

Case study: Naturally Nurturing

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Naturally Nurturing sleeps easy with Business Link for London by its side

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**Chireal Swallow
Founder of Naturally Nurturing**

For many women, maternity leave is a time to rest and prepare for the arrival of their baby. Not so for Chireal Swallow, an expectant mother of twins and a trained psychologist who specialises in changing behaviour. “I was contemplating how I was going to persuade my twins to sleep and I found there was no literature on the subject,” she recalls. “As a psychologist, I knew the principles of behaviour change and sleep is just another form of behaviour, so I decided to do it myself and set up a private sleep consultancy two and a half years ago.

“I had always wanted to run my own company and it seemed the right time,” she adds. “At first I was dealing primarily with twins who couldn’t sleep and then I was asked by parents to help with other babies. The business has been really successful and now I’m also offering training to become a sleep consultant and gain a national qualification.”

Working alongside Chireal at Naturally Nurturing, her children’s sleep clinic in Sanderstead, are two other consultants, one trainer and an administrator. The business has also developed internationally with Chireal helping parents in the US and Canada, as well as the UK.

Naturally Nurturing’s approach to children’s sleep problems draws on Chireal’s background in addressing cognitive behaviour and combines this approach with systemic practice (which deflects blame by examining the role of each family member) and attachment theory (which focuses on building trust, reassurance and bonding between parent and child).

The business has developed without any additional investment from Chireal but by 2006, she was wondering how to take it to its next stage of growth. After a fellow female entrepreneur recommended the services of Business Link for London, Chireal decided to contact the organisation. “I’d taken the business as far as I could on my own and I needed some professional advice to lead me forward,” she explains.

Chireal was put in contact with Business Link for London account manager, Stephen Walker, who talked to her about business growth, investing, managing finance and marketing – the main areas of her business she was concerned about. “Stephen was brilliant,” adds Chireal. “He really understood what I was doing, and after we met the first time, he wrote up a business action plan for me, which gave me an idea of what I need to focus on and included timeframes, how I could increase my sales and things like that.”

In addition, Stephen signposted Chireal to several consultants that could help develop key areas of her business. “I wanted to speak to a marketing consultant about the best types of marketing for my company and how to put these into practice,” she says. “So I’m working with someone Stephen recommended who is more of a coach, which suits my needs.” In addition, Chireal will soon begin working with another company recommended by Business Link for London that specialises in business advice and funding, to help her grow the training side of her company and put in place some general structures and processes.

Chireal continues to meet with her Business Link for London account manager. “Stephen is good at making sense of my nonsense!” she laughs. “He has helped me structure things in my mind and given advice that I can practically apply to my business, and I think the benefits in terms of revenue and growth will come from that.

“I love being my own boss, but it has been a huge learning curve,” she says.

“Business Link for London has helped to structure my business and point me in the right direction of people who can help me that I wouldn’t have otherwise known existed. Business Link for London is an expert in its field and if their account managers can’t help, they’ll know someone they can put me in touch with.”