



# Specialist Employment Team Newsletter Winter 2025

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Specialist Employment Team's (SET) Newsletter. SET offer support to Sandwell residents with a health condition or disability, who are looking for employment and offer a free service to employers.

Whether you are a job seeker, a referral organisation or an employer, we hope you will find the 'good news' stories to be of interest and inspiring.

#EmploymentForAll

## Work Experience - Work Experience - Work Experience



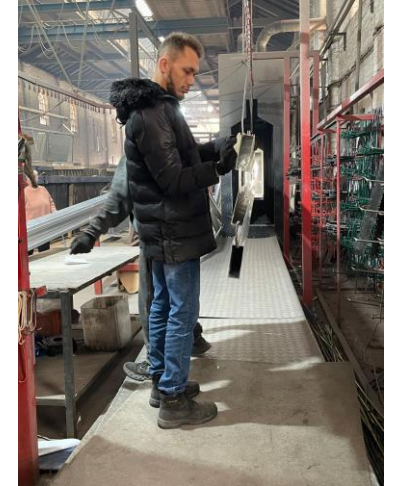
Thank you to Cheryl, Shaun and the team at **Premium Powder Coating** who have offered valuable work experience placements to our jobseekers.

Exposure to real life work settings is so valuable, whether a site visit, job shadowing or a longer-term placement.

For LSE participant **Bailey** (photographed) the placement has allowed him to demonstrate how reliable, punctual and hardworking he is. He has also gained confidence and self-esteem, raising his aspirations.

*“He was very helpful, you only had to ask him to help any of the guys and he just did it. He learnt how to strip the work, then load it onto the moving line, helped with packing and cleaned up work area after himself. Bailey was a lovely quiet and pleasant lad, after a week he started to come out of his shell. He always arrived on time and was never late.”*

Cheryl, Premium Powder Coating



## Job Start – Job Start – Job Start – Job Start

Congratulations to SET participant **Chris** who has been employed by **GAP Family Christian Centre** with their After School Club.

Chris started as a volunteer at GAP, whilst looking for paid work. Through his volunteering Chris more than demonstrated his considerable capabilities, reliability and fitted into the team very well.

When a paid opportunity came up, CEO Andy Bent (right) was keen for Chris to apply and he duly got the job. “Chris is a good worker and part of the team. We’ve introduced new aspects of the role slowly, in a managed way. His confidence has grown and he is bringing his own ideas now, where initially we had to tease things out of him. Its about treating people as individuals.”

Discussing his time job seeking and applying for work Chris, who has autism stated, “I don’t think I’d have ever got a job by standard application and interview. I don’t have the words that they seem to be looking for and there is a lot of pressure”.

Chris is however, really pleased with how things have worked out. “Earning my money by doing a job I want to do and that I’m good at – its great!”



## Work Experience - Work Experience - Work Experience



Massive thanks to Ella and the amazing team at **Sandwell Meals on Wheels** for offering valuable work experience placements to our job seekers.

**Tamara** hadn't worked in a kitchen before but has flourished in her placement.

*"I am so thankful to Stoney Lane and the staff there who have given me the opportunity. I learned a lot about preparing food and being careful about food allergies/health such as diabetes and to separate food containers highlighted with special instructions. The staff in the Kitchen were very kind to me and supported me. I really enjoyed working with Pauline and April they were so much fun, as they sang songs whilst working, which improved my confidence."* Tamara, LSE participant

*"Tamara is doing brilliant in the kitchen and the staff wish she could stay! Tamara seems to get on very well with the team and they're very fond of her."* Ella, Team Manager

*"Tamara has really enjoyed her placement and gained confidence and awareness of what it would be like to work in a kitchen, helping her career choices and raising her aspirations"*  
Seema, Employment Advisor



## Job Start – Job Start – Job Start – Job Start

Congratulations to LSE participant **Chloe**, who has recently started as a **Customer Service Apprentice** with **Sandwell Council's Employment and Skills Team**.

Starting work has had a positive impact on Chloe:

*"Working within the council as someone who is quite introverted and shy has helped me come out of my shell in ways I'd never imagine.*

*When I first started working for Sandwell Council, I was nervous as it was something I have never done before but through pushing myself out of my comfort zone I gained confidence, especially through the help of those I work with.*

*I am and will always be eternally grateful for being given this opportunity as a young neurodivergent person."*

Her line manager Suzanne Allen is really pleased with how well Chloe has taken to her new role:

*"Chloe has settled in extremely well, managing to interrelate quickly with the changing demands of a busy team, travelling to different places, and speaking confidently to customers both internally and externally, professionally and showing confidence".*



## Work Placement – Work Placement – Work Placement



Thank you to [VINCI Building UK](#) and [O’Neill & Brennan UK](#) for offering fantastic opportunities for work placements to our job seekers. They've offered flexibility, taken on board individual needs and really invested in each young person, making them feel a valued part of the team.

James (pictured) has really benefitted from the placement. As a young person who is neurodivergent, James has had a busy couple of months, also travelling on a plane by himself for the first time. He has demonstrated tremendous determination and aspiration.

“My weeks at Vinci have been great. Met so many new people, had fun doing jobs and felt safe during work. Everyone is willing to help each other. This placement for me has been a great way to test myself and see what I can do.”  
James Davis, SET participant

“Great to hear the placement has benefited James and that he is enjoying himself. He has fitted in really well with the Site Team and is a hard worker!” Phil Hosier, Site Manager, Vinci Building

Thank you to Alex and the team at **Bella Italia** who continue to support our service by offering fantastic work placement opportunities to our job seekers.

*“I really enjoyed my work placement at Bella Italia, especially helping in the kitchen and preparing the vegetables to be cooked by the Chef. I learned how to cut vegetables safely and Max the chef taught me the colouring system used in the catering industry such as the red knives are raw meat, etc. I learned how to fill and empty the dishwasher.”*

*“I would like to thank everyone at Bella Italia for the support they gave me and the opportunity to work in a famous restaurant made me feel very lucky. Bella Italia is a wonderful, great place to work.”* Sayful, LSE participant

*“Sayful is a nice lad and has definitely gained confidence and is completing tasks more efficiently than when he started – his pace of work has increased significantly! By attending the placement, he has given himself a good foundation to build a career.”*  
Alex, Manager at Bella Italia





**Staff Spotlight - Seema Mair**  
Employment Broker & Job Coach  
LSE (Local Supported Employment)

**Q: What do you like about working on LSE?**

It's a pleasure! I have learned so much about supporting people with Autism and Learning Disabilities and the barriers around looking for paid employment. It has also given me the opportunity to get to know each job seeker as an individual and the different kinds of support they need.

**Q: What has been your experience of working with job seekers who have additional needs?**

I have met some amazing people who are unique and have dreams and hopes of their own. I am lucky enough to be part of those aspirations and love to motivate them to keep trying, to help them do things another way, to find their way of understanding and doing tasks they find difficult.

**Q: What are the challenges that people with a disability face when looking for work?**

There are barriers such as face-to-face interviews and online applications. Instead, we encourage employers to look at working interviews, informal interviews, work trials and work placement tasters. We give advice around workplace adjustments, job carving, and can job coach if an individual requires additional support. We also make employers aware of [Access to Work](#), which can make all the difference.

**Q: What gives you the most satisfaction in the job?**

The journey of each job seeker is great to share and a pleasure to see their faces light up when they have managed to gain paid work or tackle a task they never thought they could do. Also, the employers who have offered a work placement or recruited through our service have seen how someone with a disability can have such a positive impact on the workforce.



### Supported Employment Celebrated at Sandwell Council's Growth & Employment Summit

The Specialist Employment Team recently attended Sandwell Council's Employment and Growth Summit. Alongside Anjali Agrawal and Jon Smout from CMT Engineering, we presented a case study of how recruiting through the Supported Employment model had worked very well for their business.

The focus of this was on their employee Sam Green who through 'Place, Train and Sustain' moved into employment with CMT and has gone from strength to strength.

Please click link to view an excellent piece about the above on CMT's website: [CMT Engineering](#)



*Jon Smout and Sam Green at CMT Engineering*

# Employers

## Reverse Jobs Fair - Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 12-2pm

Black Country Living Museum, Discovery Way, Dudley DY1 4AL

Are you an inclusive employer or looking to create a more diverse workforce? Pop in on Tuesday 1st April 2025 between 12-2pm to meet a room full of young job seekers, network with local business professionals whilst learning how to make your business more inclusive!

This FREE event will provide the start of a crucial conversation with young people, colleges, local authorities, employers and career professionals.

Click on link to book your place:


[The Black Country Reverse Jobs Fair Tickets](#)

# Get in touch

Sandwell Council's  
Specialist Employment Team

Email: [Enquiries\\_Recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries_Recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk)

Go to: [www.sandwell.gov.uk/SETeam](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/SETeam)

 Search "Sandwell Jobs"  
on Facebook and send us a message

Call: 0121 569 5981 or 569 5563

We're based at:  
Hateley Heath Family Education Training Centre  
Huntingdon Road  
West Bromwich  
B71 2RP

This service supports unemployed Sandwell residents aged 16 and over who have a disability or mental health condition and want support to find paid employment.