



# Shared Lives



## Worcestershire Shared Lives

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# Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme

**Worcestershire Shared Lives Scheme** offers people with additional needs the opportunity to be part of the family and community of a Shared Lives Provider. Our Providers offer care and support based on the persons individual needs. This may include developing life skills; cooking, budgeting, travelling independently, support to achieve personal goals or support with personal care needs.

We can offer long term placements, shorter term placements which can support a person to move towards more independent living, and short breaks.



# Who can benefit from a Shared Lives placement?

Our scheme can support people from the age of 18 years old. Although traditionally a service for people with learning disabilities, we also offer placements for people with mental health needs, physical or sensory impairment, older people, and other complex support needs.

Matching is key, and we take time to introduce people to Shared Lives Providers, to ensure the right placement for the best outcomes.

## Our Providers

All of our Providers have been assessed by the scheme which includes assessment of their home, an enhanced DBS check, a health check, and references. They have undertaken a comprehensive induction and training programme before being approved by a panel made up of professionals with an interest in Shared Lives. Once approved, all Providers are supported by the scheme to continue their development with ongoing training opportunities.

No placement is the same - Our Providers have a range of differing skills however all have a passion for Shared Lives and making a difference.



# Our Shared Lives stories

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## Donna Owens

I worked in Health and Social Care for 14 years within a large staff team supporting individuals, some living in their own homes and others in a residential setting. I was first introduced to Shared Lives in 2008 when my Mum became a long-term provider. I noticed the difference in the setting I worked in compared to the Shared Lives Scheme. The difference being one to one consistent support and care for the individual and what a huge positive effect it had. The individual thrived and from having very limited life skills became a confident person who reached their full potential in the space of a couple of years. My mum then became a carer for a further 2 individuals and this is when I became her Support Carer (a role I still do today).



I supported 2 of the individuals on a weekly basis and developed a strong relationship with them. Needless to say, the difference I noticed with the individuals in a Shared Lives setting receiving more person-centred care and support than those in a residential setting. So, it was then that I decided to approach Shared Lives and I became a provider for replacement care in my own home, I did this for about a year and then the opportunity arose to become a long-term provider.

Elizabeth moved in with myself and my family in 2018. I support and care for her in all aspects of her daily life, helping her to maintain her life skills and to achieve new goals and future aspirations, supporting her to make safe and healthy decisions and to attend any medical appointments. I support Elizabeth to have regular contact with her friendship groups and maintain her relationships with her family and peers. Elizabeth is a very sociable person and has become a big part of our family. My daughter and son have a good relationship with her and often help set up her jigsaw and colouring activities (usually with lots of joking and banter!) The role of being a sole carer also comes with its challenges. Elizabeth sees me as “good cop and bad cop” when we are doing nice activities Elizabeth is in her element, but when asked to do something mundane or something that is going to disrupt her usual routine Elizabeth does not appreciate this and being the sole carer I can receive a mixed bag of moods from her.

Over the past 3 years there have been times I have been faced with challenges from Elizabeth where I have needed a second opinion and advice. During these times I knew I could call upon Shared Lives and speak to my Shared Lives worker who has always listened and offered help and solutions, this has been a lifeline for myself and highly appreciated.

Being a Shared Lives carer has had a very positive, personal impact on my life. It's a pleasure to watch someone achieve and thrive and also feel comfortable enough to truly be themselves in our home. Having the “mum caring instinct” I feel complete continuing to care for someone now that my children are reaching adulthood and becoming independent, I suppose I feel useful again!!



## Elizabeth's sister-in-law, Gill Hailstone

Donna and the family are very special people. We keep in contact and any problems that crop up on either side we put our heads together and solve them. We feel that both Liz and we are very fortunate that Liz has been placed with such a close and very capable family. We are truly thankful to Shared Lives for the ideal placement for Liz. Donna has patience and a true understanding of Liz and her needs. We couldn't be more pleased with her professionalism and dedication. We rate Donna and the family extremely highly.



## Karen and Bjorn Havinga

We have been Shared Lives Providers for 7 years and absolutely love our job. We currently support 2 people. It has been wonderful helping them reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. They have become part of the family and join in with family activities and get together if they wish.

We encourage them to be as independent as possible and help them to gain daily living skills, things which we take for granted! We help them to prepare their own breakfast and lunch, and this is now part of their daily routine which they do without any help. They also help out with our evening meal i.e., peeling carrots, laying the table, washing up and clearing up afterwards. They love suggesting meals they would like when we plan our meals for the week. We have a sit-down meal most nights where we all have a catch up and enjoy our food! We enjoy their company and enjoy their favourite things like going to coffee shops, ten pin bowling, walks, movie nights at home, drinking wine and shopping trips which they love and much more. Part of our job is to promote a healthy lifestyle too and they have managed to improve their health and fitness over the years and have lost a lot of weight along the way! One person who has been with us for 6 years had absolutely transformed since moving in with us. She now has a full and active life and has made many friends along the way. She is well known in the local community too. She goes out on her own to visit the shops, hairdressers, beauty spa or go for walks. She books her own hair and beauty appointments too!

We also look after another person who has been with us for 4 years. She has developed a great social life since she moved in and has become much more confident in everything she does. She has improved her health and fitness and has lost a lot of weight. She particularly enjoys her walks, animals, coffee shops, eating out and horse riding. All of which we love too so it's a win, win situation. Her family have supported us throughout and have been really pleased with her progress since she moved in. We have a great relationship with them, and they often visit for a coffee and a catch up.

We actively encourage those individuals we look after to maintain close contacts with family and friends and try to promote a good relationship with all those who have an interest in the individual's well-being. Being a Shared Lives provider is challenging and requires a lot of patience and understanding. It is also a very responsible role to ensure individuals are kept safe whilst at the same time promoting independence and allowing them to make their own choices. However, the role is also extremely rewarding as individuals develop and prosper in the Shared Lives environment. If you have the skills and temperament then this is a unique role that offers so much to both providers and individuals alike.



## **Jen and Jim – Chloe’s Grandparents**

I’ve never been so happy; it’s the best decision we ever made in choosing Shared Lives for Chloe. We’ve been so lucky with understanding and caring providers for Chloe and they totally get her. The relationship we have with them as well as with Chloe is like we are one big happy family. They involve us with everything, even minor details and share everything we need to know about Chloe.

It has definitely been the best decision we have ever made in our lives; I’d recommend it to anybody, especially as you’re getting older.

When Chloe left us just over four years ago, she didn’t have much confidence and was very shy. Now she’s so different, she’s so confident and loves laughing and joking with BJ and Karen.



She's made lots of new friends and can still keep in touch with her old ones. We have lots more time for ourselves, we have Chloe at weekends and days out whenever when she wants to come to us. We take Chloe on holiday and Karen and BJ also take her on holiday. Chloe is so well supported and cared for we don't have to worry at all. Karen and BJ support her if she needs to buy anything, she can have whatever she wants, and I say to Karen let her spend her money.

Life couldn't be better for the three of us; Jim and I have time to ourselves, and we don't miss the early mornings getting Chloe to her day activities and can have a lie in till 10.00am! Sometimes I pinch myself, I can't believe how lucky we've been finding Shared Lives and Karen and BJ.

We've had a fantastic life bringing up Chloe, she's enriched our lives, and still does. We are just so happy to know she is so well cared for. I can't thank them enough, we're so grateful there are people like Karen and BJ in the world.





## **Tracey Addis**

I started the Shared Lives process in February 2020 just before COVID-19 restrictions started and this has been the only hindrance. From my initial meeting through to my application and panel meeting the process has been smooth. I received information when it was promised and I received phone calls when they had been planned. Due to COVID-19 restrictions some of the training was completed online and even this went without any problems or hitches. I have been very well supported by Kate through the whole process to the point she knows my telephone number off by heart! I have been able to ask any questions about anything to do with Shared Lives. Well the process has been longer due to COVID-19, I am very pleased to say that I have my first permanent placement starting this week. I would absolutely recommend Shared Lives to anyone wishing to start this new way of life.



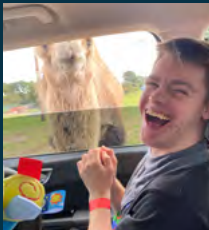
# Shared Lives

To find out more about Worcestershire's Shared Lives Scheme, please contact us on:

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