WASTE NOT WANT NOT
CREATING COMFORTABLE HOMES AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

FRESH START CASE STUDY: SHARON

Sharon (name changed to protect anonymity) was referred to our Fresh Start programme by a Family Keyworker at Wiltshire County Council.



"I was born and raised in Africa and married my British husband in 2003. Due to his extended family and business needs, he spent his time between our two countries. Back home, I worked in marketing, had a good income, a nice house, and my extended family.

When he visited, he was sweet, and a loving guy. We eventually had our son Joseph (name changed to protect anonymity). Last year, Joseph and I moved to the UK as he needed his dad. We came over on a spousal visa.

We moved into my husband's one bed apartment, which was a bachelor's pad…..he is a hoarder…. with Joseph sleeping on the sofa. Soon after moving in, things changed. I had no freedom, with him telling me that "things work differently here in England." He said, "the government is not your friend, I will train you…..dress more humbly…. become my carer." He told us what we would eat, how much we could eat – I lost 8kgs…..he managed everything.

Even though my spousal visa allows me to work, he did not want me to earn more than £800 per month. I would like a permanent job; I am not a lazy person.

He tried to give our son alcohol; my son is humble and a respectful boy but refused to drink. He started calling him Lucy since that day.

Things escalated, he panicked when it came to completing his Universal Credit form. He started hitting the wall, the chair, punching stuff. One time, he was sitting on the sofa and was holding a Stanley knife saying he will "Kill him (Joseph) and me." A neighbour heard the death threat and called the Police. The Police knocked on the door, he would not let them in, so they pushed the door open. He started fighting them. He ended up in cuffs.

I was scared for my son, I was crying, shaking, scared my son's life was going to end. The Police took him away; they took a statement from me. They reassured me England is a safe place, and I do not need to be supervised.

We then moved into a shelter, and then through an African friend, we moved to Wiltshire and are now in a 2-bed apartment.

We moved into our new apartment on the Thursday before the Easter weekend. I told my son, "We are going to make it!." We had no furniture, no heating, so we choose one room and put our clothes on the floor and slept on them.

I have faced many challenges, but since moving to Wiltshire, so many kind people have helped us. From the first person at FearFree to speak to me as a human being, to the support we received from Children's Services and Waste Not Want Not, I am incredibly

grateful for the kindness and support we have been shown.

Waste Not Want Not has played a big part of the help I got…… big milestone for me. They gave us white goods, a sofa, chairs, rugs.

Since moving into our apartment, I have certainty, I am appreciating the smallest things in life, my son going to school, homework, eating dinner.

I have night terrors; my brain is still in survival mode. I am receiving counselling. Our journey has had painful moments, I felt dehumanised. Every tear drop, every nightmare, is it worth it? Everything I have done is for Joseph. As I have left my husband, my spousal visa has been cancelled. I have indefinite leave to remain. I am receiving legal aid, so I can apply for a court order to obtain Joseph's documents as his dad still has them.

Joseph has a right to stay here; he has two countries.

I am studying for a Level 2 Certificate in Cleaning Principles, once finished I want to get a full-time job, a small car. I want to see my son through college, through university.

I am safe, my son is safe."