

Edinburgh teenager new chief executive of student rental platform

Student Rents, the Edinburgh-based SaaS rental platform, has appointed Jamie Stewart as its new chief executive after closing a £470,000 CrowdCube seed round.

Stewart, 19, steps up from chief brand officer and replaces his father Grant MacCusker, who becomes non-executive chairman as the company prepares for major growth on the back of the investment.

The pair founded the company two years ago, establishing the software-as-a-service rental platform to allow accommodation providers across the UK to advertise properties, students to find them and both to manage tenancies.

“It is the right time for Jamie to step up after being under my wing for two years,” said Grant. “He has built up a strong contact list of agents and has grown a team to support him. It was therefore the right time for me to become the chairman of the company as a non-executive director, and Jamie to take on the role of chief executive.

“We had many discussions how this all would look and we’re really excited about what lies ahead, particularly with the CrowdCube investment allowing us to further strengthen and grow the operation.

“There have been challenges working together as father and son but it has been very rewarding. It has been a privilege as not many people get to sit and work with their son in business every day and Jamie now has the responsibility to take the business to the next level.

“It’s now time to kick on with a fresh impetus. There is nothing better than having someone at the helm who is the same age as the people going to university; someone who can relate to them and gets what it’s all about.”

Student Rents was named Best Student Accommodation Rentals Platform 2022 by IT Awards & UK Enterprise Awards after matching 11,000 students to accommodations last year – that number is expected to rise to 30,000 in the next 12 months.

Jamie was a finalist for Young Entrepreneur of the Year in Scotland at the Great British Entrepreneur Awards last year and has been shortlisted for Digital Startup 2023 at next month’s Startup Awards Scotland.

The new chief executive will oversee eight members of staff from the firm’s headquarters in the centre of Edinburgh and he said: “We have both been in senior roles since founding the company and this was the next obvious stage in its development.

“It’s a big opportunity and a big responsibility as the business is growing really quickly. Our main marketing tool is social media, using the likes of TikTok and Instagram in which we have had great success growing our community. After our successful fundraise we both agreed the time was right for the restructure and the brand would benefit from having someone who understands students’ struggles well and the current marketplace.

“There is no doubt that accommodation issues are getting worse for students, and we will be doing what we can to ease those stresses as we continue to develop the platform.”