

Warrior spirit

Paul, Antony and Gavin are no strangers to You First magazine. In April 2016, they graced the back page of our relaunch issue, telling us all about their lives at Spencers Villa in County Durham.

Fast forward two years, and alongside their staff team, they've embraced their warrior spirit of bravery and being open to moving into their new home, Warriors House.

Their journey began last year when despite many great years together at Spencers Villa, it became clear that as the three lads entered their 20s, the environment no longer suited their needs.

Paul Nesbitt, Service Leader, tells us more: "We worked in partnership with Mersten, who are specialists in accessible housing, and sourced an amazing property consisting of self-contained flats


in a nearby town. This meant that the lads could still live together, with the same staff team, but would be able to enjoy their own space too.

"It was important that Paul, Gavin and Antony were involved from the beginning – so we used photos to create a positive storyboard. Colleagues also stocked the cupboards with their favourite snacks so it felt like home. Before long, the lads were referring to it as 'Spencers 2'!

"It's all about the lads being in an environment in which they can flourish. We're already seeing the impact this can have. The whole team are so excited for the future."



No big house move is complete without a trip to IKEA, as Antony found out



Gavin is thriving in his own space and enjoying the sense of freedom it brings!

Paul's tips for a great transition



Possibilities, planning and partnership.

🗨️ Always look at the art of the possible. It might seem like we're doing a great job, but can we do better?

"Plan, plan, plan. Account for absolutely everything, and then some! Because the lads have autism, we have to be really meticulous, but it really does pay off.

"Work in partnership with your colleagues, professionals and partner organisations. The expertise and support from Mersten was key to our success. 🗨️"



Paul has really settled in since moving and is thriving in his own space