

In celebration of  
INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY

## GETTING HER DUCKS IN A ROW

### VICTORIA ROWLEY

*Puddle Ducks East Kent*

North Kent & South East London –  
Woman Franchisee of the Year finalist



Victoria Rowley not only had to deal with the pressures of the pandemic, she did so in the shadow of a serious illness which had hospitalised her in 2019, and included a slow recovery which meant learning to walk, again.

Undaunted, Victoria used 2020 as an opportunity to grow her children's swimming franchise. The business increased from holding classes in 13 pools in Feb/March 2020 to working in 23 a year later. Despite the setbacks of 2020, she not only kept her team in a job, she even generated new positions.

Victoria gives as much time to helping her franchisor and wider Puddle Ducks network as to her own business. She's a member of three franchisor-led focus groups including the 'Return to Classes' and 'Marketing and Retail'. She also found the franchisor a pool for their network-wide training, and supported a new Puddle Ducks franchisee to secure a pool they could offer classes in.

As her business grew, Victoria found herself in a position to buy out her partner whose circumstances had changed due to covid, and expand with the purchase of a neighbouring franchise territory. She took on all the staff from her new franchise, working hard to support and integrate everyone with the changes. She is also currently working with local primary schools, offering them time in a pool she has exclusive use of, so local children benefit.

Rather than waiting for lockdown to lift, Victoria also devoted her time to her own personal development completing webinars and CPD courses and the Open University's 'Coaching others to Coach' module. This gave her the tools to maintain close contact with all her 36 team members, 23 teachers, 10 poolside assistants and three administrators, and the confidence to support their mental health and wellbeing, throughout.

*Franchising offers all women, the chance to 'be their own boss'. Organisations like, the British Franchise Association (bfa) and Encouraging Women into Franchising (EWiF) proved support to women wanting to enter franchising, with services like EWiF's volunteer mentors to the bfa's free online Prospect Franchisee Certificate.*