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news release

## **NatWest and RBS support franchise job creation programme**

NatWest and The Royal Bank of Scotland ("RBS") have pledged financial support to an innovative programme that will give 50 unemployed Greater Manchester residents the chance to start their own franchise businesses.

The banks are providing £150k of sponsorship to **FranchisingWorks**, which is being piloted in Greater Manchester. The programme's core aim is to reduce unemployment by creating new businesses and jobs through franchising.

FranchisingWorks is part of The Shaftesbury Partnership and was launched in Manchester earlier this year. The programme is backed by NESTA, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), and Manchester's New Economy.

During the course of the next eight months, the pilot aims to provide 50 unemployed local residents with the opportunity to become a self-employed franchisee. Each candidate accepted onto the FranchisingWorks programme goes through a structured training programme designed to equip them with the key business skills needed to run a franchise.

FranchisingWorks also provides financial support to buy franchise licences for those successful candidates who are unable to cover the full cost themselves. Once the new business becomes profitable the candidate can buy the licence from FranchisingWorks and repay the initial investment.

One of the first candidates to complete the programme was Stockport-based Colin Hughes, who was made redundant in November 2010 after a 25-year career in various corporate roles. With FranchisingWorks' support and training, Colin started his franchise business VIP Bin Cleaning in May. The business provides a wheelie bin cleaning service for domestic and commercial customers in South Manchester (see separate case study).

Graeme Jones, Head of Franchising for NatWest & RBS: "As the leading bank for franchising in the UK, we are delighted to support this initiative that will help a number of local people get back into work by starting their own franchise. By helping to reduce unemployment and create new businesses the FranchisingWorks programme has the potential to create a lasting and positive impact in Greater Manchester."

Simon McNeill-Ritchie, Founder and Managing Director of FranchisingWorks: "Franchising is a proven way to create local, sustainable jobs. Thanks to the support we have received from NatWest & RBS and others we have already been able to help a number of people in Greater Manchester out of unemployment by starting up their own businesses. And as their businesses grow, I expect to see further job opportunities emerge for other local people."

**ENDS**

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

The RBS group is a large international banking and financial services company. Headquartered in Edinburgh, the Group operates in the United Kingdom, Europe, the Americas and Asia, serving more than 40 million customers. The Group provides a wide range of products and services to personal, commercial and large corporate and institutional customers through its two principal subsidiaries, The Royal Bank of Scotland and NatWest, as well as through a number of other well known brands including, Citizens, Ulster Bank, Coutts, Direct Line and Churchill.

FranchisingWorks is an innovative programme to reduce unemployment by helping the unemployed create new businesses and jobs through franchising. It has also developed a unique fund to lend to successful candidates with insufficient financial resources of their own.

Franchising is a form of supported self-employment. As a result, franchise businesses are three times more likely to be operating after 5 years than other start-ups.

Led by franchise specialists, FranchisingWorks provides advice, information and practical support about getting into franchising through workshops and one-to-one sessions. We also provide introductions to suitable franchisors.

Supported by RBS Group, NESTA, AGMA and New Economy, FranchisingWorks is being piloted in Greater Manchester. From here we aim to expand the Programme nationwide to create thousands of new franchise businesses, providing employment and work experience to many tens of thousands of people.