



**: Tiggy Winkles supports 'Help for Heroes'**

Tiggy Winkles Pegasus showed their support for our troops abroad and at home by holding an 'Army Day' for the kids. The event was organised to raise money for 'Help for Heroes', and was really successful with a massive £590 being raised, as the children sold cakes, toys, and other fun items. There were lots of activities for the kids as well including making toy army cars, and dressing up as soldiers for the event. The day was organised by Vicky Clinton, who is the head of the Under 2's at the Tiggy Winkles Pegasus Nursery.

*"It's been a wonderful experience for us and the children. We hope everyone who came had a good time, and we're glad to be have raised so much money for 'Help for Heroes'."* - Vicky Clinton



**Places Available NOW!**  
At Tiggy Winkles Nursery. **0121 747 2186**

**: Placements @ Merlin**

Emma Higgs heard about, and joined, Merlin Venture through a referral from the Job Centre, and then started a six month placement on the Future Jobs Fund as a Training Assistant. Emma had previously worked in retail since she was sixteen, and after leaving University she began looking for admin work, online, in the Job Centre and through agencies. She is planning to go back to University to study Social Work, a decision she puts down to working with the kids at Merlin Venture. Working directly with the training team, Emma has had the opportunity to learn new skills from competent and experienced staff.



*"I've enjoyed my time here, working with the kids has been really interesting and a great experience."* - Emma Higgs

**: 'Buster' Driver's get their NVQ's**

Congratulations to the members of the team at Buster Werkenbak who have just successfully completed their NVQ Level 2 in "Passenger Carrying Vehicles".



This qualification is further evidence that we take staff development very seriously as well as constantly improving our customer service to our passengers across North Warwickshire. Well done to Robert Bierd, Eric Perry and Adrian Dovey for completing the qualification in less than 5 months. Buster Werkenbak is continuing to provide a great low cost service helping people get to work at inaccessible employment sites including Hams Hall and Birch Coppice. For more information please call 0845 234 1234

**: New team starts at Merlin**

We have recently taken on a new team of employment coaches to help us provide a wide range of employment services to our clients. Based at our head office and providing additional support at our other locations we would like to welcome to the team Kim Williams, Heather Gibbons, Mark Gillespie, Liam Brennan, Mo Farooq, Sameena Kausar, Simone Edmead, Theresa O'Regan and Roxanne Baldwin. They have all joined us on six month placements on either the Future Jobs Fund or the Intermediate Labour Market.



(l-to-r) Liam, Heather, Kim, Roxanne, Mo, Colette, John.

We have also been joined by two new starters in the front office: Colette Tedstone is our new administration assistant and John Northam has joined our marketing team. They have both fitted in well and are looking forward to seeing what the next six months will bring. If you are unemployed and looking to get back into work we may be able to help you so for more information call Lynette Gauntlett on 0121 384 5614.

**: Our Thanks.**

We would like to thank Anwaral Haque (centre) and Rabeela Akhtar (left) who this month completed their six month Future Jobs Fund placements. As part of the marketing team they were both involved in developing a range of new materials including the newsletter, information packs as well as producing a video of the training centre which is now on our web site at [www.merlinventure.co.uk](http://www.merlinventure.co.uk); they both provided invaluable support to the marketing department. We would like to wish them both the best of luck in their future careers. *"It's been a fantastic experience, and I'm glad to be taking these skills on to other positions."* - Anwaral Haque.



# merlin:news

Merlin Venture hope you enjoy our newsletter, bringing you all of the latest news and information on Merlin Venture and our businesses.

SEPT 10  
ISSUE 38

**: Star Employee**

Shirley McKenzie is currently on an ILM placement with the Debra Charity Shop in Erdington. She has been nominated by her employment adviser for her extremely hard work and determination to find permanent work. Shirley had previously been long term unemployed before taking on this role. During her time at Debra she has pushed herself to excel at every opportunity and is now doing so well that she is being trained to become a store Assistant Manager.



*"It's extremely helpful being able to sit down with someone on a one to one basis and talk about things, it is a real confidence booster. The one to ones are very useful to have as it can become very nerve racking looking for work on your own."* - Shirley McKenzie

**: Star Team**

This month's star team is our JETS employment placement team, recently upgraded to a four piece with the introduction of Cheryl Gordon and Rita O'Grady. The team is headed up by Lynette Gauntlett, who with Tina Champion is responsible for finding work placements and suitable candidates for our six month placements on the Future Jobs Fund and Intermediate Labour Market programmes. They have also recently taken over responsibility for finding four week work placements for our flexible New Deal clients.



*"They have proved themselves to be an exceptional team and they are always pushing themselves to help as many people as possible while achieving all of their targets."* - Robert Brown

**: Adult Trades Training Now Available**



Merlin now offers adult training in various skills, which can help lead you towards a college course or, even better, employment. We cover trades such as: Electrical Installation, Plumbing, Painting & Decorating, Carpentry, Motor Mechanics and Forklift Truck Driving for both Counter Balance & Reach. As well as developing new skills, the courses can be used as a taster towards further education giving you an understanding of the basics required for each trade.

The courses are perfect for anyone who wishes to change career, or try a practical trade. We are also able to provide CSCS card training which gives you the Health & Safety training necessary to get to work on most building sites. These courses could be completely free of charge if you meet certain requirements. To find out more about our adult learner courses and how you can apply, contact Jackie Elston today on 0121 384 5614.

James O'Flaherty has taken two of our trade taster courses, the first in Carpentry, and now Electrics. He was made redundant from Land Rover security two years ago, and in that time has also achieved his SIA badge and First Aid qualification. He is now working towards his CSCS card which allows him to work on a construction site. With a job only weeks away, James is using the taster courses to refresh his skills in the two fields, and is really looking forward to getting back into work.

The Merlin JETS team, both at Unit 19 and the Community Campus, have managed to help him fully prepare for that new job.

*"The people here are very good and really helpful. Sukhi has been helping me to get on top of my paperwork."* James O'Flaherty



If you would like more information about Merlin Venture and any of the services we have to offer, please contact us via;

[info@merlinventure.co.uk](mailto:info@merlinventure.co.uk)

**0121 384 5614**

[www.merlinventure.co.uk](http://www.merlinventure.co.uk)



**: Our Services - Unit 19**

Unit 19 on Erdington Industrial Park is home to our main JETS services. The JETS (Jobs Enterprise Training Support.) have been extremely successful at getting clients back into work, and providing new skills like Interview Techniques. With a great range of facilities and lots of space, we are able to offer job search facilities, one-to-one interviews and advice, as well as training in various practical trades.



With Unit 19 also being the head office for Merlin Venture, it's a constant buzz of activity and support. With a large team of employment advisors and coaches we always have people on hand to help you identify the skills you can offer an employer, and help you write applications and improve your CV.

**: Flexible New Deal Placements**

The Flexible New Deal programme gives every person who registers the chance to take part in a four week work placement to help them to get back into work. We have been able to offer several four week placements within our own businesses, including Lee Jones from Bromford and Paul Garner from Castle Bromwich. They have both signed up to the Flexible New Deal programme to try to find permanent work. Having been looking for work for the last twelve months they were referred to Yvonne Roberts at our Head Office. They have been working with the training team preparing the centre for our new intake of students.



*"I am looking to get a permanent job so I am happy to do anything that might help me do that."* - Paul Garner  
*"I am looking really for Fork Lift Driving but don't mind what I do as long as I can find a permanent job."* - Lee Jones

**: Merlin Venture & Seetec Working in Partnership.**



**Seetec**

The Flexible New Deal programme began in Birmingham in the Autumn of 2009, and since then Merlin has been providing back to work support together with delivery partner, Seetec. Seetec is a national deliverer of Government programmes, and like Merlin, Seetec believes that empowering others to achieve, aspire towards and sustain their objectives through employment is one of the best routes into happy and fulfilled lives.

*'Our partnership with Merlin means that more people are helped back to work within their own local community and this is an important part of our Flexible New Deal offer in Birmingham.'* - Debra Fullerton, Operations Director for Seetec

**: Meet The Team  
Sukhi Johal.**

Sukhi is one of our Employment Training Advisers who is based at our head office. Sukhi is currently working on the Flexible New Deal programme with clients coming from across Birmingham for help getting back to work. Sukhi is one of our newer recruits joining us in April this year. During her time here Sukhi has made her mark on the team and is now responsible for overseeing the employment coaches and providing them with support and training to ensure we can provide everyone with a high quality level of support.



*"I am enjoying the challenges that this role has brought me since starting here. It is really rewarding for me to see a client I have worked with to be able to find a new direction or career that they want to work in and then find them the perfect job that really makes a difference in their lives."*  
Sukhi Johal

Sukhi currently has more than fifty clients on the go at the moment, most of whom are on Flexible New Deal. She is actively working to find them permanent work and four week placements, contacting local employers and finding any suitable vacancies. If you are able to offer a four week placement please call Sukhi or Cheryl on 0121 384 5614.

**: How was your first day?**

Starting a new job can be a little daunting, but with a little help from people who've been through it, you can see it's not so nerve racking!

**Mark Gillespie**  
Employment Coach - Merlin JETS  
*"I was feeling a little nervous because I was going to meet new people who didn't know what I could do. Once meeting the staff and settling in my nerves went away"*



**: How was your first day?**

**Lauren Taylor**  
Administration Assistant  
Kingstanding Community Development  
*"I was nervous about my first day, I previously had some computer skills but everything has changed since I last used them. At the end of the day though I felt really good like I had actually achieved something."*



**: Success Stories**

Robert Cambridge, 54, from Sutton Coldfield has been working as a shop assistant at the Birmingham City Mission Charity Shop in Kingstanding.



Robert was unemployed for the past two and a half years, during which time he attended and completed a BTEC qualification in Health and Social Care. With 25 years of retail experience working for Reddingtons Rare Records which ended when they became a mail order only business, Robert had been looking to find work in a caring profession which he has continued to work in on a voluntary basis alongside his placement.

On his first appointment with Lynette she was able to take him through all of the necessary paperwork and book him in with his interview at the shop. Robert was offered the job and started work immediately. In his role he has been responsible for looking after the shop as well as building its visual identity and providing invaluable extra support towards all aspects of the shop.

*"Words can't really describe how much I have enjoyed this job, there has been fantastic support throughout and everyone involved has been superb - I have had no problems at all. This is the best thing that has happened to me in the last six months. Financially I have been much better off than I thought I would with having tax credits and things like that."* Robert Cambridge



**: Success Stories**

Merlin JETS works in partnership with a number of organisations across all of our projects. This partnership enables us to provide our clients with a greater range of services and access to a wider number of possibilities.



Paz Thakrar, 40, and from Castle Vale has had a successful career within recruitment as a branch manager and also has several years experience working with people looking to get into work on various Welfare to Work schemes. Paz was referred to Merlin in May after a permanent position fell through at the final stages. Paz had been volunteering for the Castle Vale Tenants and Residents Association (CVTRA) for 14 months whilst working full time on a temporary contract. Paz has recently started a six month Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) placement at our partners ENTA, where he has become an Employment Outreach Adviser working with people from across Kingstanding who need additional support to find work and training.

*"Merlin have been a great help - the team are brilliant and being able to just drop in and be always welcome is a great help. I have already recommended the team and the services to a number of people and businesses who are now benefiting for the same support that I received. After a number of bad personal experiences the team provided a level of additional support that has helped me to recover and to overcome any barriers that I may have had."* - Paz Thakrar

**: How was your first day?**

**Emma Higgs**  
Training Assistant - Merlin Training  
*"Yes, I was nervous on my first day, but they were 'good' nerves! Everyone made me feel welcome and before I knew it the day was over."*



**Andy Severn**  
Nursery Nurse - Tiggy Winkles  
*"I've never worked with kids before, so it was exciting to get stuck in. I went straight in at the deep-end as we went out on a trip on my first day, it was great fun."*