



Supporting Independence at Ivy Cottage

Supporting Independence Ltd provides supported living accommodation for people with complex health needs. The company enables independent living and its properties are a stepping stone from residential care or a stay in hospital.

Supporting Independence has services at a number of locations. One of these, Ivy Cottage, is a shared house, where clients have access to 24-hour support. Ivy Cottage is a Grade II listed building located in beautiful Sussex countryside.

Currently, Ivy Cottage has three residents. They spend most of their time in the main part of the house and easy access is vital. Unfortunately their fire doors were getting in the way.

Sarah Akehurst, assistant manager, said: "Our fire doors are really heavy and, because they had to remain closed all the time, our clients struggled to move around. It was a real source of frustration, particularly if they were carrying anything. I'd often hear swearing as the residents struggled to get through the fire doors!"

"To make life easier, staff would sometimes prop the doors open. Unfortunately this defeats the whole object of having fire doors in the first place."





Supporting Independence allows residents to live independently in their own home, making their own choices and leading their life in the way they want. It's important for residents to maintain a balance of good eating and a clean living environment with having sufficient leisure time.

As part of this ethos, clients have a weekly plan, including cooking for a healthy diet and household duties. With heavy fire doors getting in the way, doing the cleaning was difficult and the kitchen door had to remain closed, making it very dark. A solution was needed.

Staff decided to install Dorgard SmartSound on the lounge and kitchen doors. Dorgard SmartSound is a wireless device, easily fitted to the bottom of the fire door. It holds the door open, and if the fire alarm sounds, it releases the door automatically. This means the fire door is closed in the event of fire, and able to do its job.

Sarah said: "The SmartSounds have made life so much easier. Now people can get in and out, and there's no swearing from people being clouted on the back by a heavy fire door!"

"It's ideal for the kitchen as it means we can air the room

out. The best part is the amount of natural light brought in by having the doors open. Before it was very dark and we had to have the lights on all the time, but we don't need to anymore. This really helps with the electricity bill!"

"Having the doors open helps with the cleaning too. Residents can just walk through easily with the vacuum cleaner."

Sarah said: "I've worked at places before with other hold-open devices, but the noise of the vacuum cleaner kept setting them off and the doors would close. We don't have that problem with Dorgard SmartSound."

"Whenever we test the alarm, the doors close automatically. Everyone is loving the SmartSounds!"

