

KENT SHARED LIVES

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(22) Placement Introductions

It is the policy of Kent Shared Lives to have a procedure for introductions to any new placement that ensures that the individual and the Shared Lives host can make an informed decision about a longer-term commitment to the placement. A thorough and transparent introductory process helps to ensure the stability and quality of placements.

The policy is complementary to and should be read alongside the Shared Lives policies on matching and emergency placements.

Procedure

1. Shared Lives will provide information for each new individual about the Shared Lives placement services provided by Shared Lives in a form accessible to the individual.
2. Shared Lives will ensure that it has accurate and comprehensive information about both the person referred and the Shared Lives host. This information will be held in line with the Shared Lives policies on confidentiality and record keeping and access to files.
3. Shared Lives will identify Shared Lives hosts that have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the person placed in accordance with the Shared Lives matching procedure. It will make information available about possible Shared Lives hosts to the person referred and about the person to the possible Shared Lives hosts in order to enable both parties to make an informed choice about possible placements. Shared Lives will try to ensure that the information available is accurate and sufficient.
4. Once a possible match is agreed Shared Lives will ensure that:
 - 4.1 Family members and /or an advocate for the individual are given the opportunity to be involved in the introduction of an individual to a Shared Lives placement
 - 4.2 Introductory visits are planned which allow the Shared Lives host and the individual to spend time getting to know each other.
 - 4.3 The length and frequency of the visits are dictated by the needs of the individual but are sufficient to allow the Shared Lives host to judge whether they will be able to meet the individual's needs and the fit between the individual, the Shared Lives host themselves and the other members of the household.
 - 4.4 In the case of a long-term placement, the individual will normally spend at least one day (preferably including overnight) with the Shared Lives host at their home. This allows the prospective individual (with family, friends, or advocate as appropriate) to:

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- Meet the Shared Lives host's family and any other placed individual;
- See the house, their bedroom and the neighbourhood;
- Have a meal;
- discuss how the placement can meet their requirements;
- See the kind of records kept about individual.

4.5 Where, because of the particular needs of the individual is not possible, Shared Lives will ensure that the individual and the prospective Shared Lives host are provided with sufficient opportunities to meet and get to know each other in other settings.

5 As part of this process of introductions, Shared Lives will ensure that the prospective individual and the Shared Lives host have opportunities to discuss the process and to raise any concerns related to the proposed placement. If those concerns cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of both parties, then the individual and the Shared Lives host will be supported to end the introductions without recrimination or criticism.

6. Shared Lives will record the reasons for any decision to end the introductions, in line with its policy on record keeping and will make this record available in an appropriate format to the individual and host.

7. For long-term placements: Shared Lives will ensure that a minimum eight-week introductory period of residence is offered. The referring team and Shared Lives will review the placement at the end of this period.

7.1 The introductory period of residence will provide the Shared Lives host with the opportunity to identify any gaps in the information provided by Shared Lives. Shared Lives will support the Shared Lives host to obtain any further information necessary to ensure their ability to provide safe and high-quality support and care to the person placed with them.

7.2 Shared Lives will ensure that there are opportunities during the introductory period of residence for concerns to be raised. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily addressed, Shared Lives will support the individual and Shared Lives host to end the placement.

8 Shared Lives will ensure that the Shared Lives host and the individual understand that a decision to end the placement will not be viewed negatively and will not affect their involvement in any future placement