEARCH NEWSLETTER



New Year – Health and Wellbeing

January can leave many of us feeling more tired than usual. The festive period has ended, the days are short, and the cold, wet weather can make it harder to stay positive. During our first week back at Project SEARCH, we explored the importance of looking after our health and what it truly means to be well.

We learned about the three key areas of health—physical, emotional, and mental—and discussed why each one plays an important role in our daily lives. Together, we came up with practical ideas for improving our wellbeing, and we wanted to share some of our top tips with our readers:



OUR HEALTH TIPS

- Build and practise a positive mindset
- Do simple warm-up exercises (like jumping jacks or push-ups) to keep your body and mind active
- Try to maintain a healthy daily calorie intake (around 2,000 calories for most adults)
- Aim for a balanced diet—fill your plate with lots of colours
- Make sure you're getting your "five a day"
- Drink at least 2 litres of water daily
- Walk after meals to help burn calories and support digestion
- Try to go for a walk for at least an hour each day
- Listen to music or audiobooks to stay engaged while walking
- Exercise with pets and enjoy quality playtime with them
- Keep a regular sleep schedule by going to bed at the same time each night
- Challenge yourself by improving on things you've done before
- Get plenty of natural sunlight when you can



Employer Partnerships

During our first placement block, we were fortunate to work with a wide range of employers across West Dunbartonshire. Two partners we would especially like to highlight are West Dunbartonshire Council and The Salvation Army, both of whom provided valuable learning experiences for our interns.

West Dunbartonshire Council

West Dunbartonshire Council is a major public-sector organisation delivering essential services to residents across the area. The council includes many departments, and our interns had opportunities to support several of them, including:

- Queens Quay Care Home
- Crosslet Care Home
- Housing (Repairs and Maintenance)
- Information Services (Church Street)

These placements allowed participants to gain insight into the responsibilities and teamwork required to keep local services running effectively.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is a well-known third-sector organisation dedicated to helping people who face challenges such as poverty, homelessness, addiction, and social inequality. Our interns worked at the Clydebank Donation Centre, where they supported daily operations and learned how donated items are sorted, processed, and prepared for reuse in the community.

Progress During First Placements

Everyone has shown noticeable improvement over the course of their first placement. Across the group, we have seen growth in:

- Self-confidence
- Problem-solving skills
- Teamwork and communication

Alongside these shared achievements, each participant has also developed skills unique to their personal role and placement. For example:

- Daniel has developed strong manual-handling and practical skills through hands-on tasks.

These successes show how well our interns are adapting to workplace environments and learning to apply their strengths in real-life situations.

What Employers Look For

Although the two employers work in very different sectors, they share many expectations when it comes to skills and employability.

The Salvation Army values:

- Empathy and strong communication
- Flexibility
- Being well-organised
- Teamwork and reliability
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West Dunbartonshire Council looks for:

- Clear and confident communication
- Problem-solving skills
- Sector-specific knowledge (depending on the placement)
- The ability to work effectively as part of a team

These insights help our interns understand what real workplaces look for and how they can continue to grow.



First Aid Training

This month we took part in REHIS Emergency First Aid training with Ellen from W4U. We thought it was important to all learn what to do to help someone in an emergency.

We covered what to do if someone was unresponsive and not breathing, completed CPR training and learned how to use an external defibrillator machine (not on each other, don't worry). We also learned about the recovery position, how to treat cut wounds and burns, what steps/procedure to follow when administering first aid, and what to do if someone is choking or having a seizure.

WE ALL PASSED!!

Project Search collected for WD Foodbank



This Christmas, Project Search West Dunbartonshire partnered with West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare to help those in need—and we achieved our goal! The foodbank has worked tirelessly for years to support the community.

Over the festive period, WDCF managed to support 914 local children with toy/gift parcels, all from families who are adversely affected by poverty and food insecurity.

In the two weeks before Christmas they were able to deliver a Christmas food parcel containing 2 weeks worth of food to 412 local households, for 620 adults and 231 children.

Claire Coyle, the manager, shared her thanks:

"West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to Project Search Interns for the fantastic support shown to the Charity this year during the lead up to Christmas. The Interns collaborated with several local businesses and organisations to encourage participation in our Christmas Appeal, and as a result, they collected and delivered a tremendous amount of toys, gifts and food to our base prior to Christmas. Thank you so much to everyone who supported our Appeal this Christmas and helped us ensure all West Dunbartonshire children received gifts to open on Christmas morning. We really could not do what we do without your help and kindness."

We're always looking to build meaningful connections with individuals and local organisations who share our passion for inclusive employment. Whether you're an employer, community partner, or someone who simply wants to support our journey, we'd love to hear from you.

If you're interested in getting involved, please contact us — together, we can make a real difference.

Email: projectsearch@west-dunbarton.gov.uk