

**About the Shared Lives Scheme and the role of Shared Lives Carers**

In Oxfordshire there are a number of adults who need support, or to be looked after, and for whom traditional services are not the best solution. The Shared Lives Scheme provides them with the kind of support and/or care they require by offering them the chance to live or stay in people’s homes, or to be supported in their own home and community. Shared Lives arrangements rely on Shared Lives Carers who are happy to share their homes and lives. They share their home and daily life with people using the service, providing friendship, support and care in the same way that a relative might. Shared Lives is regulated by Oxfordshire County Council’s Shared Lives Team and registered with the Care Quality Commission.

**The purpose of Shared Lives Care**

To provide personalised care which is individually tailored to meet people’s needs. This might be :

*Long term care/ permanent arrangement* : when the plan is for someone to live long term with a carer – i.e. anything over 3 months. There is always a trial period first, which will vary according to individual circumstances.

S*hort term or Short breaks* : providing a short break for a someone using the service who usually stays with another Shared Lives Carer. This can be anything from one night to a few weeks at a time and may be a one-off or on a regular basis.

*Outreach* : some Shared Lives Carers provide support for people who need it in the community or in partnership with the host family.

**THE ROLE OF A SHARED LIVES CARER**

The role of a Shared Lives Carer is to:

* meet the support needs of the person using the service as agreed in the Support Plan (as amended from time to time)
* abide by the Shared Lives Carer Agreement
* attend and contribute positively to all arrangement reviews for the person using the service
* treat the person using the service as a full member of your household
* support the person using the service in being a full member of the local community
* respect the person using the services wishes, privacy and dignity
* respect and encourage, whenever possible, the person’s right to make choices
* attend any training agreed with the Shared Lives worker
* keep accurate records up to date, in good order and secure, returning them to the Shared Lives Team if the arrangement is terminated.

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF THE SERVICE

Carers are expected to uphold and promote the principles and values of Oxfordshire’s Shared Lives Scheme:

* The service aims to promote and enhance the independence of people who use the service and to enable them to form new and meaningful relationships and to broaden their experiences.
* Arrangements should offer the opportunity and support to enable people who use the service to experience choice and to have increased presence, and a more active role, in the local community.
* People who use the service have the same rights as other adults to experience a lifestyle which most people would value as desirable for themselves and their families.
* The service offers flexibility and support which is tailored to meet the needs of each individual who uses the service. The service is responsive to the different and changing needs of people who use the service and the approved Carer.
* Arrangements should provide a one-to-one consistent relationship which complements and extends the social and support networks of people who use the service. They should have the opportunity to develop and maintain existing relationships with family members and friends.

### THE AGREEMENT MADE BY SHARED LIVES CARERS

Shared Lives Carers enter into an agreement with Oxfordshire Shared Lives Scheme to provide care and/or support to someone who uses the service.

Shared Lives Carers are responsible to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) via the Shared Lives Scheme in meeting the standards of care within the legal requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. Carers will also work within the policies and guidelines of Oxfordshire County Council.

Shared Lives Carers are self-employed and can expect to incur some costs, which they can offset against their income tax. Carers are responsible for keeping their tax affairs in good order and for seeking their own professional advice, if it is needed. Carers have the responsibility to register with the Inland Revenue as self-employed

Successful applicants will be required to receive training to meet the Scheme’s requirements.

A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service check is required.

**SUPPORT FOR SHARED LIVES CARERS**

The Scheme ensures that Shared Lives Carers have the on-going support of a Scheme Worker who is available to review and discuss their experiences in the role. This is to make sure that carers have the resources, skills and knowledge to fulfil the responsibilities of the agreement and meet the needs set out in Support Plans, in line with the principles of Shared Lives. The Shared Lives Social Worker’s role is to assist with any additional specialist advice and support required to meet both needs of Shared Lives Carers and those of the person they are supporting.

Shared Lives Carers also benefit from:

* Up to 42 nights paid break for carers with long-term arrangements
* automatically qualification for  Oxfordshire Public Liability insurance
* membership of [Shared Lives Plus network](http://www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk/), a UK charity which represents the interests of all those involved in Shared Lives
* training opportunities.

### PAYMENT

Payments made will vary, dependent upon the service provided. Carers will be informed of the current payment rates, including payment for mileage, by the Shared Lives Scheme as these vary from year to year. The tax rules for Shared Lives carers are very attractive as a considerable amount of what you earn is exempt from tax.

### ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION ACT 1996

Although Shared Lives Carers are self-employed, they are required prior to being approved, to provide documentary proof that they are entitled to work in the UK.

**VALUES**

Shared Lives Carers are expected to practise in a manner that promotes the dignity, equality and respect of people using the service; values diversity and challenges prejudice, discrimination and oppression; actively safeguarding people’s welfare and ensuring they have opportunities.

**COMPLAINTS**

People who use the service, their families and Shared Lives Carers have the right to express a concern or complaint about the Shared Lives service, its employees and/or Shared Lives Carers, or any other aspect of Oxfordshire County Council Social & Community Directorate. Complaints will be managed under the relevant Shared Lives Scheme and/or Oxfordshire Social & Community guidance and policy.

**TERMINATION OF ARRANGEMENTS**

The Shared Lives Scheme can terminate an arrangement if the Shared Lives Carer is not complying, or is not likely to comply with, the obligations identified under the relevant carer’s agreement or guidance contained within a relevant Support Plan. If the safety or wellbeing of someone using the service, or of the Shared Lives Carer/others in their household, is thought to be at risk by the continuation of the arrangement, the arrangement can be ended without a Review.

**PERIOD OF NOTICE TO END AN ARRANGEMENT**

If a Shared Lives Carer decides, for whatever reason, to either terminate an arrangement or to no longer be a Shared Lives Carer it is asked that they give a minimum of 28 days’ notice to the Shared Lives Scheme. If they have someone/people living with them who is/are in a long-term arrangement we ask that you consider some flexibility to the period of notice to allow for appropriate alternative accommodation for them to be arranged.

**Full details of all aspects of the role can be found in the**

**Shared Lives Carer Handbook.**