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The Press and Journal

Teenagers discover oil industry



The students with their Centrica Energy mentors. Photograph: Kami Thomson

Five teenagers joined leading energy company Centrica Energy for an internship to learn more about the workplace environment and the oil and gas industry.

The secondary school pupils from across the north-east spent five weeks at Centrica Energy's Exploration and Production HQ in Aberdeen as part of the national Career Academies programme.

The internship came

halfway through a two-year mentoring scheme, which has seen the teens receive career guidance and advice from five people, including engineers and other technical specialists, from across Centrica Energy's E&P business.

It is the first time Centrica Energy has taken part in the Career Academies scheme, which matches thousands of 16-19-year-olds from across the UK with volunteers from 1,400

employers. Callum Christie, 17, from Peterhead Academy; Isadora Lee, 17, from the Gordon Schools; Emma Good, 17, from Portlethen Academy; Johnathan Tweddell, 16, from Oldmachar Academy; and Julie Bonnar, 16, from Peterhead Academy worked alongside teams at Centrica Energy's offices in Aberdeen to gain first-hand experience of life with an oil and gas operator.

Stuart Dalgleish, the

company's human resources director for the UK and the Netherlands, said: "The Career Academies programme is an excellent way for young people to gain an insight into the many options available to them when thinking about their careers."

"We were delighted to welcome these five bright teenagers to Centrica Energy and, hopefully, inspire some of them to consider a career in the oil and gas industry."

Callum, who worked with the process-engineering team during his internship, said: "It's been a fantastic experience for me. I was involved in such a wide variety of projects and was able to get a taste of every side of engineering."

"I have been able to meet engineers from across several disciplines during my internship and find out more about how they got into the industry, and that really inspired me because I realised how much drive is needed to be part of a team like this."

"Joining a company like Centrica Energy, even for a few weeks, has been a massive benefit for me - I have wanted to be an engineer for a long time, and this experience has absolutely backed that up."

Callum's mentor, Mustafa Mohamed, a process engineer in the company's projects team, said: "Having Callum in the office has been a privilege, and the way he has taken on the projects he's been given has really gone above and beyond expectations."

While some of the interns had their eyes opened to the potential careers in the oil and gas industry, others had their sights set on other careers but were able to learn skills that are vital in any sector.

Isadora Lee, who aims to work in theatre or film production, said: "Having been more used to the school environment, it was great to be in a more relaxed working atmosphere where you are trusted with more responsibility."

"I had no idea what the office environment was like, but I was able to spend time with a lot of different departments and got a great perspective from it. There are so many parallels between the oil and gas industry and the film and theatre industry that I would never have expected, but it has meant that I have drawn so much from the internship."

David Hughes, an assurance manager in the company's technical team and Isadora's mentor, said: "In the last year, Isadora and I met every month or so and, with Isadora setting her sights so clearly on theatre or film production, we were able to focus on the skills which will help her achieve that."

"The internship has allowed Isadora to learn about how to run a project, recruitment and overseeing the financial and health-and-safety sides of her work, so although oil and gas and film production are different industries, she has gained some really useful transferable knowledge."



The Noble Julie Robertson drilling rig in Centrica's York field