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In the right direction

Mum Vikki books a change of career

LOVING her work as a nursery manager, mum of three Vikki MacDonal, 34, was flying high.

But when her second son was born with physical disabilities, she realised full-time work was no longer an option.

Needing to make ends meet, Vikki, from Corby, started looking for alternatives. And when a friend told her about direct selling with Usborne Books at Home she thought she'd give it a try.

It's a similar type of role to being an Avon representative or Body Shop consultant – and she's not regretted it.

What do you do?

I sell award-winning children's books either myself or through my team. I love it, especially the mentoring, training and supporting others.

I work anything from 15 to 20 hours a week, and for that I earn on average £1,000 a month.

It has become our fun money – not only topping up the family budget but allowing us to have day trips and holidays.

I do everything from school fairs and toddler groups to coffee mornings.

How does that work round your life?

Perfectly – it gives me the flexibility I need. Last week I had to take my son

Blake to three hospital appointments.

And, if I need to, I can take the children to “work” with me, particularly Frankie the youngest.

I do a lot of the admin side of things during Frankie's nap times.

It doesn't take up a lot of space in our home either. I keep the books in boxes and have a trolley ready to pack up when needed.

Why did you start with Usborne?

When Blake was born he had a lot of physical needs, so the only option was to take a career break.

There just wasn't the flexibility in my job as a nursery manager to work around medical appointments.

My husband Liam and I often had to scrimp and scrape, and Christmas was particularly stressful. But that all changed really quickly as I started to grow my business. In fact, Christmas now tends to be a very busy time for me. I started out back in 2015 using

Facebook and in a couple of months I had “accidentally” recruited six people. It grew rapidly.

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What else has it brought you?

Last year I won a company travel incentive to India which went beyond life-changing for me. Not only did it open my eyes to travel, allowing me to experience a once-in-a-lifetime location in the most luxurious way, but for the first time in a very long time, it allowed me to just be "me". My entire outlook on life has changed; I no longer worry about the fake stress, the day-to-day mini dramas,

and I make myself a priority. I won again this year and am going to St Petersburg. I am so excited.

GET BACK INTO WORK

Many parents are desperate to get back to work and start earning, but the reality of fitting a job round the kids is often impossible.

Vikki's direct selling with Usborne (Usbornebooksathome.co.uk) is the perfect solution. If you want to follow suit then check out The Direct Selling Association (dsa.org.uk) which keeps an extensive list of established firms.

As well as Usborne Books you could look at The Body Shop or Avon. Big firms such as Travelodge are also actively recruiting parents, offering hours that fit around the school run, a work buddy to help you get up to speed and access to management training.

Check out travelodge.co.uk/careers/working-parents/ for 3,000 roles as they become available across the firm's hotels and head office - including jobs in reception, restaurants and housekeeping as well as flexible hours at head office.

Part-time jobs can be a way forward for parents to start working and keep on top of family commitments. From hotels, restaurants and pubs to office work, shops and supermarkets we have found 25,460 part-time jobs.

At fish4jobs.co.uk, we found 3,301 jobs ranging from drivers in Glasgow (negotiable rates) and a caretaker in Derby (£19,554 to £21,166) to a clerical assistant in Waltham Cross (from £23,016) and a home support carer in Denton (£8.50 to £9 per hour).

At gov.uk/jobsearch there are 21,443 part-time jobs including a gardener in Wolverhampton (£8.21), an assistant chef in Cardiff (£50 per shift) and a cleaner in Aylesford (£10).

Caterer.com has 716 part-time jobs, although many catering roles are split shift which could work around the kids.

It gives me the flexibility to look after son



NOVEL CAREER
Vikki
MacDonald