

Lina Finds Her Purpose

A woman from Barrow-in-Furness says the Building Better Opportunities Getting Cumbria to Work project (BBO GCtW) has helped her find a purpose and put a road map in place to achieve her career goals.

Lina Harb Tyson said she had felt *'a bit lost'* after moving to the United Kingdom from Lebanon and having a new baby.

But BBO GCtW had offered her invaluable advice and support and she was now hoping to find paid work and also set up her own interpreting business.

She said that, after having her child, her priorities changed.

"I was doing a PhD in Human Resources at Lancaster but I decided to withdraw," said Lina.

"I started doing interpreting in Barrow for refugees from Syria and Iraq on a voluntary basis."

Ideally, she wanted to find a full-time or part-time job in either Human Resources or social care and to do some paid and voluntary interpreting work as well. However, she realised she needed more qualifications to achieve these goals.

And that is where BBO GCtW has been able to help.

Lina had been going weekly to a mums' group and other groups run by Barrow Women's Community Matters, one of the BBO GCtW partners. The organisation is run by women, for women. It offers a wide range of courses, support groups, activities and appointments and aims to support women with anything they may need, including benefits, housing, mental wellbeing, employment, education and social activities.

"Barrow Women's Community Matters made me feel very welcome from the start and I made a lot of connections and friends by going there," said Lina.

"At the time it was very good for my mental health because it is quite isolating having a baby and not having many friends in this area. The organisation helped me quite a lot with the social aspects of my life."

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mental health**

Lina first heard about BBO GCtW from its project manager Natalia Wealleans-Turner, who is also chairperson of the Furness Multi Cultural Community Forum and volunteers with Furness Refugee Support.

"I met Nat there and she told me about the BBO GCtW programme," said Lina.

"When I asked about it at Barrow Women's Community Matters Lynne Shaw, who is its project worker with BBO GCtW, told me more about the programme."

The Covid-19 pandemic delayed matters a little but eventually Lina had assessments with Lynne and Natalia and became a participant.

Lina was full of praise for the help and support given by BBO GCtW.

"I knew what I wanted but some of their questions helped me decide even more what I wanted," she said.

"I wanted to take a Level 3 course in Community Interpreting and I discussed it with BBO GCtW and they funded the course. I have passed all the assignments and assessments up to this point. They have also funded me to take a Level 6 Diploma in Public Service Interpreting course."

"I am planning to set up my own business doing remote freelance interpreting because in Barrow there are not enough Arabic speakers who need interpreting services. However, working remotely would allow me to also access people all over the country."

"I am still looking for social care or Human Resources work and BBO GCtW has guided me to look into some courses. They also signed me up for a mental health first aid course to give me additional skills and knowledge within the social care world."

In addition, BBO GCtW has paid for a block of driving lessons for Lina and for her driving theory and full test, as being able to drive will improve her employment prospects. Lynne Shaw said Lina had been a pleasure to work with.

"She has been really keen to work on personal development," she said.

Lina paid tribute to the help she had received from the BBO GCtW project.

"They helped me get back on my feet," she said.

"I was a bit lost because of all the changes of moving to a new country and having a baby. They helped me find a purpose and something that I really wanted to do. They put a road map together, supported me to get on some of the courses and to help achieve my goals."

Would she recommend BBO GCtW to other people?
"Absolutely!" said Lina.

They helped me get back on my feet



Lina Harb Tyson

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