

Softer approach pays off for Polly & Andy

We talk to women forging innovative businesses in rural Ireland. Polly Doyle's business [Polly & Andy](#) makes seam-free and super soft bamboo socks for children and adults.

A simple comment from Polly Doyle's four-year-old son broke her heart – and led her to set up her clothing company.

Andy is autistic and wasn't then able to communicate fully but, after pulling on new soft trousers, said: "these don't hurt."

As he happily ran off to play, Polly was devastated that Andy's clothes had been hurting. Polly, who was Andy's full-time carer, investigated clothing made from bamboo, which she felt was perfect for the layer of clothes next to your skin.

She could not find anyone in Ireland making such products so, in July 2019, Polly launched Polly & Andy from her home in Cheekpoint, Co Waterford. The company makes seam-free and super soft bamboo socks for children and adults.

A perfect fit

Polly & Andy is now stocked in 25 stores including Foxford Woollen Mills. Polly is working on a new range including soft top socks, with no cuffs. She is also planning to introduce new lines such as vests and underwear.

Polly has one other person employed part-time and is hiring for the run up to Christmas. She also has plans to build a purpose-built unit for the business at her home.

Being a participant on ACORNS gave Polly accountability and pushed her to achieve her goals. She also learned to delegate so she could focus on the core business – especially when coping with the enormity of the global pandemic.

ACORNS is a Government-supported programme designed to support [early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland](#) through a peer learning approach.

Women in rural Ireland with new businesses or at least with well-developed ideas are being invited to join [ACORNS 7](#). The ACORNS programme is designed to support early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland through a peer learning approach. Thanks to the support of the

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the voluntary contribution of time by Lead Entrepreneurs, there is no charge for those selected to participate.

“ACORNS kept me focused during the Covid pandemic. I had practical support during unpredictable times. I would highly recommend the ACORNS programme.”

And what about Andy? “He’s seven now and full of chat. And is very proud to see his friends, family and even teachers all wearing socks with his name on them.”

The call is now open for applicants for ACORNS 7 and 50 female entrepreneurs from across the country will be selected to participate. Anyone interested in receiving an application form ahead of the September 10, 2021 deadline for ACORNS 7 should [register their interest here](#)