

**Information
for families**

Shared Lives



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk/sharedlives

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What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is:

Shared Lives is a highly flexible form of supported living. The Shared Lives Scheme recruits Shared Lives Carers to provide individuals with the opportunity to live in the community, where they can develop their skills and confidence in a stable supported environment.

Shared Lives is a service provided in the Carers own home, (they may live alone, with their partner and/or other family members). They offer many of the important things only a real home can. They enable someone to live an ordinary life at the heart of their community. They value the person and promote their independence and choice. They provide people placed with support in day-to-day living, their own personal space, emotional as well as physical support and a sense of belonging and being part of the community.

Any adult who is eligible for a Community Care Assessment may be able to use the Shared Lives Scheme. They usually have either, a learning disability, mental health support needs, a physical disability and/or are an older adult.

Shared Lives arrangements are made by an agency (a Shared Lives Scheme). The Scheme approves and trains the Shared Lives Carers (SL Carers), receives referrals, matches the needs of people seeking a service with SL Carers, and monitors the arrangements. Shared Lives arrangements are very different from more traditional forms of 'care'.

The features that make them different include:

- People in Shared Lives arrangements have the opportunity to share in the life of the SL Carers' family and social networks.
- SL Carers use their family home as a resource.
- Arrangements to provide committed and consistent relationships.
- The relationship between the SL Carer and the person (Service User) placed with them is of mutual benefit.
- SL Carers can support up to three people at any one time.
- SL Carers do not employ staff to provide care to the people placed with them.

Shared Lives placements are provided in ordinary homes, by the people who live there, (whether they live alone, with their partners and/or other family members). They offer people many of the important things only a real home can including help with day-to-day living, providing someone with their own personal space, emotional as well as physical support, a sense of belonging, and being part of the community.

How does Shared Lives work?

Any adult who is able to have a Community Care Assessment and who meets eligibility criteria for services may be able to use a Shared Lives Placement. If following an assessment, usually by a social worker, and it has been agreed that the Service User would benefit from the support that can be offered by Shared Lives, the Scheme will then be contacted with information – this is called a **Referral**.

The Shared Lives Scheme will look at the available vacancies to see if any would be suitable. Shared Lives Officers will look at a variety of things including support needs, likes and dislikes, cultural

and religious beliefs, and the location of the placement; they will also look at the skills, knowledge and experience of the SL Carers – this is called the **Matching Process**.

Each Shared Lives household has an allocated Shared Lives Officer from the Scheme. They will be involved in co-ordinating the matching process and ensuring everyone is happy with any proposed arrangements before any placement is agreed. The Shared Lives Officer will be on hand throughout the matching process to answer questions people may have and are contactable at the Scheme.

If a suitable placement is identified, an introductory visit will be arranged for the Service User to meet the SL Carer. If this goes well, overnight/weekend stays are then usually arranged to give the Service User and SL Carer a clearer idea of whether they would like to go ahead with the placement.

If a placement goes ahead, a **Placement Agreement** and a **Service User Plan** will be formulated to detail the arrangements for the placement, and to provide information about what the Service User and SL Carer will agree to do in the placement.

Depending on how it is agreed, your family member's placement is likely to be funded through a **Licence Agreement**, a contribution from their own benefits and a support element paid for by Coventry City Council, which entitles them to occupy a room in the house. Family members can request copies of these documents with agreement from the person placed.

The first six weeks at the placement will give your family member and the SL Carer time to get to know each other to decide if the placement will be suitable. An initial review will then be held to decide if the placement will continue, this will normally be

attended by a Shared Lives Officer and a worker from the Case management Team, family members can also attend with the agreement of the person placed.

If the placement goes ahead, both parties can give notice at any time if they do not wish to continue. A period of 28 days notice must be given, however this can differ in certain situations, for example, where circumstances identify that an alternative placement is required immediately, due to concerns at the placement and/or the Carers change in circumstances, meaning they are no longer able to provide the support required to maintain the placement safely.

Shared Lives Officers carry out regular **Monitoring Visits** at the placement and hold a **Placement Review** annually or whenever significant changes in circumstances are identified. Family members are not routinely invited to attend Placement Reviews, however, Shared Lives Officers will seek their views, and the views of others such as day service support workers as part of the review process.

Shared Lives Officers also hold an annual **Carer Review** with the SL Carer to establish how well they are carrying out their role, to identify their learning and support needs, and to monitor the standard of care that is being provided. Where a SL Carer has been newly approved, the Scheme will provide more intensive support during the probationary period, which is usually 12 months.

If the Scheme cannot find an appropriate Carer and/or household, a placement will not be made. The Service User can then be placed on the Scheme's waiting list. Should a vacancy arise that is thought to be suitable, a worker from the Scheme will contact the Case Management Team to see if it is still needed.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Service Users:

Service Users should expect the following:

- The opportunity to share in the daily life of the SL Carer, and to be included in their family and social networks.
- The right to have the home maintained to a safe and comfortable standard.
- The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- The right to experience ordinary life opportunities, to take risks and to be listened to.
- The right to have their ethnic and cultural differences recognised and provided for; and their sexuality respected.

Service Users are expected to:

- Pay rent, board, a personal contribution and to purchase their own toiletries, clothing and community/leisure pursuits.
- Respect the SL Carer's home and not cause any deliberate damage in it or to it.
- Respect the wishes of other people who live in the household.
- Keep to the agreed house rules.
- Talk to the SL Carer, Shared Lives Officer, Case management Team or Advocate if they are unhappy or worried about anything in the placement.

Shared Lives Carers:

SL Carers are self employed and cannot employ any other care staff. They may use Support Carers (usually the Carer's family

members or friends) for respite purposes (a break) but this is on an unpaid basis and with prior agreement from the Scheme.

SL Carers are expected to:

- Meet the physical, social, cultural and emotional support needs of Service Users as agreed in the Service User Plan and Placement Agreement.
- Attend training relevant to the role.
- Maintain detailed records including medication and financial records.
- Build positive working relationships with other professionals, and attend and contribute to reviews.
- Maintain a healthy and safe place for people to live.
- Provide support to Service Users to keep in contact with family and friends, to develop independence skills, and to manage finances as necessary.
- Ensure that any arrangements for care and support in their absence, is appropriate and is agreed with the Scheme.
- Ensure that arrangements are made with the Scheme for the necessary Criminal Records Bureau checks to be carried out for support Carers.
- Ensure that family members are notified should the Service User be taken ill and/or hospitalised.

The house and all the amenities within the house are shared. The payment made to the SL Carer by the Service User is inclusive of rent, household maintenance costs, utility bills, food costs, and any other costs as agreed and detailed in the Placement Agreement and Service User Plan, for example: transport costs.



Shared Lives Scheme:

The Shared Lives Scheme is expected to:

- Provide the Service User and SL Carer with useful information about Shared Lives and the Scheme.
- Provide the SL Carer with the ongoing training that they need to meet the needs of the Service User placed with them.
- Support the SL Carer to meet the support needs of the Service User as detailed in the Placement Agreement and Service User Plan.
- Visit the placement regularly to discuss how the placement is going and to help the Service User and SL Carer sort out any problems.
- Arrange regular Placement Reviews.
- Seek the views of others including, where appropriate, family members as to the ongoing suitability of the placement.
- Provide the SL Carer with information and contact telephone numbers to use in the case of an emergency.
- Try to ensure that specialist support is available to the placement if necessary.

Social Work/Case Management Teams:

Your family member may also have involvement from other professionals including Social Workers and Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPN). These professionals are part of Case management Teams who usually make the initial referral to the Shared Lives Scheme.

Case Management Teams are expected to:

- Provide relevant information to the Shared Lives Scheme as part of the referral.
- Play a part in the introductory process, and make sure that the Service User and SL Carer are happy with the arrangements before the placement goes ahead.
- Make sure that the funding is in place before the placement begins.
- Conduct an annual review with the Service User to which family members will be invited to if this has been previously agreed.

Once a Service User has moved into a Shared Lives placement, it is likely that the Case Management Worker will then close the case. If any concerns arise whilst the Service User is living at the placement, a referral can be made to the Case management Team; this can be done by a number of people including the Shared Lives Scheme, day service support staff, GPs, and family members. It is likely that the concerns will be dealt with by the duty workers within the Case management Teams, however if a more detailed intervention is required the Service User may be reallocated to a worker within the team.

Accountability

Shared Lives Carers are self employed. They have a contract with the Local Authority called a **Carer Agreement** which outlines their responsibilities. In extreme cases where the SL Carer is no longer able to meet their obligations under the Carer Agreement, the Local Authority may take action to remove their approval and terminate their contract.

The **Shared Lives Scheme** is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) the regulatory body for all health and social care services and it has a registered manager. The CQC inspect the Scheme regularly. They will look through the Scheme's files and paperwork; speak to SL Carers and Service Users to see what they think about the Scheme and the support that they receive. When the CQC inspect the Scheme they will be looking for evidence that they meet **The Essential Standards of Quality and Safety**. These set down what a person can expect from the service. They can be found at www.cqc.org.uk

Concerns

Service Users and their family members are encouraged to discuss the things that they are unhappy about with the SL Carer. If they feel unable to talk to them they can also contact the Shared Lives Officer who visits the placement regularly. If concerns cannot be addressed informally, Service Users and family members will be supported to make a complaint that will be investigated in line with the Scheme's and the Local Authority's complaints procedure.

Where there are concerns that indicate possible abuse or neglect, a referral may be made to the relevant Case management Team who may decide to implement the Local Authority's Multi-disciplinary Safeguarding Procedures. You can find these at: www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguarding

Terms used in this leaflet and what they mean

Service User: If you are reading this leaflet this is likely to be your family member who has had an assessment and is being provided with or is likely to be provided with support to enable them to live in the community.

Carer Agreement: A written agreement (similar to a contract) between the SL Carer and the Local Authority setting out the SL Carer's responsibilities.

Carer Review: An annual review held by the Shared Lives Officer with the SL Carer to monitor the care and support that they are providing, and to identify their learning and support needs.

Case Management: A system for organising the assessment and re-assessment of individuals' needs and the subsequent planning and delivery of care services to Service Users by Local Authorities. Social workers and Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs) usually work for Case management Teams.

License Agreement: A written agreement permitting the Service User to occupy a room in the placement, which the SL Carer and Service User must sign. It specifies the responsibilities of the householder (SL Carer) and the licensee (Service User).

Monitoring Visit: Visits made by the Shared Lives Officer to the placement to monitor how the placements are going and address any issues that may arise.

Placement Agreement: A written agreement between the Service User, the SL Carer, the Shared Lives Scheme and the Case

Management Team about the arrangements for the placement, for example, which room will be occupied and how long the placement will last. It sets out the terms and conditions of the placement.

Placement Review: An annual review held by a Shared Lives Officer to assess the continuing suitability and stability of the placement, and to ensure that the Service User's needs are being met within the placement.

Service User Plan: A detailed document that is developed by the Shared Lives Scheme with the Service User. It describes how the SL Carer will meet the Service User's needs and goals, and provides information about how the Service User likes to be supported.



If you require any of the documents or guidance referred to in this leaflet, please contact the Shared Lives Scheme.

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