

Ciara Eastell OBE

## Going It Alone:

# Step into self-employment with purpose and confidence



## 2026 Programme overview

If you're standing at a pivotal moment in your working life and longing for greater freedom and autonomy, Ciara's **Going It Alone** programme offers structured support as you explore the possibility of working for yourself. Designed for midlife women who are considering building a freelance or self-employed career, the course provides the frameworks, reassurance, and community essential for developing your own business with confidence.

Delivered and facilitated by Ciara Eastell, the programme guides you through the practicalities of setting yourself up – either as a freelancer or through developing your own business. Ciara will share her experiences of growing her successful business over the past 7 years and will share the tools and insights that have enabled her to build a business that gives her huge satisfaction as well as a sustainable living.

## Programme details

Ciara is launching this online programme in early 2026 with the first cohort as a pilot group, as she develops and iterates the programme.

All sessions will run online via Zoom, designed to offer a supportive and accessible experience.



**Session structure:** The programme consists of four half-day sessions, each lasting 3 hours. This session length allows for a mix of guided reflection, practical exercises, and group discussion, supporting deep learning and genuine connection with peers. The programme runs over a month, giving you a focused opportunity to learn more about going it alone.



**Preparation and resources:** At the start of the programme, you will receive a workbook to help capture ideas and shape your journey. Ahead of each session, Ciara will share a 20-30 minute recording and some short, useful exercises to set the scene for learning. You need to set aside around 60-90 minutes to prepare for each session.



**Session recordings:** All live sessions are recorded to support registered participants who may need to miss a live meeting; however, full attendance is strongly encouraged to benefit from the group energy and sharing. Life can be unpredictable, and the programme aims to be as flexible as possible.



**Group size:** The pilot programme is designed for a group of around 8 people. Together, we will create an informal, friendly environment for discussion and mutual support.



**Pilot pricing and feedback:** As this is a new and developing programme, Ciara welcomes your input to help shape future iterations. To reflect the pilot nature, the rate is £200 plus VAT (£240 in total) – a special, reduced fee for pilot participants. Your feedback post-programme will be invaluable in evolving this into a comprehensive online course for future cohorts.

# Session breakdown

<b>Session 1</b>	Friday 30th January 2026 09:30 - 12:30	<b>Welcome &amp; Foundations</b> We start with an overview of the <b>Going It Alone</b> programme and discuss why more women are choosing self-employment today: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore the key benefits of setting up on your own</li><li>• Identify essential elements for a sustainable self-employed career</li><li>• Compare different forms of self-employment: freelance, Associate roles, and limited company setup</li><li>• Develop confidence and readiness for the self-employed path</li></ul>
<b>Session 2</b>	Friday 6th February 2026 09:30 - 12:30	<b>Shaping Your Offer &amp; Essentials</b> In this session, we focus on clarifying what you want to offer and preparing practical foundations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define your professional offering for clients</li><li>• Explore ways to market yourself effectively</li><li>• Review what you'll need as a new self-employed professional (public liability insurance, HMRC registration, hardware, potentially an accountant)</li><li>• Hear insights from a guest speaker who has built a successful freelance career</li></ul>
<b>Session 3</b>	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 14:00 - 17:00	<b>Planning &amp; Pricing</b> In this session, we examine your working preferences and financial planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decide your preferred working hours and the income you need or want to generate</li><li>• Learn how to price your time and set your day rate</li><li>• Draft a high-level plan for your self-employed venture</li><li>• Investing in your own development</li></ul>
<b>Session 4</b>	Tuesday 24th February 2026 14:00 - 17:00	<b>Sharing, Support &amp; Next Steps</b> We conclude with collaborative sharing, encouragement, and practical next steps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share your initial ideas and plans</li><li>• Explore strategies to manage your time effectively</li><li>• Explore how to protect your wellbeing as a self-employed professional</li><li>• Identify clear action steps to move your self-employment journey forward</li></ul>

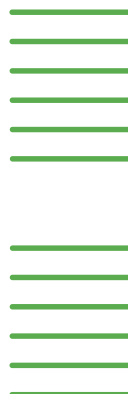


## Meet your programme leader, Ciara Eastell OBE



With over 25 years of experience leading transformational change and innovation, Ciara works with senior leaders, Chief Executives, and Boards to lead change with clarity, compassion, and impact.

Her career spans senior roles in the arts, social enterprise, public sector, and higher education – including as founding CEO of Libraries Unlimited and Professor of Practice at the University of Exeter Business School.



For the past seven years, Ciara has successfully developed her own consultancy, coaching, and facilitation business, supporting a diverse portfolio of clients. Her own move to self-employment has brought both commercial success and the personal flexibility she sought after many years in salaried leadership roles. Drawing on this wealth of experience, Ciara is passionate about empowering other women at moments of transition to create careers that deliver both freedom and fulfilment.

Benefiting from Ciara's experience, you will gain practical insights and encouragement to navigate the opportunities and challenges of building your self-employed future. She understands—through first-hand experience—what it takes to step out, start anew, and thrive and has designed this programme to share all that she's learned.



## What clients say about working together

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*There isn't a high enough recommendation I can give about her work! I was navigating a transition to becoming a freelancer, and felt utterly supported through both her skill as a coach and also her personal experience of going through a similar process. The word 'transformational' is applied to coaching quite often, but I can truly say it was in this case.*

**Hannah**

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*The decision to leave is a lonely place. Taking part showed me that there were other people in similar transitions, which reinforced my self-belief and gave me strength. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting new people from such wide-ranging roles, places and stages of life – rooting for others helps pull you out of your own fixations..*

**Charlotte**

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*Ciara guided us with an outstanding and supportive coaching style to reconnect with our true values and transferable skills and learn how to develop networks to support our future careers as well as think through the more practical steps of a career transition. I'm feeling so much more optimistic and confident about my future career possibilities.*

**Jenny**



## Who is this programme for?

This programme is designed for mid-life women, who sense that full-time employment may no longer be for them and are keen to explore a different way of working that focuses on working more flexibly and with a high degree of autonomy.

This programme is ideal for you if:

- You're feeling increasingly ready to step away from working for others and want to create something for yourself that brings independence and flexibility.
- You've recently had a life change (like redundancy) and are taking time to reconsider your path and potentially pursue something new and meaningful.
- You want to boost your confidence and need guidance on setting up as self-employed, whether you're unsure about the process or still building belief in yourself.
- You're eager to explore the possibilities of working as a consultant, coach, or facilitator, drawing on your unique experience and strengths.



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## Next steps

To find out more or to discuss whether the programme may work for you, please email Ciara at [hello@ciaraeastell.co.uk](mailto:hello@ciaraeastell.co.uk) to arrange a call.

Remember the pilot programme begins at the end of January 2026!