

# How Chris took on the training mantle

A MAN who retrained as an electrician and set up his own business is now helping to pave the way for others to follow a trade.

Chris Penny, 31, is working with his former training provider, **New Career Skills** – which specialises in retraining mature students for careers as plumbers and electricians – to offer work experience to students.

He used the service three years ago when he trained as an electrician and went on to set up his own firm, **CJP Electrical**.

Chris is now so passionate about helping people that he has become one of the first to sign up to a scheme which matches trainees with businesses for work experience opportunities through New Career Skills' AC-



CESS programme. Chris, who lives in Trafford, said: "You can empathise with people starting out again.

"The lads I've had working

with me have been great, and it's making a difference to them. It really helps them to have the practical experience.

"If I'd had the opportunity to

go and get some experience for a couple of weeks, I'd have snapped it up straight away."

And he's not worried about training future competition.

"If anything, it's a way of making contacts. We might work together on a job in the future. In fact, I am currently working on a job that came through another New Career Skills graduate who had so much work coming in that he passed it on to me. It's great to have a network there."

For Chris, training with NCS was a return to his roots.

He had initially done some electrical training after leaving school but then went into bar and catering work. He knew that this wasn't something he wanted to do long-term, and so he retrained as an electrician.

He said: "The career change

has done my confidence a world of good.

"It was a big decision to make, but it was definitely worth it. I'm happy with being my own boss."

■ Businesses in Manchester provide some of the lowest levels of vocational 'on-the-job' training in the country, new research by Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce has found.

The statistics revealed that those aged 19-24 in Manchester's local authority area are 40.5 per cent more likely to be in full-time employment without any vocational training or qualification than the rest of the country.

The research also highlighted that around 11,000 individuals in the area have no formal qualification in their trade.