



# Shared Lives Plan 2021- 2024

[www.reading.gov.uk/sharedlives](http://www.reading.gov.uk/sharedlives)

## Introduction



## About Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a national scheme, providing accommodation and care to someone with support needs. The scheme matches Adults in need of care with an approved Shared Lives carer. The carer is paid to share their home and family life and give a helping hand. For instance, to help someone get dressed, get to doctors' appointments, make friends, cook together or learn a new skill.

The scheme enables individuals to live more independently in the community for longer and has proven to be successful in supporting adults with care and support needs adults across the country, with several other benefits for the individual. It is also significantly cost effective.

The UK network for Shared Lives and Homeshare is facilitated by Shared Lives Plus who provide support to individual schemes throughout the country.

### Who it Supports

The scheme was predominantly set up to specifically support adults with Learning Disabilities. However, in the last few years, the Shared Lives Schemes has grown across the country to include those with other support needs which make it difficult for them to live on their own, such as physical impairment (which increased by 34% in 2018) or those with mental health needs (which increased by 27% in 2018).

### History of Shared Lives at Reading

The Shared Lives scheme has been running in Reading for almost 30 years (previously known as Adult Placement) and is rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (July 2018).

It was set up in 1989 across West Berkshire but run as an individual scheme in Reading since 1998, and in 2005 combined to cover Wokingham.

Like the wider trend, Shared Lives in Reading has predominantly focussed on Learning disabilities, but in 2018 began to expand the scheme and increasing their publicity and marketing materials.

From November 2018 a six-month project was carried out to begin an expansion of the Reading Shared Lives scheme to older people.

## Benefits

Over **150** Shared  
Lives Schemes across the  
UK

Over **9,000** Shared  
Lives Carers supporting  
over **12,000**  
people nationally

**1989**  
Shared Lives Scheme  
introduced across West  
Berkshire, including  
Reading

**1998**  
Shared Lives Scheme run  
independently in Reading

**2018**  
Expansion of the Shared  
Lives Scheme to Older  
People

Existing carers have reported the scheme to be a life-enriching experience for them and immensely rewarding through the ability to make a difference to people's lives

### Reducing social isolation

Many service users report of feeling settled, valued and like they belong for the first time in their lives. Half of people using Shared Lives went on their first ever holiday, as a result of the support and companionship of their Shared Lives carer. In 2018:

- 97% of people in Shared Lives felt they were part of the family most or all the time
- 93% of people felt that their social life had improved
- 83% of people in Shared Lives found it easier to have friends

### Improving Wellbeing and Independence

As well as reducing social isolation, many service users can learn new skills and live independently in the community for longer, due to Shared Lives. In 2018:

- 94% felt more involved with their community
- 83% felt that they had more choice in their daily life
- 79% felt their physical health had improved
- 85% felt their emotional health had improved.

### Financial Benefits

An independent report by Social Finance showed that Shared Lives costs £26,000 less per year for people with learning disabilities than other forms of regulated care (£8,000 less for people with mental health problems). In Reading, Shared Lives costs up to £25,200 less per year for an older person than other forms of regulated care.

If all areas caught up with the best performing Shared Lives schemes, around 34,944 people would be supported, with total annual savings of over £225 million (not including further savings associated with better outcomes)

Further savings would be achieved through cost avoidance with reduced trips to A&E, GPs, and hospital admissions, reduced reliance on community health services, and reduced residential admissions

Shared Lives consistently outperforms all other forms of regulated care in the UK, with 96% rated good or excellent in CQC

"I really do have the best job in the world"

Lorna, Reading Shared Lives Carer



# Vision, Aims and Va

## Vision and Aims

[www.reading.gov.uk/sharedlives](http://www.reading.gov.uk/sharedlives)

I wholeheartedly encourage every leader to invest

# Individuals live independently in the community for longer through the life enriching experience of Shared Lives

## Objectives

To promote the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the people in Shared Lives and protect from abuse of harm

To promote the right of individuals to live an ordinary and independent life, in the same kind of home as others in the community

To extend support to adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people, and other needs that make it harder for them to live on their own.

To provide high quality service, which is the first choice of regulated care in Reading

To raise the profile of the Shared Lives Scheme in Reading and ensure its continued sustainability.

## Values

**Respect**

Respect for every individual and their right to live and enjoy an ordinary life as part of their local community and keep them safe

**Caring**

Making a difference to someone's life by being their champion and responding to their needs

**Effective**

Supporting people to develop their independence and be the best they can be— being stronger together

# Who we are....

Reading Shared lives is a small, internal service, owned and run by Reading Borough Council. The Shared Lives team are part of The Directorate of Adult Social Care and Health.

It is made up of four Shared Lives Officers and a part-time registered Manager, based at 188 Whitley Wood Lane. An overall team manager oversees the Scheme as well as other internal learning disability and older people services.

Key to the success of the Scheme are its 30 approved Shared Lives Carers who support 33 adults with care and support needs in Reading, Wokingham and beyond.

All Shared Lives schemes are registered with the Care Quality Commission and periodically reviewed.

The majority of Shared Lives carers are couples, and some are part time or day carers. The majority of Shared Lives Carers in the scheme live in Reading. They are all DBS checked Carers and can take up to three service users, depending on the level of complexity.

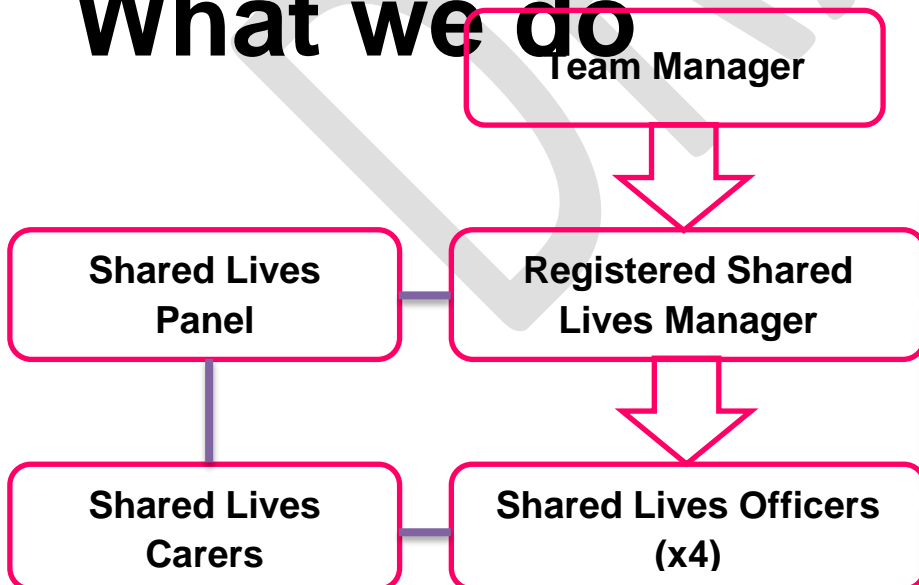
The Shared Lives Scheme is governed through Reading Borough Council. Approved Shared Lives Carers are self-employed but recruited by Reading Borough Council.

The Scheme also has a Shared Lives Panel, which is made up four independent people who have relevant skills and experience to review potential new Shared Lives Carers and approve with the Registered Manager

**30** approved  
Shared Lives Carers  
across 21 households\*

**33** adults  
supported with learning  
disabilitiies or mental  
health conditions\*  
\* February 2021

## What we do



There are three key main areas of work for the Shared Lives team at Reading over the next five years:

- To raise the profile of the Shared Lives Scheme through marketing and communications, events, and other publicity

- To recruit a pool of new Shared Lives Carers in Reading

- To promote the wellbeing of adults with care and support new and support their independence and interests

## How it works

- To effectively train and support new and existing Carers to carry out their role
- To monitor and review placements, helping to resolve any problems and maximise the benefits



**“I needed a flexible role that could work round my other job and family”**

Shared Lives Carer

- To match a person with care needs to a suitable Carer, supporting both ends through the process and setting up new placements



1

## Recruitment and training of Carers

Shared Lives carers are recruited and trained by Reading Borough Council and are DBS checked. Carers come from all walks of life and can be single people, partners or married couples. Potential Carers complete an Expression of Interest form and the Shared Lives team gets in touch, visits them in their home, and supports them through the application process, which is then presented to a panel for approval. Carers then begin an induction process.

3-5  
months  
recruitment  
and  
matching

2

## Referral

Adults who live in Reading and are in need of support are referred to the Reading Shared Lives Scheme by social workers, voluntary organisations, GPs or are self-referred. Adults with care and support needs adults are assessed according to eligibility criteria and support needs by adult social care practitioners.

3

## Match

The Shared Lives team match the user with an Approved Shared Lives carer; this matching is by mutual agreement. Both parties meet and choose one another, which helps to ensure the success of the scheme. The recruitment and matching process includes a number of informal visits and settling in period.

4-12  
weeks  
Trial  
period

4

## Placement

Shared Lives works as full-time placements where the service user lives with their carer and fully integrates into family life. Placements can also be part-time, where the service user regularly visits the carer during the daytime or as overnight respite visits. Placements can be arranged on a one to one basis or up to 3 service users at any one time according to the needs of each person.

5

## Monitoring and Review

The carer will be contacted a minimum of three times annually. This includes a carer Review, a Record Check and health and safety check. Other reviews will be arranged as needed.

Regular  
Reviews  
and  
support

6

## Support and training

The Shared Lives Scheme will endeavour to arrange meetings for mutual support, exchange of information and training whenever possible. Some of the training is mandatory and much of it is included in the induction process.

# Expansion of the Scheme

In five years, Shared Lives has grown nationally by more than a third (34%). Shared Lives has also shown that it complements traditional forms of care – giving family carers valuable relief and support – with day support growing by 15% in 2018 - the biggest growing type of support arrangement.

The Shared Lives Plus Annual report (2017-18) states that Shared Lives has grown to help more people enjoy a richer life where there has been concerted effort and collaboration to expand.

In 2018 the Shared Lives Scheme at Reading began to review its strategic priorities and expand its reach to benefit a wider range of people across Reading – enabling them to live independently in the community for longer.

This included:

- Carrying out a needs analysis to identify priorities and need
- The recruitment of an additional Shared Lives Officer to support the expansion of the scheme
- Increasing Carers pay by 19.76% across both full and part time placements (effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020)
- A marketing campaign to raise awareness of the Scheme and attract new Carers

Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 awareness of the Reading Shared Lives scheme has been raised through:

- Around 1000 leaflets and posters distributed to almost 300 local organisations or venues, as well staff email distributions to local public and voluntary organisations.
- 724 people visiting the Shared Lives website page as well as additional press releases promoted on the RBC website and Shared Lives Plus.
- 16,800 people reached through social media between January and March 2019, with 1 in 28 people interacting through a further link or click (Twitter and Facebook)
- A four-week bus advert campaign in March 2019 across 19 Reading buses, estimated to reach approximately 76% pedestrians
- Media coverage through interviews with BBC radio Berkshire and ITV Meridian in March and April 2019.

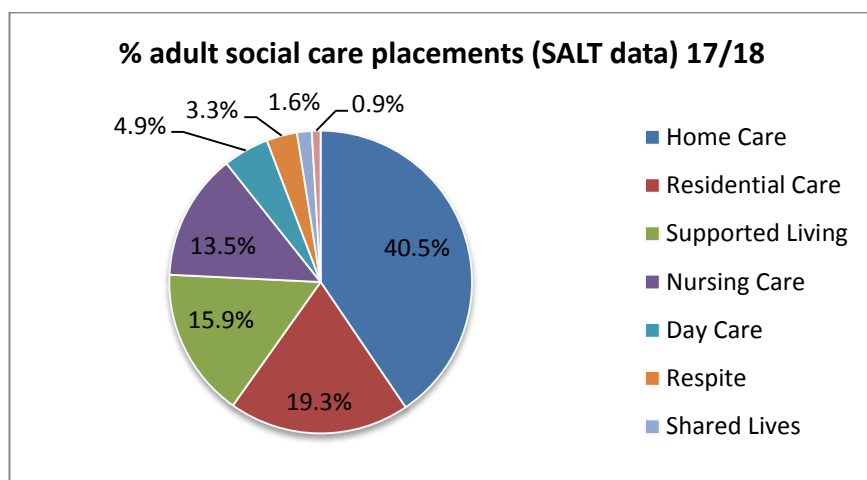
**Nationally,  
in five years,  
'Shared Lives  
has grown  
by more  
than a third  
(34%)'**

Shared Lives Plus

## Priorities and need



In 2017/18 Shared Lives placements represented **1.6%** of adult social care placements (27 placements of 1713). 81.5% of these placements were learning disability support for 18-64-year olds.



We have set a target to expand our Shared Lives scheme by 15 placements (34.9%) to a total of 58 placements by April 2024, which would represent around 2% of adult social care placements overall. The aim is to increase the number of placements by an average of five per year, which is seen as realistic and achievable within current resources.

A further expansion could then be considered, supporting another 15 placements (around 2.5% of adult social care placements) by 2027. Future targets could be adjusted accordingly, depending on success, drive and ambition.

Total Number of Shared Lives Placements*	Year	% of Adult Social Care Placements (baseline 2890 adults)
43	2019	1.49%
58	2023	2.01%
73	2027	2.53%

In order to build capacity of the Scheme, the expansion is being managed through a phased approach, with the primary focus on older people. The focus on older people is based on our needs analysis which showed that:

56% of people in adult social care placements were aged 65 or over (snapshot, Oct 2018).

Older people equated for 38% of Adult Social Care spend, with Learning Disabilities representing 32%; Mental Health services make up 7% and 'other' services provide the remaining 23% of spend<sup>1</sup>

In 2017, 8,199 people aged 65 and over living in the borough were estimated to be unable to manage at least one or two domestic tasks on their own, with this figure estimated to increase to around 9,762 by 2025 (Population Profile Jan - Feb 2019).

# The Future

<sup>1</sup> Reading Borough Council Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2016-2019 – 'Resource and Demand Profile'

Over the next three years, delivering quality care for adults will be a continual challenge for adult social care, Reading Borough Council and the public sector, particularly in the landscape of further financial cuts to local government budgets and lack of adult social care funding.

Over the next three years there are also several other factors that will influence the work of Shared Lives in Reading, including:

- **The financial position, and strategic direction of Reading Borough Council** – providing a clear commitment to the expansion of the Shared Lives Scheme in Reading and championing its role in the wider provision of care and support of adults with care and support needs adults
- **Demographical and economic changes** – the number of people in need of support.
- **Employment opportunities and carers pay** – attracting and retaining Shared Lives Carers as an attractive career route or flexible working option.
- **Market position** – the cost of care in the wider market and alternative types of support which are available.
- **Regulations and Quality of Care** – any changes in regulations or standards of care, for instance stipulated by the Care Quality Commission
- **Digitisation and technology** – the role of smart technology in helping people to live independently in their own home and online services which enable people to better access support and guidance

There are also several wider initiatives within the Council which will influence the work of the Shared Lives team. For instance, the drive to improve ICT packages and backend processes within Adult Social Care to better support staff.

Sometimes it is the subtle changes here and there which can help save staff time and work better for those who use our services. For instance, as part of the initial project to expand the Shared Lives scheme in 2019, we reviewed the payment process for Carers and changed the weekly payments to once every 4 weeks, with the onus on the carer to invoice RBC for their pay. The change in the invoicing arrangements has eased the administrative burden and improved transparency on managing payments.

# Strategic Priorities

Over the next three years the Shared Lives team at Reading will continue to expand its reach to benefit a wider range of people across Reading and will fully review its strategic priorities with a wide range of stakeholders in order to ensure we are demand responsive and fit for purpose as we go forward.

This will include continued focus on:

- **Raising the profile of the Scheme**
- **Attracting new Carers through events and marketing**
- **Supporting existing carers to deliver high quality support to adults with care and support needs adults,**
- **Working closely with adult social care practitioners and health and social care partners to increase the level of referrals**
- **Promoting Shared Lives as the regulated care of choice.**

### Phased approach

The expansion of the Shared Lives scheme requires commitment and investment in order to become the regulated care of choice and extend its reach to benefit the lives of more adults with care and support needs.

In addition, continuing to support existing placements within the scheme – primarily adults with learning disabilities and mental health conditions and their Carers – remain pivotal.

The phased approach requires some capacity building of the Shared Lives team in terms of marketing and publicity, as well as ongoing resource to develop and support an increasing number of placements. These need to be structured and phased in order to manage resources effectively. The following approach is recommended to build the capacity of the team over time:

Phase	Priority	Key work strands	Objective
Phase 1	<b>Expansion to Older People</b>	a) Marketing and recruitment of Carers b) Increasing referrals c) Analysis and review	Increase the number of Shared Lives placements by 15 (total 58)
Phase 2	<b>Further expansion – learning disability, older people, mental health and neighbouring areas</b>	a) Marketing and recruitment of Carers b) Increasing referrals c) Analysis and review	Increase the number of Shared Lives placements by 15 (total 73)
Phase 3	<b>Home share Scheme or further expansion</b>	a) Feasibility to be explored	Increase the number of Shared Lives placements by 15 (total 88)

# Action Plan\*

The following activities and recommendations will help to carry out the plan to 2024, including the vision and objectives.

### Phase 1: Expansion to Older People (1<sup>st</sup> January 2021- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Planned activity	Planned activity and recommendations	Lead
<b>Events and marketing for new carers</b>	<p>A minimum of four annual marketing events to increase awareness and interest in the scheme, with the long-term vision of recruiting carers and increasing referrals to the scheme, examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared Lives week (June 2021)</li> <li>● Carers week - June 2021</li> <li>● World wellbeing week June 2021</li> <li>● Annual information and recruitment event to recruit new carers – (July/August 2021)</li> <li>● International day of older persons – October 1<sup>st</sup> each year</li> <li>● Continue and encourage use and growth of social media for marketing purposes - Ongoing</li> </ul> <p>- Exact dates to be planned and scheduled into calendar of events -</p> <p>Additional targeting through social media, newsletters and emails</p>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Corporate Communications</p>
<b>Support Existing Carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continuation of local Shared Lives Carers Network – coffee mornings or shared activities – via TEAMS</li> <li>● Discount Benefits scheme – further explore and formalise an annual Carers event to obtain feedback for continual improvement from existing carers and service users - ongoing</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Finance</p>
<b>Review contracting arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review and assess contracting arrangements with other local authorities, including possibility to extend and increase income generation</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Commissioning</p>
<b>Staff development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communications and marketing training for Shared Lives Officers to be arranged through the Communications Team</li> </ul>	<p>Provider service team manager with the Head of Communications</p>
<b>Process and administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor and assess enquiries for potential placements as well as expressions of interests from Carers to analyse demand and plan for future activity.</li> <li>● Ensure all documents within service user and carer files are duplicated on the shared drive in digital form. Scan and hold copies of placement agreements and placement reviews.</li> <li>● Provide all social care practitioners (and relevant partners) with a Shared Lives profile and key information about the scheme, including its benefits, eligibility criteria, referral process and costs.</li> <li>● Review the referral process making use of digital technology ensuring it is customer focussed. For instance, making use of the online referral form.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Adult Transformation team (pending Business Process review)</p>

## Phase 2: Further expansion (1<sup>st</sup> January 2022- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)

To continue the activities set out in Phase 1 and further develop, including:

Planned activity	Planned activity and recommendations	Lead
<b>Events and marketing for new carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seek and extend opportunities to promote through other events, organisations, and networks</li> <li>● Seek to co-ordinate another major marketing campaign to raise the profile of the scheme, including street advertising, bus adverts and social media. Budget around £2,000.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Corporate Communications</p>
<b>Existing Carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review feedback and achievements and communicate back to carers and wider publicity where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Corporate Communications</p>
<b>Increasing referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Further reviewing mechanisms to increase the number of referrals coming through</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Locality Managers and senior operational managers</p>

## Phase 3: New ways of working – 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

To continue the activities set out in Phases 1 and 2 and explore new ways of working, including:

Planned activity	Planned activity and recommendations	Lead
<b>Introduction of a Homeshare Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full exploration and feasibility study of introducing a Homeshare Scheme</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Adult Transformation team (to be confirmed)</p>
<b>Funding opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full exploration and feasibility study of future funding opportunities, further income generation, co-funding opportunities with other strategic partners, spinning out to the voluntary sector etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Lives Team</p> <p>Additional support: Adult Transformation team (to be confirmed)</p>

# Get in touch

\* Action Plan to be annually reviewed by the Shared Lives team and subject to resources.

**Please Note:** due to COVID19 Pandemic a lot of the actions have been put on hold due to change in priorities, staff being furloughed etc. However, the team have continued to promote the service online via social media platforms, RBC websites, Jobs go Public etc.



The

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[www.facebook.com/ReadingCouncil/](http://www.facebook.com/ReadingCouncil/)



[@ReadingCouncil](https://twitter.com/ReadingCouncil)

#### Further resources (External):

- <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/> - National Shared Lives Plus network and support
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zd7qfut6RSY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zd7qfut6RSY) - Shared Lives example for Carers, West Sussex County Council (2 min clip)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ns3\\_bSGo178](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ns3_bSGo178) - Key questions answered on Shared Lives, with examples of placements, Gloucestershire County Council (10 min clip)