

OpenLearn animation

Quilt of excellence

Narrator:

Our research showed that there are three key aspects involved when providing excellent care to older people with learning disabilities and their family carers. Each aspect is made up of its own unique elements. The result is really good support.

We talked about how we could show what this support might look like in a visual way. Our team came up with the idea of a patchwork quilt. We call it the quilt of excellence. A patchwork quilt can be added to and changed over time, developing just like our lives do.

A patchwork quilt also shows us how lots of smaller elements work together to make the whole. So, our quilt of excellence for older people with learning disabilities and their family carers has three main parts, each with many different patches.

The first is about supporting people to live well as they get older. Through our research, we found that living well when people get older means having a good home, being able to get out and about in the fresh air, enjoying nature and being supported to do the things you really love. Enabling people to sustain relationships with their friends, family members, and support workers as they get older is also really important.

The second key element is supporting people to age well. This is about supporting people with the physical, mental, social, and emotional changes related to ageing. It's also about planning ahead.

This means really thinking about what happens as people age, paying close attention to their health and well-being and any changes they may be experiencing. It's also about ensuring people are in a home that they can grow older in, and supporting people around issues of death, dying and bereavement.

The third aspect of the quilt is about creating a caring environment for everyone. This involves looking after staff, enabling them to be confident and well trained to provide excellent care as people get older. It's also about helping staff to feel happy and well supported in their work.

This is also about looking after family carers, supporting them, really listening to them, and keeping them involved in decisions, and being aware of their changing needs as they too get older. And very importantly, it means making sure the person is in a nurturing environment that respects their human rights, enables people to be supported by people that they like, and by people who like them.

When this patchwork of good practice comes together, we get the quilt of excellence, the best ways to support people with learning disabilities and their family carers as they get older.