

# Disabled are sent to old people's homes

**Greg Hurst** Social Affairs Editor

More than 3,000 disabled adults are living in residential homes for older people, figures show.

Charities have called for councils to end the practice of placing younger adults with learning disabilities in care homes for residents aged 65 and over, saying that it is damaging their quality of life. The MS Society, which supports people with multiple sclerosis, said that it knew of cases of people in their 30s and 40s living in care homes where the majority of residents were in their 80s and 90s.

Local authority leaders, who arrange for the care of vulnerable adults, admitted that some placements were "compromised" and blamed financial pressures and rising demand for the services. Many councils admitted that dozens of adults aged 18-64 with learning difficulties were living in retirement homes, in response to freedom of information requests from the MS Society.

In Plymouth there were 211 such cases, with 162 in Durham, 139 in Liverpool, 123 in Lancashire, 113 in York and 103 in Trafford. Their conditions included cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, motor neurone

disease and strokes. A total of 3,300 cases were recorded but the charity said that, since only half of councils responded, the actual figure would be much higher and could mean that almost one in seven younger disabled adults in residential care was living in a home for older people.

They included Julie Murch, from Bristol, who was diagnosed with MS when she was in her late 50s and was placed in a retirement home where she died last month aged 64. Her son, Wesley, said: "It made me sad that there was no one her own age she could mix with, especially given how much of a sociable person she was."

Michelle Mitchell, chief executive of the MS Society, said: "It is fundamentally wrong that younger adults with MS are living in older people's care homes in such numbers. These facilities are rarely equipped to meet all of their needs and this can have a hugely detrimental impact on quality of life and mental health."

Margaret Willcox, president of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, said: "Progress on delivering personalised care and support can be compromised by acute pressures on council budgets and rising demand."

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