

Case study:
Enterprise Renewal
Business Grant

Region
Denbighshire

Sector
Retail

Project value
£7,227

SNOWDONIA CANDLES

A new workshop has helped a young entrepreneur turn her hobby into a thriving business with eyes on the international market.

When Sky Irvine was revising for her recent A-level in Business, she may have had a slight advantage over many other candidates. After all, it wasn't just theory to her. She was already running a successful business.

Her company Snowdonia Candles makes a range of hand-poured soy wax candles and melts, all vegan-friendly and cruelty-free, with fragrances inspired by the North Wales landscape. With gift boxes entitled Cariad, Cartref, Diolch and Hiraeth, these are candles made with love and a strong sense of Welsh identity.

Like many great ideas, it began in the kitchen at home. "My Mum and I loved candles and I thought I could make some for her – that's where it started. Then family and friends said they liked them and I thought this could really be the beginning of a business," says 18-year-old Sky, of Pentre Celyn.

Stockists from across North Wales quickly came on board. Soon there were boxes of candles all through the house, not always in places that were easy to find. Lack of room meant making candles on demand instead of building up stock levels. Sky's Enterprise Renewal grant took her business to another level – from cramped kitchen to purpose-built outside workshop with pallet racking to store and display stock.

"Thanks to the grant I can generate around 50% more sales by producing more stock in a better organised way," says Sky. "It means I can respond to orders more quickly, increasing customer satisfaction and resulting in more repeat sales. It also gives me the capacity to meet the demand from retailers and my online shop."

Now she has the space to develop new fragrances with a commercial melter capable of producing 400 candles at a time. She's already created two new scents at the request of an estate farm shop in Denbighshire – White Lavender and the seductive-sounding Rose and Wild Berry. Plans are afoot to launch a baby powder-scented candle as a baby shower gift.

Entrepreneur Sky, who plans to take a year off before university to grow her business, is already thinking big. "My current customer base is local and regional," she says. "But going forward I think we can break into the international market because the Snowdonia name is known all around the world."

