

News from Jersey Employment Trust

Back to work with help from JET and a very sympathetic employer

After a motorbike accident, Jan Cork couldn't return to her old job but now has the perfect place for her mobility scooter and her bubbly personality. Report by **Caroline Spencer**

IN September 2023 Jan Cork was knocked off her motorbike on her way to work. She was signed off for a couple of months but when she wanted to go back to work, her employer was unable or unwilling to make any adaptations, even though she had been there for 13 years.

She needed room for a mobility scooter. "I had always given 110% to my job, but my daily work was now unbearable, so I handed in my notice," Jan said. "I didn't know then that the Jersey Employment Trust might have been able to help."

It was only later that she found out about JET and she was introduced to her employment co-ordinator, Kerry Robinson. Jan applied for 45 jobs over ten months, but many employers couldn't allow for her disability. However, when she found her job at Amalgamated Facilities Management Ltd (AFM) as a customer service adviser, it was like it was made for her.

AFM's premises in St Helier Business Park at La Pouquelaye already had an access ramp to the front door, disabled toilets and an open-plan office big enough for



■ AFM managing director Dave Webb: 'We believe that everyone should have access to meaningful employment opportunities, whatever their circumstances'

Jan's mobility scooter to navigate.

"It's perfect. They haven't really had to change anything," she said. "I love my role supporting AFM's customers. I enjoy solving people's problems."

"I hated being out of work. All this has happened to me and yes, I could sit in a ball on the sofa and cry my eyes out but where's that going to get me? It's not going to pay my rent, buy my food or pay my bills. I don't see it as ruining my life. I see it as my life before the accident, and this is how I live my life now."

"With JET's intervention, I was able to

secure a brilliant ground-floor Andium flat, Enable Jersey have been amazing, and I was lucky enough to get a grant to purchase the mobility scooter. AFM are a brilliant employer and they look after their staff. In the interview they said they passed her probation earlier this year and feels like everything has finally fallen into place.

"I'm so glad I came to JET," she said. "Kerry encouraged and supported me after each rejection to carry on. She made it a lot easier and kept me going. She was always there. I don't know where I'd be without her."

stances. Our support for JET reflects this commitment, alongside our long-standing partnership with the Back to Work scheme and other initiatives that put people first."

Jan was just as delighted when she passed her probation earlier this year and feels like everything has finally fallen into place.

"I'm so glad I came to JET," she said. "Kerry encouraged and supported me after each rejection to carry on. She made it a lot easier and kept me going. She was always there. I don't know where I'd be without her."

Fundraisers on the run and in a spin

TWO members of the Wolf Pack Social Run Club have got together to run the Standard Chartered Jersey Marathon in October.

Matt Tabb and Allie McMahon have joined forces to become Team JET (Just Enough Training), which they hope will be self-fulfilling.

Allie is business development director at Quilter Cheviot and Matt is a marketing consultant and JET trustee.

"Allie put a call out to see if there were any runners up for partnering her as a team of two for the Jersey Marathon," Matt said. "I was the first to reply. What she failed to mention was that she was keen to run the last two legs (15k) so that her partner, now me, would have the challenge of legs 1-3, which is 27k and a decent chunk of it uphill."

"It's always better to run for a reason, and given my role as a trustee for JET, that seemed the obvious choice. It's a brilliant cause and needs funding now more than ever as pressures on its resources increase day by day."

You can sponsor Team JET here: sportsgiving.co.uk/sponsorship/team/27622.



■ Matt Tabb and Allie McMahon are going to do "just enough training" to run a marathon

A SPINATHON is being held next month to raise money for the JET Jaunt. It's being organised by one of the teams, Lorna Pestana and her husband Jamie.

They were one of the first to register last year, when Jaunters raced to Monaco. They loved it so much that they were first to sign up for the 2025 race to Prague, and this time there is some family rivalry, as they have roped in their two adult children with their partners.

For their fundraising they are holding their Spinathon challenge on Saturday 6 September at Healthhaus at the Hotel de France. There will be four sessions starting on the hour from 8am.

Lorna, who recently stood down from being a JET trustee, said: "People can do just one session, or as many as they like. We have 64 slots to fill."

"We chose to do a Spinathon, as we have both done the spinning classes at Healthhaus and love it. Jamie is a cyclist, so regularly spins as part of his training and has been spinning for around ten years, particularly during the winter. I only started this year but quickly got the bug, as it's a fun way to exercise. If I can spin, anyone can."

"Jamie is doing all four sessions but I'm only doing two so that I can look after our spinners, as we'll have tea, coffee and cake available for the breaks so we can all fuel



■ Lorna and Jamie Pestana get straight down to planning their route after receiving the checkpoints and challenges at the Harbour on the 2024 JET Jaunt

up and we will be asking for donations into the bucket. The sessions are suitable for everyone, so those who have never done spinning should come along and give it a go – they may just get hooked, like I have."

"We are asking for a minimum £10 donation per session, which can be paid in cash on the day by using our QR code. The instructors are very kindly giving up their time free of charge for the charity, and our spinning instructor, Gary Holmes, has committed to running two of the sessions. Lorraine at Healthhaus has been amazing with her support too."

• Spinathon sessions must be booked by calling 614800. The Pestana team can be sponsored here: tinyurl.com/Jaunt-Pestana.

A job that makes a difference

Caroline Spencer takes a look at the essential work of an employment co-ordinator

OVER the course of a week, 13 employment co-ordinators come and go from their Oakfield Building office on the Highlands College campus and from their Job Club premises in Kensington Place, but you will rarely find them all in one place. They are always on the move, checking in with clients and employers, visiting them in the workplace and liaising with various agencies and organisations.

They will all agree on one thing: no two days are ever the same. A day might involve job-searching and preparing CVs, work-shadowing or conducting mock interviews, meeting with employers to address concerns or explore new work experience opportunities, delivering neurodiversity training to corporate teams, developing tailored training plans, or collaborating with professionals such as GPs and housing providers like Andium Homes.

The employment co-ordinators are doing more pastoral work than ever before. The job is just the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the surface lies a huge amount of support work: helping individuals access stable housing, income support and the services they need to maintain their wellbeing, because if someone is facing instability at home or struggling with personal challenges, it's incredibly difficult to focus on finding or keeping a job.

Glancing through her calendar, Mel Therin has filled a page of A4 with a list of different things she might do in any given day. For all that is scheduled in the diary, it is also necessary to remain adaptable in case someone is in crisis.

"We do have to think on our feet sometimes and link with other services to support the client," she said. "It can be challenging but you just need to prioritise when necessary."

"Because we take a person-centred approach, we take time to get to know a person, build a relationship and build trust, which is crucial for all the work we do. And sometimes the smallest of adjustments can make the biggest difference."

In 2024 we worked with 350 people, and while of course statistics are important, it's the difference we make to each individual that matters most.

One of Mel's clients came to us with severe social anxiety, having been out of work a long time. "We got him onto a



■ Employment Co-ordinator Mel Therin, pictured with a client at Waitrose: 'Watching someone's journey, no matter how long it takes, is a privilege'

three-month placement. Once he could meet staff, get used to the office layout and knew where the exit was, he started building in confidence. With the right support from JET and the employer, he grew and we saw his resilience kick in. We saw him go from being isolated to being upbeat and talking to colleagues. It's opened up his entire world."

"The thing was, he was given a chance. Even when people think there's no hope, I always believe there is. You've got to be able to step back and see the bigger picture."

"You've also got to look after yourself. The team look after each other – and the ethos and values of JET filter all the way down from the top."

Mel often finds it hard to describe exactly what makes her job so meaningful. It's rewarding, inspiring and even emotional at times to see someone thrive after being given a chance, she says.

"I would ask all employers to approach with an open mind and kindness," she said. "Many clients are facing challenges you can't see – unseen disabilities, personal struggles, or complex circumstances behind the scenes."

"I feel incredibly passionate about JET. In nine years, I've never once said I didn't enjoy my job. Watching someone's journey – no matter how long it takes – is a privilege and humbling, too. This kind of work stays with you. I feel lucky to do what I do, and proud to be part of this team."

Join the jaunt from St Malo to Prague

NEARLY 50 people have signed up for the JET Jaunt in September.

Teams of two will be racing from St Malo to Prague using only land-based public transport.

The event, sponsored by CSC, is to raise funds for the charity, which supports Islanders who have a disability or long-term health condition secure and sustain employment.

Funds go towards paying a wage to a client over the course of a three-month internship, giving them the chance to show their potential.

Fundraising manager Caroline Spencer

said that there was room for more teams. "We are delighted that we have 25 teams signed up – but there is still time for more. They had better be quick, though, as we need to book ferry tickets."

Everyone will be on the same boat to St Malo on Friday 19 September before they head off to Prague, aiming to reach the city by 5pm on the Sunday. Not only do they have to navigate their journey on the hoof, they also have challenges and checkpoints to complete along the way.

The event is sponsored by CSC, Ports of Jersey and All Island Media.

You can sign up via the JET website.

Move & Sing

Age 2-4

45 minute class

An introduction to music & instrumental play

BOOK NOW

hello@redhouseyms.com | 669966

YAMAHA
YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL