

Case study: My new home

Supporting people with a disability and advanced dementia moving into a care home

Research shows adults with learning disabilities may be more likely to develop dementia early. This changes the type of care and support they need.

This case study is an example of how Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Learning Disabilities team supported a local care home, in the care of 'Bob'. Bob was a 50 year old gentleman with Downs' syndrome who had to move to a care home following a dementia diagnoses.

Dementia diagnosis

Bob lived with his parents all of his life. He moved to a supported living placement in his 40s, following agreement between his aging parents and adult sisters.

After spending six years in a supported, purpose-built flat in his home town, Bob was diagnosed with dementia in his 50s. Following his diagnosis, Bob found it hard to manage his own tenancy, even with support.

Making the move to a care home

Following review meetings, input from Bob's GP and health checks, it was agreed that Bob's dementia was making his supported living placement untenable.

His family agreed and reviewed multiple care homes, eventually settling on a one in Bob's home town. The care home manager met Bob at his supported living place and agreed their service could meet his needs. A "best interests" meeting agreed Bob would move to the care home. His move to nursing care gave reassurance to his parents that his care needs were being met.

Bob's dementia was already quite advanced by the time he moved to a nursing home. His pathway was different to their other residents due to his learning disability and personality. It took three months to prepare for Bob's move and he accepted the nursing home as his own new home.

Settling in

The differences between Bob and the other residents soon presented themselves. He was more mobile than other residents. He would walk in and out of their rooms, even climbing into the bed of another resident. He also formed a daily habit of visiting the library and taking all the books off the book shelves.

Two adult protection referrals were submitted by the care home. There were regular phone calls to the Community Learning Disabilities Team, expressing concerns about Bob.

Working together

The Inverclyde Learning Disability (LD) team prioritised supporting the care home staff to help Bob settle. Every call was returned the same day and followed up by a visit. The social worker and LD nurse visited regularly to chat to the staff and suggest ways of supporting Bob. Everyone involved agreed Bob's physical needs could be met. He settled in the care home until his eventual physical decline and death from dementia, about 18 months after his move.

The nursing home staff learned from their experience, and were open to other referrals for people with learning disability. But they needed support to deal with the needs of people with learning difficulties and advanced dementia.

The publication of '[*My new home: Supporting people with a learning disability and advanced dementia moving into a care home*](#)' by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and partners is available now. It provides Scottish care homes with the guidance and tools they need to care for people with learning disabilities and advanced dementia.