

## Best interests decision-making case study: Answers

### Best interests checklist

- What efforts have I made to enable Miss Powell to participate in making the decision?
  - Found out about communication needs and preferences
  - Ensured a known and trusted person was available at an appropriate time and location
- What relevant circumstances have I identified?
  - Nature of the care and treatment at the home including the type of home
  - Number of residents
  - Levels of supervision and monitoring
  - Medication used to sedate or manage behavior
  - Autonomy in choices about activities
  - Less restrictive options for care available
- What information about Miss Powell's past and present views am I taking into account?
  - I have noted that Miss Powell's life has been lived in institutional care since the age of 5 and that at times she shows distress and agitation at living with others.
- How have I avoided making discriminatory assumptions on the basis of Powell's age, condition, appearance or behaviour?
  - By considering less restrictive care options, I am neither assuming that people with severe learning disabilities always require institutional care nor that Miss Powell has spent too many years in an institutional setting to be able to adjust to a supported living arrangement.
- Is Miss Powell likely to regain capacity? Why?
  - Very unlikely as she has had her learning disability since birth.
- Does this decision regard life-limiting treatment?
  - No
- What information have I gathered from consulting others and how does this inform my decision?
  - The level of care Miss Powell needs to main her health and wellbeing and am weighing this against her distress at times with living with others.
  - Her sister's desire to move her closer to her home so she can be in regular contact.
  - The social worker has identified a supported living placement as a potential alternative option that could reduce the level of restrictions in Miss Powell's life, reduce her distress and increase her contact with her sister.
- How have I avoided restricting Miss Powell's rights?
  - I have considered all available alternative options and ways to meet her care needs that involve the least restriction to her.
  - Explored the option of increasing contact with her sister.
- In summary, how I am I taking all this into account when deciding?
  - It is my opinion that Miss Powell's current placement is in her best

interests at the moment while the options for a move to Scotland are explored. Future options for the social worker to explore may include either a similar specialist learning disability home or a supported living arrangement near where Miss Powell's sister lives in Aberdeen.

## Balance sheet structure

### Options

#### Option 1: continue current placement

##### Benefits

- Miss Powell's care needs are well-known to staff
- Miss Powell responds well to known staff
- Miss Powell's sister supports current arrangement, at present

##### Risks

- Level of distress and agitation that living with others causes Miss Powell
- Miss Powell's sister can only visit twice a year

#### Option 2: learning disability placement in Aberdeen area

##### Benefits

- Similar level of qualified and skilled staff available to care for Miss Powell

##### Risks

- Staff will need time to get used to Miss Powell's needs
- Miss Powell is likely to take time to settle into new home
- Level of distress caused by living with others is unlikely to reduce.

#### Option 3: supported living arrangement in Aberdeen area

##### Benefits

- Miss Powell's sister will be able to visit more regularly
- Miss Powell will receive support in a setting tailored to meet her needs
- Miss Powell's agitation at noise and the proximity to others may be reduced

##### Risks

- Living alone may not improve Miss Powell's levels of distress and agitation

## What is your best interest's decision?

- My chosen option is
  - Option 1 for the moment while Option 3 is explored
- This is because
  - Miss Powell's needs are currently met adequately in the care home. It

will take time for a supported living arrangement to be set up in Scotland, and the social worker will need to explore how social care is arranged in Scotland.

- I think the following conditions should be attached to this authorisation
  - The managing authority to try other ways to manage Miss Powell's distress other than sending her to her room when other resident's behaviour becomes an issue.
  - The managing authority to record activities and trips out of the home, both offered and refused.
  - The social worker to explore the possibility of a supported living arrangement closer to Miss Powell's sister.
- I think the authorisation should last for
  - Six months
- I think the recommended RPR should be
  - A paid representative as Miss Powell's sister is not able to visit often enough to monitor her well-being in the home.