

Relatives & Friends Guide

This guide will tell you about **Kent Shared Lives** and Shared Lives placements.

If you have any questions about what you read or you would like further information about Shared Lives you are welcome to contact:

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Tel: 03000 412400 Email: sharedlives@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk/sharedlives.

What is Kent Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is a personalised alternative to residential and residential-type care for all eligible Kent-funded individuals from the age of 16 and above. Kent Shared Lives is part of Kent County Council.

Shared Lives offers three main types of placements:

- **Long term** – individuals move in and live with one of our approved Hosts.
- **Short breaks** - individuals stay with one of our approved Hosts for a shorter time frame. This could be one night, a few nights, a week or longer, depending on the requirements of the individual.
- **Day support** – the individual receives up to five hours' support at any time of day (this is classed as one session). This can be held on any day of the week although part of that support must be held within the Host's home.

Shared Lives placements are tailored to the needs and requirements of the individual. The Service enables your relative / friend the opportunity to retain or develop their independence with as little disruption to their routine as possible. Living with a Shared Lives Host will enable your relative / friend to live as valued members of their local community.

Why choose Shared Lives?

Quality of Life

- “Real Life”
- Part of a family

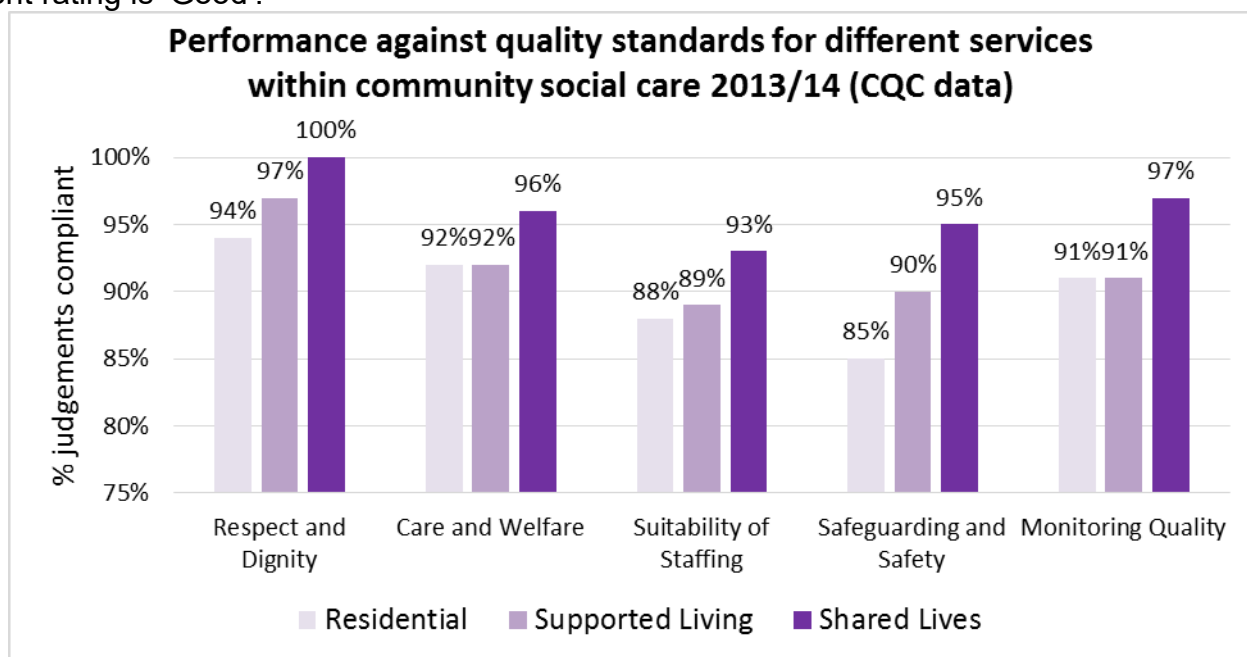
Social Inclusion

- Family Network
- Community Presence

Support

- Consistent and continuous
- Personalised
- Regular visits by Shared Lives and care management

Kent Shared Lives is registered and regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the current rating is ‘Good’.



How could a Shared Lives placement be beneficial to my relative or friend?

- They will live in a clean and well-looked after home
- They can remain as part of their local community
- They will have the company of other people so can reduce isolation but also increasing independence where possible
- They will be able to make new friends
- They will get the help they need daily to live as fulfilled a life as possible
- They can maintain or learn valuable life or social skills
- They can learn new skills which is particularly important for those aspiring to live independently in the future
- They may find new hobbies or interests
- They will be able to go on holiday with their Host if they wish

Some individuals may use Shared Lives as a ‘steppingstone’ to more independent living, for example, supported living. Hosts will support and prepare the individual to gain valuable life skills and social skills in this transition. It is a positive step towards independence and our Hosts are trained and paid to provide this service while maintaining a family type environment.

Other individuals might be using the service as an alternative to residential care to maintain their skills, lifestyle, hobbies and interests to lead the most fulfilling life as possible.

Who are the Host families?

There are many kinds of Shared Lives Hosts. Some are couples and some are single people. Others have children, some have pets, and some provide help and support to more than one placement. Our Hosts all have a caring nature, sensitivity, and warmth. Hosts are paid a fee for each placement and this fee is decided upon once the placement has been agreed.

All our Hosts undergo a rigorous assessment including checks with the Local Authority and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Ongoing support is provided by the Kent Shared Lives service, including regular monitoring visits and annual reviews. Hosts are also expected to undertake regular training relevant to their role.

Who can use Shared Lives?

Anyone who is over the age of 16, who meets Kent County Council's eligibility criteria, can be referred to Shared Lives. This includes people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, autism, physical disabilities, sensory impairment issues, older people or people living with dementia.

Most placements are for individuals. However Kent Shared Lives will try to provide a service to the following if a suitable placement is available:

- Siblings
- Parent and baby
- Parent with adult daughter or son
- Couples

Shared Lives will make every effort to find suitable placements that will accommodate the following, but it may not always be possible:

- Individuals who may need rehabilitation following illness
- Wheelchair users
- Individuals with specific religious beliefs and cultural practices
- Individuals who require specific, fixed equipment i.e. ceiling tracked hoist

However, some difficulties are hard to manage in a family home and the service may not accept referrals for people with the following behaviours:

- Destructive and violent actions
- Soiling or smearing
- Wakeful nights on a consistent basis

How can a referral be made to Shared Lives?

Referrals to Shared Lives must come from your relative or friend's Care/Case Manager or Social Worker.

Referrals to Shared Lives will include full information about your relative / friend including their needs, level of support required and any behaviour we may need to be aware of. This is to ensure they are matched with the right Host family.

Advance referrals may be accepted for young people in transition before their sixteenth birthday if a Shared Lives placement has already been identified as the most appropriate option.

In some cases, a Kent 'Looked After Child' can be referred to our Service as part of their transition. The existing foster family can be approved as Shared Lives Hosts to continue providing the placement.

Shared Lives will consider people who self-fund, however, they will still need to be referred by a Care/Case Manager or Social Worker.

Care and Support Plan

Kent County Council has adopted a person-centred approach. This will consider the views of your relative / friend when drawing up a support plan, and this will become an integral part of their future service provision.

A Care and Support Plan or Pathway Plan will be completed by a Care/Case Manager and must identify Shared Lives as an appropriate service that meets assessed eligible needs.

The Matching Process

This will consider:

- support and communication needs of your relative / friend
- the Shared Lives Host's ability to care for, support and communicate with your relative / friend
- potential risks and behavioural issues
- age of the Shared Lives Host/s and your relative / friend
- cultural background and needs
- personal interests
- location and accessibility of the Shared Lives Hosts home
- lifestyle and preferences
- spiritual and philosophical beliefs and how differing beliefs may impact on the placement
- need for special access or specialist equipment for your relative

Once your relative / friend or Shared Lives has identified a potential placement, information on your relative / friend will be shared with the prospective Shared Lives Host/s.

If the Shared Lives Host can proceed with the placement, information about the Host/s will be given to the appropriate Care/Case Manager. They in turn will then share this information with you and your relative / friend. If the individual wishes the placement to proceed, the Care/Case Manager and the Shared Lives Officer or Assistant Officer will arrange an initial meeting between all parties.

Introductory visits

The Shared Lives Officer or Assistant Officer will ensure that you, your relative / friend, and the Shared Lives Host have sufficient opportunities to discuss the process, your concerns and your hopes for the placement.

Introductory visits will normally include the following:

- A meeting to take place at the Shared Lives Host's home or at another venue if that is more appropriate
- Up to four overnight stays or day support visits at a pace that suits both parties

If further overnight stays are required, this will be agreed and funded by the Care/Case Manager.

The introductory visit will ensure that you:

- meet the Shared Lives Host/s family and other people living at the house, e.g. another Shared Lives placement
- familiarise yourselves with the house, the bedroom (if applicable) and the neighbourhood
- discuss the support needs of your relative / friend
- are aware of the records that will be kept by the Shared Lives Host
- discuss any house rules and guidelines e.g. no smoking
- ensure the Shared Lives Host is made aware of any specialist requirements that need to be met for your relative / friend

Following the matching visits, if all parties are happy to proceed, then the Shared Lives placement agreement will be drawn up and the placement will begin as soon as all parties are satisfied with the arrangements.

If there are exceptional circumstances where the placement requires a lengthier introduction this must be an identified need within the Care and Support Plan and Care/Case Managers must fund this.

If your relative / friend being placed and/or the Shared Lives Host decide at this stage not to continue with the placement, the Shared Lives Officer or Assistant Officer will support the Host to end the introductory process and the appropriate Care/Case Manager will support you and your relative or friend.

Financial Contribution

Like some other services within the council, Shared Lives is a chargeable service and so your relative / friend may be eligible to contribute towards their stay. An assessment will be carried out to establish any payments required to Kent County Council. This will be covered by their benefits and will still leave them with their personal allowance to spend as they wish.

Placement agreement

The Shared Lives Officer or Assistant Officer will convene a meeting for all parties to discuss the Placement Agreement. This is a formal written agreement that sets out:

- Purpose – whether it is a long term, short break, day support or preparing for independent placement
- Timescales within which tasks are expected to be completed or progress made
- Tasks and expectations of Hosts – for example, where a Host is promoting independent skills
- Expectations of the Care/Case Manager and Shared Lives
- Contact with family and friends
- Additional costs to your relative or friend, for example, travel expenses

Arrangements for your relative or friend to enjoy appropriate contact with you and other relatives, friends and representatives are all agreed on an individual basis. Details are recorded within the placement agreement together with the support that will be provided by the Host.

Your relative / friend must be fully involved in agreeing their Care and Support Plan and Placement Agreement and should be encouraged to fully participate in reviews. Where assistance is required, arrangements will be made for a suitable advocate to provide support.

Ending a placement

If your relative / friend wishes to end a placement they should normally give a minimum of 20 working days' notice.

Where a placement ends due to a concern about the Host's ability to provide care or the Service's withdrawal of Host approval, the amount of notice given to both the Host and your relative will depend on the outcome of the Care/Case Manager's risk assessment. If deemed high risk, then notice and removal of your relative or friend would be with immediate effect. In other circumstances 20 working days' notice will be given.

Shared Lives Hosts will normally be expected to provide a placement for the term agreed. If, however, a Shared Lives Host does wish to end a placement, a minimum of 60 working days' notice would be required to enable us to find another Shared Lives placement if this is in the best interests of your relative / friend.

A placement may end following an annual review when a change of accommodation is identified as appropriate for the changing needs of your relative / friend, or if the current placement is felt to be unsuitable. If your relative or friend wishes to change to another Shared Lives placement then they should give 60 working days notice to allow us time to find an alternative suitable placement. In these situations Adult Social Services and the Shared Lives Host will be involved in arranging as smooth a transition as possible, planning the change over in an appropriate time scale.

Contact Us

As discussed above, the referral to Shared Lives must come through your Care/Case Manager.

Please look at our website www.kent.gov.uk/sharedlives as it contains useful and up-to-date information. It also contains a link to the CQC report.