

Ishaq Sseruwugge

Ishaq was referred to Ashley Community Housing (ACH) from a homeless centre in Digbeth. He had just been granted asylum in the UK but had no idea how to start his new life here.

Previously, in Uganda, Ishaq taught physics at a secondary school and had great ambitions to carry on with his career in education. Unfortunately, he was forced to leave his home country and became homeless here in the UK.

Once contact was made with ACH Birmingham, Ishaq was given a room in one of our shared houses, along with some daily living essentials. He was then assigned an ACH support worker called Joe, who was there to help him integrate into the community. Joe arranged IT sessions for Ishaq, which built up his confidence in using computers and allowed him to research for his future.

Whilst at ACH, Ishaq went to his support workers for help in pursuing his dream to go to university and study nursing. "Joe advised me accordingly, he told me to bring my academic qualifications and send them to UK NARIC to get an equivalent qualification in the UK."

Joe also helped with the university application process; going through personal statements with Ishaq and writing him a letter of support for his application. Now, in 2017, Ishaq has completed his Bachelor of Science (hons) in Nursing and returned to ACH Birmingham to give his thanks to the team that helped him get there. As well as studying, he has also been working as a support worker looking after people with learning disabilities.

"The support from ACH was exceedingly important for my success both at university and in the UK. There are many refugees out there who have not been able to get the support like I got from ACH. I think this project should be country-wide because some people have ability to contribute to the nation but lack the support and advice to achieve their dreams."

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Ashley Community Housing was established in 2008 as a social enterprise specialising in the economic, social and civil integration of refugees through accommodation and community based training support. We have successfully resettled over 2000 individuals from refugee backgrounds in this time.

We employ 60 staff and operate in the West of England and the West Midlands as a strategic partner for local authorities and government prime contractors. Through the establishment of our subsidiary training arm 'Himilo Training' we are committed to supporting refugees through work experience, language training, IT literacy and employability skills.

Our #rethinkingrefugee programme is considered outstanding and reflects our commitment to making sure refugees become part of society rather than remaining marginalised and under-employed.

If you would like to find out more about Ashley Community Housing's work with tenants and learners in the West of England and the West Midlands call 0117 954 0433, email matthew.rogers@ashleyhousing.com or visit www.ashleyhousing.com