



Jessica's Story

My daughter Jessica, who is now 48, has lived in communities most of her life (mainly, but not exclusively, Camphill). She started at a Rudolf Steiner based residential school in Hampshire , the Sheiling School aged 8. From there she went to two Camphill Communities in the Stroud area and spent about 10 years at the Hatch , from where she went to Paradise House in Painswick (which had been Camphill but was taken over as a result of which the Rudolf Steiner ethos sadly faded away). She enjoys this way of life, and it suits her – plenty of people to engage with (including carers) and many different activities on site.

She left Paradise House in most unfortunate circumstances (which I won't go into here) in the Autumn of 2017.

We then had a very stressful period of more than a year fighting Social Services (Essex) for the finance for a placement we had found at St Elizabeth's, Much Hadham , which specialized in Epilepsy and had nursing care. This funding was initially approved by a panel, but then rejected by the boss as far too expensive, (but her Social Worker thought it would be ideal for her). We then looked at some terrible and completely unsuitable placements (including one that was effectively an old people's home full of old men). They were about to try and force her into a bungalow on the edge of Tiptree against our strong objections, when the NHS came to the rescue, and she was awarded Continuing Health Care; the fees for her place at St Elizabeth's were then agreed.

St Elizabeth's was large (over 60 in the adult care home in bungalows of 6-8), but suited Jessica because she met lots of people and there were lots of different activities all of which came to a halt during Covid and never really came back. St Elizabeth's was rated inadequate by the CQC in November 2021; part , but by no means all , of the CQC's criticisms centred round the "isolated" position of St Elizabeth's , that it was a "campus" style community and was not part of "the community" and was an outdated model of care which would never have been registered if it had applied to be registered in recent times. After the CQC rating, St Elizabeth's went into a downward spiral; the inadequate rating was repeated in a further report by the CQC in June 2022, there were insufficient

care staff which led to safety concerns , management was poor, and the Trustees were out of touch. On 27th July 2022 Notice was given to residents (without any warning or prior consultation) that the Adult Care Home would close on 30th November 2022. We got more members into the Family Association (which we started some time before and which was chaired by my other daughter Juliet) instructed lawyers and threatened Judicial Review about the complete lack of consultation. As a result, they went through the motions of a consultation process , but there was no escape from the safety issues raised by the ever decreasing number of care workers. We had another very stressful 4 months while we looked for an alternative home for Jessica , when we were (again) offered (and being pressed to accept) some appalling placements. We eventually found a suitable home in Walton-on-the-Naze, where she is now settling in.