

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

**Top Tips for housing providers to support well-being and identity in managing transitions for people with dementia**

* **Recognise the connection between ‘home’ and a strong sense of identity for people with dementia:** their sense of self can be easily eroded following diagnosis.
* **Ensure that the workforce has a good understanding of the implications of a diagnosis of dementia:** for people, their carers and families.
* **Person-centred care and support are crucial to maintain a sense of identity:** They involve developing trusting relationships, taking the time to know people and the things that are important to them. Staff need support and training to become relationship-centred and offer post-diagnostic support.
* **Transitions often work best when they are predictable and planned:** Develop opportunities for potential tenants or homeowners to discuss what home means to them personally, to ease their transition.
* **Provide accessible information that explains the type of housing available:** consider developing a ‘Settling In Pack’ for new residents. Information should ensure that people from particular communities feel welcomed and included e.g. those from ethnic communities, LGBT communities, people without children or people with physical and sensory impairments.
* **Applications for housing:** clear information that enables a pro-active dialogue at the point of application is more likely to enable appropriate decisions to be made and to reduce inappropriate allocations and relocations at a later date.
* **Ensure involvement of people with dementia and their carers:** in boards, working parties and consultative groups. This also helps services to be compliant with the Equalities Act and the Human Rights Act.
* **Joint working links with health and social care professionals:** enhance the capacity for support at practitioner and strategic levels. Get a seat at the table where plans are developed.
* **Recognise the circle of relationships that are meaningful to each person and their role in supporting them:** don't make assumptions or be judgmental.
* **Invest in dementia-inclusive features at the design stage,** such as signage, lighting and bathroom fittings, to enable independent living for longer. Recognise and take account of sensory impairments. Don’t let style over-ride function!