

Ashley Community Housing seeks new properties and landlords

Monday 9 November, 2015

Who are ACH?

Ashley Community Housing (ACH) is a thriving social enterprise that provides **essential resettlement services** to refugees, homeless and displaced people. The organisation is now looking for new landlords to provide properties for their tenants in **Bristol** and **Birmingham**.

ACH are looking to acquire new properties in order to successfully implement their resettlement services which offer tenants essential support and training - increasing employability and encouraging independence. **85% of ACH's tenants progress on to employment and further study after being resettled.**

Managing the Refugee Crisis

The organisation is currently attempting to manage a waiting list of over 50 vulnerable refugees and homeless people who are in need of safe and secure accommodation. **The Syrian refugee crisis has heavily impacted upon the demand for housing** but there are still many empty properties in the Bristol and Birmingham areas which are currently unused.

ACH offer a **culturally-responsive** resettlement service, allowing a level of flexibility that is crucial when managing the unpredictable nature of the current migration of refugees moving to the UK. **The quicker these refugees receive accommodation, the quicker the organisation can provide support and training which ensures that they do not face winter alone.**

With a **tried and tested support framework** which has been successfully established over the last 7 years, ACH has worked closely with refugees from a number of different countries. These refugees have developed and formed strong communities with the help of ACH and their diverse team, many of which have **lived experience** as refugees themselves - enabling them to empathise and inspire.

Benefits of Increased Housing

Newly arrived Syrian refugees approached by ACH will benefit from a resettlement service which is adaptable to their individual needs and strives to connect them with other refugees from similar backgrounds. This process aids in **breaking down language and cultural barriers** yet this can only happen when the organisation secures more properties.

Each new property ACH acquire creates approximately 2 part-time jobs, 5 volunteering opportunities and moves 10 people from homelessness to sustained independence every year. Properties contributed to the organisation have a positive long-term impact, benefitting both tenants and landlords.

Landlords who contribute properties to the organisation have access to long-term leases, with the possibility of extension, and competitive rents with no DSS payments. There is no set up cost or management fee and landlords have complete peace of mind as **the organisation offer a full property management service.**

Success Story

Adib, a Syrian refugee and a previous tenant of ACH commented on his time with the organisation:

*"Ashley Community Housing were so good to me, they helped me a lot. In the office I found broad smiles, good treatment and **assistance which has no limits**. Now, I am more confident and I am very happy."*

Since moving on from ACH accommodation, Adib is now living with his family in Bristol and works as a painter/decorator. The organisation's **strong links with the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME)** are also helping Adib to fulfil his dream of setting up his own carpentry

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Testimonial

After reviewing the work of ACH, **Bristol's Mayor George Ferguson** gave a positive response:

*"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."*

ENDS

Notes to the Editor

- *Ashley Community Housing* (ACH) was established in 2008 and is a leading specialist housing and training provider with offices in Bristol and Birmingham
- In the last 7 years ACH has grown from a team of 4 to a team of over 30 employed full-time staff who are a core part of this £3 million organisation
- The organisation has now successfully re-housed over 1,200 previously homeless refugees
- *Ashley Community Housing* is a social enterprise limited by guarantee and is registered with the Homes and Communities Agency as a social housing provider
- Find out more at: <http://www.ashleyhousing.com/>

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