

Bristol City Council works with Ashley Community Housing

Thursday 14 September, 2017

Ashley Community Housing (ACH) is working with Bristol City Council to provide an innovative solution to housing refugees in the city.

Bristol City Council has agreed to lease three properties to ACH so that they can be used for move on accommodation as part of their refugee resettlement programme. All three properties required extensive repair and refurbishment and the cost of this was funded by ACH. In return, the Council agreed to grant leases for 10 years at peppercorn rents in order that ACH could fund the repair work.

These three properties are part of an ongoing programme where the council has been looking at various options to bring empty flats and houses back into use.

As part of the refurbishment programme, a number of ACH tenants have worked upon the properties, helping them pick up construction skills.

Saed Mohammed, ACH's Property Manager, explained "I feel very privileged to have been involved in such a life transforming project, which has had a huge impact on peoples' lives. Not only will it provide accommodation to those who need it, it has also offered first-hand experience to the very people who will be residents in these refurbished properties, helping them gain valuable skills in building work which will enhance their future employability in the construction sector."

ACH is the leading provider of refugee resettlement services in the West of England.

Since 2008 it has successfully resettled over 2000 individuals from refugee backgrounds – developing their independence, promoting their positive contribution to the community and easing their integration into UK life.

ACH differs from many Housing Associations in that it currently works on a leasehold model, leasing residential properties from private landlords and local Councils in order to be able to quickly react to need. To expand its portfolio, and to enable it to address housing waiting lists that outstrip supply in Bristol, ACH needed access to more properties in the area.

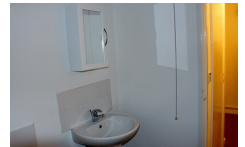
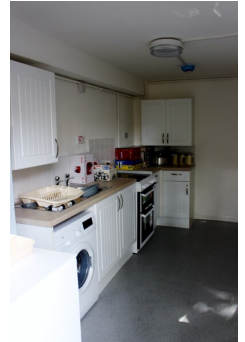
Cllr Paul Smith, Cabinet Member for Homes said: "Having houses sat empty is a tragic waste when the city is in the middle of a housing crisis, and we have to do all we can to reduce the amount of time properties stand empty."

"Our door is open to anyone who wants to work with us, and we are always looking for innovative schemes like this, to allow us to find a good use for properties that we are not able to use for our own housing stock."

The three properties are now fully renovated and will be used to house 5 tenants and enable the resettlement of 40 refugees over the next ten years. ACH are keen to work with other partners in the same way, to minimise empty houses in the city and help house the refugees on their waiting list.

To find out more or to offer properties contact saed.mohamed@ashleyhousing.com

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