

# Shared Lives Service

*Enquiry Pack*



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## Introduction

Thank you for showing an interest in Shared Lives East Lothian.

If you have a caring nature and are looking for a new opportunity to work from home and within your local community then Shared Lives might be the right choice for you. Ideally you will have some experience in a caring role but having the right attitude and values are just as important to us; this could be the first step in a new, life enriching journey. If you are interested then please read on. We welcome enquiries from people from all walks of life and if you have any doubts about your suitability or the role then please give us a call and we can talk it through with you.

Shared Lives Carer/s share their home and family life with an adult who needs some support. We believe that Shared Lives offers a great opportunity for people to work flexibly from home in a way that fits in with varying lifestyles. There are a range of different types of support that Shared Lives Carers can offer which we will go on to explain in more detail.

We hope that this pack will answer some of the initial questions that you may have but please contact us if you would like to discuss things further.



"My carers really understand me"

## What is Shared Lives East Lothian?

Shared Lives East Lothian recruits and supports **Shared Lives Carers** who work on a self-employed basis using their own homes as a base. The service employs **Shared Lives Coordinators** who assess the suitability of potential carers and provide ongoing support, monitoring and training.

**Shared Lives arrangements** are set up and supported by Shared Lives East Lothian. Matching approved Shared Lives Carers with people in need of support is a key aspect and all parties involved are able to have a say.

Shared Lives Carers provide day-to-day care and support and accommodation. Carers receive a fee from the Council and in addition may receive a contribution to other costs from the people being supported. Individuals and their Shared Lives carers enjoy shared activities and life experiences. The service is registered with and regulated by the Care Inspectorate.

## Who can be supported by Shared Lives East Lothian?

Shared Lives has the potential to support people with a very wide range of needs dependent on the skills and experience of the Shared Lives Carer. At present we mainly support people with a learning disability but there is also potential to support people with needs associated with physical disability, sensory impairment, autism, age, dementia and/or mental health. We also provide support to people moving on from children's services e.g. foster care or Share the Care short breaks service.

People referred to the service often have difficulty living on their own or need support to remain living in their own home. People also use the service to give their main carers a short break.

We will use the terms "supported people" or "supported person" in this document when we speak about people who are supported by the service. Anyone wanting to be considered for this service needs to have an assessment of their needs and be referred to us by their Health and Social Care Partnership social work service.

## What types of support are provided and do I need a spare room?

**There are three main types of support** and different arrangements suit different households.

- **Long Term Arrangements** - This is where a Shared Lives Carer has someone who needs support move in with them. This can be for many years or it can be for a few months to enable someone to then move on to alternative accommodation. We aim to provide Shared Lives Long Term Carers with some paid breaks during the year but this depends on the availability of alternative suitable support being available and so cannot be guaranteed



"I am so happy now because I feel safe"

- **Short Breaks** – This is where Shared Lives Carer/s have someone come to stay for a short period and as it involves staying overnight a spare room is needed. These short breaks are mostly to give a person's main carer a break. Short stays might also be because someone is needing to stay away from their main residence on a temporary basis.
- **Day support** – This is where Shared Lives Carer/s have someone visit to share joint interests and to spend time doing things together. This might involve going out and about together and using community facilities too. People's interests vary greatly and it might be doing creative, sporting or other leisure activities together. For some people this can be a good alternative to going to a day centre. You do not need a spare room to provide day support. Support can be offered to a maximum of two adults at any one time. If the support includes having someone stay overnight then each person should have their own room unless they are a couple.

### **Why do we need more Shared Lives Carers?**

We believe that Shared Lives is a great way of providing much more personalised support to people within local communities. Sharing family, friendships, interests and activities brings a lot of richness to people's lives. We believe that for some people it provides a good alternative with better outcomes than more traditional forms of care. Shared Lives services also tend to offer services in a way that represents good value.

**Shared Lives Plus** – our national umbrella membership organisation – has found that overall Shared Lives services receive better grades in inspections than other types of services. Shared Lives can be an alternative to a care home or group living for some people.

Shared lives can suit people who don't like being in places where there are lots of other people. Shared Lives can offer a break to people's main carers.

**We want to be able to provide more Shared Lives options for people and to do this we need more Shared Lives Carers.**

## **Who can be a Shared Lives Carer?**

Shared Lives carers are self-employed, receive a fee from East Lothian Council and the caring arrangement is supervised by Shared Lives East Lothian. Carers are varying ages, have different life experiences and need to have good interpersonal skills, be flexible and willing to learn. They also need to have space in their home and the time to provide the support needed. We accept applications from individuals as well as couples, families who have children at home and who have pets.

We are looking for people (families or individuals) who:

- are from all walks of life and backgrounds
- have personal qualities such as patience, flexibility and compassion
- are good communicators
- are willing to work on a self-employed basis
- want to support people to realise their potential
- have a spare room (for short breaks and long term support).

**No qualifications are needed** - it is your personal attitudes and values that are really important to us. You will need to be able to promote the aims and objectives of the service. You must have an inclusive attitude that does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability. If you are applying as a couple, you will both be assessed.



It is really important to stress that we are looking for people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Applicant/s may or may not have formal qualifications. We are looking for qualities such as tolerance, sensitivity, flexibility, a sense of humour and being a good listener. We are looking for people who communicate well, who will provide consistent support and who also enjoy a challenge.

It can at times be a challenging and complex role and you will have to be able to balance the professional role of being a carer with the informal nature of some aspects of the support.

You cannot apply to be a Shared Lives Carer for a relative (if there are exceptional circumstances this can be further discussed with the Service Manager).

## **How do we determine if you are a suitable person to become a Shared Lives Carer?**

It is important that we make sure that Shared Lives Carers are suitable for the role and are supported to provide the best possible service for the people they provide support to. We don't want potential Shared Lives Carers to be put off by the recruitment process and there is a Shared Lives Co-ordinator that will work with you through the various stages. There is a lot involved but you will hopefully appreciate why we have to be thorough.

The first step will be **pre-application discussions** and, where possible, a face-to-face meeting with a Shared Lives Coordinator to allow you to find out more about what is involved and to determine if progressing to a formal application is a sensible next step. If at this stage there is any particular reason we feel it is not the right role for you we will let you know.

After we receive and review your **written application**, we will seek references, complete various checks and discuss how we will take the assessment forward. You will have regular contact with one of the Shared Lives Coordinators who will over a period of time (mostly over a period of 3-6 months) get to know you well. The process will also involve any other household members and if you are living as a couple then your partner/spouse will need go through the approval process too. You will be expected to be open and honest and discuss various aspects of life over this period. The assessment process will involve applicants sharing information about their:

- personal and family background
- values and attitudes community links
- knowledge skills and abilities which will enable you to support a person in a **Shared Lives Arrangement**
- understanding of relevant policies and procedures.



“My carers are like  
my family now”

Shared Lives East Lothian

[www.eastlothian.gov.uk/sharedlives](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/sharedlives)

Here is a bit more detail on the checks and references we make when assessing your application:

- We take up **personal references** from people who have known you for at least two years (we may visit one of them to discuss in person) and also from your last or most recent employer – we seek explanations for any gaps in employment
- If you have worked in social care before – we seek confirmation of why you left your last job in this sector
- We seek a **GP reference** to confirm that you are physically and mentally able to carry out the role
- We do a **criminal record check** and any other **required safeguarding checks** on you and other adult members of the household. In Scotland advice on the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) is available from [www.disclosurescotland.co.uk](http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk)
- We have to check your identity and that you have the right to work in the UK
- We cross-reference to the Care Inspectorate (Scotland) or other professional bodies where appropriate
- **Local Authority Check.** We will check if you have had contact with your local authority in the areas you have lived in previously, and whether this is relevant to your application
- We work with you to conduct a **Health and Safety assessment** of your house and garden
- We ask for confirmation that your mortgage lender or landlord does not have any issues with you working from home as a Share Lives Carer.

## The Shared Lives Panel

The assessment process may involve some initial training and development dependent on your circumstances. At the end of the assessment process, your Shared Lives Coordinator will submit a recommendation report to a panel who will consider the contents of the report, the outcome of the checks and they will probably arrange to meet you. You will be given a copy of the report and will have an opportunity to add comments. You will be supported through this process by your Coordinator.



The **Shared Lives Panel** is made up of specially selected people who consider whether applications can be approved (in exceptional circumstances an alternative quality assurance process may be used ensuring that the process is sufficiently rigorous, fair, transparent and equitable – for example, when a person wishes to transfer from being an East Lothian Foster carer or Share the Care carer a more streamlined process will be followed). The panel will then make a recommendation to the Service Manager who makes the ultimate decision.

Applicants are usually informed verbally of the panel's recommendation within 24 hours and should receive written notification within two weeks.

Applicants have the right to appeal a decision by writing to the panel Chair to request this.

If you are approved as a Shared Lives Carer, there will be some induction training and after completing this the service will endeavour to find suitable matches with people needing support although we cannot guarantee this.

*Please note that there will be separate guidance that details the references and checking required when an existing East Lothian Council approved Share the Care Carer or Foster Carer wishes to continue to care for a child who is in their care when the child becomes an adult.*

## **What money will I receive and what other financial matters do I need to consider?**

- **Long Term.** The fee that Shared Lives Carers currently receive per week is £356.60 for supporting someone who receives the lower rate of Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance and £392.19 per week for someone on the higher rate. In addition there is a payment covering rent, food and bills that totals £148.24 per week.
- **Short Breaks.** The fee paid to the carer is £59.18 per night if the supported person is out for the day with another day support service and £74.80 per night if they are not. In addition to this there is a £7.92 per full day contribution for food from the person being supported.
- **Day Support.** The fee paid can vary according to the length of a session, the number of people supported and whether or not the person specifically needs 1-to-1 support. An example of a 3-hour session for one person would be £35.52 with additional contribution for meals/snacks if provided.

There is scope to consider exceptional situations so the above figures can vary but we will discuss this fully with you when support arrangements are set up.

## Other financial matters

This basic information is provided to help potential Shared Lives Carers understand some of what may be involved but it is not necessarily exhaustive. The information is provided on a good will basis and is to the best of our knowledge accurate at the time of writing. It is a summary of information in our Shared Lives Carer Handbook. If you want more detailed information after applying to be a Shared Lives Carer we can provide you with this.

## Being Self Employed, Tax and National Insurance

Shared Lives Carer's are self-employed and as a result are fully responsible for their own tax and national insurance. Prior to entering into a Shared Lives arrangement, Shared Lives Carers need to register as a self-employed person for tax and national insurance with HMRC. Shared Lives East Lothian does not provide support to Shared Lives Carers with their tax and national insurance matters. Share Lives Plus (an umbrella membership organisation) or independent financial advisors should be consulted if support is needed in this area. There is detailed information available on the Low Income Tax Reform Group website [www.litr.org.uk](http://www.litr.org.uk)

**Self-Assessment tax returns** can be completed online or on a paper form. Shared Lives Carers can claim 'qualifying care relief' on some of their income. This can be applicable whether Shared Lives Carers offer longer term shared lives arrangements, short breaks, shared lives day support or any combination of the three.

## Insurance information

As Shared Lives Carers are self-employed and use their own homes as a base we want to make sure that we give Shared Lives Carers good information about the different types of insurance that they should have in order to prevent them being financially liable in the event of various types of incidents/occurrences.





"We valued Lorraine's care of Daniel hugely"

The support that Shared Lives Carers can expect from the Shared Lives East Lothian includes:

- having a **named Shared Lives Co-ordinator** who is a Social Worker registered with the Scottish Social Services Council
- **regular telephone calls** and support and monitoring visits (usually every 6–8 weeks and at least once every 3 months) from the Shared Lives Co-ordinator
- **induction training** or other learning and development opportunities
- a **full review of their work and approval status** at least once a year (and more often if necessary)
- **ongoing learning and development opportunities** which can be tailored to the Shared Lives Carer's individual learning style
- **regular reviews of the supported person's Support Plan/Profile and Shared Lives arrangement agreement** so that the person's changing needs and wishes can be responded to, including whether the arrangement should continue
- the provision of a **handbook containing essential information** about the aims and objectives and operation of the service and reference documents including copies of relevant guidance and procedures
- **regular breaks** (whenever feasible) up to a maximum of 6 weeks per year for Shared Lives Carers who are providing long-term accommodation and support for a person
- offering to facilitate **peer support** between Shared Lives Carers including meetings
- **attendance at Shared Lives Panel** every 3 years or if circumstances/situation changes.

The level of support and monitoring for Shared Lives Support Carers will be proportionate to the level and type of support that is provided. We also hope to arrange Shared Live Carer meetings and ways for Carers to provide mutual support. Your Shared Lives Coordinator can be contacted for support and advice during their regular working hours. When Co-ordinators are not available there is an emergency duty and out of hours system in place.

## How do I get matched with people who need support and what happens next?

Everyone involved needs to work together to ensure that there is a good match between the Shared Lives Carer and the supported person. Once a suitable match is agreed, written agreements are completed to confirm the arrangement.

- **Matching** – A Shared Lives arrangement can only be successful if the Shared Lives Carer is able to meet the person's needs and if the person and the Shared Lives Carer(s) and other people in their household all get on well together. Shared Lives East Lothian will gather all the important information about both the person and the Shared Lives Carers and use this to work out which Shared Lives Carers will best suit the person. This process is known as matching. Both parties will be encouraged to take part in the matching decision and it is important that both parties are aware that they can ask for the process to stop at any time.
- If the Shared Lives Service identifies a potential match then this will be discussed with both parties and basic information will be shared. In some cases the service will share a **Shared Lives Carer profile sheet** that the Carer(s) have developed explaining a bit about them and what they can offer. The service will seek permission from the interested person to share information about them and their needs with the Shared Lives Carer(s). If both parties then wish to meet up, we can arrange an introductory visit/s.
- **Introductory visits** may be held on neutral territory or may be in the home of the Shared Lives Carer. The meeting gives both the person and the potential carer a chance to meet and get to know each other by sharing information. A Shared Lives Co-ordinator will usually attend these introductory visits. Following the meeting the Shared Lives Co-ordinator will discuss the potential match with each party separately to give each a chance to make informed decisions and express any concerns. If both parties wish to proceed then the next step may be to meet at the carer's house where the support needs/outcomes can be discussed in more detail. This will include the opportunity to ensure that both parties feel comfortable and that they are both happy to proceed. A programme of visits can be arranged if needed particularly if consideration is being given to a long term placement. There may also be a number of trial stays arranged.
- **After initial introductory visits further trial visits** can be arranged if required to allow each party more time to decide if this arrangement will suit them in the longer term. Trial visits can include overnight stays especially if someone is trying to decide if they would like to go for short breaks/respite or for a long term stay. The length of any trial arrangement will depend on the individual circumstances and be agreed by all parties.

- **Termination of the Matching Process** – No-one should ever feel pressurised for a placement to go ahead and either party can withdraw from the matching process at any time if they are not fully comfortable about it.
- **Urgent and Emergency arrangements** – these may be arranged in exceptional circumstances. If a Shared Lives Carer is willing to consider supporting someone at short notice we will provide as much support and information as we can before the arrangement starts.

There are three types of written agreements that are used dependent on the type of support:

- **Arrangement Agreement** – this lays out the specific arrangement in place for an individual and it lays out the conditions, responsibilities and expectations of everyone involved (the service, the carer and the individual).
- **License Agreement** – this is used only for longer term placements, and it outlines the things that are provided as part of the accommodation and the house rules. This is an agreement between the carers and the individual.
- **Carers Agreement** – this is an agreement between the service and the Carer and it outlines the agreement that the Carer and the service have, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party in general rather than in relation to a particular individual.

## What should I do if I want further information?

We really want to hear from you. Please do phone or email us if you have any other questions or if you want more information about being a Shared Lives Carer.

Email us at [sharedlives@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:sharedlives@eastlothian.gov.uk) or contact Louise (Mon-Fri) on 07813 722 024  
Karen (Mon-Weds) on 07929 873 140.

