

Rehousing and adaptations

Stephen's Story

About

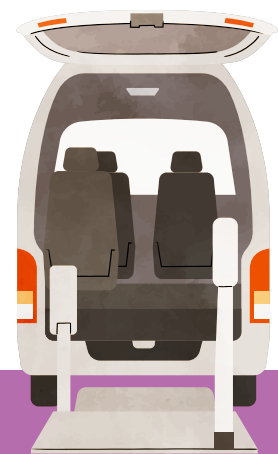
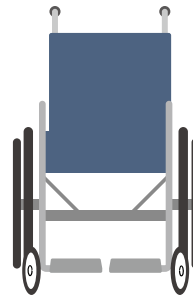
Stephen is 47 years old and lives with his wife, Bianca. Between them they have five boys ranging in age from 12 to 25. Three are older and have now moved out and the two younger children still live with them.

In 2018 Stephen was involved in a motorbike accident which left him with a severe leg wound. Doctors recommended a skin graft and Stephen was put on a waiting list.

Four and a half years later, Stephen still had an open wound, was suffering with immense pain and was on his fourth case of Sepsis (a life-threatening reaction to an infection which happens when your immune system overreacts to an infection and starts to damage your body's own tissues and organs).

Still being given the advice to opt for a skin graft, Stephen and his wife fought for an amputation which was eventually done in 2022.

Returning home after his operation the family had been issued a section 21 notice on their privately rented accommodation which allows the landlord to evict tenants with two months' notice in order to repossess the house. Stephen and Bianca said this was a horrible time for the family.



Contact with Adult Social Services

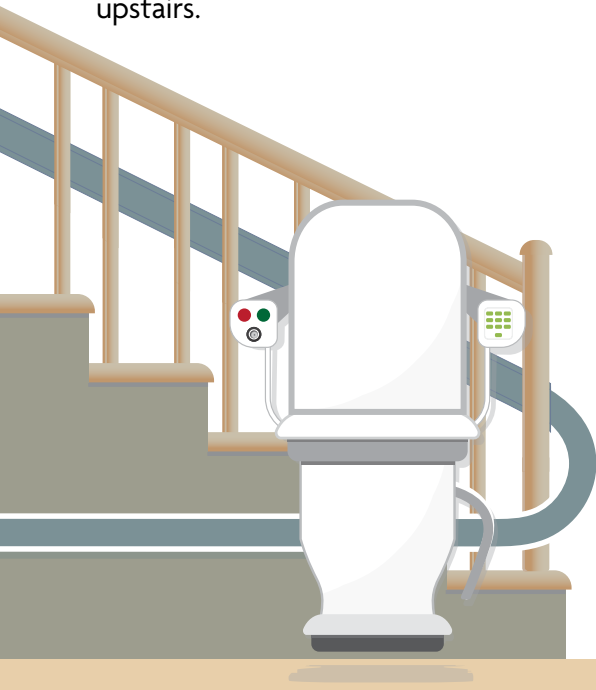
Stephen was aware of Adult Social Services and, after searching on the website, reached out via email for help before Christmas 2022. After waiting several weeks and not receiving a confirmation or hearing anything back which he found frustrating, Stephen emailed again in January. He then received confirmation that he was on the urgent waiting list. A week later Stephen was visited by Occupational Therapist (OT), Gail, from North Somerset Council. Gail completed an assessment to look at what aids and adaptations would support him to be independent at home. Stephen found the process simple and said, "Gail was brilliant". Stephen was learning to walk again with a prosthetic leg and adapting to life in a wheelchair.

A new home

Gail completed an Occupational Therapist Rehousing Report for the Housing Department in order to support Stephens request to move into accommodation more suitable to his needs. Stephen and his family moved into an adapted home in February 2023. The house has a ramp at both entrances, widened doors, two wet rooms, raised plugs, thermostats at the top of radiators, winding window openers and lower windows.

Stephen is on the waiting list for a Disabled Facilities Grant for a stairlift which will allow him to sleep upstairs. Disabled Facilities Grants are given from the Council to disabled people who need to make changes to their home. Currently Stephen sleeps on the sofa and has only been upstairs four times.

He is also waiting for remaining rails to be fitted by the landlord, a shower stall and a second wheelchair to allow him to move around upstairs.



The future

Stephen has regular rehabilitation appointments and ongoing issues which means he cannot currently work. He experiences phantom pains which can be sudden and very painful. He is hoping to get back to work soon and is starting 'Mirror Therapy' for the phantom pains. Mirror Therapy uses a mirror to create a reflective illusion of an affected limb in order to trick the brain into thinking movement has occurred without pain, or to create positive visual feedback of a limb movement.

Stephen's wife, Bianca also experiences chronic fatigue syndrome and three of their children have conditions which are monitored and require regular appointments.

After an unstable time resulting from his accident, Stephen and Bianca described their experience of Adult Social Services as "fast and straight-forward". They are delighted to be living in their adapted property which has given Stephen a new lease of life and freedom to carry out tasks on his own such as going outside. Stephen said, "It's been fantastic what Gail has done".

They are currently applying to Family Fund for a break away as a family. Family Fund is a UK based grant-making charity for families raising a disabled or seriously ill child, on a low income. They provide items families may not otherwise be able to afford. For example, family breaks, white goods, clothing, and play equipment.