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Students try out running market stalls

Students are gaining valuable work experience in the retail trade by setting up and running a weekly market stall.

Youngsters spent time in Wellington as part of an initiative at Telford College's Willow Tree Centre to help prepare them for the world of employment.

The centre, based at the Haybridge campus, specialises in teaching students aged 16 to 19

with severe learning difficulties and complex medical needs.

Natasha Careless, transition and work experience co-ordinator, said: "It's essential to ensure that our students are given appropriate opportunities to reach their full potential.

"However, due to their complex needs, work experience with external companies isn't always appropriate. We were eager

to find a solution that allowed students to gain experience of a working environment and develop their communication skills in the community, with the security of familiar staff supporting them.

"Having our own market stall allows them to play an active part in the way their work experience takes shape, which in turn helps develop their independ-

ence skills." The weekly stall, which runs every Thursday, has been donated to the Willow Tree Centre free of charge by the Wellington Market Company.

Market manager David Chapman said: "After the Willow Tree Centre first contacted me, I decided to do some research and find out a bit more about them, and what I found was fantastic. The staff are an inspiration."