

Practicalities and Possibilities

Person centred planning with older people



Mr Jones

Mr Jones is a music loving eighty-six year old who enjoys reminiscing about his friends and family, although his only relative is a cousin with whom he doesn't have much contact. He is a great practical joker and tells many funny stories about his life. He loves talking about his holidays and where he was born, too.

As Mr Jones has a learning disability and a visual impairment he has had social work support and care services throughout his life. Until 1990 he lived in a long stay hospital and subsequently moved into the community to supported accommodation with his friends. After a serious fall he found it difficult to manage independently at home and as his health changed he moved into a residential home, with carers available day and night.

Mr Jones continued to live in the residential home for a further five years until he began experiencing memory difficulties which distressed him. He began shouting out and became upset with changes to his routine or loud noises. His health also changed; he lost lots of weight, didn't eat or drink properly and developed pressure sores. His carers were very worried and felt they could no longer provide the right care for him.

As Mr Jones did not have the capacity to make a decision about an accommodation change, an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) gathered information from various professionals (nurses, doctors and social workers) who had known him previously. It was agreed that it was in his best interest to move to accommodation that could meet his complex needs with nursing support to assist him each day.

Developing a person centred plan

The IMCA report recommended a person centred plan for Mr Jones. This would make sure that the support he needed, and what was important to him, were central to the decision about his new home.

Mr Jones, his advocate, social worker and carers from the residential home met together to share information and begin to create his person centred plan. The person centred planning coordinator facilitated this.

Mr Jones's person centred plan describes:

- What people like about him.
- What is important to him.
- Best support for him.
- How he communicates.
- The characteristics of the best people to support him.
- What is working and not working in his life.

Mr Jones's person centred plan gave important information that helped both him and his advocate decide on his future home and support. Extracts from Mr Jones's person centred plan follow.

Important to Mr Jones

- To live in a quiet environment and not to hear loud noises, for example doors banging.
- To see Jack Edwards, his advocate.
- To make his own choices and decisions.
- To be told what is happening when he is being supported.
- Not to be rushed.
- For his possessions to stay in the same place where he can find them.
- To be called Mr Jones, not John, by people who do not know him.
- For staff to listen to his memories about the past, for example he still has fond memories of peeling potatoes with Sydney Lowe from the Mary Dendy Unit, many years ago.
- To listen to music through his headphones - his favourites are Val Doonican and Johnny Cash, he also enjoys panpipes and country music.
- To sing, and have staff sing along with him.
- To go to Church on a Sunday.
- To watch Emmerdale, Coronation Street, Casualty and Who wants to be a Millionaire.

How best to support Mr Jones

- Always knock on Mr Jones's bedroom door and identify yourself before entering, and tell him what you are doing/going to do all the time when you support him.
- Offer Mr Jones choices whenever possible – always the choice between tea and coffee.
- Give John time to eat and drink, and ask him if he needs any assistance. Make sure the spout on the feeder cup is angled to the left, near the left handle as John holds the cup at an angle and this makes it easier for John to drink from the cup unaided.

This detailed information about Mr Jones and how best to support him enabled them to find him the right support. It clearly demonstrates the importance to him of living in a quiet environment near to his Church, close enough for his advocate to still visit, with respectful staff that take time to listen (and are prepared to sing along to Val Doonican).

Finding a new place to live

The social worker provided a list of accommodation to Mr Jones's advocate, who discussed this with Mr Jones and began to view different homes in the area. Mr Jones visited some of the homes, and with the support of his advocate and carers made the decision to move. The person centred plan was crucial for getting both the best match between Mr Jones, a new home and support, and for his new carers to quickly learn how best to support him, and what matters to him.

Part of Mr Jones's person centred plan described what was working and not working for him. This information helped to check out possible new places to live. Would the new place keep what was working for Mr Jones? Would it be able to change what was not working for him? One of the key things that didn't work for Mr Jones was being in a loud, noisy environment. Without person centred planning decisions would have been made in Mr Jones's life that were outside his control and he would have had limited opportunity to contribute to major decisions about his life.

Life for Mr Jones now

Mr Jones is now settled in his new accommodation and has 24 hour nursing care. His new carers are getting to know him, and his person centred plan has been helpful in developing new relationships. He has stopped taking many of the medications that made him feel sedated. He is now eating and drinking with the carers support, his weight is stabilizing and he does not have any sores. He has new furniture in his bedroom and has headphones, which he uses to listen to his music in the afternoons. He has new glasses and dentures and has planned to visit his cousin with support from the carers.