

Newsletter

July 2025

**COVER STORY: SHARED LIVES WEEK
CELEBRATION
ROUND UP**

**FEATURE: CASEY COMMISSION VISIT
SHARED LIVES SOUTH WEST**

**PHOTOS: HOLIDAYSAND DAYS OUT
GALORE AS THE SUN SHINES**



Shared Lives South West was honoured to welcome representatives from Baroness Casey's Independent Commission on Adult Social Care to its Devon office. It is the first care organisation to host the Casey Commission as part of their national review into adult social care. The commission, appointed by the UK Government, is undertaking a comprehensive review of the adult social care system. It aims to develop clear and actionable recommendations to ensure that the system is fit to meet both current and future needs. As part of their work, the team will be speaking to people who draw on care and support, their families, care staff, local authorities, and both public and third-sector organisations. During their visit, the commission met with Shared Lives South West staff, commissioning leads from Devon County Council and Cornwall Council, and Shared Lives Carers who shared first-hand insights into daily life in a Shared Lives household. The afternoon included visits to local households where Shared Lives care takes place, offering the team a deeper understanding of the model in practice.

"We welcome the review the Casey Commission is undertaking and feel proud to be involved in this important work," said Dominic Spayne, CEO of Shared Lives South

West.

"Throughout the visit, the team gained valuable insight into how Shared Lives works, the many benefits of this unique care model, the challenges we face, and the changes we'd like to see in the sector. This review is a significant moment for adult social care, and we'll be watching closely as the next steps unfold."





Shared Lives South West celebrated Shared Lives Week with a meet up at Haldon Forest and a tea party at our Somerset office.

This was attended by Ilminster Mayor Brian Hamilton. Thanks to everyone who came along to celebrate, it was so lovely to see you all at our events to mark the occasion.



The Cornwall Shared Lives South West team has a new member of staff. Rich Ware has joined us as a Shared Lives Coordinator.

We had a quick chat with him to find out more about him...

Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

I was born and raised in Cornwall, but I left to go to University in Canterbury. I then lived in Cheltenham for seven years, where I met my wife. We then moved to Bristol and stayed there for ten years, and had two kids, then we moved to Cornwall.

I've worked in various positions in health and social care, most recently for a homelessness charity called 1625 Independent People, supporting care-experienced people aged 16-25 as an education, employment, and training and wellbeing coach.

What made you apply for the role as a Shared Lives Coordinator?

I stumbled across the job advert.

I did some research and really wanted to be a part of what Shared Lives does and is

How are you finding it so far?

I'm feeling settled and welcome. I'm looking forward to learning the role and getting stuck in.



What are you looking forward to the most about working at Shared Lives as a Shared Lives Coordinator?

It's quite scary being new, so I am looking forward to not being new anymore, and then after that, I am looking forward to meeting the carers and the people they support.

What do you enjoy doing out of work?

I have a wife and kids who keep me pretty busy. I also try and find the time for snooker, the pub, or resting where possible.

What three things would you take to a desert island?

A well, suncream, and a big book, something like Shantaram.



We loved being at Kernow Blue Light Day. Here's a picture of SLC Rich Ware on our stand.

"I had a lovely morning walk through Tehidy Woods and around the lake with Jamie and Helen," said Nicola Drewett, Shared Lives Carer.

"We had a well earned coffee and cake before heading home to cook a Sunday roast."

Great photos all! It sounds like a lovely day.



"After a formal performance with his ukelele band at Torpoint Festival, Elvin headed down to Perranporth with us and explored the sights of the poppy and wildflower fields above Crantock beach," said Shared Lives Carer Di Cole.

"Then on Wednesday we visited Porthcurno and walked along the coastpath to stunning Pedn Vounder beach."



Carers & households out in your community...

Don't forget we have resources available if you know of a coffee shop, church or community board where you could leave some leaflets or pin up a poster!

If you need any, do contact our offices and we'll be sure to some get sent to you. Your support to help us spread the word about Shared Lives South West is extremely appreciated.



We bid farewell to Shared Lives Coordinator, Sally Smith, after an incredible 20 years of service.

When Sally first started, Shared Lives was a small organisation operating in Devon.

“At the time, Devon County Council was transferring small residential homes with three or fewer people to Shared Lives, and that’s how the organisation was born. Back then, we were called SWAPS,” she recalled. Over the years, Sally’s caseload has been based in Mid and North Devon, with some households remaining as part of her caseload since the very beginning.

“I’ve loved the stability of my role and witnessing the ups and downs of everyday life,” she said.

“In previous social work roles, I often felt like I was just fire-fighting, but here, I’ve been able to build long-term relationships,” she said. Sally will greatly miss her chats with households, the banter in



the office, and the social meals with colleagues.

“Shared Lives is an effective organisation that does social care work well—most importantly, people are at the heart of it all,” she added. Now, as she embarks on retirement—her ‘holiday life’—Sally is embracing new adventures.

“I started writing stories last year and now attend monthly writing sessions. After years of report writing in my role, I’ve found joy in creative writing.

I also hope to travel and go backpacking,” she shared. Over the last couple of months, she’s ensured she saw all the households on her caseload and made a real effort to say goodbye to the whole team. The staff team held a shared lunch for Sally in the Devon office and presented her with gifts and flowers. A huge thank you to Sally for her commitment over the years. You are greatly missed, and we wish you all the best for the future!





Dawn and Claire, from the SLSW team enjoyed a volunteer fair at Exeter Cathedral. It was a great event organised by Exeter Community Initiatives. We have various voluntary roles available, so if any carers or households know anyone suitable, do call us.

"Bruce chose a fish and chip supper as his farewell meal," said Glynis Meloy. "He's lived with me and the family for 40 years! He was 23 and I was 31. At 71, I thought it might be time to retire. "Bruce has moved to a lovely new Shared Lives home with Joy and Brian. Joy has had

lots of experience, so he'll settle well. It doesn't stop me from being emotional though." A huge thank you to Glynis for your dedication to Shared Lives and we wish you happy retirement. Good luck to Bruce in his new Shared Lives household.



We held a stand at Derriford Hospital. Plymouth, where we had a nice surprise meeting Jess again (last time was in Tesco in Crediton). Jess lives with Shared Lives Carer Monika. It was lovely to see a friendly face.



One great thing about Shared Lives is that friendships are made!
Meet Gillian and Chanroth, who live with Shared Lives Carer Tracey Chase, along with their friend David, who lives with Shared Lives Carer Yasmin Chown. They all met for lunch to discuss their forthcoming holiday together and then enjoyed an ice cream Mr B's Ice Cream Parlour!
Also pictured is Ken Chase, Tracey's husband who is a support carer.

Hattie enjoyed an afternoon at the arcades. She visited Dawlish Warren with her Shared Lives household. She is supported by Shared Lives Carer Melissa Boardman. We hope you had a great time!



Bob and John have been out and about lately with their Shared Lives Carer Caroline O'Sullivan and extended family. They have visited the theatre and enjoyed a trip to Rosemoor.



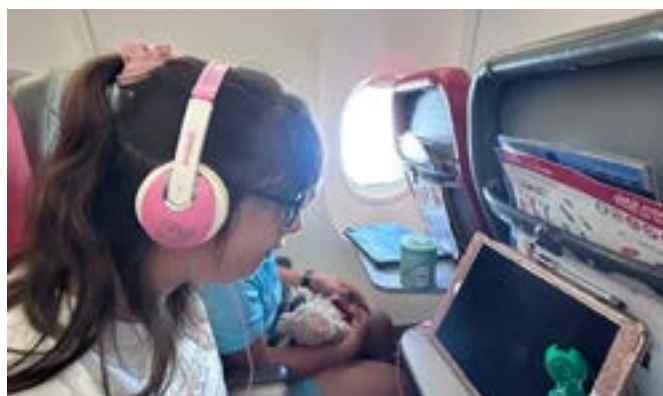
"Bob is very happy on his holiday in Lynmouth with Greg and Alex (Shared Lives Carers) and was reunited with his friend Marty the dog," said Caroline O'Sullivan, a Shared Lives Carer who supports Bob long-term. People supported in Shared Lives can enjoy a short break/ respite with other Shared Lives Carers, so their main carer can have a break.



"Cara had a busy weekend. She had her hair cut and curled at Devon Cliffs, and enjoyed a lovely walk into Exmouth," said her Shared Lives Carer Sylvia Marsh. "We also chatted to the RNLI team."



Cara had a great time soaking up the sun in Ibiza with her Shared Lives Carers! From the photos alone, it looks like she had a super time on holiday!



"Katie and Sam swam a mile, we are very proud of them both," said their Shared Lives Carer Zoe Maycox. They are pictured at Tencreek Holiday Park with lifeguard Josh. Well done to you both!



Shared Lives Carer Lynn Whitting sent in these great photos of her and Mark, who she supports, on holiday in France. We love the smiley, happy faces!



We've had great fun at Exeter Pride and Torbay Pride this summer.

We've had some VIP guests pop by and see us too including some drag queens and Torbay MP Steve Darling.



Shared Lives Carer Eileen Bond, her husband Steve, and Kevin who they support, all enjoyed a lovely stroll in Seaton. Great photos!



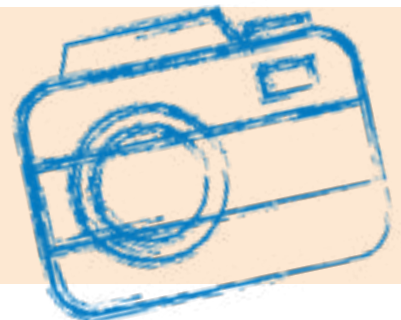
The staff team all wore green to mark Wear It Green Day during Mental Health Awareness Week. We joined thousands of people around the world all wearing the colour as a symbol for good mental health!



Photos!

We love seeing your photos and hearing your news.

Don't forget to send photos to:
dgillingwater@sharedlivessw.org.uk



Two Shared Lives South West households enjoyed time away in the sun!
Shared Lives Carers Tracey Chase and Yasmin Chown went to Kefalonia with Chanroth, Gillian and David. Those smiles tell us they are all had the best time!



"A lovely weekend with Bruce and Gemma while their carers, Joy and Brian were away having a rest," said Sarah Ford, a Shared Lives Carer.

"We enjoyed a local VE day celebration fair, walks with Stolley, good food, sunshine and Bruce loved all the DVDs at Par Market.

"We are looking forward to Bruce and Gemma's next stay."

It sounds like they had a fun-packed stay!



"Gavin stayed with us for a long weekend and enjoyed a great walk on Dartmoor," said Shared Lives Carer Caroline O'Sullivan.



We had a staff team day at Buckfast Abbey in June. Our focus was on the psychometric Insights Discovery profile system. It was great to see everyone!



How happy does Em look soaking up the sun in this comfy egg chair? The photo was sent in by her Shared Lives Carer Mel Brunson.



A great photo of Matt, who is supported by Shared Lives Carer Lisa Drew, at a vintage steam rally.





A big thank you to the Kehelland Trust for hosting our stand.

It was also lovely to see Jamie, who uses SLSW services and works in the shop too.

Kevin and Alestair are seen here enjoying the band and pancakes in Brittany by the canal Nantes a Brest.

The photo was sent in by their Shared Lives Carer Nick Higgins.



SHARED LIVES CARER REFERRAL INITIATIVE

As a Shared Lives Carer you know the benefits of the role more than most and now you have the chance to receive up to £500 if you refer someone who goes on to become an approved Shared Lives Carer.

If you know someone who would be perfect for this role, and encourage them to apply — ensure your name goes on their application form!

The details of this initiative are regularly sent to you in your monthly email from us if you would like more information.



Emails from SLSW

We send SLSW events, news, updates information to you by email.

We send organisational updates once a month, carer handbook updates every few months and as and when needed.

You will also receive invites to carer meet ups and carer meetings via email.

We would be grateful if you could open and read them as they could well help you in your role and contain important information.

We are loving these photos of days out and holidays in the sunny weather!

Shared Lives Carer Nicola Drewett sent in this great photo.

"Charlotte came to stay for the weekend and Jamie [who Nicola supports long-term]] enjoyed her company. A lovely day in Padstow," she said.



"Elvin enjoyed himself with his line dancing classes in Portugal and lots of walks along the beach," said Di Cole, his Shared Lives Carer.

"Cold drinks are optional, but gladly received!"



Em had a great time at Killerton House recently. Her Shared Lives Carer Mel Brunsdon sent in this photo where Em is featured on a poster advertising the National Trust.

They also sent in this great selfie!



Seen here are Colin, Josh and David, who all went to Turkey for the first time, with their Shared Lives Carer Maggie Byrne.

We hope you had a fabulous holiday.



How lovely are these knitted teddies!

While on our stand at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, we met Gloria, who knits these cute teddies for patients.

She kindly said she'd make some in Shared Lives South West colours for us.

The biggest thank you to Gloria for your kindness!



We attended Exeter Respect Festival this year and it was great to see so many people!

Did someone say party?
It looks like Gillian and Helen
had a great time at a recent
party! We love the wigs and
glasses.
They are supported by Shared
Lives Carers Tracey Chase
and Dawn Jago.



Gavin and Bob are seen
here enjoying a game of
table tennis!
"This is what's great about
Shared Lives, that
someone in their nineties
can go to a garden party
and play table tennis with
the youngsters," said
Caroline O'Sullivan.



Wendy had a fantastic time at Butlin's with her carer Sam
Robertson!

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www.sharedlivessw.org.uk

The deadline for the next edition is October 14

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter or any stories you'd like to
share with us, please do get in touch - we would love to hear from you!

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