**Joanna**

My name is Joanna Janicka and I am originally from Warsaw in Poland. I came to Leeds with my husband in March 2007 to build a better life. When I first arrived, I thought the weather was so unpredictable. I experienced heavy rain and strong winds followed by bright sunshine in one morning! But the biggest surprise was seeing so many people from different religions, cultures and backgrounds. It was great to meet new people but I remember one funny incident when I was standing outside in the garden and I overheard two elderly women chatting with each other. At first I thought they were from another country but then realised I couldn’t understand what they were saying because of their thick Yorkshire accents. In the beginning I felt homesick but the original plan was to stay here only for a short while, earn some money and eventually return home. Though things changed after I had children and now I regard Leeds as my home and I love it here. I signed up to MAP+ to improve my English and to connect with new people. Prior to the project, my friends were mainly from the Polish or English community but I made new friends on the course from South Asia. The experience enabled us to spend quality time together and we still keep in touch regularly. The outcome has been very positive and I am much more aware of the different services available to the local community. Since completing the course, I’ve started working part-time as a Migrant Community Health Educator in a GP surgery in Hyde Park thanks to Touchstone.