

A new chapter: Amani's* Story

*Amani's name has been changed to respect their privacy



When Amani first arrived in Swindon, she was completely isolated, overwhelmed by an uncertain system. Today, she is full of confidence, a source of support for other women, and looking toward the future with big aspirations. This is her story of finding safety – in her own words – and how a steady community changed everything...

"I have memories from when I first came to Swindon and didn't know anybody here. I was crying for a week and didn't know where to go. In the shared house, there was nobody there. I was so alone and confused. One day, I sat and cried on the road by the stadium. I asked some nice people, *'Where is Harbour?'* and came here.

The first time I walked into The Harbour Project, I saw welcoming people. I will never forget it. I only had £8 a week and didn't know anyone. They told me, *'It's ok, you're going to love Swindon. You can come here and we are going to help you. You will be ok'*. They gave me a SIM card for the internet, shower gel, soap, and food. I started to connect to people! I returned home feeling relieved.

We passed so many bad and dangerous things before the UK. Here, when you are safe, you do better. When you come here, you don't say *'Where am I going to have a shower?'* or *'What am I going to eat tomorrow?'*. You are safe and you continue on."

"Slowly, everything became good after joining the Women's Group, doing English classes, and going to college. At that time, I was waiting for my Home Office interview, and Harbour helped me talk to my lawyer. When I pass the place where I sat on the road and cried, I now laugh. I can be the Mayor for Swindon now! I know every place!

If I didn't get to the Harbour, what would I have done? In other cities, my friends tell me how they suffer if they don't have charities. Who are you going to ask if you don't have Harbour? Just imagine.

I've asked people who have been here 20 years, '*When you came to Swindon, was Harbour here?*'. They say yes, and when everything became good, they got jobs, families, and a normal life.

This place is like your family, not just a charity. Someone understands your pain.

Now, I am working to get my taxi license. I have so many plans, I want to open a restaurant here! I'm going to continue fighting life. I would like to welcome people now and give people what I got. That's truly from my heart."



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