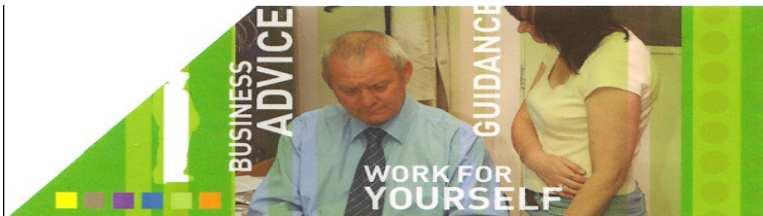


TeamTalk

KUC's Staff Newsletter



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The Three Rs

Did you know KUC is going greener? By now all staff and volunteers should have completed the commuter travel assessment form. This is part of KUC assessing our carbon footprint so we can set targets to reduce the amount of carbon KUC puts into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. Our aim is to become carbon neutral.

A number of measures have been taken across the organisation recently to help us practice the three Rs --- Reduce, Re-use, Recycle. For example, by centralising purchasing there are now less deliveries made to KUC by suppliers and we are buying eco-friendly materials and from sustainable sources. Toilet cisterns now all have water saving devices fitted and we are soon to have new water dispensers fitted direct from the mains so we can stop using all those plastic bottles. Everyone should also be making sure that computers and other electrical equipment is properly turned off at the end of each working day and not being left on or on stand by.

Recycling points are situated around the centre;

- Paper -- All Offices and meeting rooms
- Cardboard -- Reception
- Printer Cartridges -- Reception
- Aluminium -- Café
- Plastic Bottles -- Café

Outreach offices should collect any of the above and bring to KUC when attending meetings etc.

We are also planting more trees and bushes in the grounds to reduce carbon and attract more wildlife to the area, don't forget if you have any cuttings then give them to Tony Burrows.

More measures will be introduced in the future, if you have any ideas yourself then please let the Core Office know. A revised environmental policy will be launched in the near future at a forthcoming staff meeting, so watch this space.



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Also in this issue:

- Learning Centre success stories
- Learning Centre activities
- Staff News
- Business Advice Team news
- Financial Inclusion Conference

Volunteer Awards

Four of our volunteers were nominated for CVS Volunteer Awards in recognition of the valued work that they undertake for KUC. Pat Brennan, Cathy Cowley, Edna May and John May were presented with a Volunteer Award by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Knowsley at a ceremony held at Huyton Suite on Tuesday 6th November. The evening comprised of a buffet meal, entertainment, awards ceremony and a Fun Quiz.

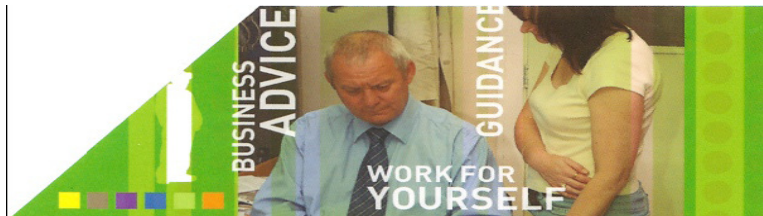
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Learning Centre Success Stories

Over the last three months forty-four learners received their certificates for courses completed at KUC. 20 people achieved their ECDL, 11 people achieved their Intro to IT certificate and 13 learners achieved either the CLAIT or Word Processing Level 1 award. This is an excellent achievement and highlights the high success rate the Learning Centre has in being able to help people inexperienced in IT to achieve their goals. Many of the learners on the Intro to IT course begin with little to no experience or knowledge of computers but all feel that by the end of this course they have significantly developed their skills in this area and built up their confidence to really high levels.

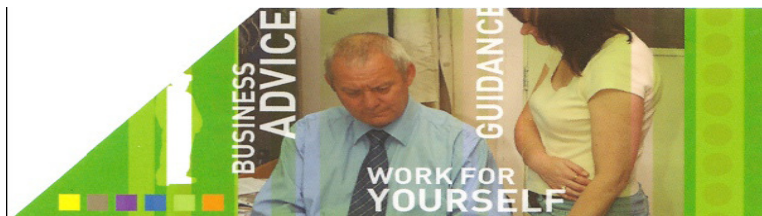
Fred Roberts began as a learner with us in August. When he started Fred told us that he had no experience of IT. He has now completed the Intro to IT course and while doing this course produced some really outstanding work, particularly when it came to designing posters and flyers. He has since moved on to the CLAIT course, which develops IT skills to a higher level, where he has now passed three exams (Word Processing + File Management, Databases and Spreadsheets). Fred has recently started work but is still finding the time to develop his IT skills by attending our Tuesday night class to get his ECDL. Fred's progress is an excellent example of what learners can achieve and he fully deserves to be identified as a Learning Centre success story.

After a long and determined effort (and not to mention a few tears) Peter Ainsworth passed his CLAIT File Management and E-Document Production exam. Peter is one of our longest attending learners and his quiet determination to achieve this result is a reflection of the patience and hard work he put into his course. He fully deserves the recognition for carrying on when the going got tough. The Learning Centre teaching team are now bracing themselves for more trauma as Peter prepares to undertake the Spreadsheets module of the course.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the learners from VSS to KUC. VSS are a group with learning difficulties and disabilities who are using one of KUC's IT suites to develop a newsletter to record their activities. We hope that they enjoy their time here and look forward to seeing the results of their efforts.

Fresh Start Mentoring Programme

This is a brand new pilot project for Knowsley dedicated to help newly formed businesses develop and grow. The programme will work alongside and compliment the services already received from advisers at the KUC. This free service is based upon a business to business approach with existing business men and women providing the guidance and support. There will be an opportunity for clients to utilise a dedicated mentor plus guidance on specific areas of business activity. For information, please contact Paula Cain or Howard Patterson at the Knowsley Chamber of Commerce on 0151 477 1356 or alternatively, talk to a business adviser.



Kathy Runswick—Business Advice Manager **Kathy introduces herself to KUC**

I have recently joined KUC after working in the public sector as a manager, with HR and project management experience. My role involved managing teams who delivered advice and processing support to employers, and individuals on a range of issues. I joined KUC because I recognised that we had values in common. I am an active trade unionist, my Trade Union Career spans 27+ years. I held the elected position of Deputy President of the Public and Commercial Sector Union, a role I held for nearly 4 years until I stood down in 2006. I was involved in representing members interests at all stages from local workplace to ministerial level. I was the lay officer responsible for the union's finance and I chaired many projects, forums and committees to progress members' rights both inside and outside the workplace.

I am bringing both my managerial and my trade union experience to the role of Business Advice Team manager. I will support my team so that they can provide quality advice and assistance to business start ups and social enterprises. I am committed to improving ordinary people's standard of living through support and training, by campaigning for the provision of decent services and by eliminating the barriers people face when they try to help themselves. I am delighted to be working for KUC.

Sarah Boyd – Guidance Officer

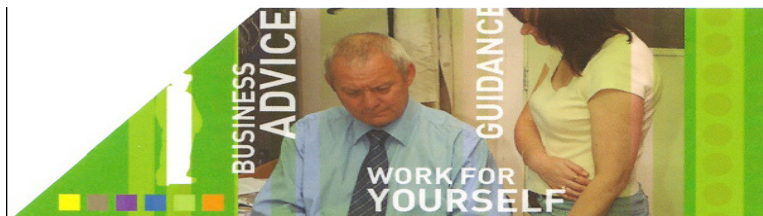
Sarah is the newest member of the Employment and Skills Team, joining the team at the beginning of January. She was previously employed as a Senior Guidance Officer with Liverpool City Council JET Service based in North Liverpool, delivering advice and guidance to local residents for over nine years. She has also previously worked in Job Clubs and Restart courses and brings with her a wealth of experience. She enjoys spending time with her children and is relishing in her new part time position, which has led to more time with her family, whilst still working in advice and guidance a job she is passionate about. Sarah is thrilled to be part of the KUC and will be dividing her time at both the centre and at the shop.

Karen Metcalfe – Administration Assistant

Karen joined the Employment and Skills in October 2007. She was previously employed with Somerfield for over twenty two years and brings with her a wealth of experience. During that time she worked as Personnel / Admin Officer dealing with everything from time sheets, payroll, all admin duties and even dealing with issues of a sensitive nature. Karen is enjoying her role and in-particular dealing with learning about the services available to local residents.

Chris Halliwell

Business Adviser Chris Halliwell and Lisa married in January, the reception was held in the Haigh Hall, Wigan and all those of us who attended fully enjoyed the evening with entertainment included a casino, even the constant rain did nothing to dampen anybody's spirits. Chris and Lisa have just returned from honeymoon in Paris.



KHT Workshop for Small Subcontractors

It has been agreed that KHT will host a "Breakfast Workshop" to be held on KHT premises at Link Road, Huyton with a maximum of 12 subcontractors to attend. A second session will be held subject to demand. Dates **2nd & 3rd April** (depending on demand) - Time 8am to 10pm.

We will be looking at small businesses (max 5 employees) to encourage growth and KHT will not give work of more than 30% of their annual turnover (max £150K over 3 years) to each subcontractor to ensure that they are not reliant on KHT for their work. Subcontractors will be given a pricing framework (given a copy of the Current Schedule) to ensure a level playing field.

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY - BUILDING COHESIVE COMMUNITITIES CONFERENCE

To mark the anniversary of 25 years serving communities in Knowsley, KUC are hosting a conference on **28 February 2008**; to bring together a host of organisations and individuals who are working in or have an interest in the agenda of debt and financial inclusion. Debt is having serious effects on our health, family and can be the cause of community breakdown; as well as unemployment and homelessness. Indeed, whilst household borrowing has expanded enormously over the past five years, one in twelve households in the U.K. do not have access to banking facilities.

As one of the longest serving social enterprise in Knowsley; KUC feel we have a responsibility to our communities in tackling some of these key issues by leading on the development of local approaches. We have recently been successfully awarded £390,000 Big Lottery funding and aim to establish a network of Advice Agencies in Knowsley that will identify a number of key actions including the development of effective and efficient referral systems that will enable local people to get the right advice at the right time by the right agency.

Keynote Speakers include – Councillor Round, Leader Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Liam Edwards Member European Consumer Debt Network, Damon Gibbons Chair of Debt on our Doorstep

A number of workshops will be taking place throughout the day that will explore the issue of debt and the effect on people who are experiencing over-indebtedness. The workshops will be facilitated by credit unions, money advice services, and local trade unions, learning organisations, employers and HR specialists.



KUC
Westhead Ave
Northwood, Kirkby
L33 0XN
Email: enquiries@kuc.org.uk

