

Islington Shared Lives

Thinking about becoming a carer?

Thank you for thinking about being a Shared Lives carer. Below, you'll find more information about what being a Shared Lives carer is all about. If you have any more questions or want details of how to apply to be a Shared Lives carer, please get in touch with our Shared Lives team who will be very happy to help.

What is a Shared Lives carer?

A Shared Lives carer is a person who opens their home to provide care and support to an adult with a learning disability or other support needs. Shared Lives is all about people in the local community sharing their home and family life with an adult with a disability who is unable to live in the community without some additional support.

What does a Shared Lives carer do?

Shared Lives carers open their home and family life to individuals who require some care and support to live the life they choose. Shared Lives carers can provide long-term arrangements (where a person lives with them and is supported by the Shared Lives carer in all aspects of their support), short breaks or respite arrangements (where a person stays with the Shared Lives carer for short periods of time) and day support arrangements (where a person visits the Shared Lives carer during the day and is supported to undertake chosen activities).

All aspects of Shared Lives involve the person being supported in the Shared Lives carers own home and as part of the Shared Lives carers own family, friends and wider community.

A Shared Lives carer is there to support people with all their care and support needs and enable the person to be as independent as possible whilst living within their local community.

Are Shared Lives carers paid?

Yes. Shared Lives carers are paid for the care, support and accommodation they provide.

How much will I get paid?

Pay will vary depending on a number of factors including the level of care and support that the Shared Lives carer is providing. If you wish to find out more about how Shared Lives carers are paid, please contact the Shared Lives team who will be happy to chat with you.

All Shared Lives carers are self-employed. There are a number of tax advantages to being a Shared Lives carer including a number of generous tax free allowances agreed with HMRC.

In addition, all Shared Lives carers that live in Islington are exempt from paying any council tax.

The team can provide more information if requested.

Who can become a Shared Lives carer?

We will consider anyone who is willing to share their own home, family and community life. We are keen to recruit single people, couples and families, with or without children. The only requirements are that you need a spare room (for long-term or short break/respite arrangements) and some spare time to support somebody with care and support needs.

What if I don't have a spare room?

If you don't have a spare room then it is possible that you could provide daytime support. This would mean supporting somebody with daytime activities or to learn new skills. You would still need adequate communal space within your home and the spare time to provide the care and support needed.

What type of people will I be caring for?

In Islington, the Shared Lives scheme is currently used by adults with learning disabilities however, we are keen to expand the service to support other people.

Can I choose who I support?

Yes. All Shared Lives arrangements are subject to a matching process to ensure carers and people using the service are compatible. Being happy to support someone is key to a successful match. One of the Shared Lives co-ordinators will discuss any potential match with you. You will have the opportunity to meet with the person and their family and decide if you want to go ahead with offering support. All Shared Lives arrangements are based on a choice and everyone has an equal say.

How do I become a Shared Lives carer?

All of our Shared Lives carers are supported through a thorough assessment process which can take around three months to complete. The process includes completion of an application form, vetting checks and references as well as DBS (criminal records check) and health checks. A large part of your assessment will be undertaken by home visits and you will then be presented to an independent approval panel. Don't be put off by this, our friendly team will be on hand throughout the process to help guide you through each step.

Do I need to have any formal qualifications to be a Shared Lives Carer?

No. You don't need any formal qualifications to become a Shared Lives carer. However, we are looking for people who have some personal and/or professional experience in supporting people with learning disabilities. We also think it's important that potential carers are keen to build on their skills and want to participate in our training and development programmes.

What skills will I need to be a Shared Lives Carer?

As a Shared Lives carer, you will need the ability to see people for who they are and not just their disability. You will have a good understanding of how to support and provide care for people with disabilities. You'll be caring, enthusiastic and sensitive to people's needs and differences. Shared Lives carers need to take a positive approach, have plenty of patience and willingness to go the extra mile for people who need their support.

Will I receive training as a Shared Lives carer?

Yes. We encourage all Islington Shared Lives carers to undertake regular training. Training may be in required areas, such as first aid, administration of medication and safeguarding as well as areas that will help you with supporting the person matched.

What support will I get as a Shared Lives carer?

We make it our priority to support all of our Shared Lives carers. You will have an allocated co-ordinator who will work with you. You will receive regular visits and the service has support over the phone 24/7. You will also have the opportunity to attend regular Shared Lives carers meetings where you can meet the team and other Shared Lives carers.

I live with my family, including children. Can I still be a Shared Lives carer?

Yes. If you're thinking about being a Shared Lives carer, it's important that you discuss your plans with all family members, including children. Shared Lives is about sharing your life with the person you are caring for, and this naturally includes the people you live with.

I am a pet owner. Can I still be a SL carer?

Yes. It is important for us to know how many pets you have and what type. As part of the assessment and screening process, we make decisions around the suitability of pets on a case-by-case basis.

I'm interested in being a Shared Lives carer or I would like some more information. What do I do next?

Get in touch with our Shared Lives team and they will discuss the next steps with you. Call 0207 527 7661 or email sharedlives@islington.gov.uk

If you would like any more information or have any questions, please give us a call. We realise that becoming a Shared Lives carer is a big decision so will happily answer any questions you may have.



For more general information about Shared Lives please visit www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk. Shared Lives Plus are the national network for Shared Lives services and have lots of information.



Islington Shared Lives is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). You can read our most recent report (and see our rating) at www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-135230965. Or search 'Islington Shared Lives CQC'