

# GOOD NEWS STORIES

Prevention and Promotion Fund for Better Mental Health – Rotherham

## A new beginning

Kirsty is new to the Rotherham area, Kirsty, her husband and 2 beautiful boys moved to Rotherham just as the project was starting in late September early October. Kirsty's oldest son James has a diagnosis of Autism as well as learning difficulties. When the family moved to Rotherham James already had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) but even with this the family were worried about schooling and where their son would go to school. Part of the reason for moving to Rotherham Kirsty's mother and grandmother had recently passed away, and the family wanted a fresh start, Kirsty's husband was originally from Rotherham – the family decided to move here to be closer to his family.

Kirsty was feeling extremely anxious about the move, she was worried about schools for her son as well as not feeling part of the community and feeling isolated, as well as still grieving the loss of her Mother and Grandmother. Kirsty was browsing social media for things to do for when the family moved, she came across an advert for a coffee morning for families who may have children with additional needs and/or disabilities. Kirsty persuaded her husband to come along to the coffee morning with their 2 boys. Kirsty and her family attended together for the first couple of coffee mornings - as she was too anxious to attend alone.

The family felt welcomed and cared for from group, and quickly started to receive support from the team as well as other parents as part of the group, the team picked up on Kirsty's anxiety and had 1:1 chats with her, to explore how she was feeling about the move and her new life in Rotherham. Kirsty then felt comfortable to attend alone and as she described it "a little me time" she met other people with similar life experiences, they shared stories and developed friendships. Kirsty and her husband struggled to find a school for her son, the team helped to signpost her to different organisations to access support. The signposting helped and a school was sought, the process has taken a little longer than expected due to the complexities of her sons needs, but the team continued to support them through this process.

Kirsty continues to access our coffee mornings and has even started to join our craft group, through the team recognising Kirsty needed a little more "me time". Kirsty confidence has grown week on week and she is now offering support to new people

**Rotherham Federation of Communities Ltd** Charity no: 5913521, Company no: 1158600, **Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR)** Charity no: 1075995, Company no: 2222190, **YAWR Services** Charity no: 1192406, **Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance** Charity no: 1140365, Company no: 04730630, **Age UK Rotherham** Charity no: 1039771, Company no: 1927474, **Rotherham Parents & Carers Forum** Charity no: 1147969, Company no: 07719951, **Live Inclusive** Charity no: 1065630, Company no: 3126759



joining the group. Kirsty still has down days and feel emotional but she knows we are her to help, support and signpost. Kirsty as started to accept the loss of her Mother and Grandmother and feeling hopeful for the future.

Kirsty feels part of something which has helped settle her in to the local community, she has made friendships and started to self-help. Kirsty has accessed support in her local community and now knows where to go if she needs help for her son's. Kirsty said she doesn't know what she would have done without this project at such a difficult time in her and her families life, she said "we have been a god send and will forever be thankful for the support received".

Kirsty's family access local activities as well as our events and activities aimed at young people with additional needs, the family are less isolated. The boys feel more settled and enjoy coming to activities. Kirsty said she would have never felt able to come to activities without the support from this project.

Kirsty has just signed up to become a volunteer for the project and wider offer, as "she wanted to give something back" Kirsty will be a huge asset to our organisation, she has developed a huge sense of resilience which I'm sure she will pass onto other members. The project started at the right time for Kirsty, and we are grateful to be able to see the growth of the whole family, we look forward to continue to watch the family go from strength to strength.

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