

# Human Right to Family Life



## A Slice\* about Exploring and Enhancing the Visiting Experience

\* Over 20 different strands of work took place between March and October 2022 as part of Rights Made Real Phase 2. Each of these strands was situated under one of 4 Human Rights. This Slice offers a slice of insight into one of those strands.

# HUMAN RIGHT TO FAMILY LIFE

## A Slice about Exploring & Enhancing the Visiting Experience

This Opportunity was about exploring ways to hear from families, residents and staff about how they are currently feeling about the visiting experience, and how those in the care home community might like to come together to think about (small, real and possible) ways in which to enhance the experience.

Five care homes participated in this Opportunity. They participated in a 2 hour online workshop where they were able to celebrate and share ways in which they currently gather perspectives and ideas from residents, relatives and staff, as well as try out what might be some new, simple, yet effective ways of helping people to talk about what is important to them, and what they value in terms of visiting in the care home. The learning partner for the Rights Made Real project facilitated the workshop and offered opportunities for care homes to have an in person visit to support them to use some different techniques to hear the experiences of those visiting care homes.

Workshop attendees then were able to apply for a grant (up to £500), to support them to take forward ideas generated from their conversations with residents, families and staff about enhancing the visiting experience.

### Creating Connections between Right to Family Life and the Principles from the National Care Standards

Some key elements of this opportunity connected with the Right to Family Life and the Principles were:

- The recognition that the visiting experience can be both rewarding and challenging for families.
- The importance of collaboration in creating connection, space and the sense of community for families visiting the care home.

# What we've Heard

Stories from staff and families about their experience of exploring and expanding the visiting experience.

“We pay particular attention to families leaving and feeling ok – we try to make sure we have a conversation with each person when they leave and ask them questions like how has your mum/dad been today and how are you feeling. Through COVID we had started to walk families to the resident’s rooms – this was a great opportunity to connect with them and ask them how they were. We are trying to carry this on post-Covid. I have also been phoning people to ask more about how they would like their visit to go, what sort of environment would work for them, would they like us to be involved in the visit in any way. Families have been really responsive”.

“I always get a warm welcome when I come to visit – I am offered a cup of tea, staff chat to me. The staff are wonderful. I went to other homes and chose this one because the atmosphere was just different. Staff are smiling and chatty it feels homely. I like to bring a friend with me when I visit – when I am on my own – it is silence, I sit and then put the TV on. When I have a friend with me we talk about gossip – my husband likes hearing us chat. It is easier – there is a 3 way interaction - less intense. I think staff feel they should not come in when I am visiting but I like when they come – I get the 3 way chat”.

“How I would like things to be if visiting was at its best is ... Calm and relaxed, Staff families and residents all playing a part. An active experience. Overcoming obstacles together. Calming soothing. People coming and going as they please. Path opened up. Opportunities to explore and get outside. Be mindful that everyone is different and may want different things out of the experience. Notice and observe how things are going – help people with visiting if it is difficult. Check out expectations and chat through how realistic these might be. Take pressure of the visiting experience”.

Staff had been able to develop the visiting experience following the workshops in their ways of being/communicating and connecting with families that did not necessarily require funding.

A range of experiences were taken forward with the funding (some of which are still in progress) which included:

- Transforming an outbuilding called the Clubhouse into a tearoom so residents and families feel they are going out somewhere out of the care home
- Upgrading gardens including new garden furniture, making garden areas more safe for everyone and extending the access to the garden in colder weathers through purchasing canopies for cover if it is raining.
- Workshop with relatives, facilitated by Suzie Ferguson- Therapeutic Clowning Practitioner- this work is described in the Slice about Enhancing and Exploring Connection

## 1 Thing you Might Want to Do

Ask one family member how they feel about the visiting experience.

## Something you Might want to Ask or Think more About

What did you like in the stories above?

Have you or someone you know done something a little bit similar?

What has thinking about these stories sparked in you?

