

Shared Lives Carer

Applicant Information
& Guidance Pack





A warm welcome from Shared Lives South West

Hello,

Firstly, thank you for your interest in becoming a Shared Lives Carer with Shared Lives South West.

Our focus is to provide people with high-quality, person-centred support. Since our humble beginnings in 2004, we have achieved many great things and have grown and evolved our services over the years. In 2019 we were rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and we are passionate about flying the flag for the care sector. Our staff team, Shared Lives Carers, people who use our services and volunteers all play vital roles in making Shared Lives South West what it is today.

We recognise the benefits of a diverse team and welcome people of all ages, disability, gender identity, marital status, race, faith or belief, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background

So if you are looking do a rewarding role, that puts people at the centre of all they do, please read on or contact us today.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Shared Lives South West

The Shared Lives South West Team



About Shared Lives South West

Shared Lives South West recruits, trains and supports individuals and families (to be Shared Lives Carers). They can offer accommodation and care for adults with care and support needs in their home, enabling the person to share in family life, and maintain their independence. This is known as Shared Lives.

Our service supports adults over 18 years of age and occasionally young people aged 16-17 who are in transition to adult services.

We currently support around 320 people on a long-term basis in around 290 Shared Lives homes. We have up to a further 130 people using our short break services.

We provide support to people with learning disabilities, autism, early stage dementia, older people, a physical or sensory disability, mental ill health, and parents who have a learning disability with their child.

We currently have five contracts from local authorities across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset to support our work and a range of project funding totalling around £1.8 million per annum.

You can read more about the activities of Shared Lives South West on our website www.sharedlivesw.org.uk

Shared Lives South West is a registered charity and a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.



our vision, purpose, and our values

Our Vision To be the leading Shared Lives provider in the country.

Our Purpose To make a positive impact on the lives of the people we support.

Our Values Putting **CARE** into everything we do...



Community- Working together with a shared purpose and belonging to achieve common goals.



Autonomy- Empowering people to take ownership and accountability for decision-making.



Resilience- Building the strength and character to embrace change and challenge.



Equity- Giving people what they need to have equal access to opportunities in life.



The Shared Lives South West Team

Currently we have a staff team of more than 40 people working across Shared Lives South West led by CEO Dominic Spayne. The staff team is made up of the Leadership Team, Shared Lives Coordinators, Funding and Benefits, People and Culture Team, Finance Team and Admin.

Quotes from carers about why they enjoy their role

“

Best thing we ever did.

”

“

I'd recommend being a carer - the house feels full and the friendships that are made make it so rewarding.

”

“

It's a very fulfilling job to have and the benefits of working from home are great. You get support and training.

”



Working as a Shared Lives Carer

Once you have gone through the assessment process and are approved as a Shared Lives Carer, we will aim to match you with someone with care and support needs. Please note this is a self-employed position.

You will be assigned a Shared Lives Coordinator to guide and monitor you and any people you support.

As part of the role you will be expected to complete mandatory training sessions. To find out more details, please read the briefing sheet. Other training can also be provided to support your role.

During your assessment we will link you with a Carer 'buddy' who is an experienced Shared Lives Carer.

Purpose Statement

- To provide care and support to one or more adults, for either a short-break or for a long-term arrangement, within your own home. The person receiving these services will become a member of your household and share in all aspects of your family life.
- You will be expected to meet their care and support needs as identified in their care plan. As part of a multi-agency team and we will be able to demonstrate that you are helping them achieve their goals.
- To challenge prejudice, discrimination, and oppression and enable people to fulfil any spiritual or cultural needs.
- To work in a person-centred way.



Main duties:

Landlord/lady

- To provide a safe, warm, and comfortable home
- To keep the building in good repair
- To ensure all mortgage, rent, and utility payments are up-to-date
- To sign up to an individual Shared Lives South West licence agreement
- To provide a bedroom within the shared family home

Homemaker

- To provide healthy and nutritious meals that meet the needs of the person staying with you
- To keep the house clean
- To do the laundry/help the person do their laundry
- Pay utility bills
- Provide a TV licence
- Provide furniture and household equipment
- To provide transport (within reason)
- To provide basic personal items e.g. shampoo, soap
- To ensure your home and contents are insured and that you have public liability insurance for your role as a carer

Care and Support

- To provide any personal care the person needs
- To ensure all health care needs are met including helping with medication
- To provide emotional support as needed
- To enable effective communication
- To help the person/people you support to keep in touch with family and friends
- To help the person/people maintain and develop daily living skills and promote independence.



Shared Lives Carer- Role Description

- To help the person supported to manage money
- To help the person supported get involved with the local community
- To help the person supported find meaningful activities
- Any other care and support needs as recorded in the person's Shared Lives plan.

Working with Shared Lives South West

- To monitor the well-being of the person supported on an on-going basis and keep a record of their progress with particular emphasis on achievement of outcomes, changes in needs, and any risks
- To keep records of significant financial transactions involving the person's money and make these available to Shared Lives South West
- Raise any issues with their Shared Lives Coordinator at an early stage
- Cooperate with monitoring visits, annual carer reviews and the person's reviews
- Undertake any training deemed by Shared Lives South West to be necessary for the delivery of this service
- Be aware of Shared Lives South West policies and procedures and know how to access them
- To work in partnership with Shared Lives South West, other agencies, and family carers where appropriate, maintaining a professional approach, for the benefit of the person/people receiving care and support
- To maintain confidentiality for the person/people you support, only sharing information on a need to know basis, with the person's consent where this is possible
- Attend carer meetings and training events



Safeguarding

- To undertake training and be familiar with how to make “a safeguarding”
- To be familiar with Shared Lives South West’s Safeguarding Adult’s policy
- To be part of a multi-agency plan to protect the person as appropriate
- To understand when a Shared Lives South West risk assessment should be undertaken
- To refresh your Safeguarding training every three years
- To protect people from abuse and neglect

This is not a comprehensive or exclusive list, but a guide to what is required when working with an adult who has care and support needs.

Person specification

Having the right person in the role is important to us. If you are interested in applying but are unsure whether you meet the criteria listed below, you are welcome to contact us.

	Essential	Desirable
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non judgemental • Enthusiasm and passion for what could be achieved for and with the person being supported • Open and honest • Values each person and supports them in a person-centred way 	
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills – able to talk openly and easily with a range of people • Organised within the household • Able to weigh up risks and make considered decisions • Able to cope with unpredictability and be flexible • Able to keep accurate records e.g. finance, incidents, medication • Able to empower people to develop and achieve their potential • Ability to empathise • Ability to maintain professional boundaries • Able to use email and the internet (this is our preferred communication method) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific caring skills e.g. sign language, management of a condition e.g. epilepsy, diabetes • IT literate
Personal Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience • Willingness to go the extra mile for others • Integrity • Calmness when required • Enthusiasm and energy • Willingness to learn new things • Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses • Sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of needs of the person even if no in-depth knowledge of conditions • An understanding of the role of a Shared Lives Carer • An understanding of how to maintain health and well being in self and others • Understand person-centred approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific knowledge about certain disabilities or conditions and how they might effect a person • Knowledge about welfare benefits • Understand and implement the principles of confidentiality • Know how to respond to the unexpected e.g. allegation of abuse, accident, unexplained absence
Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient bedrooms for the number of people proposed with adequate space for furniture and personal possessions • Clean, safe, and well maintained • Sufficient bathroom facilities for all household members needs • Comfortable • Allows space and privacy for all household members • Permission from landlord or mortgage company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor space • Ground floor/accessible accommodation
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal, voluntary, or work based experience of caring for or supporting people in some capacity • Relevant life experience that the person can translate into the role of a Shared Lives Carer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous paid employment as a carer or running a care service • Previous role as a family carer for a person with care and support needs

Whole family context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to include the person in all aspects of family life • Whole household supportive of the proposal to become a Shared Lives Carer • Family works as a team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good support network • Experience of sharing your home with non-family members
Physical Health requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally in good health • Any pre-existing mental or physical health issues are well controlled, and the Shared Lives Carer role would not exacerbate the condition or put the carer or person at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active lifestyle
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific qualifications required • Commitment to training and to undertake learning to meet the needs of the person and the requirements of the role of Shared Lives Carer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any social or health care qualification • First aid training • Health and safety training • Recent Safeguarding training (training is provided)



Benefits

As a Shared Lives Carer you have the satisfaction of knowing you're working for an "Outstanding" organisation as rated by CQC. There are numerous other benefits too!

Tax Relief

A special form of tax relief, Qualifying Care Relief, is available to people who provide Shared Lives care.

Find out more here: <https://www.sharedlivesw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/SL-Tax-factsheet-2024-25.docx>

Council Tax Discounts

Depending on household circumstances you may qualify for:

- Carers Discount
- Severe Mental Impairment (SMI) Discount

Council Tax Reduction

If you have had to make alterations to the property you may be entitled to a reduction that will lower the banding of your property.

These are quite complex discounts so please feel free to take advice from the F&B team prior to contacting your local authority council.

Blue Light Card

Shared Lives South West is a social care charity and as such staff are eligible to apply for a Blue Light Card:

"Blue Light are the discount service for the emergency services, NHS, social care sector and armed forces, providing members with thousands of amazing discounts online and on the high street.

For just £4.99, members of the Blue Light community can register for two-years access to more than 15,000 discounts from large national retailers to local businesses across categories such as holidays, cars, days out, fashion, gifts, insurance, phones, and many more."

Community days at The Eden Project

"To say thank you for the invaluable support of our local friends and business colleagues in Cornwall and Devon, we invite a range of groups to come and enjoy the Eden Project for free on certain dates."

Carer cards and discounts

Discounts For Carers is a benefit provider for carers and any retired carers. From holidays to car insurance, mobile phones to fashion. Visit: discountsforcarers.com



Guidance on how to fill in the application form

Application form type

Completing the digital Application Form

If you are planning to apply as joint applicants, both will need to separately fill in the digital form. Please take care when completing the form and ensure all sections are completed.

Alternatively you can complete a PDF version together.

When using the digital application form, joint applications will be linked together when you name each other in each of your forms, when they have been submitted. You don't have to complete the form all in one sitting, but must press the 'submit' button on the last page to save your progress.

If you '**submit**' the form you will receive an email link that enables you to go back and continue the submission.

You will be asked to indicate when it is your final submission at the end of the form.

Completing the PDF Application Form

Please take care when completing the form and ensure all sections are completed. The PDF document allows joint applicants to complete the form together as it has dedicated applicant 1 and applicant 2 sections.

If you are a couple and one of you is intending to take the main role as a Shared Lives Carer please apply as a single applicant.

You can print out this form and fill it out by hand if required. We would recommend posting back via recorded delivery.

Previous addresses

If you have had more than one previous address in the last five years, please let us know.



How did you hear about Shared Lives South West?

It is helpful to know how applicants have found out about us. It helps inform where we share information and promote our scheme to hopefully reach more people. If you found out about Shared Lives South West via another Shared Lives Carer please mention them by name on your application form as there is an incentive payment for them if you are approved.

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 gives us an indication of the experience you might have and enables us to undertake relevant checks and references

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. 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 something different to a single person household. Please let us know about any pets you have too.

People already being supported

If you currently provide a service to a person in your household, 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 who pays privately for a care service from you. It may be that the person living with you would become part of Shared Lives South West, which would require us to do some additional work.



Tell us about your home

Shared Lives Carers can support a maximum of three people at any one time in their home. Each person (unless already a couple) must have their own bedroom.

It helps to know a little about your home so we can think about whether it would be suitable for Shared Lives services.

The property needs to have 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.

Tell us about your community

Please provide details about your community— whether it is rural or urban. We also need to know whether you are near to other houses and shops or in a more remote area. It helps to also understand the transport links near to your home.

Please mention if your house has features that would make it unsuitable for people who have physical difficulties. This might be steep steps, a house on many levels or that the house is on a hill.

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 offering. We will look at it again with you should you go on to be assessed

Personal statement

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.

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 person would be entering into if they came to live with you.

We would anticipate personal statements being at least five paragraphs in length.

Current and previous employment

We expect 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. If there are any gaps in employment, please tell us about these. If you were not formally working, but were raising your family or caring for someone, then please mention that in this section.

Please tell us about all relevant training or qualifications whether these have been gained through your employment or in your own time. Relevant qualifications would include those in care, social work, and health. Also, first aid qualifications (if within the last three years) and any other training relevant to the care and support of adults.

References

If you are applying as a joint applicant, you both need to provide the relevant references requested. They must not be duplications of each others.

Each applicant must provide: current employer and three personal references. If applicable, a fostering agency reference (even if you are no longer fostering)

Please note you cannot be your own referee.

If you are self-employed, please contact us if you are unsure who to nominate for your employer reference.



Personal references: The personal references will give us an informed opinion about your character, personality, and integrity as well as 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 five years to give a good history of your skills and experience.

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.

If you are self-employed, as an alternative, you can state someone who knows you well in a professional capacity.

Medical reference: We ask applicants to self confirm that they are fit and healthy enough to undertake the Shared Lives Carer role.

Mortgage/Landlord reference: We ask applicants to self certify that they have sought permission of their mortgage provider/landlord. We have information we can provide you with to help you progress this.

Declarations and consents

We will not 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 (POVA).

Certain offences and being on the POVA list automatically exclude you from



becoming a Share 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 person supported who might be part of the scheme.

The consent section gives us permission to take up the necessary references when appropriate. It also gives us permission to keep your details.

We follow all the requirements of the Data Protection Act /General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 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.

If paper based, both applicants need to sign and date the form, and once completed should return it to the office address. We would advise you to keep a copy. When we receive it, we will acknowledge it, and let you know what happens next.

How to apply

It's now time to fill in your digital application form. Go to the email we sent to you and click the link to start your application form or [click here](#).

We welcome people regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marital status, race, faith or belief, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background.

Further information

For further information on Shared Lives South West, visit our [website](#).

To read the latest Shared Lives South West Annual Report, please [click here](#).

For information about how we use and store your data under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018, please refer to our [privacy policy](#).