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Family blossoms with new venture

A lot of pregnant mums are said to be blooming, but one Coventry mum has taken the phrase to its extreme and opened a florist shop just over a week after giving birth.

Whitefriars Housing Group tenant Kimberley Gibson saw her labour of love, Kimberley Jane Floral Studio, open its doors at 9am on Friday, only 10 days after the arrival of baby Maguire.

With three sons under five 24-year-old Kimberley, of Henley Green, has her hands, and green fingers, full. But thanks to The Prince's Trust and mentor Judy Ryder, director of organisational development at Whitefriars, she is determined motherhood and Marigolds can mix.

Proud mum Kimberley said: "I love floristry but as it doesn't pay well I thought the best way to provide for my sons was to go out on my own.

"I'm really nervous but am hopeful it will be successful. I wouldn't advise anyone to start their own business with a newborn as its stressful enough as it is, but Maguire was actually due on May 7 so it was a relief when he was early!

"I'm just getting on with it and providing the best future for my sons. I think Coventry men are a romantic lot, and are happy to woo their women with flowers, so I'm confident the shop will do well."

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Kimberley has received a loan and support from The Prince's Trust, a national charity which helps young people overcome barriers and get their lives working.

As part of the Prince's Trust package she has worked with mentor Judy Ryder to launch the business.

Judy, who has previously, in partnership with The Prince's Trust, helped launch a bridal business in Coventry, said: "Whitefriars is about so much more than housing, and my involvement with The Prince's Trust is a key part of that.

"Kimberley is an inspiration to anyone wanting to set up their own business. The difficulties of balancing motherhood and work are well told, but she is a real ambassador for those wanting to overcome challenges. We hope other tenants and residents will be encouraged by her move to become her own boss."

Chris Murphy, of The Prince's Trust, said: The Prince's Trust works with those in greatest need. We believe in helping young people to help themselves, and we do this by working in partnership with many organisations. There seems to be a natural link between the trust and Whitefriars, and if any Whitefriars tenants fit our criteria we would be more than happy to help them to realise their potential.

"Without volunteers like Judy and the support of places like Whitefriars, the trust in Coventry and Warwickshire would not have been able last year to help over 450 young people get their lives working. To contact us, call 024 7665 0679."

Other projects run by Whitefriars to help tenants and residents into employment include a Modern Apprentice Scheme, courses with young people, including a recent one in Stoke Aldermoor, construction training and a new initiative at Barr's Hill School to help pupils learn more about diversity.

Kimberley Jane Floral Studio is based in Brixham Drive, Wyken. To make an order or to find out more information, please call 024 7626 0050.

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