

Information for Prospective Carers



What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives gives people with a learning disability, a physical disability, mental health difficulties or other health or sensory disabilities the opportunity to live in a family home with ordinary people who will support them to be part of their home and community.



Shared Lives allows individuals to live as part of a family, giving them opportunities to do the things they would like to do.

The Scheme aims to provide and enhance the independence of people who use the service and to enable them to form new and meaningful relationships and to broaden their experiences.

Shared Lives is about a household sharing their home, family life, interests and skills with someone who needs some help and support to live a fulfilling life.

Shared Lives is delivered by skilled, trained and committed individuals who have chosen to share their homes and their lives with others. Shared Lives carers are supported by their Shared Lives scheme, which matches carers and service users, monitors the well being of the service user and supports the Shared Lives carer.

What types of services are available?

- Long term – where the person lives full time in the Shared Lives carers home.
- Short breaks/Respite – The person will stay at the Shared Lives carers home for short breaks. This can be overnight, a weekend or 1-2 weeks at a time.
- Day support – The person would be with the Shared Lives carers in the daytime but not stay overnight.

Who can be a Shared Lives carer?



Carers are members of the public who have offered their time and support to individuals who require it.

They can be married, single, they might or might not have children.

Shared Lives carers come from a wide range of backgrounds and all have different family circumstances. The diversity is what makes Shared Lives so successful.

Carers need to live in North Somerset and if providing overnight stays must have a spare room.

Key qualities in Shared Lives carers are:

- A good sense of humour
- Plenty of patience and empathy
- An ability to face everyday challenges head on
- Willingness to share their lives and homes.
- Some experience is preferred but full training is available.

Do Shared Lives carers get paid?

Shared Lives carers receive a fee for the support and accommodation they provide.

Currently this is £357 per week.

The service user will also contribute towards food and utilities.

Shared Lives carers are self employed and they receive tax breaks on money received from Shared Lives.



What is the process to become a Shared Lives carer?

Shared Lives carers go through an assessment process to assess suitability and commitment. This involves a Shared Lives worker spending time to get to know them and carrying out various checks. From application to approval panel can take up to 6 months.

The Shared Lives worker will arrange to visit you and explain further about Shared Lives and what it involves.

The prospective carer would complete an application form. The form requests that you supply identity and contact information about yourselves. It also asks you to explain why you are applying to become a Shared Lives carer. It asks you to detail your work experience in order that the scheme can easily determine whether you are completely new to supporting people or experienced and we can plan the assessment accordingly.

Once the assessment is completed it is taken to an approval panel that are responsible for making decisions whether a person is suitable to be approved as a Shared Lives carer.

The approval panel usually consists of a service user, workers from other Shared Lives schemes, and other members of North Somerset Council. To ensure that the carers are given a fair and unbiased panel, panel members are not allowed to have had any prior experiences with the carers.

Matching Process



Shared Lives will carefully match service users with carers who can support them in the best possible way and who will welcome them into the family.

This is called matching.

When matching we take into account, peoples personalities, interests, skills and experience, type of family they wish to live with etc.

Shared Lives carers are carefully matched with service users who Shared Lives workers believe will be best suited for them. This means that the individuals are given the support that they require and will feel comfortable with their carers and new placements. Shared Lives workers match carers and individuals by:

- Listening carefully to the kind of placement that service users want;
- Making sure that carers are fully prepared (through training and assessments) for an individual's specific needs;
- Introducing carers to service users and arranging visits between them.

If the service user would like to meet up with any of the Shared Lives Carers we will make arrangements for this. This kind of visit is called an introduction and is part of the matching process. The shared lives worker and/or social worker will usually facilitate this visit. If this meeting goes well the service user may want to visit again or come to tea and it can include an overnight stay if the service user is thinking about having short breaks with the Shared Lives carer or of living with them for a while.

Both carers and service users can halt the process at any time if they feel the match is not right for them.

What support do Shared Lives carers receive?

Shared lives carers receive ongoing support and training including:

- Allocated Shared Lives worker.
- Regular visits and support
- Shared Lives meetings
- Social events with other Shared Lives carers
- Support as part of a registered service.
- Monitoring support and reviews
- Pre and post approval training, including Induction to Shared lives, first aid, safeguarding adults etc.

All carers are encouraged to develop a support network with other Shared Lives carers.



What do people say about Shared Lives?

"We really appreciate the personal care and commitment given by the Shared Lives carers. We have noticed such a change in our son and cannot thank them enough" **Parents**

"The process to be approved as Shared Lives carers was lengthy. We met with the social worker many times over several months. She helped us to explore what it would be like inviting someone into our home who needed help." **Shared Lives carer**

"Ian soon settled in and is now part of the family. We have learnt lots from him. He likes family days out so we now go to the pictures and 10 pin bowling. We're learning about rap music and he's learning about classical music." **Shared Lives carer**

"It felt perfectly natural to have someone come into our home" **Shared Lives carer**

"Shared Lives is a great scheme. It enriches our lives. It provides Sue with a real home and the possibility of a more independent life in the future." **Shared Lives carers**

"Our job is to support David to increase his independence and eventually live on his own." **Shared Lives carers**

"I used to live in a residential home but now I live with a family. I get to do lots of new things like cooking and going to the pub. I like living here." **Shared Lives service user**

"Sometimes my mum needs a break and then I stay with Wendy and Robert. They are like a second family to me." **Shared Lives service user**

"I was able to visit the carers to make sure we would get along before making up my mind." **Shared Lives service user**

"I don't want to be anywhere else other than Shared Lives." **Shared Lives service user**

"The 'matching' process is very good and tries to make sure we are the most suitable person to support the person using the service." **Shared Lives carers**

"They (the carers) treat me like any other adult, not like someone with a learning disability." **Shared Lives service user**

"If I have a concern or question there is always someone to phone." **Shared Lives carers**

I am interested, what do I do now?

You can contact Shared Lives team who can answer any further questions or arrange to time to visit you at home.

You can complete the application form and return to Shared Lives team. A Shared Lives worker will then contact you to make arrangements to start the assessment.



Where can I find out more?

If you have any questions about Shared Lives please contact the North Somerset Shared Lives team:

By telephone:
01934 427600

By post:
North Somerset Shared Lives
Partnership House
Building 400
Worle parkway
Weston-S-Mare
North Somerset
BS22 6WA

Information is available on:
www.ld4u.org.uk

DVD clips of Shared Lives in action can be viewed by following the link on

www.ld4u.org.uk or www.sharedlivesw.org.uk

More information on Shared Lives nationally can be found on

www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk

You can view CQC's inspection report on

www.cqc.org.uk/directory/1-229776551

Contents

What is Shared Lives?.....	Page 1
What types of services are available?.....	Page 1
Who can be a Shared Lives carer?....	Page 2
Do Shared Lives carers get paid?.....	Page 2
What is the process to become a Shared Lives carer?.....	Page 3
Matching Process.....	Page 4
What support do Shared Lives carers receive?.....	Page 5
What do people say about Shared Lives?.....	Page 6
I am interested, what do I do now?....	Page 7
Where can I find out more?.....	Page 7