



SharedLivesPlus

THE UK NETWORK FOR SHARED LIVES AND HOMESHARE

#Invaluable - campaign briefing 2018

What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is where someone who needs support to live well, either visits or moves in with, an approved Shared Lives carer. Together they share ordinary home and community life.

The people using Shared Lives include those with learning disabilities, mental ill health, physical health conditions, dementia and other needs associated with old age, young people in transition to adulthood, young parents with learning disabilities and their children, people who've experience domestic violence and people returning home from hospital.

Half of the 14,000 people using Shared Lives live with their Shared Lives carer; half visit their Shared Lives carer for day support or overnight breaks.

Shared Lives carers are approved after a rigorous selection process by one of the UK's 150 CQC-regulated Shared Lives schemes. These schemes, which are run by a mixture of local authorities and independent organisations, carefully match people who need support with Shared Lives carers based on their mutual compatibility. Shared Lives is rated the best of forms of social care, by all UK care inspectors.

The value of Shared Lives

The outcomes can be startling, with people reporting feeling settled, valued and like they belong for the first time in their lives. They make friends (a third make five or more friends through Shared Lives and nearly all make at least one) and get involved in clubs, activities and volunteering, often for the first time. Half of people using Shared Lives went on their first ever holiday, as a result of the support and companionship of their Shared Lives carer. Shared Lives carers truly share their lives with the people they support.

Shared Lives carers create outcomes that are out of all proportion to the resources they require, resources that are still plentiful in every constituency: compassion, large houses and ordinary family and community life. The potential to expand and transform social care landscape with targeted investment is enormous.

Shared Lives consistently outcores all other forms of social care in CQC ratings. Despite this, it is not more expensive. In fact, Shared Lives, if chosen as an alternative to traditional / institutional support, could save up to £26,000 per year to support someone with a learning disability or £8,000 per year for someone with mental ill health.¹

National partners see the value of investing in Shared Lives, for example, NHS England and seven NHS trusts are investing over £1.75m in scaling up Shared Lives as a new form of healthcare. Big Lottery Fund, Nesta, DH, Cabinet Office, the Welsh Assembly Government, Monument Trust, Ellerman Foundation, Pears Foundation and Lloyds Bank Foundation have also partnered with us to develop Shared Lives for many more people. Social Finance has developed a Shared Lives Incubator with £1.45m of social investment, and we are helping Greater Manchester to triple its use of Shared Lives.

Stephen and Pat's story (pictured)

Stephen is 61 and lives with diabetes and a learning disability and he sometimes experiences severe anxiety. When Stephen's father died and he was left to live on his own, his life took a turn for the worse.

Stephen struggled with mental ill health and he was financially defrauded by members of his family. He was moved into sheltered accommodation but without closer support, he was unable to do many of the things that make up an ordinary life. He couldn't keep himself or his flat clean, he ate badly and spent his days alone watching television.

When Stephen was first referred to a Shared Lives scheme, there was potential for a drastic change in his quality of life. He was introduced to his

¹ *Investing in Shared Lives* -an independent report from Social Finance, 2013

future Shared Lives carer Pat and her husband Alan, and both parties decided they wanted to live together – having both considered and rejected other Shared Lives matches prior to that.

Stephen said: “I came here because I like the place and the atmosphere. I was scared at first because it was a strange place, then I got more confident to stay.”

The life change for Pat wasn't seamless either, as she committed to sharing almost all aspects of her life with a new person, with different habits and personality traits.

“When he first came to us – Stephen swore like a trooper!” said Pat.

As Stephen explained: “We're from totally different backgrounds.”

Gradually, Stephen's life expanded in all directions. With the support of Pat and Alan, he started to realise his potential and participate in home, family and community life. He is a student on the Jamie Oliver catering course at college, he attends wood working classes and is a regular attendee at his local football club. He has enjoyed his first ever holidays with Pat and Allen - to Turkey and Cyprus, and has made friends at college and social clubs including Jenny, who he goes to the cinema with.

He said: “I never used to go out, never had any friends. Since I came here I go to church and the Tuesday club – I've got loads of friends now.”

As his cooking skills have improved Stephen has developed a much healthier lifestyle, he has lost four stone and his diabetes is now under control.

“He should be very proud of himself,” Pat said.

But Pat and her husband Alan have also gained so much from their relationship with Stephen. Alan and Stephen often go to the pub together and enjoy conversations about local history and heritage. “Now, they are like Darby and Joan,” Pat says of Alan and Stephen, “we're company for each other.”

After about six weeks, any sense of standing on ceremony with each other faded. Pat added “When Stephen first came I'd lay the table in the dining room for dinner every night, but one day I just stopped. Well, some things are false aren't they, when you're a family.”

The need for Shared Lives

Social care has been under-resourced for decades and a greater proportion of people will need support in the future. 15 million of us live with long-term conditions; three million with multiple long-term conditions – and our population is aging. The number of people who need long term support to live well is increasing.

Valuing Shared Lives carers

Shared Lives carers, actual and potential are the human infrastructure that can meet this need. Investment in this infrastructure, improving workforce satisfaction, will enable the model to grow and eventually create a social care system that is more effective, more humane and offers more value for money.

Shared Lives carers do amazing work and enrich the lives of the individuals they support as well as the communities they live in. Many of them commit to sharing all aspects of their lives – taking on a responsibility that is a paid way of life rather than just a job. Their dedication in this deserves to be rewarded. Even though they are self-employed, the work they do is categorically a part of social care – so including them in social care pay reviews is a matter of basic fairness.

Our call to action

1. We invite MPs to visit Shared Lives carers and the scheme in their constituency to see the value of Shared Lives for themselves.
2. We also call on MPs to support us as we try to clarify, and in some cases, change any regulatory barriers, such as unclear benefits rules, which can make Shared Lives less affordable or more complex for people taking part.
3. We are asking Shared Lives schemes to meet with their Shared Lives carers and together co-produce their own local charters, based on our national model, which set out local expectations on both sides.
4. Finally, we want local authority leaders to include Shared Lives carers in their local workforce development plans and pay reviews, so that Shared Lives carers are valued alongside other people working in social care, and we would like MPs to support this call.

We would love to hear from you!

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