[headline]

**"Victoria House has given me my life back and a will to live"**

[intro]

**In 2013, practice nurse Lynda, 59, from Wales, had a haematoma and haemorrhage. Her husband Gareth became her full-time carer. After he died in 2017, Lynda moved to our residential centre in Hull to be closer to her brother. She was supported to grieve and move forward with her life. As part of our** [**40th anniversary series of stories**](https://www.thedtgroup.org/the-disabilities-trust-news-and-media/news/an-a-to-z-of-40-years-of-improving-the-lives-of-people-with-disabilities-part-1)**, here, Lynda shares her story.**

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“When I became ill my husband Gareth gave up his job to become my full-time carer. It was a really difficult time for us.

I was left with severe physical and cognitive impairments. I had weakness on my left side and visual and perceptual disturbance in my left eye. When I first became ill, I couldn't put any weight down and had to use a wheelchair.

Gareth had to take over all the things I used to do. We had been married since 1998 and had a 15-year-old son, Rhys. I was a practice nurse in our local GP surgery in Caerphilly and Gareth was a long-distance lorry driver. I did all the parenting tasks and looked after our finances and household matters as Gareth was away a lot.

We had to come to terms with the changes to our lives and work out how we were going to manage. It was a struggle as this was so new to us both. Our home was not equipped for my needs. I ended up moving into a residential home in 2016 and this gave Gareth a bit of respite.

[subheading]

**Overcoming loneliness**

Sadly, Gareth passed away suddenly when he was playing sport in January 2017. I felt numb. I was scared to cry as that would make it real. I wanted to think he was coming home. My son Rhys moved out of the family home to his girlfriend's mother's house.

My brother Andrew and his wife Diane live in Hull and wanted me closer to them. They searched for somewhere for me to live. That's how I came to live at Victoria House. They looked around and loved it so put in a transfer for me. In November 2019, I went to Victoria House in an ambulance as it was too long a drive in a car from Wales to Hull.

I love it here. Everyone is friendly and caring. I like people to talk to me straight – it shows they care. I was very lonely in the home in Wales as the other people living there were not the same age. I did not realise how lonely I was until I came to live at Victoria House.

The staff seem to take the time to communicate more which makes me very happy. They are very sympathetic to my needs. I am encouraged to take part in all activities. I love the social interaction. At first, I was very reluctant as it was a complete change to have people wanting to involve me.

[subheading]

**Seeing family makes me happy**

Since moving here, my family pay me lots of visits, which make me very happy. They enjoy getting involved in everything that is going on here. The day I arrived, there was a Christmas craft fair on, and my niece and her children loved it.

I had not been here long when Andrew came to tell me that my son Rhys and his partner Serene were going to make me a grandma. This was a shock but wonderful news. Serene went to the doctors with a stomach ache and was told she was seven months pregnant.

[subheading]

**Making a new life**

My hope – and dream – is to walk again. I was doing so well using a frame to walk when I was in Wales. But then I had a fall which knocked my confidence right back. I am building my confidence back up at Victoria House. I recently started using a turntable to transfer to my wheelchair – rather than a hoist – as I have built up more strength.

This is going to be my future home. I don't want to move anywhere else when I have everything I need here. The staff are great, and the other people who live here are my companions. The home is beautiful, and the grounds are stunning.

Victoria House has given me my life back and a will to live. I had lost myself. I think I was grieving for loved ones, past and present.”

[**Find out more about life at Hull’s Victoria House which provides accommodation for people with complex needs.**](https://www.thedtgroup.org/pd-victoria-house)