

NEW PERSON-CENTRED BED PRESCRIPTION PROJECT INTRODUCED

'ME and My Bed' (Bed Prescription Project) is a new service innovation that introduces a person-centred approach to bed prescription in St Michael's House (SMH), a large intellectual disability service.

"The overarching aim of the project is to ensure the comfort and safety of service users and to promote a safe ergonomic environment for staff and families/carers. The scope was initially to look at the needs of service users living in our adult residential houses but has since extended to include residential, day and respite services for both adults and children and recently has expanded to include all service users who live in the community," explained Anne Spencer, nursing lead for the project.

"The needs of service users with an intellectual disability are often complex, from both a physical and behavioural perspective. Their needs are changing care as they age and we need to be cognisant of these when working collaboratively with the multi-disciplinary team both within our organisation and local healthcare community when determining the most appropriate bed solution for them. Our ethos is to ensure a person-centred approach to any decision making with the service users, family/carers centric to this process."

The specific project aims have been and continue to be that the team:

- Support service users and staff to make individual decisions around the choice of beds and bed adjuncts including specialist mattresses.
- Comply with national policy and advice and other national guidance regarding the safe use of bed rails.
- Reduce the potential for harm to service users caused by falling from beds or becoming entrapped in bedrails.
- Ensure all reasonable steps are taken to promote the safety of service users and their independence while respecting the rights of them to make their own decisions about their care if they have capacity.
- Identify other steps that should be taken to reduce the risks to service users from falling from bed and falling in their room.
- Staff safety and awareness re ergonomics and safe use of beds and bed-related equipment.
- Link in with other health promotion initiatives across the

organisation to promote healthy active ageing.

Anne explained that it isn't solely about the bed itself, it's invariably about the environment, changing physical needs of the individual service from a behavioural and physical perspective such as cognitive decline, management of incontinence, skin care, posture management, falls safety etc.

"There are many which are interlinked and which need a holistic person-centred approach to manage effectively so that we can ensure that our service users can age safely in place," she said.

"One of the most telling issues arising is that service users are now themselves requesting that their bed is reviewed – they simply want

a new one which is more comfortable and appropriate for their needs."



The photograph of the bed frame is an example of an initiative with Mattress Mick in Coolock to be able to design beds to suit individual service users' needs notably in relation to the height of the bed. The bed frames come in differing colours and service users are encouraged to choose for themselves.