

Learning and Employment

Learning and Employment, Unit 30, Grand Arcade, Wigan WN1 1BH Telephone: 01942 827826

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Keys to Success

You're hired!



When Lord Sugar officially opened Wigan Skills Shop he met young apprentices from across the borough.

The stern taskmaster of BBC TV's Junior Apprentice met Council apprentices Dominic Webster and Thomas Hurst who presented him with a hand-bound leather book they had made. He also met four young people who have gained secure work placements with Wigan Council under the Future Jobs Fund.

Lord Sugar said: "The Wigan Skills Shop has clearly helped out a lot of people throughout the community and is an excellent example of both the public and private sector working in partnership."

The Skills Shop has conducted over 3,000 personal interviews and supported over 300 people into employment. Based in the

Grand Arcade, it offers the best advice and guidance on jobs and careers, qualifications, training and support with vital skills such as maths and English.

It also offers free face-to-face advice with professionally trained advisors, internet access and online support when searching for job and training opportunities. There is a training area, a confidential meeting space and an extensive library of reference books.

In addition, young people can receive advice and guidance from Connexions advisors. The service is the result of a partnership between Wigan Council, Jobcentre Plus, Skills Funding Agency and the Grand Arcade.

Contact Wigan Skills Shop on 01942 827826 or call in - no appointment is needed. Other Skills Shop are: Marsh Green - 01942 705067; Leigh - 01942 404456; Westleigh - 01942 487343.

Stepping into Learning

Kay Smethurst joined a Family Learning course when her second child started school.

She achieved a Level 1 qualification in Adult Numeracy and was signposted by Family Learning tutor, Pat Bosworth, onto a Level 1 Teaching Assistant evening course at Tyldesley Community Education Centre. She also volunteered to help at Holy Family Primary School and achieved Level 2 in Adult Literacy.

At the school, Kay joined Chris Sergot and other teaching assistants to face the challenge of Level 2 Numeracy. With Pat leading the group, she

succeeded and has continued her learning with an ICT course. Headteacher at Holy Family Primary, Anne Farrell, summed up the supportive atmosphere at the school saying: "It is wonderful to have the opportunity to help. We are all learners together."

Kay has attended Step in to Learning sessions and has been appointed as a Teaching Assistant at the school. She is full of praise for the help she has received from Chris, Anne and Pat.



Claire is pictured third from left with her learners.

Claire's blossoming career

Claire Taylor, the new Centre Manager at Bedford High School started her floristry career as an adult learner.

After deciding on a career change from a secretarial and business background, she enrolled on a six week taster course for flower arranging. She then decided to enrol at Wigan and Leigh College on a BTEC Level 2 course in Floristry. Her tutor asked if she would teach the subject, so Claire went on to pass her Level 3 Floristry and Cert. Ed. teaching qualification. She also worked for two years for one of Britain's top florists in Manchester and passed her Level 4 Floristry.

Claire is very familiar with adult learning and has been teaching floristry for more than seven years in the community.

She recently attained Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status before being appointed Centre Manager for Adult and Community Learning at the school.

Claire says: "Learning is for everyone, at anytime in their life, at any age. The adult learning classes are a fantastic way of meeting new friends, taking up a new hobby or changing your life. I should know, because that's exactly what happened to me!"

Wayne's World

Wayne had been unemployed for a year when he came into one of our outreach venues in Leigh.

The 31 year old had no qualifications and was always coming up against qualified people in job interviews, even though he had worked all his life. His skills and experience were as a loader and warehouseman. Wayne had previously attended mainstream employment programmes which hadn't worked for him. Ideally, he wanted a job as a bus driver or working for the Council in a role where he wasn't tied to a desk.

His partner Stephanie was also out of work had just given birth to a baby boy. They had moved to a new area of Wigan and were struggling to access social and financial support. They walked into our community venue and we contacted SureStart who introduced Steph to a network of support, advice and activities where she could access training and family support groups. As a result, Steph has started a maths and English course to raise her qualifications to GCSE Grade C levels.

Wayne is also studying for maths and English qualifications alongside PCV training and practising



for his theory test. Although he had a clean driving licence, he did not have a PCV licence to allow him to drive minibuses or other passenger carrying vehicles. We accessed funding for Wayne through the Family Employment Initiative. Employment is his next goal and Wigan Council has committed to the Future Jobs Fund to create employment opportunities for local people.

He is applying to be a Delivery Driver which would guarantee him work for 6-12 months while he looked for a permanent job. Since walking into one of our outreach venues his confidence and his options have increased. The barriers which were increasing the family's isolation and worries have been addressed through locally-based services. Steph and the baby are doing well and she is much more confident. If you live in the Westleigh, Bickershaw or Abram area, please call 01942 487343 for support on jobs and training.

Learning and Employment Centres

Central Office
Donna Clayton
01942 827826
d.clayton@wigan.gov.uk

Bedford High School
Claire Taylor
01942 486379
claire.taylor@admin.bedford.wigan.sch.uk

Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy
Justine Silcock
01942 827917
j.silcock@wigan.gov.uk

Lowton High School
Stephen Toole
01942 767040
stephen@lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk

Orrell Community Education Centre
Sue Stockley, Keith Massey
01942 776191
sstockley@abrahamguest.wigan.sch.uk

Shevington High School
Pauline Neilson
01257 400990
pneilson@shevingtonhigh.org.uk

Tyldesley Community Education Centre
Sue Hanson
01942 797951
tcec5000@yahoo.co.uk

Westleigh High School
Jackie Latu
01942 767693
jackielatu@westleigh.rmplc.co.uk

Family Badminton Champion!

Family Badminton continues to flourish in the experienced hands of Jeff Johnson at Shevington High School.

Jeff (pictured) has inspired mums, dads, grandmas, grandads, brothers, sisters and cousins to enjoy sport together. The purpose of the course is to encourage parents and carers to show children that sport can help them to keep fit. Jeff says that it has often been the other way around! The adults are learning to play badminton, carefully guided by their children.

Working with young people is not new to Jeff as he has been coaching in the borough for 30 years. He was recently presented with the Children's Champion Award for his work with young people and sport. In addition, he enjoyed

success at the 4 Nations Disability Games where his team received 10 Gold and 2 Silver Medals.

A highlight of this year has been the BISI (Badminton into Schools Initiative) Festival. Shevington High School's sports hall was packed with excited pupils from Wigan primary schools. Primary staff and pupils were so inspired by the Festival that Jeff now works in local primary schools, busily developing badminton skills.

The excitement of learning to play badminton never leaves many young people. Past pupils continue to attend badminton with their families. Some pupils have developed their badminton skills to a very high standard and regularly enter a range of badminton tournaments at national level.



Jeff is running a five week badminton taster course.

On course for success!



The group is pictured with Anne and their tutor Margaret Miller.

The Helping and Working in School course, provided by Family Learning, goes from strength to strength.

Though originally intended to support those volunteering to work in schools, it has produced a number of professional Teaching Assistants in Wigan. Learners travel from all parts of the borough to attend these courses.

The current course at Leigh St Peter's Infant School is unique in that all the learners are parents of children at the school. Anne Fletcher, the Pastoral Support Manager, has a long history of

organising Family Learning within St Peter's. She realised the course would recruit well-trained volunteers for the school which could also pave the way into employment for some learners.

Anne has created an induction booklet to support the volunteers. One of the volunteers, Nichola Burton, describes the course as: "A great opportunity to get back into education and to do something I enjoy. And it's free!"

Headteacher, Pat Jolley, is fully supportive and sees the parent helpers as 'a valuable resource' and five volunteers have been recruited.

Picture perfect

By Tina Martin, Oil Painting tutor

Learners enrolled on the oil painting course at Tyldesley have been making their own paint!

They had been following the technique of Velazquez and working in the style of the Old Masters who had to make their own paint. I thought it would be interesting to actually make paint using fine dry pigment.

Each learner had 15 minutes to hand-grind their paint with linseed oil until it was as smooth as butter. They then transferred their paint into a tube. It was different to bought paint as it was very rich and

strongly coloured. They then worked with scenes, portraits and seascapes that would suit the dark colours.

Some chose to use the paint in glazes or use white with it, while others added colour. They all enjoyed painting with something they had made from scratch, and the finished oil paintings were excellent.



It's never too late

When Gary Peacock was made redundant, he thought his age would prevent him finding employment.

Aged over fifty, it was his first experience of being out of work and his concern was catering for his two young children and paying the mortgage. He expected long-term unemployment to have a devastating affect on his family's well-being.

After job searching without success, Gary visited the Family Employment Skills Centre where his transferable skills were identified. Following the meeting, he felt confident about his future employability.

A further meeting revealed a vacancy for an IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) worker. Gary's skills matched the job specifications and support was provided for the application process and interview techniques.

Gary was successful and is employed in a different role from his previous jobs. He is developing ongoing skills via an NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance and is helping others gain employment and training.

The Family Employment Initiative is funded through the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, the Homes and Communities Agency and the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Its target groups are people claiming Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Lone Parent Benefit. Employment advisors and support workers offer a full package of employment advice and guidance, one-to-one support and health education.

The service is based at: the Westwell Street Family Employment Skills Centre; Jubilee House on the Plank Lane Estate; Wigan Road Labour Club; Bickershaw Labour Club. For more information please call 01942 487343.



Gary is pictured with other staff at Leigh Family Employment Skills Centre.

Ideas into action

Many of us return from courses thinking: "Wow! That was really good. I got so many ideas."

Sadly, the reality of being back at work and the arrival of the next course or initiative means we rarely make the most of the ideas we bring back. Fortunately for the parents of Holy Family Primary School in Boothstown, Learning Mentor, Chris Sergot, is made of stronger stuff!

Having attended Step in to Learning and Problem Noticer courses run by Doreen Ellison, Chris became more aware of the need to support parents in supporting their children. Outcomes for children supported at home are significantly better than those who are not. Help is available through Skills for Life classes and Family Learning, to improve skills including English and maths. However, most people only access this provision after receiving information from someone they know.

In the Family Room at Holy Family Primary

School, the excellent provision has been supplemented by displays and information sheets signposting parents towards the help available. Chris is also on hand to talk to parents. Information is available for parents who may have legal issues such as debt, domestic violence or other problems which interfere with the time they would like to give to their children.

Headteacher, Anne Farrell, is proud of the work Chris has done in this area and in setting up and encouraging parents to attend Family Learning classes in the school. As part of the Core Offer for Extended Services, schools must show how they support parents to support their children. Holy Family Primary fulfils this very important obligation.

For further information about the courses, please phone Doreen Ellison, Step in to Learning Co-ordinator, Learning and Employment, Unit 30, Grand Arcade Shopping Centre, Wigan WN1 1BH. Tel:01942 827918



Pictured are Chris Sergot, Learning Mentor (left) and Anne Farrell, Headteacher.

Keys to Success

Family Learning goes digital

By Chantal Bramwell

When Wigan Online Learning (WOL) was born, its aim was to re-engage Key Stage 4 students who were disaffected and out of mainstream education.

WOL provides a 24/7 online community that meets the educational and pastoral needs of up to sixty young people annually. The students have access to a personal tutor both online and face-to-face and can interact with over 6000 tasks. The young people feel a sense of belonging, find renewed trust in adults and peers which improves their self-esteem. WOL also offers drop-in days, work placements and live online tuition.

With funding sourced by the Family Learning Team, ADWOL has joined the family. This ADULT version is offered to WOL's young people and provides social and emotional support alongside maths, English, Key Skills and computer skills.

Parents can access many of the same activities as their children, creating opportunities for discussions and joint learning. Fifteen parents have been registered and gained numerous AQA certificates. Parents who were previously isolated have created friendships, attended drop-in sessions and raised their self-esteem.

I work ten hours a week providing online support, a weekly drop-in and regular home visits. Increased use of technology by parents has created a better understanding of what their children are doing and has reduced tension between both groups. Parents have become more confident with technology, enabling them to consider college courses and future employment opportunities.

Manager. They were assisted by Kevin Fisher, First Aid Instructor at the Primary Care Trust and Emma Barry from Child's Play. A free crèche was provided by Groundwork. Although all the fourteen recipients could not be at the final presentation, Carol and Hugh extended their congratulations to everyone. The children also received certificates and a prize in recognition of their good behaviour throughout the course!

Support for carers

Wigan Council's Adult Services has awarded further funding to the highly successful Relaxation and Complementary Therapy course, run at the Grange Community Complex. Janice Davies and Graham Gowland, therapists at the Mary Brotherton Well-being and Cancer Centre at the Grange, received many compliments after the first course. Anyone who looks after, cares for or supports an adult, not necessarily in their own home but without receiving payment, can apply for a free place on the course and for one of the Pamper Sessions.

Janice and Graham offer free complementary therapy sessions and support to cancer patients. They raise funds through their sessions, courses and Car Boot Sales held on the first Sunday of each month at the Grange. To support this good cause please call 01942 498558. For Grange course information phone 01942 777548.



Learners in the Computer Suite at Hope Community Library are brushing up their skills in a friendly and supportive environment.

Situated within the Grange Community Complex at Marus Bridge, the range of courses has increased to meet the community's needs. The computers are freely accessible during library opening hours and there is no cost for residents to register at the library reception.

Carol Watson, Managing Director, explained: "The Grange offers courses from complete beginners to the European Computer Driving Licence as well as Literacy and Numeracy Levels 1 and 2. It is used by parents and grandparents catching up with their children's skills and learners wanting to improve their job prospects." Tutors, Frank Wells and Helen Daniels, have received praise from learners for their patience, understanding and support. Young children are also encouraged to access the user-friendly computers.

Celebration

Proud local residents (pictured) have received certificates for their achievements on the Working with Young Children course. Held at the Grange Community Complex, the course was arranged by Carol Watson, using funding received from the Targeted Support Fund.

Lyndsey Aldred of Groundwork delivered the course with Hugh Shields, Programme

Viva España!

The Lawton family from Hindley Green are learning Spanish at Westleigh Adult and Community Learning Centre.

The five members have been attending for the last five months, initially enrolling on the Beginners course and now progressing onto Spanish for Improvers. Brothers, Paul and Gregory and their respective wives, Susan and Cathy were joined by daughter Charlotte who completed the Beginners

course. Now Sam, one of the sons, is enhancing his school work in the Improvers class.

The family have a holiday home in Murcia, where English speaking is limited. On their next visit they hope to converse confidently with the locals in the shops and town. They chose the Westleigh Centre as it was near to their home and they have thoroughly enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, getting along fabulously with tutor Maria Jesus Henderson. **Pictured are some of the family with Maria.**



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