

The story of four men in Gateshead

How Andrew, John, David and Brian are going to move together out of their residential home into their own house

Andrew, John, David and Brian are four men who have been involved in the in Control project in the Gateshead area.

Andrew, John and Brian have all been living at 'The Hermitage', a large residential home for adults with a learning disability, for some time now. David moved into 'The Hermitage' earlier this year in the hope of getting to know Andrew, John and Brian a little better. They have all now become friends.

David was a student at Dilston College and had already met Andrew there. Dilston College is for young people with a learning disability. David thought life was ok at Dilston College because there were lots of things to do.

The Hermitage is due to close soon and so plans for the four men have had to be done quickly.

The men will be amongst the first to move out of the residential home and into their new house. Their story is different to other in Control stories in Gateshead. The way the men have planned to move into their new house is different.

Their way of planning was different because there was not much time to involve the rest of the men's 'circles of support' at first.

The four men went to look at a house in a nearby village to see what a different house could look like. They liked it so much they decided they wanted to live in it together.

The house was for sale so the men and the people supporting them had to move fast to try and buy the house. They worked with a housing association to buy the house and the Care Manager, the Manager of the Care Homes and the Learning Disabilities Housing Manager worked quickly with the men and the staff from the home to make a care plan and work out how best to spend the money the men had been given through the in Control project.

The house is a semi-detached house in a small cul-de-sac and it has a lovely garden and conservatory. The four men are going to move into this new house together soon.

When the 'circles of support' started to meet up, the families of the four men didn't know much about the new house at all, so this was fixed straight away and the men showed the house to their families and carers.

John saw his brother Harry last week and they both went to look at the new house. Although the shower will need to be looked at, Harry says the house is ok too.

John knows that the place he is in now, the Hermitage, will be closed down soon and he has been choosing wallpaper for his new house.

Jimmy Proudlock is the Learning Disabilities Planning Co-ordinator in Gateshead. When he brought the 'circles of support' together he found John had felt empowered by the whole process. Andrew had taken control of the opportunity to move and be involved. Brian and his staff had created most of his support plan and had the move all organised. Jimmy had spent time with David earlier in the year when he was planning to leave Dilston College.

Although the men are going to be supported by the same staff that support them in the residential home they are living in now, they still intend to interview them. Brian has been training to learn how to interview staff.

Now the four men are really looking forward to their new lives together.

David is excited to be moving out of where he is living just now and settle in a new house. He thinks it will be great to meet new people. David will be upstairs with Brian and he'll be getting a new television. His new room will be all Newcastle United colours. David has ordered a new bed and likes choosing new furniture. He has chosen a new settee with the other men. David has checked the house and everything is ok but now he is fed up with waiting.

David - "I'm excited to move out of here and settle in a new house".

Brian says he is moving because he has been good and his friends will visit him there. Brian says he will be able to go to the Club for a drink and see his friends.

Brian - "This is my home, I'm going to move".

Andrew went to a meeting with his Gran, he didn't know what was going to happen but has plans to do the shopping when he moves and says its hard waiting.

Andrew is looking forward to the next meeting. He wants to do a food and hygiene course which will help when he does his own cooking.

Andrew - "I'm not going to live here long, going to live at Sunnyside".

John says he cannot wait until he moves! He will be taking the wardrobes with him but will get a new chair.

John - "I'm moving house, getting my key soon. Sick of being here, don't like it, been here a long time. Should be out of this place".

The men will have a Christmas Party in the new house.

Brian will go and see his Mum on Christmas Day. He is looking forward to putting tinsel up in his new house.

David hopes to be moved in by Christmas and then they can have a Christmas party there. He is looking forward to a pint at the Club.

The circles of support will meet again when the men have been living in their new house for a month and then everyone can be involved in looking at what is working and how things could be made better. Jimmy sees this stage as reviewing the plans after the move has happened and focusing on not losing important things like social contacts, work and education opportunities, family contact and staff support.