

Term of Reference (d) the appropriateness of the aged care system for care of young people with serious and/or permanent mental or physical disabilities

My name is Maddy Archer, I am 29 years old and have an acquired brain injury.

I was 21 when I first went into the nursing home eight years ago. I did want to live in a nursing home because my friend was there. I was quite comfortable when I went in and I still am 'comfortable' now. I have my own two-bedroom apartment, I am not living in the main facility. I understand that for most young people this isn't an ideal setting, facility or unit, a nursing home isn't an appropriate place. I am only comfortable because I don't have to speak to anyone if I don't want to. I can keep to myself. Being around people is not my thing. Although going to speak with someone occasionally is nice. But everyone is 40 years older than me, I would rather not be listening to people saying things like 'their wife died' or 'there kids never come and see them.'

Over the years I have made a few friends, that is good, but it is still not the place for me. I don't want to be here when they pass away. A few friends have passed away and this made me upset. I don't want to see people bed-ridden, at the end of their life. I know being here when my closer friends pass away will make me sad.

My carers come everyday except for Wednesday, to take me out, they do things if I want them to (cleaning etc.), although I am independent in everything. I am not very outgoing. I like staying in my unit, watching DVDs and studying. I don't need the support that is provided in the nursing home. I am too young and independent to be living here.

I have been told I have to move out of the nursing home by the 1st of February. However I don't have anywhere to go just yet. I wish that if I didn't have somewhere to go, my stay could be extended. I am made to feel like I have to be out, like I could be homeless. I don't want to live on the street. Who would want me to live on the street? (I'm gorgeous!) I am happy to leave, but need to find a place to go.

I am down on a housing list, I rang DHS and they told me there won't be a place available, "I'm sorry about that" they said. It is harder for me, I don't work and I just can't go and rent anywhere. Being on the housing list, I have been told it could take 10 or 20 years. I don't know why the government don't start building more places for more people.

I have been getting a lot more migraines than usual, my mood has been very low and I have been very snappy and angry for nothing. I don't know that I won't end up on the street, and that is worrying.

Ideally I will be moving into a two bedroom independent unit. I have always dreamed of living in a palace, but that is never going to happen. I would need to live somewhere that allows pets, I can't get rid of my cat, she is the one that keeps me company. And I would love to buy a dog. I need a place to live to be happy, healthy, safe and have space for myself. The government needs to build more housing for people like me.

Options need to be created for young people in nursing homes to move out and live independent lives.