

# CASE STUDY: DURHAM ACTION ON SINGLE HOUSING LTD (DASH)



## Background

DASH (Durham Action on Single Housing Ltd) is an independent charity that provides accommodation with support to people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness.

They accommodate people in a variety of properties and aim to provide a supportive and stable environment to help people move forward into independence. They also run a project for vulnerable women. All new residents receive a welcome pack including food, cleaning products and toiletries.

They receive a grant from Durham County Council to run their services and they also generate income through fundraising and rental income and service charges from their properties.

They are a registered charity with 18 staff and 8 trustees and are managed by an Operations Manager and a Business Development Manager who oversees fundraising, communications and marketing and volunteer management.

DASH attract a range of volunteers, many from Durham University. Some of the roles for volunteers include upcycling furniture for use in their accommodation, organising fundraising events such as an Auction of Promises which will be held at Durham Rowing Club on 19th October and setting up welcome packs for tenants. They recruit volunteers through Freshers Week at the university, through their website and social media pages and CSR schemes.



## Support from DCA

DASH have recently worked with Durham Community Action to achieve the County Durham Kite Mark, a certificate awarded to organisations that can show how their volunteering programmes endeavour to overcome barriers to volunteering. As part of this process, DCA supported DASH to review their processes, implement volunteer time record sheets, create role descriptions and an induction process. They also now carry out exit feedback when volunteers leave them to help them monitor this.

DASH recently attended DCA's Volunteer Fair which they found very useful and as a result recruited three new volunteers.

One of the volunteers, Augusto from Brazil has spent the last year living in Durham whilst his wife has carried out research at the University and has been volunteering with DASH which he has found to be a very positive experience. He has helped to build shelving and organise storage space within the DASH office building and has contacted organisations regarding the Auction of Promises fund raising event which he felt has helped improve his English. The experience has helped him to meet new people and increase his confidence.

DASH found the Kite Mark process very worthwhile - it has helped them to appraise their current policies and procedures and has given them more confidence in recruiting volunteers.



“ I think DASH is conscientious when it comes to volunteers. Since the people we work with led such chaotic lives DASH properly informs and expects a high standard of work from their volunteers. The level of attention given to each volunteer really shows that they put in the effort into developing efficient and beneficial volunteers.”

**Feedback from volunteer questionnaires**

## **FEEDBACK FROM DASH**

"Although we had some procedures in place already, DCA have helped us to identify improvements and have advised us on the development of new forms and the introduction of new procedures. In particular DCA have advised on the preparation of volunteer role descriptions and checklists. The process of achieving the Kitemark has also enabled us to improve our existing documentation including our volunteers handbook and volunteering policy. We have a robust system in place now from marketing volunteering opportunities, recruiting new volunteers, carrying out inductions and the proper care and management of volunteers. This has helped us enormously and is a good advertisement to would-be volunteers."

**Trevor Atkinson, Business Development Manager**

"The DCA support on internal procedures at DASH has been extremely important for volunteers. A comprehensive set of induction information, a continually updated schedule of tasks and projects and a feedback procedure support volunteers to organise and manage their time with DASH. I have really enjoyed the experience. With this set of tools volunteers can benefit from the DASH maxim; 'if you are happy to do this task, we are too!'"

**Augusto Mangeth, Volunteer**

## **FEEDBACK FROM DCA**

"It was a pleasure to work with DASH and see the welcome and support to volunteers which was evident to me from spending time in DASH's office, evidence submitted and conversations with volunteers and their completed questionnaires."

**Abby Thompson,  
Volunteering Development Manager,  
Durham Community Action**

