

Jawed's Story



Jawed was born in Afghanistan, working as an interpreter for the British forces in Afghanistan until he was accepted onto the relocation programme and flew to the UK on 26 July 2021 with his family.

"It was my great ambition to leave Afghanistan. I could not see a bright future for my family there. There was always fighting and killing."

Life in the UK

Jawed spoke of his family's life since boarding the plane and was so grateful for the welcome he has received. *"Our house was ready, we have beds, food and everything was prepared. When we landed in the UK and were taken to a hotel, there were sheets with our name already on them, space for my family sorted and it was so efficient. Our country was not like that."*

When asked about some of the differences between his life in Afghanistan and the UK, Jawed smiled and laughed. "My family were all confused by the food to start with! They didn't know what it was. Our bread is very different to that in the UK!" The family thankfully got used to the food, but the day they found the local Afghan shop and brought their bread, it was all the children would eat for a day.

His brother and mother are still in Afghanistan, along with many of his friends. His brother told him they have had people coming to the door asking for Jawed. They claimed to be his friends, but his brother knew they were Taliban, looking for him still. This worried Jawed, but he hopes his leaving will also help keep his family in Afghanistan safe.

The family now live in Walsall, supported by The Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) of which Jawed said *"They have gone above and beyond, I said to my mother we could not ask for more"*.

With several of the newly arrived families now living near to each other, they have built up a small community. Jawed told of their arrival, and how after being supported to get everything ready by RMC, the other local families cooked a big meal and they all ate together.



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School

The eldest son of the family is now in school and has asked his father about Afghanistan and what is going on. Jawed had to have a difficult conversation with him and explain that in the UK, they are safe. This is something most British people will thankfully never have to do.

Jawed spoke proudly of his son though, and how well he is doing in school. How he has settled in and is settling in, and also spoke of how different the schools were. *"He doesn't get hit here. In Afghanistan, if they misbehave, they get hit with rulers. In UK class, they give him what he needs, don't hit or shout at him"*

The Future

Looking to the future, Jawed only had one main goal. To give back.

"I promised my wife that as the UK has helped us, I will help them and support other people. I will teach my children to do their best for other people too."

He wants to become a HGV lorry driver. He has seen there is a shortage and wants to do his bit. Alongside this, Jawed wants to one day see his favourite team, Liverpool, play at Wembley. He, and some of the other newly arrived families were invited to Walsall FC recently and got a stadium tour and even got some time on the pitch. *"We got to play with the team for half an hour and it made me so happy! I love playing football and they have invited us to watch the game this weekend"* As a big football fan, Jawed used to watch as many games as he could on TV in Afghanistan. *"In my country I was a very good player. I hope to be able to play here somewhere"*.



His final comments show how important a kind welcome and a safe place can be.

"When I walk on the streets, I can enjoy it. Every step makes me happy. I am safe, I have freedom. I pick my son up and can ask him what he studied at school, listen to his stories and walk home together safely."

