

# Shared Lives Plus

## Importance:

Shared Lives Plus allows service users to continue living a “full life” in spite of any additional care needs they may have. According to Shared Lives Plus, awareness around the homeshare model as a form of social care is low, in spite of its evident benefits and the growing need for it in society. Shared Lives Plus promotes this model, particularly relevant in the context of a lack of affordable accommodation in the UK.

## What is it:

Shared Lives Plus is the UK membership charity for more than 12,000 Shared Lives carers, 150 Shared Lives schemes and a growing network of over 25 local Homeshare organisations. It supports the organisations (either local authorities or independent charities) that deliver Shared Lives as a social care model, such as Homeshare UK and Family-to-Family (a pilot project in Stoke-on-Trent). Shared Lives Plus’ vision is to create a kinder, stronger society built on sharing lives and homes, bringing community-based support to the UK. Currently, the focus is largely on support for individuals with autism and forms of neurodiversity, but they are beginning to expand their offering to other care needs.

Homeshare UK brings together people with spare rooms, to tackle loneliness, with people who are happy to chat and lend a hand around the house in return for affordable, sociable accommodation. Together, Householders and Homesharers share home life, time, skills and experience. Homeshare provides affordable accommodation at a time of record housing shortages, and helps householders remain independent for longer. Shared Lives Plus are looking to roll out this scheme across the UK.

Family-to-Family connects Sharing Families (a family that has been through a challenge and come out the other side) with Seeking Families (a family that may be known to social services, or need support) to work on achieving goals and move towards thriving lives supported by a professional coach.

The scheme promotes sharing values, working to community strengths and building social capital through i.e. sporting clubs, voluntary work, playgroups, as well as helping families with parenting and child development, to learn new behaviours, and improve coherent family life. This is a pilot project currently running in Stoke-on-Trent with 30 families matched up to form 15 cohorts.



# 150

Shared Lives  
schemes

# 30

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# Shared Lives Plus

## How it creates impact:

Shared Lives Plus is transforming the landscape of the mainstream provision of social care. It aims to put patients first, encourage community-based care, reduce the need for expensive traditional social care resources, and allow individuals to live better, fuller lives in their communities.

## Administration:

- As a result of the pandemic, three technology innovations were introduced to speed up administrative processes.
- The carer recruitment website:
- Shared Lives Plus developed a portal with COVID funding for shared lives carers to be assessed online. This sped up the supply and demand balance significantly.
- Online training:
- Training is now being delivered online for shared lives providers/carers.
- Shared Life Tool:
- An application which collects meaningful data, that Shared Lives Plus are looking to develop further. Currently, there is a difficult tension between usability and the target audience (who may be disabled, neurodiverse or autistic).

## Costs:

According to Shared Lives Plus research, Shared Lives models as an alternative to institutional care costs £30,000 less than traditional care models.<sup>17</sup> It has also been proven to be a successful scalable model. In just five years (from 2012-2017), Shared Lives grew by more than a third (34%), supporting over 14,000 people across the UK.<sup>18</sup>

## Patient Benefit:

The Shared Life model can provide a 15% increase in the day-to-day support for patients. At the end of 2018, My Shared Life showed that 94% of **patients** felt more involved with their community, 93% of people felt that their social life had improved and 83% of people in Shared Lives found it easier to have friends.<sup>19</sup>

## Provider/Carer Benefit:

The Shared Life model provides the opportunity for relationship building, peer support, social capital through network sharing, and the chance to reduce rent cost by sharing accommodation, or working at home and earning between £350-£650/week with tax relief, training and regular breaks.



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<sup>17</sup> Shared Lives Plus. Growing Shared Shared Lives and Homeshare: our consultancy offer. 2022. <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/news-campaigns-and-jobs/growing-shared-lives/strategic-advice/>

<sup>18</sup> Shared Lives Plus. Shared Lives in England Annual Report. 2018. Accessed at: <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Shared-Lives-in-England-2017-2018-Exec-summary.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid