

2025/26 Impact Report

Supporting businesses.
Strengthening Scotland.

A photograph of Debbie Bligh, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue knit beanie, a light blue sweater, a blue scarf, and brown overalls. She is sitting on a log, smiling, and holding a metal cup. In front of her is a silver metal kettle on a small fire. The background shows a white tent and trees.

**Debbie Bligh,
Dunbar Outdoor Learning**

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About Business Gateway

Business Gateway provides **free business support for anyone in Scotland**. The role of the service is to provide one-to-one business advice and online resources to help individuals who need support to start up and grow their businesses. In doing so, we strengthen the connection between organisations and the business community.

Business Gateway is run by local authorities across Scotland and plays a crucial role in supporting local economic development and community wealth building by helping businesses start and create jobs. It also serves as a key point of contact for business support, directing individuals to enterprise agencies and other partners.

Over the past five years, Business Gateway has helped over **200,000** businesses and individuals. It offers localised business support with over **350** staff across **32** local offices in every region of Scotland. Business Gateway's services are accessible to all, with multiple ways customers can access support including through its website (bgateway.com), livechat, telephone, email, social media channels or by visiting a local office.



Key services



Business advice and support

1:1 advice from local business advisers for tailored guidance.



Networking and connections

Connecting businesses with peers and industry experts.



Funding and grants guidance

Supporting businesses to identify and apply for funding.



Market research and planning

Access to business intelligence, trends, and feasibility studies.



Legal and regulatory support

Advice on business structure, compliance and regulations.



Workshops and webinars

Providing free training covering core business skills.



Online resources

Articles, video tutorials and guides available on bgateway.com.



Sector intelligence

Pre-prepared Market Reports containing essential information for 22 headline sectors.



Signposting and referring

Collaborating with partners* to signpost and refer businesses to relevant resources.

*Partners include: Scottish Enterprise, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise, VisitScotland, Skills Development Scotland, Business Energy Scotland, Kings Trust, DSL Finance, Find Business Support

Supporting Scottish Government priorities

Business Gateway sits at the heart of business support in Scotland, acting as a key entry point and enabler for businesses. The service provides a valued and cost-effective means of supporting Scottish Government's national priorities to help grow the economy by delivering across the four priority areas of:



Growing the economy



Eradicating child poverty



Tackling the climate emergency



Delivering high quality and sustainable Public Services

Relevant policy areas and strategies linked to economic growth and diversity include a refreshed National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), which guides the services Business Gateway provides to help businesses start-up and create jobs.

The Business Gateway service is key to building stronger communities as it directly supports the development of new businesses, existing businesses, social enterprises and community organisations across all sectors of the economy, and addresses structural barriers faced by under-represented groups and women-led businesses in local communities across Scotland as well as supporting businesses to upskill in the areas of digital and AI adoption.

2025-26 in numbers

**Andy O'Neill,
O'Neill Trees and
Timber Ltd.**



Our year in numbers

In 2025-26, Business Gateway advised more than 52,000 customers, including over 23,000 existing businesses and over 25,000 pre-start individuals.

7,250 businesses started up in 2025-26 with help from Business Gateway.

Of those start-up businesses, over half (52%) are women-led, almost a third (30%) come from rural areas and almost a fifth (19%) are based in disadvantaged areas.

The service handled 30,001 enquiries, with an increase in the number of start-up enquiries, demonstrating that the work done across Scotland to support small businesses continues to be vital.

52,000+

Customers supported

30,000+

Enquiries

7,250

Start-ups

9,692

Forecast number of employees from start-ups



52%

Women led start-ups



30%

Start-ups from rural areas



19%

Start-ups from disadvantaged areas

Events and webinars

Business Gateway ran 1,390 events with 27,233 attendees. The service continues to deliver webinars online as businesses continue to champion remote and agile ways of working.

The digital skills events were attended by over 10,000 people.



1,390

Events



27,233

Attendees



10,646

Digital
skills event
attendees



491,731

Web
visitors

Website interactions

Many customers continue to enjoy the breadth of free support available on the Business Gateway website – with 491,731 web visitors in total.





Survival rate

Research shows that businesses in Scotland experience a reasonably strong survival rate, with 73%* of start-ups remaining open a year after launching.



73%

**Of businesses
remain open a
year after
starting-up**

Business Gateway monitoring indicates that 58% of businesses trading for one year anticipate a positive outlook in the next 12 months.

**This survival rate applies to businesses that started-up with Business Gateway.*

**Marguerite Spina,
Villaggio Gelato**

Quality assurance

Each year, Business Gateway carefully measures the quality of its services and the satisfaction and benefit that customers using the services receive.

The key findings from quality assurance reports from April 2025 to March 2026 were:

- Overall satisfaction was 79%
- 78% of respondents said their expectations had been met or exceeded
- 76% of respondents reported that the support they received would be beneficial for their business (excluding those reporting it was 'too early to say')
- 80% of respondents would recommend Business Gateway to other business people or those thinking of starting a new business.

**79%**

Reported overall satisfaction with the service

**78%**

Said their expectations were met or exceeded

**76%**

Reported support was beneficial for their business

**80%**

Would recommend Business Gateway

Business Gateway's approach to support

Janani Prabhakaran,
Unbagged





1:1 Support from local teams

Our network of local teams operates in every region of Scotland, providing accessible, tailored 1:1 support to individuals at all stages of their business journey. By offering personalised, place-based support, our teams ensure that advice is not only expert-led but also rooted in the specific needs and opportunities of local economies.

Beyond individual business support, our local presence plays a vital role in building trusted relationships within communities. This locally embedded approach delivers wider value by strengthening community resilience, encouraging entrepreneurial activity, and supporting inclusive economic growth.



Eshan Owarish,
OakHill Café & Deli



Tailored online support

Business Gateway provides a wealth of digital resources designed to support individuals and businesses at every stage. For those with a business idea or considering self-employment, our online guides, video tutorials and downloadable templates offer practical, step-by-step support to help them take the first step.

For established businesses, our online resources help drive growth and resilience. This includes guidance on increasing revenue, expanding operations, accessing new markets and improving efficiency. Businesses with high-growth potential can access enhanced support pathways, including referrals to specialist advisers and sector-specific expertise through partner organisations.

Central to our online support is the Business Support Tool, which provides instant access to personalised content and recommendations tailored to individual business needs.

Our online guides and templates include:



Starting a business resources:

[Downloadable business plan template](#)

[How to start a business: the basics](#)

[Planning your first business website video tutorial](#)

[Legal structures: the basics](#)

[Business bank accounts](#)

[Quick ways to test your business idea is viable](#)

[Setting up your digital presence](#)



Running a business resources:

[Risk management and business continuity planning](#)

[Increase profitability](#)

[The essentials of bookkeeping](#)

[An introduction to TikTok & Instagram Reels](#)

[Designing & building a sustainable website](#)

[Taking on premises](#)

[Exporting: The basics](#)



Webinars and events

Business Gateway has a selection of webinars and events designed to help individuals learn new skills – whatever stage their business is at, and wherever they are based. Topics covered include bookkeeping, AI, social media essentials, marketing, sales, and starting-up.

Business Gateway webinars and workshops take place during the day and in the evenings, are free to attend and are available for booking at

www.bgateway.com/events

Impact in action



Programme spotlight:

InspireHER March 2026

In March 2026, Business Gateway delivered a four-part InspireHER webinar series in partnership with confidence coach Nic Henderson, supporting business women across Scotland to overcome confidence, mindset, and early-stage practical barriers.

The programme achieved strong engagement, with **1,329 bookings** and **618 attendees**, averaging **154 attendees per webinar**. Across the series, feedback responses gave consistently high satisfaction levels of **98% for content** and **99% for both booking process and host delivery**.



1,329

Total bookings



618

Total attendees



154

**Average
attendance**



1,843

**InspireHER
page views**

Case studies

The case studies below demonstrate a few of the ways Business Gateway support helps businesses start up and grow. Click on each to find out more.



The Nomadic Pizzeria

Local authority:
Shetland

Sector:
Food & Drink

[Read more](#)



Réalta Architecture Ltd

Local authority:
Argyll & Bute

Sector:
Architecture/Planning

[Read more](#)



Bring Together

Local authority:
Dundee

Sector:
Social Enterprise

[Read more](#)



Kelly Residential

Local authority:
East Renfrewshire

Sector:
Property Services

[Read more](#)

**Dr Karen-Ann Dicken,
Highland School of Jewellery**

Next steps



Explore the full range of free resources, events, and support available at www.bgateway.com



To find out more about Business Gateway and the services it provides, contact Alyson Pearson, Marketing and PR Manager on alyson@cosla.gov.uk

