



**EthicalSchoolwear.co.uk**



# Liam Charlton-Killen

## Small Business Owner

### Introduce yourself. Where do you work? What is your job role?

My name is Liam and I run Ethical Schoolwear, a start-up offering embroidered and plain school uniform items from B-Corp certified suppliers. As it's just me at the moment I look after marketing, finance, operations, technology, distribution and most importantly, tree planting. I plant a tree for every order, here on my smallholding in County Down.

### What does your job entail?

As a new business owner, I'm learning on my feet. Every day is a school day and I'm loving it. My previous roles have all been marketing and communications related so it's interesting to see how that grounding has given me a great perspective on the other areas of the business.

### How did you get into this line of work?

Since I became a parent seven years ago, when we adopted our son, I've realised that I ask a lot of questions: What's that? Where is it from? Who made it? What is it made from? How much?

Many of these questions have been about school uniform. Getting answers, and on occasion getting any response at all, has been difficult, so I decided to set up a shop myself. Ethical Schoolwear is for people who are trying to do the right thing for the planet, the people who make school uniforms, the kids who wear them and the grownups who pay for them.

### Outline your career to date

I studied Equine Management for my degree at CAFRE Enniskillen Campus. In my final year I took a marketing module and found it fascinating, as a result I decided to pursue a career in marketing after graduation in 2007. I moved to Manchester and secured a junior role in the Communications Team at Manchester City Council. I worked my way up over the years to Senior Communications Officer. In 2020 we moved back to Northern Ireland and I took up a role as Marketing Manager for a wooden toy manufacturer. Sadly they were experiencing difficulties due to the rise in the price of materials and had to lay everyone off. This caused me to re-evaluate what I wanted out of my career. So I decided to set up my own business.

### Tell us about your qualifications and training

BSc Hons Equine Management  
CIM Certificate in Marketing

### What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

I very quickly had to become a champion plate spinner.

### What is the best advice you have ever received?

Not advice, but an Oscar Wilde quote that I live by: "We're all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars." I always try to see the positive in any situation.

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

Anything horse related and now tree planting, reading about trees, watching YouTube videos about propagation, and growing from seed.

### Tell us an interesting fact about yourself?

My husband and I have two adopted kids.

### Who has inspired you most in your life?

My grandmother, she raised four boys on her own after my grandad died at a young age. She worked her socks off and always had a smile on her face.

### What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Seize every opportunity. Don't be afraid to take the leap into the unknown, it might be the best thing you ever do!