

ABERDEEN CITY

People's Stories

Ken's story

Ken, aged 71, has a medical history of spinal stenosis, chronic back pain, COPD, angina and peripheral vascular disease. In 2014 he had a below knee amputation as a result of circulatory problems. His goal was to return home and be independent in all activities of daily living. Mr B's mood was very low after his amputation surgery and this coupled with his history of back pain made his rehab process very slow. He struggled to build up tolerance to his prosthetic limb. When discharged home he could walk short distances using his limb and 2 x walking sticks, but relied heavily on his self-propelling wheelchair for general mobility. He was independent in all activities of daily living except bathing.

Home situation

Ken lives with his wife in a privately owned ground floor flat with one entrance step. The property comprised a large living room, good sized double bedroom, a kitchen/dining area and a very small bathroom. Circulation space within the property was adequate for a wheelchair user but not ideal. The couple considered re-housing but could not afford to buy a larger house. They did not wish to move into social housing or private rented accommodation. It was important that a solution was found that could offer Mr B the independence he needed without making his modern home look 'institutional'. The aesthetic of the bathroom was very important for this couple, who did not want to detract from the saleability of their home.

Solution Provided

Ken was initially issued with a swivel bather to use with his existing over bath shower. But space within the bathroom was limited, so this involved a

stand and pivot transfer through 90 degrees which he found difficult, and which therefore required supervision and assistance from a carer giver.

Options to adapt his bathroom to install a level access shower facility were discussed. Ken was very nervous when transferring and was not keen to transfer in a wet environment. On discussion he preferred the option of transferring in his bedroom where he could get undressed and remove his limb whilst sitting on his bed then transfer onto a shower chair for wheeling through into his bathroom.

Design Solutions

A design was agreed for a wheelchair accessible shower with contemporary coloured wet wall, using modern and stylish lighting and chrome fittings that is easy and pleasant space to use for both Ken and his non-disabled wife. The Shower tray is level with the floor, and large enough to allow access in a self-propelling shower chair – taking into account the limited space available

Aberdeen's person-centred **service redesign** has linked housing, hospital care and community occupational therapist services, leading to improved **hospital discharge**, a more accessible **housing options advice & housing allocations** policy, increased use of **technology enabled care**, and **better design** outcomes.

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Ken and his wife were not keen on half height shower doors but recognised that carer assistance may be required in the future. Space limitations within the bathroom and wheelchair access requirements ruled out folding or hinged doors. A compromise was the installation of a fixed section of full height shower panel with an open section to allow shower chair access and carer assistance. This fixed panel would retain water within the shower area whilst still allowing Ken to access the shower independently. An anti-scald shower unit is fitted at a height which Ken can reach whilst seated with a long shower rail and hose which would allow other household members to use the shower standing.

Floor tiles with a grained surface that provide a degree of slip resistance have been fitted in place of non-slip vinyl. The entire floor is also fitted with marine ply underlay so that the fixed shower enclosure panel can be removed and the room can be used as a wet room with either a shower curtain or carer screens to retain water in the shower area if required. A second shower head bracket can also be fixed to the back wall to give a carer easier access to the shower head whilst assisting if assisting with the existing screen.

Impact for the Client

They clients are very happy that their shower room looks attractive and modern and that it does not look in any way look like a 'disabled' facility. Ken can use his shower independently, and he still has room within his bathroom space to transfer through 45 degrees from his wheelchair to toilet or to access the semi pedestal sink from his wheelchair if required

Service Outcomes

The works were completed in 2015 at a cost of £4,819. A shower room installation completed during the same period but using half height doors and a sealed vinyl floor was completed at a cost of £4,882.

Whilst it is difficult to compare these directly because the house types were different and there will have been variances in the preparation works required, it does show that there is

not a significantly price difference between the two style options.

The Last Word

"It was very daunting task for us to reconfigure our bathroom, to investigate designs and quotes etc....we were concerned as to how it would all work and how it would turn out and how much disruption it would potentially cause. We really appreciated the help and guidance provided by OT, who provided guidance for us and also worked alongside the designers to make sure they achieved the full potential required to accommodate wheelchair access and manoeuvrability whilst in the bathroom. Once the work began the process took just over 1 week and was completed to an exceptional standard with minimal disruption.

The benefits for Ken now means he can shower independently, making him feel more confident. He now feels completely safe changing from the wheelchair to the shower chair and back again, a tremendous success that should not be underestimated. It has enabled me to also feel more confident about Ken being in the bathroom himself.

And as for my use of the bathroom – it has been a success story too!" (Ken's wife, Oct 2016)



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Mrs X's story

Mrs * is, age **. She was in hospital because ... and unable to return to her original home because In accordance with usual policy for Housing Allocations, Mrs X was awarded urgent priority for a move to more suitable property that would meet her needs. This category of priority is only awarded in extreme circumstances, and applicants have not been limited in terms of area or property preferences. Most make a pragmatic informed choice, but once a property is allocated the household are expected to remain in it permanently and no further priority is awarded. This can lead to an understandable tendency to be very considered in terms of housing choices, which can on occasion be at the cost of providing a solution to meet the urgency of the needs assessed.

Mrs * had lived in the Cults area of Aberdeen for all her life and had a wide network of friends and family in the area. Her only choice was therefore for a ground floor amenity property in a relatively new development near her home. The area has some of the highest property values in Scotland and purchasing an alternative home there was not achievable. Four months after being suitable for discharge to live independently, Mrs ** was still on a clinical ward, as no property had become available in the area, which had very limited availability and extremely low turnover.

Solution Provided

The Disabled Persons Housing Service (DPHP) in Aberdeen became involved and met with the applicant to discuss her options independently of the clinical care or housing providers. DPHP were able to present the realities of the option chosen and to explain that the aspired housing solution was unrealistic. Other options were explored and a wider choice of areas negotiated. An alternative solution was found in very sheltered housing complex in a nearby area.

Impact for the Client

The client is now settled in her new home, and is living in accommodation much more suited to her ongoing needs.

Impact for Professional Roles

It is very difficult for the providers of clinical care to intervene to negotiate a wider choice of housing outcomes with a client. The importance

of independent advocacy and advice; and of a direct link for housing in discharge assessments, has been highlighted.

Service Outcomes

The case has highlighted a number of unintended consequences of existing allocations and discharge policies, with a number of policy and practice changes now being implemented.

Client photo & quote

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Useful Documents and Links

- Adaptations Service User Report (November 2015)
- Delayed Discharge Project Evaluation Report (2015)
- Telecare in Aberdeen Poster & Storyboard (November 2015)
- Telecare Screening Tool
- Aberdeen City Council: Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee; Extreme Need for Medical Housing (May 2016)
- Kinbank Productions Video: Hospital Delayed Discharges; The Aberdeen Experience (August 2016)
- Housing Options Fact Sheet (2016)
- Ideal Pathway for Major Adaptations

The following Advice Notes are available:

- Person Centred Service Redesign
- Housing-Related Hospital Discharges
- Housing Options and Housing Allocations
- Promoting Technology Enabled Care
- Individual Case Examples

All Adapting for Change Practice Notes are available from **The Improvement Hub** and **Scotland's Housing Network**

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