

## How to manipulate the words: independent living

Welcome to a trip on the *Manipulation Bus*: we are in the mid-90s when I was in my last year at college. During half term I went home to my dad's house. We had a meeting with the *Manipulators*: their real name is the London Borough of Wandsworth. I had a very friendly OT and she told me about a new block of flats that would be built in a couple of years' time - *ticket please*. The driver asked which stop: *Leonard Cheshire mystery tour*? The driver smiled and he got confused he asked again: "*the Care Home*" stop - here we are. I was 23 years old and excited about getting a flat. I had missed some stops like the "Self-directed Support Lane", "Getting Up When I Want Road" and "PA Lane". But the driver said no, there is only "Ignore Complaints Lane", it is a very long road the driver said. I was thinking to myself where was "Freedom Road" and "Going Out Avenue", but the bus went on that route for 13 years. The surface of the road got rougher because of complaining and frustration, but Wandsworth just said the Manipulation Bus has a contract with us. In the 9<sup>th</sup> year, my dad died and the pressures of the failing bus got worse. Even that didn't break the bus, it struggled on for 4 more long years until the Bus Inspector (the Care Quality Commission) told the Manipulation Bus - no more. There was a Freedom Bus called the ILA bus: it was cleaner and more forward thinking. In the beginning of the move over to ILA, it was scary but I got the bus back in control and I gained more confidence in telling the PAs what I want and how I want it. I am very happy with ILA.

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