

OP06 Approval Panel**1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 Shared Lives South West believe that the process of approving Shared Lives Carers is fundamental to the safety of the service, and as such uses an independent Approval Panel to provide additional oversight.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 Shared Lives South West will endeavour to recruit an Approval Panel which reflects the communities we serve, offering a balance of interests, skills, backgrounds and an even gender balance.
- 2.2 All Panel Members must be recruited and selected using a fair and equitable process set down by the Scheme.
- 2.3 Shared Lives South West will ensure that all Panel Members abide by the Code of Conduct for Panel Members at all times.

3. Panel Composition

- 3.1 The Scheme will ensure that the Panel is made up of people who are independent of the Scheme wherever possible. It cannot include people who are active Shared Lives Carers or people who live in a house with a Shared Lives Carer. It may include people who have stayed with Shared Lives Carers or ex- Shared Lives Carers. It may also include staff who work outside of the Operations Team.
- 3.2 The Approval Panel has a Panel Chair who is completely independent of the scheme and who has the necessary skills and experience.
- 3.3 The Scheme will appoint a Panel Advisor. The Panel Advisor will sit on the Approval Panel in order to answer panel questions, provide clarification on process, and provide the panel with the Scheme perspective. The Panel Advisor will not enter into any discussions or decisions about carer approval. The panel advisor will be a Registered Manager or the CEO if a Registered Manager is not available.

4. Appointment of Panel Members

- 4.1 Volunteers with relevant experience are recruited by way of an application form, references, DBS check and an interview with a Registered Manager. Panel members may also include personnel from other Shared Lives Schemes, where the schemes are affiliates to Shared Lives Plus. In these cases, the recruitment standards of schemes affiliated to Shared Lives Plus meet our own safe recruitment practise. In all case the personnel from the

said scheme will be in a role equivalent to a SLC and/or registered manager. Personnel from other schemes volunteering on our panel will be asked to share their DBS and to sign a code of conduct.

- 4.2 Panel Members will go through an induction process to ensure they fully understand the sensitive nature of panel information and the importance of panel in the support and protection of people who use the service. They will also understand the importance of evidencing carer skills when making decisions and the action they will take if they are not satisfied with panel procedures or decisions.
- 4.3 There is no expectation for employees of other schemes volunteering on our panels to go through an induction process as they are already familiar with all panel processes.
- 4.4 Panel members are able to observe a panel before joining and are offered an annual panel event. They are invited to carer events and the whole scheme meeting and to any training that is being provided 'in-house'.
- 4.5 Panel Members will receive written information about the Scheme, Scheme processes, their panel role and expected conduct. The Approval Panel Guidance document is their working tool and explains de-approval as well as approval.

5. Resignation or Removal of Panel Members

- 5.1 Panel members and Panel Chairs wishing to resign from the role are asked to provide as much notice as possible to allow for adequate arrangements to cover panels. Ideally a minimum of 2 months' notice is requested to ensure a smooth transition.
- 5.2 Panel members may be removed from panel if concerns are raised about their conduct. Legitimate concerns may include:
 - Repeated failure to attend panel meetings having agreed to attend.
 - A failure to attend introduction and training sessions.
 - Repeated failure to read the required papers for a panel meeting.
 - Breaches of the code of conduct.
 - Not declaring conflicts of interest.
 - Discriminatory or offensive remarks or behaviour during a panel meeting.
- 5.3 If concerns are expressed about a panel member including the chair (by other panel members, the chair, staff or applicants), this should in the first instance be raised with a Registered Manager in confidence. The Registered Manager will request a meeting with the panel member to discuss the issues raised and to agree the action plan with the panel member.

- 5.4 Where the panel member is an employee of another scheme concerns regarding conduct will be passed onto the registered manger and/or the nominated individual of the relevant scheme.
- 5.5 If this does not resolve the issue and the concerns continue or escalate, or the panel member is unwilling to attend such a meeting, the Registered Manager may ask the panel member to stand down.
- 5.6 If the panel member does not wish to stand down or feels that they have been treated unfairly, they may request that the matter is referred to the Chief Executive as a form of appeal. The Registered Manager will be asked to make a report on the matter to the Chief Executive. The panel member will be able to make representations to the Chief Executive. The decision of the Chief Executive will be final and be given to the panel member, together with the reasons for it.

6. Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1 The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.