

The state of Shared Lives



Shared Lives care in Scotland 2024-25

A report by
Shared Lives Plus



Patricia, Archie and Alistair from Cornerstone's
Shared Lives service in the Scottish Borders.



Table of Contents

Key messages	2
About Shared Lives	3
About this report	4
Supported people	5
Shared Lives carers	6
Shared Lives staff	6

Our **lives** get better
when they're **shared**

◀ Katherine and Liz from Moray Shared Lives.

Key messages

In **2024-25**, **589** Shared Lives carers supported **526** people across Scotland - a **4%** increase on the previous year - with **48** staff working across **12** Shared Lives schemes.



526 people supported

One Scottish scheme featured among the top **10** schemes for growth across the UK, showing a **55%** increase in the number of people supported.



55% increase

Day support was the most frequently accessed form of support, although more Shared Lives carers provided live-in support than any other arrangement type.



Schemes in Scotland primarily supported people with a learning disability, older age support needs, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), those living with dementia and mental ill health.

- Learning disability
- Older age support needs
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Mental ill health
- Dementia



Shared Lives Fife’s Speak Your Mind Group, made up of people who draw on the support of the service, reached the final of the co-production category of the Great British Care Awards.

About Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a real example of what the future of good social care looks like. It builds relationships, belonging and purpose within local communities.

Shared Lives schemes bring people who need support, together with Shared Lives carers, to share homes, lives, and community connections, so everyone has the chance to live where they feel they belong.

Across the UK over half of the people using Shared Lives move in with their chosen Shared Lives carer; nearly half visit a Shared Lives carer for day support or overnight breaks. People get safe, personal care and support, in a place which feels like home. They build relationships, skills, do things they enjoy and become more active.

The **12** Shared Lives schemes in Scotland are regulated by the Care Inspectorate, and all have gradings of at least ‘Good’ for the care and support they provide, with **75%** of Shared Lives schemes rated ‘Very Good’ or ‘Excellent’.

Shared Lives Plus member schemes

1

Cornerstone Shared Lives and Short Breaks

2

Quarriers Shared Lives Service

3

East Lothian Shared Lives

4

Edinburgh Shared Lives

5

Shared Lives Fife

6

Shared Lives Shetland

7

Midlothian Shared Lives

8

Moray Shared Lives

9

The Richmond Fellowship Dumfries and Galloway Shared Lives Scheme



About this report

The State of Shared Lives series of reports illustrate the scale and nature of the Shared Lives sector, charting how it develops year on year. Not every scheme was able to provide all the data requested; therefore this report is as accurate as possible with the data received.

This report would not be possible without the contributions of our member schemes in Scotland, whose collaboration we are grateful for.

To find out more visit www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk

Jean from Moray Shared Lives, celebrating turning 101 years young.



Supported People

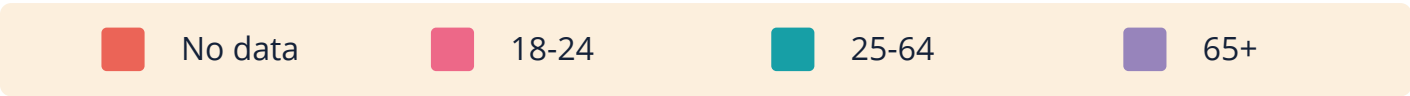
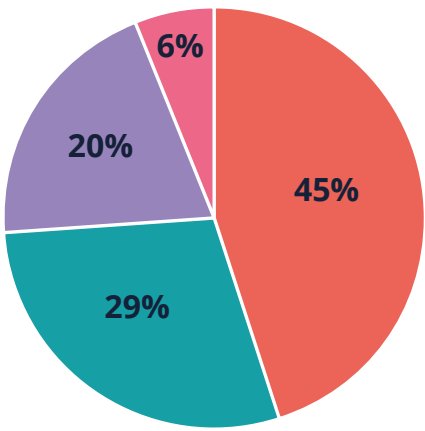
In Scotland, **526** people drew on Shared Lives support in **2024-25** - a **4%** increase on the previous year. This steady growth reflects the national trend of stability and recovery seen across the UK, underscoring the resilience of Shared Lives schemes in adapting to evolving care needs.

Of the **10** Scottish schemes providing data over the past two years, seven reported either an increase or maintained the same number of people supported, with one scheme showing an exceptional **55%** increase. For one scheme established in **2023** this is their first year of reporting.

Day support continues to be the most widely accessed arrangement, with **198** people drawing on this form of support - an increase of **15** from the previous year. Short breaks saw a slight reduction (from **74** to **64**), while **152** people accessed live-in support. Together, these trends indicate that Scottish schemes are adapting flexibly to meet diverse needs and local priorities.

Among those supported, learning disability remains the most common primary support need (**219** people), followed by older age-related needs (**65**), mental ill health (**20**), dementia (**19**), and autism spectrum disorder (**33**). The mix of needs shows Shared Lives’ continued relevance to both traditional and emerging care groups.

Age patterns were consistent with previous years, though a new “no data” category (**45%**) was introduced this year, which affects direct comparisons. **29%** of people supported were aged **25-64**, **20%** aged **65+**, and **6%** aged **18-24**. The Scottish model continues to provide stability for older people and a valued alternative for younger adults with a learning disability or autism.

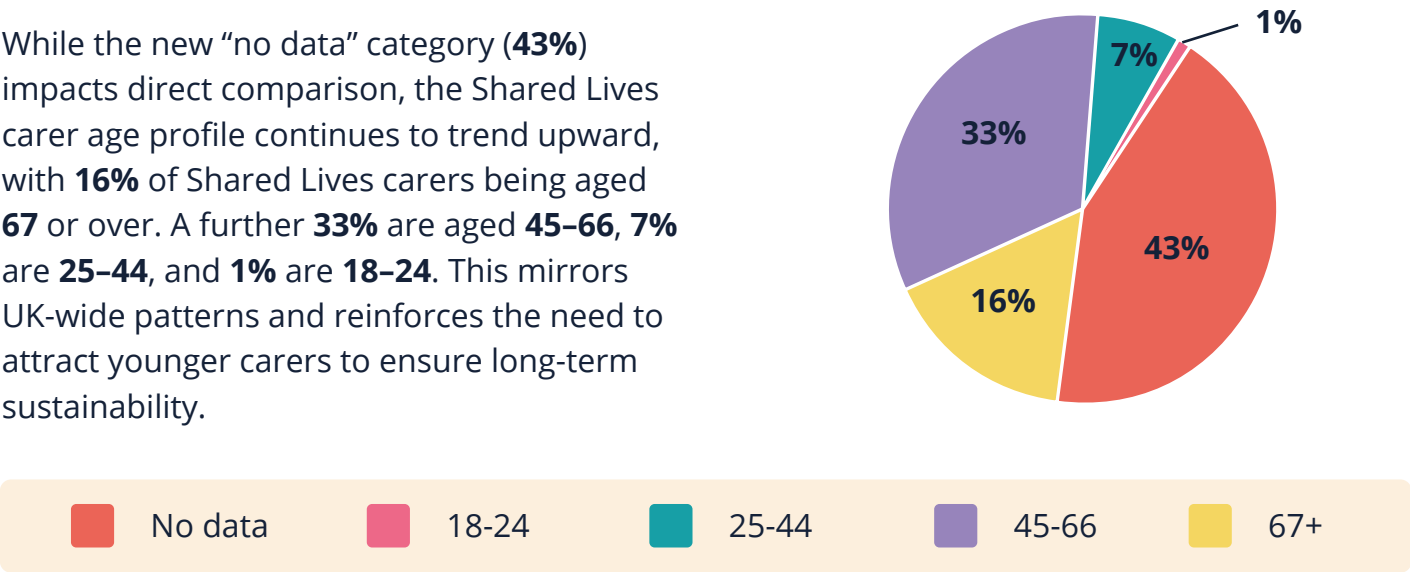


Eight young people transitioned into Shared Lives upon leaving care, with an average referral age of **20**, highlighting Shared Lives’ growing role in transition planning for young adults in Scotland.

Shared Lives carers

The number of Shared Lives carers in Scotland stood at **589** in **2024–25**. While this represents a slight reduction from the previous year, it still marks a **6%** increase since **2021–22**, despite a reduction in the total number of schemes (two closures and one new service launched).

While the new “no data” category (**43%**) impacts direct comparison, the Shared Lives carer age profile continues to trend upward, with **16%** of Shared Lives carers being aged **67** or over. A further **33%** are aged **45–66**, **7%** are **25–44**, and **1%** are **18–24**. This mirrors UK-wide patterns and reinforces the need to attract younger carers to ensure long-term sustainability.



On average, **10** Shared Lives carers now provide **9** live-in or short-break arrangements, up from **8** in **2023–24**. Similarly, **10** day support carers provide **21** arrangements, reflecting careful balance between capacity and matching quality.

Shared Lives staff

Shared Lives workforce data from Scotland indicate stable staff levels, with **48** scheme workers across nine schemes, representing a **2%** increase since **2022–23**. Staff numbers range from **2** to **11** per scheme, and approximately **75%** work full-time, consistent with national workforce patterns.

This steady staffing level, alongside growth in people supported, highlights efficient use of resources and the ongoing commitment to maintaining a skilled, dedicated workforce across Scotland’s Shared Lives network.

For more information about Shared Lives in the UK and Shared Lives Plus check out our [UK State of Sector](#).



Our lives get better when they're shared

Data note

This report is based on the best information available at the time analysis was carried out. It uses data from Shared Lives scheme responses, reliable external sources, and data already held by Shared Lives Plus. Since information is not collected in the same way by all Shared Lives schemes and across all topic areas, the amount of data and level of detail vary. Where we could not collect information, we have shown this as 'no data', rather than filling in the gaps based on assumptions. In some cases, high-level figures are included to provide context. Figures are included to provide a broad picture. They should not be used to make wider claims or comparisons and should be read with care.

[Read the full data transparency statement](#)

[Visit the report website page](#)

**To find out what Shared Lives
can do for you, please contact us:**

 www.sharedlivesplus.org.uk

 info@sharedlivesplus.org.uk

Company Number 4511426

Reg Charity Number (Scotland) SC042742

Reg Charity Number (England and Wales) 1095562