



### Business Profile

Unleash the Chic offers; furniture painting commissions, selling of unique finished pieces, kitchen cabinet painting, caravan interior painting and fitted bedroom painting. Selling online and also from The Crafty Collective a joint venture pop-up shop.

### Industry

Arts, Crafts & Retail

### Geography

Bridgwater, Somerset.

### TDA Business Support

- Business diagnostic to understand current business plan and aims
- A programme of business support to develop the business as part of the ERDF Start Up programme
- Digital marketing workshop, Business Planning and Social Media.

## Unleash the Chic – From voluntary redundancy to dream job!

Unleash the Chic is a Bridgwater business, specialising in upcycled furniture, kitchen cabinets, fitted furniture and caravan interiors. Somerset owner Claire Hill turned her passion into her dream job when she took voluntary redundancy in early 2019, leaving behind a 9-5 job of 20 years to take the exciting decision to take her business full time.

Initially working and selling online from home, Claire this year became a part of The Crafty Collective, a group of 5 Somerset businesses selling their products in a high street, pop-up shop located in Bridgwater Angel Place Shopping Centre.

### The Challenge

Moving away from full time employment to become self-employed can be incredibly daunting. For around 4 years Claire had been painting furniture in her spare time, she had become familiar with the market and felt that there was the potential to make the business a full time venture. Following her redundancy she felt it was the perfect time and opportunity to make the move. Having tested the waters Claire was ready to fully commit to 'Unleash the Chic,' providing bespoke products for customers in Somerset and further afield.

### The Solution

The active business support network in Somerset provides a wealth of information and guidance. Along with attending an Under Construction – 100 Women First meeting, Claire attended a TDA Business workshop, Facebook for Business. The workshop introduced the fundamentals of using the social channel for business, and soon after met with Phil Riste – TDA Business Advisor for Start-Up advice.

Enrolling onto the fully funded ERDF Start Up and Grow Programme Claire was entitled to 12 hours of fully funded business support. The support has enabled Claire to meet with Phil as an independent business advisor and attend workshops for Business Planning and Digital Strategy.



*“Support with the day-to-day implications of running a business and making the transition to self-employment... A reliable source of expert support.”*

### The Results

The business support sessions have offered a chance to discuss the business and areas for growth, looking at ways to diversify the business to reach new customers. Unleash the Chic is now offering kitchen refurbishments, and also caravan interior makeovers.

Meeting with Phil has enabled Claire to receive support with the day-to-day implications of running a business and making the transition to self-employment. Speaking about the ERDF support programme Claire said:

“Having left full time employment I was faced with the reality of how to fill my new 9-5, structuring my day and also now having the additional awareness of what happens when I’m sick, or taking holiday! All very scary.”

“Working with Phil has not only got me thinking out of the box about the business, but has offered a reliable source of expert support. Running a business can be incredibly lonely. Phil tuned in to my business straightaway. He was immediately able to offer advice and for me it was the chance to talk through business with someone else other than simply friends or family.”

Phil Riste said: “Claire already knew her market well and had developed her skills over the years to be able to produce fantastic products. There are many considerations and options available when managing a business yourself. We’re able to offer people just like Claire a chance to discuss their business, signposting relevant sources of information and additional support available.”

### The Future

Unleash the Chic specialises in ‘Quality Chic.’ For Claire, the focus lies with the quality, finish and durability of each of the pieces that she produces. Becoming a partner with The Crafty Collective pop-up shop provides a shop front for Claire’s products.

The new shop will help to grow the awareness and reach of Unleash the Chic, providing more opportunities to continue her passion for painting and reach new customers. “It’s brilliant to be part of such a great team of like-minded people supporting each other achieve their goals.”

Phil continues to support Claire under the ERDF Start Up & Grow programme. For further information on Unleash the Chic, or the TDA Business Support visit:

[Unleash the Chic on Facebook](#)

[The Crafty Collective on Facebook](#)

[TDA Business Support](#)

