

Islington Shared Lives

Information for service users and their families

This document explains what Shared Lives is and how it works for people using the service and their families and explains what you can expect. If you have any more questions please get in touch with our Shared Lives team, who will be very happy to help.

What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is provided by Shared Lives carers. Shared Lives carers open their home, family and community life to vulnerable adults with learning disabilities and other support needs. Shared Lives is an alternative to more traditional residential or supported living services and can support people with a variety of support needs. Some people live with Shared Lives carers, some people stay with Shared Lives carers for respite or short breaks and some people spend time during the day with Shared Lives carers undertaking chosen activities.

Who are the Shared Lives carers?

Shared Lives carers are ordinary people from the local community who choose to become Shared Lives carers. They are fully assessed and vetted before being able to provide a service and are regularly monitored and reviewed by the Islington Shared Lives scheme.

Shared Lives carers are paid for the support they provide and they all go through an approval process to ensure they are suitable for the role. This includes a thorough assessment of their care skills, home visits to ensure they can offer a safe and appropriate environment for caring, and criminal records checks.

Islington Shared Lives is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and is subject to regular inspections. This ensures that Shared Lives carers are recruited and supported in an effective way to provide good quality and safe care and support.

Who is eligible to receive a service from Islington Shared Lives?

In Islington, Shared Lives is currently available to adults with a learning disability that have been assessed as eligible for a service. The service could be long-term, respite / short breaks or day support. Your social worker will talk you through the options available to you and give you more information about Shared Lives if you are interested.

What types of Shared Lives arrangements are there?

- **Long term (live-in) arrangements:** The person will move in with an approved Shared Lives carer and live with them and their family. The Shared Lives carer will provide all the care and support that the person needs and will support the person to live as part of their family and local community.
- **Short breaks / respite:** The person will stay with a Shared Lives carer for short periods of time, often to give them (or their main carers) a break. The person will stay in

the Shared Lives carers home and will be part of the Shared Lives carers family and local community for the period of the stay.

- **Day support:** The person will visit the Shared Lives carer for agreed periods of time during the day. During the time the person will be provided with care and support by the Shared Lives carer and their family. The Shared Lives carer will support the person to undertake chosen activities either in the Shared Lives carers home or in the wider community.

How does Shared Lives differ from domiciliary care or other types of residential or supported living care?

The Shared Lives carer uses their own home as a resource and the carer takes on a role of 'extended family member' to the person with the disability or support need. This makes Shared Lives unique, and very different to other care arrangements.

To be provided by Shared Lives the service must be provided in (or from) the Shared Lives carers own home. This is an important distinction in the regulations and Shared Lives carers are unable to provide care and support in the persons own home.

How do I find a Shared Lives Carer?

Shared Lives is based on a match between a Shared Lives carer and the person receiving the care and support. To find you a Shared Lives carer, you will be asked lots of questions about what support you need, where you would like to live/stay and what your likes, interests, hobbies and things important to you are. We will then use this information to find a Shared Lives carer who matches well with you.

You and your family (or anyone you want involved) will get to meet the Shared Lives carer and see their house before you start the service. Shared Lives is based on a match and everyone needs to agree before any service can begin.

How do I know I will get the care and support I need?

All new Shared Lives arrangements are reviewed after 6 weeks – this will give everyone an opportunity to see how things are going. In addition, all Shared Lives carers have an allocated worker who visit them regularly to check that they are doing a good job. The Shared Lives co-ordinator will contact you and your family on a regular basis to make sure you are happy and, you can contact them at any time if you want to let them know anything.

What if I am unhappy with my Shared Lives arrangement?

It is important to speak to your Shared Lives co-ordinator if you are at all unhappy during your arrangement. If the issue is able to be resolved directly with your Shared Lives carer and you feel confident to do this yourself, you can. If you feel you need support in dealing with an issue, please talk to your co-ordinator who can help. You have the right to suspend or end your Shared Lives arrangement at any time.

For more information

If you want to know more about Shared Lives, you can speak to your allocated social worker or contact the Shared Lives team on 020 7527 7661 or email sharedlives@islington.gov.uk