

CASE STUDY

Trailblazing hairdressers head for the Med

Trainee hairdressers from two valleys towns have formed the first wave of new-style internationally-mobile learners from Wales.

The ten students from Merthyr Tydfil College and The College Rhymney spent an intensive ten days working alongside counterparts in Majorca as part of a pilot scheme under the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Mobility Programme.

The young women carried out their placements in two hair salons, at the Francesc de Borja School in Palma, where they shared skills and ideas with Spanish hair and beauty students.

Despite the language barrier, the students managed to communicate confidently with salon 'customers' and local students by using hand gestures and facial expressions.

In addition to the job skills they obtained from the project, the Merthyr and Rhymney Valley students supported the key skills element of their training by organising most elements of the trip themselves.

Emma Jones, 18, from Merthyr Tydfil College, who took part in the programme, said: "I really enjoyed my time in Palma. I learned so much which will be a great help to me in my career.

"The trip has really broadened my horizons and has made me realise that I don't have to stay in my home town when I qualify. I've got so much more confidence thanks to the placement and I feel that I can now go and pursue my career wherever I want."

Linda Phillips, a hairdressing lecturer at The College Rhymney, who accompanied the students, said: "They had a fantastic time and learnt so much. Culturally, it is very

different in Majorca in that work starts earlier, they have a long siesta in the afternoon and work on longer in the evening. The girls took to the lifestyle quickly and seemed to enjoy it.

“Teaching methods in Majorca are very different to the way we do things, but this was a very interesting learning experience for the girls. For example whereas we have sessions on hairdressing as a whole, in Majorca they have a block of lessons on cutting and another on colouring.

“Even though none of our girls speaks Spanish, and English was very limited among the Spanish students, they managed to communicate very well and were able to transfer skills, which ultimately improved everyone’s confidence.”

Two Majorcan students are currently on a work placement at The College Rhymney and are carrying out placements at two local hair salons.