Diane's Journey from loneliness and isolation
A Community Gateway Story

August, 2026

Diane, a 73-year-old resident of North East Cornwall, lives alone in a small ground-floor flat. Diane is socially isolated, has limited mobility and no family or friends nearby.

Adult Social Care referred Diane to the Community Gateway, asking if we could provide support and information to help with her feelings of loneliness - the outreach team arranged a visit to chat with Diane face to face. Early conversations revealed that Diane's primary concern was her desire to return to West Cornwall - sharing that the Housing Trust relocated her to her current ground-floor flat over a year ago due to her lifelong mobility issues, but since then, she has felt deeply unhappy. Diane expressed a strong longing to return to a place where she feels connected, safe, and "at home."

During this discussion, we reviewed the steps Diane has taken towards making her move a reality. However, it became apparent that she was struggling to navigate the necessary processes, such as completing the registration with Home Choice and managing the 'bidding' process.

Throughout our conversation, Diane was visibly upset and tearful, clearly anxious about her situation. We provided her with the space to express how the move has affected her, and she conveyed a profound sense of loneliness. She also described experiencing symptoms of anxiety. We gently inquired about any support she might have accessed for her emotional health, Diane responded that she hadn't sought help, as she feels that her local surgery is ***"not interested in me, so I don't bother."***

Diane expressed a sense of feeling invisible to statutory services and shared her frustration, stating that, ***"no one listens to me" and "I am alone and unhappy".***

Supporting Diane's Emotional Wellbeing

Diane showed signs of depression and low mood, so we focused on reducing any risk of harm and ensuring she got timely emotional support. We encouraged her to contact her GP but offered to sit with her while she made the call. She appreciated this support, called the surgery, and completed a Triage form, reassured that someone would call her back that afternoon, which made her very happy.

We also suggested Diane call the **Guinness Trust** for help with her urgent need to move. Our Gateway team spoke with a local representative, provided necessary information, and requested a home visit to complete paperwork, answer questions, and guide Diane through any challenges.

"Thank goodness I've had the chance to meet someone in person; you've made such a difference for me, truly a blessing. I would recommend you to anyone in need of assistance; you've been smashing." ***Diane***

Diane still needed to register with Home Choice for a housing swap, so we helped her call them. Diane also found it difficult and preferred 'in-person' contact - we supported her to register for 'Proxy' bidding, allowing Home Choice to place bids for her and notify her of any success - this significantly reduced her stress and concerns.

Diane also felt that it was important to be better connected in her community, and together we searched for local volunteer support, activities, and Telephone Friendship calls, which really pleased Diane. We were able to arrange Telephone Friendship calls and recommend a range of local groups and activities.

During one of our follow-up visits, we learned her surgery could provide counseling. So, with Diane's consent, we connected her to **NHS Talking Therapies**; she now has an ongoing appointment for one-on-one support.

The impact of Community Gateway

Since our last conversation, Diane has now successfully completed all steps for the home swap. Diane is connected with relevant agencies, equipped with the right information, resources, and support pathways. Diane has also received further support from her surgery to help manage her emotional wellbeing during the move. We've established friendship support to foster connection and belonging, and arranged talking support, providing Diane with a safe space to explore her worries and concerns, offering strategies for her journey ahead.

Diane shared feelings of invisibility, describing herself as **"worthless" and "hopeless"** regarding her house move and interactions with agencies. By advocating for her and reinforcing her right to support, along with building connections with these agencies, we boosted Diane's confidence in managing these tasks independently in the future.

During our calls, we also raised concerns about IT and email expectations from statutory services and agencies, advocating for Diane regarding her challenges in managing these tasks. This in-person support has helped her overcome hidden barriers and discrimination.

Together, we have accessed wellbeing support, connection, and friendship via local groups and provided her with emotional stability throughout the moving process, reducing loneliness, anxiety, and isolation. This will enhance her resilience, sense of worth, and belonging. In a moment when Diane expressed feelings of hopelessness, the Community Gateway helped her regain hope and optimism for the future, supporting her goal of moving "home" to West Cornwall.