shared lives plus

Could you support a young person who is in need of:

- Somewhere to call home
- Acceptance
- Further support
- Stable relationships

Become a Shared Lives carer for a young person who is leaving or moving on from being in care

What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is a care and support service for people who want to live independently in their local area with the support of a carer and community network. It's a relationship-based alternative to supported living, supported housing, or residential care.

In Shared Lives, an adult or young person with support needs is matched with a Shared Lives carer by their local Shared Lives scheme. The supported person may move in and live with the Shared Lives carer in a long-term arrangement, or may visit for a short break, or day support. Some carers just support one person, others may support multiple people if they have the spare rooms or for day support, or a mix!

Shared Lives carers open their homes and hearts to support young people and adults who need some extra help to live independently.

Young people with a learning disability or difficulty, neurodiversity, autism or complex trauma who are transitioning out of care can experience a 'cliff edge' of support. What this group of young people need is a loving, safe and supportive home environment in which they can become happy, healthy adults.

You could support a young person leaving care, helping them feel part of your family and community life.

What Shared Lives means for you

Shared Lives is a different way to care. You would be trained and supported to become an approved carer. Once approved and trained you would be able to support someone from your home - supporting a young person to experience safety, security, a trusting relationship and ultimately to maximise their independence into and beyond adulthood.

It's based on ordinary life – sharing meals, responsibility, and relationships. It's all about belonging, not just for the person being cared for, but you as a carer too.

You could offer short breaks, day support or long-term live in arrangements.

How it works

You don’t need formal qualifications – just patience, understanding, and space in your heart and home. If you can offer overnight support this means having a spare room that is available to the young person. Some carers have been or are foster carers, some have previous experience of caring roles and others have decided on a career change or offer Shared Lives alongside other commitments.

It really can work for everyone!

You’ll go through an approval process and training, making sure you feel equipped and comfortable to support someone else. After that, your local scheme would look to match you with someone who fits well with you and your household. This process takes time to make sure it is right for both you and the young person.

You'll receive ongoing support, regular contact and receive a fee for your role, for the room in the house and a contribution towards costs such as utilities and food.

As well as the fee you receive for your role which is set locally and based on the needs of the supported person, you'll also receive a contribution from the person you support towards household costs.

This contribution is in two parts:

Rent payment - average £120 a week, usually paid directly to you by the young person

Housekeeping contribution - average of £60 per week, covering food, hot water, and heating. This contribution is usually funded through the young person's benefits and entitlements and paid by them to you.

Once you are supporting someone through Shared Lives, there is general guidance on who pays for what. Some examples include:

Items the young person wants or needs, such as clothing, toiletries and subscriptions are paid from their own money.

If you and your young person decide to go out for a a meal together to a restaurant you both want to go to, the cost would typically be shared between you.

What makes it different

A career you can be proud of - Being a Shared Lives carer allows you to give back and make a life changing difference to a young person.

It is flexible – you can be a Shared Lives carer around other commitments including work. You will be self-employed so it can sit alongside a part time job, caring responsibilities and your hobbies and interests.

It is fun – you will be sharing your life and we aim to match you with someone with similar interests. For example if you like long walks with your dog, watching football, going to the cinema or craft activities – you'll likely support someone who enjoys these things too.

This is a rewarding role supporting young people to maximise their independence at the time and pace that works for them

You're never on your own as Shared Lives is a community. Local carers have regular opportunities to come together, support each other, including having respite support, and share experiences. Many carers say it feels like being part of one big family!

This is more than a role - it's a lifestyle.

“We were fostering and as she was getting older we were very concerned about what her long-term care would look like post 18. We became Shared Lives carers so she could stay with us and we could give her a home for as long as she needed.”

Tim, long term carer

“I think it’s fantastic, I don’t feel like I work anymore. I feel like everyday is joyful, full of excitement and I feel like I get more from Shared Lives because I enjoy it so much. It really is a pleasure.”

Maria, day support carer

Your next steps

If Shared Lives sounds like something for you:

- **Visit https://startyoursharedlife.today/**
- **Find out about Shared Lives in your area https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/find-your-local-scheme/**
- **Visit the Shared Lives Plus website for more information**

Open your home – change a life

FAQs

What makes it different to Fostering?

Fostering children is often seen as a parental role, and much of the child's life is closely monitored, supported and decisions made on behalf of the young person. In Shared Lives we focus on maximising independence, encouraging autonomy and promoting decision making. The role of a Shared Lives carer is to mentor and guide, rather than parent. Young people in Shared Lives are encouraged and supported to make their own decisions and chose their own path wherever possible.

Can I foster and be a Shared Lives carer?

Yes! You might join Shared Lives because you're already a foster carer and the young person you support is transitioning into adulthood within Shared Lives. Alternatively, you may not yet be a foster carer but want in the future to open your home to both a young person or adult through Shared Lives, and a child through fostering. Your local fostering service and Shared Lives service would work together to ensure the arrangements complement each other, and that there are no risks to either individual.

How much would I earn as a Shared Lives carer?

The level of care and support fee depends on the needs of the young person. Some schemes operate a banding system where others have a set fee. The weekly fee for supporting someone who lives with you could range from £350-£650 per person, depending on need and your local area.

In addition to this fee for the care you provide, the person you support also contributes toward household costs.

This is in two parts:

Rent payment - average £120 a week

Housekeeping contribution - average of £60 per week, covering food, hot water, and heating. This contribution money is usually funded through the young person's benefits and entitlements.

Financial information | start your Shared Life today

What is the process to becoming a Shared Lives carer?

By visiting https://startyoursharedlife.today/ you can find your local scheme and get in touch with them.

Once your application is complete, there is an assessment period during which a Shared Lives scheme officer will visit you several times to compile a report, which is then reviewed by an approval panel. The assessment period is relaxed, friendly and supportive. Its purpose is to get to know you as a person, understand your life, and explore what life might look like for someone welcomed into your home.

What are the benefits?

A steady income, flexibility for you and your family, breaks and time off so you can build your own lifestyle, and generous tax breaks.

Who will continue to support me?

Each Shared Lives scheme has a team of workers. When you decide to become a Shared Lives carer, you will be allocated a Shared Lives worker. Their role is to visit you at least every 12 weeks to check in, see if you need any support, and ensure that your home and the records for the person you support are up to date and safe.

Safeguarding (Adult Support and Protection in Scotland)

Shared Lives takes safeguarding very seriously, and there are some important points we want you to know. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and Shared Lives is committed to ensuring that everyone who comes into contact with us, or our work, is properly protected.

Your local team will have specific safeguarding (or Adult Support and Protection) procedures in place to support and protect you in your role.

Our lives get better when they're shared

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