

## Adib Al-Bakou

Adib has been a tenant with Ashley Community Housing Bristol since January 2014. Adib arrived in the UK in 2013, after being forced to flee the conflict in Syria. Adib had no choice but to leave his family behind when he left Syria. Adib was initially housed in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation in Cardiff and moved into an Ashley Community Housing house as soon as he had received his refugee status. Adib was supported to enrol on and attend ESOL classes and to settle into Bristol.

After settling into a new city, Adib decided that it was time for him to bring his family to the UK under the refugee family reunion scheme. Due to the recent changes to legal aid funding, Adib was unable to access support elsewhere. ACH helped Adib to find an appropriate solicitor to handle his application. He was then supported to compile the necessary supporting evidence to maximise the chances of a positive outcome of his claim. Adib was also supported in acquiring a DNA test for his children, which was very challenging to arrange with the medical staff in Damascus. Adib submitted his application in November 2014 and his wife was interviewed at the embassy in December.

On 9th February 2014 Adib's family were asked to come to the embassy to collect their passports. They had received their visas! Soon they will book flights to the UK and the family will be reunited after 18 months.

Since the changes to Legal Aid Ashley Community Housing support staff have supported numerous tenants with successful family reunion claims.

*"I thank all the staff in the office especially Mr. Tom. In the office I found broad smiles, good treatment and assistance which has no limits. As I am unable to speak English I need a lot of help and am grateful for the support I have received." - Adib*



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***