

## Mencap and The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation: Empowering people with a learning disability to live independently



Together, The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation and Mencap are working to give more people with a learning disability the chance to live with greater independence in a safe, well equipped and happy home. This year, year one of three, we begun this vital work by creating a home for three individuals with developing needs in Rotherham.

Dennis, Valerie and Gladys are great friends and were living together in Rotherham. However, due to their developing needs their previous home was becoming increasingly unsuitable and unsafe. They desperately needed to be moved into new, more suitable accommodation, however they also desperately wanted to remain living together, as great and long term friends.

We were able to identify a suitable property just four miles down the road from their previous home. It did however require multiple adaptations to make it suitable for their advancing needs. The generous support of The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation made these adaptations possible. Consequently I am thrilled to report that, at the end of May this year we were able to move Dennis, Valerie and Gladys out of the unsuitable property and into their beautiful new home, fully adapted to their needs and wants. Crucially The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson's support enabled the following works to be undertaken:



- **Removal of the existing kitchen in order to raise the floor, remove all steps and install non slip flooring**

All three individuals have mobility issues and the original kitchen floor was uneven. So much so two of the tenants would have been unable to access the kitchen area at all. In order to make it fully accessible the kitchen was removed, the floor raised and levelled and a new kitchen installed. The kitchen was chosen by the tenants.

- **Widened the doorways throughout the property to ensure full accessibility for the residents when using mobility aids**

As above, currently one of the ladies has a walking frame that she struggles to fit through a standard doorway. What's more, all the tenants are older now. Dennis just turned 90 two weeks ago! So we widened the doorways to both ensure accessibility with the frame but to also future proof the house in case they needed a wheelchair in the future.

- **Renovated the bathroom lay out to maximise accessibility for each resident**

The bathroom needed to be altered to both allow for the door widening but to also allow for the installation of a level access shower. This level access shower is crucial in enabling the tenants to undertake their own self-care with as much independence and autonomy as possible. Were they to not have these adapted facilities they would require much more support, removing all their independence.

- **Renovated the outdoor area by installing a patio surface, creating a safe and accessible outdoor space for the residents to enjoy**

This work has created a safe and fully accessible outdoor space for all three residents to enjoy. It is so vital that when adapting a property the outdoor area is taken into consideration so as to not confine individuals to the inside at all times. Having this accessible outdoor space has provided the tenants with the independence and choice as to how they spend and enjoy their time.

### How Valerie, Gladys and Dennis are settling in to their new home

Louise West, service manager at Mencap commented:

*"Valerie, Gladys and Dennis are great friends and have lived together for 57 years. They are elderly, and although they're independent, they'd reached a time in their life where they needed overnight support. Valerie, Gladys and Dennis wanted to continue living together in Rotherham, so the search began to find a bungalow.*



*One we found the perfect place, Golden Lane Housing made the necessary changes to the property and everyone was fully involved in the process. They're delighted with the new kitchen they've chosen and they can get around more easily.*

Valerie, Gladys and Dennis have settled in to their new home really well. They've got to know their neighbours and are on first name terms with shop keepers. They recently hosted a house warming party. It was a fabulous day; many of their friends and neighbours came."

We asked Valerie and Gladys what they thought of their new home:

*"It's lovely, I like everything especially my conservatory" - Valerie*

*"It's beautiful, I like everything and my new furniture" - Gladys*



*Dennis, Valerie and Gladys in their new home*

### **Year two – next steps and timeline**

As indicated in our original proposal, we have identified Yorkshire as a key area to direct your support. We have an exciting and bespoke new build development in Sheffield that we would like to propose your support in both Year Two and Three is directed to. The development will consist of both a block of flats and a bungalow and will provide homes to 11 people with a learning disability. The scheme is still in its early stages we therefore propose the following timeline for next steps:

By May 2019 we will provide The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation with the following information, in regard to where the second and third instalment of the three year grant will be directed:

- The exact location of the property
- Detailed overview of works to be undertaken
- Information on the prospective tenants who will be moving into the property
- Detailed budget and invoice (as per this year)

### **Acknowledgement opportunities**

- A plaque in the Rotherham property's garden space, a key feature of the works completed here thanks to your support. We will be in touch for further information in the New Year.
- Acknowledgment in both Mencap and GLH's annual report.
- The scheme in Sheffield will have a naming opportunity. For example The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation could name the bungalow a name of their choice.
- We are in the process of redesigning our webpage, acknowledgement of The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation will feature. Acknowledgement will also feature of the GLH website. We will be in touch for further information in the New Year.
- We will seek opportunities for a local press release and a story in our Mencap Matters magazine which reaches up to 60,000 people per edition.

**Thank you again for your support and for changing Valerie, Gladys and Dennis's lives. We look forward to updating you further in 2019. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact: Kimberley Scoltock – [kimberley.scoltock@mencap.org.uk](mailto:kimberley.scoltock@mencap.org.uk) – 07584550332.**