

# Shared Lives

*Services for people with disabilities*

**Information for paid carers**



*Do you have time to share?*

*What is Shared Lives?*

**This booklet tells you about Gateshead Shared Lives Service. A service that links Shared Lives carers – people like you, with adults with a disability.**

- What is Shared Lives?
- Who does it support?
- What's different about Shared Lives?
- Who provides the support?

## **What is Shared Lives?**

The shared lives service helps approved Shared Lives carers (ordinary people from the local community) to share their home and time with someone who needs support.

### **Who does it support?**

The service is run by Gateshead Council and supports people with a disability aged 18 – 65.

### **What's different about Shared Lives?**

Many adults are looking for somewhere new to live.

For example:

- A person may be returning to the community from hostels or long-stay hospitals

- A person might not be able to manage on their own; or, may be unable or unwilling to live with their own families

There are a number of living options which you've probably heard about already. These include living in your own home with support from community services. Others may live in residential homes. Shared Lives offers an alternative type of support with accommodation:

### **Longer Term Accommodation**

- this is where people live with Shared Lives carers, sharing their lives and their home.

### **Short Term Break/ Accommodation**

- people stay temporarily with a Shared Lives carer to get a break from routine or to give their carers (family or friends) a break.

## Who provides the support?

Support is given by ordinary people from the local community who are given training to become Shared Lives Carers. The service is looking for new carers. You might be just the person we are looking for. Did you know that carers are paid generous fees?



## Shared Lives Carers

### Have you got what it takes to be a Shared Lives Carer?

The people who use Shared Lives need support to take part in community or family activities that most of us take for granted, such as going to the shops, going into the countryside or visiting a museum or theatre.



As a Shared Lives Carer you may offer help for a few hours each week or you may wish to have someone to stay for a few days to give their relatives a break from caring. The service also matches people on a longer-term basis and this may be the kind of support you want to offer.

Experience of helping people is useful but full training will be given to you, hopefully leading to a recognised qualification.

**Generous allowances** are paid to you for the help you offer once you are approved.

We need people from all over Gateshead, so even if you have only got a few hours a week or the odd weekend to offer you are still needed by the Shared Lives service.

To register your interest in Shared Lives please give us a call on 0191 433 3000 or use the online form - [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk). Please be reassured you are not committing yourself to the service if you fill in the form.

## Why do people become Shared Living Carers?

Shared Lives Carers can help someone with a disability overcome many of the barriers that can occur in daily life.

Shared Lives Carers get a lot of satisfaction from building a relationship with people who use the service. Shared Lives Carers say being a support carer is rewarding but it is also a challenge at times.

## Who can become Shared Lives Carers?

All types of people can become Shared Lives Carers. What is important is that you can offer your time and be aware of an individual's needs. If you are offering short stays, you should have a room available for the use of the person.



Shared Lives Carers can be:

- Single people
- Married couples
- Couples living together
- Friends sharing accommodation
- People with children

We will consider people as carers regardless of age, ethnic origin, sexuality or disability.

You do not need qualifications or previous experience. We provide training.

## How long does Shared Lives last?

It can vary. If you are approved as a short term carer, the placement could be any length of time from one night upwards. All stays are planned in advance to suit you. It may be that you offer care to more than one person, at different times, so you could be quite busy.

Some Shared Lives Carers are prepared to offer short breaks to people in an emergency at very short notice.

You and your family need to think carefully about the type of support you want to offer.

## What if a placement doesn't work out?

Before a Shared Lives match is agreed, the person, their own carer and the Shared Lives Manager and approved carer are introduced and meet over a period of time, getting to know each other. A Shared Lives match doesn't go ahead until everyone involved is happy about the arrangement.

If at any time during a placement, things aren't working out, other arrangements will be made for the person using the service. For the Shared Lives Carer you can still offer placements to other people.

## Support for Shared Lives Carers

All Shared Lives Carers attend an assessment and training course before they can be approved to take a person into their home.

Once you have been approved you can attend further training sessions and carers support groups.

The Shared Lives Manager will make regular visits to support Shared Lives Carers, the person and their family to discuss progress and future plans.

They will make sure there is someone on call if there is a problem. If you are providing a longer-term accommodation, they can arrange short breaks as and when necessary.

# Financial Information for Shared Lives Carers

- Shared Lives Carers are paid expenses for the work they do
- They are not employees of Gateshead Council
- The payment date will vary from month to month
- Carers have to register with the Inland Revenue and register as self employed
- You will not be liable to income tax
- You are paid only when you have someone in your home
- There are comprehensive financial guidelines

## How to become a Shared Lives Carer

Call us for an informal chat on 0191 433 3000 to find out more about being an Shared Lives carer. You can also visit [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk) for more information.

You can complete our on-line application form. You are not committing yourself to the service by filling out the form. Someone will contact you to discuss what is involved in becoming an Shared Lives carer in more detail.

We will visit you at home to give you more information on the service. If you have family or

someone else living in your house, it is important that they want to participate in the service too. You will be asked to provide medical and personal references and must agree to a Criminal Records Bureau enhanced check for all people over 16 in your household.

We will ask you to attend a training course that looks at the many issues that people with disabilities have. This helps you become clear in your own mind about exactly what you would be committing yourself to.

Once you have attended the course, the Shared Lives Manager will arrange to visit you at home to get to know you better. This also helps you look at how the family or household may be affected by someone living or staying with you. We will then write a report.

Finally, your references and the report will have to be considered

by a panel of senior officers from Social Care and Health. The panel have the final say about your acceptance with the service as an Approved Shared Lives Carer.



## What happens when you have been approved as a Shared Lives carer?

- The Shared Lives Manager will match you with someone who will hopefully get on with you and your family. When a possible match is found, you are given details of each other and if both parties agree, you are introduced.
- An introductory period follows, during which time you can get to know each other better. If all goes well, the placement progresses from short visits to overnight stays where appropriate.
- Planned short breaks or a long-term stay will only happen when everyone involved is happy and ready. You can withdraw at any stage before this, or after, if things are not working well.
- After a Shared Lives has gone ahead, the Shared Lives Manager will visit regularly and review the placement from time to time.

## Interested in finding out more?

Whether you are a potential carer, you know someone who might benefit or feel you would benefit from the service yourself call us for an informal chat.

Shared Lives Manager

Tel: 0191 433 3000

or find out more by visiting [www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)

## Different Formats

If you would prefer this leaflet in large print, Braille or on audiotape/CD please contact the communications team at Gateshead Council on 0191 433 3444.

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