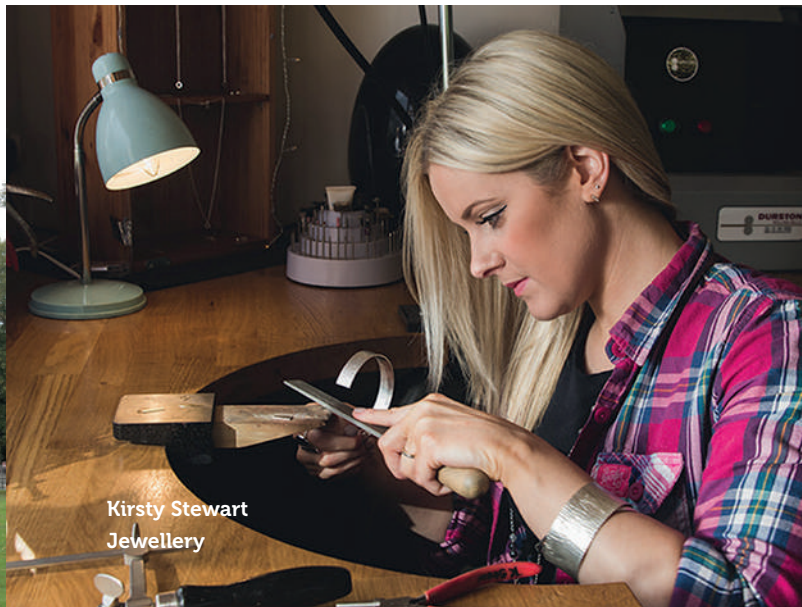




Alex and Sara  
Flying mirrors



Kirsty Stewart  
Jewellery



Alison Christie,  
Scoonie Kilts



Gordon Mackenzie & Colin Macmillan  
Macmillan Engineering



Chris Naylor  
Bespoke Catering



Daman Bush  
Poporopo





Business Gateway guided us through the start up and growth process.

We didn't come into this as entrepreneurs so we needed help from the off. The invaluable, free support from Business Gateway changed to reflect the needs of our business and played a big part in our success.

We've moved from being a very small business to one which employs nearly 50 people."

**Gillian Reith, Three Sisters Bake**

## Year in Review

### National Performance

For Business Gateway nationally, 2015/16 was a year of strong performance in the face of some challenging economic conditions, changes in the types of clients approaching Business Gateway for support and in the way our information is being accessed.



**Hugh Lightbody**  
Chief Officer for Business  
Gateway National Unit

There continues to be a high level of demand for the assistance and information provided directly by the service, with 58,271 enquiries received for advice and support. In addition, a record 607,887 people visited our website [www.bgateway.com](http://www.bgateway.com), an increase of 16% on the previous year, viewing almost 2.3 million pages of information and guides to help their business; up by 36% on 2014/15. These visitors downloaded 8,132 copies of the Business Plan template, Market Insight Packs and Guides.

The free training workshops remain both popular and valued. The 3,117 workshops that took place during the year attracting an attendance of 24,678 the second highest on record. 96% of attendees rated the trainer's knowledge of their subject good/very good, 91% rated the content as relevant or very relevant to their business and 95% of attendees were either satisfied, very or extremely satisfied with the workshop attended.

Whilst demand for information, workshops and adviser support has remained high we have seen some changes in the types of businesses approaching us for support.

The robust employment and labour market in Scotland in 2015/16 appears to have reduced the level of interest in self-employment and starting new businesses. Employment rose by 22,000 to 2,636,000 jobs in the quarter to December



Business Gateway's free advice helped us through the start up phase and they have been key to our global expansion. As a result, we are now working with some of the world's top airlines.

Turnover increased from £250,000 to £2.1 million in the past year."

**Graeme Frater, Cloud Global**



Business Gateway has been part of the team since launch, providing sound advice on a range of issues.

The free advice and support from Business Gateway has been invaluable. They've been instrumental in helping us ramp up exports, secure bigger contracts and identify much needed funding to help grow the business."

**Gareth Downie, West Coast Foods**

2015. By the end of the third quarter of 2015 the number of Scottish jobs, as reported in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) household surveys, was 3.2% above the pre-recession peak. The labour market statistics gathered from the LFS indicated that there were 14,000 fewer people in self-employment in 2015 than in 2014.

Business Gateway has seen a corresponding fall in the number of start-up businesses supported in 2015/16 – nationally 9,087 businesses were helped to start trading, down from 10,103 in the previous year. Although a fall was experienced in many parts of Scotland, it was not universal. The impact of the low price of crude oil on the economy in the North East of Scotland and resultant redundancies in the industry, meant that record numbers of start-up businesses were supported by Business Gateway in the Aberdeen City & Shire area. Additional market research into the start-up economy is being undertaken and steps will be taken to address the support needs identified by this research.

Although growth in the wider economy slowed in the last two quarters of 2015, along with a dip in wider business confidence, Business Gateway supported similar numbers of existing and growing businesses as in the previous year. There was a small increase in the number of growing businesses that received additional one-to-one adviser support through the Growth Advisory Service to help them with their local business challenges and achieve their growth ambitions.

To assess the quality of the service provision and the impact on a client's business, Business Gateway carries out research with those that have accessed the service each month. During 2015/16, we received over 3,400 completed questionnaires, a sample size that gives confidence in the quality of information gathered.

**Overall, satisfaction with the service provided was 84%; we met or exceeded the expectations of 82% of clients; and 85% would definitely/probably recommend Business Gateway to others.**

Looking at the impact on clients' businesses, 87% said that the support provided by BG would be beneficial (excludes those who said it was too early to say when the research was carried out). The benefit provided included the following:-

- Gaining new customers – 43%
- Business survival – 41%
- Increased sales/turnover – 35%
- New markets entered – 31%
- Improved profitability – 28%

## Local Services

During 2015/16 our marketing efforts concentrated primarily on highlighting the Business Gateway services provided through the network of local offices. Local knowledge is key to the success of Business Gateway. It provides a better, more appropriate service, geared towards the requirements of the business and the client's specific needs and objectives. It recognises that each region of Scotland has its own distinct economic dynamics and challenges. The advice and assistance provided by our 57 local offices throughout Scotland can be tailored to support the needs and objectives of clients. Our 150 Advisers have a depth of knowledge about the local business environment, the range of support structures available and potential sources of funding that may be accessed through local authorities and other partners. They also have a valuable network of contacts to which they are able to refer clients, ensuring they are able to access the support that will provide the greatest benefit to their business.

In addition, we have strong working relationships with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise, working closely to ensure that businesses receive appropriate support from both organisations.

The assistance provided by the local offices may include:

- Local Workshops - a wide range of fully funded workshops and events that help clients further develop the business skills they need to start a new business or to grow their existing business successfully
- Local Adviser support - available to businesses with a specific focus for intervention by local authorities but which are at the early stages of thinking about growth. During 2015/16, 7,505 clients received Local Adviser Support
- Local Expert Help Services - additional specialist support to companies on a case-by-case basis, centred on the needs of the business; 1,711 businesses received this support during the year.

Moreover, many local authorities submitted applications for additional European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support to further increase the assistance that Business Gateway can provide to these growing businesses.

The Quality Assurance research shows that the support provided by our advisers is valued by clients with the following proportion of clients rating their service Good/Very Good:-

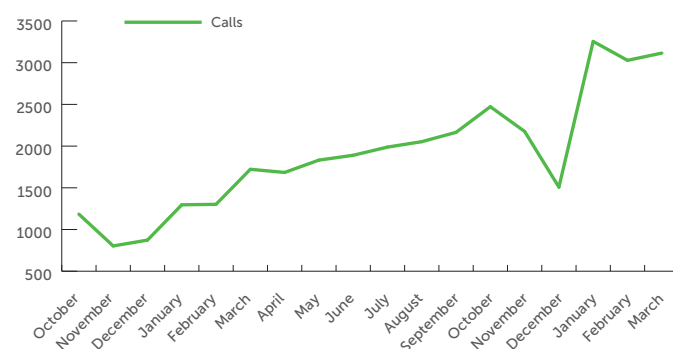
- Adviser's understanding of client's needs – 94%
- Understanding of client's business issues – 93%
- Adviser provided relevant information – 92%
- Overall satisfaction – 93%

The emphasis during 2015/16 was on encouraging clients to contact their local offices. With a greater proportion of the marketing budget directed towards local marketing, the Business Gateway National Unit worked closely with each area to develop targeted strategies and campaigns. Local pages on the Business Gateway website were updated, allowing clients to gather more information about the services that are available from the offices closest to them. Tracked telephone numbers were introduced for advertisements, which directed people to their nearest office or guided them to the appropriate pages on the website.

We have, as a consequence, seen a continuing increase in the number of calls being made to local offices as shown in Figure 1.

**Fig. 1**

**Calls to Local Offices**  
October 2013 – March 2015



As a result of our marketing initiatives, 35,311 calls were made to local offices in 2015/16, an increase of almost 20% over the previous year. There were also 153,312 visitors to the local websites, viewing 422,176 pages, an increase of 34% and 44% respectively over 2014/15.



## Digital Boost

Business Gateway services have been further complemented by DigitalBoost. This ambitious programme, delivered in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, is part of the Scottish Government's Digital Strategy for Scotland, providing small and medium sized enterprises with advanced digital advice. The objective is to give businesses new opportunities to improve their technical and digital capabilities to help them use digital technology to enter new markets, trade internationally, increase efficiencies and, potentially, employ more staff.

The resources that are available to businesses are:-  
Digital health Check and online guides - this will help establish a client's level of use of digital technology and direct them to further online resources tailored to their needs.

Workshops – there will be ten advanced digital workshops that will build clients' understanding of digital technologies, highlight areas for improvement and direct them to further support to help build their digital capability.

Specialist one-to-one support – the support provided will vary depending on the needs of the client. Up to 21 hours consultancy per client can be provided

The programme, which began in January 2016, is running until March 2017 and in the first three months, 148 workshops were hosted. It is anticipated that the programme will engage with 10,000 clients and provide specialist one-to one consultancy to 800 businesses.



# The Year in Numbers

## 81,074

New business starts  
helped in last eight years

## 91% stated

Our support would provide  
some/significant benefit to  
their business

## 85% of clients

said we met or exceeded  
their expectations

### Business Gateway website

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Visitors	498,678	525,832	607,887
Page Views	1,538,549	1,679,575	2,293,613
Visits to local pages	-	114,192	153,312
Local pages viewed	-	293,239	422,176

## 7,505 businesses

received local advisory services  
(8,085 in 2014/15)

## 1,711 businesses

received local expert help  
(1,489 in 2014/15)

## 85% of clients

would definitely/probably  
recommend us

## 58,271 enquiries

## 9,087

New business starts helped

## 95% of attendees

were satisfied, very or extremely  
satisfied with workshops attended

## Over 3,100

workshops, attracting

## 24,678 attendees

### Satisfaction\*

#### Business Gateway Website



#### Business Gateway Enquiry service



#### Local Office



#### Satisfaction with workshop/events attended



#### Satisfaction with contact with adviser



#### Overall satisfaction

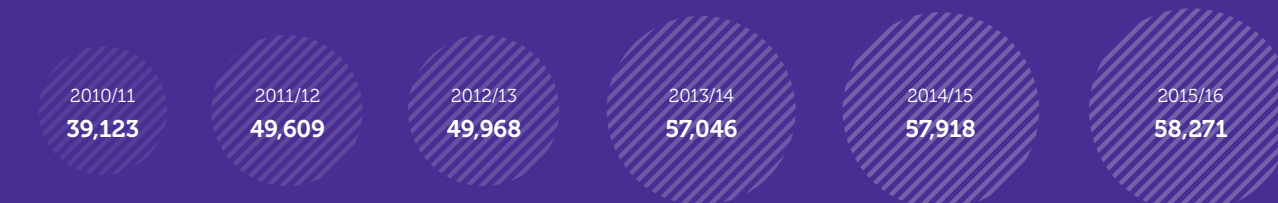


\*Very satisfied/fairly satisfied

## New Business Starts



## Total Enquiries



## Business Gateway Adviser\*

Adviser's understanding of your needs



Adviser's understanding of business issues



Adviser provided relevant information



\*Good/very good

## Reasons for contacting us

Help start a business



Help to access finance/grant support



Help grow a business



Advice on sales and marketing



Advice on IT/online trading/social net



Opportunities for networking with other businesses



Advice on new product/process development/R&D



Advice on HR/team development







Ronnie Graham  
Barony Country Foods



Emma Hepplewhite  
Paddlefast



Jon Vincent  
Watchmakers



Mags and Mark  
Summer Harvest



Keith McDougall  
McDougall Mountaineering



Chris Miller  
Miller Masonry