



that any move enhances the quality of life of the resident and that their views, and that of their families, are heard.

Families of the residents were understandably initially apprehensive about the move into the community but they have been won over by the changes they have seen. One such family member is Margaret Lyons. Margaret reveals that her son Sean is so much happier since he moved to his own home. Sean communicates non-verbally and can prompt staff about his needs. Staff are supporting Sean to now explore new things and to become more independent. Sean's family visit regularly and he loves to relax with them at home or go for a spin in the car with them.

"Since Sean moved here I have seen great changes in him – he's a lot happier in himself. When he came to St Raphael's first, he was banging and was a danger to himself and staff members. He could lie down and bang his head and he had to be slightly restrained for his own safety and the safety of others, but all that has changed. He is completely changed. It's brilliant," she smiles.

Donal O'Mahony and Catherine Ryan, the nephew and niece of Finbarr O'Leary, who has been in care nearly all of his adult life and was in St Raphael's for over 50 years, have also been won over by the visible changes in Finbarr.

Finbarr refers to his house as 'home'. When asked, Finbarr will comment that he is very happy in his new home. He loves to

greet visitors, open his own front door and show visitors his room and all the lovely photographs he has framed. He is very much involved in the running of the house, helping with the weekly shopping and helping around the house. Finbarr's family are a big part of his life and visit regularly.

"I suppose we were all nervous about his moving here because he was in care for most of his adult life but he seems to have taken to it like a duck to water. For example, today he is helping out doing stuff in the kitchen, and he loves to be out and about and meeting people and he's definitely getting to do a lot more of that. It's definitely a big positive change," explains Catherine.

And it's not just the residents that are enjoying the change. Kim Twohig, registered nurse, intellectual disabilities, says she loves coming to work.

"It's different for the staff too because when you are working in an institution, the staff are almost institutionalised too, without even realising it. But now it's so easy going here, you still have your duties to do but now you are in a family home setting. I just love coming to my job every day," she says.

"Now what I love about it is that while you still need to have some forward planning, we do plan on a day to day basis. For example, if it's a sunny day, we'll go down to the beach, we could have our dinner outside the front, or do whatever the gentlemen would like to do on any given day. We can bring all that into play and go about our day."

TRANSFORMING LIVES

'Transforming Lives' is about the fundamental reform of our disability services and working together to ensure that people with a disability are at the heart of, and involved in, our decision making. A key part of this reform programme is supporting people with a disability to choose where they want to live, who they want to live with and how they spend their time.

A video, which captures Jerry, Sean and Finbarr's transition to community living with the support they need, demonstrates that this kind of move can literally 'transform lives'. St Raphael's Centre is one of 19 centres nationally that has received funding to enable them to develop homes for people moving from congregated settings.

Nationally, €100 million is being allocated over six years under the Disability Capital Programme to enable this to happen. During 2016-17, €40 million of this funding was allocated and there are currently 87 houses being developed which, when completed, will be home to almost 300 people.

Further information and video can be found here: www.hse.ie/timetomoveon

ABOVE LEFT: Finbarr O'Leary and Kim Twohig, registered nurse, intellectual disabilities, at a new community house in Youghal, Co Cork. Finbarr and three other men recently moved from an institutional setting to live in their new home. ABOVE RIGHT: Sean Lyons and Yvonne Dalton, CNM1 at the kitchen table at the Sean's new home. ABOVE: Finbarr O'Leary in his bedroom at his new home in Youghal. FAR LEFT: Finbarr O'Leary and Kim Twohig. PHOTOS: BRIAN LOUGHEED