

Rory Sanders Plant

The Young Business Growth Project was set up with funding from the South Devon Coastal Local Action Group and the Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund to help young entrepreneurs set up new businesses or to assist development of an existing business.

The funding was aimed at young people with a strong business idea but who needed funding and advice to get it off the ground. Around one in five young people in the UK were not in work, education or training in 2013. The YBG project acknowledged that there was a growing need to offer targeted support to young people.

One recipient of the Young Business Growth project who epitomized what the project set out to do, was the investment made to Rory Sanders, a 20 year old from Kingsbridge. After leaving Duchy College, Rory was not able to find work close to home but had been gaining experience working in Reading for an earthmoving company on quarries, archeological sites and canals, as Rory is a plant operator and owned his own excavator.

Rory was granted £3,046 towards setting up his own agricultural and environmental plant contracting business in Kingsbridge. He has known this type of business since he was a child as his grandfather (and mentor) had an engineering, contracting and skip-hire business. The aim of his project was to enable him to return to the area in which he was born and raised to set up a sustainable business whilst living near his family. Without the grant, Rory said that it would have been years before this could have been achieved. The money was used to purchase a 3.5 tonne tipper van, support HGV training costs, sign writing, advertising and marketing material costs.

As a result of the LAG funding, start up business and mentoring support Rory developed a full business Plan and cash flow projection to assist him with the progression and commencement of his own business which he has now set up, and hopes will grow over the next few years. The launch of his new business coincided with the retirement of a local plant and excavating contractor and so Rory has high hopes that his timing was opportune.

During the monitoring and evaluation interview Rory was asked whether he would have been able to manage the funding application process on his own without support. Rory said, "It is unlikely that I would have been able to manage the application on my own. In order to get the money to be able to set up the business I had to keep working around 10 hours each day and so could not have found the time to do this and undertake the application process at the same time."

This is a common issue that applicants and businesses face who are looking for funding, therefore, future funding programmes may need to consider having a separate pre-application mentoring and advice project sitting alongside.

When asked if there were any constraints with the funding process Rory said, "The biggest constraint was time. For second hand plant equipment the big contractors only sell on used machinery at set times of the year which did not fit with the funding timescale. I was lucky to be able to find what I wanted but it could have been a big problem." Rory applied to the Young Business Growth project towards its conclusion and so there could be no flexibility of time.

Rory is well known in the Kingsbridge area having grown up amongst the farming community and helping with his grandfather's business from the age of 8. Rory is a hard working individual who in order to work in his chosen career was forced to work away from Devon but now with the appropriate support has the financial backing and the confidence to start up his own business in the community that he knows and loves.