

# News from Jersey Employment Trust

## ‘The right support can make a big difference to someone’s journey in the workplace’

All the latest news from Jersey Employment Trust. By JET fundraising and relationships manager **Caroline Spencer**

### ‘My experience with JET has been truly life-changing’

A FAMILY man who has been agoraphobic for 20 years says that working with JET has been truly life-changing.

Chris (47), who now works at Jersey Post, suffered from severe anxiety and panic attacks.

“I felt like I was barely surviving,” he said. “My wife and two children were my only connections to the world. I only ventured out to my local shop, which was just a two-minute walk away, and that was about it.”

“I contacted JET because I needed to take what I perceived as a risk, and it was one of the best decisions I ever made. Working with Employment Co-ordinators Kerry Robinson and Emma Powell has been an absolute pleasure. Both are caring professionals who make sure that you feel completely at ease in searching for the best job at the right company.”

“I was welcomed into Jersey Post, working with some of the best people. I am the happiest I’ve been in many years. I now venture out more and have made many changes in my life that I would never have imagined doing in the last 20 years.”

Jersey Post HR partner Robyn Pestana says that Chris’s progress since July 2024 has been nothing short of remarkable.

“When he first started, Chris faced significant challenges – even leaving the house was a major step for him,” she said. “To see how far he’s come in such a short space of time is truly inspiring.”

“He now independently completes his pouch runs and confidently supports with handling heavy and large items – something that would have seemed impossible just months ago. His growth in both confidence and capability has been one of the most impressive transformations I’ve witnessed during my time at Jersey Post.”



Jersey Post HR partner Robyn Pestana: ‘Small adjustments can make a big difference’

“Chris has also settled into his team exceptionally well, building strong relationships with his colleagues and becoming a valued part of the workplace. It’s clear he has not only gained skills but also a real sense of belonging, and we hope he’s made some lifelong friendships along the way.”

“Working with Chris is a powerful reminder of why our partnership with JET is so important. It demonstrates how, with the right support and opportunity, individuals can truly thrive – and how much value they bring to our organisation in return.”

### JET delivers first-class service

The following is by HR partner Robyn Pestana, Jersey Post

At Jersey Post, we believe it is important to work with JET because it supports our commitment to inclusivity, community engagement and equal opportunity.

Partnering with JET allows individuals with disabilities to gain valuable experience in a structured, physical work environment, something that offers a different pace and setting from many typical roles.

Our operational areas provide hands-on experience that helps JET clients build confidence, develop practical skills, and better understand what working life can look like in a physical and team-based setting.

In return, we gain fresh perspectives and can foster an inclusive culture among our teams. It also encourages our staff to reflect on how we can continue to remove barriers and make our physical workplaces more accessible and supportive for everyone.

I believe diversity and inclusion bring real strength to any workplace. When people from different backgrounds, experiences and abilities work together, it creates a more dynamic and engaging environment. Everyone brings something unique to the table, which often leads to more creative thinking, better problem-solving, and a stronger sense of teamwork. Inclusion is about making sure everyone feels respected, supported, and able to contribute in a meaningful way.

Small adjustments can make a big difference to someone’s confidence and success. I’ve seen how diversity can improve not just the culture of a team, but also how we connect with the wider community. It helps us to be more empathetic, more aware, and more aligned with the people we serve.

Over the past six years at Jersey Post, I’ve seen how the right support can make a huge difference to someone’s journey in the workplace. I’ve witnessed employees come in through work experience placements – some of whom were initially very shy or unsure of themselves – and, with the right environment and encouragement, grow into confident, capable team members who’ve gone on to secure permanent roles and stay with us.

When working with individuals who are supported by JET, we make sure extra care is taken to set them up for success. That includes giving managers the right training to understand their needs, adjusting tasks to play to their strengths, and providing consistent encouragement and structure. In these cases, I’ve seen people completely come out of their shells – becoming more independent, social, and proud of what they do each day.

Jersey Post has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with JET, one that began even before I joined the company. Over the past six years in my role, I’ve seen that partnership grow significantly stronger. We’ve worked hard to ensure that JET remains our first point of contact when recruiting for both seasonal and permanent roles. In fact, we have one seasonal employee who originally started working Christmas shifts in 2010 and who has since returned every year.

We welcome seasonal workers from JET each year, actively prioritising JET clients for our available Christmas roles. We have



Paul ‘Bernie’ Byrne is running to raise funds for Acorn, where his son attends Acorn projects

taken on as many as seven clients in one Christmas period.

More recently, we aim to recruit at least two to three clients during each seasonal intake. We have also introduced a Summer Seasonal Operative role to assist during the school holidays. This not only provides clients with valuable work experience during the summer but also helps pave the way for them to return for future Christmas roles.

### Summer programme for young people

The JET under-25s service has devised a four-week summer programme to give work experience and employment skills to a dozen young people.

The Level Up programme, running from

21 July to 15 August, will see clients, who have a disability or long-term health condition, split into different sessions at Acorn. These will include projects where creative gifts like wooden beach huts are made and the merchandise project for creating bags and mugs.

Work experience at Acorn will include till training, sorting and pricing clothing, and putting items out in the shop.

Towards the end of the sessions, participants will run a pop-up shop at Charing Cross in town on 14 August for the morning, when they will sell their products and speak to members of the public about customer service.

Several local businesses are supporting the programme with job tasters, including the Seymour Group of Hotels, RBSi and Digital Jersey. Six newly appointed JET Ambassadors are also getting involved in helping with mock interviews.

Under-25s Employment Co-ordinator Mel Oxenham said: “It’s good to get a cohort of young people together, to get them to work as a team and see them develop in confidence. We hope the Level Up programme will lead to work experiences and internships for most of the young people involved.”

### Marathon run in support of JET

Paul Byrne – known by his friends and colleagues as Bernie – will be running his fourth Jersey Marathon in October, to raise money for the Jersey Employment Trust.

Paul’s son, Jude, who has autism, attends Acorn Training and Development projects.

“Jude has come on so much since he has been at Acorn,” he said. “He is getting more confident in himself.”

“I’m running for Acorn again because I feel that the help and the support they give is essential in helping so many people who need help to feel good about themselves and enables them to progress in the community.”

Bernie says that running helps him with both physical and mental health. “It gives me somewhere to help clear the head,” he said.

Bernie took up running in 2017, starting with ParkRuns. With training going well, he is aiming to finish in around 5 hours and 30 minutes, but the main thing is to finish.

■ The Standard Chartered Jersey Marathon is on Sunday 5 October. You can sponsor Bernie here: [tinyurl.com/BernieRun25](https://tinyurl.com/BernieRun25)

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