

# **BEYOND THE FRONT DOOR: What ‘home’ means to people with dementia and their carers**

**Top Tips for carers and families to support positive transitions for people with dementia**

* **Plan ahead!** Do you know the views of the person you care for in relation to where they live and what would support their sense of who they are? Encourage them to think about what home means to them as this will help you all to manage any move better. You could use our *‘Top Tips to support well-being during transitions’ and ‘Thinking about home worksheet’* which help people think about the things that are important to them.

* **It is important that the person you care for is involved in all the decisions that need to be made.** If there any doubts about their capacity to make specific decisions, professionals involved in their care should carry out a Mental Capacity assessment. You should be involved in this process and the outcome of the assessment should be recorded. If the person is assessed as not having capacity, then a Best Interests Decision process should follow and again you should be involved in this and the outcome recorded.
* **People with dementia cope better with familiarity.** Any move from home therefore needs to be clearly thought through. The earlier you start planning, the easier the move.
* **A strong sense of identity and self-worth are associated with home for many people.** This may include memories of bringing up the family or memorable events. Moving from a familiar home can have a negative impact on cognitive abilities but for some can give a new lease of life if it is managed well.
* **A sense of ‘home’ can contribute enormously to feelings of safety and security, with a positive impact on well-being.** This may not be the case for everyone, but is an important factor in well-being.
* **As a carer, you can ask the local authority for an assessment in your own right** under the Care Act 2014, to determine how the needs of the person with dementia impact on your well-being and what you need to support you in your caring role. Your housing needs and the significance of ‘home’ for you should be taken into account. If a move is being considered for the person that you care for, your support during this transition should be taken into account in your assessment.
* **A prevention duty exists** under the Care Act 2014 to prevent, delay the development of or reduce the care needs of adults. Local authorities should provide information on local support, including respite opportunities, as part of your assessment.
* **Seek out information about housing options** including adapting the existing home. Could the person manage in their existing accommodation with additional support or adaptations, or would a move to other accommodation be better? Do you know where to go to get more information?
* **Seek out peer support for yourself** - there will be others in the same boat who you can share experiences and ideas with. These issues can be stressful for families and carers and you will benefit from emotional as well as practical support, so seek out local support networks