

FN10      Respite**1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 Respite is a break from caring responsibilities for Shared Lives Carers, aimed at supporting wellbeing through rest and recuperation. Alongside the direct benefits to the Carer, ensuring that Carers take a break from their caring responsibilities helps to reduce the risk of placement breakdown, thus benefiting the people supported as well.
- 1.2 Shared Lives South West are passionate in advocating for respite and will work to supporting Carers to take as much respite from their role as possible.
- 1.3 Shared Lives South West strive to implement clear processes and procedures which make respite a simple non-financial component of Carer welfare.

**2. Establishing Respite**

- 2.1 The provision of respite is established in the service specifications of the local authority contracts that Shared Lives South West work under, funded through the Management Fees received.
- 2.2 As a result, Shared Lives South West are responsible for defining, utilising and managing the provision of respite, ensuring that the needs of the service are met, and the associate costs are proportionate and reasonable.
- 2.3 Ordinarily, 'two weeks paid break' for respite is established in our local authority contracts, which is referenced throughout this policy. Where the level of respite available is higher, e.g. for people funded by Plymouth City Council, those affected Carers will be notified of any additional allowances.
- 2.4 Shared Lives South West will continue to work with our local authority partners to achieve higher levels of respite for all Shared Lives Carers.

**3. Managing Respite**

- 3.1 Shared Lives South West set, allocate and manage respite allowances such that all Carers can achieve two weeks break from their caring role. However, this is dependent on the alternative care used and the costs associated.
- 3.2 Respite allowances are managed by Shared Lives South West rather than being providing to Carers as a payment to then self-manage. This is to encourage the use of respite, help the scheme monitor where the people supported are staying, ensures alternative care is provided by approved

providers, avoid financial disagreements between Carers, and avoid respite becoming taxable for Carers.

- 3.3 Finance and Funding & Benefits staff manage the booking and recordkeeping of respite using internal systems, giving clear guidance to Carers as to how to use them.
- 3.4 Shared Lives Coordinators will regularly discuss respite and access to support with Carers as part of ongoing support discussions.

#### **4. Using Respite Allowance**

- 4.1 Carers are allocated a 'respite allowance' equivalent to two weeks fees (Care & Support plus Rent and Household Costs) they received for the person using the service in their care, each financial year.
- 4.2 Carers can then use this allowance throughout the financial year to cover the cost of alternative care for the person they support.
- 4.3 Carers must use the booking system provided by Shared Lives South West to ensure that their respite is correctly recorded and funded.
- 4.4 Respite allowances can be used to cover alternative care in several ways;
  - Where the person supported stays with another Shared Lives Carer
  - Where the person supported remains in the Carer household and is supported by a Support Carer
  - Where the person supported attends another care setting, such as a care home
- 4.5 Ordinarily the preference would be that alternative care is provided at the same rate the Carer is paid to ensure two weeks respite is achieved, however, rates are negotiated between the Carer and alternative care provider and can be higher or lower. Where the costs are higher, the Carer might not be able to achieve two weeks respite within the year.
- 4.6 Respite allowances can also be used to cover other costs which facilitate the Carer either taking a break from their role or achieving suitable rest and recuperation, such as;
  - To cover the cost of a DBS Check or First Aid training for a Support Carer
  - To cover mileage costs associated with taking or collecting the person from a stay away from the Carer household, either with family or a funded alternative care provider
  - To fund the cost of the person using the service going on holiday with their Shared Lives Carer

- 4.7 Carers cannot insist that a person supported attends or funds a holiday. Actions will be taken in the best interest framework of the Mental Capacity Act for anyone lacking capacity.
- 4.8 Shared Lives Carers are responsible for developing their own network of support and arranging their own respite.
- 4.9 Shared Lives Carers must notify the scheme whenever the person supported is not being supported by themselves, even if there are no payments involved. This is because the scheme has overall responsibility for the person supported.
- 4.10 Respite allowance cannot be used to pay for alternative care provided by a family member of the person supported.
- 4.11 Respite allowance that has not been used at the end of the year cannot be accrued to the next year, nor can it be paid to the Carer. Similarly, where a Carer leaves the scheme during the year and has unused respite allowance the balance cannot be paid to them.
- 4.12 Where a person supported leaves their placement within the year, and the Carer has used more respite allowance than is due on a pro-rata basis to the leave date, the Carer may be required to repay the shortfall. All decisions to recover respite, where a placement has ended, must be made by a member of the Leadership team.

## **5. Review**

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required.
- 5.2 This policy requires formal board approval.

## **6. Responsibilities**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- 6.2 Funding & Benefits, Finance and Coordinator staff are responsible for the overall managing and processing of respite.