

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

**Top Tips for social care assessors to support positive transitions for people with dementia**

* **Recognise the importance of self worth and a strong sense of identity** for an individual with dementia and the impact on their well-being.
* **Home is a place of strong attachments** - to people, place and objects. These memories are part of the person and their reality. Try to understand the particular significance of ‘home’ in assessing and planning for individuals.
* **Involve family carers as equal partners in discussions and decision making:** they probably know the person better than anyone else and are experts in their care.
* **People with dementia continue to feel things strongly and have opinions about what they want** Assume their capacity to participate in planning and decision making, unless assessed otherwise and recorded under the MCA. Enable people with dementia to have as much control as possible in planning and decision-making and understand their circumstances. Involve family carers, friends and others who know them in Best Interest Decisions.
* **Familiar environments** and surroundings enable people with dementia to retain a sense of who they are for longer. Care at home can enable safer and more independent living and paid carers can develop knowledge about an individual’s life skills, abilities and ambitions.
* **Dementia friendly and accessible information** on housing options is key to supporting people with making choices. This includes group living, sheltered housing and Extra Care housing, adaptations, grants and other funding advice.
* **An outcome focused approach** includes choices and aspirations as well as needs.
* **Transitions are stressful and emotional** at any stage of dementia and will involve changes such as role, status and meaningful activities. Adjustments are more difficult in dementia and people are likely to be disabled by a move as the dementia progresses.
* **Take positive risks.** Removing or refusing to enable some risks can lead to deskilling and increased dependence, cause premature admission into care and create new risks, as well as affect wellbeing and quality of life.
* **Early OT assessments** can contribute significantly to enabling a person with dementia to remain at home independently.
* **Involve housing colleagues in assessments and support planning at the earliest opportunity;** they have valuable information about individuals and how they manage in their accommodation.
* **Be aware of housing options** and how to access them; keep up to date on eligibility for DFGs and changes in benefits associated with housing. Be familiar with the legality of tenancies and relinquishing them, particularly if a person may lack capacity in this area.