

Enterprising Neath Port Talbot

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Neath Port Talbot Council's Enterprise Club continues to gain popularity with people looking for help to become their own boss. Since launching the Club in 2011, over 300 people have benefited from self-employment advice with a third of these going on to start a business.



Gemma Barrett set up Gemma's Plumbing and Heating Services with the support of Neath Port Talbot Council's Enterprise Club

The Club is held monthly at Sandfields Business Centre and is open to anyone who is interested in becoming self-employed. Held in an informal environment, attendees can speak to a number of professionals about start-up grants, training courses, marketing, business banking and accounting issues. They also receive their own business start-up pack containing useful contact details and websites, along with details of other organisations that can offer further support.

Attendees are also provided with information on the Council's Innov8 grant of up to £1,000 that aims to help with initial start-up costs such as marketing, stock and overheads.

Successful start-ups receive ongoing support from the Council's Enterprise Development Officer including business planning, commercial property search, mentoring and identifying further funding opportunities.

Ceri Rees and Gemma Barrett attended the Enterprise Club and are now running their own businesses.

Gemma set up Gemma's Plumbing & Heating Services and Ceri runs his company CS Wales Ltd. from Sandfields Business Centre, providing Health & Safety consultancy and training services.

He said: "I only discovered the Centre when I attended one of their Enterprise Clubs. The help and support I received gave me the confidence to set up my own business. There are a lot of like-minded tenants in the Centre to network and build relationships with."

"I can make use of the Centre's facilities, such as the conference rooms and communal areas to meet with customers and suppliers, which helps maintain a professional image for my business. It is also reassuring to know that there is ongoing support available from the Council's Business Development Team located on-site."

Gemma said: "I first signed up with the Enterprise Club when I was made redundant from my job as a safe gas engineer. I was interested in becoming a self-employed plumber but wasn't sure where to start. The Club helped me with things like business planning and cash flow and profit & loss projections."

"Within a few months of attending the Enterprise Club and with the help of the Council's Innov8 start-up grant I was able to set up my own plumbing and heating business. It has become so successful that I am now looking to take on an apprentice through the Jobs Growth Wales scheme."

Cllr. Ali Thomas OBE, Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council said: “There are so many people out there with the potential to become successful entrepreneurs and set up successful businesses who simply need that help and encouragement to take those first steps.”

“Through the Enterprise Clubs we aim to do just that and provide the facilities and advice to set them on their way and realise their full potential.”

[Interested in starting your own business?](#) Contact Kevin Lugg on 01639 765695 or k.lugg@npt.gov.uk to book a place at one of the clubs.