



ZOË GARDNER PHOTOGRAPHY

Working for yourself gives you

confidence

to be who you want to be

Zoë Gardner, Zoë Gardner Photography, Byfleet

Zoë focuses on lifestyle photography based mainly in her clients' homes or at outdoor venues of their choice. Her style is very much relaxed reportage, where she tries to capture the real person and to portray the feeling and atmosphere of the event. Zoë's particular specialism is in christenings and family portraits.



CONFIDENCE



Zoë had always thought about the possibility of having her own business and it was something that she had often spoken about to her father and husband. After the birth of her son she decided not to return to work, however, the idea of being her own boss greatly appealed. "I had so many requests from friends and family to take photos for them and it gave me confidence. As I was on maternity leave I saw this as a great opportunity to go ahead. Financially there was no risk as we were now used to relying on one salary. So I purchased a new camera and away I went!"

At the very beginning Zoë went to Business Link for help and advice. "I knew about Business Link and to be honest I wouldn't have considered starting my business without their input." She attended a four-day course called *She's the Business*, which helped with marketing, confidence building and motivation. "The networking has been great as I have met a group of other new business owners. We meet every few months to discuss our problems and try to help each other."

Zoë had a number of hurdles to overcome early on, technology being the biggest, but she worked hard to conquer them. "Working for other companies I always had access to in-house IT support, so I found dealing with the systems side of my PC stressful and often frustrating, and I still struggle sometimes." Balancing life and work was also a challenge until Zoë realised that she had the right to say no to work that came her way. "This has to be a part-time business for me at the moment as my son is young but it is hard to say no to potential business. I have to balance having enough work against taking on too much or not enough."

One of the main pieces of advice that Zoë shares is "You need to build your confidence as, believe me, it often gets tried. With emotional support and the tools to start a business, it's hard work but it's worth it. Stick to your guns and have confidence in yourself!"

For further information on setting up a business,
contact Business Link on 0845 600 9006
www.businesslink.gov.uk