

# Don't ever put me in a care home



The perceived wisdom is that we should all live at home for as long as possible, but quite how long is 'as long as possible' for people with dementia?

**T**he Daily Telegraph reported on 11 April that elderly patients stuck in hospital beds are ageing 10 years in 10 days. None of us at Rose Lodge were surprised by this revelation, particularly as it relates to people living with dementia. It confirms our own experience that people who join us after a hospital stay are significantly more progressed in their dementia than they were before their hospital stay, often with permanently reduced mobility and increased levels of confusion. This is not the hospital's fault. However much they try to provide a dementia-friendly environment, the systemised provision of healthcare will always take priority. For people living with dementia the typical hospital is a bewildering place, and such stays should be avoided as much as possible. The question is how?

## WHY DO PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA GO TO HOSPITAL?

On the whole people with dementia don't end up in hospital because of the type of medical conditions that hospitals specialise in. More often than not a hospital stay comes about because people are unable to look after themselves well enough at home. A simple fall, poor nutrition and hygiene, getting lost outside, and the absence

of an environment that continuously supports people that are confused.

## THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL.

The perceived wisdom is that people are always better off staying in their own home for as long as possible and while this makes sense intuitively, in practice the strived-for independence so often results in social isolation, without the support and stimulation that enables people with dementia to lead meaningful lives. Confusion feeds on confusion and a rapidly downward spiral often results in a crisis followed by a stay in hospital and a sharp drop in quality of life and life expectancy.

## THE WISDOM OF ACTING EARLY.

Of course most of us feel that we want to stay in our own homes as long as possible. Most of the people who live at Rose Lodge felt just like that. What they found though is that they enjoyed being in a community where they can be active and sociable. A place that enhances their independence rather than reduces it, where they can stay in touch with their family, where they feel safe and loved. Many people join us relatively early in their dementia, perhaps just for a couple of hours a week to join the choir or an art class,

and then steadily increase their visits as they make friends and their dementia progresses. And at some stage they may decide to just stay among friends and this becomes a relatively easy decision and a gentle transition.

## YOUR LAST HOME.

Rose Lodge provides a social club, day care, respite care, and two residential communities for people living with the different stages of dementia. For most of our residents Rose Lodge is their last home.

## YES WE ARE DIFFERENT!

Come and see for yourself. We'll put the kettle on...

Peter de Groot is a principal at Dementia Care Devon which operates the Cottage and Lodge at Rose Lodge, two small communities for people living with Dementia. ♦

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# Gold Award

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Blog & dementia info: [www.dementiacaredevon.co.uk](http://www.dementiacaredevon.co.uk)



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