



I started volunteering as a Women's Court Volunteer at the New Routes project in 2012. Before starting my volunteering, I had just completed my Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice and I was ready to work. I was in this role full time for a year or so, until I found a job as a Support Worker but I kept my volunteering role on a part time basis or an ad hoc basis until 2018, as it meant a lot to me!

With volunteering, I supported women who had entered the criminal justice system with the aim to break the cycle of reoffending. I offered emotional and practical support to achieve the goals they had

set up for themselves.

Volunteering was a unique experience, as with volunteering you get the opportunity to build lots of skills which are crucial to your career. Such skills were: ability to work in a team, presentation skills, problem solving and adaptability, leadership, communicating with clients and stakeholders, organisation and time management skills, partnership work with statutory and voluntary organisations. Also, with volunteering you feel that you are helping your local community. In addition, I got to meet lots of volunteers and staff from different pathways of life where with some of them I have kept in touch until today.

Since my volunteering role, I have been holding a variety of roles in the third sector and over the last six years, I have been on management positions in a national charity. This volunteering role, was the start of my career, and without that experience I don't think I would have been able to get to where I am today.

A very big thank you to all the staff and volunteer team!