

Well UK report on residents' transition to new homes

Well UK has been carrying out research on behalf of Devon County Council to review the way our Transition Team has worked with, and supported, individuals and their families during their moves from our residential care homes to private/voluntary sector care homes.

The focus of the research is on how the process and practice works for the individuals and their families, and on identifying where improvements may be made for the benefit of people we support in the future phases.

Well UK select the sample of residents for interview and DCC gain appropriate consents for Well UK to then conduct the reviews. The sample of residents were contacted either for a face-to-face interview or a postal questionnaire.

The sample size used is one in four of the number of residents in each home (25%), and then a postal questionnaire is also sent to two out of three families of those residents not interviewed directly.

Summary of the findings from interim report on Phase 1 residential transitions:

Half the service users indicated that they moved earlier or on the date specified. The remainder were unsure and it seems likely to be because family / friends arranged the move on behalf of service users. Two thirds had choices/ decisions made regarding alternative homes by or with their families, with most service users saying were given options of a trial visit or stay, and where a visit or stay was taken up they were supported by transition staff and families as appropriate.

Unsurprisingly, where comments were made about how residents felt before they moved, most were anxious and / or sad about the need to move as they were settled and comfortable with the familiarity of the former home. A smaller group were content or even looking forward to the move as the new home came with a very good reputation. Nobody felt unsupported, and emotional support came from the current homes' staff and Transition Team as well as relations.

A third of residents confirmed they had received their Care Plan, a third were not sure and a third did not believe they have had a copy of their Care Plan.

When asked if the new home had all the information on their needs and preferences, there were no residents who felt the new care home had not been briefed about their needs, and the majority felt the new care home had all the necessary information and understood their needs.

The term Care Plan is clearly not well understood by all residents and in future researchers will explain clearly what this is and that there is consistent use of the term Care Plan. Care home staff will take opportunities to look at and discuss the Care Plan with residents prior to their move.

Half of residents said that they had moved with others from their own home and for about half of these a familiar face or former friendships or acquaintances had been a help.

Most service users felt supported by their family, the former home or new home staff in being settled. For many the support with the move contributed to them settling in. Unsurprisingly, a few took a little while to settle and where there have been teething problems it seems to be around individual homes responding to particular needs. The role of support staff from their existing home has been recognised by service users.

The Transition Team acknowledges that a high proportion of people moved with support from their families during Phase 1, and that families had already looked for and found alternatives.

The Transition Team members did check that residents who had capacity to understand were happy with the choices and plans, and agreed with them the proposed move timescales.

Where families had arranged the alternative care, there is no evidence to suggest that residents have been unhappy about the arrangements made by their families. The Transition Team will make extra efforts to ensure that they ask and listen to the views and wishes of residents about the decisions made on their behalf by their families.

Areas where some improvement can be made include:

- **Job titles:** It has become clear that, when asked questions about their experience, residents are sometimes confused by the variety of professional job titles within the Transition Team. In future, names will be used rather than adding titles when introducing themselves and in all ongoing work with residents and families.
- **Location:** A number of residents have taken the opportunity to move closer to relatives and some have chosen to move to other areas of the country. However, in response to the comment from families about the difficulty in getting to the new home, the Transition Team will make extra efforts to ensure that transport is discussed with them.
- **Opportunity to comment:** Two thirds of residents felt it was important to have been given the opportunity to comment on their experiences in order to help DCC to help others who will go through the transition experience.

The survey has been helpful in confirming what is working well and what areas could be improved. Learning has been shared with Transition Team and care home staff.