

Rabia was abandoned by her mother whilst she was a baby in Pakistan. Her father remarried and returned to the UK to start his new life, leaving her in the care of his brother and sister-in-law.

She was 7 years old when her uncle had an accident and broke his back. He became bedridden. His wife refused to look after him and left home, leaving Rabia to become the sole carer and so she was unable to go to school.

At the age of 18, Rabia's father died in the UK and she was summoned over for the reading of her father's will. Unfortunately, her uncle in Pakistan died a day after she arrived in England. Her aunt (father's sister) took her in and she has been staying with them ever since.

Rabia was diagnosed with diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. Initially, she was supported by her uncle with all her hospital appointments. Her cousin (aunt's daughter) also went to the hospital with her to translate as Rabia could not read, write or speak English.

Soon after her uncle developed medical problems of his own and was unable to accompany her to the hospital appointments and her cousin started working and was also unable to take time off to support her.

Rabia was now finding it very difficult, as she was unable to understand any advice given by medical professionals looking after her. She could not read the names of her medication, follow instructions on the labels, complete forms or call a taxi, let alone travel alone by bus. "I was always dependent on someone else".

Rabia's uncle's condition deteriorated, and he became housebound and Rabia became his carer. She had to communicate with her uncle's nurses, his GP and hospital consultants as well. She started to pick up on the English language purely by listening to people talking around her but that was the extent of her skills.

She discovered GOAL based at Adderley Children's Centre by word of mouth and started to access English classes. Due to her care responsibilities she wasn't able to attend regularly.

Unfortunately, her uncle died a few months ago. Rabia now started to attend regularly and she expressed an interest in Computer classes. She had only attended a few sessions when everything came to a halt due to the lockdown.

During the lockdown, she became immensely stressed, felt quite depressed and isolated. She was unable to communicate with anyone other than her aunt and cousin who she lived with. She didn't even have a basic phone. Her aunt understandably was mourning the death of her husband and was also depressed. Her cousin was now busy working from home, so couldn't spend much time with the learner due to work commitments. All her access to learning had come to a halt. She occupied her time by practising her writing skills. Rabia ran out of paper so was unable to practice her writing and as she was vulnerable and classed as 'high risk', she was unable to leave her house.

She was then contacted by GOAL as part of their welfare calls to support their learners through the pandemic.



AGAINST ALL ODDS!

She received a device thanks to Good Things Foundation & BT through a project called DevicesDotNow setup by FutureDotNow.

Initially, there was a great concern, that due to the lack of literacy and digital skills, she would struggle to use the device but through pure perseverance and determination and continued support from the GOAL team, Rabia has, in such a short period of time, managed to learn how to make video calls, text, send audio message, take photos and send photos using WhatsApp.

She has also learnt to use YouTube for entertainment and exercise videos to help her with her medical conditions. She uses the internet to search for information and can access documents using her email facility.

Rabia has also started to access GOAL online English classes using the Zoom app. She has handwritten an emotional story about a rabbit and a mouse.

Rabia is a totally different person to the one that walked through GOAL centre just a few months ago.

Rabia's smile and her laughter flows through every call. Her personal growth, in terms of her confidence that is growing every day; is nothing short of a small miracle.

Rabia's sheer enthusiasm and thirst to learn has been her driving force, breaking all barriers and overcoming challenges with technology!