

Family Placement Schemes for Adult Persons with Intellectual Disabilities living with Elderly Carers

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- With Family placement schemes, people are recruited, selected and trained to provide care for people with intellectual disability in their own home. Can extend to overnight or weekend breaks or long term placements.
- The experience of placing adult persons still relatively limited but growing.
- To date, few studies of family placement services for adult persons have been undertaken.
- Proponents of these schemes argue that placement can be individually tailored to meet the particular needs of persons with an intellectual disability.

Method

In Northern Ireland, two agencies are involved:

1. United Response Northern Ireland;
2. Causeway Health and Social Services

- 30 older carers (aged 55 +) involved in the two schemes – 25 agreed to participate in research;
- 20 other carers from the same geographical area formed a contrast group;
- Number of people with i.d. in the study: 27;
Contrast group: 20;
- 30 placement providers took part.

- Information gathered through individual interviews undertaken by researchers in the homes of carers or of the placement providers;
- People with i.d. mainly interviewed in the day service they attended;
- All interviews used a semi-structured format with selected “trigger” questions and probes;
- Emphasis placed on allowing participants the opportunity to talk freely about their experiences.

Age of those placed ranged from 24 - 75

30%	< 40 years
36%	40 – 49 years
34%	60 + years

12 of those placed	had problems with mobility
16	had visual problems
19	had hearing problems
12	had history of epilepsy
11	had physical / health problems
12	had mental health problems
16	required constant supervision
19	required out of doors supervision

Satisfaction with Family Placement Schemes

20 (74%) of those with i.d. able to answer most of the interviewer's questions.

- Most common reason for liking the placements were that the carers were nice, kind people (85%);
- Enjoyable experience (45%)

Number of people mentioning each activity done when on placement and at home with family carers (n=20)

Activities	Placements	Family Home
Watch TV, DVD	9	15
Shopping	8	6
Drive in car	8	2
Attends church / Mass	4	0
Go to town	3	0

Continued:

Activities	Placements	Family Home
Listen to music	3	9
Relax	3	1
Housework/help with chores	3	10
Walks	3	1
Have meals them	3	0
Go to Bingo/cinema/pub	3	0

Continued:

Activities	Placements	Family Home
Play with pets	2	1
Attend events/competitions	2	0
Look at magazines/catalogues	0	4
Lie in bed	0	2

- All the carers found the schemes helpful in diverse ways; gave them a break from caring; had freedom to do things; knew their relatives looked after properly;
- Carers also mentioned benefits the scheme gave relatives; break for both.

Benefits cont..

- opportunity to meet new people (48%);
- break from the house (44%);
- enjoyment of extended family (32%).
- “It gives them another family, like an extended family”.

- 72% of the carers had no suggestions for the improvement of the scheme;
- 28% suggested the following:
 - more time spent on breaks – more regular;
 - available in emergency;
 - more contact with social worker;
 - costs should be reduced / increased.
- 96% would advise others to become involved.

Views of Carers in Contrast Group

of the 20 in this cohort:

45%	would be interested in involvement in scheme
25%	might be interested in involvement in scheme
25%	not interested
One person unwilling to answer	

Views of Placement Providers

- most frequent reason given for involvement was past experience of working with people with i.d.;
- wanting something to pass the time;
- interested in fostering;
- having a friend who was placement provider;
- being approached by co-ordinator of scheme.

Views cont.

- Most people spoke of enjoyment and satisfaction of scheme;
- Sense of achievement;
- Getting closer to another person;
- Main difficulty related to financial issues.

Service Implications

- Underinvestment in these schemes;
- Value for money;
- Extend these schemes.

Room to Share

- Commenced in 1993: Provides long term permanent care in a host family to 19 people aged 18 +;
- Those currently availing of scheme live in Counties Longford (4); Westmeath (8); and Laois (7)



James and Bridie

2008

Region	Number Placed	Cost €
Westmeath	10	75,264.37
Longford	5	44,278.22
Laois	7	67,182.68
TOTAL	22	186,725.27

(Two people left the scheme in Westmeath and one left in Longford)

Evaluation of Share a Break / Room to Share



Teresa, Betty and Mary



Nicky, Brian and Bernie

Evaluation cont.

- Those interviewed stated that they were happy with participation in the scheme;
- Also, high levels of satisfaction expressed by hosts and carers.

Conclusion:

Home sharing should be viewed as an option in long term planning for accommodation / care needs.