



## Meet our new Progression Coach - Erika



I started my working life as a lifeguard/swimming instructor, whilst I was at college studying for my BTEC in Childhood studies, after a summer at an American holiday camp. After this I started a 15 year career in childcare, working as a nursery nurse and overseas nanny. I was lucky enough to live in Chamonix Mont Blanc, a ski resort on the French Italian border, for 7 years.

Returning to the UK in 2016 I wanted a new challenge and after volunteering for MHA Communities Rothwell, I became a Community Coordinator. My role was to plan activities and day trips for over 50s, but during the first lockdown it involved providing emergency food parcels and having daily befriending calls.

In February 2021 I took on a temporary role at St George's Community Centre as COVID Community Recovery Co-ordinator. Part of the role was to provide individuals with funding to help support them from the effects of lockdown. I worked closely with Senior Family Mentor Jill from Hopeful Families, to support some of her participants to move forward through the recovery fund. When I heard about the Progress Coach position, I jumped at the chance to apply and was fortunate enough to be offered the job, which I started on 4th October. I also set up pilot schemes for an Autism stay and



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play, Family Fitness classes and a teenage mum support group. In July I successfully obtained funding for these pilot schemes to run for a year, providing a guaranteed year's support for families, young mums and individuals of ethnic minority backgrounds in Lupset and surrounding areas of Wakefield.

Here at Hopeful Families we currently have lots of spaces for female referrals. At this time our key targets are to give more support to women, people who are from ethnic minority backgrounds, those living with disabilities and those who are inactive. We offer individuals support to help improve their self-confidence. This may include:

- A chance to learn new skills
- Personal growth and development
- Access to services from our partner framework(if appropriate)
- A pace and timescale to suit individual needs
- Support with voluntary and paid work opportunities
- An accepting environment free of judgement

The past 18 months have been a rollercoaster for us all, effecting us all in different ways. We have noticed a particularly high percentage of women who have been effected and are doing all we can to support them.

Please get in touch if you know of anyone we can support:  
Email [Erika.Smith@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:Erika.Smith@groundwork.org.uk) or call **07971880423**.



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