

## **“Doors which lock when closed”**

We have all heard about “locked houses”. These are supported accommodation group homes where the residents are restricted from leaving the house unescorted for their own safety, as they have little or no ability to understand direction and conditions in the outside world.

In contrast, these residents should be afforded as much freedom as possible inside their group home. It may, nevertheless, be necessary to place some restriction on food cupboards, for example. And residents’ rooms may need to be locked when they are away for a period of time, say with their family. In this case, staff use a key, not just pull the door shut to lock it.

What is unacceptable though, is residents’ rooms being fitted with locks which lock the door from the outside whenever the door is closed (Note: there is never the question of a resident being able to be locked-in, as doors always open from the inside). With this type of lock, residents can frequently be locked out of their rooms by a resident who likes to close doors.

Residents locked out of their rooms is a breach of human rights per se. But given their limited capacity to do but a fraction of that which we neuro typicals take for granted, being locked out of the only real sanctuary they have, their room, is a real restriction on their reasonable rights.

We are seeking views on the use of room door locks which lock the door when the door closed – “What say?”