Settling into our new home

Three months on from the completion of the build and everyone is getting used to their new environment

RESIDENTS AND STAFF have been in the new building now for nearly three months and they are adapting well to their lovely new surroundings and enjoying the extra room the development has given them. The large central lounge is a great place to meet and socialise. For some residents it has taken time to adapt to the extra space and the new layout of the rooms as Markyes Close is now one bungalow for nine people, rather than two small bungalows each for four people. Orientation has been a big issue for some residents, but overall everyone thinks it was worth all the upheaval.

Lots of work has gone into setting up the equipment in the new sensory room. This room is very popular with the residents and has been a great addition to the home. It’s a lovely space to sit and relax. The Fish Tank TV is very popular.

More information about Aspire at www.aspirehereford.org.uk
Settling in - an update

An open day was held in September. It was a great opportunity to invite family and friends of residents and staff to celebrate the completion of the building works and to thank the many people who had worked so hard to get the build completed on time. An empty building looks completely different to one that has all the furniture and people in it. It was great for the builders to see why we wanted it designed the way we did.

Everyone has now settled in their new bedrooms and every room has been personalised with pictures, photos and personal effects. Outside each person’s room there is a collage to celebrate their likes and interests as well as a photo of them on their door.

One of the residents has a collage outside his room which shows his love of tea, sparkly things, streamers and curtains. He has some nice wall art in his room to meet his sensory needs. His key workers have been very inventive.

The smaller second lounge is being used regularly for craft and group activities, it is a great space for bringing out the creative talents of the residents. For Halloween pumpkins, bats and witches were made for a Leisure Link party in the local pub. Further work will be done over the winter to develop this room as a cinema and reminiscence room.

Right: A collage representing one resident’s love of tea, sparkly things, streamers and curtains
IT HAS BEEN a busy period in the redevelopment of Markyes Close; there has been a lot of change for everyone involved. The residents have needed extra support to orientate themselves with the new layout and the extra space has proved a little overwhelming for some.

Over the last few months there have also been changes in the residents who live at Markyes Close. Someone came and stayed for a few weeks for rehabilitation after an operation and now a new gentleman has moved in as a permanent resident. All these changes have affected some resident’s behaviours and this in turn has increased the demands on the staff. We don’t want to offer ‘just enough support’ but want to use the new facilities to encourage the residents to try new 1-1 activities like crafts and sensory therapy.

The biggest time consuming thing for me has been updating the essential paperwork. New rooms, new layout, new fire exits etc all need new sets of paperwork to keep them current.

For some people, the new building has offered both new opportunities as well as new risks, in particular in relation to the easily accessible new kitchen. Balancing the need to keep people safe with the rights of others to have access to the kitchen for their own food preparation has been challenging, especially when some residents have no sense of danger. You have to consider the worst scenario that can happen and then do a risk assessment to prevent it.

For the staff the changes have meant working in one larger bungalow and sharing the support for nine people instead of the four they supported in the smaller bungalows. Cooking meals for 13 seemed a daunting prospect for some, but now you enter the kitchen and it’s as if they had been doing it all along. It’s taken a lot of thinking out and pre-planning.

“A new building is not enough; you need good staff to work in it ”

Dispensing medications for a larger group has also needed a lot of planning. One staff member has to be allocated to do this task each shift. The team allocate roles at handover for specific tasks such as doing the medications and cooking. The staff on the waking night shifts play an important part in the smooth running of the home during the day. They prepare foods for the next day, as well as doing administration tasks and health and safety checks.

Everyone does day and night duties and so they know the importance of helping each other out. The less time taken up with chores during the day means more time to spend with the residents.

It has highlighted one thing though; you can’t do this without a great staff team to do it with you. A new building is not enough; you need good staff to work in it.

Would I do it all again? Definitely - YES. It’s been very hard work but the benefits far outweigh the negatives!
People

GILL HAS LIVED AT MARKYES CLOSE for over 10 years. She moved into one of the Markyes Close bungalows in 2002 after she had broken her leg in a fall at home. Before her move into Markyes Close she had lived with her sister, Jan, and her family on a farm. Gill had mobility problems after the fall that made it difficult to return home. Jan and Gill decided it was better for her to live at Markyes Close permanently. In the bungalow Gill lived with 3 other people, two men and her good friend Gilly. Gill and Gilly were great friends and enjoyed each other’s company.

Jan says Gill has coped really well with the move. At the beginning she moved into the other bungalow with three other people and then she moved into her new room which she is enjoying very much. She has more space and her own TV and at times she likes to spend time on her own in her room. Gill is friends with many of the staff, she particularly enjoys doing craft activities, going out to St Owens and to the music sessions. Jan says, “the staff have been marvellous during the move helping people in difficult circumstances. It has all been worth it, the new building is great, with more space for people”.

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