

American Express Leadership Course



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Introduce yourself and talk us through your journey working for ACH

My name is Asma and I'm the office Manager for Ashley Community Housing (ACH) in Wolverhampton. I support the settlement and resettlement needs of refugees and vulnerable homeless to ease their integration in UK society and promote independence. I started off with ACH as a volunteer member of the Housing team in Birmingham shadowing the Housing Manager Abdirahman Iman. During my volunteering role I was able to learn and carry out different roles in different departments such as Reception, Support, Finance and Housing. I'm a proficient Arabic speaker, and have utilised this selling point to engage and attract clients to ACH that are in need of our services, and translate ACH materials into Arabic to help tenants better understand their roles and responsibilities. In mid-2015 ACH board members decided to open a new ACH branch in Wolverhampton. With the skills, background and encouragements I was able to fill 44 units with 17 successful move on stories in less than a year.



I have three key characteristics that make me an outstanding leader. Firstly, I have incredible natural leadership qualities. Secondly, because I work in an environment with vulnerable adults it is extremely important to ensure my relationship as manager is efficient and effective with the clients. Thus ensuring effective communication between staff and clients. Finally, although I always maintain professionalism, I still have a great sense of humour with the staff and clients. I have been able to find a great balance between having a professional environment, but still one where people can laugh and work together.

My future goals are to be able to become more open to working with different people in different complex problems and to continue grow and develop my personal leadership skills. I'm looking to secure a senior leadership position at ACH.

What is the American Express Leadership course?

In 2007 American Express Philanthropy established a new giving theme to address the leadership development needs of the not-for-profit sector, leveraging American Express' financial and intellectual capital to support organisations that nurture the sector's emerging leaders.

In keeping with this theme, the American Express Leadership Academy was launched in the UK in 2010. The next Leadership Academy has been scheduled for 18 - 21 October 2016. This robust and comprehensive course focuses on both the people skills and the business skills required for successful leadership. It is run in partnership with Common Purpose and aims to develop emerging leaders who have the potential to become senior leaders in the not-for-profit sector.

Some of the themes covered during the week include:

- What is needed for successful leadership in the not-for-profit sector?

- Partnership working.
- Peer coaching and One-to-One coaching.
- Developing organisational capacity.
- Personal brand and leadership.

What was the selection process?

To apply, I had to:

- Complete the online application form.
- Submit a letter of reference from my Line Manager outlining how I would benefit from going on the programme.
- Submit a copy of my latest CV.

The online application form theme questions were:

- 1) Summarise the mission of your organisation.
- 2) Describe a current project that best speaks to your capacity for leadership and long-term impact in advancing the public good.
- 3) What are your goals for the next few years? How will participating in the American Express Leadership Academy help you achieve them?
- 4) How have you extended your impact outside of your organization to contribute to the broader community?

The American Express Leadership Academy for Autumn 2016 received outstanding applications of 156, but few were successful to join, I was delighted to be one of this year learners.

What are the next steps?

Next steps are to complete a pre-course assessment, 360 degree surveys, a short biography about myself and personal social media ID.

Thank you ACH for giving me this opportunity. Ashley Community Housing is the best place where all your dreams come true.

I will have the chance again to update you all about the outcomes from the AMEX course, what I have learnt and also pictures along with participants.