

Scottish Government

Women's employment support networks and resources

A short list of support networks for women in business in Scotland,
the UK, and beyond

2013

Guide compiled by Daria Luchinskaya

Women's employment support networks and resources

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Scotland: National

Association of Scottish Businesswomen (ASB)

<http://asb-scotland.org/>

The Association of Scottish Businesswomen (ASB) supports business and professional women throughout Scotland. We do this by: providing opportunities to link and connect businesswomen in Scotland together, building and strengthening business relationships via our national events and in our affiliated groups; providing opportunities for national recognition of businesswomen's achievements; providing support and inspiration to enable affiliated organisations and members to develop and grow in the business world; sharing opportunities of interest to businesswomen; listening and consulting our members to form a consolidated businesswomen's voice for Scotland; and seeking to influence and inform policy-makers and key decision-makers in partnership with Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES) to increase and strengthen women's business opportunities, growth and success in Scotland.

Close the Gap

<http://www.closesthegap.org.uk/>

Close the Gap works across Scotland with employers and employees, to encourage and enable action to address the gender pay gap. Project partners include the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Equality and Human Rights Commission, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Close the Gap works towards the achievement of specific outcomes. These are: Improvement in general awareness amongst employers and employees about the gender pay gap in Scotland, and its various causes; Improvement in employers' understanding about the business benefits of taking action to address the gap; Increase in employers' activity – and capacity – to address the gap and its causes; Compliance by public sector organisations with the specific duty in the Gender Equality Duty in Scotland to publish, regularly review and report on equal pay statements; and a reduction in the gender pay gap in Scotland, as evidenced by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – but recognising that the causes of the pay gap are varied and complicated and often outwith the project's sphere of influence

Scottish Business Network

<http://www.scottishbusinessnetwork.co.uk/>

Scottish Business Network is the umbrella for a number of online websites focussed on the SME business community in Scotland. We want to help Scottish Businesses by providing useful resources to help you start or develop your business. Our current ventures include Scottish Business Forums, a site dedicated to discussing your business issues and a place to share your experiences with others. Start Up Scotland aims to provide articles and podcasts from leading Scottish business experts and entrepreneurs all geared towards developing your business.

Scottish Women in Business

<http://www.scottishwomeninbusiness.org.uk/>

Scottish Women in Business is a very friendly and welcoming group of businesswomen, which offers a wealth of experience from many different sectors of business – from sole traders to charities to corporate high fliers and everything in between. While focusing on business, members build up long-term relationships and friendships, supporting each other and helping to promote and grow each other's businesses.

Skills Development Scotland

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

Skills Development Scotland is the national skills body supporting the people and businesses of Scotland. We were formed in 2008 as a non-departmental public body, bringing together careers, skills, training and funding services. SDS is preparing Scotland's workforce to maximise opportunities in today's dynamic world.

Women's Enterprise Scotland

<http://www.wescotland.co.uk/>

Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES) is a community interest company that focuses on the contribution women's enterprise makes to the Scottish economy. More than 80,000 women in Scotland are self-employed, and around 60,000 are registered business owners. But the statistics don't tell us much about them as individuals, or what their businesses or social enterprises are doing. And we think there is great potential to help enterprising women across the country to connect with each other, and also to connect with the business support services, networks and opportunities which will help them to start, sustain and grow their enterprises. Research includes the WES/RBS Index of Women-Owned Businesses, information on start-ups, small business surveys and austerity.

Scotland: Regional

Ayrshire Association of Business Women

<http://www.aabw.org.uk/>

The Ayrshire Association of Business Women (AABW) is the leading business, entrepreneurial and professional women's group in Ayrshire. The AABW offers networking and training opportunities; relevant motivational speakers and a chance to share experiences (and challenges) with other women. Reciprocal trading between members is also encouraged. As we say "We know a woman who can!"

Edinburgh's Businesswomen's Club (ESBC)

<http://www.esbc.org.uk/>

The Edinburgh's Businesswomen's Club (ESBC) is a club run by women, for women in management and entrepreneurial contexts in the Edinburgh area. ESBC's continuing aim is to provide a positive environment for the city's businesswomen.

Fife Women in Business

<http://www.fifewomeninbusiness.com/>

As a networking organisation focusing particularly on women's issues, FWB has now been established since 1991. Our Members range from women who run their own businesses to women in professional positions within companies. We all have one goal in common - to actively promote the advancement of women in business by providing support, guidance and networking, or simply sharing their own tales of success and challenges that they have overcome.

Highland Business Women's Club

<http://hbwc.co.uk/>

The Highland Business Women's Club was founded in 1995 and has gone from strength to strength. The Club has individual members and corporate members i.e. companies, etc taking annual membership, which allows up to five of their employees to attend any monthly meeting. Any woman who is working, whether as an employee, employer or self-employed can join the club. Members are encouraged to take guests along and non-members can attend up to three monthly meetings before joining the club. The club is also affiliated to the Association of Scottish Business Women and club members can attend Business Women's Club meetings held in other areas of Scotland, if travelling outside the Highlands.

Lochaber Businesswomen's Network

<https://www.facebook.com/LBNetwork>

This group has newly affiliated to the ASB - its details will be provided shortly.

Moray Business Women Club

<http://www.mbwc.org.uk/>

Established in 2006, Moray Business Women is a dynamic club for business & professional women in and around Moray. It is now one of the largest business women's club in Scotland with in excess of 60 members and is continually growing. We have meetings on the first Thursday of every month, members and guests come together and network over dinner. Each meeting is different, with either a focus on networking and getting to know your fellow members a bit better, or with a guest speaker. Guest speakers will range from inspirational business women & men, to politicians and entrepreneurs.

Perthshire Businesswomen's Network

<http://www.perthshirebusinesswomen.co.uk/>

PBN is a well-established networking group founded in 1987. A not for profit organisation, it exists solely to benefit and support its membership and is open to all women in business, ie entrepreneurs, academics, self-employed and employees, in SME's and large organisations. Attracting women with wide-ranging skills and experience, PBN offers members networking and development opportunities, both in business and personal terms, while meeting up with other like-minded women who can offer advice and support.

Women Ahead (Dundee and Angus)

<http://www.womenahead.co.uk/>

Women Ahead was launched in 2001 to encourage, support and connect women in business and the professions in Dundee and Angus. It is an inclusive, supportive and inspirational group of women who wish to make the most of themselves, their careers and family life. The objectives of Women Ahead are to: Provide a forum for discussion, development and networking; Enable businesswomen to share knowledge, skills and experience; Encourage members' advancement in business through personal development; and Exert influence in a professional manner in business circles and thereby promote the advancement of women.

Women Connect (Aberdeenshire)

<http://www.womenconnect.co.uk/>

Women Connect has been running for over twenty seven years and was formerly known as Aberdeen Businesswomen's Network. We aim to encourage, inspire and support women in business and we work hard to promote our members through our website and social media. Established in 1985 as Aberdeen Businesswomen's Network, it was the first networking group for women of its kind in Scotland. A few years later ABN rebranded to Connect925 before launching Women Connect in January 2013.

UK: National

CEWE – Centre of Excellence for Women’s Entrepreneurship

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/cewe/>

CEWE is the Centre of Excellence for Women's Entrepreneurship - a place for enterprise development, based at the University of East London and supported by a network of UK business experts. We're here to offer all kinds of support to women entrepreneurs. Contacts, knowledge, research, collaboration...the full toolkit for setting up and growing a new business. CEWE is more than a business portal. It's a place where women entrepreneurs can gather to ask questions, share knowledge and work together.

Enterprising Women: helping women to start and grow in business

<http://www.enterprising-women.org/>

Enterprising Women is a national community of over 45,000 women from all sectors and backgrounds, who benefit from a wide range of business and peer support, from local business clubs to mentoring and practical advice from business women who've been there, who are there, and who are getting there! Founded by Bev Hurley, a passionate and successful businesswoman with 30 years of business experience, we're the largest UK community dedicated to helping women grow sustainable, thriving business and achieve their potential.

The Fawcett Society

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk>

Fawcett is the UK's leading campaigning organisation for women's equality and rights – at home, at work and in public life. Since our founder's successful parliamentary campaign for the women's vote we have continued to keep women's rights on the political agenda and in the public eye. Today we are the UK's largest independent membership organisation with a dedicated focus on advancing women's equality and rights in modern Britain.

National Women’s Network (NWN)

<http://www.national-womens-network.co.uk/>

National Women's Business Network – Supporting Professional and Business Women In London, Midlands, North East, North West, Yorkshire, Scotland & Southern England. NWN provides support and events for women in business, including: Women with vast experience in their chosen field; Women entrepreneurs; Women starting a business journey; Women running an established business. You are all welcome at National Women's Network. Since 1981 NWN has provided business networking for women, with stimulating and inspirational events, conferences and one-to-one support.

Prowess 2.0: Women in Business

<http://www.prowess.org.uk/>

Prowess 2.0 is the online centre for women in business. We provide top-quality information, resources and directories of local, women-friendly business support and networks. We know women often start with less funds and are twice as likely to use and appreciate publicly funded business support. But while new female start-ups soar, business support has all but disappeared in some parts. Our vision is to help plug the gaps and join the dots in women-friendly business support. We've started with quality information and links to good support where it exists. Our aim is to develop affordable online training and resources that can 'blend' with on the ground support delivered by our partners around the country.

We Mentor UK

<http://www.ncee.org.uk/mwe>

We Mentor UK is a European mentoring project that aims to provide guidance and support for women entrepreneurs to further grow their business enterprise. The project will link mentors and mentees according to sector, skills, need and preference. Mentors and mentees will be able to work together both in person and through our comprehensive e-mentoring systems to share experiences and build an action plan.

WISE

<http://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/>

WISE helps organisations to inspire women and girls to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) as pathways to exciting and fulfilling careers. Our mission is to push the presence of female employees from 13% to 30% by 2020, boosting the talent pool to drive economic growth.

Women Like Us

<http://www.womenlikeus.org.uk/>

Women Like Us provides resources and support to help women fit work around family life, for instance getting back into employment after having children, or finding full-time work. Our aim is to give women the choice to fit work around the needs of their family, without losing their value in the workplace. We: Provide a range of free online resources for women, prepared by professional career coaches; provide online spaces where women can network, sharing their skills and experiences to learn from each other; run affordable career support workshops to give women the practical careers advice they need; and offer free face-to-face support to women on very low incomes.

Women on Business

<http://www.womenonbusiness.com/category/women-in-business-statistics-facts/>

Established in 2007, Women on Business, is an award-winning online destination for the news and information women need to be successful in the business world from today's thought leaders. Business women can be a powerful network online. The goal of Women on Business is to see that power grow and to broaden the online discussion between today's male and female business thought leaders. News about recent commercial and government research reports, well-summarised and presented.

The Women's Organisation

<http://www.train2000.org.uk/>

The Women's Organisation (recently rebranded from Train 2000) provides a range of services to women who are seeking to: Develop their confidence and sense of well-being; become more actively involved in community life through peer support group circles; identify opportunities for volunteering, education, training, and employment; explore opportunities to start or grow their own business or social enterprise; and identify and secure financial support through a loan or a grant to establish their own business or social enterprise.

European and other international – selected networks

FEM - The European Association of Female Entrepreneurs and Co-entrepreneurs

http://portal.wko.at/wk/format_detail.wk?angid=1&stid=612216&dstid=9404&opennavid=0

FEM was created in 1990 as the European umbrella organisation for national and regional associations of women in Small and Medium-sized enterprises. This organisation represents female co-entrepreneurs as well as female entrepreneurs. At the moment, FEM has 15 member organisations in 10 European countries. Furthermore, there are contacts to organisations in other European countries including countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Since October 1995, FEM has been a member of UEAPME - the European Association for Craft, and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

International Federation of Business and Professional Women

<http://www.bpw-international.org/>

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International) is an influential international network of business and professional women from over 100 countries in 5 continents with Consultative Status at ECOSOC/United Nations. Founded in 1930, BPW International has advocated for workplace equality, the right to vote, equal pay and represents women in the economy and women in leadership, power and decision making roles. BPW International is bringing the voice of women to business by leading the awareness of the Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business; Equal Pay Day Campaigns and bringing greater economic benefit to women entrepreneurs through the Global Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women Vendors.

MYente

<http://myente.org/>

MYente is the interactive webcommunity especially for women entrepreneurs. Via MYente you can connect, exchange ideas, and do business with other women entrepreneurs all over the world.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - Women Entrepreneurship Portal

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/portal/>

This European women's entrepreneurship portal aims at providing links to the websites of women entrepreneurs' representative organisations, networks, projects and events that relate to the promotion of female entrepreneurship.

WEConnect Europe

<http://www.weconnecteurope.org/>

WEConnect Europe is the leading global supplier diversity initiative spearheading the connection of women-owned business and multinational corporations. It is Europe's leading advocate of women-owned businesses as suppliers to global and national corporations and government bodies.

Women Employed: Resources

<http://www.womenemployed.org/resources>

Women Employed is a nonprofit advocacy organization based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 1973, Women Employed's mission is to improve women's economic status and remove barriers to economic equity. They promote fair workplace practices, increase access to training and education, and provide women with tools and information to move into careers paying family-supporting wages.

Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED)

<http://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/womens-entrepreneurship-development-wed/lang-en/index.htm>

The International Labour Organization's Women's Entrepreneurship Development programme (ILO-WED) is part of the Small Enterprise Development Programme (SEED). ILO-WED works on enhancing economic opportunities for women by carrying out affirmative actions in support of women starting, formalizing and growing their enterprises, and by mainstreaming gender equality issues into the ILO's work in enterprise development. This approach to WED is highlighted in the ILO WED Strategy that was adopted by the Governing Body in March, 2008.

