

Yonderton Canine Care

The interactive business support tools on Business Gateway's website proved a boon for former RAF aircraft electrician Frances Murtaugh when she was planning her new business, Yonderton Canine Care, which opened in Moray in October 2009 and offers the first canine hydrotherapy treadmill service in the area.

Introduction to Business Gateway

Frances first learned about Business Gateway during a re-settlement course she went on prior to leaving the RAF. She immediately accessed the Business Gateway website and was impressed at the interactive tools with which she could set up a virtual business.

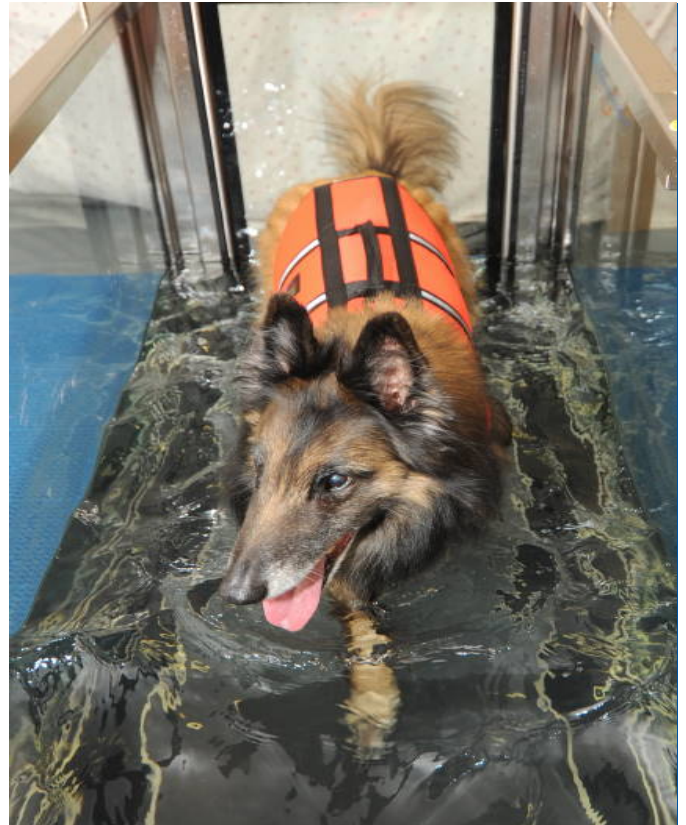
She recalls: "After 25 years in the air force, I didn't know anything about the business world. The website gave me useful tips and advice on how to go about starting up my business. It kept me focused and showed me how to proceed step-by-step."

How Frances prepared for her new career

From Ilford in Essex, Frances has served across the globe with her last posting at RAF Brize Norton. Dog training had always been a passion so she was keen to set up a canine related business when she left the service. She prepared for her new career by completing an HNC in Canine Behaviour and Training at Bishop Burton College.

The business

Along with her husband, she settled near Keith, Moray, an area she knew through previous postings to RAF Lossiemouth. A garage attached to her home has been converted into an animal surgery containing a canine hydrotherapy treadmill. Dogs are walked into a tank and attached to a flotation device before the tank is gradually filled with water and the treadmill switched on. The treatment is beneficial to animals who are affected by arthritis or orthopaedic conditions; are overweight, or simply need to increase their fitness level.



Frances says: "I've had some brilliant results with it already." She believes she is the only business in the north and north-east offering this service. There is a canine hydrotherapy pool in Elgin but the next nearest canine hydrotherapy treadmill is at the School of Veterinary Medicine in Glasgow.

Networking opportunities

Frances was so impressed with the Business Gateway website that she got in touch with Business Gateway's regional development officer for Moray, Craig Robertson, who arranged for her to go on a marketing course. Craig also opened up networking opportunities by introducing her to local groups and organisations.

Adding value to the business

Frances offers one-to-one dog obedience and training classes. She also works with the Spey Valley Dog Club and Aberdeen Canine Training Society. She has started selling dog food as another way of promoting her hydrotherapy business.

How is business

Business has been slow in the first year partly because of the severe winter of 2009/10. Frances believes it will take time for the business to become established. In the future she wants to develop Yonderton into a large canine treatment centre with a hydrotherapy pool.

What Business Gateway Says

Craig Robertson commented: "Frances had used some of the online tools on the Business Gateway website but felt it would be useful for her to look into networking opportunities in Moray. We were able to introduce Frances to several organisations and groups locally which we thought would enable her to increase her business contacts, raise awareness about the services Yonderton Canine Care offered and, most importantly, help her find new customers. Frances provides a high quality of care and aims to promote the recovery of dogs and improve their quality of life. A very worthwhile service in Moray."

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.