

# SWS... **BEST NEWS**

## Shaping a new Future

Welcome to SWS Best News March 2021. It has been over a year since the pandemic turned our work and private lives upside-down. This upheaval came on the back of leaving the EU and the uncertainty this also created. It has tested us all – to the limit. For this edition, I thought the theme ‘Shaping a new Future’ would be apt. Why? Because the events of the past year have demonstrated how adaptable and determined we have been in order to make things work. To do this we have shaped our approach to working with our clients, our temporary workers and each other and many of the stories you will read are testament to individual efforts and teamwork that has often gone above and beyond to get things done.

Above all, what constantly shapes our business is you. This is partly illustrated in the feature on apprenticeships. This route to work gives people starting out on their careers and those changing their direction the opportunity to learn and develop the necessary skills and knowledge on the job. It is becoming an increasingly popular choice and one that allows our business to train and develop people through formal and immersive ways. So far, 160 trainees have progressed through the programme and there will be many more to follow. As you will read, our inaugural Apprentice of the Year competition has identified our superstars in the making who will no doubt help to shape our future success as they grow with the business. The awards were fiercely competed and an outstanding success.

With a workforce of over 800 staff, we bear witness to those beginning their working life and those who have progressed through their careers to retirement after many years of service. Despite the circumstances, I am particularly proud to share news of personal triumphs and promotions in this issue. We value talent and dedication and this is rewarded. Congratulations to those of you who have been recognised in this way and good luck to those of you working towards your career goals.

In other stories, Brexit FAQ's will test your knowledge as the deadline of June 30th approaches. Mark this in your diaries and be prepared to answer any questions clients and temporary workers might have. You may be shocked to hear that we have uncovered a real case of modern-day slavery. Well done to those of you that handled the report.

Finally, we say goodbye to Director Martin Recci. Martin has been with The Best Connection since the start and has decided to retire from the business. We wish him a long, happy and restful future.

Andrew Sweeney  
Chief Executive



*Andrew Sweeney*



### NEXT ISSUE...

Could you please contact Jan Blann if you have any topics for inclusion in the next issue of SWS Best News or with subjects for future Press Releases.

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# Fleetmaster embraces training for electric vehicle drivers

Despite the pandemic throughout 2020, Electric Vehicle (EV) sales in the UK rose significantly and fleet managers are now starting to integrate EVs into their fleets. Following the UK Government's announcement that sales of petrol and diesel engines will cease in 2030, adoption of EVs will be further accelerated.

It is important that drivers are trained, not only in terms of crucial vehicle differences, but targeted training can have a significant effect on safety and efficiency. Fleetmaster is working closely with manufacturers and with industry experts to develop its range of industry leading training options. Courses have been designed to familiarise drivers with EVs and improve risk across the fleet. Training can be delivered in various ways including practical and online, with bespoke courses available designed around an individual company.

One of the leading adopters of EVs in the UK is British Gas and they have partnered with Fleetmaster to deliver training to all their EV Drivers.

James Rooney, Fleet Engineering and Innovation Manger at British Gas, said: "As the UK's biggest power company and with one of the largest vehicle fleets in the country, we are leading the drive to change to electric vehicles. We have committed to electrifying our fleet by 2030.

"We have worked with Fleetmaster for in excess of 15 years as our driver training provider, so it makes perfect sense to partner with them in our drive to a greener future. They have

fully embraced the EV culture and have written industry leading courses around our needs to educate our drivers."

During a challenging period due to the Covid pandemic, Fleetmaster has adapted quickly and helped keep British Gas' training running by putting in appropriate safety measures and utilising remote learning that has worked well for the business.

Fleetmaster Director, Jamie Boocock, commented: "We have worked with British Gas for a long time and are delighted to continue our partnership. They have really embraced the change to electric vehicles and working alongside them we have developed courses that have worked well for drivers and the company. Our courses are designed to get drivers familiar with EVs and maximise performance and safety across the fleet."



## Martin joins Fleetmaster

We are delighted to announce that Martin Hopkins has joined Fleetmaster as a Key Account Manager. This is an important appointment for the Fleetmaster team as they look to grow the business throughout 2021. Good to have you on the team Martin.

Martin will be responsible for developing new accounts such as Network Rail, Hitachi, UK Power Networks and Mitie. His previous role was with Leeds Bradford Airport working with key brands including TUI,

Jet2 and Mercedes. With over 30 years in sales including 20 years managing and developing sales teams, Martin brings a wealth of experience to the business.

"I have known Fleetmaster for over 10 years and I'm really pleased to have joined the team. The potential opportunity in some of the new contracts we have won recently is very exciting and I am looking forward to contributing to the growth of the business," said Martin.



Martin Hopkins

# Mitie gritters receive winter training

Fleetmaster has partnered with Facilities Management giant, Mitie, to develop and run a bespoke 'On-Road Winter Driving & Slow Speed Manoeuvring Course' for Mitie's Landscapes Team.



The Mitie Landscapes Team operates a fleet of over 400 specially adapted vehicles that are used nationally for gritting operations throughout the winter. Collectively they have clocked up a whopping two million miles every winter, so it is important they do everything to mitigate risk and ensure the safety of the team.

"Our winter services teams keep 9,000 sites safe for our customers across the UK and making sure they can operate safely in all conditions is our top priority. To ensure we can do this safely it is paramount our frontline operators have the appropriate skills and competencies to operate safely in some challenging weather conditions. Working with our Fleet, QHSE (Quality, Health, Safety & Environmental) and Training

Teams, we were able to source focussed training and roll this out to our teams who cover our most challenging regions," said Tim Howell, Managing Director of Mitie Landscapes.

So far, over 200 of the Mitie team have completed the training which has been run at venues across the UK. The training will help keep Mitie colleagues safe over the demanding winter months.

"Due to the generally mild nature of the UK weather, wintery conditions can bring UK business to a standstill with no warning - significantly increasing the risks faced by company vehicle operators. Maintaining critical services is essential and the new On-Road Winter Driving & Slow Speed Manoeuvring courses combined with carefully selected vehicle technology has allowed Mitie to protect against adverse weather conditions and the increased risks posed to safety and services," explains Nick Boocock, Head of Key Accounts, Fleetmaster.

Fleetmaster work in partnership with companies like Mitie to mitigate risk and ensure safety for their colleagues and customers alike.

## We received some feedback from the participants:

*"Very informative. I have been able to learn a lot in relation to winter driving."*

*"The course was very helpful and definitely helps going into winter. The instructor was knowledgeable and put us at ease from the start."*

*"The experience was excellent. Great advice was given and I learnt a few things along the way."*

*"I learned some new information regarding driving in hazardous weather conditions, being prepared and making sure we do all the necessary checks."*

## Fleetmaster Online Driver Training is a success!

Like so many training companies Fleetmaster has needed to adapt many of its courses to be delivered remotely - whilst maintaining the quality they are renowned for. Having run many online courses over the past year, feedback from attendees suggests they are getting rather good at it.

Here are some of comments they have received:

"Easy to access with clear information and a very knowledgeable trainer with all systems easy to access. Given the current climate these courses are brilliant and no doubt keeping our drivers safe - the best form of digital learning I have undertaken." **Speedy Hire**

"Remote training was a little different but something we will have to get used to. Couldn't have asked for a better trainer." **Thames Water**

"Course was well planned. Instructor was professional, perfect and easy to engage with. Excellent session." **British Gas**

"Very informative, our trainer didn't put any pressure on

anyone to answer and I thoroughly enjoyed the course." **Barrett Steel**

Fleetmaster is increasing the number of online courses to address demand and to ensure drivers operate safely and are compliant. All courses are delivered by experienced expert trainers.



# 10-year Awards list gets longer!

We are delighted to celebrate a new and growing list of employees who have worked for The Best Connection for 10 years. The people listed reached this momentous milestone as of 30th November 2020. To mark the occasion, the new decade-busting team members will each receive a £500 voucher. Congratulations to you all and here's to the next milestone!

*Let's see who's in the line-up:*

Leoni Ward - Leicester  
 Hayley Allen - Worthing  
 Louise Swaine - Ashford  
 Andrew Robertson - Hull  
 Victoria Ellis - Watford  
 Daniel Edginton - Birmingham  
 Samantha Smith - Wolverhampton  
 Alison Johnston - Newcastle  
 Stephen Belton - Darlington  
 Richard Owen - Training, Halesowen  
 Caroline Painter - Head Office, Topaz, Bromsgrove  
 Katherine May - Wakefield

## Outstanding Google Reviews

TBC has achieved an amazing score of 4.9 out of 5.0 on Google Reviews. This is up from 4.1 in January 2019.

This figure is an average of all reviews taken across the whole TBC network of almost 90 branches which makes the result even more impressive and highlights how consistent TBC's service delivery is throughout the UK.

### Why do reviews matter?

Customer feedback and endorsements are very important in retaining and gaining clients. It is one way the customer can express their satisfaction or displeasure!

One such barometer of customer happiness is Google Reviews.

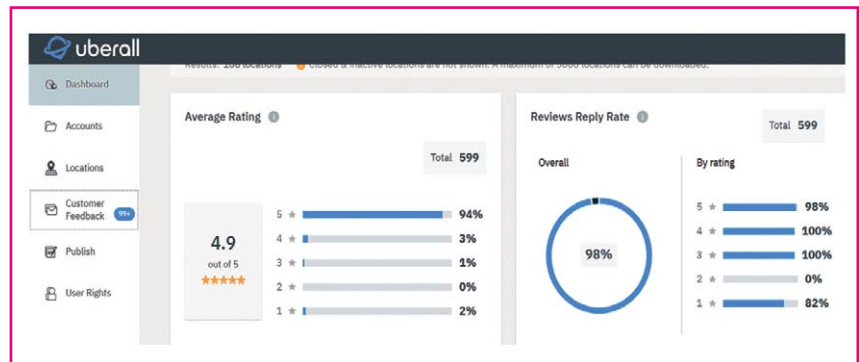
The first thing to point out is that Google reviews are independent. Customers

decide on the score and the feedback. As such, these reviews are considered credible and develop trust in your product or services.

Google reviews also help to improve local search ranking which, due to Google's algorithms, makes it easier for businesses to find you online and this can help with acquiring new customers.

Google reviews can also influence purchasing decisions or whether or not prospective customers are willing to talk to you.

Good reviews will also encourage and increase click-throughs to your website and can be used for marketing and messaging to clients and prospects.



Martin Recci

## Cheerio from Martin Recci

Earlier this year, Martin Recci announced he was hanging up his recruitment boots and retiring from The Best Connection. Whilst it will be sad to see him go, we all wish him a long and happy retirement.

Martin was a co-founder and Director of The Best Connection and as any of you will know, he's a native Brummie! He began his working career as a Technician/Metallurgist for BSA and worked in the automotive industry after leaving school before making the move into the recruitment sector.

Martin joined a Midlands-based industrial and driving recruitment business where his self-drive and motivation swiftly established him as the top performer within the market. In 1991 Martin joined forces with Andrew Sweeney and Neil Yorke in the formation of The Best Connection Group Ltd.

Good luck Martin – you will be missed.

# Shaun Seaton awarded TBC Scunthorpe Branch Manager role

We are always delighted to announce promotions and particularly during these times when conditions have been a huge challenge for our industry. In this instance we congratulate Shaun Seaton who has worked his way up through the ranks and has now been given the keys to the TBC Scunthorpe branch as its new manager. Very well done Shaun.

Like so many of the TBC branches across the country that have endured a difficult 2020, Scunthorpe too has had its challenges. However, despite the coronavirus lockdown the Scunthorpe branch has gone from strength to strength as the year progressed surpassing their pre-March 2020 performance which is a fantastic achievement.

The highlight of the year for the team was bringing on Wren Kitchens as a client. This was a tremendous joint effort between James Morgan, Matt Forrest and Marc Dawson that resulted in a contract to find over 200 production operators to support the client's peak run up to Christmas.

Equivalent demand is also anticipated in 2021 as Wren Kitchens look to open an additional quartz manufacturing factory at another location.

"Under Shaun's stewardship the team has really come together this year and the effort from each individual has been pleasing to see. We are in a really good place as we start 2021 on a high," said Marc Dawson, Senior Manager.



Shaun Seaton

## There's no holding Brogan back!



Brogan Bowes

**Put your hands together, virtually that is, and give Brogan Bowes a massive round of applause for achieving promotion to Senior Consultant. The news broke in January that she was to be recognised for her outstanding work. Very well-done Brogan.**

Brogan, who is based at TBC's Carlisle office, began her journey with TBC as a Resourcer on the industrial desk in May 2016 before moving to the HGV desk in January 2018 and becoming an HGV Consultant. Although there have been a number of consultants who have joined her on the HGV desk, Brogan has remained the key player and driving force.

As a person, Brogan has grown with the business, developed her skills and over the past year, despite some very tough

trading conditions, has been pushing the desk to perform well throughout the pandemic. She began working towards the Senior Consultant role in August 2020 with some challenging objectives ahead of her. Not fazed by the challenge, Brogan has grown her plan, retained good business and provided great support for Gina Metcalfe – by stepping in and supporting the team in Gina's absence.

"Brogan has been a credit to herself and to the branch and has shown that through hard work and determination you can achieve your goals when everything appears to be stacked against you. I am sure the journey doesn't stop here for Brogan and we are looking forward to seeing her develop further in her new role," commented Darren Ainge, Director.

# National Apprenticeship Week & Apprentice of the Year Competition

Since 2017, The Best Connection has been running an apprenticeship programme that has given both existing employees and those joining the company the opportunity to learn and develop business essential skills whilst gaining valuable work experience at the same time. Additionally, the qualifications are nationally recognised industry qualifications.

So far, with the help and support of our sister training company, Fleetmaster, we have supported 166 learners through their apprenticeship training and many more are working at various stages through the process.

This year, National Apprenticeship Week ran from 8th to the 12th of February. The theme, which was set by the Government, was Build the future – Train, Retain and Achieve. Throughout the week we celebrated the successes of our learners during 2020 and the resilience demonstrated throughout the pandemic. The event helped to showcase the value that the qualifications bring to TBC branches and TBC as a whole.

In addition, as part of the National Apprenticeship Week celebrations, TBC launched its inaugural Director's Apprentice of the Year competition which will become an annual event to recognise learners' achievements.

"We are incredibly proud of the employees that have embarked on this route to work with The Best Connection. At the start of the apprenticeship programme, we offered business administration as a core focus. Following the success of this, we added recruitment consultant a year later and more recently, customer service," explained Neil Yorke, Director.

Along the way, there have been many success stories and individual triumphs, so it was time to acknowledge some outstanding achievements. To do this, The Best Connection's Apprentice of the Year competition was launched and the response and contributions have been simply amazing.

"The apprenticeship programme will continue to remain an important part of our recruitment and employee nurturing culture. Congratulations to all of you who have undertaken this training and good luck to those who have embarked on this journey with us," added Neil Yorke.

Lee Harris, Director, TBC, who helped with judging the competition explained: "The Best Connection's Apprentice of the Year has been an enjoyable and close-run affair. It has demonstrated how popular and successful the scheme has become and it's uncovered some amazing stories of personal achievement. It's also shown how committed our apprentices are in achieving their work goals and has demonstrated the huge value, individuality and energy apprentices bring to the business.

"Congratulations to all of you who were nominated for this prestigious accolade. Whilst you are all winners in our eyes, we can only select the top person in each category."

## The Results are in!

Congratulations to Lara Reid TBC Carlisle on being awarded Apprentice of the Year, Recruitment Consultant 3 category. Fantastic achievement Lara and well deserved!



Lara Reid



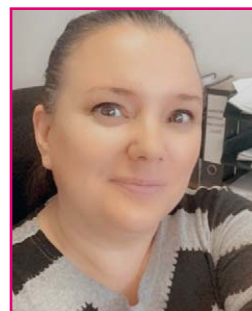
Faye Machin

Congratulations to Faye Machin TBC Crewe on winning Apprentice of the Year, Business Administration 3 category. An amazing accomplishment Faye – very well done!

## We asked our Apprentices to share their feedback and experience and here are some of the responses we received.

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to complete my qualification and for the ongoing support of Stephanie and the training team." **Faye Machin, Crewe**

Since starting at The Best Connection there has been so much emphasis on my learning! The support from the team within the branch and guidance of my tutor have been instrumental in my progress. I have learnt so much throughout my first year with the Company and cannot wait to continue to develop my skills and gain more experience on this journey. **Shawnie Berry, Walsall**



One of the great things about working for The Best Connection is the amazing training opportunities they offer! In my experience of completing and then continuing further training, I have found the Training Department to be very knowledgeable, friendly and approachable. They are always there to help you along the way." **Tammy Pritchett, Bedford**

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"Going through this qualification has really helped develop my career as a driving consultant as I have been able to learn about all the different aspects of the job from my driver tech course to all about AWR. Working with the training department of The Best Connection and Fleetmaster has really allowed me to enhance my knowledge of all the things I need to know to fulfil my potential in my job and I would recommend this apprenticeship to everyone." **Jack Ainge, Walsall**



"I have enjoyed the qualification and all of the training that has accompanied it. The information has been thorough and well presented and it has given me the knowledge to become a better consultant. Laura was assigned as my trainer and I want to thank her for all of the support she has provided, whether it's preparing me for a professional discussion or answering any small query I had, she was always more than happy to help however she could." **Aaron Green, Crewe**



"Working with The Best Connection and completing my qualification for the last year has ultimately increased my confidence, allowed me to learn more about myself and feel a sense of achievement in the workplace. The knowledge I have learnt has aided me within my job role, making me look forward to the year ahead and continue working towards personal KPIs." **Calum Hadley, Walsall**



"The Business Admin apprenticeship is great! It has helped me gain more assurance in my current role and an expectation of how my role might develop as business needs change. I am more confident when handed new or additional tasks and am looking forward to getting to grips with the new End-to-End system when it's rolled out!" **Jessica Amy Heap, Bristol**



"Training has been a fantastic way to learn about the recruitment industry in a way that makes you feel more confident in developing the business and with a better understanding of an effective interviewing process when placing a temp with a client." **Matthew Putland, Maidstone**



"The apprenticeship has helped to develop me, so far it has enabled me to gain more confidence when taking on new challenges and responsibilities, as well as giving me the opportunity to contribute ideas to support my team in the development of our Facebook page." **Olivia Wellington, Coventry**



"Thank you, Laura, Stephanie, Kanez and the rest of the training team for allowing me to gain valuable experience during my training and helping me to gain confidence and progress in all aspects of my job role. Also, thank you to my manager Rob, Laurence & Emma for their guidance and support throughout my training." **Lisa Natrass, Chelmsford**



"I would say the qualification has definitely helped me as the training days allowed me to take what I learnt and put it into action within my daily job role which has helped me to succeed and grow our plan. I have also gained valuable knowledge about legislation and best practise. I enjoyed the training days as they allowed me to meet consultants from other branches and build friendships all over the country." **Amber Whitmarsh, Southampton**



"The qualification has enhanced my organisation with my workload, and has made me much more proficient using google docs." **Charlotte Johnson, Telford**



"I found the course very useful, having come from a recruitment background without any formal training it was great to go back to basics and learn the theory of recruitment. I learned about legislation and laws that I had previously not been aware of. I really enjoyed the training days in Halesowen, it was great to meet other consultants from various branches, share ideas and generally develop together. As a whole the qualification has proven invaluable in my day to day recruitment duties and I would like to thank the training and assessment team for all their help." **Jacob Leeming, Blackburn**

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"Overall, I'm so glad that I signed up to do the Level 3 in Business Admin apprenticeship, it is teaching me so much about all of the aspects of being a team player within my role and expanding my knowledge further."

**Chloe Wood, Mansfield**

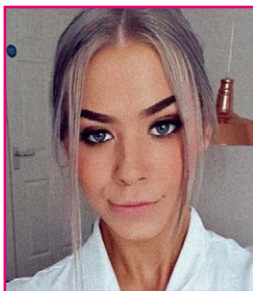


"I have been working for The Best Connection for over 5 years. I recently transferred from admin to a consultant role. The training that I have been provided with has helped me to understand my role and explained all laws and legislations that I need to follow to become competent in my new role." **Jadwiga Ficiek, Preston**



"I would definitely recommend the apprenticeship programme to other people. The training department played such a key part in my success in completing my Business Admin Level 2 qualification and in starting my Level 3 Qualification. Their time and effort have allowed me to grow as a person."

**Khaleda Gumbs, Slough**



"The apprenticeship was fun and engaging and it helped me to fully understand the business. It was a very flexible programme and I could manage my work and studies very easily. All the training gave me a real chance to put my skills into practice and helped me to gain more confidence in a working environment."

**Kristyna Vymyslicka, Derby**



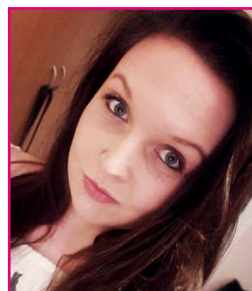
"I started my apprenticeship in 2019 when I started at TBC; I only work 3 days a week for the business on Monday - Wednesday being the busiest days for Payroll; but I got through all the modules I could in branch. Due to Covid back in March I was furloughed but I managed to complete the qualification while in lockdown alone with my 2yr old which was a struggle but I managed to complete the qualification and pass which was such an achievement for me because it kept my mind working during a difficult time, kept me in touch with the business during furlough and gave me something to be proud of when returning to branch." **Laura Brown, Staines**



"The apprenticeship has helped me to learn more about the role of a recruiter. I have found it to be a pleasant challenge and am extremely grateful for the opportunity and all of the support I have received from my trainers. Thanks to this apprenticeship, I have gained more knowledge and confidence in my role as a recruitment consultant. I have learned more about important legislation regarding recruitment, the recruitment process itself, and how to successfully gain and fill bookings for job roles." **Michelle Siwiec, Bedford**



"I started from scratch in the recruitment industry at TBC in March 2020, from working in branch throughout Lockdown V1 & 2 and also being so close to completing the apprenticeship now, I am really excited to see where I might be again in a year from now." **Paige Osman, Northampton**



"Since starting the apprenticeship at the beginning of 2020, I feel my knowledge of recruitment has grown significantly, having come from a retail management background. Kinny, Richard, Steph and the team at head office, have all been 100% supportive throughout the past year and while having to deal with furlough/isolation etc, they have always been approachable and understanding." **Rebecca Dunnington, Hull**



"I've enjoyed working on my apprenticeship with The Best Connection with great help from my trainer Kinny Rock. I feel that it has enhanced my knowledge and skills to help me perform to the best of my abilities." **Robert Southworth, Nuneaton**



I feel that the apprenticeship has greatly improved my knowledge and skills to help me be the best I can." **Ryan Heeley, Newcastle**



# Modern Day Slavery – be vigilant!

**You might think that incidences of modern-day slavery happen somewhere else, certainly not in your own back yard! The reality is slavery could be happening under your nose – you may just not notice.**

Information from the Home Office says that 10,627 potential victims of trafficking were referred to the UK's framework for identifying modern slavery abuses in 2019. It is much more common than we would like to think. For that reason, it is imperative as a company and as fellow humans to be vigilant at all times so that any signs of slavery are picked up and investigated – straight away.

A sobering example of this was brought to the attention of TBC recently. It was claimed that a temporary worker was having their wages siphoned off to others. For legal reasons we are unable to share details that may identify the

individual so we will give the victim a fictitious name - John.

It began when one of John's relations contacted a member of the TBC team requesting payments to John's account be stopped. It had become clear that the two individuals who John lived with had control of his bank account.

The TBC team advised the informant to ask John to visit the TBC contact. Prior to the information being divulged, the TBC team had not witnessed any suspicious signs or activities that may have alerted them to a possible incidence of slavery. John had registered and attended the induction by himself and brought the correct ID. His behaviour was perfectly normal.

Following the meeting, John confirmed the information was correct. He had been living abroad and 'liked' a picture of someone one of John's friends knew

on social media. This person then gradually befriended him and suggested he should move to the UK to stay with their family which he did. John started work through TBC in late 2020 and it became apparent that he was not receiving any of his payments. Furthermore, he was not allowed to leave the house and had his ID card taken off him. He said that he was too scared to tell anyone about his predicament.

In response to the feedback, the TBC team stopped payments to John's account and set up a One Pay account to ensure that all outstanding money would go to him. The information was shared with the Modern Day Slavery helpline who referred the case to the police.

John has since escaped his captors and has moved in with relations. They are very thankful for the support TBC has shown and that he is now safe.



**Spotlight on Richard Bentley. A man with hidden talents to draw on!**

## Richard Bentley is promoted to Divisional Manager

**Richard started his career in recruitment with Topgear Recruitment in Wakefield around 14 years ago. He unveiled that his first ever interview was with a familiar TBC face, Jason Melia, who is now a Senior Manager based in Manchester. He clearly must have made a good impression as Jason hired him!**

"Jason is responsible for my recruitment career, I'm not sure what he saw in me," explained Richard (modestly).

Prior to arriving at this point, Richard had been busy setting up his own business with two partners but decided to sell his shares and in 2018 joined The Best Connection instead. This decision turned out to be a good one as Richard and his colleague, Liam Rusby, set about turning the Barnsley driving desk in to one of the company's best performing teams. On February 21st Richard moved to TBC Sheffield to take on the challenge of a city location.

Outside of work, Richard is an enthusiastic Manchester United fan and confessed to enjoying running and cooking as it helps him to relax. He also revealed that in 1989 when he was eleven years old, he had entered a drawing competition and won it. But this wasn't any old drawing competition, it was a world-wide competition that earned him an Olympic gold medal for

his efforts which was presented to him by Princess Anne. And this is when it becomes even more interesting. Richard's picture was displayed in the Switzerland Olympic Art Gallery (yes it does exist!) and was purchased by Olympic legend, Tessa Sanderson.

Richard's prize included a trip to Switzerland and dinner with Gary Lineker at his house in London with the other winners. How cool is that? A great story for the dinner party.



Richard Bentley

Nowadays, Richard is a dedicated dad to his two daughters, Eva 5 and Freya 1 and is expecting another addition to the family in August. In normal times, Richard is an intrepid traveller having visited Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, USA and South East Asia. Congratulations on your promotion Richard!

# Jimmy retires at 81 years young!

The old cliché, you are only as young as you feel is perhaps fitting for 81-year-old TBC HGV driver, Jimmy Ratcliffe, who has decided to hang up his lorry keys and retire after a long and varied driving career. Cheers to Jimmy! You give us all hope.

Remarkably, Jimmy has covered the equivalent distance of travelling to the Moon and back three times! He started with The Best Connection Plymouth in 2006 having previously worked with SMS from 2000 and has served a large variety of clients including Samworths, Fedex, DHL, Hovis and Wincanton, driving a variety of vehicles from 3.5 ton to HGV Class 1 including Milk Tankers.

"Sir James," as Jimmy is fondly known, apparently obtained this title after telling people he had received a knighthood for his services to HGV driving! His mischievous sense of humour has earned him much respect

from his fellow drivers and Jimmy is always willing to help and encourage new drivers using his vast amount of knowledge and experience.

When the news broke that Jimmy was to retire, clients were sad to see him go. This is what some had to say:

"It was a sad day when Jimmy decided to hang up his boots and hi-vis. Jimmy was a valued asset to our business."

"We always received positive feedback for the work Jimmy undertook. His professionalism, commitment and work ethic are a credit to him."

"We wish Jimmy a very happy retirement and would like to thank him for all the hard work and dedication he has shown over the years."

From everyone at TBC, thank you Jimmy for your loyalty and dedication and for reminding us all that retirement is just a state of mind!



*Jimmy Ratcliffe receiving a gift voucher from The Best Connection*

## Spotlight on Georgina 'Gina' Metcalfe, Divisional Manager, TBC Carlisle

Since joining TBC as a trainee recruitment consultant in May 2015 Gina has made exemplary progress advancing to a Consultant and then Senior Consultant position. In 2017 Gina decided to leave the business to pursue a role in



*Gina Metcalfe*

Permanent Recruitment. With this additional experience and knowledge under her belt she decided to return to TBC in Jan 2020 as a Senior Consultant working on the industrial desk and quickly picked up where she had left off!

"We lost the Carlisle branch manager with little notice which allowed Gina the opportunity to take a lead role in the branch, steadying the ship and keeping the branch performing. During this period Gina still worked on the desk whilst leading the branch working through a pandemic, redundancies and a very difficult trading period. She has done a brilliant job pulling the team together and supporting all the Carlisle team during this difficult period," explained Darren Ainge, Director.

We are told that Gina is a real positive influence on all the Carlisle team and has the branch performing extremely well. For all her hard work Gina was promoted to Divisional Manager in January 2021 and is now formally managing the Carlisle branch.

"Gina is a real asset to the company, she is a trusted and professional operator and I am looking forward to her developing her career with TBC," added Darren.

## Andy celebrates Senior Manager role

Promotions are a great indicator of a business determined to carry on and one that recognises great work and talent - regardless of the challenges.



Andy Nuttall Senior Manager

On this occasion, we are delighted to share with you that Andy Nuttall, TBC Oldham, has been promoted to Senior Manager for his excellent work. Congratulations Andy!

"Andy has been with The Best Connection for the past 18 years and has become a great asset to the business. He has worked in a number of branches leading to him becoming a Branch Manager in Stockport where he worked diligently to make it a successful branch and developed a strong team around him," explained Darren Ainge, TBC Director.

In 2019, a regional restructure gave Andy the opportunity to manage his home-town branch TBC Oldham in addition to Stockport. Andy excelled in this position and in a short period of time demonstrated that he was more than capable of taking on greater responsibilities. Throughout 2020, despite the pandemic, TBC Oldham went from strength to strength, with no detrimental impact on the Stockport branch.

Andy was rewarded for his work with a promotion to Senior Manager in January 2021.

## Recruiting Creativity Pays for TBC Inc

**The pandemic has caused unprecedented upheaval across the world. Even the simplest of tasks like buying a coffee has become an ordeal!**

The TBC team in Canada have been experiencing the same frustrations and challenges the UK has faced.

"With scheduling in a state of flux, our clients have become less predictable when requesting labour. This is a challenge that we are learning to overcome," explains Elliot Mendoza, Operations Manager, TBC Inc.

"Our recruitment strategies have pivoted and our online presence has widened our candidate pool. Thanks to technology we have been able to be creative with finding temporary workers and this has included areas such as participating in online groups and forums which has been successful for us.

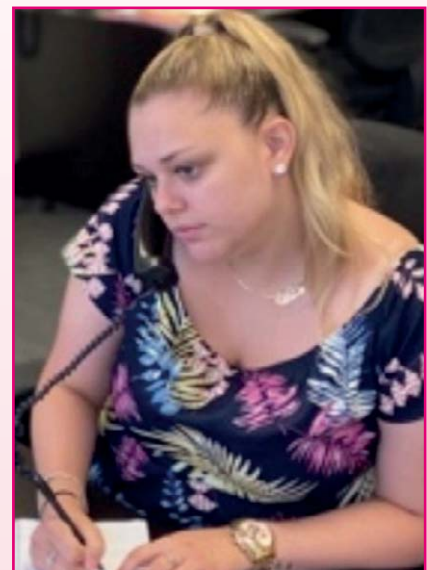
"A good example of where this

engagement has been effective was when Woodbridge Senior Recruiter, Britney Rodriguez, shared a job with a candidate that in turn was shared again and again. We were inundated with candidates interested in working for The Best Connection Inc," added Elliot.

Faced with the highest unemployment levels in recent history it would be natural to think it would be easy to recruit temporary workers, however, the team have not found this to be the case.

At The Best Connection Inc. the team have used their digital resources and creativity to their advantage. They held virtual Townhall meetings and attended seminars with HR leaders and hiring managers to collaborate and uncover solutions. "Our tenacity along with creativity has taught us that recruiting in a pandemic is not just post and hope for the best! You have to make that extra call, call out of hours, ask for referrals,

join a group, work closely with your clients and find good work for your temporary workers," concluded Elliot.



Britney Rodriguez

# NW RORM Sales competition winners excel

The NW RORM has produced some spectacular business results in the most challenging circumstances. The annual round up of all the competition scores on the doors has revealed some outstanding performances.

"Can I start by simply saying WOW! In a year like no other that has been hugely challenging to operate in, as a RORM group you have managed to contribute an outstanding net margin. What an achievement!

"I've long believed that we have some of the best people in the recruitment industry working for us and these results evidence that. When the chips are down what do we do? - we roll up our sleeves and do what we do best - deliver an excellent service to our clients and candidates that is in line with our ambition to be the agency of choice for clients and temporary workers. This in turn, delivers results that we can all be proud of. Well done to each and every one of you, but as always with every competition there has to be a winner, or in this case, three and here they are," said Darren Ainge, Director.

## Winner of 'Year 1 Consultant' Ryan Motler

Following on from his recent win in the quarterly sales competition Ryan Motler, TBC Stockport takes home first prize in the "newbie" contest. Ryan joined TBC in April 2019 and his achievement in new business net margin is no mean feat given he spent part of the year on furlough. Ryan was one of the first to return from furlough as the business started to recover and he clearly didn't waste any time getting back on the phone and making the most of the opportunities that presented themselves.



L to R: Candice Daley, Stockport DM, congratulating Ryan Motler

"Part way through the year I did consider suspending this competition for 2020 on the basis that the prizes would probably be greater than the returns to the business. Well, we are wrong from time to time and on this occasion I'm happy to admit I would have been wrong to do so. Your prizes are thoroughly deserved and my expectations for this year have just rocketed," added Darren Ainge.

## Winner of 'Experienced Consultant' Jake Maddison

Jake left the comparative comfort of the Stockport branch for an opportunity in Oldham with the aim of progressing his career to Senior Consultant - an accolade he achieved in October 2020. Covering two plans with the support of his manager, Jake has still managed to achieve admirable net margin whilst coming to terms with a whole new client base and geographical region.



L to R: Jake Maddison receiving his prize from Andy Nuttall

## Winner of Divisional Manager/Senior Consultant Chris Glover

Having won two of the past three years' competitions, Chris Glover, TBC Warrington, is no stranger to winning the league, unlike his beloved Liverpool FC who we all know was a one hit wonder! Joking aside, Chris managed to build significant net margin in 2020 which is an amazing achievement.



Chris Glover

Well done to all the winners and those of you that tried but didn't manage to take the top spot on this occasion. Never fear the clock's rewind and another year awaits – good luck!

# Henry awarded well deserved Senior Consultant promotion

Please put your virtual hands together for Henry Alonso who has been promoted to Senior Consultant. Congratulations Henry!

The TBC Coventry driving team have enjoyed some incredibly positive results over the past two years and Henry Alonso has been a big part of this

success for which he's been rewarded with a well-deserved promotion to Senior Consultant.

Henry started in Coventry in January 2018 and after a short time on industrial, transferred to HGV recruitment. With the bit between his teeth, he hit the ground running

overachieving the targets set for him with 25 new clients and an impressive new client margin in 2019/20 despite the pandemic and a period of furlough.

Recognition also needs to be given for him agreeing to have a photo taken, as this is something he is not too keen on - so well done Henry in all respects!



L to R: Andy Presley congratulating Henry Alonso

## Fantasy Football!



Whilst access to football stadiums has been closed there is always room for some fantasising until the gates open in the not-so-distant future.

This year, the Fantasy Football league table is looking very interesting as it moves into the quarter of the season with only 120 points separating 10th from 1st place. It may seem a lot, but some managers may have all their jokers left to play (free hit, bench boost, triple captain, etc).

Surprisingly, Darren Cole is in the top spot. We say surprisingly because he will be the first to admit that he knows absolutely nothing about football! Apparently, we are told, he has a secret method of selecting his team. Well, whatever you are doing, whether it is sticking a pin in a list with your eyes covered or the Enigma machine, it is working for you Darren.

Having led for a large part of the season, Shirlies Girlies have dropped to 3rd position but still with plenty of time to regain the top spot. Come on Shirley!

Half of the top ten managers are from two sites (3 from Topaz and 2 from Romford). We don't know if this is significant – but it is at least a fact.

There are some big decisions for the managers to make if they want to improve their position. Do they drop the likes of Salah,

### Here's the top 10:

1	Dunk Kane Donuts	1730	Darren Cole
2	Choppers Lillywhites	1709	Steven Harris
3	Shirlies Girlies	1695	Shirley Martin
4	Dunder Mifflin	1688	Matthew Smyth
5	Fred West Ham	1673	Ben Moloney
6	Crowfish Athletic	1670	Paul Crocock
7	Lew Mar Facilities	1645	The Facilities Team
8	Yuvraj FC	1623	Gurinder Khatkar
9	CHANGE NAME	1615	Brian Bourne
10	Show Me Da Mane	1610	Chris Glover

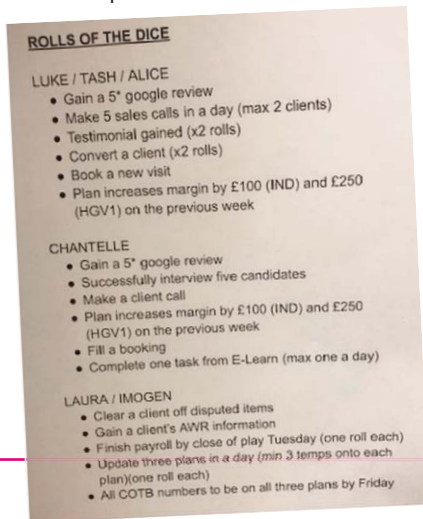
Mane (expensive players in a Liverpool side that seems to be in freefall) or Vardy (can't buy a goal for Leicester at the moment) and bring in more productive players like Fernandes (Man Utd), Gundogan (Man City) and Bamford (Leeds)? It is a choice only they can make!

**Good luck to all the Managers for the remaining weeks of the season.**

# Snakes & Ladders is the new motivational team game!

When the chips are down people can become very creative. And a great example is TBC Exeter who invented their own version of the snakes and ladders game that creates a little motivational incentive as well as injecting a bit of fun at the same time. Great idea guys!

As you may remember from bygone days, it's all about the throw of the dice and where you land. However, to earn the right to have a throw you must first achieve a task. So, no task completion, no throw – simples!



We took a snap of the rules and this is what they have come up with:

“So, essentially each member of the team was given a list of tasks to ‘earn’ them a role of the dice. I tailored these tasks around different job roles for Consultants, Resourcer and Administrator. At the end of each day, we would get together and find out how many roles people had gained. It ended up lasting about six weeks, we had a few close winners who then fell ‘victim’ to one of the last snakes! It created a great competitive spirit in the office and we plan to run it again this year,” explained Holly Daly, Divisional Manager, TBC Exeter.

As with all good games there must be a winner and the inaugural victor was Laura Smith. Congratulations Laura for achieving the tasks and well done for dodging those crafty snakes!



Laura Smith with first prize

## TBC Brexit update

### Brexit Questions – how well do you know your FACTS?

Although we have officially left the EU, clarity over the EU citizens’ rights and work status is sought by many of our clients. The following list of FAQ’s will help to cover most queries.

How many of these questions can you answer?

#### Questions your clients could ask:

- What are the key milestones for people professionals?
- What do I do if I have EU citizens working in my organisation?
- What does ‘settled status’ and ‘pre-settled status’ mean?
- Can I ask my EU staff what their intentions are?
- Do we need to check if our EU citizen employees have applied for settlement status?
- Do employers need to see or show evidence that their EU citizen employees or candidates were in the UK before 1 January 2021?
- What are the types of visa that give non-UK and non-Irish citizens the right to work in the UK?
- What is a Frontier Worker permit?
- What is the new immigration system?

#### Questions EU Citizens (temporary workers) could ask:

- What is the impact of Brexit on European citizens in the UK?
- How do I prove my right to work in the UK?
- If I am not a UK resident, can I join my family in the UK after 30 June 2021?
- Do I have to be in the UK physically to make my EUSS application?
- What is a Frontier Worker permit?
- What is the new immigration system?
- What are the minimum requirements for a skilled worker?
- How will Brexit impact access to healthcare?
- How does Brexit Impact me?
- Where can I get additional help?

Answers to these questions are available on the intranet.



# Bev and Tash come to the payroll rescue

The current pandemic has thrown its share of curveballs at us over the past year. What it has emphasised is the importance of teamwork in covering for colleagues when the chips are down and in this story, we have Bev Spencer and Natasha James to thank for stepping in to help out a sister branch when needed.

It all began when one of the administration team at TBC Coventry unfortunately received a positive Covid test and was required to self-isolate. This meant that there was no-one in the branch able to run the payroll for the Coventry operation.

In the hour of need, the TBC Northampton payroll team, Bev and Tash, stepped up to the plate and said that with the support of the IT team they would be able to payroll the four Coventry plans. In addition, the Coventry payroll team put together comprehensive handovers and provided calculations

for all of the more complicated pay and charges and were on hand to support throughout.

The workload was considerable for all those involved, with approximately 550 temporary workers across 70 clients but Bev and Tash worked through to 7.30pm on Tuesday to make sure that the payroll for Coventry was completed on time. The consultants in the branch that knew Staffplus updated what they could whilst also filling bookings and running the plans and the Coventry payroll team assisted in chasing clients for timesheets.

As a result of this exemplary teamwork all of the temporary workers were paid on time.

**Fantastic work everyone and a special huge thank you to both Bev and Tash for your support.**



Bev Spencer Payroll Supervisor (right) and her daughter Natasha James (left)

## Charity initiatives raised over £9K in 2020

**Dress Down Fridays, Christmas Jumper Day, Christmas allowance donations - not to mention all the generous food bank donations – were some of the charity fundraising activities many of you were involved in throughout 2020.**

Your efforts and generosity raised an amazing £9,125! A huge well done and thank you to everyone who has taken part or donated. Every penny makes a real difference to the recipient charities. For example, the PDSA will use the donations they receive to deliver life-saving treatments for animals in their care.

In 2021 a project group, headed up by Darren Ainge, was formed to drive more fundraising and social initiatives. "Since the Fisher House fundraising campaign in 2016, I have felt that we have not shouted enough about the great work we all do across the branch network to support local initiatives, communities and charities. To address this, we have formed a project group consisting of myself, Katie Yorke and my fellow BORM members, Iain Brown and Sue Harwood. Collectively, we will be planning initiatives for 2021 and beyond," explained Darren Ainge, Director. One

such initiative is March4March which you can read about in this issue.

"In addition to fundraising, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) affects so many aspects of our business and as a group we will be developing and sharing our experiences of this over the coming months. Many of you will remember the employee engagement survey you completed last year, one of our commitments from that survey was to inform you more about decisions we make based on your feedback. The CSR project is one example of You Said, We Did," added Darren.



# BACKLINE

LOGISTICS | RECRUITMENT | TRAINING

## Backline adds Bronze Recognition for FORS to its accolades

Since the company's inception Backline Logistics Support Services has sought to establish itself as a specialist provider of temporary staff – providing unparalleled service to both its clients and workforce.

From humble beginnings, with a single office in a residential street in Exeter, the company has grown organically to become a multi-branch network spanning seven counties, supporting a number of household name brands.

As part of that journey, the company is proud to have accrued several accreditations, awards and accolades. These include:

### REC Membership

Recognising quality recruitment practice and providing clients with the assurance that the company operates both legally and ethically.

### FTA/Logistics UK Driver Agency Excellence

Further evidence of Backline's commitment to exacting standards of operation. An annual audit focuses on both compliance and best practice when it comes to the recruiting and supply of drivers within the industry.

### SQA, AITT, FAA & JAUP T Accredited Training Centre

Offering a number of industry focused training solutions such as ADR, Materials Handling and Driver CPC courses, accreditation from each of the relevant authorities ensures that high training standards are upheld.

### ISO 9001:2015

Demonstrating the company's commitment to continual improvement, this certification recognises the Quality Management System Backline has in place.

In November 2020, Backline achieved another significant award. At its operating centre in Exeter, it was awarded **Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) Bronze** status, which elevates its presence alongside prestigious companies such as Grafton Merchanting, Wincanton, XPO Logistics and DHL Supply Chain.

We spoke to Rob Sargent, Operations Manager at the site, who was tasked with preparing for the accreditation, about the experience.

"It's a great feeling to have our hard work officially recognised by FORS. The application process was quite intense. An external auditor visits and assesses all of your operational procedures, Health & Safety policies, checks out the site and various other compliance documentation to make sure you're up to scratch as far as your O licence obligations are concerned. Gaining FORS Bronze status will open doors on a number of commercial opportunities that were previously closed to us and further cement our status as experts in our field," said Rob.

"This is great work by Kelly Hughes, Rob Sargent, Marc Newton, Mike Griffin & Nick Powers at the Exeter Outbase to secure this accreditation for the business" said Mark Gooden, Director.



Rob Sargent pictured with FORS accreditation



# Backline Logistics compliance 2021

After an unpredictable year in 2020, the Backline Logistics haulage business in Leighton Buzzard is currently recruiting full and part-time permanent drivers to ensure compliance with the upcoming IR35 legislation which is set to come into play in April 2021. This will be the biggest individual change for transport and logistics companies in many years as drivers will no longer be employed through limited companies. Backline's recruitment drive is well under way using the new 'Recruit' software to make the process as quick and user friendly as possible.

## Direct Vision Standards

Originally launched in October 2019, the 'Direct Vision Standard' is also being upgraded from 1st March 2021 for the Greater London Region.

The 'Direct Vision' equipment is designed to make drivers more aware of where a person, cyclists or another vehicle is in the nearside blind spot. The system will sound a warning in the driver's cab to warn them there is something or someone in danger that they may not be able to see. A verbal warning will also sound outside the vehicle when the vehicle indicators are used to warn other road users what the driver's intentions are.

"We feel it is one of the most important initiatives for many years and will really reduce accident frequency and make the roads much safer. We have decided to include this equipment

on all vehicles coming onto our fleet for 2021 – not just those travelling into London.," said Mark Gooden, Director.

## 'Roadwise' Software

Backline has invested in driver behaviour monitoring software called 'Roadwise'. This came into use on 1st March 2021. The software examines data from many different sources including tachograph downloads, onboard tracking devices and cameras, vehicle damage, insurance claims and fuel spend.

The data is analysed and aggregated using a bespoke penalty scoring system. The fleet manager is able to see each driver's position on a leader-board based on their driving performance.



## CTS Goes the extra mile for its customers

**CTS has had a very busy start to 2021. Towards the end of 2020 the business started a brand review process to assess how effectively they were communicating the CTS difference in the market.**

The team worked with an external branding consultant to develop a new brand positioning with accompanying language to express the outstanding quality of service and expertise the CTS team deliver.

After much head scratching and strategising it was agreed to update the original, generic strapline from 'The Route to Reliability' and to replace this with a phrase that better expressed the CTS promise 'We go the extra mile'.

The updated strapline has been incorporated in a new sales presentation which outlines the reasons why customers should choose CTS. These attributes include outstanding value, experts in their field and a flexible service.

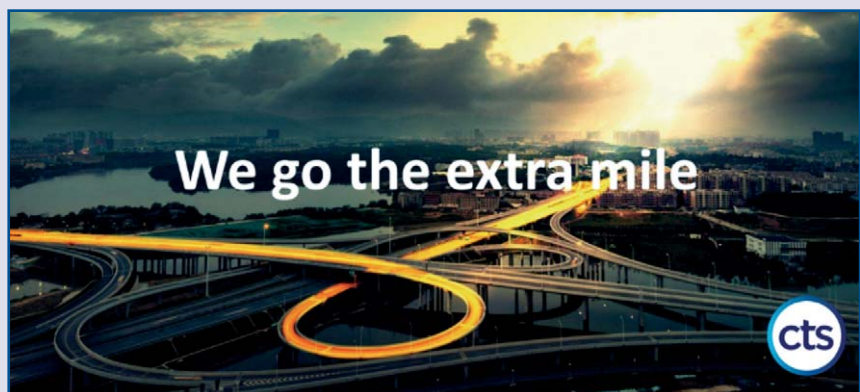
Unlike many of its competitors CTS is positioned as 'service first', 'tech enabled' through CTS Drive. The revised branding will be extended to its online presence and social media activities.

Words are of course important, but actions speak much louder. In early January CTS had a business review with its customer Travis Perkins where they discussed business performance. The team also took the opportunity to share

their vision for the future.

The good news for CTS was that Travis Perkins agreed to renew their contract for a further three years. Congratulations CTS!

"While the new brand development definitely helped frame our thoughts, the team deserve full credit for their hard work and dedication. I'm sure that you'll join me in congratulating them on their success," said Mark Gooden,





# March4March

– Employees step up to the challenge for Cancer Research

On 1st March we launched our month-long campaign, March4March, to coincide with Cancer Research's Walk All Over Cancer event. We set ourselves a company-wide target of achieving 100,000,000 steps (or the equivalent of half an hour's daily exercise per person throughout March). All forms of exercise contribute to the total whether running, cycling, dancing, walking the dog or, as one of videos demonstrated, walking on your hands! Family members have been encouraged to join in the challenge and their activity can also be counted towards our company goal.

Individuals and branch teams have been busy pledging 'steps' and funds and conducting their exercise each day during

March. A weekly prize is being awarded and the winning branch for Week 1 was TBC Crewe! Crewe worked together as a team and their families' involvement helped them achieve their steps target. The week 2 winner was TBC Poole.

At the time of going to press we have raised £2,279. Donations raised up to a maximum of £10,000 will be matched by the company.

Check out some of our fundraisers in the following pictures. You can donate here:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tbcmarch4march](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tbcmarch4march)



TBC Bedford



TBC Cannock



TBC Preston



People Services (1)



TBC Milton Keynes



TBC Mansfield



TBC Walsall



People Services (3)



TBC Nottingham



TBC Burton



TBC Birmingham



People Services (2)



TBC West Bromwich



TBC Chesterfield



TBC Derby

# SWS VACANCIES

## SWS Featured Vacancies

In addition to the featured roles below, more jobs with full descriptions can be found at:

[www.thebestconnection.co.uk/joinus/](http://www.thebestconnection.co.uk/joinus/)



**Head Office Opportunity**  
Excel Development  
and Support Consultant



**Senior Industrial Consultant opportunities are available in the following TBC branches:**

Cannock, Coventry,  
Earls Court, Oxford,  
Scunthorpe and Wakefield



**Senior HGV Consultant opportunities are available in the following TBC branches:**

Croydon, Stoke,  
Kidderminster, Oxford,  
Southampton and Taunton



**Management Opportunities are available in our TBC Blackburn and Oxford branches**



The Best Connection has identified the following locations for future branches and has opportunities for current or aspiring Senior Consultants and Managers in:

Banbury • Basildon  
Hereford • Reading  
Swansea • Tunbridge Wells



**CPA**  
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Consultants

**Want more details?**

Please contact Andy Guest on 0121 504 3065  
or email [andy.guest@thebestconnection.co.uk](mailto:andy.guest@thebestconnection.co.uk)

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**BCS** Bailey  
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[www.baileycare.co.uk](http://www.baileycare.co.uk)

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**BACKLINE**

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Paper from sustainable forestry