

NOTES TO HELP YOU COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM

These notes have been written to help you as you complete our application form. The more information you are able to give us, the more we can see whether we would be able to take your application forward at this time and give you a speedy response. Thank you for taking the time to get information about us and fill in this form.

Section 1: Your details

Please fill in all the boxes.

First and second applicant: You can apply as a single applicant in which case you would just complete the first applicant sections throughout the form. If you are applying as a couple or as partners who would like to work together as joint shared lives carers, then both of you would need to fill in the form as applicant 1 and applicant 2.

If you are part of a couple or partners and one of you is intending to take the main role of Shared Lives carer and the other person would be a support carer to you but might still work outside the home, then we would probably only need the first applicant's details, but we will check this with you when we do an initial visit once we have received your form.

Previous addresses: If you have had more than one previous address in the last five years, then please continue on a separate sheet.

Section 2: How did you hear about Shared Lives South West?

It is very helpful to us to find out how applicants found out about us. We can use this to look at how to get information about the scheme to more people. If you have been recommended by another Shared Lives carer please mention them on your application form as there is an incentive payment for them if you are approved.

Section 3: Previous registration as care providers

We need to know if you have ever been registered as a care provider in any other sort of scheme before. This enables us to do some checks and references. It also gives us an indication of the sort of experience you might have which would support your application.

Section 4: Other members of the household

When considering someone as a Shared Lives carer, we need to get a good understanding of who is in the household and check how they might feel about sharing their home with a service user. Knowing the make up of your family helps us to get a feel for what sort of matches we would be able to make – for example families with young children might offer different sorts of placements than a household with just one person in it.

Feel free to include your domestic pets in the household members if they are an important consideration in your family!

If any of the household members are current service users for whom you already provide a service for which you are paid we will need to explore this further. This could be a foster child approaching 18 years of age, someone living with you under a Supporting People arrangement or someone living with you paying privately for a care service from you. It may be that the service user living with you would become part of Shared Lives South West which would require us to do some extra work to explore this fully.

Section 5: Tell us about your home

Shared Lives carers can support a maximum of three people at any one time in their home. Each service user (unless already a couple) has to have their own bedroom which is in the main part of the house, not a separate annexe. Please let us know how much accommodation you have available for the scheme.

It helps to know a little about your home so we can think about whether it would be suitable for Shared Lives services. There are no specific room size requirements, but we do check that there is reasonable space for everyone to live in together and that your home offers an acceptable level of comfort and amenities. If you have downstairs accessible accommodation available please make that clear in the description of your home.

It also helps if you can tell us a little about the community you live in – whether it is rural or in town, whether you are near to other houses and shops or in a more remote area. It helps to also understand the transport links near your home. There are no right or wrong answers and we look at all these factors during the assessment process.

If your house has particular features that would make it unsuitable for wheelchair users or people with walking difficulties, let us know. This might be steep steps, a house on many levels or that the house is on a hill.

Section 6: What service are you interested in providing?

Please tick all the boxes that apply as this really helps us to understand what you are interested in doing and how that relates to our current priorities. It is more helpful if you can be specific at this point rather than ticking all the boxes, but again we will look at that with you should you go on to be assessed.

Section 7: Personal statement

This is the most important part of the form! This is where you can tell us about yourself in your own words. It is a little like the supporting statement on a job application form and you know how important they can be!

The key thing to address here is why you wish to become a Shared Lives carer and the circumstances that have led you to make the application. It would be useful if you included a summary of any specific caring skills or experience and how you gained this. We would also like to gain some insight about your lifestyle and the sort of family life a service user would be entering into if they came to live with you. Please do continue on a separate sheet - the more you can tell us, the more we can get a picture of your suitability for the role of a Shared Lives carer.

Section 8: Current and previous employment

We are required under regulation to gather a complete employment history of each applicant.

Please include all job/occupation roles, even if you were self employed as we need a continuous employment history without any gaps. If you were not formally working but were raising your family or caring for a relative, then please note that in this section.

If you have relevant training or qualifications please let us know. This might have been gained through your employment or in your own time. The sort of things that are relevant are NVQs in care, social work or health qualifications, first aid qualifications (if within the last 3 years) and any other training relevant to caring for vulnerable adults.

For all these areas please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Section 9/10: References

Each applicant must provide a medical reference, an employers reference where applicable and three personal references. As a general rule, references are only taken up when the applicant starts on the formal assessment process following a successful initial visit and completion of our Day 1 training – Introduction to Shared Lives.

Medical reference: We need your permission and details to seek a medical reference from your GP. We ask them to tell us whether they feel there is any medical or health reason why you would be unsuitable to become a Shared Lives carer. Your GP may charge you for this reference. If the GP indicates a concern, we would then discuss this with you further and it would not necessarily preclude you becoming a Shared Lives carer.

Employer's reference: This should be an appropriate person within your current employer's organisation. If you are not currently employed or are self employed, please indicate this on the form. It may be appropriate to ask for a reference from your last employer, depending on how long ago you worked there.

Personal references: We will need three personal references which give us an informed opinion about your character, personality and integrity and comment on your caring abilities in some degree. Personal referees should not be a relative or neighbour unless there is a specific relevance (e.g. your experience as an informal carer for a family member). Only one reference can be from a family member or neighbour in these circumstances.

Preferably referees should have known you for a minimum of 5 years to give a good history of your skills and experience.

Each applicant must give different personal referees. Please ensure your referees know you have given their name. Please also ensure you provide full address details for your references so that they can be contacted swiftly.

Section 11. Declarations and consents

We cannot process your application unless this section has been completed. Each applicant must complete their relevant part.

We need to know if there are any issues that might come up on a DBS (formerly CRB) check or on a check of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List. Certain offences and being on the POVA list automatically exclude you from becoming a Shared Lives carer, but there can be discretion about some minor offences. We would need to discuss this with your further.

We need to know of any possible conflicts of interest. This would include being an employee of Shared Lives South West or married to or living with an employee of Shared Lives South West or being a professional care worker for a service user who might be part of the scheme.

The consent section gives us permission to take up the necessary references when required. This includes those we have already stated plus a mortgage/landlord check to ensure that the accommodation you are offering could be used for this purpose. We also have to consult the local authority and check to see if you are known to them for any reason.

The consent section also gives us permission to keep your details on paper and electronically. We follow all the requirements of the Data Protection Act in this area and take the utmost care with your personal information.

We also have to get your permission to make your information available to CQC on request as our registering body.

Both applicants need to sign and date the form. Once the form is fully completed, you should return it to the office address on the front of the form. We would advise you to keep a copy. When we receive it we will acknowledge it and let you know what happens next.