

BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP

GLASGOW GRADUATE **KATRINA MEIKLE** DESCRIBES HER DECISION TO OPEN UP A SQUAT PRACTICE AND THE HELP SHE RECEIVED ALONG THE WAY

When she decided to open her own dental practice after five years as an associate, Katrina Meikle's first port of call was to contact a trusted adviser.

A colleague, who had been through the process before, recommended she spoke to Trisha Munro of Strictly Confidential and they duly met in November last year. Katrina said: "Trisha had been recommended to a friend by her accountant, and I felt that contacting her to arrange a meeting would be a good starting point with regard to my own practice – I wouldn't have known where to start otherwise!"

Katrina graduated from Glasgow in 2011 and completed her VT year in Kirkintilloch before spending a year in Stewarton, Ayrshire and two in Croftfoot, Glasgow. In April 2015, she started working in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire. She gained her MFDS from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow in 2015 and spent a year as a VT trainer at her previous practice. She has also undertaken further training in IV sedation, which she has used to great success with very anxious patients.

Despite being relatively young, Katrina had been trusted with increased responsibilities in her previous practice and, by mid 2016, she had decided that her long-term future lay in starting her own practice. She met with Trisha to discuss options and asked her opinion on starting a squat practice. She said: "The practice I was currently working in was a squat, and a friend had recently started two sessions a week at a squat. While there are obvious downsides – namely the lack of patient list initially – I felt that squats do come with numerous benefits and was keen to pursue this line of enquiry."

As it happened, Trisha had a squat practice on her books and invited Katrina to have a look around the building in Cardonald. She said: "I was really impressed when I saw it. It had been



Katrina Meikle

finished to a very high standard and I could see how attractive it would be to new patients. It is in a densely populated area and I felt that there was good potential for patient list growth."

After weighing up the pros and cons, including seeking the advice from family and friends, she decided to put in an offer, which was accepted just before Christmas 2016. And Katrina explained that as well as the initial meeting and introduction to the practice itself, Trisha's input didn't end there. She recommended a financial adviser, accountants and solicitors as well as introducing her to trusted suppliers who have helped her equip the practice and get it ready for the practice inspection.

She said: "As well as all of these introduction and recommendations, she has been on hand as often as I need her to answer questions, guide me in the right direction with regard to the timing of each stage of the process and also provide friendly support. Had I done all of this without Trisha, I believe the whole process would have taken a lot longer and

there would have far more challenges to overcome. She made it as easy as it was ever going to be."

While the initial purchase was cheaper, owing to the practice's status as a squat, Katrina admitted that the financial outlay since then have been quite high. Allied to the fact that the banks are less inclined to invest as much in a practice with no goodwill and no existing patient list, Katrina insists she went in with her eyes wide open and aware of all the associated risks, but that she trusted her plan was robust and she was in the best place to succeed.

She said: "I plan to work single-handedly initially while the patient list grows, and will recruit for an associate when it is busy enough. In years to come, I would consider applying to be a VT trainer again, or perhaps recruiting a therapist. I believe excellent patient care is of the utmost importance, and I strive to deliver this. I want to build Cardonald Smiles into a practice where each patient knows that they will be well looked after and staff will do their very best for them."