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## Karl Fone

### Head of Trading Community Links

“I want to be able to provide more employment and training opportunities. Over the years we have helped a lot of young people with their confidence and their work ethic. If you’re not an academic person, then you need a hands-on skill set and Links Event Solutions (LES) gives them that. Events are quite a pressured work environment, always with a time scale to meet. It gives the young people the opportunity to work independently, in teams, and to lead teams.

For myself, I want to do a formal Health and Safety qualification to bring the skills and knowledge together that I have gained whilst working at Links and an accountancy course, so that I understand and can use the same accountancy terminology used when talking to accounts and business mentors. I’d like to see more community engagement events in Newham, like family fun days – it would be great for local people and great for Links to deliver them. I know the importance of these events because I’ve delivered them for years. I’ve seen people travel from event to event with us, because it was the only way they could afford a day out for their children. Even if they couldn’t afford the bus, then they would still come – they would walk miles to get there, because it was a safe and rewarding place for their children to play.

I’ve been involved with Community Links my whole life, since I was a bump. I was always in and out of the building as a child. To be honest, I was very withdrawn and preferred adult company, so I started helping out and it just snowballed from there really.

I worked on my first Links event when I was 16. When I was 19, we started working for paying customers and the business expanded. I grew it, but it was Kevin’s vision – it was his vision to run events as a way of making money for the charity, but he gave me this opportunity. The self-storage side of the business was my creation. That part has been going for five years now – I started with one container, and now have over 40, bringing in over £45K per year for Community Links.

I’m feeling really positive about the future. The work Links Event Solutions does is not revolutionary but we provide a good service that our customers depend on and we provide local employment for the people of Newham – and a return for Community Links. We provide solutions and deliver on time, every time.”