



Our aim is to uncover, empower and enable Britain's hidden entrepreneurs - to change things for people who are disadvantaged by circumstances, health or disability and are left behind by the economy. We believe everyone has potential and should have an opportunity to fulfil it.

We open doors and provide opportunities and new possibilities for people who otherwise would not have access to funding or support. Through our loans and our self-reliant groups we build capacity, independence and confidence in often marginalised individuals who have previously struggled with employment. We aim to drive positive and sustainable change for these "hidden" entrepreneurs, allowing them to flourish – improving their lives, the community they live in and the wider economy.

## Context:

The Trusted Executive Charitable Foundation (TTECF) provided an initial grant of £5,000 (Sep23) to help establish a new Self Reliant Group in Pontypridd. The group is for women whose children have just accessed free childcare and are trying to reclaim their own identities and think about re-entering the world of work. The group is a place for them to be themselves (not just Mum) and try out some skills and ideas in a supportive setting that encourages them to use enterprise to solve issues for themselves and their communities.

## March 2024 Update:

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### Back up and running!

The Purple Shoots team first met Steve when he was still in Parc Prison in Bridgend – he was a prisoner representative on the Employability Advisory Board (where Purple Shoots is represented) and he also chatted with us at one of the regular job events that the Resettlement Team in the prison run for individuals who are soon to be released.



His plan was to restart his flooring business as soon as he could when he was released. He had run it successfully before his time inside, which meant he already had all the skills to lay a wide range of floors and knew how to run a small business.

He got in touch in his first week out, and by the time we met with him, he had already registered as self-employed with HMRC, sorted out his benefits, got his car back on the road, found some work and booked for his CSCS card. He needed funds for a range of new tools and had already researched suppliers and prices. Our loan enabled him to break down that last barrier and get his business off the ground.

He said that without our loan, he couldn't have got his business back up and running – with the business he felt he had a fresh start and a second chance to build a good life for himself and his son.

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## Cheltenham Social Prescribing Group:

A group made up of people who previously did not know each other and who all have long term health issues.

In the first week of the group, only half of the members could manage to walk through the door. The other members took another 2 weeks to be able to enter the room due to anxiety and feeling generally overwhelmed.

After 3 weeks the group started to save money together and they started a WhatsApp group to offer each other ongoing support between meetings. After 6 weeks they went on a trip to a Scrapstore<sup>1</sup> together, finding that mutual support gave them the ability to do things they couldn't have dreamed of doing alone.

After 12 weeks they requested and received training on branding and pricing crafts in order to be able to sell their wares through the Purple Shoots shop. They have now completed the formal social prescribing sessions and decided to become an Self Reliant Group (SRG). They have also planned a trip to the Purple Shoots shop in Pontypridd (2 hour drive), to do more training and meet another SRG. They are unrecognisable from the beginning of the group, with strong friendships providing support and encouragement to all group members. The group are doing well in generating quite significant income from their activities, and several members are developing "side hustles" earning them welcome extra cash which could develop further into small businesses.

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## A warm welcome:

Four Ukrainian refugees have joined one of our established Self Reliant Groups in Swansea. They came struggling with English, with all our officialdom and with isolation as well as with the pain of separation from their families. The Swansea group, a group of women of varying ages with disabilities, have welcomed them in. They have swapped craft skills, have tried to teach each other English and Ukrainian and the Welsh ladies (and our team member) have helped in practical ways with issues around housing, accessing health care etc. The Ukrainian ladies made close to £100 each at the Purple Shoots stall in Cardiff Christmas market from sales of their beautifully knitted products – and are currently busy using some of that money to knit warm socks to send to the soldiers in the trenches.



Purple Shoots' Self Reliant Groups (SRGs) are a great example of The Nine Habits of Trust - particularly: coaching, consistency, humility, and kindness - creating sustainable transformation within the lives of economically disadvantaged people and in their community. <http://www.t-tecf.org.uk>; <https://trustedexecutive.com/nine-habits-of-trust>

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<sup>1</sup> Scrapstores support the reuse of unwanted materials that have been donated by businesses and individuals