

Aisling Gillespie

Bidlims Moods

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When Aisling Gillespie's mother Briege, nicknamed Bidlins by her family, moved from Dublin to the beautiful hills of Donegal, she joined the ICA to get to know the locals.

She started making her own jams and chutneys, which she developed into a cottage industry, calling it Bidlins Moods as what she made depended on her mood.

After her mother had a health scare, Aisling and her partner Gary Ritchie decided, in March 2015, to continue on — and grow — the business so her mother's recipes would not be lost.

They initially concentrated on the branding and getting the products right before securing new business premises — just a five-minute walk from Aisling's home in Mountain Top, Letterkenny.

She has since given up her previous job as a dental nurse and radiographer to work full time in the business.

Aisling believes being part of ACORNS allowed her to throw a mirror up to herself and the business. It helped her make the decision to hire a third person so that she could concentrate on sales, rather than making all the products herself.

A Bord Bia/SuperValu Food Academy graduate, Bidlins Moods jams, chutneys and jellies are now stocked in Donegal SuperValus as well as local shops, visitor centres and gift stores.

The company has just signed a deal with the well-known McAtamney's butchery and deli chain in Northern Ireland to supply their stores across the North. She also supplies restaurants, hotels and the catering industry with her catering buckets and miniature jars.

Aisling has plans to extend her range of products over the coming years and continue to increase the workforce as the business grows.