Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme aims to provide vulnerable Individuals with the opportunity to be part of the family and community of a Shared Lives Provider, who in turn will provide friendship and appropriate support and care.

It is important for all Individuals using Shared Lives services:

- To be part of the Shared Lives Provider’s family or household
- To be part of the community
- To have opportunities to develop and use new skills
- To do as much as they can for themselves and be as independent as possible
- To have privacy and dignity in their home and life
- To be treated with consideration and respect
- To have choices and make their own decisions
- To lead the kind of life they want and achieve the things that are important to themselves
- To recognise other people as equal human beings who all have the same rights.

Who can benefit from a Shared Lives placement supported by the Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme?

- The Worcestershire Shared Lives scheme supports a range of placements which provide services, suitable for men and women aged 18 or over. Providers are recruited with a range of differing skills and experiences. Placements may be in the home of a sole carer, a couple or a family with children. Careful matching is undertaken to ensure that the placement is appropriate for both the Individual and the Provider.

- The range of needs that the scheme intends to meet through the making of placements includes:
  - Learning Disability
  - Mental Health needs
  - Needs relating to older people
  - Physical disability and sensory impairment
Shared Lives Placements may include:

- Accommodation with care; or intermediate care in the family home of a Shared Lives Provider.
- Accommodation with support, including support funded through Supported People, in the family home of a Shared Lives Provider.
- Day services based outside the home of the Shared Lives Provider.
- Replacement Care, with or without personal care, inside or outside the Shared Lives Provider’s home.
- Support in the community by a Shared Lives Provider acting as extended family (‘kinship’) support or ‘outreach’ support in the community.

The needs that can be met in Shared Lives arrangements could be:

- **Physical** - help with all areas of personal care such as washing dressing and getting around
- **Emotional** - becoming more confident or maintaining friendships
- **Social** - getting to know more people, or developing new skills
- **Cultural** - following a particular diet or customs
- **Spiritual** - keeping in touch with a faith community.

Shared Lives providers can help the Individual to stay in touch with the people who are important to them. The Individual will be asked about this before they start their Shared Lives arrangement and whenever their Individual’s Plan is reviewed. Relatives, friends and representatives of the Individual will be welcome to visit them when they are staying with a Shared Lives Provider.
Why I like living with my beautiful shared lives carers

“I have lived with my Shared Lives Carers for over a year now. I have my own bedroom where I like to chill and I get time to watch telly and to sing. My carers help me get the things for my bedroom that I want such as a TV because I won’t know how to do it myself. They also teach me how to save for things like this. I also know how to clean my bedroom like vacuuming and mopping and dusting.

I like going out into town to the shops. My carers have taught me to do this. Everybody knows me locally and says hello when they see me. When I first got here I wouldn’t go out on my own.

My carers take me to college where I have made new friends and I have learnt life and living skills. I have also passed English tests and my maths and I have now started my second year.

Since I have been here I have learnt to do my breakfast and my lunch and I help make family meals. I peel carrots and potatoes and I am learning to use the cooker.

I have learnt to eat healthily and have lost over 2 stone in weight, and now I can walk a long way which I couldn’t do before.

I also joined a Special Olympic swimming club and have won swimming medals.”

“And I would like to live here forever”
A Day In The Life Of A Shared Lives Carer

Hi, my husband and I have been Shared Lives Carers for 2 years and is something we love doing. We look after two individuals with learning disabilities who are 21 and 22 and we also have a son who is 11. I see the individuals as an extension of our own family and this keeps us busy with all the day to day things that crop up in our family lives.

Here is an example of a typical Monday. My husband it still working full time and helps out when he can. I have changed the names of the individuals for confidentiality reasons. Wake up my son so he can get ready for school.

Wake up Peter (we are working together so he can eventually get himself up with his own alarm) so he can get ready for the Day Care Centre he goes to on a Monday. My son’s friends arrive and they have a catch up before leaving for school. Peter can wash and dress himself and get his own breakfast and then he has a bit of quiet time which he likes to do first thing in the morning. During this time he makes sure he has everything he needs for the day such as a packed lunch which he makes himself and a little bit of spending money.

I drive Peter to his Day Care Centre and we listen to music, which is quite loud, as Drop off Peter safely at his Club and I am happy knowing he will have a great day and an opportunity to make new friends and have fun!

I have a horse riding lesson with a Shared Lives colleague that loves riding too. I started riding again because the stables were right by Peter’s Day Care Centre, a good time to re-kindled a hobby I loved when I was little and get exercise and catch up with a colleague all at the same time.

Drive home and chat to Ann who has got herself up and made her own breakfast. She has had a bit of a lie-in today as she does not go to college on a Monday. Ann loves walking, bowling and dancing and today we decided to go bowling. We have an hour doing jobs – Ann will put her own washing on and dust and vacuum her room on a Monday and I will do some Shared Lives paperwork or gardening if the weather is good. Ann and I have our lunch. Ann will make her own sandwiches now too. We drive to the bowling alley and book a couple of games of bowling each. Carers and their individuals are given a discount here so its great value for money for both of us! Ann pays for her own bowling and has been learning to add up money since she came to live with us. We always treat ourselves to a drink and a cake while we are bowling too. This is a great opportunity for Ann to practice adding up coins. We have a lot of fun and then it is time to leave to collect Peter.
Drive to Droitwich to collect Peter. Catch up with the Day Care Centre manager and Peter to see what they have been up to that day. (Next week I will be doing travel training with Peter to catch the train from Droitwich back home. He is a bit nervous about this but over the next few weeks I am confident he will be successful at doing this and not be so nervous).

Just as we get home my son arrives home from school. We all have a cup of tea and then my son will do his homework and I will be available to help if he needs it. Ann and Peter do their own thing for a while. Prepare tea. We have an early tea most days in the week because at least one of us in the household is doing an evening activity. We all eat together and catch up on the day’s activities. Sometimes Ann, Peter or my son, help prepare and cook tea. They are all learning to cook and take it in turns to cook once a week.

Peter washes up after tea, Ann wipes up and my son loads the dishwasher. These are their preferred chores after tea. If my husband is about he will chip in too.

Ann gets her swimming stuff ready for her lesson with her swimming club which she has every Monday. She is becoming a great swimmer and has won medals at the swimming galas which are held every 3 months.

Ann, my son and I all set off for the swimming lesson and my son and I watch the lesson and wave at Ann whenever she looks over. Peter stays at home to relax with my husband. We return home and Ann gets her sandwiches ready for college the next day and we all have an hour chilling. Ann, Peter and my son are all ready for bed and my husband and I watch a bit of TV and have a catch up and perhaps some wine! Phew!

**The best thing I ever did was to become a Shared Lives Carer. I have met so many great individuals with disabilities; Shared Lives colleagues; parents and other carers and have made some great friends too. Life is very hectic but hugely enjoyable, especially when I see the individuals I look after gain skills and confidence in what they do.**

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**A Parent’s Shared Lives experience**

I have always wanted my daughter to have as near as independent life as possible. So when Shared Lives was mentioned to me I had a whole mixed bag of emotions. Initially I felt that I was letting her down, at times the guilt was overwhelming but I kept thinking of the bigger picture. If anything happened to me I wouldn’t want my daughter to feel lost without me or suddenly be thrown unprepared into the
world. So I went to meet the carers who were happy and keen on caring for her. It was a really good first meeting and my daughter instantly clicked with them. They were positive and straight away made her feel welcome.

A year later and my daughter has blossomed into a very independent young lady. She now goes to the shops on her own, she will book her own appointments at the hairdressers and the nail spa. We talk every day and she has always got her social calendar booked. She has taken charge of her own life and this is down to the wonderful support she gets from her placement. I speak to her carers frequently and they are positive and we have a very open and honest relationship. I trust them implicitly with my daughter which is important as I know that they will keep me informed with all aspects of her life.

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**My Shared Lives**

I am 38 years old, and have lived with my Shared Lives carer for 14 years. There is another Shared Lives person in the house, and we get on okay, most of the time.

I see my family regularly; I see my mum and stepdad, sister and niece. I see my dad, but not as much as I’d like to. I also go to stay with my mum, and when I’m with her I have my hair done at the hairdressers and she takes me to my dentist appointments. My Shared Lives carer takes me to any other appointments I need to go to.

I am very busy and go to lots of activities during the week. On Monday I go to the training centre where I have learnt to do all sorts of things including ironing, packing chocolates and I do cleaning training. A group of us do some cleaning for people, what we get paid we put it into a fund that pays for when we go away on outings. I also go to Special Olympics on Monday evening and my Shared Lives carer takes me there.

On Tuesdays I go to the Charity Shop and then I Swim at the leisure centre in the afternoon. On Wednesdays I go to a pet shop and I help clean out the rabbits, I then get given food for my own rabbit to say thank you. I go back to the training
centre all day Thursday and do whatever activities we have planned, this may be cooking a meal which I bring home with me.

**Alice’s Shared Lives Support Worker**

Alice has Friday as her day off to herself, to do what she enjoys doing; she may go out with her Shared Lives carer, and the other individual in the house, they will choose where they’d like to go. Alice also enjoys going out with her Shared Lives carer to walk the dogs who live at home. Alice told me she enjoys living with her Shared Lives carer; she helps her to manage her money, keeps her safe, and cares that she is well and happy.

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**My Shared Lives Story**

I have been living in the Shared Lives scheme since April 2015. I was regularly staying in a respite care home and I needed somewhere more settled to live. My social worker told me all about Shared Lives and how I could live with people as part of their family and I thought it sounded exciting and I would like to know more. The Shared Lives team matched me with a couple from my local area who sounded nice. It was important to me to stay in my local area so I could see my family and friends regularly and know my way around when I went out independently.

I was nervous meeting John and Liz and their dog Pip! I needn’t have been, they were very friendly and they answered all my questions to put my mind at rest. We decided to try some trial visits. I went for tea, which was really nice and I had a sleepover and then a weekend visit. We all got on great and I was comfortable and decided I wanted to make it permanent. I moved into John and Liz’s home and John helped me decorate my room in West Bromwich Albion’s colours, my favourite football team. John also helped me find new hobbies such as model building, growing my own vegetables and cooking. Liz helped me to learn how to find new opportunities in the community. I did a horse care course at college and now do voluntary work at a local stable every Monday.

I play football every weekend and I play in tournaments. I joined a drama group and played two parts in a show recently at the local town hall, it was so much fun. John, Kate and I recently had our heads shaved for a local hospice, raising around £800. It’s my way of giving something back to other people like me. Shared Lives has helped my confidence and my self-esteem, which led to me meeting a young lady last year, through a mutual friend. She is my perfect partner and we do so
many things together. I asked her to marry me on the beach while on holiday in May, with John, Liz, Pip the dog and another Shared Lives person who lives with us, and she said yes. John and Liz helped me to plan it while we were all away on holiday. Our families are very happy about our engagement and our friends are thrilled, as are the Shared Lives team and John and Liz.

My next plan is to get my own home so we can marry and live together. John, Liz, Shared Lives and the social work team will help me to do this next year. By then all the skills I have learned during my time with Shared Lives and John and Liz will really pay off. I can now cook a roast for five people, budget money better, manage paying bills, decorate, do my own laundry and access the community independently, amongst other things. Most importantly due to my time in Shared Lives I now feel more respected and that I matter and I can contribute to society. I feel I can do anything I want with support if I need it and a bit of encouragement. My opinions matter and life couldn’t be better. Thank you Shared Lives.

A note from John and Liz: He has been an absolute pleasure to live with. He takes everything on board and is never afraid to try something new. He is such a quick learner, bubbly and has a wonderful sense of humour, everyone he meets falls for his natural charm. We find our chosen path as Shared Lives carers very rewarding, don’t get us wrong it is hard work at times but when you see someone accomplish something new it’s worth every second.

We hope to be Shared Lives carers for a long time. People will come and go, we’re sure it will be hard to say goodbye but, when you see someone moving on to being totally independent and taking skills with them that you have taught them, then you know you have done a good job and that’s what it’s all about.

Shared Lives is a wonderful scheme, the staff are very warm and friendly. They are always there if you need them. Shared Lives gives people real opportunities and happy lives. Thank you Shared Lives. John and Liz
## Living with Mary

I have lived with Mary since about 1982. I really enjoy looking after my animals at home, I have 2 guinea pigs, called Caramel and Toffee. I have 1 rabbit called Sooty and a cat called Tilly. She is black with white on her nose, neck and her paws. My photograph is of me and Molly and I love her to pieces; she is a lovely colour and good company.

I help at a nursery on Monday Wednesday and Thursday. They are all nice people there I work with; I help to lay the tables for dinner.

I play with the children; today we got all the play farm animals and went outside and played with them. Sometimes we have sand and water. Today we also did leaves that we collected off the ground, and chalked on them to make patterns.

I live with my Shared Lives carer and 2 other Shared Lives people. We do quite a lot with Mary, we go for days out and have meals out. We go to the Thursday night social club every week and sometimes we also go on a Friday.

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## Mary’s Farm

I like going to the farm to help, there are 2 horses, one is called Jubilee and one is called Tessa. Tessa has had six foals, and one of them we kept who is Jubilee.

There are 10 geese, 4 turkeys, 2 male, 2 female. There are 3 cockerels and we are hoping to get some more chickens, we also have 3 ducks.

I help look after the horses and I enjoy helping Mary to feed them, I also feed the ducks and the geese.

Sometimes I go to the farm 3 times a day when I am not busy doing other things.

Sandra is our Shared Lives support carer and she always makes my day when I see her. She helps me with things, and lives just down the road from our house.

I love living with Mary in Shared Lives; it makes me feel happy and safe.
Mary's Thoughts on being a Shared Lives carer

Being a Shared Lives carer is very rewarding. I support three Shared Lives individuals. During the week I help them get to their chosen day care centres in the morning. When they come home in the afternoon it’s nice to sit and listen to how their day has been and if they have enjoyed it. In the evening I help and support them to prepare and enjoy a meal as a family. Some evenings and weekends we like to go out and about in the community and enjoy going to social events such as discos and parties we all like going to live music events too. I offer support for the individuals to keep and look after several different animals, which they enjoy. Shared Lives have always given the individuals and me full support.

Mary
If you would like to learn more about the Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme, Please contact us on:

**Telephone:** 01905 765622 (Select Option 3)

**E-mail:** sharedlivesadmin@worcestershire.gov.uk

**Web:** ylyc.worcestershire.gov.uk

Find out more online: ylyc.worcestershire.gov.uk