



## **Case Study: Malgorzata**

Malgorzata is originally from Poland and, when she first arrived in the UK, had limited English language skills. Although she had previous experience working in the automotive and manufacturing sectors, her professional background in Poland was primarily in administration.

Following the birth of her youngest child, Malgorzata decided not to return to manufacturing work and instead focused on volunteering within her local community. She played a key role in developing the ICOS Women Mum's Club, became an active member of the ICOS Women Project Steering Group, and helped organise events and activities for women and children across Sunderland and the surrounding areas.

Through her volunteering and leadership roles, Malgorzata significantly improved her English language skills and developed her confidence. During this period, she also completed a range of personal and professional development courses, including Leadership Training, Autism Awareness, Health Champions Training, and Domestic Abuse Awareness.

As her confidence and skills grew, Malgorzata became interested in developing her own creative business. Through delivering Mum's Club activities as a volunteer, she gained valuable experience in planning and facilitating workshops, community engagement, event organisation, and project delivery. Recognising these strengths, she decided to begin delivering workshops on a freelance basis and sharing her skills with others.

ICOS supported Malgorzata throughout the process of establishing her business, including guidance on business registration and self-employment requirements. She continued to expand her business by obtaining a Food Safety registration with the local council, enabling her to provide food and refreshments at community events.

Today, Malgorzata runs a successful creative community enterprise that delivers workshops, activities, and events for local residents. She has also taken on responsibility for coordinating a local community centre, further demonstrating her leadership and organisational skills.

Her business is now well established, and she delivers regular activities within the community. She has continued to collaborate with ICOS Women, including supporting food-focused initiatives such as community feasts delivered through the ICOS

Pieroginie Collective Project, and a project with the Polish School in Newcastle and ICOS delivering mum's club activities.

Malgorzata remains an active member of the ICOS Women Project Steering Group and continues to use her experience to inspire and support other women who are interested in volunteering, developing new skills, or starting their own businesses. Her journey demonstrates how community involvement, training, and targeted support can empower women to achieve personal growth, economic independence, and leadership within their communities.