

## Indigo Newsletter – A ‘Leek’ you’ll want to have!



Jess Barrow

### How a New Twist on things can work!!!

Our 14 – 19 Placement Officer, Jess Barrow, has come up with a unique approach to

the problem of motivating learners in Leek; she has now shared her idea with us in the newsletter. Jess says, “With placements being 100% voluntary now, I’ve tried to change the thinking of the learners to help them realise that placements are such a valuable experience and that they are a reward rather than a punishment (to get them out of the centre, into the real world!)

So here in Leek we’ve started encouraging some healthy competition for when a placement is available. For every new place that is advertised on our placement board, I actually set up interviews with 2 or 3 learners to gauge how much they want that placement. We even had an employer come in and hold interviews with 4 learners, with a view to take on 2 learners on placement.

With the lads being quite "macho" it was brilliant to see the sense of competition when they were all waiting to go into the interview room!! They all prepared for it well, came smartly dressed, and one learner even spent 10 minutes doing his hair in the toilets!!!!!! When I phoned the learners later in the day to let them know who had been successful, there was a real sense of pride because they had worked so

hard off their own backs to get onto that placement.

I definitely think it’s the way forward to encourage learners to go on placements for their own sake, and getting them involved in a selection process is another taste of real life too. I think it helps them to take ownership of their placement, as they know they’ve been given a place based on their success at interview”. (Below is an article from the Leek Sentinel regarding one of our programmes)

**Congratulations to all of the learners below who achieved a positive outcome, as the majority have college places, well done!!**

Charlie Lerner  
Tom Mann  
Ryan Turner  
Louis Parkes  
Chris Faulkner  
Phil Buckley  
Kane Furze  
Rowan Donnell  
Michael Sinclair  
Gregory Wright  
Daniel Wright  
Luke Cheers  
Shaun Buckingham

Dean Wheatley  
Robert Davis  
Bradley Evans  
Tom Sargent  
Tom Sargent  
Mustafa Miah  
Blake Parsons  
Ross Walker  
Josh Bell  
Dane Beardmore  
Andrew Scott  
Harry Robinson  
Dave Cane

**Further Congratulations** to **Alan Coster** and **Donald Guthrie** from Armstrong Metal Ceilings on achieving their Team Leading Level 2 NVQ, **Ruth Turner** from Allied Healthcare on completing her Business & Administration Level 2 NVQ, **Mark Coates**, **Martin Collett** and **Denise Knobbs** for completing their Management Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship and also, **Sarah James** who was on the Business Academy with Edson Evers to help achieve her Business and Administration Level 2 Apprenticeship. Well done to all of you and best of luck for the future!!

**TRAINING:** School leavers and young people unsure of their next step in education are being thrown a lifeline by a Leek training provider.

Indigo Training Solutions is based in Stafford and its Leek centre specialises in training 14- to 19-year-olds.

The firm is holding an open day next week for anyone interested in its services.

For 16-to-19-year-olds, Indigo provides foundation learning courses in working in construction and business skills, with learners able to achieve level one National Open College Network, Edexcel and City & Guilds qualifications.

The firm also works with 14 to 16-year-olds at risk of underachieving or being excluded from school, and runs courses in skills such as English, maths and ICT.

Training is funded by the Young People's Learning Agency.

Trainer Jess Barrow said: "We are very different from school or college – we try to provide a relaxed environment.

"Our foundation learners come two days a week as well as doing an optional work placement."

Jess added: "For construction skills, we've got a massive workshop where we teach things like brickwork, carpentry and plumbing.



"For many people, we are a stepping stone to going on to further qualifications – many school-leavers are nervous about going to college but these

courses and the work experience help them feel more confident."

■ Indigo is holding an open day on Wednesday, September 8, from 2pm to 7pm at its base at

Portland Mill, Queen Street, Leek.

For more information, call 01538 398750.

Main picture: Kyle McClellan, of

Biddulph, takes part in a training session. Inset top, Callum Williams, of Leek. Inset below, Aidan Ryan, of Meir. All are aged 16.