

Reducing homelessness, one household at a time

Over 500 homeless households rehoused through national housing mobility scheme.

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 **Bill Tanner**  11:36 August 19, 2019

 **Homelessness**  0

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After splitting with her partner, a mother and her three children shared a single bedroom for over a year.

Camelia Le-fleur’s life took a good turn when she was introduced to Homefinder UK.

Now, she’s one of the 500 homeless households that have been successfully rehoused by the national mobility scheme.

“Finding a new home made me believe I can put my life back together. Now, I live in a two-bedroom flat and my children have an amazing support network at school. We can rebuild our lives all over again”, Camelia said.

“I can breathe, I can say ‘Go to your room!’. My boys are happy, they have space, they can play with their toys, they have a desk where they can do their school homework. I



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feel I can build their routine back, teach them to be organised and to manage their time better”, she said.

Camelia was advised by Croydon Council to register for Homefinder UK as a quicker way to find permanent social housing as she was facing a three-years waiting time to be moved to a permanent social home in the borough.

“It was such a good move”, says Brenda Fraser, the Homefinder UK’s senior case manager who was responsible for rehousing Camelia.

“Camelia was committed, she did her own homework as to study the new areas she would like to move to, to check transport links, the schools for the kids... She was very proactive throughout the process. It is rewarding to see she is happy in the new home”, Brenda said.

Set up by Home Connections in 2013, Homefinder UK is a non-profit body, owned and controlled by RPs and LAs.

Almost 200 councils and RPs are engaged with the service – as members, advertisers, or whose applicants are registered.

The scheme offers housing opportunities for vulnerable applicants, such as homeless, applicants in temporary accommodation, victims of domestic abuse as well as private sector tenants facing eviction and has helped over 470 homeless households move into permanent social housing.

The new Homefinder UK’s service, Revive, provides a specialist and individually tailored case management service for domestic abuse survivors to help them finding a new home.

This service is available for councils and housing associations who become a member of Homefinder UK.

Ninesh Muthiah, Homefinder UK’s CEO, credits the success of Homefinder UK to the strong partnership maintained

with councils housing associations which has one goal: reduce and prevent homelessness.

“We have a proven model with an established national network of social housing organisations keen and willing to help,” says Ninesh.

Through the scheme, which is voluntary, our aim is to reduce homelessness and offer support to applicants through Case Management to ensure the property matches the applicant’s needs.

As a result, we have a tenancy failure rate of less than 1%”, he says.

Homefinder UK dedicates special attention to those who are fleeing domestic abuse.

Revive was launched this year as a dedicated case management service focused on finding new homes for survivors of domestic abuse.

The service is supported with a grant from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government’s (MHCLG’s) Fund for Domestic Abuse Services.

“The Revive project has been developed to enable people who have been subject to Domestic Abuse to move to areas of the country where they can feel safe, get access to good quality support and affordable housing”, says Patrick Odling-Smee, Service Director of Housing of Luton Council, who led the bid for funding and helped to design this new case management service.

One applicant, who prefers to stay anonymous, explains how Revive helped her to protect her daughters from gang influence: “I found out my girls were going to areas where there was a lot of drugs – sold and used. I checked their phones and saw messages from people persuading them to steal mobile phones from other girls.

2I grew up in the streets, I know things, I’ve been around the wrong people... I just wanted to move completely out

of this area and step into something new and Revive made it happen”, she says.

“Domestic abuse is one of the most quoted reasons for homelessness. Still, survivors of domestic abuse compete against other high priority groups seeking affordable social housing,” says Ninesh.

“There are excellent campaigns going on, like the #ASafeHome, which highlights how important is for survivors to have access to a stable and permanent home.

Revive provides a brand-new and faster route to safe and secure social housing,” he says.

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