



## Rebecca's new business is Heaps of Fun

*Kirkby Stephen woman starts her own party supplies shop.*

Rebecca Heap worked at a newsagent in Kirkby Stephen for seven years, the last three of which she was the manager. At the time the shop stocked a limited range of party goods such as helium balloons, and it was this that sparked her long-time desire to run her own party supplies shop.

Rebecca already had a great deal of sector-specific knowledge of party supplies from her time at the newsagents, with a network of existing relationships with suppliers and good knowledge of prices. She also knew that there wasn't much competition around--aside from the newsagent that carried a small range of party supplies, there were few specialist shops in Cumbria where people could go to get all their party supplies in one fell swoop.

She took the plunge and opened her shop, Heaps of Fun, in September last year.

One area of weakness in her range of skills that Rebecca identified was accounting, so she contacted Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency and enrolled on the Intensive Start-Up Support (ISUS) programme. She attended a series of six Business Skills Workshops and filled the gaps in her knowledge.

CREA Business Adviser Kellie Bradburn-Sims says, "the ISUS programme assisted Rebecca with completing a Business Plan before starting trading which gave...

...her a better insight into the costs involved in running her own business. Armed with this knowledge, Rebecca was confident she would be able to turn her dream of running her own business into a financially viable and profitable reality."

Rebecca wants to build upon her success with the Heaps of Fun shop in Kirkby Stephen by getting a website that incorporates an online shop, extending her market beyond the immediate area.

The ISUS programme is part of Solutions for Business, the Government's package of publicly funded business support designed to help companies start and grow. The programme is funded by the NWDA and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is making a real difference to people and businesses in the Northwest. With €755 million to invest between 2007 and 2013, ERDF is enhancing the competitiveness of the region's economy by supporting growth in enterprise and employment. ERDF in the Northwest is managed by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).