When needs change, can our services change with them?

Dementia, shared understanding
and the support around care

Reece White MSc
ReFOCUS with Reece

Addressing Challenges, Celebrating Successes
Thames Valley Care Association Alliance · 4 November 2026



The person across our service boundaries



The person experiences one life.

Dementia across ages and settings, including
working-age adults and people with learning disabilities.

Home Care services Community teams Hospital

Who brings the understanding and support together?

Before there is a response, there is an interpretation

Mr Chan is awake and walking at night.

“It’s very important.”

Disorientation? An immediate need?
Familiar purpose or identity?

Behaviour gives us information.
It does not give us the answer.

Illustrative vignette

Needs, access and emotional safety



Needs do not disappear.
Access changes.

Comfort Familiarity Connection Purpose

Our response becomes part of the person's experience.

Shared understanding across organisations



- **What is usual for this person?**
- **What has changed?**
- **What appears to help?**
- **What remains uncertain?**

What we have learned should help the next person who supports them.

The support around the workforce



Time to think and discuss

Supervision and shared learning

Clinical advice when it is needed

Clear responsibility for the next step

When we ask teams to respond well,
we need to make that response possible.

Margaret: room to live

- At assessment: largely seated and heavily sedated.
- A renewed approach: clinical review, family knowledge, an adapted environment and a shared staff approach.
- **Within weeks: walking, connecting and taking part again.**

“I feel like I have my mum back, I thought I’d already said goodbye.”

Pseudonym. Professional recollection. Daughter’s letter, as recalled by Reece.

What could we change together?



1. Earlier joint review

Can teams obtain support when needs begin to change?

2. Understanding that travels with the person

Does a transfer explain the person, the changes and the uncertainties?

3. Support that teams can actually access

Can the receiving service deliver the plan and obtain further help?

When needs change, can our services change with them?