

NEWS RELEASE

LOCAL BEAUTICIAN WINS TOP BUSINESS AWARD

- **A local business woman has beaten off stiff competition to win the regional final of Scotland's most prestigious award for young entrepreneurs**
- **Cash boost for winning Western Isles business**

A Western Isles beautician, whose burgeoning business has become a family affair, today, Thursday, 29 September, walked away with a top business award and cash boost of £600.

Iline Afrin (22) founder of Stornoway's 'Body and Sole' has beaten off the business talents of Western Isles best young start-ups to win the 2005 regional final of the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT)/The Royal Bank of Scotland Business Awards.

Iline returned to the Western Isles from Glasgow after completing an HND in Beauty Therapy. Market research proved there was sufficient demand for another beautician on the Island and aged 20, she set-up her own business in rented premises. She was joined by her father, a local chiropodist, hence the name 'Body and Sole'. Offering a full range of skin care treatments and massage therapies, the business was so successful it moved into extended premises after year one and Iline's sister joined the team offering nail treatments.

Earlier this year, Iline found new premises to allow further growth and was given a PSYBT expansion loan and PSYBT Growth Fund Accelerator loan to assist her in the purchase and refurbishment of a two storey building. The 'Body and Soul' team moved into the new premises this month and with more space, Iline is now in a position to employ a new member of staff and rent out rooms to two hairdressers and a reflexologist.

The ceremony, which took place at Stornoway Town Hall, was attended and supported by The Royal Bank of Scotland area Senior Manager, John MacSwan, who presented Iline with a cheque for £600. She will now be in line to represent the Western Isles at the national finals in Glasgow in November 2005. Six of the 18 regional winners will be selected to compete for the coveted national title of 'PSYBT/Royal Bank of Scotland Young Entrepreneur of the Year' and the opportunity to scoop another £1,500.

The runner-up in the regional heat was George Shepherd of Shepherd Engineering. Based on the Isle of Benbecula, Shepherd Engineering offers a full range of welding and fabrication services to customers ranging from homeowners and crofters to the fishing industry, local businesses and contractors. Following an initial period of successful test trading, George set-up his business in March 2004 with support from PSYBT. There is now a huge demand for Shepherd Engineering's services, including their specialist work in aluminium and stainless steel. The business is now in the position to expand and take on more employees.

Comhairle Convener Alex Macdonald, presented the runner-up prize of £300, which was kindly donated by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

John MacSwan, The Royal Bank of Scotland area Senior Manager, said: "Congratulations to the Western Isles winner. Iline's attention to detail, knowledge, skill and exceptional customer service has allowed her to succeed and expand her business."

PSYBT Regional Manager, Jane Campbell said: "The young entrepreneurs we help every day all have something in common - guts, determination and enterprising attitudes. Our winner today is made of that and more. We wish her all the best for the national final."



Photo:

Front Row – Jane Campbell, PSYBT Regional Manager, George Shepherd, Shepherd Engineering,
Iline Afrin, Body and Sole, John MacSwan, The Royal Bank of Scotland
Back Row – Ann Scott, PSYBT Director of Operations, David Green, Lews Castle College Principal,
Alex Macdonald, CNES Convener

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The Royal Bank of Scotland is the leading bank for small businesses in Scotland and has been supporting the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust / The Royal Bank of Scotland 'Young entrepreneur of the Year' award for 11 years, since its inception.

The PSYBT was launched by HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, in 1989. PSYBT has helped over 7,000 businesses and almost 8,500 young people start up across 18 regions in Scotland. The aim of the PSYBT is to provide start-up finance and professional support to 18-25 year olds, whoever they are and wherever they come from, so that they can set up and run their own businesses. The Trust has particular concern for the disadvantaged. Of those started, 80% have traded beyond one year and 54% beyond three years. The average age of a PSYBT recipient is 23 and 39% of all new business starts are run by women. Nearly 80% were unemployed before

receiving PSYBT support and 16% left school without any formal academic qualifications. A first year average turnover per business is £23k and £56k by year three. Turnover of all businesses exceed £80 million.