# Building Better Opportunities in Sandwell

**Wednesday 8 February, 2017**

This year Ashley Community Housing (ACH) are supporting the resettlement needs of approximately 230 refugees in Sandwell, Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

The Building Better Opportunities programme, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund, provides support for those furthest from the labour market to become employment ready and to develop their pre-employment skills. ACH has secured funding through two Building Better Opportunities programme streams. The Community Matters Programme helps people move into work, training or to become economically active and Black Country Click Start provides support to help people develop their personal financial and digital skills.

**Community Matters** is designed to help people who are furthest away from the labour market, and who face some of the toughest challenges, to move closer to securing paid work and get into work where possible.

Under this strand we will be providing support around:

- Functional English/ESOL, delivered via trained local volunteers
- Employability Skills training
- Vocational Skills training
- Job Clubs
- One to one careers advice and guidance
- Basic ICT
- Social Inclusion
- Health & Wellbeing
- Women's Craft Club

**Black Country Click Start** is designed to provide wraparound support to improve digital and financial inclusion. The project, which is jointly led by whg and Accord, will specifically work with social housing tenants who will be affected by the roll out of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms, and offer clear progression routes onto skills and employment provisions.

Under this strand we will be providing support around:

- Finance & Budgeting
- Promoting and supporting small scale community saving schemes
- Basic ICT
- Benefit calculations
- One to one advice and guidance
- Supported Driving Theory practice
- CSCS preparation for building trades

The brand new Sandwell BBO team comprises Clarine Powell (Team Leader), Andreea Chelaru (Office Coordinator), both in post, and James Haughtey (Outreach & Training Officer, Community Matters). We are currently seeking a second Outreach & Training Officer to take responsibility for Click Start.

We have now relocated to the Victoria Park Skills Centre, Corbett Street, Smethwick, B66 3PU. For more information about the project please contact us on 07956 177913 or email clarine.powell@ashleyhousing.com

**Editor's Notes:**

*For further information please contact:*

**Clarine Powell**, Training & Development Team Leader
**Email:** clarine.powell@ashleyhousing.com
**Tel:** 07956 177 913
**Website:** www.ashleyhousing.com

**About Ashley Community Housing**

## Media:





## Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Education & Human Resources ::

## Related Keywords:

Skills :: Training :: Labour Market :: Sandwell :: Employment ::

## Scan Me:

Ashley Community Housing (ACH) has been running since 2008. We are a Refugee Resettlement Service working in Bristol, Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

We know our beneficiaries very well - many staff and board members were themselves refugees to the UK. We provide supportive housing in a culturally sensitive manner, bringing stability to each beneficiary arriving at ACH.

We run a unique programme that we have developed in language, culture, health and personal finance to further resettle our tenants, enabling them to contribute positively to society and moving them on into UK life.

We currently have 126 beds in Bristol, 207 beds in Birmingham, 35 beds in Wolverhampton.

Ashley Community Housing has received up to £380,000 of funding from the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme in England. The Department for Work and Pensions is the Managing Authority for the England European Social Fund programme. Established by the European Union, the European Social Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support skills development, employment and job creation, social inclusion and local community regenerations. For more information visit https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding

whg is one of the largest and most successful providers of high quality housing in the West Midlands. whg houses in excess of 40,000 people in around 19,000 properties and has invested more than £350million in homes and communities since its launch in 2003. Visit www.whg.uk.com to find out more.

About the Accord Group:

The Accord Group provides 13,000 homes and a range of services, including health and social care, to over 80,000 people across the Midlands and beyond. The Group is one the largest housing associations within region, employing almost 4,600 people.

Accord is not-for-profit and specialises in involving customers and communities in shaping the homes and services it provides. The Accord Group is a member of PlaceShapers, a national alliance of more than 100 community-focused housing associations. Find out more at placeshapers.org

**Building Better Opportunities**

The project has received up to £3,880,000 of funding from the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme in England. The Department for Work and Pensions is the Managing Authority for the England European Social Fund programme. Established by the European Union, the European Social Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support skills development, employment and job creation, social inclusion and local community regenerations. For more information visit https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding.

## Company Contact:

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**ACH**

T. 01179415339
E. matthew.rogers@ach.org.uk
W. https://www.ach.org.uk

**Additional Contact(s):**
Matt Rogers (Marketing & Communications Officer): matthew.rogers@ach.org.uk

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