



**An Introduction  
to  
Worcestershire Shared Lives**

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## **Introduction**

Thank you for enquiring about becoming a Shared Lives Provider with Worcestershire County Council.

We hope the following will provide you with helpful information about the scheme and the role of a Shared Lives Provider:

- What is the Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme?
- The role and expectations of the Shared Lives Provider
- Matching
- Payment
- Frequently asked Questions

We look forward to speaking to you soon.

Yours sincerely,

The Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme



## **What is Shared Lives?**

Shared Lives is for adults who have additional support needs, this may be because they have a learning disability, mental health needs, a long-term health condition, or may be a young person aiming to build on life skills for more independent living.

Shared Lives offers Individuals the opportunity to stay in a family home setting, with trained Shared Lives Providers, who have been carefully matched to ensure they are able to meet their needs and support them to live a full and active life.

It is all about the household sharing their lives, interests, and experiences.

It offers a great alternative to residential care and may also be a stepping-stone to more independent living.

Worcestershire Shared Lives is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and funded by Worcestershire County Council.

Worcestershire Shared Lives offers both long term accommodation and support, or short-term placements. Short term placements can include planned replacement care, or temporary emergency placements.

The Worcestershire Shared Lives service aims to provide Individuals using the scheme with the opportunity to be part of and enjoy the community of Shared Lives Provider.

These are some of the essentials we believe are important for all Individuals within the Worcestershire Shared Lives scheme:

- Being part of and involved in the community
- Having the opportunity to develop new skills
- The opportunity to be as independent as possible
- Having privacy at home and in their wider life
- Being treated with dignity, consideration, and respect
- Support and encouragement to make decisions.

Shared Lives Providers are expected to support the Individual to stay in touch with the people who are important to them and they should be made welcome to visit.

## **The Role & Expectations of the Shared Lives Provider**

Shared Lives offers Individuals with care and support needs an alternative form of accommodation with care and support provided by specially selected, fully trained Providers. This alternative to residential care or supported living is very much valued by the Individual and their family because it can benefit the person's quality of life enormously. As a Provider, you will need to provide the Individual you support with their own bedroom. The bedroom will be furnished and large enough for a single bed, a wardrobe and/or chest of drawers and a comfortable chair. The Individual will then personalise it as they choose.

Shared Lives is for Individuals over the age of 18 who have additional support needs, this may be because they have a learning disability, a long-term health condition, or may be a young person aiming to build on life skills for more independent living.

Shared Lives Providers share their homes with the Individuals matched with them and provide support in accordance with the key principles of Shared Lives, the requirements of Individual plans/ Placement Agreement and the Shared Lives Scheme Policies and Procedures.

Shared Lives Providers are expected to have both a professional and an informal, caring relationship with the Individuals they support. One of the key principles of Shared Lives is that Individuals are embraced into the household and the local community.

Applicants will engage with an intensive assessment undertaken by the Shared Lives Scheme which includes the completion of the Care Certificate, a DBS, reference checks and occupational health check etc. Also, an independent portfolio of you and your home to be approved by a panel.

Shared Lives Providers are expected to follow a detailed plan for the Individual and to work co-operatively and positively with a wide range of professionals and others involved in the life of the Individual who they support. Their work is subject to quarterly monitoring visits by a Shared Lives worker who will also support the placement. A Shared Lives Provider will be required to keep accurate records, in line with the Individual's needs. This can include keeping medication and financial records, appointment information and recording general health information.

As a Shared Lives Provider, you will be assisting Individuals to meet the outcomes set out in their plan from the scheme and their social worker. The type of support could include:

- Personal Care which can include support with bathing, showering, dressing, undressing, brushing teeth, washing hair, support with incontinence issues, nail care and shaving.
- Support or assistance with medication
- Support or assistance with shopping
- Assistance with finances.
- Support or assistance with general household tasks
- Provision of nutritious meals, preparation of meals, or assisting with eating and drinking.
- Assisting the Individual to access leisure activities, to take an active part in their local community and to take holidays/breaks,
- Supporting to maintain contact with family and friendships
- Transporting the Individual to where they need to go
- Carrying out moving and handling tasks.
- Developing independent living skills to enable the Individual to progress onto independent/supported living.
- Support or assistance with medical appointments.

## Matching

**The matching process** is central to the person-centred approach in Shared Lives. This can take time, and involves considering the support needs of the Individual, the location, social networks, and other factors specific to them.

A Shared Lives arrangement can only be successful if the Shared Lives Provider is able to meet the Individual's needs. Also, the Individual with care and support needs, the Shared Lives Provider and others in the household are compatible. Therefore, the Worcestershire Shared Lives scheme workers gather all the important information about the Individual and Shared Lives Providers and use this to identify which Providers may suit. This is known as matching. Shared Lives Providers are only able to accept referrals into their Shared Lives placements that have come via the Shared Lives scheme. This is to ensure the correct protocols are undertaken, funding has been agreed, and to ensure correct payment to the Provider.

When the scheme receives a referral, it will provide information about the person and helps us understand and match their needs and wishes. The sort of things that we consider are as follows:

- the person's assessed needs and wishes
- any identified risks
- the skills, knowledge, and experience of the Shared Lives Provider
- the person's hobbies and interests
- the location of the Shared Lives Provider's home
- the facilities and accommodation the Shared Lives Provider can offer
- the cultures and/or faiths that are important to the person and the Shared Lives Provider.

If we can identify Shared Lives Providers who are able to meet the person's needs, the scheme will provide the person or their representatives with information about potential Providers. We will then share information about the Individual to the Shared Lives Provider.

If everyone agrees, we will arrange for an introduction to take place. This would include the following:

- introductory visit to the Shared Lives Providers' homes
- getting to know each other and learning about each other
- meet the Shared Lives Providers and other members of the household
- see the house, the bedroom, and the neighbourhood
- have the opportunity to ask any questions

If the person and the Shared Lives Provider think that an arrangement is possible, then introductions would move onto inviting the person around for meals and arranging an overnight stay.

If the introductions are successful and everyone agrees to proceed, there will be a 28-day trial period. This will allow a period where the Individual or Provider can change their mind about the arrangement.

Matching and introductions are a major part of ensuring that the Shared Lives arrangements are right for all concerned. If a situation arises where an emergency arrangement is required, we will follow our procedure and guidelines on emergency arrangements.

## Payments

Shared Lives Providers are self-employed and receive a fee, dependent on the level of care and support they are giving to an Individual.

Payment for Shared Lives long term arrangements are made up of three elements:

- Payment for assessed care and support needs
- Payment for accommodation (rent)
- Payment for food utilities etc. (household contribution)

People living in Shared Lives arrangements will pay for their rent using Housing Benefit or other income. The rent will be set according to the local authority housing rates for Shared Accommodation and will be detailed within the Individual's licence agreement.

Payments for food, utilities etc. are paid for by the Individual from their benefits or other income. The rate is set by the Worcestershire Shared Lives scheme and reviewed annually.

Payment for the Individual's assessed care and support needs are paid by Worcestershire County Council through a BACs system on a four-weekly cycle, based on two weeks in advance and two weeks in arrears. The Individual will be assessed by their social worker against a banding system where they will fall into one of four fee categories identified in the table below:

Replacement care payments will not include payment for accommodation, food or utilities. Instead, the Provider will receive a lump sum payment from Worcestershire County Council. The fee for replacement care is set at £78.00 per night.

<b>Level</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
<b>1</b>	£306
<b>2</b>	£367
<b>3</b>	£430
<b>4</b>	£557
<b>Replacement care</b>	£80.34 per night
<b>Household Contribution</b>	£84.12 per week

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Am I employed by Worcestershire County Council?**

No, you will be a Provider in your own right, and you will have a contract with Worcestershire County Council to provide care and support under the Shared Lives scheme. Shared Lives Providers are considered self-employed and can access the Shared Lives tax break. Shared Lives Providers are not paid by the hour and do not work to a fixed schedule but are paid a fee to meet the outcomes set out in a Shared Lives arrangement Agreement and Individual's Plan. More information about tax breaks can be found by contacting Shared Lives Plus at <http://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/> . Shared Lives Providers do not employ staff to help them provide care.

### **I live on my own, can I still be a Shared Lives Provider?**

Yes, we have many single Providers within the scheme. However, there will be careful consideration through the matching process to ensure you are able to manage the needs of the Individual. We would also recommend a support network for when you need a break.

### **How many people can I support at a time?**

Shared Lives Providers can support a maximum of three Individuals at a time. However, this would be following detailed and careful discussions with your allocated worker and dependent on your own situation. It is recommended those new to the scheme do not support more than two people to start with, this can then be reviewed.

### **Who pays me?**

You will receive payment directly from Worcestershire County Council, paid out of the Individual's personal budget. This money comes from whichever social work team is involved with the Individual. You are not paid by the Shared Lives scheme itself.

### **I live in rented accommodation; can I still provide care and support?**

This will be dependent on your landlord because they will need to agree that their property can be used for this purpose. They would also need to complete documentation to evidence their agreement. We have many Providers who rent property and are able to use their home for Shared Lives purposes.

### **How big is the scheme?**

We currently have over 80 Providers and over 120 Individuals within the Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme.

## **What is a Shared Lives Worker?**

The Shared Lives Worker is employed by Worcestershire County Council and has a responsibility to support and monitor the placement at least four times a year, more input will be provided if needed.

Their role is to work with you to ensure everyone in the placement is happy and the relevant information is being recorded. The Shared Lives Worker will document information from their visits to provide evidence of compliance and quality, and to demonstrate that the needs of the Individual are met. The Shared Lives worker will be able to signpost you to useful information and services within the council. You will be provided with a handbook which provides extra support and guidance. You will also have access to the team during working hours and the Emergency Duty Team at any other time. The Shared Lives Worker is not a social worker nor responsible for the Individual's funding.

To find out more please check out our website:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/care-and-support/care-homes-and-supported-accommodation/shared-lives-scheme>