

News from the Jersey Employment Trust

JET client harnesses the power of an online petition

Caroline Spencer offers a selection of stories from the world of the Jersey Employment Trust

ON being told that jobs were at risk at Acorn Training and Development, Jamie Cauvain spontaneously initiated an online petition, which called on the government to “reconsider and reverse the decision to reduce funding for the Jersey Employment Trust”.

It is not something he has ever done before. He used an AI search tool to find out how to do it and within minutes he had it figured out, found people to countersign it and it went live.

It is understood to be the fastest-growing petition in Jersey, reaching 5,000 signatures in less than one week.

Jamie is a client at Acorn Training and Development, attending the metal recycling and upcycling skills workshops. He was at Acorn when he was told about the potential jobs at risk and possible cuts to the service.

“My blood was boiling,” he said. “I set up the petition straight away, while I was still here.”

Explaining his core motivation for starting the petition, he emphasised JET’s role in developing skills, confidence and preventing social isolation.

“To me, JET’s not just about getting people back into work. I don’t have other places to go apart from two members of my family. Things are getting better, but even to this day, people think people with disabilities are different and they don’t want to know. Acorn is my chance to socialise and learn new skills,” he said.



■ Jamie Cauvain was presented with a gift from Acorn as a token of appreciation by Acorn Training and Development client services manager Fiona Scott

Acorn Training and Development client services manager Fiona Scott said: “One of the things Jamie’s petition did was highlight the real need for investment in charities like JET, supporting vulnerable

Islanders to achieve employment goals, and others in finding a vocational pathway that makes them feel valued and an integral part of our community.”

Jamie is proud to have played his part in the petition, and he is thrilled that the government have secured funding for JET for the rest of the year while discussions continue on a longer-term funding arrangement.

Can Aztec employees hit the mark for JET?

THREE colleagues from Aztec are hoping to raise £3,000 for JET by taking part in next month’s White Collar Darts event.

Director Gary Leatt, along with colleagues Aimee Brennan and Arron Bosch, are total beginners “with no natural ability”, so performing in front of a crowd of 600 at the Royal Jersey Showground will put them out of their comfort zones.

Gary said: “I saw the event advertised having just come back from watching the World Darts Championships at the Ally Pally and thought it would be a great night out. I have done White Collar Boxing but that was 13 years ago and I’m a bit older, so something less energetic appealed.”

Gary explained why the trio had chosen to support JET: “JET has helped some of my friends’ children, so I know the work that they do and we hope that this helps make a difference.”

“We are also familiar with the JET Jaunt, as our colleague Lucy Gomes has won it twice, with her friend Sarah Parker. We are looking to put some teams in the Jaunt this year, so that’s the next challenge for some of us.”

Meanwhile, training has already started, with support from members of Jersey Darts. Gary said that they have considered every scenario of what could possibly

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Aztec director Gary Leatt

go wrong on the night: “Nerves, miss the board, can’t hit a double, fall over during walk in, hit the ref...”

“We have each been with Aztec for more than 12 years and we have nearly 70 colleagues, friends and family coming to support us, so the potential for embarrassment is huge.”

The White Collar Darts is on Saturday 28 March. You can sponsor the Aztec team here: tinyurl.com/AztecDarts.

■ Hoping for a bullseye: Arron Bosch, Aimee Brennan and Gary Leatt



Get in touch

■ If you have a story that you would like to see on our community or feature pages, please email thomas@allisland.media with a few details and preferably a contact number so we can give you a ring

The opportunity to work and feel valued

The board of trustees and staff at the Jersey Employment Trust would like to thank everyone who signed the petition and to everyone who spoke out in support of us. We were truly heartened by the public response.

JET helps Islanders who have a disability or long-term health condition access, sustain and thrive in meaningful employment. Its mission is rooted in a simple but powerful belief: everyone deserves the

opportunity to work, contribute and feel valued.

At its core, JET provides tailored support to individuals who face barriers to employment. These barriers may stem from physical disabilities, mental-health issues, neurodivergence, or long-term health conditions.

Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all programme, JET focuses on personalised pathways that recognise each person’s strengths, aspirations and support needs.

The following are comments from just some of the thousands of Islanders who we have supported over the past 24 years.

‘It’s so good having someone to back you up’

Since he was employed by the Coop five years ago, Jake has become a key part of the customer-service team. With the support of JET and his employer, he has been able to change his hours to suit his needs.

He said: “JET are really good at helping people like me – people with learning disabilities, ADHD, autism – in getting into meaningful employment. It’s so good having someone there to back you up if you’re having problems.”

“Thanks to JET I’m feeling so much more confident in what I’m doing.”



■ Jake with his supervisor, Kurt

‘There was nowhere else to go..’

Alex (not their real name) was referred to Acorn in 2018. Their co-ordinator gradually built their confidence to enable them to slowly move forward and they received some in-depth well-being support and were signposted to other support services.

They started with sessions on the allotment, as they struggled with indoor groups. As their trust and confidence grew, they were able to try indoor sessions. Initially, Acorn’s re-use environment was too noisy for them, so they stayed in quieter settings, including upcycling, which they proved to be very good at.

After some work experience, they flourished during an eight-week paid role at the Acorn site, followed by a

three-month paid internship, which was culminated in a one-year contract.

To show just how far they have come, Alex can now deal with customers and is a much-valued member of staff.

Alex said: “I came to Acorn because there was nowhere else to go. I didn’t leave the house. The difficulty was trusting the process, because everything else had failed. The Acorn Training and Development sessions were a safe space for me to thrive. The key is that Acorn has no agenda and that helps me stay engaged.”

“My progress will have been measured in years rather than months, but my family has seen the positive change. Throughout this, I have wanted to be an inspiration for my family.”

‘JET is a vital part of my life...’



■ Luke talks to JET’s Emma Burns

Luke, who lives with schizophrenia, says that having a job, with support from JET, plays a crucial part of him being an active member of the community.

“JET is vital. Had I not been referred to JET, I wouldn’t be as well as I am now,” he said.

“I have a much healthier life, and I am making better decisions. Other departments, organisations and professionals have helped me as well, but

had JET not been there, the whole lot would probably have collapsed. It’s a bit like a bolt in the steel girders. If you take out the bolt, the rest might support the structure, but it would be a bit wonky and over time it may end up collapsing. Being in work is a vital part of me being an active member of the community, to volunteer outside work, to pay my taxes, to take part in sport and to have a social life.”

‘My employment co-ordinator reinforced positive aspects of me’

Michael says that JET deserves Gold Standard recognition.

“I came to JET because I was in a lamentable place in my employment and mental health,” he explained.

“What my employment co-ordinator offered me was a way of resolving my distress through targeted employment.”

“He reinforced positive aspects of me and argued persuasively to ameliorate those aspects of my personality which interfered with me becoming a productive and confident member of society.”

“Instead of being a burden to society through demanding medical intervention, instead of financial support through other agencies, I have been ‘processed’ by JET at a fraction of the cost to the public purse.”

“I have been processed more swiftly and with less angst to all parties.”

“One thing I was told, which acted as a beacon and held me steady when I was wavering with anxiety in the small hours, was that I could come back to see my employment co-ordinator if I needed to.”

“That was a powerful thing. It worked.”

‘Engaging with JET has been life-changing...’



■ Jess is pictured with Amanda Cabot, trust operations associate director, and Emma Burns, JET organisational development lead

At JET, we see first-hand how the right support and inclusive workplaces can transform lives, helping individuals grow in confidence, gain independence, and contribute their skills in a supportive environment.

Jess came to JET after two years of unemployment due to her health. She was nervous about getting a job back in the finance industry before securing a

job at Affinity. JET worked with her employer to ensure that Jess felt supported and understood.

She said: “I was hesitant at first and the idea of asking for any kind of support can be quite a daunting experience, but engaging with JET has been absolutely life-changing in terms of what it’s allowed me to do.”

‘The confidence it brought changed my life...’

Through JET, Steve found not only a job but a team that understands the challenges of mental health and provides the right support. His story is a reminder that with the right opportunities and encouragement, individuals facing anxiety or other mental health challenges can gain stability, independence and a renewed sense of purpose.

After working with his Employment Co-ordinator, he successfully applied for a customer service role at Durrell.

“I was at a very low point in my life,” he said. “I can’t thank my Employment Co-ordinator enough. It’s very hard to describe, but the support they gave me, the confidence it has brought, has actually changed my life.”



■ Steve serving a customer at Durrell

‘No one really talks about the journey after cancer...’

Although now clear of cancer, Antonia has been left with a lifelong health issue and needs cell treatment once a month. She can’t work full-time but she knows that both she and JET will focus on what she can bring to a workplace.

Antonia is now working as a reporter at All Island Media and she is a JET Ambassador.

“With a cancer diagnosis, you get told about your treatment plan but no one tells you about the implications for work. When I called work to tell them I had the cancer confirmed, I had no idea myself what was going to happen.”

“I want to use what has happened to me to help other people. I speak up for people who can’t speak up for themselves. And that’s what JET do for anyone who has a disability



■ Antonia is a reporter for All Island Media and serves as a JET Ambassador

or long-term health condition. “By seeking JET support, I could get on with my recovery. When you’re struggling and going through treatment, all your energy should go towards getting well. I am so glad I came to JET and asked for help.”