

First “certificate for independent living” course for unaccompanied, underage refugees successfully completed

Berlin, 11 January 2017. Yesterday, seven refugees aged 16 to 19 completed the first “certificate for independent living” course for unaccompanied, underage refugees. In doing so, they acquired knowledge and skills on the subject of housing and rents in Germany. After successfully completing their final examination, the refugees received their certificates in the seminar rooms of JaKuS e.V. (a Berlin-based charity that provides support to young people) in the Berlin borough of Marzahn-Hellersdorf. The [certificate for independent living](#) is a tried and tested programme that gets young people ready for having their own flat. The adaptation of this established certificate to meet the needs of young refugees is part of a [cooperation project](#) between Deutsche Wohnen AG and JaKuS e.V. that was announced at the end of 2015.

As Stefanie Greske, Head of the Hellersdorf Service Point of Deutsche Wohnen Immobilien Management GmbH, explains, “With the help of this cooperation project, we would like to contribute to the integration of underage refugees. For us, this includes not only making housing available but also supporting young people in developing the skills to live independently. This project also means that we are strengthening social cohesion in our neighbourhoods.”

On a total of eight training days, the course participants from Syria, Iran, Iraq and Ghana worked on topics like tenants’ rights and obligations, neighbourliness, the care and decoration of a flat, applying for a flat and finances. All the participants had already taken part in initial German language courses, so they had a basic understanding of German. They were supported by a Syrian social education worker from JaKuS, who was able to help in case of communication difficulties.

Deutsche Wohnen supported the adaptation of the certificate for independent living with a total of EUR 10,000. Along with other housing associations, Deutsche Wohnen also helped with the content of the course. This meant, for example, that - as part of the certificate programme - specialist staff from these housing companies were able to conduct application interviews for flats on their company premises in a particularly realistic setting.

As Frieder Moritz, the CEO of JaKuS, explains, “For many of the participants, the details and terminology of German tenancy law are unfamiliar at the start of the course. So, we take time to familiarise the young people with these German particularities. The results of the first course are very promising and we look forward to expanding our programme further.”

In future, and as soon as it has secured the promise of financing, JaKuS will be offering these certificate courses for unaccompanied, underage refugees on a regular basis as the need arises.

About Deutsche Wohnen

Deutsche Wohnen is one of the largest publicly listed property companies in Germany and Europe with a business focus on managing and developing its portfolio, which focusses on residential properties. As at 30

September 2016, the portfolio comprised 160,500 units in total, of which 158,300 were residential and 2,200 commercial. With approximately 110,000 flats in Greater Berlin, of which around 15,000 are located in Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Deutsche Wohnen is one of the largest providers of housing in Berlin.