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Supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health issues: service users' experiences

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Figure 2: Harry

Harry is a man in his early sixties with a mild learning disability and a history of mental health needs relating to chronic schizophrenia. He spent over three decades in a long-stay hospital before being resettled into the community. Harry moved into his present staffed group home just over fourteen years ago. Since Harry has lived in his present home, he has been admitted as an 'in-patient' to a psychiatric unit, which is located in the local general hospital, on three occasions. These admissions to the psychiatric unit lasted several weeks, and were necessary due to observed changes regarding a marked deterioration in his mental health and behaviour, which had presented major challenges to his direct carers and fellow service users, and required specialist treatment and support. At the present time, Harry continues to be prescribed antipsychotic medication, and his treatment is regularly reviewed by the specialist psychiatric services provided by the local health authority. He also attends a local authority day centre for people with learning disabilities on two days each week.