

Edinburgh Reporter chats – Lucy Petrie Help4Letting

✘ **Who are you and where did you come from?**

I'm Lucy Petrie, director of [Help4Letting](#), my ethical letting company, which I started up last year. I was born in Aberdeen, but moved to Edinburgh just over three years ago, after travelling through Australia, Thailand and Eastern Europe.

I'm off on my travels again in January 2012, this time just for five days, when I'm cycling through rural India to raise money for orphaned and underprivileged children. I've set up a [Justgiving fundraising account](#) and plan to organise events to raise money too.

What is the business book you recommend that everyone should read?

I've found 'It's not how good you are, it's how good you want to be' by Paul Arden inspiring. Others I plan to read are Lord Sugar's and Peter Jones' autobiographies, as The Apprentice and Dragon's Den are two programmes I enjoy watching.

What do you think are your business strengths and weaknesses?

My main strengths are having a 'can-do' attitude, to ensure my clients receive the best possible service and I am prepared to work very hard to develop my business.

I'd like not to be working till midnight sometimes, but this is because the business is still new!

What was the defining moment on your career path that has got you where you are now?

The defining moment for me was when I had developed and increased profits for a previous business I was employed by. I realised I could do this for myself. I also knew there was

space in the market for a new approach to property letting and I was keen to go ahead with it.

How do you spend your spare time?

At the moment, building Help4Letting takes up most of my time, but I enjoy relaxing with friends and family, going to music events, cycling around Edinburgh and getting lost in a good crime movie or thriller. I also love viewing properties and often can be found on a Thursday evening or Sunday afternoon viewing a list of my favourites as possible buy to let opportunities.

Do you think you have a good work/life balance?

I definitely still make time for myself and close ones but I'm still working on finding the right balance, as work is so busy at the moment.

What makes Edinburgh the best location for you to live and/or work in?

Edinburgh is full of interesting people. We have the Festival to look forward to every summer and there are always great new cafes, bars and restaurants to try. I love the Georgian architecture of the city too.

What is your special place in Edinburgh?

Blackford Hill is my favourite area of Edinburgh – it's peaceful, but not too far from the heart of things.

What would you consider might be the pinnacle of your career?

A happy landlord and tenant every time is my goal and the feedback I've received from them so far has made me very happy too.

If you have a mentor then could you tell us who that is and about your relationship?

My father has always been my mentor. His experience, as a successful business owner has been invaluable, especially his advice on the best use of time and effort. He also supports

my decisions and encourages me.

What benefits does that relationship bring to you and your business?

Sound advice that I can trust.

Which networking groups in Edinburgh have you found particularly useful?

The Melting Pot has been a great source of advice, support and networking. I haven't had the chance to join any groups so far, as time has been tight, but there are some great ones out there, such as Promise for Business and No Excuses, which I'd like to look into further at a later stage.

Who are your business heroes?

I admire what Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook has achieved.

What are your business goals for the next year?

My main goal is to keep growing the business and I'd also love to have the opportunity to let a property on the Royal Mile.

Describe your typical day for us

Every day is different, which I enjoy, but my days usually include showing flats to prospective tenants, meeting landlords, preparing paperwork, getting keys cut, liaising with tradesmen and keeping my website updated. I've also recently taken on an intern to help with marketing and am organising fundraising events for my forthcoming cycle through India.

Best job advice you ever received?

The best job advice I've ever received is 'keep smiling'.

Your plan of attack for the next 12 months?

To do more of the same – it's an exciting challenge to develop and build a new approach to letting in Edinburgh and I'm really pleased to see my idea being so warmly welcomed by tenants and landlords.