

# What is SharedLives

## SharedLives

@SharedLivesPlus

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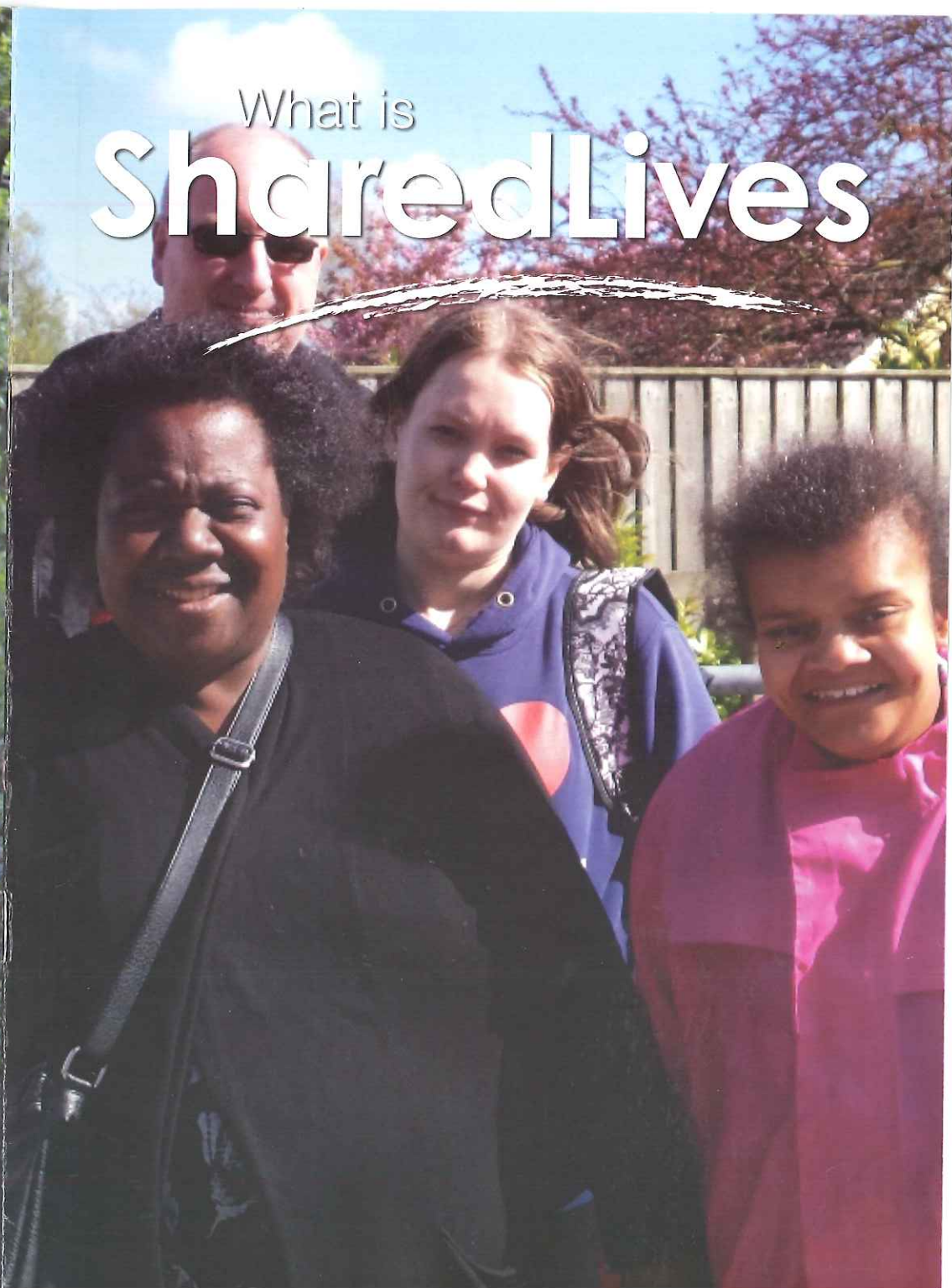
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www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk



**SharedLivesPlus**

THE UK NETWORK FOR SHARED LIVES AND HOMESHARE



# What Is Shared Lives?

In Shared Lives, a Shared Lives carer shares their home and family life with an adult who needs care or support to help them live well. Local Shared Lives schemes which are regulated by government inspectors individually match trained and approved Shared Lives carers with people who need their support.

There are over 10,000 people supported in Shared Lives in England and over 12,000 across the UK. They are adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems, dementia and a wide range of other support needs.

Around half live with their Shared Lives carer and half visit regularly for short breaks or day support.

People are increasingly choosing Shared Lives over other forms of care because it's a unique way to live well and feel independent but not alone. For some, living in a Shared Lives arrangement is an alternative to living alone or in a care home.

In Shared Lives, the goal is an ordinary family life, where everyone gets to contribute to real relationships and are able to be active, valued citizens.

Shared Lives carers are trained and paid, but not by the hour. Shared Lives carers and their friends and family also do a lot for which they don't expect to be paid, because they have chosen to share their lives with an individual who they treat as 'one of the family'. Government inspectors consistently rate Shared Lives as an exceptionally safe and effective form of care.

Shared Lives carers help people to develop or maintain independent living skills, friendships and roots in their community: giving them a sense of belonging. People living in Shared Lives may also enjoy other activities and support during the day that help them live their own independent and fulfilling life. Many people moving into Shared Lives arrangements from more institutionalised services are able to do things for the first time in their lives – to learn to cook, volunteer, work, make new friends and go on their first holiday.

Shared Lives is also significantly more cost-effective than other forms of regulated care – saving an average of £26,000 a year for people with learning disabilities and £8,000 for people with mental health needs.

There are almost 10,000 Shared Lives carers in the UK and over 5000 are members of Shared Lives Plus, their national organisation.



Shared Lives is growing and looking to double in size over 5 years – find out more at [www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk](http://www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk)

# Who We Work With

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Shared Lives carers and those they care for are matched for compatibility and then develop real relationships, with the Shared Lives carer acting as 'extended family', so that someone can live at the heart of their community in a supportive family setting.

The flexibility of this approach means that Shared Lives carers provide support for lots of different people in a wide range of different situations. Individuals supported in Shared Lives arrangements may have learning or physical disabilities, they may be older people who are frail or living with dementia for example, or people with mental health problems. Shared Lives can support parents with learning disabilities and their children, care leavers, disabled children becoming young adults and people who have misused substances or who are ex-offenders. It is also a support option for people who have recently been homeless, or who have experienced domestic violence.

## Alan

'Alan', 23, who has Asperger syndrome, had moved between several expensive 'out of area' services, after his family and then a local residential service had found his behaviour and excessive drinking too challenging to manage. When he met the South Tyneside Shared Lives scheme, Alan said, "I hate it here and want to get out". Alan was carefully matched with registered Shared Lives carers and lived with them successfully for 12 months, accessing community education and rebuilding relationships within his community, before moving to his own tenancy, with occasional support. Alan's move to a Shared Lives household saved the council £49,000

## Brenda, Kevin & Luis

Brenda is a young Shared Lives carer in her 20s. Brenda supports Kevin and Luis on a permanent basis. Luis is living with the effects of a brain tumour, which left him with speech and memory loss and epilepsy. He is Portuguese and has grown up children who live locally and visit him regularly. He is very independent, and living in Shared Lives has given an opportunity for social workers to assess his independence, and to look at whether he will be able to live in his own place in the future.

Kevin is a man with a learning disability in his 40's, who has lived with Brenda for about three years. He is supported by another Shared Lives carer to attend classes at local colleges during the day. Kevin is a brilliant photographer, and enjoys going on family holidays with Brenda.

## Pauline, Robert & Karen Linda & Sarah

Karen has Down's syndrome and lives in a Shared Lives arrangement with Pauline and Robert from Lancashire.

Karen came to live with Pauline and Robert six years ago. She was overweight and didn't speak often, using only Makaton (a form of sign language) Following support from the local Learning Disability Team and Pauline, Karen learned about healthy eating and was given support to make her own choices. Karen is now a healthy weight and much more confident. Pauline says that Karen "loves herself now" and "likes who she is - she didn't before".

Linda, a long term Shared Lives carer, has successfully worked with Sarah so that she is as independent as possible. Through Linda's guidance, Sarah is now able to travel independently to and from the Metro Centre, Gateshead and Newcastle where she meets up with her friends.

Sarah enjoys her voluntary role working in a shop in Gateshead. Sarah has completed several college courses and recently gained a qualification in British Sign Language, which her tutor said she excelled in.

Linda and Sarah believe that one day she may be able to move into a place of her own or with friends.

# Our Members

## Shared Lives carers

Shared Lives carers are dedicated, and are passionate about the support they provide and are the reason why Shared Lives is such a powerful and effective form of care in our community.

Shared Lives carers come from all walks of life, and choose to care for a wide variety of reasons. Formal experience of caring is less important than enthusiasm, motivation and commitment. Potential Shared Lives carers are given full training by the local Shared Lives scheme and go through a rigorous approval process which can take several months.

Shared Lives carers are self-employed and work under formal agreements with a registered Shared Lives scheme. They get to know people before both parties choose to form a long-term bond, which ensures that support is based upon a deep understanding of each individual.

Shared Lives carers offer time and encouragement to the person they care for in a stable and supportive home. As a result, many Shared Lives carers develop a long-term and rewarding relationship, welcoming the person into their household.

Shared Lives carers receive payments to cover some of their time and (if the arrangement is a live-in one) rent and a contribution towards household bills. Rates of payment are set by the local authority and vary depending on location and the needs of the person living in the Shared Lives arrangement. Shared Lives carers are also eligible for a tax break to cover their caring expenditure.

For more information about becoming a Shared Lives carer contact Judith Holman – Shared Lives Carer Support and Development Worker on 0151 227 3499 or [judith@sharedlivesplus.org.uk](mailto:judith@sharedlivesplus.org.uk)

A photograph of two women standing in a garden. The woman on the left has short dark hair and is wearing a dark blue top. The woman on the right has short brown hair and is wearing a black and white striped top. Both are smiling and holding green apples. The background is a dense green bush.

To find out more about Shared Lives schemes contact Anna McEwen – Director of Development on 0151 227 3499 or [anna@sharedlivesplus.org.uk](mailto:anna@sharedlivesplus.org.uk)

## Shared Lives schemes

150 independent local Shared Lives schemes recruit, train and approve people as Shared Lives carers and provide training and ongoing support and guidance.

The matching process is at the heart of Shared Lives – making sure that the arrangement is the best possible fit, looking at shared interests and personalities - so that each arrangement has the best chance of success for both the Shared Lives carer and the person being cared for. If an arrangement comes to an end, the Shared

Lives scheme is responsible for putting an alternative arrangement in place.

Shared Lives schemes are typically run by either the local authority or a charity and are always regulated and inspected by the government's social care inspectors.

Government Inspectors consistently rate Shared Lives as an exceptionally safe and effective form of care.

There are Shared Lives schemes in almost every local authority area of the UK.