

Patients helped into own homes

Long-term units to be shut down

By **TANYA HOLDEN**

FOR 52-year-old David Marshall, opening the front door to his own house for the first time is going to be a life-changing experience.

He has serious learning disabilities and has lived at Hillside House, on the Bassetlaw Hospital site, for 11 years.

But now, thanks to a Government plan for all long-stay 'campus' accommodation to be closed by March next year, Mr Marshall will soon have his own house.

He said: "I'm looking forward to it just being me, I'm looking forward to watching films and having a garden."

Mr Marshall suffers from physical health issues, as well as epilepsy and serious learning disabilities.

He moved into Hillside House after living in a number of different institutions across the county.

Eight people, all with serious learning disabilities, live at the facility, which is run by Notts Healthcare Trust.

'Campus' accommodation is defined as long-term care provided by the NHS and people who live there are patients.

Across the county there are 29 other people who live in campus accommodation, with 19 people in Mansfield and 10 in Newark.

The trust has been assessing the needs of each patient so it can ascertain where to move them to.

Some patients will be moving into houses on their own, while others will move into shared houses with friends they have formed long-term relationships with.

The patients will still receive round-the-clock care and support, but they will be able to choose who looks after them and how their care is provided.

A bid for £3.2m has been submitted to the Department of Health to fund the moves.

Hillside House's manager, Fionn Morven, said: "We go home and it's our own home.



MAKING CHANGES: David Marshall at Hillside House, at Bassetlaw Hospital.

"We decide what we watch on TV and who we let in.

"Some people are not able to make those decisions but, with help, they are.

"They've never had the chance to learn and sometimes we learn by our mistakes.

"Sometimes they will make mistakes but that is just the same for all of us."

Debbie Abrams OBE, general manager for the Community Learning Disability Directorate at Notts Healthcare Trust, said families and carers have been consulted throughout the process.

She told the Post: "It is scary for families who want them to be supported in the best

way possible. As and when properties are identified we want them to be as involved as possible."

The trust has already bought the land on which Mr Marshall's house will be built.

And the architect is going to meet with him to discuss what he would like his house to look like.

Even though Mr Marshall will have 24-hour care, he will have the key to the property and it will be in his name.

Ms Morven said: "This is a chance for people to have a real life on their terms – not our terms."

tanya.holden@nottinghameveningpost.co.uk