

# SOLUTION TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN BRITAIN

A leading housing association based in Bristol and Birmingham has developed a successful resettlement programme that prepares refugees for employment and independent UK life.

Offering a combined provision of Supported Accommodation, personal support, and training, Ashley Community Housing (ACH) has helped over 1200 people resettle.

Ex-tenants move on to long-term employment, further education and community/volunteer work, contributing towards society as paying citizens. With the recent announcement from David Cameron on the UK's plans to accept 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next 5 years, specialist support systems like this are needed nationwide.

ACH's tenants progress from homelessness rapidly and 85% go onto further study or employment after moving on. Having poor English language skills is the main barrier to finding employment, so all tenants are offered a pre entry-level English course.

Abdi Kosar Farrah, an ex-learner said,

***“Not knowing the language and being from somewhere else often makes us isolated and just become a title, a ‘refugee’. Lack of communication causes isolation and makes people become internally frustrated. It affects mental wellbeing. We cannot develop ourselves and have no direction. English My Way allows us to break this cycle. Knowing the language opens your eyes and opens doors to jobs, college, community... everywhere!”***

Started by refugees, Ashley Community Housing is perfectly positioned to respond to the challenges refugees face in finding employment.

Adib, a previous tenant who is also a Syrian refugee, said

***“Ashley Community Housing were so good to me, they helped me a lot. When I first came to the UK I could speak no English. Now, I am more confident and I am very happy.”***

Adib has moved out of ACH accommodation and is living with his family in Bristol working as a painter/decorator. Having come to ACH in a stressed and traumatised state of mind, he is now looking to set up his own carpentry business.

The UK needs a long-term solution to increased migration figures, which will not only prevent refugees from becoming destitute and homeless, but will benefit the UK's society and economy. In 4 years Ashley Community Housing has supported over 250 people into work, representing a saving of £1.94M for the Department for Work and Pensions for every 6 months these people are employed.

Across the UK, grassroots organisations have been campaigning to say

***“Refugees are Welcome”***

here. In order to welcome refugees, society must be able to support them towards independence. Ashley Community Housing's culturally-responsive solutions to the issues of multiple disadvantage, exclusion, isolation and mental health have proven to be successful.

Bristol Mayor George Ferguson, said

***“I support any programme which aims to educate, train and mentor residents into employment. I especially favour those that combine all of these, as is the case with this most innovative project, which at its core is directed at alleviating poverty for one of the most marginalised groups in our wonderful city.”***

