

# KENT SHARED LIVES

## Policies & Procedures

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### (6) Approval Panel Selection of Members & Operational Criteria

It is the policy of Kent Shared Lives to establish and maintain a panel of people who operate independently of Shared Lives. This panel of people is known as the Shared Lives approval panel and is responsible for the approval of prospective Shared Lives hosts and the approval status of hosts who are already part of Shared Lives.

#### **Composition**

The approval panel has a panel chair who is either a senior member of staff or someone with no direct responsibility for the management of anyone who carries out assessments of prospective hosts or a person who is completely independent of Shared Lives and who has the necessary skills and experience.

Shared Lives will aim to ensure that the panel is made up primarily of people who are independent of Shared Lives. A Shared Lives Host and their placement will meet with the prospective Host, they will provide feedback on their views of suitability and this will be included in the assessing officers report for Panel.

People who are employed by Shared Lives or Kent County Council (KCC) can be panel members providing they are not involved with the assessment process and are not responsible for the management of anyone who carries out assessments. People employed by Shared Lives will aim to be in a minority during any panel meeting where decisions are to be made.

Shared Lives will appoint a Registered Manager and responsible person as panel advisers. The panel advisers will be part of the approval panel to enable the panel to ask pertinent questions, provide clarification of any issues and provide the panel with the Shared Lives perspective. The panel adviser will not enter any discussions or decisions about host approval.

The panel composition will, where possible, reflect the community served by Shared Lives, offering a balance of interests, skills, backgrounds, and an even gender balance.

The maximum number of panel members present for the panel to consider panel business and decide upon approvals or continuation of approval is six. The minimum numbers of panel members present for the panel to consider panel business and decide upon approvals or continuation of approvals is three.

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### **Appointment of Panel Members**

All panel members will have gone through the KCC recruitment procedure which involves comprehensive checks and references including a standard Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check

Prospective Panel members will receive written information about Shared Lives, Shared Lives processes, their panel role and expected conduct. A meeting will be conducted to further explain role and expectation.

### **Removal of Panel Members**

Panel members can decline future involvement from the role and should give Shared Lives three months' notice in advance that they intend to do so. If concerns are expressed about a panel member, they will be discussed in the first instance with the panel chair. If the chair is unable to resolve these concerns, the chair will inform and discuss with the Shared Lives manager. This may lead to their membership of the Panel no longer being required.

The people who are authorised to give notice to a panel member are the panel chair and the responsible individual. The decision will be communicated to the panel member by the panel chair. If a panel member wishes to appeal against the decision, they should raise the issue with the responsible Individual. If the person is not satisfied, they will be advised of the KCC complaints procedure. This procedure will be discussed as part of the induction of new panel members.

### **Process**

The panel will be held every month to consider assessments of prospective hosts and reviews of existing hosts, when required.

Reports on existing hosts need to be presented to panel if they are seeking a change in approval or as result of a complaint or major change of the host's circumstances.

All notes from panel will be retained by Shared Lives as a record. Minutes will also be taken of any discussion held during panel consideration or recorded if carried out virtually.

During the monthly panel the Shared Lives worker who carried out the assessment or review will be available to answer questions and clarify any issues the panel may have. In some instances, if the assessor is not available it may be possible for a colleague or representative to support instead. This can only be effective if the representative has a good understanding of the issues in the report and is able to answer any questions/queries.

Included within the assessment will be feedback from an existing Host and an individual placed within Shared Lives. They will have met with the applicant on at least two separate occasions and formed an opinion on suitability to join the service.

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The panel will not be expected to decide on approval when the assessment or review is not fully complete, or references and checks are not available.

If panel members already have an interest in or knowledge of a host, they must declare this to the panel chair. The panel member must agree with the panel chair whether their interest or knowledge will affect their objectivity and if necessary, they must agree to withdraw from the panel while that particular host is discussed.

### **Evidencing knowledge and skills**

The primary role of the panel is to assess the evidence of the host's knowledge and skills and determine if this sufficient for a new host to become approved or an existing host to change their approval.

Reviews and assessments will be written by the Shared Lives worker to reflect the individual host concerned. The evidence of each host's knowledge and skills will look very different depending on the host, their circumstances, motivations, and experiences.

Shared Lives will ensure that panel members understand the concept of the knowledge and skills required to be an effective host as part of their induction to the role of a panel member. Panel are to discuss any risks and vulnerabilities identified in the assessment, any health and safety concerns, including environment, safeguarding and composition of the people in the household and those which could result in a regulatory action being taken against Shared Lives.

Panel members must ensure that they look objectively at each host assessment and review and consider each of the knowledge and skills statements. For each statement they will consider whether the Shared Lives worker has provided them with sufficient evidence that the host has the knowledge and skills required.

Whether the type and amount of evidence outlined in the report is sufficient is a relatively subjective decision to be taken by the approval panel. However, if panel decisions are seen to be fair, equitable, consistent, and sound it is likely that their view on the type and amount of evidence will be equally so.

### **Decisions**

#### **New approvals**

The approval panel will decide on the suitability of the applicant. When considering the assessment of new applicants, the outcome will either be:

**Approved** - This means that the panel were satisfied with the thoroughness of the assessment pack. Panel have reached the decision that the host can now work for Shared Lives to the level of their approval.

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**Not Approved** - This means the panel members have decided that an applicant is not suitable or that checks and references revealed something unsatisfactory. In this case the appeal process will be made available to applicants.

**Deferred** - This means that panel members were unable to reach a decision. It may be that the assessment report was incomplete, references were insubstantial or that it was felt that the applicant requires further training or experience to develop their knowledge and skills. In this case the situation will be explained fully to the host and a date agreed to present them to panel again in the future. When a host is deferred Shared Lives will work with them to meet panel requirements and recommendations.

### **Reviews**

When considering the reviews of existing hosts, decisions will be more tailored to the specific circumstances of the host and the reason their review has been presented to panel. They could, however, include:

**Increase of approval** - changes to original approval e.g., jointly assessed.

**Other changes in current approval** - Any changes to original approval

**De-Registration** - Removal of approval due to breaches of the Host Agreement/Noncompliance or serious concerns.

The panel has been given the mandate by Shared Lives to make all necessary decisions and offer any recommendations or further actions.

The panel will ensure any decisions they make are in line with this mandate from the scheme.

### **Disagreement**

If panel members do not reach a unanimous decision it is agreed that a majority decision will be accepted. If there is an equal split of decisions, the panel chair will have a casting vote.

### **Appeals**

Shared Lives has an agreed procedure to be followed in the event of hosts wishing to appeal against a panel decision. Initially, the host should raise the issue with the panel chair who will respond in writing. If the host is still not satisfied, they should raise the issue with the Enablement Manager. If the person is still not satisfied, they will be advised of the KCC complaints procedure.

All existing and prospective hosts will be made aware of the appeal process.