

## Press Release

### BRISTOL APPRENTICES 'A CUT ABOVE THE REST' THANKS TO ONLINE MATCHING SERVICE

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Three hairdressers from Bristol are among the first apprentices in England to land jobs as a result of using a pioneering online recruitment service which acts as a virtual 'meeting place' for would-be apprentices, learning providers and employers looking to fill vacancies anywhere in England.

Having successfully completed the application and interview process through the new national Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service, apprentices Amy Cliff, Toby Dymond and Sam Hillberg have now all secured positions with hairdressing salons in Bristol.

The Apprenticeship Matching Service forms part of the newly launched National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), which is responsible for the delivery of Apprenticeships across England, and aims to grow the availability of Apprenticeship places. Launched last month, the NAS reinforces the Government's commitment to ensuring that every suitably qualified young person has the right to an Apprenticeship by 2013.

The matching service will be key to helping fulfil this commitment. A free recruitment facility it enables employers to utilise the help of training providers to advertise current vacancies to those who are interested in becoming an apprentice and promote their organisation and the training it offers nationally, regionally and locally.

While continuing to develop their skills in the salon, all three Bristol apprentices are also working towards an NVQ Level 2 in Hairdressing by continuing to work with

To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit [apprenticeships.org.uk](http://apprenticeships.org.uk) or call 08000 150 600

Reflections Training Academy, the training provider which introduced them to the Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service.

Sam, who left school at 16, believes he knew from an early stage he was destined for a career in hairdressing.

He said: "I've always been interested in fashion and really enjoy chatting to people. I'm also a very hands-on type of person who prefers to get on with things, so I knew that the on-the-job learning nature of a hairdressing Apprenticeship would suit me down to the ground.

"Within days of contacting Reflections, I was invited to attend a series of taster sessions at its onsite training academy, during which I received a clear insight into the hairdressing Apprenticeship and how it works. The size of the groups attending the sessions was ideal as it allowed the learning to progress at just the right pace.

"Reflections also informed me about the new vacancy matching service and the process could not have been any more straightforward. I registered my details online, and was soon able to view a list of vacancies in the hairdressing sector in the Bristol area. After just a few weeks, I secured an interview and trial day with Me:Me Hair & Beauty in Clifton, and began my Apprenticeship soon after."

John Chudley, Regional Director of the NAS, said: "The Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service is a quick, easy and reliable 'one-stop shop' which offers a path to Apprenticeship vacancies across the whole of England. It allows individuals from anywhere in the country to search and apply for Apprenticeships and employers to advertise vacancies to the widest possible audience at no cost.

"An increasing number of organisations in the South West are looking to Apprenticeships to provide the skilled workers they need to fight the downturn. The fact that so many businesses are taking part in the Apprenticeship programme is

testament to how successfully it is meeting employers' exacting demands and creating a valuable, skilled and willing workforce."

In the last 10 years, the number of Apprenticeships in the UK has risen from 75,000 to 240,000. In the South West alone, there are almost 25,000 learners on Apprenticeship programmes offered by more than 17,000 companies. Over the next decade, more employers will be encouraged to offer Apprenticeships with the aim of supporting one in five young people and by 2013 the number of places on offer to 16 to 18-year-olds will increase by 90,000.

Katrina Emerson, Recruitment Co-ordinator at Reflections Training Academy, said: "Amy, Toby and Sam are excellent examples of those who flourish as a result of on-the-job training and by seeing how their learning applies to the real world. With the apprentices gaining the experience and vocational qualifications required to help them into their industry of choice, and employers gaining enthusiastic and committed employees, it's a winning formula."

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#### **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)**

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the service will drive forward the Government's ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.

The NAS will assume total responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships that includes: Employer Services; Learner Services; and a web-based vacancy matching system. This online system enables individuals to search and apply for live vacancies and allows

employers, and their training providers to advertise their vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants.

The service has ultimate accountability for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for Apprenticeship places. It will act to overcome barriers to the growth of the programme and assume responsibility for promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers, learners and the country as a whole.