

## **Youssef remembers the move to Hertford, including the last-minute panic on moving day, and the neighbours he's had over time.**

Right, I'm Youssef, I have lived in Hertford since September 1988, so it's quite a while. We moved here because it was half way between my new job and my Mum's house, roughly and I had some friends who lived in Hertford as well. I had a friend called Judy who lived on the other side of Hertford. I'd known her since I was at school because I was friends with her boyfriend, so I had a bit of a foot in the door. I'd already checked out some of the local pubs. So we knew it was a nice place.

It's a bit of a story. I was apprenticed at Thorns making security systems - fire alarm panels, detectors, sensors. I was writing the test software to test the things that they were making, to make sure they all worked – and repairing them. That was quite fun. I really enjoyed manufacturing. I'm working in manufacturing at the moment. I was there for about eight years and I was coming to the end of the apprenticeship, I was still quite happy there. But my boss, who was sort of like my mentor during most of my apprenticeship, moved up to a place in Stotfold, and about six weeks later he talked to my Mum, because his Mum and my Mum were friends, so his Mum talked to my Mum, and my Mum talked to him and then they talked to me and said do I want to move up there, and my Mum being my Mum said, *"Yeah, alright but what's in it?"* money wise and set up wise. So they arranged a full relocation package, so they paid for everything, the moving, the solicitor's fees, everything, which is how we managed to squeeze the mortgage...

The day we were putting everything in the van to move up, the solicitor came round on his bicycle in a panic because the person who was buying our flat didn't have enough money. And it was a complete panic. But luckily the Co-op bank manager helped us all out and sorted it all out and got it all sorted. The Branch was about half a mile up the road, just went up there, told them what happened: *"Yeah, here you go, I've signed a cheque, there you go, sorted it out"*.

It was really quite easy to settle in. Everyone was quite nice, all our neighbours, great. The people that were on our detached side moved out about six weeks afterwards, they were moving away. They were an old couple. They gave us some lovely jam. After about six or nine months of living here, we met the bloke that done the house up before the people, that lived there. His name was Tony and he was into bass, he was a bassist in one of the local bands and yeah, it was nice to catch up with him and say, you know, this is what we've done, this is what they done. So we got a full history of what had been done to the house since the mid, late 70's, he'd done a lot of the work there. The bathroom extension, and stuff like that, so it was nice to know...

The neighbours have been good. It's been a nice place. Not moving anywhere, not planning to go anywhere. They'll move us out in wooden boxes. There's no reason for us to go anywhere. Everything we need is there. Of course, I used to work in social services for a while, so you become quite aware of these things. As you get older, you need to make sure that the things that you need as you start to get older are there. Everything that we need is there. The services, the people, the contacts. I've watched friends and acquaintances think

*“Ooh, we’ve retired, we’re gonna go to the seaside”*, and they go to the seaside and they realise there’s nothing there. They’ve got no friends, they’ve got no family. They don’t know where everything is. And then they become infirm and they’re knackered. They’re trapped. They become trapped. And we’ve consciously talked about this. You don’t do that. You stay where your contacts and where you know where you are. If you become infirm, then you know what’s there, and how to get around.