

AUGUST 2026



Shared Lives
South West
Newsletter



Updates from the CEO

There is a great deal happening across the areas we operate in, and I wanted to share a brief update on some developments that may be of interest.

Cornwall Contract Tender

In Cornwall, the tender process for the new Shared Lives contract is now underway. Cornwall Council intends to establish a framework from 1 April 2027, meaning more than one Shared Lives provider could be approved to operate in the county. We expect the outcome of the tender process in October.

We are approaching the process positively and fully expect Shared Lives South West to be appointed to the new framework. Importantly, the council has confirmed that carer fees are not part of this process and are therefore not at risk. We do not expect the new arrangements to have any impact on existing carers or the people they support. We will keep Cornwall carers informed as the process progresses.

Somerset Developments

In Somerset, we recently met David Coleman-Groom, the council's new Director of Adult Social Services. David was very supportive of Shared Lives, interested in learning more about our work, and recognised the value the model can offer people across Somerset.

He also outlined changes he would like to make to improve how adult social care teams understand and support Shared Lives. This is encouraging, as strong relationships between social work teams, our staff and carers are essential to developing successful arrangements and helping more people benefit from Shared Lives.

Local Government Reorganisation in Devon

There are also significant changes ahead for local government in Devon. While these are not expected to take effect until 2028, current proposals would create four councils across the existing Devon area, including a new and expanded Exeter Council, a Devon Coast and Country Council, and expanded Plymouth and Torbay councils. There is still considerable work to be undertaken before these changes are implemented.

We will work closely with all authorities involved to manage any changes affecting funding and support for people in Shared Lives. There is no immediate action for carers, and we will provide updates when there is greater clarity about what these changes will mean in practice.

Shared Lives Carer Fees

We have recently met with Shared Lives Plus and other independent Shared Lives schemes to discuss carer fees. There is a shared commitment to reviewing how fees are calculated and funded to help ensure the Shared Lives Carer role remains sustainable in the future.

We know that fees, paid breaks and wider financial support are among the most important issues for carers. Although this work is still at an early stage, we will continue to contribute strongly to the national discussion and advocate for fair and sustainable funding.

Care Quality Commission Assessments

All local authorities in our region have now received the results of their Care Quality Commission assessments. This is the first time in many years that councils' adult social care responsibilities have been assessed in this way.

Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall were rated Good, while Somerset and Devon were rated Requires Improvement. Every council was found to have areas requiring further development. These assessments consider how councils commission, fund, monitor and safeguard adult social care services, including how effectively they work with providers and support people to access the right care. The findings recognise the pressures and challenges experienced across the system and should help inform plans for improvement.

Thank You

Our priority always remains supporting carers and the people who share their lives. Thank you, as always, for the care, commitment and stability you provide every day.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

Dominic Spayne CEO at SLSW



Welcome to trainer Sarah

We have welcomed Sarah Murphy to our staff team as our training coordinator. Here we find out more about her...

Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

I have 22 years of experience working in a variety of social care settings including a community carer for adults with a learning disability, autism and mental health conditions, as well as supervisory roles such as team leader and Ofsted-registered manager. I have also been an owner/director of an EBD/ SEMH residential children's service and small school. I have been a trainer for seven years. I decided to take a step into training as I'm passionate about the quality of training that carers receive, as that has a direct impact on the people we support.

What made you apply for the role?

I have a passion for empowering people to get the best out of life, and I felt that the Shared Lives model and values closely align with my own.

How are you finding it so far?

Everyone has made me feel really welcome and supported me in my new role.

What do you enjoy out of work?

I love to go to the beach, beachcombing for sea glass and fossils that I can use to make into jewellery or art. I also enjoy swimming, but not in the sea.

As a household, we like visiting zoos and farms with my son, who is aged six. We especially like Pennywell Farm where you can cuddle all the baby animals. I also love to read.

What are you looking forward to the most at Shared Lives?

Connecting with all the teams will be good and working together to ensure carers have the tools and support they need to support the people to lead their best lives.

What three things would you take to a desert island?

A good multi-tool, a hammock and a book.

Anything else you'd like to add?

A fun fact, I'm also a trained clinical hypnotherapist.



Dog's Trust charity ride success

A big well done to Katie and Sam who rode from Wadebridge to Padstow and back for the Dogs Trust and raised £385!
They are supported by Shared Lives Carer Zoe Maycox.
Congratulations to you!





SLSW households have fun in Crete

Shared Lives households swapped Cornwall for Crete.

Shared Lives Carer Tracey Chase shared:

"We've enjoyed the beach, pool, villa, a horse and cart ride, shopping in Chania, and lots of delicious food."

Two Shared Lives households came together to enjoy this special break, including the household of Shared Lives Carer Yasmin Miller.

What amazing memories have been made!

We love seeing photos of households out and about and enjoying their best lives. Please keep them coming!

Please send them via the usual channels, or email dgillingwater@sharedlivessw.org.uk
Please ensure consent is granted from everyone featured.



World Cup fever grips households!

World Cup fever swept through Shared Lives households.

Shared Lives Carer Sonia Gaston sent in this picture of Christian, who she supports, in his England shirt.

While Shared Lives Carer Jo Crocker captured this pic of her and Lynn, who she supports, ready for one of the big games



National Trust meet ups

The National Trust has given Cornwall Shared Lives Carers community access through Shared Lives South West on a number of dates this summer. Staff members Megan and Chloe went to National Trust - Treliassick and were joined by some Shared Lives households.

Shared Lives Carers Maria and Dave Wolstencroft attended along with carers Nikki and Mark Johnson with Brandon, who they support, and their 3-year-old grandson.

Everyone had a lovely morning walking around the gardens, visiting the house, and enjoyed visiting the café.





Natasha's hedgehog home

Shared Lives Carer Mary McNulty sent in this great photo of Natasha, who she supports, sat in the garden with their hedgehog house. Natasha puts food and water out for them. Presently, they think there is a mum hedgehog and her four little hogs living there. Natasha is also proudly showing off her rosette after she rode on a mechanical horse with Riding for the Disabled.





Cara leaves us for a new adventure

We have said farewell and good luck to Funding and Benefits Officer Cara Randall, who left us for pastures new.

Cara is going to work at Pete's Dragons, a very worthy organisation.





Lapping up the sunshine!

Look at that clear water and blue sky !
Elvin had an absolutely super time in Portugal with his Shared Lives Carer Di Cole, who sent in the photo.



Fishing fun for Chanroth

Shared Lives Carer Bex McKnight took Chanroth fishing, and they had a great time!
A new pastime for Chanroth to enjoy.

Mencap has launched a short survey to understand where people with a learning disability want to see more Easy Reads, how they engage with the world digitally, and whether they use AI.

They want to use the survey results to help put a case forward to the government and corporations that they need to think about accessible communication more in the digital age we're in, and the future AI age we are entering into. The survey is aimed at people with a learning disability, but also family members and carers who can fill it out on behalf of someone with a learning disability. The link is [here](#)



Delicious day out!

Formal Support Carer Di Holland sent in these great photos of Neil, who she supports, out enjoying great treats and the sunshine! That waffle looks incredible!



Wendy's big birthday

A big Happy 80th Birthday to Wendy, who is supported by Shared Lives Carer Sam Robertson. It looks like you had a great day celebrating with a day out in Teignmouth and cake!



Big day out for Julie

"Sadly no sun, but lots of exploring for me and Julie, so we had to have a sit-down," said Barby Abbotts, a Shared Lives Carer who supports Julie.

They both had their photo in the giant chair at St John's Garden Centre.

Coffee stop after walk

Shared Lives Carer Nicola Drewett said: "We had a lovely day as we walked into Redruth, wandered around the monthly market, had coffee in the Buttermarket, wandered around the charity shops and had lunch in Boesti. "Then we visited Tehidy Woods and had a walk around the lakes with Charlotte, Jamie and Helen. Note the squirrel that climbed up my leg!"



Shared Lives have been out at events!

We attended the Plymouth Parent Carer Voice SEND Conference at the University of Plymouth.

We were one of 30 organisations who attended.

Plymouth's Lord Mayor Cllr Kevin Sproston came to say hello and find out more about the organisation.

We also attended the Big Bash in Paignton, which was a fantastic event, and we hope to attend again in the future.



A day out seeing beautiful gardens

"A lovely afternoon spent up at Trenance Gardens, a walk around the boating lake and rose garden and we saw a terrapin," said Nicola Drewett, Shared Lives Carer.

She was there with Charlotte, Jamie, and Helen, who all use our services.

It looks like a stunning place to visit!





Robert enjoys the cricket

Shared Lives Carer Tracey Workman shared this lovely picture of Robert watching a local cricket match.

In Shared Lives, you share your life with someone who has care and support needs and enjoy being part of the community. This photo really supports that.



organisational emails

We email you with an organisational updates regularly.

We'd be grateful if you could read it and click on the links that we hope you will find useful.

If you aren't receiving them, do let us know.



Cara loves the lighthouse trail

Shared Lives Carer Sylvia Marsh had a lovely day with her family in the Plymouth area. They visited the Barbican, enjoyed the ferry across to Mountbatten and went for lunch and a walk. Cara, who Sylvia supports, had fun spotting some of the St Lukes Hospice lighthouses that feature on the Guiding Lights trail.





Birthday fishing trip is enjoyed by Bob

What better way to spend your 94th birthday than a spot of fishing.

Happy birthday to Bob, who is supported by Shared Lives Carer Caroline O'Sullivan.





Sunshine and songs!

Sunshine, song, and smiles!
Cara had a fantastic time enjoying a karaoke session and BBQ in the sunshine! Shared Lives Carer Sylvia Marsh shared that Cara's favourite songs to sing are "Tomorrow" from Annie and ABBA's "Mamma Mia" - perfect choices for a singalong!
It's wonderful to see moments like these filled with laughter, music, and joy.

ED&I awareness

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

August 9

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day>

World Humanitarian Day

August 19

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/humanitarian-day>

Pain Awareness Month

September

<https://www.britishpainsociety.org/>

International Day of Charity

September 5

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/charity-day>

Suicide Awareness Month

September

<https://www.iasp.info/>

Jeans for Genes Week

September 14-20

<https://www.jeansforgenes.org/>

National Inclusion Week

September 14-20

<https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/national-inclusion-week/>

International Day of Sign Languages

September 23

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/sign-languages-day>



Cornwall Blue Light Day fun!

We attended Blue Light Day at the Royal Cornwall Showground.

Shared Lives Coordinators Jo Small and Megan Parks were on the stand ready to meet people and talk about Shared Lives South West.

It was great to see Shared Lives households at the event too.

Shared Lives Carer Lisa Drew stopped by with

Matt who she supports.

Joe and Lilly, who are boyfriend and girlfriend, and use our services, and volunteer for Drums4Fun, also came to say hello.

Shared Lives Carer Mandi Brooks sent in these great photos of Emma and Jason, who she supports at the event.

We hope everyone who attended had a great day!

Every year, it's an event we really look forward to being part of.



Easy Read used with permission from



Getting a new Prime Minister in 2026



On 22 June 2026 the Prime Minister , Sir Kier Starmer MP, said he was going to stop being the Prime Minister.



Sir Kier then set the rules for how the next Prime Minister would be picked.

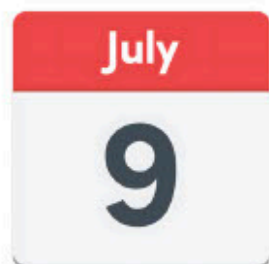


Labour **MPs** who wanted to be Prime Minister had to put their name forward.



An **MP** is a Member of Parliament .

MPs are voted for by people in their local area to speak up and work for them.



Labour MPs could start putting their names forward from 9 July 2026.



This time only one MP put their name forward to be Prime Minister.

The Member of Parliament was Andy Burnham MP. This means he will be the new Prime Minister.



Mr Burnham will go to Buckingham Palace on Monday 20 July to see the King.

The King will ask Andy Burnham to become Prime Minister.



Mr Burnham will then give a speech outside 10 Downing Street telling people what he hope to do as Prime Minister.

10 Downing Street is the place in London where the Prime Minister lives.



After his speech the Prime Minister will tell everyone who will be the Secretaries of State and Ministers for government departments.



A Secretary of State is an MP who runs a government department, like the Department of Health and Social Care, or the Department of Work and Pensions.

Each government department has Ministers who help a Secretary of State run the department.



Mencap thinks that some work from the old government will go on.

Things like the changes to Personal Independent Payments (PIP) and fixing problems with the Special Educational Needs (SEND) system.



But there will also be new work the government will start.

Mr Burnham has talked about giving more power to local areas and people like Mayors to make decisions.



We will will share more information when Mr Burnham talks about his plans.





Shared Lives Week tea and natter

Tea, natter & community spirit!

To celebrate Shared Lives Week, we hosted a lovely Tea & Natter event at our Ilminster office.

Carers, people we support, and our staff team came together to enjoy some delicious treats, great conversation, and a chance to catch up.

We were also delighted to welcome Ilminster Town

Crier, Karin Cumming, who joined us and delivered a wonderful town cry about our organisation and the work we do.

A big thank you to everyone who attended and helped make it such a memorable event.

For Shared Lives Week, we also promoted Shared Lives across our social media and in local press.

Did you see us in your local media?





Laura moves on to massage!

We said goodbye to our People & Culture Leader
Laura Maker.

She's been a big part of the organisation for almost
ten years, starting her journey with us as a Shared
Lives Coordinator all those years ago.

She's left us to start her own massage and wellbeing
business. We know that's her passion, so we're sure
she will excel and shine.

We wish you well!

Events

We will be at:

Teignmouth Pride on September 5.

Penzance Pride on September 12.

If you live nearby, or fancy a day
out, pop by and say hello!

Deadline for the next edition is: October 1

Find us here: www.sharedlivessw.org.uk



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