

OP11 *Data Protection & Recordkeeping***1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 It is the policy of Shared Lives South West to safeguard an individuals' rights and best interests by ensuring that personal information is processed in accordance with their wishes and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) which is the implementation of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 1.2 Personal information is processed when it is collected, handled, stored, shared or destroyed. Shared Lives Carers will therefore process information about the individuals they support on a daily basis and this policy outlines the expectations in how this should occur.

2. General principles

- 2.1 To support the organisations' commitment to GDPR, Shared Lives Carers should;
 - Ensure personal information about individuals is handled fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner.
 - Ensure the personal information held is accurate, up to date and not excessive, and not kept for longer than is necessary.
 - Not disclose personal information about an individual to anyone that isn't entitled to receive it.
 - Where possible and appropriate, ensure the individual is aware of the personal information that is held about them, ensure they have access to the personal information held, and support them to record their own thoughts and comments recorded.
 - Ensure appropriate security measures are in place to protect against unauthorised or unlawful access to the personal information held.

3. Recordkeeping

- 3.1 Shared Lives Carers should recognise that the majority of personal information held at the Carer household about an individual is the property of that individual. Where possible, the individual should be supported to maintain their own records and determine what records they wish to retain.
- 3.2 Anything other than records, such as personal correspondence, should be kept or destroyed in accordance with the wishes or best interests of the individual, as with any other personal belongings.
- 3.3 Letters from The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), plans and records issued by Shared Lives South West, or any other documents which

the organisation would otherwise already have on file, need only be kept for up to a year for reference purposes. If the Carer is in any doubt, they can provide the records to Shared Lives South West to retain.

- 3.4 All financial records, including bank statements and receipts, should be retained for up to 7 years to ensure the Shared Lives Carer and Shared Lives South West can sufficiently document decisions and actions made in supporting the individual in managing their finances in the event of subsequent enquiries.
- 3.5 Any medical records held by the Carer—such as medication charts, health action plans, or hospital letters—should only be kept for as long as they are relevant to the individual's current care and support needs. Medication Administration Records (MAR sheets) should be retained for a minimum of 3 years from the date of the last entry, to ensure accurate records are available in the event of any audit, medication query, or safeguarding concern. Once no longer relevant, all medical records must be securely destroyed to avoid confusion. Shared Lives South West does not retain individual medical records centrally.
- 3.6 Anything other than records, such as personal correspondence, should be kept or destroyed as in accordance with the wishes or best interests of the individual, as with any other personal belongings.

4. Review

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if necessary.

5. Responsibilities

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