



**Are you a social care professional and
know a young person leaving care who
is in need of**

Somewhere to call home

Acceptance

Further support

Stable relationships

**Find out more about Shared Lives for
young people leaving care**



What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is a regulated community-based care and support service for young people and adults who need some support with their daily life. It is based on shared interests and lifestyles, with the Shared Lives carer 'sharing their life'. The care and support takes place in the Shared Lives carers home, where they either offer day support based at their home or a full-time live-in arrangement.

Shared Lives provides a unique opportunity for young people leaving care to develop their independence, offering high quality, person-centred care in a supportive environment in the area where they want to live as there are 150 schemes nationally covering England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Shared Lives carers share their homes and lives with the people they support. This is more than a 'placement', - young people experience family life, community inclusion, and independence. It's about real homes and lasting relationships.





<https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/shared-lives-training-for-social-care-practitioners/>

Shared Lives can support range of young people leaving care, including those who have **learning disabilities or difficulties, are neurodiverse, physical or mental health needs, autism, or have experienced **complex trauma**.**





“If you are an authority or a social worker or personal adviser who doesn’t know about Shared Lives, you are missing a trick.”

Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker, Department for Education in England.

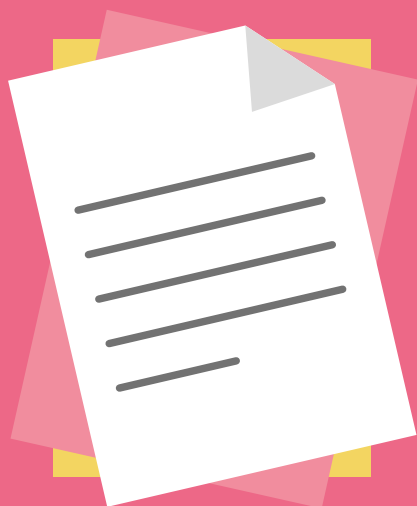
Shared Lives is sometimes described as being similar to fostering, in that the person is supported in the carers home. As the young person will be, or about to become an adult, there is a strong focus on maximising choice and control, independence and autonomy.

It also has similarities to Supported Lodgings; however, Shared Lives carers can support a range of needs- from higher-level personal care, to low-level prompting and mentoring. There is no age limit: young people may move in with a Shared Lives carer for a few years until they are ready to move on, or they may stay for many years into adulthood.



Transition from fostering to Shared Lives services

Shared Lives carers can also be foster carers. Many young people transition from fostering into Shared Lives with their carers, who then undergo the assessment and panel process to become an approved Shared Lives carer, with their Form F assessment shared with the Shared Lives scheme to reduce the assessment process.



This is an example practice guidance (England only) for Fostering and Shared Lives services to share information and support best practice:
Fostering-and-Shared-Lives-joint-transition-practice-England-1.docx

Criteria:

All schemes will support anyone **over 18** with a Care Act eligible need for housing and support, funded by Adult Social Care. However, some schemes are registered with CQC to support young people from 16 and others can support any young person who needs support and where there is leaving care funding (sometimes referred to as Staying Close) to pay for the support element to the carer, similar to Staying Put.



Contact the scheme covering the local area where the young person would like to live to find out more.

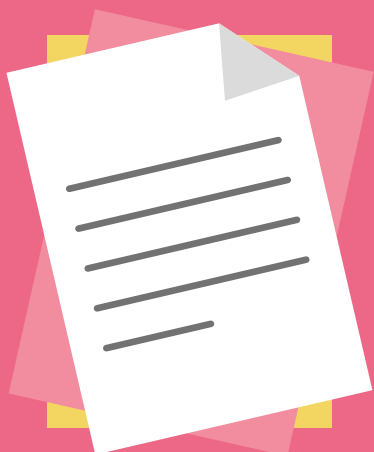




How do I refer?

We encourage you to refer from 16. As soon as you identify that a young person may benefit from Shared Lives, contact the local scheme to where they want to live, to discuss and submit a referral. This may not be local to where they live now.

Once processed, a team member will be in touch to discuss the referral, arrange joint visits, and, if Shared Lives is the right route for the young person, begin their exciting journey into Shared Lives!



Resources for health and social care professionals - Shared Lives Plus



The impact of Shared Lives

National research shows Shared Lives is both cost-effective and high impact, reducing reliance on residential and more institutional type placements, improving stability, and achieving good outcomes for young people in education, employment, training, mental health, independence, and sense of belonging.

Early evaluation from the Shared Lives Young People Leaving Care programme shows that:

68% are in education, employment or training, compared with 62% nationally

Care leavers report stability in relationships and improved emotional wellbeing

Care leavers experience stable housing

Guidance for practitioners:

When things need to change - Making It Real



Who are Shared Lives carers?



Shared Lives carers are passionate about supporting young people and adults. They choose to open their homes - and their hearts - to help people thrive in a home and family environment. Shared Lives carers undergo a thorough assessment process and receive training relevant to the needs of the people they will be supporting. The scheme will also ensure, check the home is a safe and suitable place for a young person to live.



Some Shared Lives carers have previously been, or are still Foster Carers, others have a background in care and support roles. There are also people who are new to care and support but have the values and outlook we are looking for!

Shared Lives carers are self-employed and receive a fee for the support they provide, which varies depending on that the needs of the they support.

No Shared Lives arrangement is 24/7 care, the young persons needs will be taken into account at assessment and day opportunities and short breaks allocated and arranged as appropriate.

It is possible for Shared Lives carers to have commitments outside of their caring role, such as caring for family members or separate employment.



The cost

Shared Lives carers are self- employed, receiving fees from three sources:



Payment to the carer for care and support

Contribution to living costs
(from the supported person if over 18)



Rent (usually in line with Local Housing Allowance)

The national average total for these elements is £760 per week.

Your next steps

Act early, refer today:

- Find out about Shared Lives in your area Visit <https://startyoursharedlife.today/>
- Connect with Shared Lives Plus for further information about supporting your local care leavers: mary.stokes@sharedlivesplus.org.uk
- Visit the Shared Lives Plus website for more information



FAQs

What makes Shared Lives different to fostering?

Fostering often involves a parental role, with decisions closely managed on behalf of the child. Shared Lives focuses on maximising independence, autonomy and decision-making. Shared Lives carers act as mentors and guides, rather than parents. Young people are encouraged to make their own decisions and follow their own path wherever possible.

What is the ongoing package of support from Shared Lives?

Each Shared Lives scheme has a team of workers. When a young person is referred, they are allocated a worker who supports both the Shared Lives carer and the young person. The worker visits regularly to see the young person at home and in the community, manages training and monitoring for the carer, and works closely with social care professionals to ensure the arrangement thrives.

Who doesn't Shared Lives work well for?

If a young person just wants a room to stay in or is already independent, it is likely that Shared Lives may not be quite right for them. Also, young people who need constant supervision, or more than 2 to 1 support are also unlikely to find this the right option for them.

How long can someone stay in a Shared Lives arrangement?

We love this answer – it is for as long as they need to. Obviously, carers do retire, or their situation changes but if Shared Lives is the right option we would do all we could to find another match for the supported person so they can remain part of Shared Lives. Usually supported people move on to independent living when they are ready, but they take the network of relationships that they built in Shared Lives with them.

**Our lives get better
when they're shared**



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Who pays for it?

Up until a young person turns 18 all costs are usually covered by children's services. After this, there are three elements to the payment.

This includes:

- **Rental component** which is usually the one bedroom rate set by Local Housing Allowance
- **A contribution from the young person for bills** such as food, internet and utilities (and housing if they are working)
- **A support payment to the carer** that comes from the Shared Lives Scheme and is based on the assessed level of need of the young person.