

# DARREN SMITH, ILFORD

**D**arren Smith, 35, was so frustrated with his fruitless search for an affordable home in London and so fed up with temporary hospital accommodation that he almost fled to Canada.

His plans changed after hearing about the Intermediate Market Rent scheme from a colleague at the hospital where he works as a nurse. Darren was told that he could find an affordable home through Tower Homes at Westside Apartments in Redbridge, Essex.

As a key worker at Guy's Hospital, Darren was able to take advantage of subsidised rent through the scheme, which offers key workers the chance to rent a brand new or refurbished apartment at a subsidised rent. This is usually 20-30 per cent less than the expected amount for a similar sized, new build apartment in the same area.

His colleague mentioned Tower because he was already enjoying the benefits of renting at Westside Apartments. Darren had been forced to take temporary hospital accommodation when the tenancy on the house he had previously shared with friends in Bromley came to an end.

"I had to share with five other people and the place was really grim," says Darren. "At £550 per month including bills it was also very expensive. I looked online, but most of the flats I had seen or read about in London were asking for around £700 a month, even before bills. The areas weren't very nice and some were really grotty.

"I reached the conclusion that there was no point staying in London because everywhere would be the same." At that point, Darren was so fed up by the lack of affordable housing that he was tempted to move to Vancouver in Canada where he could continue working as a nurse. "I considered emigrating as I really wanted to get my own flat and had wanted to live abroad for a while," he says.

Instead, Darren took his colleague's advice and contacted Tower Homes to find out more about homes available at Westside Apartments. He loved what he saw and just one month later, he had moved into his one-bedroom apartment. "The staff at Tower were very helpful and made everything very straightforward," he says.

Darren had some money saved up for a deposit, but because he only needed enough for one month's rent, he spent the rest on furniture instead.

He is very pleased with his new apartment. "At £465, I'm now only paying £20 extra per month for a brand new apartment than I was paying for that grotty hospital place I shared," says Darren. "It's been fantastic for my independence and it's only a five minute walk to Ilford station." ■

## FAST FACTS

**Development:** Westside Apartments

**Current rent:** £429 (plus £35.85 pcm service charge)



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