

Routes into Employment: Spotlight on Support Work

Today we had the pleasure of interviewing one of our support workers, Samina, to find out about how she got into support work. Support work can range from roles in the healthcare sector to the charity sector, and can involve everything from providing hands-on practical support to providing emotional support and advice.

Every role is different and even within a role, no two days are likely to be the same. We hope the following interview gives you a bit of insight into what it is like to be a support worker for Ashley Community Housing.

What interested you in working for ACH?

"My passion to help others has always been at the focus of my career direction – it's very rewarding to be a part of an organisation that supports clients whole-heartedly."

What prompted you to apply for your role?

"I had just completed my degree at Birmingham City University, and I was always keen to work. Like many other graduates, I was applying for jobs every day and saw Ashley Community Housing as a great opportunity to increase my skills. I began working with ACH, on a voluntary basis; supporting clients with job applications, improving CV's and fulfilling job centre requirements. I was then offered a part time position, from which I successfully progressed on to a full time position shortly after. I have now been with ACH for two years and I thoroughly enjoy it!"

If you had to describe your role in your team what would you say?

"The Enthusiastic Organiser! I'm always approached for organising courses/events/meals and various other tasks."

What does a typical day in your role look like?

"My morning always begins with a cup of Earl Grey tea – checking my schedule for the day, calling and meeting clients; resolving any urgent issues they may be faced with, liaising with the job centre, bidding with clients online using Birmingham Home Choice, completing referrals, and supporting my team."

What is the top tip you would give to someone interested in support work?

"Never underestimate voluntary work! It is always useful to portray your abilities to potential employers through work experience and placements opportunities. Giving up your time and showing consistent commitment to your work can act as a unique selling point to employers."

Is there a moment in your role that has inspired you, made you smile?

"There have been a lot instances that have made me smile, but I would say the most inspiring moment was when I working with an individual who was trafficked into the UK. She had been victimised and abused for so long that when she was offered accommodation with ACH she could not contain her tears of joy, happiness and relief. After regular support sessions, and a lot of hard work, she was finally offered permanent accommodation and a place to call home. It was emotional to say goodbye, but I was extremely proud of the progress she made and to this day we still keep in touch."

What's your favourite thing to do outside of work?

"In my spare time I write creative blogs that raise awareness of worldwide issues, from an impartial and unbiased perspective. I have received a large fan base, as a result of this 'unreported world' from countries including, America, Canada, Germany, India, Poland, Croatia, Spain, Malaysia and many others. I hope to continue acting as an advocate for these minority groups ; to read my blog, please follow this link<http://innercityslum.blogspot.co.uk/>."

If you are interested in being involved in support work for refugees, we currently have some Support Work Assistant volunteer opportunities available at our Bristol office. To find out more, go to the

Volunteer Bristol website