

# **Business Gateway holding free event for start ups**

**Business Gateway West Lothian is holding a second “Connections and Conversations” free event on Thursday, 5 September at Whitburn Partnership Centre, from 5-7pm, to highlight the support available to help local people with start up businesses.**

The “Simplifying the Business Start Up Process” event, which follows on from the success of the first one in February this year, will include presentations from a team of Business Gateway West Lothian advisers, covering everything from planning and financial advice to marketing and HR support.

Various local businesses who have received valuable support in their start up journey will also be attending to share their personal stories in a panel discussion followed by a Q&A, including Paul Stark who founded Livingston-based Sustainable Sport in March.

The company provides expert consultancy support to help organisations within the sports industry achieve their long-term goals whilst minimising their environmental impact.

The support he received included guidance on the different types of legal structures for his businesses, allowing him to select the most appropriate option and also advice on how to

source start up funding to assist with initial capital expenditure costs, allowing him to get off to a great start, efficiently and professionally.

Paul said: "Business Gateway was instrumental in helping me set up my business. From supplying information and templates, to providing access to funding, they were with me every step of the way.

"I'm delighted to say that due to the solid foundations that were put in place with the support of the Business Gateway team, Sustainable Sport is now going from strength to strength."

Claire McGurk, founder of Canine Bodywork Clinic, which provides canine hydrotherapy and clinical massage services will also be talking about the support she has received for her Livingston-based business, which launched in January this year.

This includes help completing a business plan, with detailed financial projections, assistance with funding applications, advice when deciding on the structure of the company, and guidance and signposting on planning consents.

The support enabled Claire to secure the appropriate funding to support the start up of the business, establish a clear and realistic set of financial projections, and create a strategy to help the business achieve its first three year's objectives.

Claire said: "Without the expert help and advice from Business Gateway, the business plan for the clinic would not be as robust as it is. The financial projections for my first three years were a huge help for me to set my longer-term goals.

Help and support through achieving funding for the business was also a huge boost on getting the business off the ground. The support has been incredible, and I am genuinely so

grateful.”

Former teacher, Susan Grieve and pupil support worker Ben Fazakerley, who founded Positive Outcomes LP this month, will also be sharing the story of their start up journey, which began in March this year.

The company, which specialises in offering afterschool care, holiday day care, respite, tutoring, and support for home-schooling to families with children with ASN, is based in Mid Calder Institute Hall Monday to Thursday and on Friday's at The Polbeth Hub.

Susan said: “We have had an excellent experience with Business Gateway West Lothian.

“Our adviser Jordan McDonald gave us the confidence and encouragement to push forward with our business. We were given expert advice and support throughout our whole journey.

“Jordan helped us to start creating our business plan and was fundamental in getting us some funding which helped us greatly with start up costs.

“We have received a first-class service and are still receiving support from Jordan, even after our business has successfully started up.”

There will also be opportunities for all attendees to network at the event.

Linzi Winton, Team Leader at Business Gateway West Lothian, said: “We are really looking forward to another ‘Simplifying the Business Start Up Process’ event on the 5<sup>th</sup> September, aimed at anyone who is thinking about starting a business or at the early stages and could benefit from a helping hand.

“It will be a great opportunity for attendees to hear from our guest speakers who will be sharing their start up journeys and

the support they've received from our advisers, who will also be at the event to highlight the fantastic free resources available at Business Gateway West Lothian to help get your new venture off to a great start."

