



Amina's Story

Companion in a digital device!

Amina heard about GOAL and its services through word of mouth. She came to Adderley nursery to access support with her universal credit. During these sessions she revealed her desire to find work. As she had no previous work experience, no digital skills and lacked the language skills, she was signposted to volunteering and English classes delivered by GOAL at the centre.

She started volunteering with GOAL's DOSTI group in March 2020. She was very shy and nervous whilst interacting with DOSTI ladies. During these sessions she kept herself to herself, rarely joining in or talking to anyone.

Amina was pleasantly surprised to receive an initial call after lockdown from GOAL and by all accounts told her keyworker that everything was ok and she was busy with housework. Due to the weekly welfare calls she developed a strong bond with the keyworker and she opened up about her marital separation and moving from London to Birmingham.

She stated she was nervous to talk about herself when she came to the centre as she felt her fellow learners would judge her.

It was very much evident from what she was describing that she was very lonely and by attending classes and doing voluntary sessions with GOAL kept her busy and gave her somewhat of a social life which she craved.

She told her keyworker that she lived alone, without a TV or a proper digital device. She spent her time praying and reading books. When she received news that she may be eligible for a tablet through Good Things Foundation and BT through a project called DevicesDotNow setup by FutureDotNow, she absolutely shrieked with utter joy and was so excited at the prospect of being able to get access to the outside world. Amina could not thank GOAL enough for the efforts made on her behalf.

Her first words when she was informed about the tablet were "NOW I HAVE A COMPANION". You could feel her delight through the phone. Amina now talks about how she watches documentaries and Islamic talks on YouTube and how the device has made such a difference for her, especially during the lockdown.

She is also looking forward to having a go at online shopping, which is a luxury she has never experienced before. This is important to her especially during the lockdown as she doesn't want to use public transport and is not familiar with local shops.

The device has helped her in ways beyond her expectations from the simplest thing like having some background noise to having the freedom to watch what takes her fancy when she likes, to having it as a tool to expand her learning and bettering herself for the future.

During the lockdown she received a very large water bill. With the support of her keyworker from GOAL, she was able to setup monthly instalments. She now communicates with the department using email and does online payments, something she had never envisaged doing before.

Thanks to the device she has also enrolled onto online English classes with GOAL and talks about how she would not have been able to participate in the classes had she not received the tablet and would have been worried about falling behind when classes restart at GOAL centre.

Amina now feels more confident in herself. Owning a device was something she was not allowed to have in her previous life and with her current circumstances she couldn't afford to buy one, the tablet has been god-sent.

The device has given her the freedom to continue some normality of life during lockdown, from attending classes, to having a go at online shopping and watching informative videos on YouTube.