

# Your easier to read guide to Shared Lives





## What is the Shared Lives Service?

The Shared Lives Service is about people sharing family life with a Shared Lives Host in the family's home.

This could be for:

- A few hours
- Overnight
- A weekend
- Longer-term placements



You may have heard of Shared Lives under its previous name - 'The Adult Placement Scheme'.



The Shared Lives Host could live in a town, a village, by the sea or in the country. They could be single, with a partner, family member or with children.

You will be matched with a Host Family who will be able to offer you the support that you need.



The Shared Lives placement will allow you to live as part of a family, giving you the opportunities to do the things you would like to do.

The Shared Lives Host will be carefully selected and trained to assist you with the help and support that you need both at the placement and in the community.



You will always have your own bedroom but you will usually be expected to share the bathroom and the rest of the house with the Shared Lives Host and their family.

## Who can use the Shared Lives Service?



People with; dementia, a learning disability, autism, asperger's syndrome, a physical disability, mental health difficulties other health or sensory disability and older people can use the service.

You must be aged 18 years or over and reach the criteria for Fair Access to Care. You can then be referred to the Shared Lives Service for a possible placement.



You will have a needs assessment. This is where a Care Manager will ask you questions about you, and the support you need.



The Care Manager may, with your permission, talk to other people about the options for meeting your needs, and if the Shared Lives Service is the right sort of placement for you.

Your Care Manager will be employed by Kent County Council and they will work with the Shared Lives Worker to help arrange a service for you.



Your Care Manager will also meet with you to ensure that the placement is going well or if there are any problems.



## Information about you:

Shared Lives Workers will collect information about you during the assessment.

You have a right to know what information Shared Lives have collected about you. You also have a right to change this information if you feel it is wrong.



This information will only be kept by Shared Lives for as long as the information is needed. It will then be disposed of securely.



If you would like more information about this, please contact your Shared Lives Worker.

## How is the Shared Lives service paid for?



Kent County Council will pay for part of the cost of your placement.

You will usually have to contribute some money to the cost of the placement yourself.



The amount will depend on your financial circumstances.

Normally someone from Kent County Council's Finance Department will come and discuss this with you and will be able to tell you exactly how much you will have to pay.



They will also make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to, including housing benefit.

If you decide not to share your financial details with Kent County Council, then you will be expected to pay for the full cost of your care.

### Shared Lives costs



It is important for you to know what you are expected to pay for.

Kent County Council will pay towards your support needs.

This fee is paid direct to the Shared Lives Host Family by Kent County Council.



You will be assessed in line with the Care Act.

This helps decide what you should pay towards all of your social care services.

Shared Lives is a social care service.



If you would like some more information about this, please ask your Care Manager.

## Short Breaks and Long Term Placements



### You will pay:

- For travel to places that you have asked to go, also for some day to day travel for example day services or medical appointments.
- For your Host to get in to places that you have asked to go.
- For food and drinks while you are out.
- For presents that you want to give to people from you.
- For decorations or furniture that you want to have.
- For your own clothes, toiletries and hairdressers.



### The Host Family will pay:

- For their own meals and drinks while they are out with you.
- For travel to places that you both need to go.
- For their own admission to get in to places that you both want to go.
- For your room to be nicely decorated and furnished, but not for extra things that you want but that you do not need.





## Day Support

If you stay with the Shared Lives Host Family for day support, they will make sure you have meals and refreshments for the time you are there.



If you all go out for a meal, you will pay for your own food and drinks.



If you are confused about what you need to pay for, you can ask:

- Your Shared Lives Host
- Your Shared Lives Worker
- Your Care Manager



The Placement Agreement is where the things that everyone agrees to is written down so that you and your Host know what is expected.

This will include:

- When you move in
- How long your stay is
- Anything else you feel is important to write down.



## Finding the right Shared Lives Host Family for you

We will find out (through assessment) what your needs and support are and then try to carefully find the right Shared Lives Family who can support you in the best possible way.



This is called 'Matching'.

We do this to try and make sure that placements will be successful and continue as long as everyone wants them.



We have to find a Shared Lives Host that you like and who will be able to support you in the way that you want.

If there is nobody available that can support you in the way you want then we may not be able to arrange a Shared Lives Placement after all.



If we cannot find a suitable Shared Lives Placement for you, we will tell the person who referred you.

If a possible Shared Lives Family is found, a Shared Lives Worker will talk to you, your family and other people who are close to you to find out what is important to you.



We will look carefully at all of the information that has been collected and tell you about any suitable Shared Lives Hosts.



To help you find the right placement the Shared Lives Worker will look at:



**You:**

- Your age
- Your health
- Your needs



**What kind of Host Family you would like:**

- A person on their own or a family
- Someone who lives in a town or a village
- Someone with pets or children



**What things are important to you:**

- Things you believe in
- Things you would like to do
- Plans and hopes for the future

You will then be told about any suitable Host Families and a meeting will be arranged for you.



## How are people introduced to a Shared Lives Host Family

The Shared Lives Worker will tell the Host Family about you.

If the Shared Lives Host thinks that they can meet your needs then you will be told about this and a meeting will be arranged between you and the Host Family.



This is normally done at the Host Family's house so that you can look at the room and house and also meet any other members of the family.



You can meet the Host as many times as you wish to help you decide whether the placement is suitable for you.

This could include going for tea or having a few overnight visits before you decide to stay regularly or for a longer term placement.



You will be asked how you feel about the placement and how things are going.

The Host will also be asked how they feel things are going.

If you feel you no longer want to carry on getting to know the Host then the visits can be stopped at any time and an alternative Host family could be considered.



In longer term placements there will be a review held around 8 weeks into the start of the placement to allow everyone to discuss if the placement is right.

During this time you or the host family can decide if the placement is right.



Your Care Manager and the Shared Lives Worker will then talk with everyone to make sure everything is ok, or to sort out any problems.



Some placements may end but this is fine and if you wish to find another Host the Shared Lives Worker will try to find another placement that suits your needs better.



### **What to expect in a Shared Lives Placement**

You will be able to say 'yes' or 'no' when choosing someone to stay with.



If you are staying overnight or longer you will have your own room with furniture supplied.



You will be able to take things of your own if you want to, like a TV for your bedroom or your own duvet, CDs etc.



You will be able to visit your friends and family or they can visit you.



You will be able to meet new people and also be able to try out new things if you wish.



You will be supported to do things you choose to do.

You can learn new skills.

The Shared Lives Host will help you to take part in your usual activities where possible.



Your Shared Lives Host Family will treat you with respect.



## House Rules

Every Shared Lives Placement will be different and you may be asked to keep to some house rules, for example not having friends in after a certain time or playing loud music late at night.

These rules will be different in each placement and will be talked about with you when you visit the Host Family.



## Ending a placement

For many different reasons a placement may have to end.



You will be told at least 60 working days before this happens.



If you need to find somewhere else to live your Care Manager will help you with this.



If you no longer want to stay at the placement you can talk to your Care Manager who will help you give 20 working days notice.

## Making a complaint



If you are unhappy about anything connected with your Shared Lives placement you can tell your Care Manager, the Shared Lives Worker or your Shared Lives Host Family.



If you are unhappy about other services or other things in your life you can talk to your Care Manager, or your Shared Lives Worker who will help you find a solution, or help you to report this to someone who can.

Adult Social Care Complaints Team  
Kent County Council  
Invicta House, County Hall  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME14 1XQ

Telephone: 03000 410 410

Text relay service: 18001 03000 410 410

Email: [customercarecomplaintsadults@kent.gov.uk](mailto:customercarecomplaintsadults@kent.gov.uk)



If you are still unhappy then Kent County Council has a complaints procedure which is included with this service guide.

You could also write or get someone who will help you to write to the Care Quality Commission.



The Shared Lives Service will do its best to ensure that your placement with your Host Family is a positive experience.



For more information on the Shared Lives scheme go to:

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

This pamphlet is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.

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[alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk)