



Case Study

Thanks to healthy steps I was able to help out a couple (the male is from Italy and the female is from Poland: both have lived in Sunderland for 2-3 years) the couple did not speak any English, they both work in an Italian restaurant where they speak in Italian and they have been quite excluded from the society.

They came to ICOS for help in January 2018 because they have been experiencing some health problems including eczema and difficulty breathing (she was never registered with the doctor in the UK before and has been living here for three years, she always went to A&E when she had a health problem). Her recent health issues have been caused by damp in their flat and a leaking roof. The issues with their flat sounded very serious to me and I decided to support them further.

I have asked the couple to show me the state of their flat (which was privately rented from a Landlord). The couple showed me pictures and videos of the flat and I knew it was in a very bad state, there was a hole in the roof, it was leaking, the other bedroom was damp and mouldy, and the place was not safe to live in. I contacted their landlord on few occasions and asked for repairs to be made, my requests have been ignored. I also contacted the council and explained the situation, someone from the council got in touch with me on the same day and went to visit the flat. After the visit, they rang me back and I've been told that the flat was dangerous to live in, not only there have been health hazards but also fire hazards in the flat. I got advised that the couple should move out on the same day, I have went to the council with the couple to see if they could get any temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, the council could not provide them accommodation and it has been Easter bank holiday weekend so they got told they could stay over in their flat till Tuesday when council re-opens but the condition was for them to stay on the living room floor and they weren't allowed to go upstairs in any of the bedrooms. The following week we have registered the couple with Bernicia Group and they managed to get a lovely flat.

Once they moved into their new flat I helped them to get floors and furniture from the council as the couple could not afford new items. Then, I registered them for the doctors near their new flat so that they could get help with her health problems caused by the damp in their old flat.

The couple have been very grateful for my help as they now feel safe in their flat and their health issues have improved. The process of support lasted from January 2018 till May 2018 but now the couple feels confident enough to carry on with their lives and their physical and mental health has improved as they did not have to worry about the issues with their housing and they got help from the doctors with their health issues such as eczema and breathing problems which was caused by damp environment.