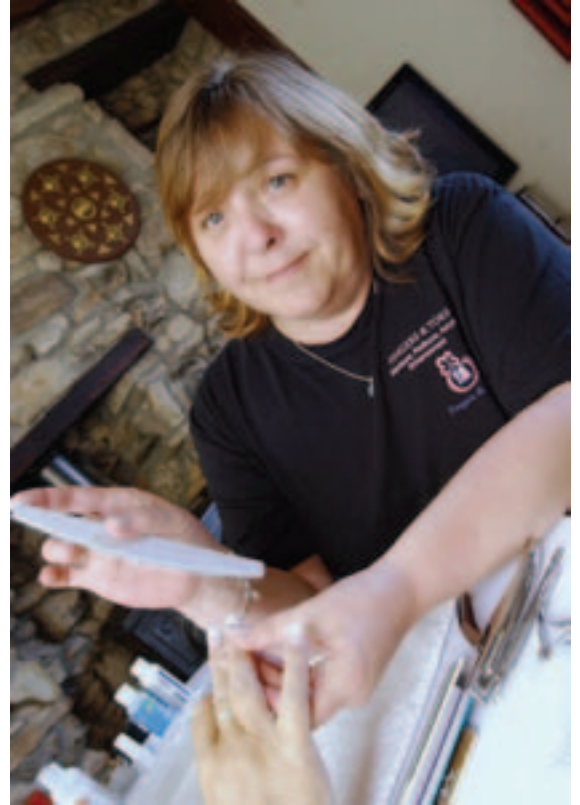


Fingers & Toes

Tracey Wallace was getting nowhere with her ambition to set up her own mobile nail technician business until she was referred to Business Gateway. "I was being passed from pillar to post and was becoming really frustrated," she recalls. "There seemed to be lots of help available for people in the 16 to 25 age bracket but not so much for anyone older. However, as soon as I learned about Business Gateway, doors started to open." She launched 'Fingers and Toes' in June 2010 after receiving start-up funding from Business Gateway and attending workshops run by the service.

Move North leads to new career

A move to the Highlands prompted Tracey to establish her own business. From Lancashire but with Scottish roots, she previously worked in administration with the prison and probation services. In December 2009, she moved to Edderton when her partner, a Royal Mail service engineer, got a new job in Inverness. Tracey felt it was a chance to change her career. "I decided it was an opportunity to retrain and do something totally different," she explains. "I didn't want to be stuck in an office anymore. I wanted to do something that would give me more freedom."



Feel good factor

She opted to become a nail technician because she enjoys meeting people and has always liked getting her own nails done. But when she first began searching for outside sources of support, she found herself stymied. "I got on to the Internet in the hoping of finding funding and a training place, but everything seemed to be targeted at the under 25s," she maintains. In May 2009 she finally found a training place at the Scottish Beauty School in Glasgow, which involved her travelling from her home to the city one day a week for six weeks.

Referral to Business Gateway

Tracey was eventually referred to Business Gateway by ILA Scotland. She phoned the Business Gateway call centre and was sent a basic information pack, which she found useful. David Knight, Business Gateway's regional manager in Sutherland then followed up her call and arranged for her to attend one-day business start-up and bookkeeping workshops. She says: "I'd no idea about working for myself because I'd always been employed. The courses flagged up for me issues that I'd never even thought about such as public liabilities insurance, National Insurance and tax. The instructor also briefly went over how to calculate how much I needed to earn to cover my costs."

Grant aid

David Knight secured a Rural Development Grant for Tracey with which she bought the equipment she needed including a portable manicure table, a UV lamp, acrylic powders and gels. As well as providing manicures and pedicures, she gives hand, leg and foot massages. She made up posters and fliers, which she put up in local shops and public buildings.

The next step

Tracey thinks she could do more to market her new service and intends to contact Business Gateway again in the hope of attending a marketing course and receiving expert advice to further boost her profile. In the future she would like to expand her services to include other treatments such as facials or body massages but acknowledges she would have to undergo further training.

Business Gateway comment

Business Gateway's David Knight commented: "We were pleased to help Tracey with her venture based on her commitment and enthusiasm for her proposed business. Tracey's successful launch is a great example of the value of business skills training as offered by Business Gateway workshops and we wish her every success".

Business Gateway provides practical help, advice and support for new and growing businesses in Scotland. To find out how Business Gateway can help your business, visit www.bgateway.com or contact your local office on 01463 713889 or 01343 563634.