

1 What is Shared Lives South West?

Shared Lives South West (the Scheme) is a registered charity specialising in the delivery of Shared Lives services in the south west of England. Shared Lives South West is registered with the Care Quality Commission under the Health & Social Care Act 2008.

Shared Lives South West offers accommodation with care and support in the family homes of our approved Shared Lives carers. Our services support adults who have a need for accommodation where their care and support needs can be met. Shared Lives can be a long term arrangement, regular short breaks, or day time support.

Our long term Shared Lives services enable people to live within a family environment, share in home and family life and be part of the local community. Our services aim to promote the person's independent living skills, support them with their every day care and health needs and help them realise their ambitions and potential.

Shared Lives South West was set up in 2004, and was previously called SWAPS (South West Adult Placement Scheme).

2 Who is a Shared Lives service suitable for?

Shared Lives South West offers services to people who have a learning disability, people with mental health problems, people with physical disabilities, people with early stage dementia and older people. The service is available to adults, usually over 18, although we can support young people aged 16 + in transition to adult care. Shared Lives can also support parents who have a learning disability or mental health issue.

Shared Lives is a flexible service where a wide range of care and support needs can be met. It may be appropriate where:

- someone is quite independent but needs or wants a little more support on a day to day basis.
- where someone has some moderate to complex care and support needs but where moving into a care home would be inappropriate (for example a young person moving into a home with people significantly older than them) or where residential care would detract from their independence.
- where someone is currently in a care home but would prefer to live in a smaller more family orientated setting.
- where someone has been living at home with their family but this is no longer tenable or the family cannot cope.
- where someone has been fostered on a long term basis and is now approaching 18 and wishes to continue living with the foster family (in this case the foster family would also have to register with us as Shared Lives carers).

3 Who are our Shared Lives carers?

Shared Lives carers are individuals, couples or families who are able to provide support, and care and accommodation in their own homes. Shared Lives carers would support one to a maximum of three people using the service in their home.

Shared Lives carers have a variety of skills, experience and knowledge sometimes from their own personal experience as a carer or from their work and careers as care professionals.

Our Shared Lives carers are located throughout Devon, Cornwall, Somerset Plymouth and Torbay. We aim to recruit carers in all areas to widen the choice for people. It is one of our aims to enable people to remain in their local communities rather than having to move to another part of the county to access an appropriate service.

4 How are Shared Lives carers assessed and approved?

Carers are vetted by Shared Lives South West to assess their suitability for this role and will go through an assessment and training process and scrutiny by an independent panel who will make the final recommendation as to whether the applicant should be approved.

The assessment process takes about 12 weeks, and is undertaken by a Shared Lives Coordinator. The assessment includes comprehensive references and checks, including an enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS – formerly the Criminal Records Bureau), medical, employment, housing and financial checks and personal as well as professional references. The applicant will be visited several times in their home, and everyone living in the home will be part of the assessment process.

Applicants must attend pre-approval training sessions (two full day sessions and a half day session usually spread over several weeks) which look at the values and attitudes needed to be a Shared Lives carer as well as the practical and emotional issues of supporting someone in your home on a full or part time basis. Safeguarding Adults, Health and Safety and Medication Management are included in this initial training. An assessment won't start until the applicant has completed the first day of training which is an introduction to Shared Lives. No application will be presented to the panel until all parts of the assessment are completed, including attendance at the three days of training.

Once the assessor is satisfied that the applicant has the necessary values, skills, experience, motivation and support from their household and an appropriate home, the application will be put forward to an independent approval panel. The panel is made up of volunteers who are independent of the Scheme, but who have a wealth of experience in related fields and a commitment to supporting high quality Shared Lives services. All panel members have been trained.

The panel will make a recommendation to Shared Lives South West about whether they feel the applicant should be approved. Once approved, the applicant will then become a Shared Lives carer with Shared Lives South West and the matching process can begin as soon as the carer has public liability insurance and an emergency First Aid certificate. There are four further full days of training for newly approved carers to complete – on Communication, Person Centred Approaches, Finances, including how to support someone with their money, and the Mental Capacity Act.

Approved carers undertake additional training as and when required and identified with their

Shared Lives Coordinator. Safeguarding Adults and First Aid have to be refreshed every three years.

5 How are Shared Lives Carers supported?

All carers are required to meet agreed standards of care set down by Shared Lives South West and are regularly visited, and monitored against our standards and policies and procedures. They will also be able to access training and support through Shared Lives South West to ensure they are able to meet the care and support needs of the people placed with them. Every Shared Lives carer who is part of Shared Lives South West is supported by a Shared Lives Co-ordinator who will usually cover a broad geographical area. The Shared Lives Co-ordinator has three main roles:

- To manage the referral, including the matching process between the person who wishes to use the service, carers and the other people who live in the carer's home.
- To assess, monitor and review Shared Lives carers to ensure that they are working in a person centred way and that the work of the Scheme meets the requirements of the CQC regulations for adult social care, and the requirements of the local authority commissioners.
- To support carers in their role through regular telephone and face to face contact, and by organising training, networking events and meetings on a regular basis.

6 How are referrals made to Shared Lives South West?

Referrals are usually made by staff in social care and health teams, and other care agencies on behalf of a person hoping to use the service. Referrals can also be made by individuals and their families directly. There are currently contracts in place with Devon County Council, Cornwall Council, Torbay NHS Trust and Plymouth Council for the provision of Shared Lives services.

In most cases we expect that the referring agency will have been involved in undertaking a needs assessment and drawing up a care plan for the person and have indicated that a Shared Lives service might be a good solution to meet their needs.

At this point, Shared Lives South West could be contacted by phone to discuss the referral with one of the Team Managers (West, Mid or East). They will have an overview of our Shared Lives carers who currently have capacity for new referrals. We will need a referral with some basic information. The referral will be allocated to one of our Shared Lives co-ordinators who will then discuss it further and gather more detailed information about the person, in order to seek a match with one of our carers. We will then undertake the matching process and if a suitable Shared Lives carer can be found then we would progress with setting up a licence agreement and a Shared Lives agreement to enable the person needing a service to move into their new family based accommodation.

7 What is the “matching” process?

The most important part of the referral process is the matching process. Our Shared Lives co-ordinators will look very closely at all the information given to them about the person's

wishes and aspirations, their care and support needs and their likes and dislikes, lifestyle and preferences. They use this information to match them with a Shared Lives carer who could best support and care for them and enable them to live a full and happy life in their home.

The more information Shared Lives South West has about the person, the more likely it is we can find a good match and set up a service. It is also useful to have as much information as possible about the person's income and benefits at this point as this helps us to plan how we might maximise their income once they move into a Shared Lives service.

The matching process not only looks at the match between the carer and the person needing a service, it also takes into account the needs and preferences of the other people who live in the house – this may be members of the carer's family and other people who are already living there. It is important that the service will work for everyone involved.

To make sure that there is a good match, there is an introductory period where the person will visit the Shared Lives carer, initially for an afternoon but then perhaps overnight or for a weekend. There is no fixed pattern for the introductory period – it will be arranged between the person making the referral, the person needing a service, the Shared Lives co-ordinator and the Shared Lives carer. Shared Lives South West makes a charge for the introductory process based on our short break service.

For our short breaks service, the introductory process will usually be a trial stay, before any further regular stays are set up.

8 How long will the referral process take?

If we identify a possible Shared Lives carer, the time it takes for the service to start will vary. Sometimes it can be almost straight away and other times it takes a few weeks. If we have a potential carer, it will depend upon how long it takes to gather all the information we need about the person, how long the introductory visits take to arrange, how many visits are needed and the circumstances of both the person and the carer and their family. We may also need to arrange extra specialist training or particular aids and adaptations to enable the carer to meet the person's needs and we would not move someone in until this has taken place.

9 Can I make a placement at short notice or in an emergency?

In some circumstances we may be able to organise a service in a shorter time span. Moving into a Shared Lives service should be a planned event where everyone is given time to get to know each other and feel comfortable about the move, but we do have some carers who are very experienced and flexible and could offer an emergency placement.

10 What if a suitable match for the person can't be found?

We will only set up a service if we can find a good match between a person needing a service and a Shared Lives carer. We will not place people with Shared Lives carers where there is not a good match as it is much more likely this will break down and this will be upsetting and disappointing for all concerned.

If we cannot find a suitable match, there are some other options. We can place the person on a waiting list until such time that a suitable place does become available. Alternatively, we might be able to recruit a new carer with a specific person in mind, but this can take three to six months.

11 Can referrals be made directly to Shared Lives carers?

Shared Lives carers offer personal care and therefore have to be part of a Shared Lives scheme registered with CQC and can only support people who have been matched and placed by the Shared Lives scheme. All arrangements must be made through Shared Lives South West. Our carers are aware that they cannot take referrals unless they come through us. Any direct placement with a Shared Lives carer would not therefore be classified as Shared Lives and would not benefit from any of the special arrangements and dispensations that exist specifically for Shared Lives carers.

12 How much does a Shared Lives service cost?

Shared Lives South West has a banded fee structure for its long term and short break services in each area which will determine the total charge for a Shared Lives service, inclusive of all rent, household and support costs.

The cost of a Shared Lives service will depend on their level of need and what support they will require from the carer. Services are purchased from Shared Lives South West not from the carer direct.

People may be required to pay a contribution towards their care and support under the fairer charging rules of their local authority. People using services are responsible for meeting the rent and household costs within the total fee. Shared Lives South West supports people to claim all eligible benefits.

13 What does the payment to the carer cover?

Part of the payment covers the basic rent of the accommodation plus a contribution towards the upkeep of the communal parts of the home that the person has access to. The person signs a licence agreement to cover this aspect of the service. The payment also covers their living costs such as food, laundry, clothing, heating and lighting, and so on.

Most importantly the payment covers the time and support given by the Shared Lives carers in meeting the care and support needs of the individual. This may be support in getting up and dressed, preparing and eating meals, personal care needs and supporting people in tasks of daily life such as shopping and so on, and learning to live independently.

14 What role does the local authority have?

The role of Shared Lives South West is to support and enable the Shared Lives carer to provide high quality care and support to the person we match with them. The Shared Lives co-ordinator will support the carer and ensure that they provide the level of care and support that has been agreed through reviews and regular visits and contact with the person using the service and the

carer. We will make sure the person is happy with the service they are receiving and that the agreed outcomes for the services are being achieved.

Where the service is funded by a local authority they retain a responsibility for supporting the person if they have any issues or dissatisfaction with the service and are responsible for arranging statutory reviews of the person, which they may wish the Shared Lives co-ordinator and the Shared Lives carer to have input to. If issues or emergencies arise, we expect Adult Social Care to work with us to resolve them and to make all arrangements for alternative accommodation and care should the service break down or become inappropriate to meet the person's needs. These responsibilities form part of the contract between each local authority and Shared Lives South West.

15 How will Shared Lives South West monitor the carers?

For new services, the Shared Lives co-ordinator will keep in contact with the carer to see how the service is going. At the end of three months the co-ordinator will review the service with the Shared Lives carer and the person using the service to ensure that the service is working and that the carer and person are happy.

This will include:

- Reviewing whether the carer needs any further training or information to meet the person's needs now they have had a chance to get to know them better
- Reviewing whether the banding level agreed at the start of the service is appropriate or should be upgraded
- Reviewing whether the benefit maximisation process is complete
- Ensuring we have worked with the person using the service to set out the outcomes they want to achieve

The Shared Lives co-ordinator will ask for input from the referring agency to see if there are any issues for them or for the person using the service that need to be fed back to the carer so that the service can be fine-tuned to meet the needs of the individual.

Each carer will be visited by their co-ordinator and more frequently when there are issues or problems. There will be frequent phone contact between these visits. The Shared Lives co-ordinator will undertake an annual review of the service provided by each carer, and of the person's individual plan.

16 How is Shared Lives South West itself monitored and regulated?

Shared Lives South West is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and will be monitored by them for compliance against the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2008, as a provider of personal care services.

Shared Lives South West is developing its own quality assurance programme to ensure that the service it provides is of the highest quality and meets its customers' needs.

Each local authority that commissions a service has its own approach to monitoring our delivery of their contract and this can include regular monitoring meetings.

17 What happens if a service breaks down or is no longer appropriate?

Shared Lives may often be used as a stepping stone to more (or less) independent forms of care. The person may decide that they are ready to live more independently or may need a higher degree of support. Over time a person's needs may change and the carer may no longer feel able to manage. It may be that circumstances within the Shared Lives carer's own family mean they can no longer offer a Shared Lives service in their home. This should not happen out of the blue and will most likely have been anticipated.

Under normal circumstances when it is decided that a long term service needs to end, the carer must give the person a minimum of 28 days notice. This will be communicated to Shared Lives South West, the person using the service and the local authority's care manager. It is the care manager's responsibility to find suitable alternative accommodation.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to end a service at short notice for the well-being of the person and/or the carer. It is hoped that by good joint working between Shared Lives South West and care managers such situations can be anticipated and avoided. Should it arise, the care manager will need to make some emergency arrangements for the person. It is not possible to simply move the person to another Shared Lives carer without undertaking this process.

We hope this answers your basic questions about Shared Lives South West and Shared Lives. If you have any other questions about Shared Lives South West contact our offices listed below:

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